Agenda – Council – November 26, 2020

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – November 12, 2020

Item No. 2 Wading Pool Rationalization and Spray Pad Reinvestment Strategy

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 18, 2020, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Spray Pad Reinvestment and Wading Pool Rationalization Decision-Making Framework, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

2. That where a future spray pad addition is recommended in a ward where there are multiple wading pools within the Targeted Level of Service (as defined in Appendix A), that a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5 wading pools be identified for closure in consultation with the area Councillor, based on usage, proximity, and condition of the wading pool amenity.

3. That funding for closure of wading pools (where applicable) and reinvestment in alternate park amenities at those sites be included in the project budget approval for future spray pad development projects.

4. That future spray pad investments be confirmed through the annual budget process as funding from the Transformative Fund or other sources becomes available.

5. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to complete the intent of the foregoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – November 12, 2020

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 18, 2020, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 12, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

COUNCIL DECISION:

On October 29, 2020, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks and adopted the following:

1. That an extension of time of 90 days be provided for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back with a wading pool rationalization and splash pad reinvestment strategy which proposes funding from the Transformative Fund.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

On March 20, 2020, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Executive Policy Committee, as amended, and adopted the following:

1. That the following recommendations with respect to the 2020 Preliminary Operating Budget be approved by Council:

    I. That Council direct the Public Service to report back within 180 days with a wading pool rationalization and splash pad reinvestment strategy which proposes funding from the Transformative Fund.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Wading Pool Rationalization & Spray Pad Reinvestment Strategy

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks - Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
K. McKim	C. Fernandes	P. Olafson, Interim CFO	M. Ruta, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the 2020 Budget, Council directed the Public Service to prepare a Wading Pool Rationalization & Spray Pad Reinvestment Strategy, to be funded through the Transformative Fund.

Based on existing Council direction in the *Recreation, Leisure and Library Facilities Policy* and recent work carried out through the pending *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*, the Public Service has developed a Decision-Making Framework for prioritization of spray pad investments and potential rationalization of older wading pools.

This report includes provision analysis mapping of all wading pools and spray pads in the City and applies prioritization factors to outline potential future spray pad investments by Ward, as funding becomes available.

As Transformative Funds become available through various land sales, spray pad investments and associated wading pool closures (where applicable), as well as associated park amenity reinvestments will be identified and considered through the annual Budget process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the *Spray Pad Reinvestment and Wading Pool Rationalization Decision-Making Framework*, attached as Appendix A, be approved.

2. That where a future spray pad addition is recommended in a ward where there are multiple wading pools within the Targeted Level of Service (as defined in Appendix A), that a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 5 wading pools be identified for closure in consultation with the area Councillor, based on usage, proximity, and condition of the wading pool amenity.

3. That funding for closure of wading pools (where applicable) and reinvestment in alternate park amenities at those sites be included in the project budget approval for future spray pad development projects.

4. That future spray pad investments be confirmed through the annual budget process as funding from the Transformative Fund or other sources becomes available.

5. That the proper officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to complete the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On March 20, 2020 Council directed the Public Service to report back within 180 days with a wading pool rationalization and splash pad reinvestment strategy which proposes funding from the Transformative Fund.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Approval of this report will confirm the decision-making framework for future wading pool rationalizations and spray pad investments, which are generally consistent with the 2005 Council adopted *Recreation, Leisure and Library Facilities Policy* and the forthcoming *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*.

As funds become available through the Transformative Fund, spray pad investments and any associated wading pool closures and alternate park amenity investments will be identified through the annual Budget process.

There are no operating implications in the recommendations of this report.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Background

Nearly all of Winnipeg's current inventory of 81 wading pools were built in the 1960s and 1970s and most are at or near the end of their useful service life. The unfunded capital liability for wading pools and related pump/washroom buildings is significant, with a 10-year unfunded investment requirement of over $28 million (2021 Community Trends and Performance Report) and a total estimated replacement value of over $50M. In addition, most wading pools have limited play value, appeal to a very limited age profile and do not meet current accessibility standards.

