



To: COUNCIL

Meeting Date: 11/18/2020

Subject: Future Outdoor Pool Operating Strategy

Submitted By: Hardy Bromberg, Deputy City Manager Community Development
Cheryl Zahnleiter, Deputy City Manager Corporate Enterprise

Prepared By: Lesley Head, Director of Recreation & Culture
Lisa Keys, Manager of Facilities

Report No.: 20-236(CRE)

File No.: N/A

Recommendation(s)

THAT Report 20-236(CRE) re: Future Outdoor Pool Operating Strategy is received;

AND THAT Council endorse Option 1d set out in this report to have the George Hancock Pool remain open until the end of the 2024 season and to have the Kinsmen Soper Park Pool remain open until the end of the 2021 season;

AND FURTHER THAT Council refer the funding required for option 1d in the amount of \$347,000 in 2021 to the 2021 budget discussion of Budget and Audit Committee.

Executive Summary

Purpose

The City of Cambridge strives for excellence in recreational programming through experienced program delivery and inclusive facilities.

Since 2015 staff has been working to develop a strategy to address the aging aquatic infrastructure within the City of Cambridge. With the City's Recreation Complex expected to open in 2025, there is a question as to future investment into recreational programming, which includes operating programs from community outdoor pool facilities.

Both indoor and outdoor aquatics programs significantly contribute the City's recreational landscape. The development of an outdoor aquatic strategy is consistent

with the strategic goals related to creating and supporting safe sport and recreation opportunities within the community.

As part of the process, staff engaged in a collaborative decision-making strategy that included the development of a decision matrix that identified four key criteria associated with the functionality of the outdoor pools; alignment with the Corporate Strategy, Financial Impacts, Community Impacts, and alignment with the Asset Management Policy.

Key Findings

The City of Cambridge currently offers aquatics programs at two indoor pools; WG Johnson Centre and the John Dolson Centre, and three outdoor pools; Ed Newland Pool, George Hancock Pool (Hancock Pool) and Kinsmen Soper Park Pool (Soper Pool). Collectively, there are a variety of aquatics programs for all ages and abilities that serve over 144,000 bathers per year. The City also maintains close partnerships with over 20 different community of groups that provide a variety of aquatic programming for all ages and abilities to the community. Hancock and Soper pools offer 30% of these programs to roughly 9% of the overall bathers.

The City of Cambridge owns and operates over 70 facilities supporting a wide range of programming, including arenas, pools, older adult services and administrative and operational support services. The facilities portfolio has a combined square footage of over 1,000,000 square feet with the age of facilities ranging from 1 year old to over 100 years old. The City takes pride in providing exemplary facilities for the community to prosper and there are regular maintenance and capital programs that support this infrastructure.

With regards to the decision of operating outdoors pools, there are multiple options that Council could consider for the future of Hancock and Soper Pools. Regardless of the option, there is significant investment required on behalf of the City to continue with our current aging outdoor aquatic infrastructure.

Financial Implications

If Council endorses **Option 1d: George Hancock Pool remain open until the end of the 2024 season and that Kinsmen Soper Park Pool closes in 2021** as set out in this report, a one-time capital investment of \$347,000 to support continued operations at Hancock pool until 2024 would be required. This would require an additional capital project be added to the 2021 Budget with funding allocated from the Facility Maintenance Reserve Fund.

The financial implications of the other proposed options are set out in the body of this report.

This report does not identify additional funding requirements that are required to develop the properties at Hancock and Soper Pools once the buildings are decommissioned. Funding requirements would include a capital investment to implement enhanced community infrastructure, which could include park land, splash pad, skate park or multi-purpose use.

Background

The 2015 Recreation Facility Needs Assessment Report concluded that the city's present and future aquatic infrastructure requirements would best be served by a new multi-purpose indoor aquatic facility - the City's Recreation Complex. This was further confirmed through the Multiplex Concept Design and Operating Implication study (2016). Neither study identified the need for outdoor aquatic facilities.

At the Budget and Audit Committee Meeting of December 14, 2017, the Committee resolved that the outdoor pools would remain open for the upcoming year and that staff was to report back to Council if there were any major repair requirements needed. Council members have also expressed at times a desire to keep both pools open until the end of the 2024 season, as the City's new recreation complex is expected to open in 2025.

