

CONSULTATION REPORT


PROPOSED COMMUNITY RECREATION & CULTURAL CENTRE

Findings and Preliminary Recommendations
23 May 2006



F O N D A T I O N C H E L S E A F O U N D A T I O N

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Executive Summary

The Chelsea Foundation has acquired approximately 20 acres of prime land in the heart of Chelsea on which to build facilities that our community has identified as priorities. The Foundation's vision is to use this land to create a "heart and soul" for Chelsea: a dynamic community gathering place where people of all ages can come together to meet one another, and to enjoy their favourite recreational and cultural activities.

This report describes a consultation process that has taken place with the Chelsea community related to overall themes and physical elements for the planned Community Recreation and Cultural Centre. It summarizes the main input collected to date and presents six main themes to guide the ongoing planning process. Consistent with these themes and the detailed findings of the consultation, the Foundation board makes specific recommendations that will direct the formulation of several building scenarios.

What Did You Tell Us?

A summary list of the primary findings from our consultations is as follows:

- You confirmed support for six themes for the project and a number of specific elements or physical pieces. Some of these are new; most are consistent with the themes and elements previously identified.
- You highlighted three significant concerns about the project. In order of importance, these concerns are: sustainability with regard to yearly operating costs, the challenge of raising the initial capital costs, and the possible negative impact on existing facilities in the community.
- Your strongest single recommendation was for "a hub" – a cultural heart and central gathering place for Chelsea.
- You strongly supported the idea of recreational and cultural activities taking place at the same location, but you feel that we should be creative in our design to allow both activities to be pursued simultaneously without one interfering or compromising the other.
- The proposal for an outdoor rink for various winter sports and activities received your broad and enthusiastic support. The site could be used in the summer for a musical festival, theatre location and a farmers' market.
- You insisted that the Community Centre should serve local needs as its primary focus. Local needs included use by surrounding municipalities.
- You called for continued environmental leadership and especially a low environmental "footprint" (which means construction using green technology), and ongoing programming that promotes environmental awareness and stewardship.
- You called for a creative, holistic approach; an original design, varied in "look," and something uniquely and proudly Chelsea. You want a place to take your family and visitors to share in the Chelsea experience.
- You made it clear that you want to be involved in this project. It was touching to hear comments from people who had "given up" on the community and now see new avenues for connection and contribution. The inclusive, consultative guiding principles that underlie the Chelsea Foundation's mandate received unanimous support.
- You asked that we now move forward and show specific progress so that you can begin to enjoy a return on the investment you've already made in the property.

Recommended Elements and Features of the Proposed Community Centre

Based on the input received from the numerous discussions that have taken place in the community, we recommend that the following physical elements shape the scenarios that we will now formulate. The elements are not listed in any order of perceived priority or importance. Of course, these all remain preliminary, subject to further exploration, prioritization and funding considerations during the formulation and feasibility phases.

1. **Multi-Purpose Community Hall** – A large room or Grand Hall able to hold several hundred people and to host a variety of gatherings and performances. Not a theatre with tiers of fixed seats, but having some type of permanent or retractable performance stage for artistic events, conferences, press meetings, etc.
2. **Activity & Meeting Rooms** – Smaller rooms, both multi-purpose and dedicated, able to support a wide variety of recreation and cultural activities with construction allowing versatility and many options.
3. **Facility for Youth** – A purpose-made space within the centre that caters to the unique needs of our 13 to 19-year-old youth, and a variety of facilities and programs that can attract their enthusiastic involvement.
4. **Kitchen** – A fully-equipped kitchen to cater to various needs of the large and small groups using the centre.
5. **Commercial Food Service Outlet** – A privately-run café and/or health bar to provide basic refreshments on a cost-recovery basis.
6. **Gymnasium and Fitness** – A well-equipped gymnasium that can support team sports, plus facilities to support individual fitness, a high-performance training centre, and healthy lifestyle programs.
7. **Outdoor Ice Surface** – An outdoor ice rink with roof. Doubles as a musical festival location and farmers' market in summer. Possibly used as a future heat source for the centre in winter using green technology.
8. **Focal Point for Emergency Situations** – A dedicated and sufficiently-equipped collection point that can provide planned response to a number of possible emergency situations.
9. **Separate Outdoor Recreation Building** – To support the specific needs of soccer, cross-country skiing and skating enthusiasts. To be constructed prior to the main centre.
10. **Lookout or Vantage Point** – Many options are possible to exploit the magnificent view offered by the property.
11. **Pre-School** – Will ensure early connection to the Community Centre, help to ensure improved daytime usage, improve access to high quality day-care facilities, be run on a cost-recovery basis, and can encourage intergenerational mixing at the centre.
12. **Greenhouse** – An element of the environmental design.

