

Feb 7, 2019



Indo-Canadian Community Centre

A Proposal for the 'Community Centre' for the information and approval of the ICCC Members

The key objective of ICCC — 'Community Centre' (A common meeting place for all Indo-Canadian community)

The 'Community Centre' Saga (a historical perspective)

The Indo-Canadian Community Centre, a non-profit Ontario corporation incorporated in 1977, started primarily to launch a community gathering place for the Indo-Canadian community in Ottawa. This facility, the 'Indo-Canadian Community Centre,' served as the '**hub**' of the Indo-Canadian community until 2006, when the building was sold.

Since then, several unsuccessful attempts have been made to acquire/build another community centre. 'Funding' has been the key bottleneck. The Boards have constantly grappled with the challenges inherent in putting together a facility—the '**community hub**'—appropriate for the ever-growing and varied Indo-Canadian community.

Breaking News... ICCC now has a solution in sight. Read on...

First, a new Vision for the 'Community Hub'

In January 2017, the ICCC Board pondered the '**community hub**' aspect of the 'Community Centre' in a broader perspective and decided to think big, i.e. it **visualized a much bigger scope** for gathering the large Indo-Canadian community in multiple ways.

First, the Board put forth a **new VISION for the ICCC**, i.e.

ICCC Vision

**"A United Indo-Canadian Community
Thriving in the Canadian Mainstream."**

Strategy and the Game Plan

Then, the Board expanded the scope of the '**community hub**' four-fold:

- 1) **A Virtual Hub** (*an online Community Portal—<https://icccottawa.org>*) – The Virtual Hub is essentially in place already. As the Indo-Canadian community at large cooperates and participates in contributing information and using it, the Virtual Hub is envisioned to grow into the one-stop online source of information on Indo-Canadian community events, news, views, etc.
- 2) **Three Physical Hubs** (Search is on for suitable venues and options):
 - a. **Community Centre** (A place for gathering the community to hold functions, meetings, and social activities),
 - b. **Spiritual Hub** (Meditation and Peace Garden for activities such as Yoga and Meditation sessions, teaching of Ayurveda and Wellness practices, Spiritual discourses, etc.), and
 - c. **Sports Hub** (sports facilities for the community youth and others).

Challenge

The Indo-Canadian community has grown big. Each physical hub is envisioned to be a multi-million-dollar facility, requiring hundreds of thousand dollars for the annual operating budget. Given ICCC's meagre financial resources, each physical hub would require raising large amounts of funds from the community. Fund-raising has always been a marathon task with enormous challenges.

Solution—A classic exercise in 'Buy vs Rent' analysis

The current ICCC Board pondered the two huge challenges, i.e.

- i) raising millions of dollars to acquire and set up facilities for each of the hubs, and
- ii) generating ongoing revenue to provide for the operating funds for each facility.

Presently, ICCC Board has decided to give priority only to the 'Community Centre' and considered the 'Buy vs Rent' options, as outlined in the table below.

‘Buy vs Rent Analysis for a property for the ‘Community Centre’ Facility

Buy/Own a Community Centre Facility	Rent a Community Centre Facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options considered: Buy an existing facility or buy a land and build – ICCC presented a 4 to 6-year plan at the SGM in 2018 for this. • Investment-heavy: Upfront investment of millions of dollars plus ongoing development costs. • High operating costs: Substantial operating budget required – will need to generate substantial revenue from operations. • Human resource facility management infrastructure: Need to create a substantial human resource infrastructure to manage the facilities – cannot rely on volunteer resources; need to hire staff -- an expensive proposition. • Flexibility to scale up? When we own a facility, we’d have very little flexibility to scale up to meet the growing demands of the community, i.e. as the community grows and diversifies, its needs inevitably change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start small and diversify and grow as required: Start with a smaller facility; rent when you need it, and scale up on as needed basis. • Very small investments required: Shell out funds to spruce up the rental facility and equip it to be functional – <i>This is within reach for ICCC.</i> • Low Operating cost: Rental + utilities – Start with a manageable operating budget; gradually scale up as the entire community embraces the cost-sharing model. • Resources to manage the facility: Mostly volunteer resources could manage the rental facility(ies) before staff needs to be hired. • Flexibility: The rental option would allow enormous flexibility to scale up or down, or even change as the community needs change.

CONCLUSION

The above analysis clearly indicates that the ‘buy/own’ option is i) beyond the reach of ICCC, ii) not conducive to ICCC’s financial constraints, and iii) not feasible for a volunteer-based non-profit organization.