During Budget and Audit Committee in 2019, staff indicated that the outdoor pools would open for the 2020 season and a more comprehensive report would be presented to Council in advance of budget review for fiscal year 2021. This report represents staff's deliverable to present a comprehensive report to Council ahead of the 2021 budget review process.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the opening of both Hancock and Soper Pool in 2020 were suspended as part of the City's cost containment strategy.

This report provides options regarding the futures of Hancock and Soper pools. It does not include discussions on the future of Ed Newland pool, as it is not in need of significant capital investment in the near future.

Analysis

Strategic Alignment

PEOPLE To actively engage, inform and create opportunities for people to participate in community building – making Cambridge a better place to live, work, play and learn for all.

Goal #7 - Transportation and Infrastructure

Objective 7.3 Provide innovative leadership in the management of city assets to help plan, fund and maintain city assets in a sustainable way. Objective 7.3 Provide

innovative leadership in the management of city assets to help plan, fund and maintain city assets in a sustainable way.

Based on the City's corporate strategic plan and staff analysis, it is advised that Council support a strategy to provide direction to the operation of outdoor aquatic recreation within the City. Further analysis and recommendations contained within this report take into consideration affordability, sustainable planning and user needs.

Ensuring that the City is providing safe, reliable recreation facilities remains a top priority.

Comments

Hancock Pool

Hancock Pool has served the community since 1950 and is located on an unique property tucked within a residential setting in southwest Cambridge.

Utilization

The pool is open approximately 12 weeks a year, from the middle of June until Labour Day, and open up to approximately 10 hours a day. For the last 5 years (2015-2019), the pool has averaged roughly 7,200 swimmers each season with an average program fill rate of 48%. Program intake experienced a slight increase in the last 5 years; from 48% in 2015 to only 53% in 2019. The pool did not open in 2020 due to program restrictions related to COVID-19.

Annual Operating Costs

The annual operating budget for Hancock Pool equates to just over **\$115,000** and includes:

- Expenses: \$149,500 for staffing for recreation and maintenance, programming supplies and materials, general maintenance and utilities.
- Revenues: \$34,300 from lessons and public swims.
- Cost recovery ratio of 23%
- Operating cost per swimmer \$16.00

Operating costs for Hancock Pool have been forecasted until fiscal year 2024. Any option that contemplates closure prior to 2024 would result in corresponding operating savings for each fiscal year that the pool is no longer open.

Short-Term Infrastructure Needs

For the options noted in the body of this report that contemplate Hancock Pool closure within 3-5 years, there would be up to two infusions of capital investment required to maintain operations, including replacements related to the pool liner, boiler system, and

pool filtration system. These costs vary depending upon the length of time but are within the range of **\$64,500** (3 years) and **\$347,000** (5 years), respectively.

Long-Term Infrastructure Needs

In 2017, a building condition assessment calculated the replacement cost of the building at roughly \$2,700,000 with a 10-year infrastructure need of \$762,000. These costs would apply in any of the options noted below that contemplate Hancock Pool remaining open indefinitely. Infrastructure needs required to keep the pool open for the long-term include the replacement of the sanitary line, roof, parking lot and sewer drainage system, boiler systems, pool liner and concrete pool deck.

Keeping Hancock Pool open indefinitely, staff recommend upgrading the building to meet the City's Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS). These costs have not been accounted for and further investigations are required to confirm accurate funding for these upgrades.

Any of these major infrastructure projects would also involve hydrogeological considerations, as the facility was constructed above underground water sources and the property sits beside the main artisan well where the Middleton Street pumping station is located. This will require consultation with the Grand River Conservation Authority and the Region of Waterloo prior to any major repairs or renovations. Additional costs associated with these considerations are unknown at this time and have not been represented in this report.

At minimum, if Hancock Pool was to remain open indefinitely, a capital cost of **\$762,000** would be required with further investigations into accessibility requirements and hydrogeological considerations.

Decommissioning Facility

Any option that contemplates a closure will also have associated decommissioning costs. Decommissioning Hancock Pool would require a one-time cost of roughly **\$250,000**. Decommissioning costs have been represented in 2022 of the 2020-2029 capital forecast strategy.

Optional uses for the property upon decommissioning could include park land, splash pad, skate park and multi-purpose use.

Soper Pool

Soper Pool has served the community since 1962 and is located within a well utilized park that features walking trails, disc golf and close proximity to Galt Gardens, in south-central Cambridge.

