

## WHAT WE HEARD AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHITEMUD EQUINE CENTRE Riding Arena Replacement (Phase 1)

#### Public Involvement follow-up April 2015

In 2011, City Council recognized the importance of supporting the Whitemud Equine Learning Centre Association's (WELCA) vision to preserve and enhance the City of Edmonton facilities at the Whitemud Equine Centre. Due to funding realities and failing infrastructure, the plan was re-evaluated and a phased redevelopment approach was presented and approved by City Council in July 2014.

In November 2014, City Council and the WELCA Board approved a \$6.5 million redevelopment project to replace the riding arena, recognized as the most crucial infrastructure on site, in order to support the continuation of community equine experiences for the citizens of Edmonton.



The City is committed to involving Edmontonians in decision making; therefore, the general public and participants of the Whitemud Equine Centre in particular had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the design for the Riding Arena Replacement project. The City and WELCA hosted two open houses and comments were recorded through surveys and on comment boards.

Thank you to the 260 respondents who provided comments and opinions. The majority of the respondents (61%) support the overall Whitemud Equine Centre Riding Arena Replacement project, and an additional 39% support the Whitemud Equine Centre Riding Arena Replacement project with some suggestions.

#### PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE at the Whitemud Equine Centre

- FEBRUARY 16, 1:00 - 3:00 pm
- MARCH 5, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

#### ON-LINE SURVEY at Edmonton.ca

- FEBRUARY 18 - MARCH 16, 2015

## WHAT WE HEARD

There is great anticipation for the redevelopment of facilities on the Whitemud Equine Centre site. The Whitemud Equine Centre is a unique location in the heart of the city and ties together the urban and rural philosophies that are an integral part of Edmonton and its surrounding areas. Many comments expressed support for the Riding Arena Replacement project with the new arena being a great community asset.

## MOVING FORWARD ON THE RIDING ARENA REPLACEMENT PROJECT WITH STAKEHOLDER CONSIDERATIONS/INPUT

As we move forward in design, the replacement arena should meet the needs of the current and future participants. The facility must consider the requirements for riders and public and current programs should continue on site. We heard and are incorporating the following critical elements into the design of the replacement arena.

We heard that we need a building that is:

- warm and safe
- durable and structurally sound
- accessible to all participants
- incorporates natural light
- considers humidity levels and biosecurity
- coordinate traffic flow of people, livestock and equipment
- effective for ongoing operations

We heard that there is a desire for more space and features in the facility including:

- increasing the number of stalls
- office space and more space for programs
- increasing/moving spectators area
- space for first aid, blankets, staff, laundry
- option for food services
- increased lockers and storage
- environmental and sustainable elements
- addition of exterior program space

The Riding Arena Replacement project will continue to be guided by the budget approved by City Council and the project scope agreed to by the City and WELCA. As we continue through design, these stakeholder considerations/input will be evaluated and prioritized in consideration of budget, functionality, maintenance, operations and design requirements.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SCOPE OF THE APPROVED WHITEMUD EQUINE CENTRE RIDING ARENA REPLACEMENT PROJECT?

The goal of this project is to replace the critical infrastructure that has reached the end of its life cycle. The cost to repair the current arena is extensive; therefore, the facility will be demolished in late 2016. In order to continue programming at WELCA, City Council passed a motion in July 2014 to support a project budget of \$6.5 million to replace the most crucial program spaces. Within this budget, the approved scope includes:

- One (1) riding arena
- Horse and grooming stalls
- Indoor washrooms
- Classroom space
- Administration space
- Demolition of the old arena and reclamation of the land

The priority for the City of Edmonton and WELCA is to ensure that there is a safe riding arena that is comparable to the existing arena in order to provide programs that benefit the community at large. WELCA desired that the proposed riding arena be larger than the current one so that they could provide increased programming.

### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT COSTS FOR A PUBLIC FACILITY?

The cost for public facilities is often compared to private projects. Public facilities typically have long life expectancy requirements needed to ensure high quality and durable systems and components. A public project needs to consider code and statutory requirements for institutional buildings, follow provincial requirements for contractors and adhere to City of Edmonton policies. Finally, a river valley project requires environmental assessments and reports adhering to the North Saskatchewan River Valley System Area Redevelopment Plan (Bylaw 7188). Therefore increased durability, quality and complexity in construction are essential, which in turn leads to greater costs of construction.

## HOW WAS THE DESIGN AND LOCATION CHOSEN FOR THE RIDING ARENA REPLACEMENT?

The location was selected after examining a number of characteristics including:

- Proximity to existing buildings that maintain functional ties to the new facility (e.g.; hay shed, garage, and stables).
- Re-use of the existing parking lot, which minimizes site development and is cost effective.
- The selected location is not affected by surface drainage from the slope to the east, whereas other locations considered were.
- The selected location is not land-locked and offers flexibility for future expansion.

Given the scope and budget for the Riding Arena Replacement project, Dub Architects developed a design that considered:

- Emphasis on separation of public and private spaces and circulation routes to arrive at a layout that satisfies the operational and functional requirements of the new facility.
- Traditional agrarian and equestrian buildings often exhibit a simple approach to the exterior design, with an emphasis on utility, low maintenance materials, and a lack of decoration. The current design continues in this tradition, using contemporary building techniques.
- The setting of the site is unique for being both pastoral and urban. The current design reflects this unique balance.
- The construction materials (consistent with economical agrarian buildings) will be accented with wood and natural colours to provide a softened and welcoming experience.

## HOW WILL CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIDING ARENA REPLACEMENT IMPACT THE REST OF THE SITE?

As we move into construction, the impact on the programs to the rest of the site will be coordinated and considered. The safety of the participants, animals and operators continues to be a high priority for everyone affiliated with the project.

## MOVING FORWARD ON FUTURE PHASES

The Riding Arena Replacement project (Phase 1) does not include other facilities on site, exterior programming space or the ongoing operations of WELCA.

The Whitemud Equine Learning Centre Association will enter into a new lease with the City of Edmonton and will continue to be responsible for the operations of the entire site.

As this project needs to move forward due to critical timelines, this opportunity will provide a great starting point for long term planning of future developments on the site. We encourage WELCA to work toward a master plan that will guide future opportunities and requirements.