



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of September 6, 2018

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** August 17, 2018
From: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities
Subject: Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre Replacement Project – Initial Parking Alternatives Review

RECOMMENDATION

That Council;

1. Direct staff to consult with stakeholders and residents from the North Park neighbourhood on neighbourhood street parking options associated with a distributed parking approach; and
2. Approve \$40,000 to be funded from 2018 Contingencies, to complete an investigation of underground or covered parking options in Central Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the July 19 project update for the Crystal Pool Replacement Project, Council approved a *no net loss of park space* target and directed staff to explore alternatives for parking associated with the new recreation facility. Over the past two months, the project team, in collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, developed an approach to accommodating the new park-space-preservation target, as well as the anticipated parking needs of users of the future facility.

As outlined in the previous report to Council, the new facility is expected to see a significant increase in visits by residents of Victoria and the region. Fortunately, there are opportunities to accommodate a variety of transportation options at this centrally located, urban site. The proximity to public transit routes, major roads, as well as the cycling network, provides many patrons with the ability to choose the method that meets their needs or abilities. It is projected that many users of the new recreation facility will continue to travel by vehicle. This includes an increased number of visitors with mobility challenges, for whom the new building is designed to accommodate.

Transportation consultants engaged on the project have previously identified a requirement for parking, up to 140 spaces, to serve the needs of visitors to the new facility. As with most service facilities, the proximity of parking is an important factor for many patrons. The consultants have recommended the majority of spaces be located within a four-minute walk (350m) from the facility. Dedicated parking for those with mobility challenges is recommended within 30m of the facility entrance.

The project team is recommending that Council endorse an approach that will; i) test the viability of a distributed parking model with the local neighbourhood, and ii) confirm the design and cost implications of an underground or covered parking facility.

The distributed parking approach consists of three component areas to address the majority of parking needs; a small surface parking area in Central Park, expanded street parking capacity on Queens and Pembroke Streets (from 91 to 143), and access to public parking lots next to Royal Athletic Park and Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre.

In order to accommodate the increase in street parking capacity renovations would be necessary to existing infrastructure (ie curbs, paving, drainage, lighting, landscaping) on the three blocks. Over the past few weeks, schematic designs for the potential street parking changes were developed and a cost estimate prepared for the potential new scope of work. The project team would like to test this concept with residents of the neighbourhood, who would be most impacted by the changes. There are impacts and risks associated with this model, identified in this report, that require further analysis prior to determining a recommended course of action.

Staff also see value in a fulsome review of the costs and benefits of providing parking in an underground or covered facility, within Central Park. This analysis will provide key information, which will allow Council to make an informed decision about the most appropriate direction forward on this matter.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the outcome of an initial analysis of parking options to reduce potential impacts to park space, as directed at the Committee of the Whole meeting of July 19, 2018.

BACKGROUND

The Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre Replacement Project team provided Council with a status update on July 19, 2018. The presentation included a description of the initial assessment of transportation considerations associated with the new facility, and the design of a surface parking lot (3,000 square metre, 96-107 stalls) in Central Park, which would consolidate the majority of parking needs in one location. Following the presentation, Council provided new direction;

That staff be requested to examine alternatives for providing parking for pool users to ensure no net loss of park space.

The total area of Central Park, within the boundaries of the property line, is approximately 32,000 square metres. The existing Crystal Pool facility, associated hardscape, and parking lot occupies approximately 7,040 square metres (22%) of the park. Therefore, the “no net loss” target means that the impact of the new facility and parking area cannot exceed 22% of the total park area.

Immediately following the July Council meeting, the project team initiated the review of a potential distributed parking model to explore the key benefits, risks and general viability of this option. With Council approval, the balance of the assessment will be undertaken in a fulsome manner, which will inform a final recommendation.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

The anticipated demand for vehicle parking associated with the new facility is approximately 140 spaces, according to the study by Watt Consulting. To guide updates to the facility and site design to meet the new park space target, the project team developed an approach that prioritizes a number of considerations;

- Minimizing impact to green space and trees
- Ensuring facility parking is convenient, accessible, and promotes high utility (below the upper limit of a four-minute walk (~350m) of the new facility)
- Ensuring there is temporary (ie time limited) parking for visitors to the neighbourhood
- Maintaining the required amount of residential-only parking
- Encouraging and increasing the use of sustainable transportation modes, including walking, transit and cycling
- Integrate street parking considerations with the “shared road” All Ages and Abilities cycling improvements planned on Vancouver Street in 2019 and future changes to Central Park
- Minimize costs to the City

There are essentially two methods of providing parking for the new facility; centralized and distributed. The centralized options consist of either surface or underground parking. A large surface parking lot in Central Park is not compatible with the new park preservation target. An underground/covered option has not yet been investigated, however, this analysis is recommended for Council's consideration.

