

**TO:** MAYOR & COUNCIL  
**FROM:** GENERAL MANAGER LANDS AND FACILITIES AND DEPUTY  
GENERAL MANAGER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE  
**SUBJECT:** **CENTRAL PARK POOL COVER PROJECT UPDATE**  
**PURPOSE:** To provide Council with the outcome of staff's additional investigation and community engagement results regarding options to cover an outdoor pool.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** plans to install a cover at Central Park Outdoor Pool, as outlined in the report titled "Central Park Pool Cover Project Update" dated August 28, 2023, be abandoned.

## **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

I concur with the recommendation of the General Manager Lands and Facilities and the Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture.

### **1.0 POLICY SECTION**

The recommendations within this report correspond with the goals and values in the *Corporate Strategic Plan (2017)*, and align with the City of Burnaby's purpose "to create the city that we all want to live in and be in."

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

At the December 14, 2022, Financial Management Committee Meeting, staff provided Council with an update regarding short and long term outdoor aquatic facility planning. The report discussed several options to support the delivery of aquatic services during the construction of the planned Burnaby Lake Aquatic and Arena (BLAA) project. At this time, staff were directed to investigate options to cover the Central Park Outdoor Pool, which were later presented to Council in February 2023. Council provided authorization for staff to proceed with preparing a project concept design and feasibility study including an updated Class D cost estimate for a Tensioned-Membrane Modular Structure.

At the July 10, 2023, Open Council meeting, staff presented two options to cover Central Park Pool including a cover only option estimated at \$3,675,000 and a fully winterized pre-engineered steel building option estimated at \$7,350,000. Subsequently, Council referred the report back to staff for further analysis of aquatic needs and the options including consultation with the community.

### **3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

Aquatic space across the region remains in short supply as neighbouring amenities have also been closed for redevelopment, including pools at Simon Fraser University and in the City of New Westminster. This shortage has been offset somewhat by the opening of the new Coquitlam YMCA earlier in 2023.

In anticipation of the closure of the now decommissioned CG Brown Pool and construction of the new BLAA, Kensington Outdoor Pool was fitted with a temporary deck cover. This has allowed for use of the Pool from October through May, primarily for the use of swim clubs, artistic swimming and water polo. While the deck cover provides some protection from the elements, it does not provide full protection and is not heated. This has resulted in complaints from some user groups.

All of the City's outdoor pools were built in the early 1960s and were never designed for winter use. While the buildings are typically winterized to prevent annual freezing, the staff areas, pool deck and change rooms are not heated. Furthermore, each of the City's outdoor pools are nearing the end of their useful operational lifespan and additional use of the Pool during winter is likely to reduce its lifespan further. Being designed and built in the 60's, the outdoor pools are limited in their functional design, and do not meet many of today's inclusive design standards. The Parks, Recreation and Culture (PRC) department is currently undertaking an Outdoor Aquatics study to understand and plan for the City's outdoor aquatic needs for the next 20 years.

#### **3.1 Aquatic Service Delivery Needs**

The closure of CG Brown Pool has primarily affected the city's aquatic clubs, who were the largest users historically. On average, CG Brown Pool provided 29 weekly hours of use for all aquatics clubs. By operating a 25-meter outdoor pool, such as Kensington, the City is able to provide up to 41 additional hours weekly. As aquatic user groups primarily serve youth, these hours are provided before and after school and weekends. Covering a 50-meter pool, such as Central Park, would provide double that time and ultimately lead to an excess of time related to aquatic club use.

#### **3.2 Community Consultation Results**

Outdoor pools provide a unique and important experience, particularly during the summer months. While covering a pool provides additional aquatic space during the fall and winter, it also significantly changes the experience during the summer.

The PRC Department recently completed a brief community engagement process to solicit the public's feedback on the proposed options to cover an outdoor pool. PRC staff attended each outdoor pool at least once during the week of July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup>. A public survey was advertised and held during this week. The survey was also emailed directly to the city's aquatic clubs and all seven responded. Renderings of the proposed covers were provided to the public through this process (**Attachment 1**).

In total 298 responses were received through the survey. Staff also received direct feedback from a number of individuals. The results of the consultation are provided in **Attachment 2**. Nearly 75% of respondents indicated they either "hated" or "did not like" either option. 43% of respondents indicated they "hated" or "did not like" a partial cover at Kensington Outdoor Pool, while 28% either "love" or "like" it. While the community response to cover Central Park Pool was not favourable, it is the preferred option for aquatic clubs as 46% of clubs indicated Kensington does not currently meet their needs.

### **3.3 Recommendations and Next Steps**

As noted above, staff previously presented two options to cover Central Park Pool, which ranged in costs from \$3,675,000 to \$7,350,000 (Class D estimates, +/- 25%). Pursuing either of these options will significantly increase the cost per swim public subsidy to between approximately \$13.19 per person to \$55.53 per person depending on the chosen option (**Attachment 3**).

Considering the feedback received from the community, the financial impacts and the fact that the lost aquatic hours from the closure at CG Brown Pool can be accommodated through the temporary continued year-round operation of Kensington Outdoor Pool, staff do not recommend moving forward with a cover at Central Park Outdoor Pool. While staff recognize Kensington Outdoor Pool does not fully meet the needs of aquatic clubs, it does provide additional pool use at a reasonable cost while respecting the needs of all pool users who enjoy the outdoor summer experience Central Park provides.

A city-wide Outdoor Aquatic Facility and Service Strategy is currently underway and is expected to be completed in late 2023. This will provide a long-term vision for the provision of outdoor aquatic services with short, medium and long-term implementation goals.

## **4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Staff will continue to work with the City's aquatic clubs to meet their ongoing needs as best as possible. No further engagement regarding the options for covering an outdoor pool are planned at this time.

A robust public engagement process is planned as part of the Outdoor Aquatic Facility and Services Strategy and will take place in the fall of 2023.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As staff are recommending that plans to cover the Central Park Outdoor Pool be abandoned, there are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

Respectfully submitted,

James Lota, General Manager Lands and Facilities and Mary Morrison-Clark, General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Central Park Pool Cover Renders

Attachment 2 – Public Survey Results

Attachment 3 – Subsidy Per Swim

## **REPORT CONTRIBUTORS**

This report was prepared by Carmen Gonzalez, Deputy General Manager Parks, Recreation and Culture