

New Ottawa YMCA to become regional health and wellness destination

By Legat Architects



Community, health, and wellness at the confluence: riverside Ottawa YMCA to serve diverse users and complement surroundings

The Ottawa YMCA, built in the 1950s, had reached the end of its useful life. Construction has started on a new facility that will create a Healthy Living Campus at the confluence of the Illinois and Fox rivers. The center will serve not only as a wellness destination but also as a home for several local high school teams and a meeting place for community organizations.



Additionally, members will have access to the designated clinical space for the YMCA's healthcare partner OSF Saint Elizabeth Medical Center.

Caption: The natatorium includes a warm water therapy pool and a competition pool overlooked by a mezzanine area with bleachers.

“We are incredibly excited about this long-awaited YMCA,” said Executive Director Joe Capece. “This is a huge milestone for the Y as we continue our goal to positively impact as many people as possible in the communities we serve.”

Key components of the 67,000-square-foot facility include a competition pool, warm water therapy pool, kids' adventure center, wellness center, gymnasium, elevated track, child watch area, community "living room," exercise studios, multigenerational space, demonstration kitchen, chapel, and clinical space for OSF HealthCare.



An elevated walk/jog track overlooks the gymnasium and wellness area. Members have striking views of the Illinois River and a future adjacent park.

Take a virtual walk-through of the Ottawa YMCA:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rpuzE-1aqVs&t>

Gro Development led the conceptual design, and American City Bureau worked with YMCA to raise funds. The community then tasked Legat Architects with developing the design. Pointcore Construction is serving as the construction manager. Construction of the \$26 million facility is expected to finish in April 2024.



Large triangular cross braces visible through windows echo the design of the historic Ottawa Rail Bridge southwest of the facility. Additionally, architects drew inspiration from downtown Ottawa for the metal panel and precast concrete colors.

Respectful of Surroundings

The design of the new Ottawa YMCA capitalizes on its environs thanks to large windows that exhibit the river and a future park. Those coming into town from the main road will have prime views of the large glass wall that glows at night.

The Legat team also integrated design features that pay tribute to the facility's surroundings.

“The precast concrete’s buff limestone color and terra-cotta-colored metal panels were inspired by the quaint architectural character of downtown Ottawa,” said Legat project manager Jay Johnson. “Additionally, the cross bracing behind the large windows facing the river gives a nod to the historic Ottawa Rail Bridge.”

Health Journey Support

A partnership between the YMCA and OSF HealthCare brings a health and wellness center that will provide a continuum of care to support members in their health journey. The second-floor space focuses on exercise, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term healthy living options.

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