

King breaks ground on Township-Wide Recreation Centre

By Mark PavilonsEditor

Friday was a historic day in King as three levels of government came together to celebrate the Township's newest project. King councillors, government representatives and members of Seneca College put shovels in the ground, marking the official launch of the Township-Wide Recreation Centre. Scheduled to open in 2024, the centre will feature 124,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor facilities and is being constructed on 25 acres at the southeast corner of Seneca's King Campus. It's all made possible with funding support from the federal and provincial governments, Seneca and local developers. A proponent of active lifestyles, King Mayor Steve Pelligrini said this uniquely collaborative effort will result in a state-of-the-art facility for all to enjoy. "Being physically active provides numerous health benefits along with the social, environmental and economic benefits to the entire community," he said. "This is truly a collaborative project, with the three levels of government, academia, local developers and the community participating." Francesco Sorbara, MP for Vaughan-Woodbridge (on behalf of the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities), said infrastructure such as this is crucial to building our future. The federal government is pleased to be part of it, and contributed \$21.1 million to the facility's construction. Investments like this support growth and when government invests in infrastructure, it creates stronger neighbourhoods for everyone. "Today's groundbreaking marks the beginning of construction for a project which will brighten the lives of so many people in our community. The Township-Wide Recreation Centre will be a hub where community members can come together and stay active. Investments in recreation infrastructure spur economic growth, foster inclusivity, and create good middle-class jobs for Canadians," he said. King-Vaughan MPP Stephen Lecce said this is the single largest investment made in King by government, adding the Province pitched in \$17.6 million. The rec. centre will be a physical legacy for all families. And it's a monumental investment in helping to create healthy lifestyles. The TWC will set the "gold standard" of facilities which will serve King's projected population of 35,000 in years to come. "Today is a monumental day for King families as we get shovels in the ground to build the state-of-the-art Township-Wide Recreation Centre -- a project I have worked on personally with the Mayor to make this community stronger. I made a commitment to King families that I would fight for them and get the job done. First, our government delivered \$18 million to build this state-of-the-art recreation centre. Now, we are breaking ground and getting it done for the families that live here and those that will soon call it home. This investment could only be achieved by working together with all levels of government. I worked with Mayor Pellegrini on this for the last few years, never losing sight about how critical this investment is to the physical and mental health of our children, families and seniors." Seneca President David Agnew said it's fitting this project came together last year, as 2021 marked Seneca's 50th anniversary in King. Seneca does have many wellness related programs so the facility will complement the school's programming. The TWC will be "a terrific community resource," he said. "Seneca is delighted to contribute the land for this important community asset on our King Campus. This project continues tradition of partnership between Seneca and the King community that is now more than 50 years long, and adds to the unique appeal of King Campus as a health and wellness destination for students and residents." The Township of King is providing over \$20 million, mostly through development charges, with another \$16 million contributed by developers as community benefits. Seneca and King have signed a 99-year lease agreement for the land at a cost of \$1 per year. "The new centre will provide residents in King and our surrounding communities with access to modern and reliable recreational infrastructure where they can enjoy sports, maintain healthy lifestyles and take part in recreational programs and services for years to come," Mayor Pellegrini added. In late 2019 and early 2020, King met with residents from across the Township to get their input into the features of the new centre. As a result of the feedback, and due to the funding received, a larger pool and second ice pad were included in the project plan. The centre will also feature a multi-use field house with access to future amenities that could include baseball and soccer fields. With the Township's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the project is exploring energy-efficient measures, such as natural ventilation, reclaiming waste heat from the refrigeration system and an open-loop geothermal heat exchange.