

Aquatic Service and Facility Review Final Report

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Report Summary

This report and presentation provide an overview of the second and final phase of the Aquatic Service and Facility Review, consisting of a detailed facility needs assessment, strategic directions relating to indoor pools, supervised waterfronts and splash pads, and an implementation plan.

Resolution

THAT the City of Greater Sudbury approves the Aquatic Service and Facility Review as the foundation for guiding future decisions relating to aquatic infrastructure, programs and operations as detailed in the report “Aquatic Service and Facility Review Final Report” from the General Manager of Community Development presented at the City Council meeting of October 8, 2024.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Climate Action Plans

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan in the areas of Asset Management and Service Excellence, Climate Change and Creating a Healthier and More Vibrant Community. The Aquatic Service and Facility Review incorporates asset management considerations and will guide decisions on investments in infrastructure to support community recreation with a focus on quality of life.

This report supports Council’s Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP) as considerations for Modernized and efficient facilities form part of the strategic directions of the review.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Background

At the City Council meeting of February 21, 2023, Council approved an approach to a comprehensive aquatics review to develop a 25-year vision for aquatic services in Greater Sudbury. Funding in the amount of \$150,000 to complete the review was approved from the Tax Rate Stabilization Fund.

Contract CDD23-113, Request for Proposal for an Aquatic Service and Facility Review was awarded to Monteith Brown Planning Consultants. The scope of work included:

- Gathering of input on community needs and trends affecting aquatic participation.
- A review of the condition, effectiveness, and performance of public indoor pools.
- A study of non-municipal facilities, with recommendations on how they should contribute to an overall aquatic service delivery system for the community.
- Considerations for related initiatives, such as Lionel E. Lalonde Therapeutic Pool, Kalmo Beach 10 Year Plan, and Lively Recreation Advisory Panel Work.
- Providing recommendations for longer-term strategies for indoor pool renewal and development.
- Developing strategies to enhance the public experience at splash pads and supervised beaches.
- Considerations for aquatic services with a future vision for a 25-year time frame, accounting for population growth, growth centres in Greater Sudbury and industry/aquatic trends.

The Aquatic Service and Facility Review has been completed over two phases. The first phase of work included the following which were presented at the City Council meeting of December 5, 2023:

- Current State Report – Included a review of aquatic trends and utilization as well as a preliminary assessment of facility condition and capital requirements.
- What We Heard Report – A summary of the engagement process conducted through pop-up consultations, community surveying, stakeholder consultation and Council and staff input.

The second phase of work consisted of a detailed facility needs assessments with considerations for geographical distribution and future service delivery, an implementation strategy for strategic directions, and additional public consultations. The Phase 2: Assessments and Strategy Development Report is included as Attachment 1. Final versions of the Current State Report (Attachment 2) and What We Heard Report (Attachment 3) are also included.

Summary of Strategic Directions

Based on the review of existing user data, population projections, assessment of existing facilities and programs, community consultation and other analysis, the Phase 2: Assessments and Strategy Development Report includes the following strategic directions to guide decisions regarding aquatic services and facilities for the short, medium, and long term:

Aquatic Programs and Services

- Acknowledge the delivery of instructional and lifelong recreational aquatic programs and activities as a core service of the City of Greater Sudbury.
- Seek to increase the number of visits to City indoor pools by expanding the range of aquatic programming during available prime and non-prime time hours, as resources allow.
- Regularly review staffing requirements within the City's aquatics division to respond to pent-up demands and opportunities for more specialized programming.
- Develop an aquatic allocation policy to establish fair, equitable, and transparent guidelines for providing access to pool time in Greater Sudbury.
- Regularly review pool admission, program, and rental fees to balance the overall goal of increasing participation while achieving revenue targets.

Existing Pool Facilities and Operations

- Establish a classification system for City pools that allows for some differentiation in use, especially within the Sudbury urban area.

- Increase spending on indoor pool capital repair and rehabilitation to keep pace with rising needs.
- Integrate accessible design practices and innovative technologies into all retrofitted and new pool facilities to improve customer service, operational efficiencies, and building sustainability.
- Ensure that pool operators receive regular training on pool systems and initiatives that benefit the user experience and operational efficiencies.
- Update and enhance preventative maintenance plans for all pools to help prevent costly repairs and breakdowns and to eliminate any potential health hazards.
- Refine annual performance measures to track progress and efforts to continually improve service and efficiency at City pools.

Other Providers and Partnerships

- Recognizing that Laurentian University and the YMCA of Northeastern Ontario are important contributors to the City's aquatic network, consider establishing "service agreements" with these key pool operators.
- Encourage Laurentian University to begin planning for the major revitalization or replacement of the Jenő Tihanyi Pool within the 25-year horizon of this plan.
- Given the important role of the YMCA pool in contributing to aquatic services within Greater Sudbury and recognizing the existing relationship between the two parties through the condominium agreement, establish a communications framework through which the YMCA and the City can share relevant information about YMCA's aquatic program accomplishments, challenges, and mitigation strategies, as well as plans for future program growth and development.
- Continue to support and enhance relationships with school boards to bolster the delivery of a spectrum of aquatic opportunities on co-located sites and through programming.