In addition to these specific elements, we recommend that every effort be made to assure that the proposed centre be uniquely Chelsea. The construction materials, building design, colours used, and the interior and exterior layout should all reflect the values, voice and soul of the community. Many specific suggestions recorded in this report can and should become part of any scenario approved for construction.

As a final recommendation, the Chelsea Foundation board feels that it is critical to the success of the project to ensure involvement of both francophone and anglophone citizens. We do have several members of the francophone community involved, and through them we have recently connected with the active francophone team that is providing strong community support to l'École Grand Boisé. We are holding board seats open for francophone representatives.

Emergence of the Project Idea

Background

Chelsea Foundation Mission for this Project

To create a Community Recreation and Culture Centre: a physical “heart and soul” for Chelsea.

Related Chelsea Foundation Goals

- In partnership with the Municipality, to build a Community Recreation and Culture Centre by 2009.
- To remain fiscally responsible every step of the way.
- To be open and consultative, drawing on support and input from the entire community.
- To create a uniquely Chelsea facility that is sustainable in every way.
- To foster community well-being in all that we do.

The Chelsea Foundation was formed in 1998 by a group of residents in order to mobilize community resources and better meet some of our most pressing recreational and cultural needs. Inspired leaders, including key figures from within Chelsea’s francophone community, created the Foundation and then negotiated its land trust. The Foundation has acquired approximately 20 acres of prime land in the heart of Chelsea on which to build facilities that our community has identified as priorities. The Foundation’s vision is to use this land to create a “heart and soul” for Chelsea: a dynamic community gathering place where people of all ages can come together to share and enjoy their favourite recreational and cultural activities.

Since its inception, the Foundation’s vision and the long-term strategic plans of the Chelsea Municipality have become more explicitly aligned. On June 14, 2005, the Municipality of Chelsea and the Chelsea Foundation agreed in principle to a four-phase process that, if completed successfully, would result in the construction of a Community Recreation and Cultural Centre in Chelsea, by late 2009.

Four-Phase Process Towards a new Community Recreation and Cultural Centre

Phase One – Possibility

Phase Two – Formulation (to June 2006)

Phase Three – Feasibility and Fundraising (to December 2007)

Phase Four – Execution (by November 2009)

The objective of the first phase was to confirm that the overall project idea had broad community support. A second objective was to identify which specific themes and elements were most strongly endorsed within the community, and to compare and combine these with those already identified through previous Municipality and Foundation-led planning meetings (see section on initial themes and elements below).

This report marks the end of the “possibility” phase, leading into the second phase of exploring formulation of several specific construction options. A third phase will involve detailed feasibility planning and fundraising. Actual construction will take place in a fourth phase.

This report describes the consultation that has taken place in the possibility phase and, as such, presents a summary of the main input collected from the community. Based on these findings, the report makes specific recommendations that will direct the formulation of several scenarios or options for a proposed Community Recreation and Cultural Centre in Chelsea.

How has the Chelsea Foundation Consulted with its Community?

Consistent with the operating principles of the Foundation, the possibility phase set out to consult and collect input. The intention was to be as inclusive as possible starting with an awareness campaign to solicit broad

involvement and input. We identified and profiled fifty-nine (59) community-based groups active in Chelsea. We strategically targeted these groups, assuming that through them we could most efficiently connect to residents who are involved in one way or another in their community. We identified and assigned a contact person for each of these groups. Then, using these volunteers as ambassadors, we made a sincere effort to reach out to each group personally, individually connecting with them using e-mail, telephone, mail outs, posters and face-to-face contacts. Groups and individuals were invited to volunteer with the Chelsea Foundation and were asked to participate in scheduled “town-hall consultations”.

