

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – DECEMBER 6, 2011

WOODBIDGE POOL AQUATIC PROGRAMMING – WARD 2

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Directors of Recreation and Culture and Building and Facilities, recommends:

1. That the decision regarding the timing of the decommissioning of the Woodbridge Pool be deferred pending an overall review and analysis of city-wide pool offerings, as part of the Active Together Master Plan update planned for 2012; and,
2. That the Woodbridge Pool continue to offer the current level of programs and services with staff continuing to identify opportunities to relocate programs currently delivered at the Woodbridge Pool.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan.

Economic Impact

There is no direct impact as a result of this report.

Communications Plan

All programs and services offered through the Recreation and Culture Department will continue to be promoted in the Recreation and Culture Guide and City website.

The Active Together Master Plan update planned for 2012 will include a public consultation process, including the possible decommissioning of the Woodbridge Pool, which will be communicated to all stakeholders through standard processes such as flyers and posters in community centres, ads in newspapers, City and social websites and public meetings. All findings and recommendations will be presented to members of the public through public meetings and posted on the City website.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to address the possible decommissioning of the Woodbridge Pool pending the Active Together Master Plan update planned for 2012; and to develop a plan to relocate the current level of programs and services currently delivered at the Woodbridge Pool should a final decision be to have it decommissioned.

Background - Analysis and Options

At the Council meeting held on April 5, 2011, a Finance and Administration Committee recommendation was approved that directed staff to report on a review of the current program delivered at the Woodbridge Pool with a view to moving such programs to other pool locations in light of the eventual decommissioning of Woodbridge Pool.

The possible closing of the Woodbridge Pool was previously discussed at a Budget Committee Meeting on April 16, 2004 at which time staff was directed to provide a report on the impact of closing Woodbridge Pool. In response, at the Budget Committee meeting of April 30, 2004, staff

provided a report that included capital improvements and repairs completed between 1998 and 2003 and capital improvement required in 2004 and the associated costs. The report also included the annual operating budget and the impact to neighbouring pools. The Active Together Master Plan, approved in principle by Council in the fall of 2008, also considered the possible closure of this pool.

The Active Together Master Plan states “that should the two indoor pool tanks at Woodbridge Pool be removed from service, at least one pool tank should be replaced at an appropriate location, such as Vaughan Corporate Community Centre”. Estimated Census Age demographic figures indicate that 56% of the population in the ward falls between the ages of 20 and 59, 26% between 0 and 19 years of age, and 18% over 60 years of age. Recognizing that demographic trends have changed since the approval of the Active Together Master Plan (ATMP) staff have requested funding, as part of the 2012 Capital Budget process, to update the ATMP. The updated ATMP will revise information on population demographics, trends, and interests.

Woodbridge Pool

Woodbridge Pool was constructed in 1974 and is Vaughan's oldest municipal pool. Located at Highway 7 and Islington Avenue, the pool is part of the Woodbridge Pool and Memorial Arena complex which includes two pools, community meeting rooms, a hall with a stage, and an ice arena. The aquatics area consists of a 25 metre/13 feet deep recreational pool with one metre and three metre diving boards making it one of three pools in Vaughan that are capable of offering diving programs and diving club permits. The second pool is a smaller leisure/therapeutic pool that is heated to 92F which is ideal for young swimmers, people with disabilities, and older adults. In addition to swim lessons and aqua fitness classes, the warmer water temperature, pool shape and depth accommodates usage for exercise, rehabilitation, and movement through water.

The program mix at the Woodbridge Pool includes instructional swim programs, recreational swimming, pool rentals and leadership training. Woodbridge Pool has always offered a variety of leadership courses: teaching youth lifesaving techniques, preparing them for future employment and as swim instructors and lifeguards.

The pool is primarily used, based on demand, to offer lessons of varying levels for swimmers between 3 months and 13. Woodbridge Pool also offers drop-in opportunities such as Aquafitness, lane swim, and recreational swim. The pool is also permitted to local aquatics groups for swimming and diving instruction. The Vaughan Aquatic Club has been using the pool for over 20 years, and the Vaughan Stars Diving Club since 2009. The pool also allows for more varied permits such as synchro, water polo, therapy services, etc.

The current layout of Woodbridge Pool is ideal for running a mix of registered, drop in, and leadership programs. Leadership courses help participants complete the steps towards becoming a certified lifeguard or swim instructor. Aquatic leadership programs also emphasize and teach teamwork, leadership, self-confidence, interpersonal and problem solving skills.

In close proximity are three community centres, each with full length pools and similar programming. Father Ermanno Bulfon Community Centre is approximately 3 kilometers away. The pool is only 12.5 metres long and unable to host any of the leadership programs that occur at Woodbridge Pool. The Al Palladini and Chancellor Community Centres are both approximately 5 kilometers away. Al Palladini has both a 25m pool and a deep pod; however the pod's shape makes it difficult to run certain aspects of the leadership program. For example, NLS physical skills require a 15 m approach before diving down to retrieve a victim or object but the pod at Al Pal is circular and only about 5m in diameter. Chancellor has a 25m pool and no deep end, therefore would not be able to accommodate leadership programming. If the Woodbridge Pool were to be decommissioned, the decrease in the number of facilities that could effectively run leadership training would impact Vaughan's overall service level and commitment to aquatics

greater than the geographical impact of losing a local swimming pool. A replacement pool should incorporate facilities for leadership training in its final design.

The surrounding community centres offer similar drop-in and registered programs. The current program mixes, fill rates, and pool designs of neighbouring pools suggest that some of Woodbridge Pool's registered programs and drop-in demand could be accommodated. The ongoing and long-standing permits, such as the Vaughan Aquatics Club and Vaughan Stars Diving Club would likely have difficulty finding space at alternative centres.

Financial Overview

Recreation and Culture revenues generated from the pool area from swimming programs, pool rentals, recreational swimming, Aquafit passes and leadership training totalled \$ 270,109 in 2010. The Recreation & Culture direct operating expenses at Woodbridge Pool in 2010 were \$ 273,792 (includes aquatics staff only and materials/supplies). Building and Facilities costs for the pool portion of the facility are approximately \$250,000 dollars.

Pool specific capital investments have been made over the years to meet current building code requirements and also to reduce annual operating costs. It is estimated that approximately \$85,000 will be invested over the next two years for additional repairs to maintain minimal facility standards. Future, pool specific, capital improvements include replacement of the domestic water boiler and replacement of diving boards and stands at a cost of \$40,000 and \$45,000 respectively.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, this report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:
Service Excellence – Providing service excellence to Citizens
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE:
Promote Community Safety, Health & Wellness

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

There is no direct impact as a result of this report.

Conclusion

Based on the update to the Active Together Master Plan, planned for 2012, the Woodbridge Pool should remain open pending the findings. Should the final decision be to decommission the Woodbridge Pool, staff will have a plan in place to relocate the programs and services with as minimal as possible impact to the community and user groups.

Attachments

None.

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Respectfully submitted,

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