

Replacement plans underway for Place Maillardville

A \$20-million project to replace an aging Coquitlam community centre may include housing for seniors.

[Janis Cleugh](#) / Tri-City News

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Photograph By PLACE MAILLARDVILLE/FACEBOOK

A \$20-million project to replace an aging Coquitlam community centre may include housing for seniors.

Last night (Monday), city council approved a proposal to begin the detailed facility planning and design for a new Place Maillardville to take the place of the 39-year-old building in Laval Square that has up to 10,000 visitors a year.

According to a city staff report, the new rec centre will be double the size of the current one, at around 20,000 sq. ft., and will include a gym, park space and, possibly, a two- or three-level seniors housing complex on the existing parking lot.

Raul Allueva, Coquitlam's general manager of parks, recreation and culture, said he anticipates the detailed planning and public consultation to wrap up this year, with construction to start next year for a 2021 opening.

Council has already approved \$15 million for the replacement, with another \$5 million coming from casino revenues next year (Coquitlam receives about \$8 million a year from the provincial government as host of the Hard Rock Casino Vancouver).

But in his report to council, Allueva notes "a more detailed financial estimate will be developed as part of the next stage of site and facility design."

Coun. Craig Hodge, who covered the 1979 opening of Place Maillardville as a photographer with now-defunct newspaper *The Columbian*, said the replacement of the older building is long overdue.

In 2009, city council earmarked its replacement but it wasn't until 2015 that the project was made an "A" priority. Since then, city staff have undertaken a geotechnical review, bought surrounding lots and conducted other studies while consulting with stakeholders.

"This community has been waiting patiently for us to get started and now it's finally beginning," Hodge told *The Tri-City News* today (Tuesday).

The seniors housing component is still to be fine-tuned, he said, but it opens a number of possibilities for the city to partner with non-profit groups or developers to build and operate it, if approved.

The location is ideal, Hodge said, as Maillardville seniors downsize but want to remain in the historically French-Canadian enclave. New amenities also send a signal to the development community that the city wants investment in the neighbourhood, he said.

Currently, the city is building three other community centres around the city: in Burquitlam (with the YMCA); at Fraser Mills (with the Beedie Group); and in the Smiling Creek neighbourhood on Burke Mountain.

Place Maillardville has been operated since 2001 by the Place Maillardville Society; the city granted the organization \$450,000 last year for operations and spent another \$35,000 for maintenance.

- Visit coquitlam.ca/placemaillardville for updates on the capital project.

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