Utilization

The pool is open approximately 12 weeks a year, from the middle of June until Labour day, and open up to approximately 10 hours a day. For the last 5 years (2015-2019), the pool has averaged over 5,800 swimmers each season with an average program fill rate of 46%. Program intake experienced a significant decline in the last 5 years; from 81% in 2015 to only 22% in 2019. The pool did not open in 2020 due to program restrictions related to COVID-19.

Annual Operating Costs

The annual operating budget for Soper Pool equates to just over **\$62,000** and includes:

- Expenses: \$89,200 for staffing for recreation and maintenance, programming supplies and materials, general maintenance and utilities.
- Revenues: \$26,700 from lessons and public swims.
- Cost recovery ratio of 30%
- Operating cost per swimmer \$11.00

Operating costs for Soper Pool have been forecasted until fiscal year 2024. Any option that contemplates closure prior to 2024 would result in corresponding operating savings for each fiscal year that the pool is no longer open.

Short-Term Infrastructure Needs

For the options noted in the body of this report that contemplate Soper Pool closure within 3-5 years, there would be up to two infusions of capital investment required to maintain operations, to address replacements related to the sanitary line, roofing membrane, pool liner, boiler system, and pool filtration system. These costs vary depending upon the length of time but are within the range of **\$95,000** (3 years) and **\$431,000** (5 years), respectively.

Long-Term Infrastructure Needs

In 2017, a building condition assessment calculated the replacement cost of the building at roughly \$1,900,000 with a 10-year infrastructure need of \$537,000. These costs would apply in any of the options noted below that contemplate Soper Pool remaining open indefinitely. Infrastructure needs required to keep the pool open for the long-term include the replacement of the sanitary line, roof, boiler systems, pool liner, pool filtration system, and concrete pool deck.

Keeping Soper Pool open indefinitely, staff recommend upgrading the building to meet the City's Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS) These costs have not been accounted for and further investigations are required to confirm accurate funding for these upgrades.

At minimum, if Soper Pool was to remain open indefinitely, a capital cost of **\$537,000** would be required with further investigations into accessibility requirements.

Decommissioning Facility

Any option that contemplates a closure will also have associated decommissioning costs. Decommissioning Hancock Pool would require a one-time cost of roughly **\$180,000**. Decommissioning costs have been represented in 2022 of the 2020-2029 capital forecast strategy.

Optional uses for the property upon decommissioning could include park land, splash pad, skate park and multi-purpose use.

Options for Outdoor Aquatic Recreation Services

Both Hancock and Soper Pools have played a significant role in recreation opportunities for the community for many years. As the City expands these opportunities through the construction of the City's new Recreation Complex, a number of factors should be considered when determining options for the operations of the outdoor pools. Accordingly, a Decision Matrix was developed that rated each option below against a number of strategic criteria including:

- Consistency with Corporate Strategic Plan:
 - Does the option align with the Corporate Values of People, Place, Prosperity?
 - Does the option provide value to the recommendations highlighted in the Corporate Strategic Plan?
 - Does the option reflect feedback noted from the Community?
- Financial Impacts:
 - Does the option positively impact fiscal responsibility?
 - Does the option result in a net zero impact to the tax base?
 - Does the option align with capital budgets?
- Community Impact:
 - Does the option provide continued levels of service to the community?
 - Does the option fill a service gap for the community?
 - Does the option serve a broad spectrum of community members?
- Alignment with Asset Management Policy:
 - Does the option align with the goals and objectives of the Asset Management Plan? i.e., Financially sustainable infrastructure providing customer levels of service
 - Does the option reduce the infrastructure gap?
 - Does the option reflect a minimum life cycle cost strategy?

Each option was rated by staff within each Division that is responsible for the strategic criteria, including Corporate Strategy, Finance, Recreation and Asset Management. Each criteria was equally weighted with a potential score of 10 points.

Option 1: Continued Levels of Service

The options are outlined in the report below and include a brief description of the option, the financial impacts of the option and the allocated score from the decision matrix.

Please note that for the purposes of comparing financial impacts under each option that the annual operating budget for either pool has not been considered. Currently both outdoor pools have been forecasted for operating dollars until 2024.

Option 1a: Hancock AND Soper Pools will remain open indefinitely

This option reflects the opportunity to keep both Hancock and Soper pools open beyond the opening of the City’s new Recreation Complex, as a continued opportunity for outdoor aquatics for the community.