We used a professionally-designed questionnaire and distributed several hundred copies through the ambassadors to community groups and individuals. At two well-attended community events hosted at l'École Grand Boisé and Chelsea Elementary School, questionnaire forms were handed out at the front doors. The collected questionnaires were then collated and compared with the other input received.

In addition to the community outreach described above, we held five professionally-designed and facilitated information and consultation sessions – including an important session in which the Foundation and the Municipality aligned their vision and planning objectives. Furthermore, to make consultations meaningful and applicable, we invited and encouraged any interested individuals to form leadership teams around an element that they found particularly important. Presently we have several hundred individuals committed to and actively working on more than a dozen leadership teams. These teams are engaged in developing specific elements of the overall project (see Chelsea Foundation website www.fondationchelseafoundation.com for an up-to-date list and contacts for team leaders). Some of these teams have already produced well-developed proposals with drawings and preliminary costing.

In summary, the Chelsea Foundation board believes that a real effort has been made to invite involvement from every niche and sector of the community. Given that this consultation has been mostly volunteer-driven, and without a large communications budget, our efforts have not been perfect. For example, the Foundation has not been able to attract an ideal level of francophone volunteers.

In total, we heard from thousands of Chelsea residents including representatives from well-established community groups. We feel that there is now sufficient input to move forward from the possibility phase – endorsement of a community-based project idea – to the next phase of actively formulating several detailed scenarios. The Chelsea Foundation board is committed to ensuring that extensive, transparent and inclusive consultations continue as the project gains momentum.

Initial Themes

Themes are the defining ideas or characteristics that are expected to make the centre special, unique, responsive to the community's needs, well used and effective. It is important to remember that consultations on building a new Community Centre for Chelsea pre-date this latest round of consultations by several years. The first board of Chelsea Foundation originally conceptualized the project well before the land was acquired. Since then, a number of themes have gradually emerged from board discussions, kitchen meetings, municipal planning sessions, and other informal and formal discussions. As background for this report, the initial themes that pre-dated the more recent round of consultations are listed below:

Cross-Generational Gathering – The centre should cater to all age groups: the very young, teenagers, adults, couples, families and seniors. Facilities should encourage gathering, healthy interaction and learning among all the generations.

High Environmental Standard – The centre should demonstrate environmental stewardship by using state-of-the-art green building technologies. Teaching and encouraging the principles of the “Three R's” (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) should be part of the centre's mandate.

High-tech, Connected Community – The centre should be equipped to electronically connect with households, community groups and workplaces within the community and around the globe. The centre should demonstrate how high-tech communication could help communities work smarter and become healthier.

Centre of Learning – The centre is intended to help users learn about themselves, about each other, and about others outside their own community. The centre should encourage not just use, but community involvement.

Everything can have a Leadership Component – Linked to the idea of continuous learning, the centre should encourage community members to step forward and lead in areas they feel motivated to do so. This theme is about encouraging wider participation, serving each other, celebrating diversity within our community, and helping each other reach our best potential together.

Initial Physical Elements

Physical elements are the tangible pieces that together create a holistic facility consistent with the overall themes desired by the Chelsea community. In defining these physical elements, the Foundation has insisted that the following five criteria be met: 1) an active leadership team has stepped forward from the community for the element, 2) the team is able to show how the element can be economically sustainable, 3) the element has been shown to have broad community support, 4) the element design is consistent with the overall themes while expressing something that is uniquely Chelsea, and 5) the element is shown to be socially and environmentally sustainable in keeping with Chelsea’s environmental ideals. The expectation is that leaders emerge from the community who work with other volunteers to define elements and bring them to the board for approval and inclusion in the overall planning process.

The tangible physical elements that had already emerged before the latest round of consultations are listed below. Some of these elements are well developed with active leadership teams. Other elements remain as ideas, but without defined leadership.

