

# Staff Report to Council

Facilities

FILE: 02-0810-07/21

REPORT DATE: February 16, 2021      MEETING DATE: February 23, 2021  
TO: Mayor and Council  
FROM: S. Ahrabian, Manager of Engineering & Facilities  
SUBJECT: Harris Park Outdoor Pool – 2021 Service Cancellation

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:



---

RECOMMENDATION(S): THAT Council:

- A. Receive for information the Staff Report titled 'Harris Park Outdoor Pool – 2021 Service Cancellation' as presented at the February 23, 2021 Council Meeting; AND
- B. Direct staff to cancel the 2021 season at the Harris Park Outdoor Pool; OR
- C. Other.

## PURPOSE

To provide a summary of the necessary protocols, operational challenges and additional costs associated with operating the Harris Park outdoor pool during the pandemic and provide recommendations for Council's consideration.

☐ Information Report      ☐ Decision Report      ☒ Direction Report

## DISCUSSION

### Background:

Harris Park outdoor pool consists of a 157.62m<sup>2</sup> (8.84m x 17.83m) pool basin, a perimeter pool deck with select bench seating and both a men's and women's change room/washroom. The Harris Pool is quite small when compared to pools in other

municipalities, with an occupancy of 62 bathers. In summer 2020, due to the pandemic and in order to protect the public from exposure to COVID-19, the City decided to cancel the 2020 pool season.

Pools in some other municipalities remained open in 2020 with limited occupancy (in some cases less than 20% of the usual bather load) and programming. Neighbouring pools are substantially bigger than the Harris Pool.

Recreation Excellence, the City's pool operator, usually begins their program advertisement, resource planning and pool start-up in early February of each year. However, under the current circumstances, they have pushed their planning and programming to early March to allow the City to make a final decision on the pool operation as late as possible.

### **Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:**

Parks and Leisure Fee-Setting Bylaw No. 2010 – outlines admission rates

### **Analysis:**

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer a person comes to other people and the amount of time they spend near each other. Also, the risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Higher risk situations require adequate protocols to address the risk and effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

In line with Provincial guidelines, the pool should only be operated if adequate controls can be maintained. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the pool area, it is important that proper precautions be taken both in and outside of the pool to protect users. Staff have reviewed the relevant information from the Health Authorities in BC, high-level plans for neighbouring municipalities and discussed operation with Recreation Excellence in order to establish the below guidelines:

- Reducing maximum bather loads to minimize the number of patrons in the pool environment at one time. Capacity accounts for all users within the fenced pool area. This is to ensure there is adequate space in the pool, on pool decks, and in washrooms.
  - Public swim set up with 12m<sup>2</sup> unencumbered area around each patron, 9 to 12 swimmers in pool basin with allowance for unencumbered access points;
  - Swim lanes set up to accommodate maximum 2 swimmers per lane, total of 6 swimmers in basin;
  - Physical distancing of 2m must be maintained at all times;
  - No spectators within the pool area;

- Public swimming will be available through pre-booked blocks of time for families and individuals to avoid crowd gathering, minimize/reduce wait times and control/track the number of patrons;
- Implementing defined swim times with defined cleaning times in between. No exit/re-entry permitted;
- Limiting change room and washrooms access to ensure social distancing can be maintained;
- Patrons to arrive ready to swim and leave without using the showers;
- Removing shared floating devices and pool toys;
- Increasing deck space and eliminate potential of gathering by removing benches;
- Increasing the frequency of cleaning and disinfection and establishing a disinfecting station;
- Possibility of adding a second entrance/exit to the fenced area to help facilitate physical distancing and one direction travel;
- Installing plexiglass at entrance to protect staff interacting with public;
- Training of lifeguards on COVID-19 rescue procedures.

Unfortunately, these protocols will have a large impact on the usual Harris Pool experience, but they are necessary to ensure the safety of users and operators. Recreation Excellence is developing a comprehensive COVID-19 Safety Plan that will outline the procedures they would put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and action plans should a suspected case arise.

There are varying water depths in the pool, with a small shallow area of about 32m<sup>2</sup>. Users often travel frequently throughout the areas during public swimming, making it challenging to determine the appropriate occupancy and enforce social distancing. In some cases, enforcement of social distancing and specific protocols can be challenging among younger age groups. For these reasons, a range is provided for the maximum number of users and is subject to change.

### Recommendation

With the current restrictions, the uncertainty of future restrictions, the small size of the Harris Pool, the significant reduction in the number of users benefiting from the pool season, necessary changes to programming and additional costs, operation of the Harris Pool is not considered a viable option for 2021. For these reasons, staff recommend not having a 2021 pool season.

Moreover, Harris Park is a very popular area for families and the spray park is in close proximity to the pool; leaving the pool closed would eliminate one attraction at an already well-attended park, which helps the public to practice social distancing as recommended by the health authority.

Note that the Harris Spray Park will be operational in 2021 similar to 2020 and open from approximately June to September.

As more information becomes available, restrictions change and vaccination occurs throughout 2021, the procedures would be revisited with the intent of operation in 2022.

### COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- ☐ Principled Governance   ☐ Balanced Economic Prosperity   ☐ Corporate Excellence  
☒ Community Spirit & Wellbeing   ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives  
☐ Not Applicable
- 

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- ☐ None   ☐ Budget Previously Approved   ☐ Referral to Business Planning  
☒ Other
- 

Under the current circumstances, it will be more costly to operate the Harris Pool than it has been in past years. Additional services are required that affect the pool operational costs, such as cleaning and sanitization, reservations and programming, and the pool operator's staff time. The operational cost for 2021 would be \$110,400.20, an increase of about 46% from the previous \$75,727 annual service fee. This increased cost would be applicable to the COVID-19 Safe Restart Grant, which the City received \$3.6M for.

Currently, staff are working with Recreation Excellence to finalize the pool contract renewal for the 2021 and 2022 season. There will be a pandemic clause as part of the contract with a timeline and fee schedule attached to the scope of work. This allows the City to make an informed decision at key milestones and in the event that the pool needed to be closed mid-season, what the estimated fee would be for work completed up to that date. Should Council wish to continue with a 2021 pool season, the fees for management, program advertisement, resource planning and pool start-up would begin to be incurred by early March. The estimates costs per month are outlined in the table below.

Table 1 – Expenditures Per Month	
Timeline	Cost
March/April	\$37,768.54
May	\$4,046.66
June	\$10,536.00
July	\$25,854.00
August	\$25,854.00
September	\$6,341.00
Total Operating Expenditure (excluding GST)	<b>\$110,400.20</b>

Note that the cost above does not include the annual repairs and maintenance budget or the \$10,000 capital project for pool basin repairs.

---

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

☒ Inform    ☐ Consult    ☐ Involve    ☐ Collaborate    ☐ Empower

Comment(s):

If the pool is closed for the 2021 season as recommended by staff, the public would be informed through the City's website and social media accounts. Recreation Excellence would also inform patrons.

---

## KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral    ☐ Yes    ☒ No

---

## SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Salia Ahrabian,  
Manager of Engineering & Facilities

Reviewed by:

Samantha Maki,  
Director of Engineering & Operations

---

## ATTACHMENT(S):

None.