

Standing Policy Committee on Community Services

Re: Aquatic Center Proposal for Provencher Park

Good Day,

Thank you for your time today. It is appreciated. My name is Brian Boychuk, my wife, Leslie Deck is unable to attend today's meeting. We live at 631 Langevin Street, directly across from Provencher Park and the proposed Aquatic Center. We would like to preface our presentation today by saying amenities such as swimming pools and recreation centers are a plus for our community and for the city of Winnipeg. However, we cannot be in agreement with the placement of this large facility in what is a small community park. It will substantially change the nature of our streetscape, increasing traffic, putting children at risk, bigger asphalt parking lots and brick replacing existing decades old trees and greenspace. We currently have the Provencher play structure, splashpad and pool, all of which are well used in the community. Our neighbours frequently use the pool, walking, cycling for a quick cool off. "Bigger is better", a direct quote of our city councillor. We are of the opinion that larger is not always better. We frequent the existing pool with our grandchildren, going for a quick swim on a hot day, no need to make a day of it and, importantly, at no cost. We can swim for an hour, go home and return if we wish. It is a perfectly sized pool for the needs of this area. It is rarely filled to capacity.

Our current city councillor has publicly endorsed this site, proclaiming it will benefit lower income families. The current pool does just that, and we are perplexed as to how a new pool similar to others in size such as the Transcona Aquatic Center have fees to enter, thereby making the point that it's for financially disadvantaged families a poor argument. It is not true. Our family often has discussions about our current pool, it's the perfect size, it just needs some amenities – benches, seating, umbrellas. A well-maintained pool, such as the current Provencher Pool is an asset to this community, and substantially less cost than the \$20 million+ cost of this proposal. The Happyland and Norwood Pools should never have been demolished. We don't know all the logistics in pool construction, but restoring those pools would have been a better option. Getting rid of them was an egregious error on the part of this city council.

The current philosophy of the city seems to be to let small pools like Provencher just fade away and when enough are gone, build one large one to appease all. It doesn't work, and we've seen the results with Happyland and Norwood pools. Very unhappy kids and residents who now have no community spaces to play and swim.

If the city wishes to proceed with this proposal we suggest the Watertower area. There is a clean slate there, no huge trees to cut down, and an opportunity to allow for plenty of parking. A site of this size for Provencher will result in many, many people, probably not from our area, all jockeying for a parking spot, kids running across the street, near misses too innumerable to count. We see it now from our front yard, we cannot imagine what a structure of this size will mean for the peacefulness and safety of this area.

Now, we feel the decision has already been made. As it stands now, the plans show the structure right up to Langevin Street. Perhaps, in the least, if this site is to be chosen, then set the structure more towards the center of the park, nearer the hockey rink. Then, at least create a green buffer zone separating the families who have lived on this street for many years, in some cases generations, away from the street.

Today we look out at our park and see kids and families enjoying the amenities that are currently there. Imagine established residents now looking out at a wall of concrete that is the main structure of a huge aquatic center.

In summary:

- The plan, as is, for the aquatic center in Provencher is too large of a footprint for this park and the neighbourhood
- Water Tower area is a clean slate and the size of such a park is more aptly suited
- We believe the city should reevaluate its closing of small community pools. They are wonderful amenities that should have been better maintained and never been demolished. 20 million can be better spent constructing smaller, more neighbourhood access pools.

We thank you for your time and hope our concerns can be addressed.

Kind regards,

Brian Boychuk and Leslie Deck

631 Langevin St.