- Multi-Purpose Community Hall / Performing Arts
- Activity & Meeting Rooms
- Gymnasium/Fitness
- Space for Youth
- Seniors’ Club
- Ice Surface
- Kitchen
- Health Bar
- Focal Point for Emergency Situations

Findings – Trends Identified Through the Consultation

The following contextual trends were identified during the consultation process. These trends are important to consider given the ambitious nature of the Community Centre project. These trends help identify the assumptions we are making and the opportunities and risk that the project may face as we move together into the formulation and feasibility phases:

- The proportion of seasonal or temporary residents – those coming to Chelsea to access the Gatineau Park and other features, for holidays but who are not permanent residents – has shrunk dramatically compared to people making Chelsea their primary, year-round residence.
- The City of Gatineau is expanding rapidly and its housing developments are creeping closer to the Chelsea boundaries. The urban development visions and strategies of Gatineau and Chelsea are poles apart.
- There has been continued growth in the number and activity level of community-based organizations, reflecting the larger number of residents making Chelsea their preferred and permanent home.
- There are more people living *and* working in Chelsea, reflected in the growth of local small business, self-employment and home-based offices. People want to spend more time in the surroundings that they love.
- There is a growing environmental awareness, health consciousness and a commitment to healthy lifestyles and healthy foods in Chelsea.
- The tax base for the Municipality has steadily increased with development of new homes and increased property values. At the same time, there is a ceiling for future tax-based growth for Chelsea because of limited availability of land for further development.
- Visitors to the Gatineau Park and other local features are significantly increasing traffic, especially on weekends and holidays.
- Chelsea is attracting local artisans.
- There is increased pressure on the environment because of the rapid growth and increased number of visitors.
- The new business paradigm of the information-based economy makes connectivity critically important and has facilitated greater possibilities for flexible hours and working at home.
- Downloading from higher levels of governments has put increased financial pressure on the Municipality as it struggles to maintain basic infrastructure and to continue offering quality social services.
- The political situation, and most specifically the relationship of Quebec with the rest of Canada, continues to evolve, creating various uncertainties and tensions.
- There has been a noted decline in local farming.
- Rising costs in the region and a related higher cost of living, especially in housing, is slowly changing the socio-economic demographics in Chelsea.
- The search for meaningful, personal spirituality and connection to others is increasing.

Findings – Themes Revisited and Confirmed

In this section of the report, we move from the initial themes and elements that had been identified to what you told us in the more recent round of consultations that took place primarily in the latter half of 2005. It is worth repeating here that this latest round of consultations had specific objectives (approved by the Chelsea Foundation and the Municipality) and was designed and facilitated using accredited professional facilitators, volunteers who are deeply committed to the mission and goals of the Chelsea Foundation.

After careful review and consideration of all the input gathered, we see that the recent consultations can be summarized around six main themes. These are very similar to the initial five themes but with some important differences or additions. For example, the support for a bilingual theme emerged from the consultation process.

The themes summarized below form a simple statement of what the community is looking for and how it wants itself to be reflected in the future. They provide a strong value statement and can be understood as resting on the bedrock from which our community is built.

Compared to the initial themes, the following themes were not strongly endorsed in the consultation process: a hi-tech, connected community, a centre of learning, and the notion that everything can have a leadership component. However, these themes did appear in many comments and discussions either directly or indirectly, and therefore they remain here.

In summary, after considering all your input throughout the consultation process, the Chelsea Foundation board suggests that the six updated themes listed below guide any further planning for the project:

Gathering Place (Recreational & Cultural) – “The Hub”

A large majority of people consulted felt that the lack of a central gathering place is a significant limitation to the feeling of community in Chelsea. As some said, there is no “there” in Chelsea. The location of the proposed centre, in the middle of the Chelsea triangle – a common area that connects the two Chelseas, with paths flowing in from multiple directions – is very appealing to you.

There have been equal requests for both recreational and cultural activities. While people like the idea of having both in the same location, they also see the need for careful and creative design with multiple spaces to pursue recreational and cultural activities independently. Many people speak of growing up where there were community centres, and being able to spend the whole day there, with multiple activities available.

One of the most resonant phrases captured and repeatedly used in the consultation was the desire that Chelsea remain a *compassionate community*.

