

Fenlands Future Engagement Report

Banff Fenlands Recreation Centre Renovation

Date
October 07, 2025

curiosity applied
hcma.ca

Background

Rooted in the feedback gathered through the Fenlands Future engagement process, the vision is to transform the facility from a primarily ice-focused building into a multi-use centre that supports wellness, creativity, connection, and recreation for all.

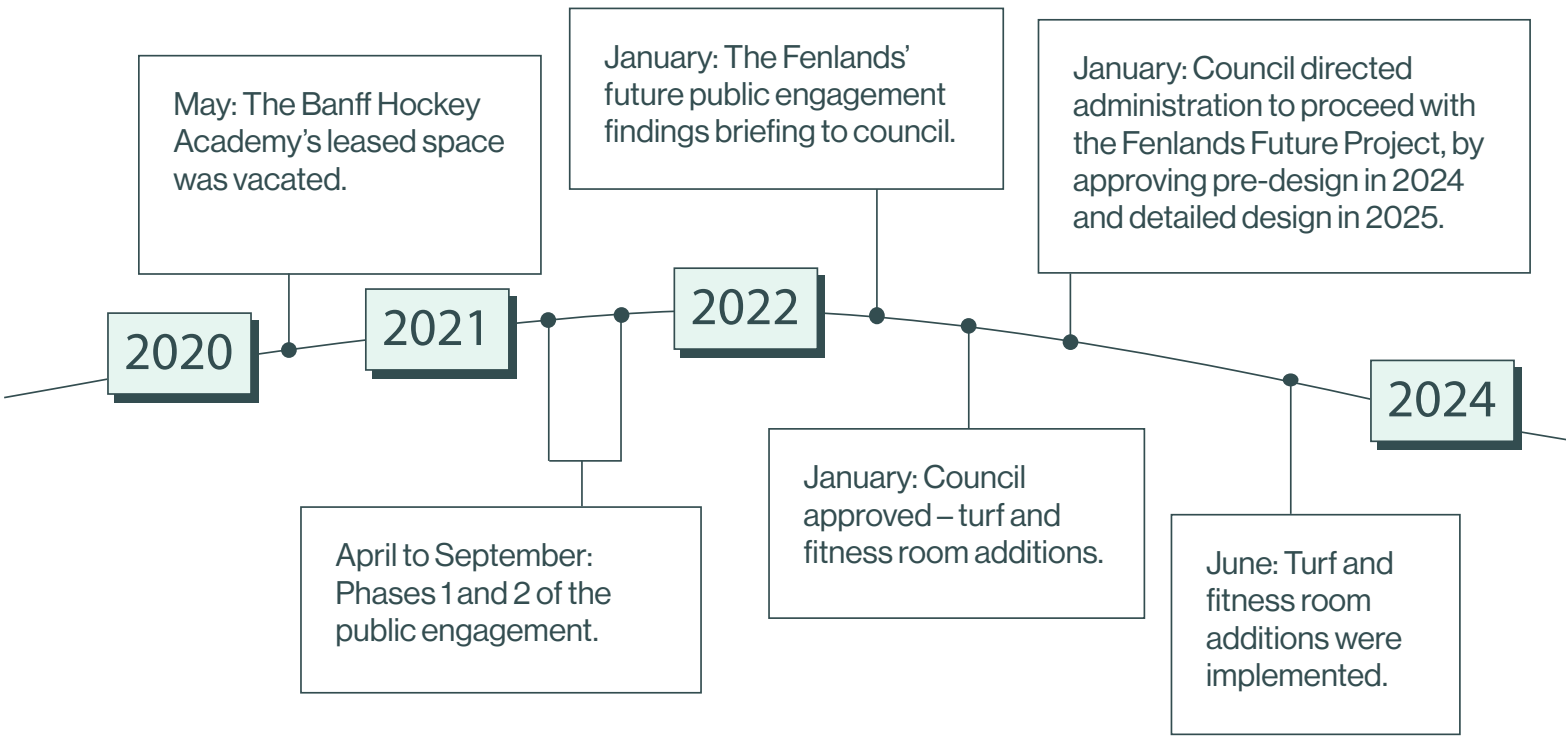
In 2020, the Banff Hockey Academy's leased space was vacated, and in 2021, the public engagement process began to identify potential future recreational amenities in underutilized spaces, excluding the rinks. The proposed design focuses on maximizing the use of the existing footprint while unlocking new program potential, improving inclusivity, and enhancing user experience.

Participants indicated a number of priorities that have led the design, and that at the heart of decision-making for future activities, the Fenlands should be community centred. Since the beginning, the four guiding principles of **Inclusivity, Accessibility, Affordability,** and **Sustainability** have been foundational to the development of the proposed design.