Indoor Pool Provision

- Reduce the indoor pool supply to a minimum of five (5) publicly accessible indoor pool locations by 2051 (including both City and non-municipal pools) through attrition, capital improvement, and partnership opportunities.
- Prepare feasibility studies to develop two (2) new or expanded aquatic centres over time to replace up to four (4) existing City pools. The proposal to build a therapeutic/leisure pool in Azilda should be re-evaluated as part of these studies.
- Maintain the Onaping Pool with minimal investment for the short-term, but do not revitalize or rebuild the facility once it reaches the end of its functional life.
- Evaluate options to convert any decommissioned pools to other community assets so that these sites can continue to serve the public in new ways.

Supervised Waterfront Beaches

- Implement the recommendations of the Kalmo Beach 10-year Plan, prioritizing those projects that improve circulation, accessibility, parking, wayfinding, and support facilities (washrooms and changerooms).
- Undertake scoped site planning exercises (such as the one recently completed at Kalmo Beach) at existing beach locations to improve safety, accessibility, and sustainability of the sites and support buildings.
- Work with the Lively Recreation Advisory Panel to maintain and enhance public outdoor swimming opportunities within the Lively/Walden area, informed by the findings of this review.
- Explore options for enhancing the range of services and experiences at selected beach locations.
- Conduct a review to determine the viability of piloting swim lessons at public beaches locations without nearby access to indoor pools.
- Continue to collect beach visitation and rescue data to inform future planning and service reviews.
- Maintain the City's beach program through continued water quality monitoring and solutions to improve water quality and reduce geese impacts.
- Regularly review staffing levels and compensation for the waterfront program and consider initiatives aimed at attracting and retaining qualified staff.
- Review and enhance promotion and marketing of the City's supervised beaches to ensure that they are well known to visitors and residents.

Splash Pads

- Maintain the current number of splash pads (17) moving forward.
- Complete shade and accessibility audits for all splash pad sites. Identify priority sites in need of site amenity upgrades (e.g., accessible paths, seating, shade, etc.).
- Conduct lifecycle audits and determine preliminary replacement schedules for all splash pads. Further, evaluate options for recycling splash pad water outflows for grey water purposes (e.g., irrigation) at time of replacement.
- Upgrade and enhance splash pads at destination locations at the time of replacement.

Other Relevant Aquatic Updates

The following is a summary of the status aquatic related projects and initiatives in the community.

Lionel E. Lalonde Centre Therapeutic/Leisure Pool Project

In February 2016, Council passed a resolution supporting the provision of a therapeutic/leisure pool to be located at the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre, pending the success of a fundraising campaign. The project estimate at this time was \$4.7M.

April 2019, the City received a \$1 million grant from the Government of Canada's Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) for the project.

During 2021 budget deliberations, a business case to construct the Therapeutic/Leisure Pool at the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre was approved at an estimated project cost at \$5.69 million.

In June 2021, a Request for Proposal for architectural services was awarded to Architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson. The City received design briefs and Class D estimates from Architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson who have estimated the project at estimated at \$7.65M (professional fees, permits, furnishings, equipment, and construction contingencies are excluded from this estimate). Project escalations were due to market issues evident on other facility construction projects such as labour shortages, supply chain issues and construction premiums.

At the February 21, 2023, City Council meeting, Council passed a resolution pausing all work on the project, pending the presentation of the Aquatic Service and Facility Review report.

City staff requested an extension to the funding agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada which was previously extended until August 11, 2024. In September 2024, the City was notified that the project file will be closed as construction work had not begun prior to the August 11, 2024 funding agreement expiry date, and there would be no option for an agreement extension. Funding previously received in the amount of \$477,829 has been returned.

Lively Recreation Advisory Panel

Council previously approved to draw funds up to the amount of \$400,000 from the Capital Financing Reserve Fund (General), which are dedicated for the Lively Recreation Project, to engage third party services to advance the project.

A Request for Proposal for site analysis, conceptual plans and schematic detailed design services has been issued.

Summary and Next Steps

The Aquatic Service and Facility Review is a multi-year phased strategy intended to guide the actions, responsibilities, and budget decisions of the City relating to aquatic infrastructure and improvements. By approving this Review, the City is not bound to implement every strategic direction or to provide facilities and services in the order, amount or timing indicated. Rather, the Aquatic Service and Facility Review provides guidance on community priorities and sets a general course for meeting the needs as they are presently defined.

The report recognizes that the City has limited resources and cannot afford to implement items identified all at once. The timing of the proposed projects recognizes the need for phased implementation as some strategic directions are based upon what is needed and not necessarily what is financially achievable at the present time. Full implementation will require the use of a variety of municipal funding sources, grants, fundraising, and assistance from partners and the community.

The report will be used to determine priorities and inform decisions during the City's budget processes. The document will also be used to guide decisions regarding aquatic facilities and services in the event of future opportunities (such as calls for recreation infrastructure funding applications) or challenges (such as building failures leading to significant service interruptions).

Resources Cited

Aquatic Service and Facility Review Phase One Report, City Council (December 5, 2023)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=51939>

Approach to a Comprehensive Aquatics Review, City Council (February 21, 2023)

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=48717>

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