There is a strong interest in the concept of a meaningful, purpose-built, gathering place; an intentionally-inclusive centre with infrastructure and programs that encourage volunteerism and provide services with equal accessibility to privileged and less privileged. One of the most resonant phrases in the consultation was building a compassionate community.

Inter-generational and Bilingual

We heard a call to de-regiment and de-segment the age structuring that has slipped into our community. Seniors, for instance, don’t want to be relegated to a separate seniors’ club. They want to be part of the activities just like anyone else. There have been many comments about the importance of children and grandparents (from whatever blended family) interacting. This interaction seems to provide something very important to each age group. The critical need to provide healthy social interaction and play opportunities for youth without relegating them to a segregated youth “ghetto” was emphasized.

We heard a strong commitment to bilingualism surfacing in this project and a deep commitment to mutual respect between the two founding languages. All communications in the centre would need to be in both languages. We see the possibility of francophone programs that protect threatened aspects of Quebec culture as representing an objective worth pursuing. From another perspective, we also see anglophones finding in

this a cultural venue through which they can deepen their bilingualism and reinforce their sense of belonging in Quebec. We see a desire to move freely and creatively between these two cultures and languages.

Local Economic Viability

There were different viewpoints expressed here. One concern was the cost of the project and the potential impact on the taxpayer. Individuals or couples with fixed incomes wondered about the potential impact on their property tax. Many families with young children were less concerned with tax impact and more interested in the potential value of a new centre to their families. While some saw costs, others saw economic opportunity for Chelsea and assumed that the centre would be largely self-supporting with cost-recovery elements that need not put pressure on the municipal budget.

Some saw potential savings in terms of driving time and gas as they get children through the “taxi years.” For them, the value of the project was diversity of service, the potential linkages to the local economy and local jobs, the ability to live, work and play in their community. They have a vision of citizens living and working in Chelsea, particularly as the wireless world emerges. They want to encourage people to remain in Chelsea, make it desirable for teens to grow up and eventually start their own families here, and provide the essential commercial services of a local economy so that the perpetual “going into town” can simply mean a bicycle ride, a walk on one of our trails, or crossing the Community Centre Park.

Environmental Leadership – High Environmental Standard

Within the community, inspired individuals and groups have been visualizing and promoting environmental stewardship. There is real pride in Chelsea’s leadership in the environmental sector and desire to take an even bigger step forward. This environmental activism partially comes from ACRE and the groundbreaking work of the H₂O Chelsea project. It is also reflected in the Mayor’s recent work in developing environmental zones across this and other municipalities. Part of it also comes from the number of individuals who work for the NCC, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, direct environmental programs at local universities, or work as environmental consultants. Another component is the number of local families who have recently constructed leading-edge environmentally-friendly homes. The environmental commitment runs very deep in the Chelsea identity. We will channel a lot of that potential energy into this project if we ourselves maintain leading edge environmental goals.

Unique Chelsea Identity

As richly demonstrated in the comments collected during the consultations, there is a Chelsea identity – expressed in local arts, culture, craftsmanship, history, creativity, love of nature, outdoors, natural materials, the environment, individuality, small business, desire for community, and a totally classless willingness to connect with one another. The centre can help us express and further develop this unique identity.

High-tech, Connected Community

Some expressed this theme under the term “new business paradigm” that they described with phrases such as: information-based economy, a wired community, and a community-facilitated high-tech network. Others saw this from the perspective of Cinema Chelsea, using high-tech networks to download film festivals, and distribute Chelsea-made films to other wired communities. Still others saw the importance of linking Chelsea more effectively with other communities to speed up exchanges and learning.

Centre of Learning

The idea of a centre of learning is obviously more than the internet and computers. Many of you mentioned using the centre to encourage and support continuous learning of all kinds. Many of your comments and written responses clearly reflect this theme: learning French, computer skills and internet research; learning about plants through community gardening; improving your skills at skiing, hockey, curling and other sports; skills in pottery, cabinet making and carving.

Everything can have a leadership component

A connected centre of learning is consistent with the original theme that “*everything can have a leadership component.*” The project has already encouraged leaders to emerge from our community, and will continue to require courageous leadership and learning from the community as the project moves forward. In fact, the Chelsea Foundation considers the formulation, planning, design and building of this centre to be one of the greatest learning opportunities offered to the community. As stated during different consultation meetings, this project is not so much about building a community centre but more about building a community. All of this learning and community strengthening is expected to make future programming easier to organize and manage.