While the average spray pad provides approximately 1,100 service hours annually (late May thru early September), the average wading pool provides approximately 260 service hours per season, with some as low as 90 hours per season. Even the City's busiest wading pool (Dakota) provides less than half the service hours of the average spray pad due to supervision requirements.

There are also wide variations in the distribution of wading pool sites between mature and newer areas of the city, which results in very diverse levels of service. While some areas have many wading pools serving relatively small catchment areas, other areas of Winnipeg have few or no wading pools providing service. Typically, when several wading pools are located in close proximity to each other, usage at each site tends to be low, with over a quarter of all wading pools averaging less than 25 visitors per day. Data also shows that wading pool attendance drops significantly when a spray pad is built in the vicinity.

The majority of spray pads built over the past 15 years are straight to drain systems, which eliminate water quality risks, but do result in substantial amounts of potable water being drained into the wastewater system. Moving forward, new spray pads should incorporate re-circulation systems to enhance water conservation, with the understanding that additional operating costs for water quality management will be incurred. It should also be noted that spray pads can form a part of Winnipeg's climate change resiliency strategy in providing free, accessible cooling centres during extreme heat events.

Discussion

In order to address these challenges and opportunities, the 2005 Council adopted *Recreation, Leisure and Libraries Facilities Policy* (RLLF) outlined that the inventory of wading pools will be rationalized over time, facilitated by the introduction of spray pads based on prescribed facility to population ratios. However, the policy does not set geographic distribution targets for new spray pads, which has limited the ability to prioritize investments and transition to a more equitable distribution across the city. The RLLF Policy also did not fully apply an equity lens, and did not consider access challenges and lack of alternate opportunities for some residents, particularly in areas of higher need. With a clearer definition and mapping of geographic areas of higher need developed in early 2020, there is an opportunity to re-examine how these services are provided.

The *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* to be completed in late 2020, will propose to establish clear benchmarks for target levels of service for recreation assets based on the catchment area, travel distance, quality and functionality. Proposed service levels are 2km catchment areas for community spray pads, with a reduced catchment area of 1km for wading pools and neighbourhood spray pads serving areas of higher need, to account for equity and access challenges. In addition, service level targets for the size of new spray pads are identified as under 3000 square feet for neighbourhood scale spray pads and over 3000 square feet for community-scale spray pads. These numbers are generally consistent with facility sizes and catchments developed over the past 15 years.

Council Direction and Funding

Through the 2020 Budget, Council has directed the Public Service to develop a wading pool rationalization and spray pad reinvestment strategy, with proposed funding from the new Transformative Fund. The development of the Transformative Fund is a separate directive of Council related to the potential sale of surplus golf lands and buildings leased to third parties, with proceeds intended to support investments that transform the delivery of services and reduce the City's infrastructure deficit with a focus on recreation, public green space as well as preservation, protection and enhancement of Winnipeg's tree canopy. The direction also includes a requirement that a majority of the proceeds deposited into this fund be re-invested within the area in which the funds were generated. A separate report to Council on the Transformative Fund will be forthcoming from the Planning, Property and Development Department.

Any real estate sale considered through the proposed Transformative Fund may require several years before proceeds are available for reinvestment. As such, this report does not recommend any specific project or investments, but instead provides the strategic approaches by which future spray pad investments and wading pool rationalizations can be made.

Spray Pad Reinvestment and Wading Pool Rationalization Decision-Making Framework
The decision-making framework below, also attached in Appendix A, recommends investment and rationalization prioritization factors for consideration for new spray pad investments and possible wading pool closures. The framework is generally consistent with the current Council adopted RLLF Policy and aligns with recommended strategic directions in the forthcoming *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*.

Wading Pools & Spray Pads

Target Level of Service

Catchment area:
Community Scale Spray Pads- 2km
Wading Pools- 1km
Neighbourhood Scale Spray Pads serving higher needs areas- 1km

Size:
Neigbourhood Scale- under 3000 s.f.
Community Scale- over 3000 s.f.

