

March 12, 2025

Cochrane Recreation Facility RFP

Questions & Answers

What is the purpose of the RFP?

In July 2024, Cochrane and Rocky View County jointly issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the management and operations of the Spray Lake Sawmills Centre (SLSC) and Cochrane Arena. The RFP represents a significant step towards ensuring these facilities continue to excel as vibrant hubs for community health, activity and well-being.

Why are new operating models being explored?

Due to significant growth in Cochrane, and our goal to continuously meet and exceed community expectations, it is crucial to reassess and potentially update operating and governance models. This proactive approach ensures our services are efficiently responsive and adaptable to the evolving needs of our residents. Now is the right time to evaluate the status quo and ensure that the operating and governance model continues to best serve our communities' needs.

Further, the need to start considering and planning additional recreation facilities is on the very near horizon for Cochrane. Prior to adding to Cochrane's existing recreation facilities, the RFP will explore new operating models that can support the current and future of recreation delivery in Cochrane.

What does the operation of the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena include?

Operational responsibilities for the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena encompass program management, staffing, customer service, financial oversight, marketing, ensuring health and safety standards, fostering community partnerships, and promoting environmental stewardship.

Who reviewed the RFP submissions?

A joint committee comprising members from both Cochrane and Rocky View County reviewed RFP submissions, following a set of predefined principles to ensure a fair and comprehensive evaluation process.

Will there be any changes to the services provided through the SLS Centre or Cochrane Arena during this process?

We intend to maintain continuity in all services offered through the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena during the RFP process. Any potential changes considered will aim to enhance service delivery and will be made with the community's needs and expectations in mind.

How will the community be informed of any changes?

Cochrane and Rocky View County are committed to a transparent process. Any changes to the current operating model following the outcome of the RFP process will be shared with the community, as well as all potentially impacted parties.

Are there considerations for the staff at the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena?

The SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena staff have demonstrated their commitment to ensuring high quality delivery of recreation services to our community. Staff will be actively informed and engaged throughout the process.

What is the current operating model?

The SLS Centre is a not-for-profit organization and a registered charity, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors made up of active citizens and stakeholders in the community. The Board Directors play a governance role in supporting the strategic vision of SLSRPS and its operating entities of SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena. As joint owners, Cochrane and Rocky View County are represented on the Board through Mayor Genung and Reeve Kissell.

What happens if a new operator is selected for the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena?

Following the existing lease and operating agreement, the Spray Lake Sawmills Centre Board will be provided with notice of any changes to the current operating structure.

How do the Town and the County support the operation of these facilities?

Financial support for the SLSC and Cochrane Arena is a shared responsibility, with the Town of Cochrane annually allocating approximately \$3 million, complemented by contributions from Rocky View County according to a cost-sharing agreement. This collaboration underscores a joint commitment to sustaining high-quality recreational services for our communities.

Is the Town of Cochrane considering operating the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena?

The RFP process provides the Town and the County with the opportunity to gather information on the various operating models available, ensuring that we can implement the model that best meets the needs of our evolving community.

As the operation of the SLS Centre and Cochrane Arena has long been facilitated through the current model, the Town of Cochrane does not currently have the in-house expertise to deliver this service for our community.

What is the history of the SLS Centre and the Cochrane Arena?

- 2001: A group of community volunteers, in partnership with the Town of Cochrane and Rocky View County, built a new hockey arena in Cochrane which is now known as Totem 1.
- 2004: The fieldhouse was added, which included an indoor turf, double gymnasium, Garmin sponsored 3-lane track, along with the UofC Gymnastics Centre and Fireside of Cochrane Fitness Centre.
- 2009: SLS Centre conducted its first major expansion, adding an additional two hockey arenas known as Totem 1 and Totem 2.
- 2017: Another expansion took place, adding a curling centre, aquatic centre, tenant spaces and fitness amenities.
- 2023: Brought a new name and brand for the Centre – Spray Lake Sawmills.