

---

# Curlers propose regional hub for Coquitlam

Curl BC, Tri-Cities rock throwers promote \$24 million, 37,500 sq. ft. facility to council

---

Grant Granger / Tri-City News

JUNE 20, 2018 09:41 AM

---



Curling action during the B.C. women's championship at the Coquitlam Curling Club in January 2016  
Photograph By TRI-CITY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Coquitlam curlers may go from no ice to having an elite facility if a proposal from Curl BC and the Coquitlam Curling Association becomes a reality.

The sport's provincial governing body presented a business case for an eight-sheet, 37,500-sq. ft., approximately \$24-million facility to Coquitlam city council Monday.

On top of providing ice for local rock throwers, it would be a regional base to train curlers, coaches, officials and ice makers as well as hold regional, provincial and national competitions. Curl BC would also relocate its administration offices from Burnaby, a city with no curling ice, to the facility.

Council voted to receive a staff report on the facility that said the project was worth pursuing, which will allow the proponents of the facility to pursue potential partnerships for the project.

"I'm feeling very encouraged," said Earlene Graham, president of the Coquitlam Curling Association. "I just feel like we're on the right track. It's been a pretty tumultuous two years.

"It's enough of a yes to go forward. They could have said go away and they didn't."

The end of the 2017-18 curling season was also the end of the Coquitlam Curling Club at the Poirier Sport and Leisure Complex. Although club members fought the decision, the city opted to convert the ice the club used to an additional arena and move the members to the Port Moody Curling Club.

"A lot of this was about turning a bad into a good," said Curl BC executive director and CEO Scott Braley. "Whether our offices move or not is probably secondary. There is a need for a regional centre in the Lower Mainland."

The estimated price tag includes \$6 million for land which would be a Tri-City municipality's contribution to the project, with another \$1 million coming from the other two. The provincial and federal governments would be asked to pump \$8 million each into the facility.



"We have been in meetings over the past year with the various MLAs and MPs in the area and the reception has been very positive. The infrastructure dollars are there from both the federal and provincial governments. It's a matter of having a business plan," said Braley.

"We're prepared to go where the Tri-Cities area thinks it would work best. Coquitlam is the group that is saying they are interested, and that's where we're starting."

The proposal calls for a non-profit society to operate the curling facility, paying a nominal lease to the city that owns the land. With 676 registered league curlers in the Tri-Cities there would be enough to support the new facility, said the business plan. It also suggested the move would allow Port Moody to repurpose its current 40-year-old facility "approaching the end of its functional lifespan" to meet high demand in other sports.

In its report to council, Coquitlam city staff said the concept could generate increased economic development and enhance the city's sporting profile.

"Although it is early in the process, staff supports the proponent moving this project forward," said the report. "The actual value would need to be quantified through completion of a [value for money] analysis once further information and details of the proposal are further developed."

Coun. Craig Hodge, chair of the city's sports advisory committee, said it's a "really good proposal" that "shows a lot of technical merit."

"There are a lot of hurdles still to cross," he said, but added the report and business case go a long way to getting all the partners together.

"I believe the time is right for a regional curling centre to be built, and I want it to be built in the Tri-Cities," said Hodge. "It's a very good vision. The work the consultant has done proves that with a strong club, with some land and some dollars we can have a strong vibrant curling community for a long time to come."

Hodge said he has faith the curling community can come together given the passion and commitment to their sport they showed when the spectre of the closure of the Coquitlam Curling Club arose.

The business case, which was prepared by consultant Brian Johnston of RC Strategies/PERC, suggested the self-sustaining facility could be open as early as 2021.