So, the ICCC Board has come to two conclusions for the Community Centre:

1. ‘Renting’ is the way to go; and
2. ICCC would do best to start with a small facility, test waters with the community, and expand/grow/diversify as needs of the community dictate.

A brief proposal follows for the consideration of the Membership of ICCC.

Proposal for Approval of the ICCC Membership

To rent a relatively small facility for the Community Centre

Executive Summary: Your ICCC Board has found a 1600 SqFt ‘meeting facility’ with a meeting room, an office and a kitchen. The meeting room has the capacity to seat 80-100 persons. There is also a 150 Sq. Ft ‘store room’ available nearby. *[The particulars of the facility and the value proposition are detailed below.]*

The proposed facility is in the former Rideau High School located at 815 St. Laurent Blvd in Ottawa. This school was closed in 2017. The Govt. of Ontario is supporting expansion of Community Hubs in closed down schools across the Province. The Rideau High School building is being converted into a ‘Rideau Community Hub’ — a joint project by Rideau-Rockcliffe Community Centre & Odawa Native Friendship Centre.

Information about the Ontario’s ‘Community Hubs’ initiative: is available on this website: <https://www.crcrr.org/en/contact-us/our-blog/139-rideau-high-hub-receives-funding-from-the-government-of-ontario>.

The ‘Rideau Community Hub’ envisages accommodating over 30 varied community organizations. There are many rooms available in the school complex, but **this 1,600 SqFt space is the only facility available with a kitchen**. This space is in a secluded area with a direct access from the parking lot. It is close to a building entrance and is **wheel-chair accessible** from the main floor. The school complex also has several 100 to 800-seat (full-fledged auditorium) meeting rooms available, which the tenants may rent at preferential rates. Those rooms will be the additional facilities available to us **on an as needed basis**.

ICCC will need to spruce up the 1600 SQ Ft facility to make it look attractive and equip it with appliances, furniture, and other gear **to create a first-class facility** for the community events, meetings, and gatherings.

ICCC is proposing that we lease this 1,600 SqFt space and set it up as the Indo-Canadian Community Centre – the ‘community hub’ for the entire Indo-Canadian community. This meeting place along with the other spaces available to rent will meet the various requirements of the community.

Value Proposition of the proposed facility

Survey of the Community Requirements

During the summer of 2017, the ICCC Board conducted a survey of the needs of the community for a community centre. 100+ respondents of the survey stated the varied requirements of the community.

Pondering the requirements of community, **the Board has reasoned out that the core 1,600 Sq Ft facility at the Rideau Community Hub is a great start for the launch of the much-awaited Indo-Canadian Community Centre.**

Here are the salient features and benefits:

1. **The core facility [1,600 Sq Ft space to rent]:**

- a. **This will be a great start for the Indo-Canadian Community Centre:** This 80 to 100-seat meeting facility with an adjacent kitchen and an office will be adequate for many of the community gatherings to hold functions and meetings.

Additional rooms as needed: When the community needs space for larger meetings and events, several other rooms (100 to 800-seat capacity) are available within the complex to rent on an as needed basis (*see further details below*).

Thus, the core facility and the adjunct facilities (available to rent on an as needed basis) will comfortably meet ICCC's 'Community Centre' objectives without a substantial upfront investment or ongoing huge operating expense.

- b. **A community meeting room available for 365 days in a year:** Yes, the Indo-Canadian community at large will have a place for gatherings every day of the year.
- c. **Ability to start small (*with a little investment*) and grow/expand as the community needs grow** – ICCC can start small and expand/grow as the need grows – *There is plenty of space presently vacant; we may rent a bigger place or additional rooms as required.*
- d. **Small investment and low operating costs:** Compared to owning a similar building, ICCC can launch an Indo-Canadian Community Centre with a small investment and low ongoing operating cost—*some of the rent expense will be offset as follows:*

- i. **Savings of current ICCC rent expense:** ICCC can save the rent expense currently incurred for various ICCC activities.
- ii. **Recovering some expense from the community users of the facility:** This facility will be available to the entire Indo-Canadian community on a cost-sharing basis.
- iii. **Expense offset by the Govt grants:** The community hub building will be eligible for grants from the Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments.

2. Spaces available for larger and diverse community events:

- a. **100 to 800-seat rooms available to rent within the school building:** For larger events, we can rent those rooms at preferred rates on an as needed basis. The 800-seat room is a full-fledged auditorium with a commercial kitchen attached to it.
- b. **Outdoor space:** There is plenty of open outdoor space available to hold community activities outdoor.
- c. **Sports grounds:** There are soccer fields, tennis courts, and other grounds available for sports events.