Earlier this year, the Town shared designs through focus-group meetings and a well-attended open house for the facility improvements and new amenities that the community had previously identified as high priorities in the 2021-2022 engagement process. The feedback was supportive of the project, with design changes proposed for the reconfigured team room concept.

In October 2025, we returned to the public, sharing how we responded to their feedback. The design has been updated to balance flexibility, inclusivity, and function for a wide range of uses. This report shares how the community's valuable input had impacted the design, and the results of the latest open house and survey conducted.

Timeline





March 2025 Open House



October 2025 Open House

2025

August: Administration began working with the architectural firm hcma, to develop drawings that support the facility improvements and new amenities identified by the community as high priorities during the 2021 engagement process.

February & March: Phase 3 Public engagement focus groups and open house.

March to August: Design updated from community feedback.

May: Focus group feedback on updated designs.

August: Fenlands future briefing & design summary.

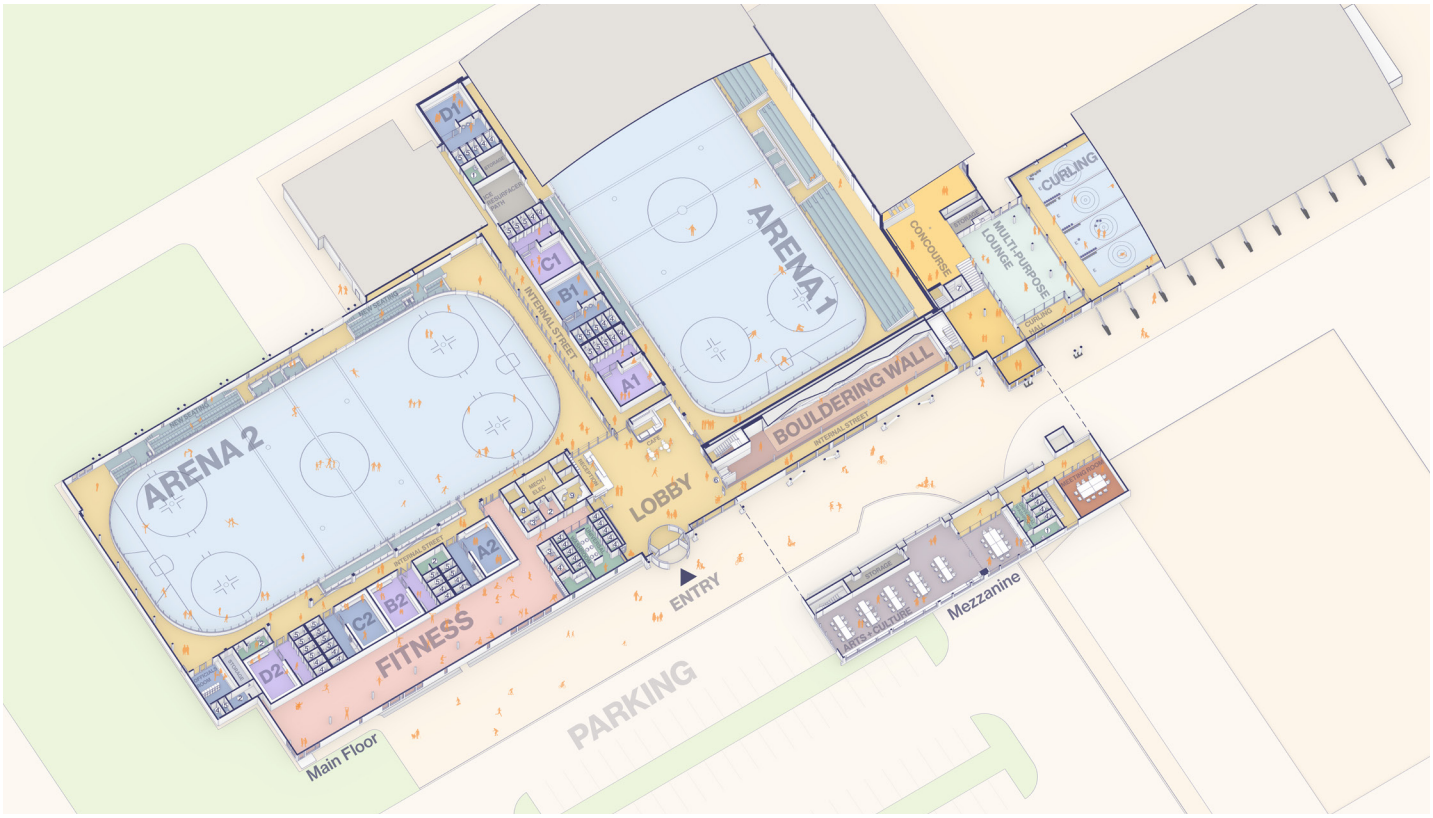
September: Open house sharing design updates.