1a: Hancock AND Soper Open Indefinitely	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$0	\$0
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$762,000	\$537,000
Accessibility Upgrades	Further Investigations Required	Further Investigations Required
Decommissioning Costs	\$0	\$0

This option receives a score of **1.5 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1b: Hancock Pool remains open indefinitely and Soper Pool remains open until 2024

This option reflects the opportunity to keep Hancock Pool open beyond the opening of the Joint Use Complex, as a continued opportunity for outdoor aquatics for the community. Soper Pool would continue to operate until the end of the 2024 season; providing continued outdoor aquatics until the opening of the Joint Use Complex.

1b: Hancock Open Indefinitely, Soper Closes 2024	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$0	\$431,000
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$762,000	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	Further Investigations Required	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$0	\$180,000

This option receives a score of **3.7 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1c: Hancock and Soper Pools will remain open until the end of the 2024 season

This option reflects the opportunity to keep Hancock Pool open until the opening of the Joint Use Complex, as a continued opportunity for outdoor aquatics for the community until the opening of the Joint Use Complex.

1c: Hancock AND Soper Open until 2024	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$347,000	\$431,000
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

This option receives a score of **3.9 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1d: Hancock Pool remains open until end of season 2024 and Soper Pool closes in 2021

This option reflects the opportunity to keep Hancock Pool open until the end of the 2024 season; providing continued outdoor aquatics until the opening of the Joint Use Complex. Soper Pool will remain open for one season, closing in 2021.

1d: Hancock Open until 2024, Soper Open until 2021	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$347,000	\$0
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

This option receives a score of **4.5 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1e: Soper Pool remains open until end of season 2024 and Hancock Pool closes in 2021

This option reflects the opportunity to keep Soper Pool open until the end of the 2024 season; providing continued outdoor aquatics until the opening of the Joint Use Complex. Hancock Pool would remain open for one season, closing at the end of the 2021 season.

1e: Soper Open until 2024, Hancock Open until 2021	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$0	\$431,000
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

This option receives a score of **4.8 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1f: Both Hancock and Soper Pool remains open until Catastrophic Building Component Failure

This option reflects the opportunity to keep both outdoor pools open until there is either a catastrophic failure of one of the major building components, including pool liner, roof membrane or concrete pool deck, or there is an order from Public Health to not open.

1f: Hancock AND Soper Open until Component Failure	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$0	\$0
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

This option supports the strategy of run-to-failure as a maintenance strategy where maintenance is only performed when equipment has failed. Unlike unplanned and reactive maintenance, proper run-to-failure maintenance is a deliberate and considered strategy that is designed to minimize total maintenance costs. This strategy would support the avoidance of any major capital investment and would force closure of the facility based on a catastrophic building component failure. This approach is unpredictable, difficult to anticipate and adequately plan for staffing resources. This approach can cause a negative impact on the community without the ability to plan and prepare for a closure of long standing recreation facility.

This option receives a score of **4.8 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 1g: Hancock Pool and Soper Pool close in 2021

This option reflects the opportunity to keep both Hancock and Soper pools for one season, discontinuing operations after the 2021 season. This scenario results in a similar outcome as Option 1f however, there is a pre-determined end date and staff can plan ahead to systematically close the pool and provide the community with a defined opportunity to celebrate the life of the pools.

1f: Hancock AND Soper Close 2021	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$0	\$0
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

This option receives a score of **6.1 points** on the decision matrix.

Option 2 - Closure of Hancock and Soper Pools and Explore Opportunities for St. Andrews Estate Pool (External Request for Support)

The City of Cambridge received a request from the St. Andrews Estates Home Association requesting financial support from the City to assist in the continued operation of their outdoor pool facility. St Andrew's Estates Homes Association is a privately owned and operated neighbourhood pool and tennis court. All operational costs are covered by membership fees and there is no additional revenue. COVID-19 has severely impacted the membership fees paid which support the seasonal operation of the facility. There are a great deal of expenses and maintenance to be covered and as such the volunteer board is looking to find solutions and assistance where available.

Staff met with representative from the Association to review the condition and use of the facility. At this time staff feels this would not be a recommended partnership for the following reasons:

- Inability to integrate with fees for municipal recreation
- Very limited capacity for public access
- Not compliant with required accessibility legislation
- Current condition and overall state of facility
- Limited parking and facility access

Without the completion of a building condition assessment it would be unknown at this time what the full costs would be to operate this facility.

This option receives a score of **2.6 points** on the decision matrix.

Decision Matrix Summary

To summarize the results of the decision matrix, the table below outlines each of the options measured against the strategic criteria.