Findings – Elements Confirmed or Identified

During many of our consultations, we collected short phrases and images as people envisioned what they wanted their new centre to look like. On the following pages we structure findings using four categories: imagining the interior, imagining the exterior, imagining the events and programs, and imagining the physical elements. Where appropriate we have further organized input comments by atmosphere (mental images and the senses) and element (tangible physical pieces).

Imagining the Interior

Atmosphere

- A living space, tree in the middle
- Interior should reflect exterior – natural environment
- Lots of colour
- Agora
- Feels like home
- Versatile use of space; Chelsea artists featured
- Art on the walls
- Grand Hall and wings
- Simple and elegant
- Wide staircases, open-air, second-story deck
- Open areas
- Open spaces inside, see many points inside and outside the building – spots to sit
- Soft and flexible materials
- See and touch local craftsmanship
- Wood carvings
- Logs and twig art
- Duncan Marshall’s aerial views of Chelsea
- Intimate, but open
- Rounded walls, no edges
- Showcase for display of achievements within community
- Learning centre... a giant maze of learning themes

Light & Air

- Large windows and views
- Windows that open in every room
- Light and airy
- Solarium, green space, lighting defines spaces
- All natural, no fluorescent, all lights on dimmers
- Stained glass
- Open, integrating the surrounding landscape, bring the lights and sounds inside

Sound

- Calm, laughter
- Great sound system
- Interior water

People

- Multi-generational space
- While children do their activities, parents can do their activities, too
- Inclusion of First Peoples
- Chelsea residents coming and going doing things of interest
- Somewhere that all groups meet – soccer, X-country skiing, guides, scouts, etc.

Building Materials

- Wood, pine, stone, brick, warm and natural materials
- Healthy construction and environmentally-sensitive
- Post and beam construction

Imagining The Exterior

The Building from the Outside

- Tall buildings, 2-3 floors, nestled among trees
- Earth tones, natural materials, curves, lots of wood
- Wood exterior, but low in maintenance
- Windows big enough for lots of natural light
- Climbing a meandering path toward it
- Wood with lots of glass, stone and granite
- Lots of beams and windows; no stairs; ramps
- Kids in the playground and background strolling, laughing
- Three buildings on a quad area – two are for sports and one is Community Centre
- No cement blocks; beams and aboriginal design, wide and low
- I want to see nature first, and then a building
- Stone, wood exterior with large windows and multi-level decks
- Grass around it, see all the fields, wood shingles, wild garden
- Shaded park benches for reading, watching
- Leading edge “green” building

Outdoor Attractions

- Outdoor fire pit
- Bandstand, outdoor movie house, concerts under stars, festival plaza
- Path from school to the centre
- Bicycle paths, well-lit pathways and trails
- Big stone with names of local heroes
- A real hitching post for horses
- The pond as a natural park site with picnic sites
- Patio area; a secluded courtyard or area that could be used for private functions and musical events
- Natural elements – water, rocks, trees – not paved
- Community gardens, garden path, butterfly and bird gardens
- Tiered, paths connecting to neighbourhoods
- Parking is screened by bushes
- Wetland interpretation tablets
- Trees, amphitheatre, benches, fountain, ruins, sculptures
- Sloped terraces, deck with tables
- Boardwalk through wetlands with interpretation, water, paths, wildflowers

Outdoor Recreation

- Speed skating club
- Curling
- X-country ski centre and interconnecting trails (bridge or something across Scott Road)
- A cabin for X-country skiers from Chelsea Nordiq to meet in the village close to practice locations
- Kids’ skate park, rope courses, designed and built by youth
- Playground, children’s play structure, beach volleyball, outdoor basketball court
- Trail networks, hike and ski
- Labelled paths to different areas
- Small model flying club
- Soccer fields, multi-purpose recreational fields
- Outdoor swimming pool
- Bowles court, pétanque

Imagining The Events and Programs

Music, Drama, Cinema, Dance

- Rock, jazz concerts, Bluesfest
- Youth “battle of the bands”
- Outside summer series concerts and theatre, Chelsea Days
- Dances – teen, adult and children
- Movie theatre with special showings, documentaries, movie night, etc.