Thus, the core space under consideration and the surrounding options available within the “Rideau Community Hub’ complex, will enable ICCC to meet not only the requirements of the community but also fulfill its vision to provide multiple avenues for gathering the Indo-Canadian community.

3. Other beneficial features:

- a. **Wheel-chair accessible with an elevator from the main floor.**
- b. **Ample parking:** There is plenty of parking available around the building. Access to the proposed facility is direct from the parking lot with a separate entrance.
- c. **Access to the school location:** The school is located very close to St. Laurent Shopping Centre, Downtown, and the highway; it’s easily accessible by personal and public transport.
- d. **Indo-Canadian Community centre signage:** We will negotiate the privilege to put up our signage at the entrance door and across the outer wall of the meeting room.

Details of the proposed facility:

1. Location of the facility:

- a. Located at the lower level in the North-east wing of the school building – *quite secluded from the hubbub of the other tenants in the building.*
- b. 7 steps down from an independent entrance, direct from the parking lot.
- c. Wheel-chair accessible with an elevator.
- d. Easily accessible by personal and public transport:
 - i. Very close to Downtown -- Within 10 Km from Ottawa City Hall;
 - ii. 5-minute walk from St. Laurent shopping mall, which has O train access.
 - iii. 2-minute drive from and to Queensway

2. Size and structure:

- a. Total space: 1,600 Sq. ft.
- b. 3 rooms:
 - i. A large meeting room with the capacity of 80-100 persons sitting in a theatre style
 - ii. Another small room that can be used as an office/small meeting room
 - iii. Kitchen
- c. Two doors – one opening into the large room and the other opening into the kitchen
- d. Windows across the length of the room – room is lighted.

3. Capital Investment required: To make the facility attractive and presentable to the community, we would need to spruce up the place and provide equipment and furniture for various community events and meetings:

- a. An estimate of the investment required: \$20,000 - \$25,000
- b. Spruce up the place:
 - i. Paint the entire facility
 - ii. Fix the ceiling
 - iii. Provide proper lighting
 - iv. Add tiles or carpet to the flooring in the meeting room and the office
 - v. Window coverings -- Curtains/Blinds
- c. Kitchen:

- i. Refrigerator
 - ii. Stove
 - iii. Dishwasher
 - iv. Microwave
 - v. Water cooler
 - vi. Utensils
 - vii. Crockery
 - viii. Cutlery
 - ix. Supplies
- d. Office:
 - i. Low level storage cupboards across the room width (closed with lock and key)
 - ii. Conference table
 - iii. 12 conference chairs
 - iv. White Board
 - v. Projector with a screen
- e. Large meeting room -- Furniture and equipment:
 - i. 16 folding tables (6' x 2.5')
 - ii. 100 comfortable sitting chairs
 - iii. Projector
 - iv. Projection screen (mounted on the wall with remote control)
 - v. Podium
 - vi. Sound system with four microphones + two microphone stands
 - vii. Tripod stand for the camera/projector

4. Operating costs:

- a. Rate: \$16/Sq Ft per year [Gross including all utilities]
- b. Rent:
 - i. The proposed facility: 1,600 sq. ft. x \$16 = \$25,600 /year = \$2, 133 /month
 - ii. A storage room (150 sq. ft.) = \$150 per month; optional
- c. One-month deposit required with signing up the lease
- d. Lease term: 1-3 years with extensions [under review]
- e. Rent includes:

- i. Heat, Hydro, and water
- ii. Maintenance
- iii. Security system
- iv. Ample free parking + one designated parking spot
- v. High speed Internet service + 6 phone units
- vi. IT support (free + preferred rates)
- vii. Access to common facilities (see below) at preferred rates.
- viii. Storage rooms available at low rates

5. **Other facilities** [*available at preferred rates (for the tenants)*]:

- a. A full-fledged auditorium with the 800-seat capacity
 - b. A large Cafeteria with the capacity of 300 seats (or 600 standing)
 - c. Commercial kitchen
 - d. Drama room/studio
 - e. Music/Band room/studio
 - f. Dance studio
 - g. Meditation room
 - h. Gymnasium – indoor multi-sport, 200+ seating capacity
 - i. Two large soccer fields
 - j. Six Tennis courts
 - k. Meeting and Conference Rooms
 - l. Daycare & Play areas for children
6. Learning, collaboration and other opportunities provided by other service and not-for-profit organizations as tenants.