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**Bowes Publishers Limited**  
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## NEWSROOM

January 2, 2008

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## City to use P3 to get southwest recreation centre built

**BRIAN SWANE**  
EXAMINER STAFF

The southwest Edmonton recreation centre will be built with a public-private partnership.

City council last month voted in favour of using a P3 model, and will negotiate with a conglomerate of private partners to develop the multi-use facility and adjacent ice arena to be located on the corner of 23 Avenue and Terwillegar Drive. Under the deal, the city would contribute \$56 million to the estimated \$90 million project, with Forum Capital Sports Arena Partnership covering the remainder.

"It's unfortunate that we can't deliver these kind of projects publicly anymore," says Coun. Don Iveson. "But we're not getting a lot of co-operation from the construction industry that way, so we're pushed to do them this way. I'm glad we're going to have a centre and I'm not sure we're going to have it any other way."

Both the rink and recreation centre will be built by the private partnership, which would then be responsible for full operation of the rink and maintenance of the overall complex, says city spokesperson Monique St. Louis. The city would deliver programming in the rec centre, which is planned to include gymnasiums, an aquatic centre and fitness facility.

The arrangement deviates from the standard P3 model, says Iveson, who notes the city will hire and train recreation centre employees, such as lifeguards.

"One of the biggest risks with these facilities when we involve third parties is ensuring that the delivery of services is equitable to the facilities that we run publicly now, and so there's a bit of assurance that will be done," says the first-term Ward 5 councillor.

Entering negotiations with the conglomerate, the city is "committed to strive to best value solutions," says St. Louis. "So if through these negotiations, it doesn't turn out

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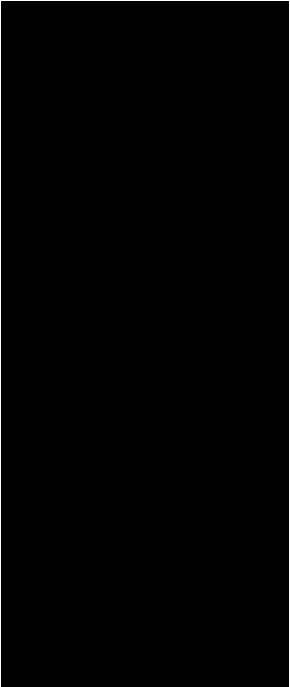
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that it's the best value solution then it will have to go back to council."

The city is planning to close the deal financially March 31, says St. Louis, and construction could begin in April.

Last month's news was applauded by the Terwillegar-Riverbend Advisory Council, which has long advocated for the centre.

"We're very excited," says TRAC representative Dave Rumbold. "We're very confident the city will negotiate a good deal to protect the taxpayers and to get a great rec centre built and we're looking forward to getting our kids in that building."

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