December: Final designs and costing options presented to council for decision.

Engagement Response

	What we heard	How we responded
Lobby	• People appreciate the welcoming atmosphere, open sightlines to arenas, and intuitive navigation. • Many requested more convenient food options beyond the concourse-level concession.	• A compact café, an offshoot of the concession café on the concourse level, has been added to the main lobby, enhancing the social Heart and offering a gathering point with a view into Arena 1
Universal Washrooms	• Strong support for fully accessible washrooms, including the need for a hoist and adult change table. • Questions about safety and inclusivity were also raised. • Request for an ablution station in a universal washroom adjacent multi-purpose rooms.	• Universal washrooms will be available across levels, with features like accessible stalls, ablution stations, and adult change amenities. • Confirmed that design aligns with RHFAC best practices. • Ablution station provided on mezzanine level
Arts, Culture + Meeting Spaces	• Strong support for the introduction of these spaces, especially their flexibility.	• These zones remain consistent with the initial concept, as they already met most community expectations. • Adjustments were made to support AV, IT, and storage needs to support
Fitness + Multi-purpose Lounge	• The community was excited about these additions, particularly the opportunity for accessible, affordable fitness and climbing • Feedback included requests for added storage, flexible space for group activities, and curiosity about how the bouldering wall would function.	• The fitness has been reconfigured and further expanded. • Bouldering design now includes preparation space, benches, and cubbies to support users of all ages. • The multi-purpose lounge now features enhanced storage along with a small kitchenette and fridge for use by the curling club and event groups.
Team Rooms	• Appreciation for the focus on providing more inclusive team rooms • Concern about shower stall capacity to handle busy changeover periods • Concern over inadvertent mixing of teams, different age groups and parents • Concern with extent of visibility into rooms - some valued transparency while others raised concerns about privacy. • Flexibility was desired in order to accomodate a wide range of users from Hockey teams and figure skaters to coaches, children and co-ed groups. • Preference was for the design to align with the Arena 1 team room layouts.	• 15 additional showers across the facility to meet peak demand. • Reconfigured team zones to maintain team environment, reduce overlap between user groups, and eliminate inadvertent mixing. • Extent of glass reduced and smart glass feature added to switch between transparent universal mode or opaque private mode. • Room configurations include both shared and private zones, providing adaptability and flexibility, for use as both a more traditional-style layout to more inclusive and open, to suit the evolving needs of the community.

Updated Design



3D floorplan of proposed design shown at the September open house



Lobby Café



Expanded Fitness Centre

Updated Team Zones







Rendering of Team Room when in “Private-Mode”