Learning

- Storytelling
- Learning about sustainable building features
- Multi-media centre
- Yoga, pilates, Tai chi
- Chelsea Toy Library site
- Meeting artists, co-op studios
- Local businesses offering workshops
- Nature and sustainable development courses
- Self-improvement workshops
- Leading chefs give culinary classes
- Classes of all kinds – babysitting, guitar, leadership, stress management, etc.

Sports

- Tournaments
- X-country ski fest
- Soccer tournaments
- Curling
- Speed and figure skating
- Beach volleyball
- Basketball
- Rugby
- Pétanque
- Horseshoes
- Ultimate
- Kite flying
- School sports
- Skateboarding
- Jogging

Community

- Community BBQ
- Public meetings
- School plays
- Winter carnival
- Annual awards and festivals
- Field days (like Rendez-Vous)
- Health events
- Virtual linking to other communities
- Craft shows, farmers’ market, a fair
- Fashion show
- Weddings
- Environmental rallies
- Community sharing event
- Police and fire training and preparation

Imagining The Physical elements

Multi-Purpose Hall – A large room or Grand Hall for various types of activities, meetings, play area, concert, theatre, performance facility, music and drama, without fixed seats but a stage.

Gymnasium – volleyball court, gym with fitness training, yoga, aerobics, dance studio, change rooms with lockers and showers, storage for uniforms, coaching manuals, equipment storage room

Fitness Centre – multi-purpose training room, conditioning and nautilus room

Swimming Pool – some people suggested an indoor pool and others an outdoor pool

Multi-Function Rooms – multi-functional, multi-use space (conference and meeting rooms, meeting space, serving artists and community groups, etc.), and dedicated rooms (workshop for the arts, sacred space or corner, space for potter's kiln, space for Newly New, etc.)

Café – for après whatever, clubhouse café, coffee shop - bistro atmosphere

Kitchen – goes with multi-purpose hall

Clubhouse and Storage Space – basement, or could go with multi-functional rooms and gym, or possible separate clubhouse for soccer, cross-country skiing, and other outdoor activities, and/or clubhouse used by youth

Youth Centre – youth enterprises, e.g. coffee shop, childcare, odd jobs, drop-in centre (have to be careful about labelling it), dedicated space or multi-use, integrated with sound studio, located in the main building

Seniors' Club – a separate seniors' club was not seen as a desired element by seniors since it implies segregation of our most respected and wise citizens

Fireplace – après ski, cozy reading room, big hearth, woodstove

Welcome Area – a main entrance showcase and display showing off Chelsea's history and natural beauty, an exposition area for kids' art, our geography, culture and economy, an entrance that sets the tone for visitors and tourists

Sports Bar – with access to an open-air deck and view of the playing fields

Bird's Eye View – “what a view!” – second-story deck overlooking the sports fields and accessible from the bar/café or snack area

Greenhouse – integrated in the main building and part of the integrated environmental leadership theme

Pre-School Accommodation – intergenerational focus

Sound Studio – integrated with community and youth radio, Chelsea Films, etc.

Internet Café/Business Centre

Exposition Corner – for artists

Meditation Centre/Sacred Space

Technician Workshops – for artists, cyclists, skiers, snowboarders

Location for the “Nearly New” – they desperately need it!

Key Preliminary Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations

Based on extensive consultations, numerous discussions, and the element teams that have emerged, the Chelsea Foundation board, along with the Municipality, suggest the following preliminary recommendations. The board understands that these recommendations may change depending on additional direction, leadership and involvement from the community in the months to come.