Spray Pad Investment Prioritization Factors

- Improves service and addresses gap in target level of service
- Co-location at multi-use recreation sites that include access to washrooms, parking and complementary site amenities.
- Supports geographic areas of higher need.
- Opportunity to consolidate older wading pools within the target level of service catchment.
- Community readiness – supports existing community plans or initiatives

Wading Pool Rationalization Prioritization Factors

- Aging asset and in need of capital renewal.
- Notable design or functional challenges such as lack of accessibility or play features.

- Low utilization rate.
- Proximity to existing or planned alternate wading pool and/or spray pad sites within target level of service catchment.
- Opportunity for investments in alternate recreation amenities at wading pool closure sites.

Potential Future Investments

The Public Service has carried out provision analysis mapping of the current inventory of wading pools and spray pads across the city, attached as Appendix B, applying the proposed target level of service catchments of 2km for community spray pads, 1km for wading pools and 1km for neighbourhood spray pads serving areas of higher need. This mapping provides indications of potential gaps in service for several areas and areas where there may be opportunities for consolidation of existing, older wading pools.

It is anticipated that some future spray pad investments may result in the closure of nearby older wading pools, based on the recommended wading pool rationalization prioritization factors. It is recommended that budget allocations for future spray pads include allocations for removal costs of existing wading pools and reinvestment in those sites to provide alternate recreation or park amenities, (E.g. playground upgrade, community gardens, site furnishings). Any potential closures and alternate park amenity investments for those sites will be explored in consultation with the area Councillors and Public Works - Parks and Open Space Division.

As funding is identified in future years through the Transformative Fund and/or other sources, spray pad investment projects with associated wading pool closures (where applicable) will be considered through the annual budget process.

Future Operating Considerations

While spray pads are generally more cost-effective to operate compared to older wading pools, there are significant operating considerations that should be taken into account when planning for new spray pads into the future. These include:

- Strive for recirculating water systems vs. straight to drain systems for new spray pad developments for enhanced water conservation.
- Reallocate operational savings from wading pool closures to support increased costs for water quality monitoring and site maintenance for new spray pads.
- Consider increasing operating hours for wading pools in proximity to proposed wading pool closures.
- Recurring review of changing community needs, design advancements, and emerging technologies to ensure incorporation of amenity enhancements and improved/reduced operating and life-cycle costs.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: October 28, 2020

Project Name:

Wading Pool Rationalization & Spray Pad Reinvestment Strategy

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations of this report. As funds become available through the Transformative Fund, spray pad investments and any associated wading pool closures and alternate park amenity investments will be identified through the annual Budget process.

Original signed by Kelly Lemoine
Kelly Lemoine, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance and Administrative Services
Community Services Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

Planning, Property and Development - Municipal Accommodations
Customer Service and Communications Department – with respect to Sponsorship opportunities

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The report is in accordance with direction strategies of Our Winnipeg:

01-5 Recreation

Direction 1: Promote and enable opportunities for all age groups to be active as part of their daily lives.

Direction 2: Work with community partners to provide services that are responsive to the community's recreation and leisure needs.

Direction 3: Directly provide, or facilitate through partnerships equitable access to a base level of recreation, culture and leisure services for all Winnipeggers (ie "Learn to", Intro, etc.)

Direction 4: With community partners, participate as a leader in planning and delivering recreation and leisure services in Winnipeg.

Direction 5: Provide or facilitate community development and recreation opportunities for vulnerable youth.

Direction 6: Plan for sustainable and connected recreation and leisure infrastructure.

03-1 Opportunity

Direction 4: Work within municipal service areas as a collaborator on poverty reduction.

03-2 Vitality

Direction 2: Deliver a coordinated, integrated, and seamless service response to address community needs and priorities that contribute to building healthy communities.

Direction 3: Work in partnership with communities to identify and address neighbourhood issues.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic Opportunity #7: Community Climate Resiliency-
Strategize and implement opportunities to improve Winnipeg's resilience and adaptability to the effects of a changing climate.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Community Services Department
Division: Asset Management Office

Prepared by: Ken McKim, Manager
Date: October 27, 2020
File No: CMS-2020-8

Attachments:

APPENDIX A: Decision-Making Framework

APPENDIX B: Winnipeg Spray Pads & Wading Pools Provision Mapping