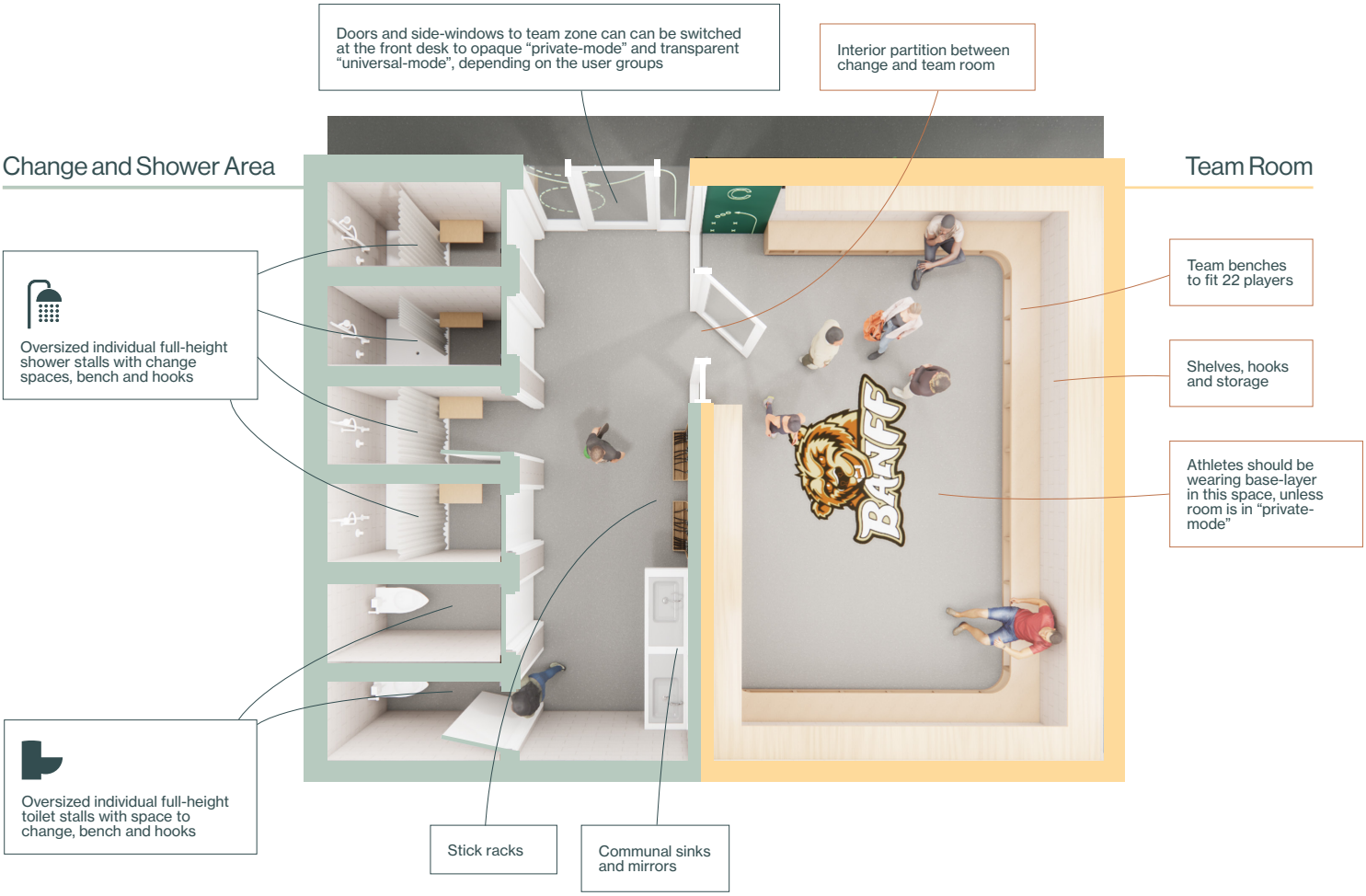




Rendering of Team Room when in “Universal-Mode”

By default, team zones operate in “universal-mode” with transparent exterior partitions that provide visibility into the space - a safety best practice for modern recreation facilities. This accommodates mixed-use activities and diverse user groups. Players and coaches should use the individual full-height changing stalls for privacy when changing clothes, and maintain appropriate base-layer coverage in the shared team room area. Teams can request to switch modes at the front desk if needed.

Controlled at the reception desk, adult teams can request “private-mode” where the exterior partitions become opaque for complete visual privacy from outside the team zone. While users are still encouraged to wear base layers in the shared team area, this mode allows greater flexibility for team activities and changing.



"Great adjustments to enhance flexibility while maintaining inclusivity!"

"Specifically with the team zones, it looks so much better & really gorgeous! The expanded fitness area is wonderful."

"I believe that the changes and feedback provided influenced positive changes to the plan."

Survey Results

On September 24th, 2025, and open house was held to share about the updates to the Fenlands Future design proposal. About 40 community members came to the open house, and 20 people completed a survey.

When asked about **how well we did at responding to the feedback**:

7	9	3	1	0
"Very Well"	"Well"	"Neutral"	"Poorly"	"Very Poorly"

Of the 20 who completed a survey:

20 people indicated they were current users of the facility in a diverse range of activities, some with particular affiliations such as: Banff Minor Hockey Association, +40 Hockey, Skating Club, +50 Fitness, soccer leagues, and Greenhouse Society and B.V. Food Alliance.

15 people indicated they were residents of Banff, otherwise residents of Canmore

14 people indicated they had previously participated in feedback about the Fenlands Future

How survey respondents use the facility:

Skating	Spectating	Hockey	Curling	Rummage Sale	Meetings	Yoga/Fitness	Certification Courses	Kids Activities	Hanging Out	Arts & Culture	Community events	Food & Beverage	Pickelball	Turf	Fitness Room	Sports Leagues	Sporting Events	Friday Prayer
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Summary of Feedback:
Community input from this round of engagement was very positive, with participants expressing strong support for how the updated design addresses concerns raised in earlier sessions. There is sustained enthusiasm for the expanded fitness centre, bouldering wall, and enhanced community spaces. The revised team room layout appears to have resolved previous concerns.

A few participants raised questions as to the overall cost and necessity of the project, reflecting continued affection for the existing Fenlands facility. Others offered suggestions for additional improvements, including additional storage, enhanced Arena 1 seating and expanded health programming.

Overall, the feedback provides confidence that the proposed updates moved in the right direction and remain well aligned with the community's priorities and long-term vision for Fenlands.

We are **hcma**. We believe human connections are the best path to solving the fundamental problems of our time.

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