1. **Multi-Purpose Community Hall** – A large room or Grand Hall able to hold several hundred people and designed to host a variety of gatherings and performances. It should have a permanent or retractable performing stage for artistic events, conferences, press meetings, etc. Note that we are not recommending a dedicated theatre with tiers of fixed seats. A dedicated theatre is not within the present objectives of the Chelsea Foundation.
2. **Activity & Meeting Rooms** – Smaller rooms, both multi-purpose and dedicated, able to support a wide variety of recreation and cultural activities, with construction allowing versatility and many options.
3. **Facility for Youth** – A purpose-made space that caters to the unique needs of our 13 to 19-year-old youth, and a variety of facilities and programs that can engage their enthusiastic involvement.
4. **Kitchen** – A fully-equipped kitchen to cater to various needs of the large and small groups using the centre.
5. **Commercial Food Service Outlet** – A privately-run café and/or health bar to provide basic refreshments on a cost-recovery basis. Could include a sports bar as income generator. This element requires further thought and development. The board will encourage direct private sector involvement in developing this element.
6. **Gymnasium and Fitness** – A well-equipped gymnasium that can support team sports, plus facilities to support individual fitness and healthy lifestyle programs.
7. **Outdoor Ice Surface** – An outdoor ice rink with roof that doubles as a musical festival site and farmers' market in summer. Possibly used as a heat source for the centre in winter using green technology. The consensus around this element as a priority is very strong. Not surprisingly, the element has a solid leadership team with a well-developed proposal. We recommend that this element be developed as soon as possible.
8. **Focal Point for Emergency Situations** – We recommend that the centre be integrated into an overall emergency response plan for Chelsea. This would include a dedicated and sufficiently-equipped collection point that can provide planned response to a number of possible emergency situations.
9. **Separate Outdoor Recreation Building** – Related to the use and maintenance of the existing soccer fields, and the planned outdoor ice surface; also as a space for soccer, cross-country skiers and ice skaters. We recommend that a separate building be constructed prior to the main centre. Details are presently being planned together with the Municipal council and Mayor.
10. **Lookout or Vantage Point** – We want to take advantage of the view offered by the property. Several options are available and should be integrated into the design of the building. One possibility is an outdoor, second-story deck.
11. **Pre-School** – Purpose-built, top-quality space for our youngsters is in short supply in Chelsea. This may be a good way to utilize general-purpose space within the centre during the day. It also offers possibilities of intergenerational meeting, early connection to the Community Centre, and a reliable cost-recovery component. The board is open to this concept and will encourage formation of an active leadership team to turn this proposed element into a reality in short order.

12. **Greenhouse** – We believe this should be incorporated into the overall green design of the centre. However, there has been little thought given to the possible dimensions, economics, sustainability and utility. A leadership team is required to move this element forward.
13. **Indoor Swimming Pool** – We don't believe this is an economically viable element at this point. A swimming pool does not match the immediate objectives of the Foundation. We do not recommend this proposed element as part of the future Community Centre.
14. **Seniors' Club** – We do not recommend developing the seniors' club as a separate element since it implies segregation of our most respected and wisest citizens.

Conclusions

This project's success depends first on *broad community support*. Your response and affirmation of the initial themes suggest that we are on track in earning that support. However, the project's success also depends on *affordability*. Given this expressed concern, the Foundation recognizes two possible scenarios: 1) designing and constructing one single structure, or 2) designing and constructing component structures in stages as the funding is confirmed.

Aligning our priorities with what we can afford is a main task in the next two phases of the project. For example, your interest in environmental leadership could increase the capital cost of the project. However, if we set a high environmental standard, we may well be able to tap into grants and raise sufficient capital *because* of our commitment to this theme. Also, our environmental leadership team advises us that we do have high-tech, medium-tech and low-tech options, and that often the low-tech options deliver the greatest gains. Irrespective of the capital costs and capital funding available, our commitment to environmental leadership, as expressed in the environmental theme of this project, should lower the ongoing operating expenses of the project.

The community consultation has shown widespread support within Chelsea with regard to a number of themes and elements for this project. There is a clear consensus on what the community wants. Multiple consultations have produced very similar messages – all reflecting fairly closely the intuition expressed in the early conceptualization of this project that goes back many years. The community endorses the process we're following, although we need to show visible progress in the short term, while building toward the ultimate goal. The one major concern about the project is *financial* – particularly the yearly operating exposure. The community wants us to approach the Community Centre as a cost-recovery business. Also, the community wants to better understand how this project fits with the Municipality's long-term financial plan.