



OAK VIEW GROUP OFFICIALLY BREAKS GROUND ON RENOVATIONS TO TRANSFORM FIRSTONTARIO CENTRE INTO WORLD-CLASS ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORTS VENUE

***Deposits for Annual Premium Hospitality Memberships Available Starting May 30
Visit hamiltonarenaproject.com to sign up for priority access!***

HAMILTON, ONTARIO (May 16, 2024) – [Oak View Group](#) (OVG), the largest developer of sports and live entertainment venues in the world, today officially kicked off the start of major renovations during a special groundbreaking event to transform FirstOntario Centre into a state-of-the-art venue. The reimagined arena will serve as the centerpiece in revitalizing Hamilton as a premier music, sports and entertainment destination for southwestern Ontario in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Partners, stakeholders, and community leaders attended the event.

“We’ve been a long-standing partner of the City of Hamilton through our management of the arena, generating considerable momentum to where we are today and are now positioned to deliver to the people of Hamilton a truly world-class, live entertainment facility,” said **Tim Leiweke, Chairman & CEO of Oak View Group**. “Upon completion of this truly transformative investment, the Hamilton Arena will generate substantial economic velocity and serve as a catalyst to the downtown core via the hosting of premier touring acts, family shows, and all types of sporting events. We’re investors in this market for the long haul and are thrilled at the prospect of replicating the success of our other owned & operated facilities in Hamilton as this is what we do, we are facility owners and operators every day focused on driving event volume and activity for the City and its people. We have great partners helping us bring this project fully to life and are already looking and planning ahead to the Arena’s re-opening.”

The \$280 million renovation will transform the facility into a modernized venue with a focus on providing the ultimate guest experience. Renovations will include the addition of premium seating, clubs, lounges and suites, enhanced acoustics to amplify the listening experience, next generation touchless and self-serve technologies for food & beverage purchases to minimize transaction times and upgraded concourses and concession areas. Additional upgrades to the venue’s back of house include specially designed artist lounges, upgraded production facilities, electrical and lighting upgrades as well as updates to the arena’s telecommunications infrastructure, wireless network, and video/network/security systems.

With a community-centric approach to the arena design, the venue will boast suites, clubs and lounges designed with the fan in mind. Each premium club will have its own unique offerings that fit the diverse tastes of a multicultural audience. The fully redefined suite experience includes completely new Mid-Level and Event Level suites for the ultimate premium experience. Deposits for the limited number of annual memberships for the arena’s premium hospitality spaces will be accepted starting Thursday, May 30. For more information and to gain priority access, please visit hamiltonarenaproject.com.

“I am thrilled the groundbreaking for the massive re-development of our downtown Hamilton Arena has arrived,” said **City of Hamilton Mayor Andrea Horwath**. “This investment by international entertainment leader OVG in our city, and downtown core, will put Hamilton firmly on the map as a world-class sports and entertainment destination, spurring job creation, economic revitalization and attracting new visitors to our great city.”

The Hamilton Arena, to be designed by Brisbin Brook Beynon Architects, is part of a larger downtown revitalization project known as “The Commons,” which includes the newly reimagined arena, renovated convention centre, significant investments in the Art Gallery of Hamilton and concert hall facilities, as well as new residential, office, and retail space development. The Commons project is managed by the Hamilton Urban Precinct Entertainment Group (HUPEG).

EllisDon, one of Canada’s most experienced and accomplished construction services companies, is overseeing the renovation project.

Live Nation joins OVG as a booking partner committed to bringing concerts and other live events to Hamilton. Combining Live Nation’s booking of top touring acts with OVG’s focus on the holistic guest experience from premium hospitality offerings to enhanced technology, the new state-of-the-art venue will be even more competitive in attracting top-tier events and, in turn, drive economic impact for the local and regional business community.