Option	Description	Total Cost	Score
Option 1a	Hancock AND Soper Pool remain open indefinitely	\$1,299,000 + Accessibility + Hydrogeological	1.5
Option 1b	Hancock open indefinitely, Soper open until 2024	\$1,373,000 + Accessibility + Hydrogeological	3.7
Option 1c	Hancock AND Soper open until 2024	\$1,208,000	3.9
Option 1d	Hancock open until 2024, Soper open until 2021	\$777,000	4.5
Option 1e	Soper open until 2024, Hancock open until 2021	\$861,000	4.8
Option 1f	Hancock AND Soper open until Catastrophic Failure	\$430,000	4.8
Option 1g	Hancock AND Soper open until 2021	\$430,000	6.2
Option 2	Hancock AND Soper close, acquisition of St. Andrew's Pool	Condition Assessment + Accessibility	2.6

Though the decision matrix resulted in Option 1g: Hancock and Soper Pool remain open until 2021, staff recognize the significance that both outdoor pools bring to the community. As such, staff recommend **Option 1d: Hancock Pool remains open until end of season 2024 and Soper Pool closes in 2021** to provide for at least two outdoor pools that remain available to the community, one of which is the Ed Newland pool, until the opening of the Recreation Complex in 2025.

This option provides opportunities for continued aquatics programs support through the operation of Hancock Pool until the transfer of services to the City's Recreation Complex in 2025.

Existing Policy/By-Law

There is no existing policy/by-law that impacts this report.

Financial Impact

If Council endorses the recommendation for **Option 1d: Hancock Pool remains open until the end of the 2024 season and that Soper Park Pool closes in 2021**, there are a number of financial implications, as outlined in the chart below:

1d: Hancock Open until 2024, Soper Open until 2021	Hancock	Soper
Short-Term Infrastructure Needs	\$347,000	\$0
Long-Term Infrastructure needs	\$0	\$0
Accessibility Upgrades	\$0	\$0
Decommissioning Costs	\$250,000	\$180,000

Specifically, this option will require an additional capital maintenance investment of \$347,000 to provide continuous operations at Hancock Pool, which would be funded through the Facility Maintenance Reserve Fund.

This report does not identify additional funding requirements that are required to develop the properties at Hancock and Soper Pools once the buildings are decommissioned. Funding requirements would include a capital investment to implement enhanced community infrastructure, which could include park land, splash pad, skate park or multi-purpose use.

Public Input

Although minimal consultation with the public has been conducted to date, staff recognize the impacts that operating these pools would have on the community through the decision matrix criteria. Consultation on aquatics infrastructure within the City has been ongoing through the engagement process as part of the Joint Use Complex project.

Internal/External Consultation

Staff in Recreation, Recreation & Culture, Facilities, Project Management, Community Development, Corporate Enterprise, Office of the Chief Financial Officer and the Corporate Leadership Team contributed to the content of this report.

Conclusion

The City of Cambridge strives for excellence in recreational programming through experienced program delivery and inclusive facilities.

Since 2015 staff has been working to develop a strategy to address the aging aquatic infrastructure within the City of Cambridge. With the Joint Use Complex expected to open in 2025, there is a question as to future investment into recreational programming, which includes operating programs from two community outdoor facilities.

Through an extensive, collaborative process with key internal stakeholders, including Corporate Strategy, Finance and Asset Management, staff developed a decision matrix that identified four key criteria associated with the functionality of the outdoor pools. Each of the identified options were reviewed and rated to reflect an associated score.

In addition, based on the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, there could be a number of factors that would result in Soper Pool remaining closed for the 2021 season, including lifeguard staffing shortages and anticipated low attendance. Staff will follow-up with Council regarding the status of re-opening Soper Pool in the Spring of 2021.

Though the results identified the most relevant option as Option 1g: Hancock and Soper Pool to remain open until 2021, staff recognize the significance that both outdoor pools bring to the community. As such, staff recommend that Council approve **Option 1d: Hancock Pool remains open until end of season 2024 and Soper Pool closes in 2021.**

Signature

Division Approval

Reviewed by the CFO



Reviewed by Legal Services

Name: Lesley Head
Title: Director of Recreation & Culture

Departmental Approval



Name: Cheryl Zahnleiter
Title: Deputy City Manager Corporate Enterprise Department



Name: Hardy Bromberg
Title: Deputy City Manager Community Development Department

City Manager Approval

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Calder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Name: David Calder
Title: City Manager

Attachments

N/A