“This is a new era for the City of Hamilton that reflects the vibrancy and resilience of the community,” said **Riley O’Connor, Chairman, Live Nation Canada**. “Live Nation has a rich history with the city and its passionate live music fans, and we look forward to bringing more world-class talent to this incredible entertainment destination.”

FirstOntario Concert Hall and The Studio will remain open and continue to host events during the arena’s renovation.

QUICK FACTS

Construction Manager:	EllisDon
Architect:	Brisbin Brook Beynon Architects
Investment:	\$280 million
Expected completion:	Fall 2025
Premium Hospitality:	<i>Clubs:</i> Event Level Club; North Loge Club; Premier Center Club <i>Suites:</i> Event Level Suites; Mid-Level Suites
Website:	hamiltonarenaproject.com

Original opening

Broke Ground:	July 8, 1983
Opened:	November 30, 1985
Names:	Copps Coliseum (1985-2014); FirstOntario Centre (2014-2024)

The Transformation Begins....What They're Saying About Hamilton Arena!

“Our local team could not be more excited about the next phase of this transformative project. We are already hard at work on every aspect of the arena’s commercial operations and we look forward to sharing exciting updates with the community as we progress towards our Fall 2025 opening day.”

Tom Pistore

President, Canada - Oak View Group

“While we may have built this City on steel, we will rebuild this City on Rock and Roll and on coming together as one community to celebrate wonderful moments of sport and live entertainment in a beautiful new facility that Hamilton will be proud to call its own.”

PJ Mercanti

President and CEO - Hamilton Urban Precinct Entertainment Group (HUPEG)

“We are incredibly honoured to be managing this renovation project to further support the revitalization of the Downtown Hamilton area,” “At EllisDon, we prioritize becoming actively involved in helping our communities thrive. Partaking in the development of the FirstOntario Centre project to build a best-in-class premier music, sports and entertainment destination for southwestern Ontario and beyond.”

Randy Reymer

Senior Vice President & Area Manager, Southwestern Ontario - EllisDon

“BBB is excited to elevate the experience of live entertainment in Hamilton. Our approach goes beyond simply renovating the arena; it's an opportunity to celebrate its legacy while setting the stage for a redefined venue meant to create new memories for generations to come. By implementing premium seating, elevated culinary offerings, and enhanced acoustics, the transformed venue is set to become a cultural landmark where every element is curated to resonate with Hamilton’s vibrant spirit.”

Tone Frisina

Partner - BBB Architects

“This significant investment in Hamilton Arena will transform our city’s downtown core into a world-class destination for sports and live entertainment. This renovation will create good-paying jobs, provide a welcomed boost to local businesses and encourage visitors from southwestern Ontario – and around the world – to experience everything our community offers. Thank you to Oak View Group for investing in Hamilton’s future.”

Neil Lumsden

MPP for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek and Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport

“As the heart of our community, the revitalization of our downtown begins with transformative projects like the arena renovation. It's not just about bricks and mortar; it's about building a vibrant hub that attracts visitors, fosters local businesses, and reinvigorates the spirit of Hamilton.”

Greg Dunnett

President & CEO - Hamilton Chamber of Commerce

“With emphasis on strategic partnership, the YMCA is taking an active role in contributing to the downtown revitalization, ensuring that youth, families, and seniors can thrive. Our commitment to well-being and fostering social cohesion connects us with partners who share a vision of creating spaces of belonging. We're excited to support collaborations that promote the power of private-public-nonprofit synergy, such as the downtown arena transformation, shaping a better future for all.”

Manny Figueiredo

President & CEO - YMCA Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford

About Oak View Group

Oak View Group (OVG) is the global leader in live experience venue development, management, premium hospitality services, and 360-degree solutions for a collection of world-class-owned venues and a client roster of arenas, stadiums, convention centers, music festivals, performing arts centers, and cultural institutions. Founded by Tim Leiweke and Irving Azoff in 2015, OVG is the leading developer of major new venues either open or under development across four continents. Visit OakViewGroup.com, and follow OVG on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [X](#).

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