The project team has initiated the exploration of potential options to increase capacity through a distributed model; the details of which are outlined below.

Facility Design and Site Parking

As a baseline for updating the site design to meet the 22% park impact target, the project team has reduced the size of the surface parking lot proposed for Central Park from approximately 107 to 20 stalls. This size allows the total footprint of the facility (as presently designed) and parking lot to occupy no more than 22% of the overall park space. Should the facility footprint decrease in size through future value engineering, it is possible that the parking area may be incrementally increased, within the target.

Neighbourhood Parking

At present, there are approximately 91 street parking spaces available for public use, within a four-minute walk of Central Park. The project team has identified the potential to expand the parking capacity on two of these streets, to provide an additional 52 spaces, as shown below (Table 1.0).

To verify the technical requirements for each of the potential street adjustments, a schematic design exercise was completed. This work also informed the development of the associated cost implications. While all of the potential adjustments noted above are technically feasible, the potential expansion of 14-16 more spaces on the 1000 block of Pembroke Street is not recommended. This section requires a high cost to implement and is of lower overall value due its location, which is furthest from the new facility and on the opposite side of the Vancouver Street cycling route. A map of the locations for each of the potential new parking locations and design details are attached to this report (Attachment A). It is important to note that these new spaces

would be available for use by anyone visiting the neighbourhood and not dedicated for visitors to the new facility.

Table 1.0

Street/ Block	Existing Street Parking Capacity	Potential New Street Parking	Total Potential Street Parking Capacity
Queens St 900 Block	19	21	40
Pembroke St 800 Block	28	15	43
Pembroke St 900 Block	19	16	35
Pembroke St 1000 Block	25	0*	25
Total	91	52	143

**Potential for new spaces, however not recommended*

Nearby City Parking Lots

The City-operated public parking lot at Vancouver and Caledonia Streets, across from Royal Athletic Park, offers another potential parking option for visitors of the new recreation centre. Although slightly beyond the preferred distance, this lot may be utilized to provide a quantity (ie 20-25 spaces) of time-limited parking for visitors, within the overall 220 spaces. The project team has conducted an initial assessment of this opportunity; which represents a less beneficial option due to distance, and further analysis would be required to best configure and manage the space for customers.

Finally, the project team also considered the public pay-parking lot operated by the City's partner, RG Properties, which manages Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre. The proximity of the lot to the new facility is within the desired distance and, while dedicated space for visitors to the new facility is not an option, although patrons will have the ability to use this lot outside of arena events.

In summary, the potential exists to provide an overall increase in parking spaces through a distributed approach, to meet much of the anticipated demand of the new facility.

OPTIONS & IMPLICATIONS

Recommended Options

(A) Endorse further analysis of the distributed parking approach outlined above

The project team understands that Council's new direction places a high priority on the retention of park space in this urban neighbourhood. Based on the feedback provided by Councillors, it is also understood that some residents in this neighbourhood may accept the potential increase in traffic on the streets around the park, in order to reduce the impact to park space. In order to refine the designs proposed, staff would like to engage with stakeholders and residents in this neighbourhood through a formal process, to seek feedback on the proposed changes.

Risks

There are risks associated with the proposed approach. From a customer service perspective, it is important for visitors to have clarity about the location of parking availability, to avoid confusion and potential safety concerns. While it is optimal to have a single parking location, the proposed approach focuses on a number of additions, within close proximity to the new facility. There will be impacts on the local neighbourhood, primarily related to increased traffic circulation and localized delays at intersections, as patrons seek an available parking spot. Upgraded infrastructure, wayfinding, communications and other administrative supports would likely be necessary to mitigate associated impacts. The fact that these spaces would not be reserved for facility visitors may result in competition for spaces at certain periods. Additional concerns identified include the potential loss of up to six trees and approximately 1,300 square metres of grass area, along the boulevard on Pembroke and Queens Streets.

Providing additional capacity in the vicinity of the new recreation facility is feasible and relatively inexpensive, but presents a challenge when allocating use for patrons, represents reduced convenience compared to a dedicated parking facility, and introduces additional traffic pressures in the neighbourhood. These issues would need to be carefully assessed against other parking alternatives to determine the best balance of service delivery, cost and protection of greens space. Additional analysis and consultation would provide clarity of these trade-offs and suitable mitigations.

Financial Impacts

As previously noted the cost of constructing the surface parking lot and associated loading and passenger drop-off areas in Central Park were anticipated in the project budget. The project team retained Herold Engineering to develop cost estimates based on the designs developed for the potential street parking enhancements. A detailed summary of all associated costs is provided in Attachment B. The total budget for implementing the neighbourhood street parking changes outlined here, in accordance with City standards, would be approximately \$900,000. This figure does not include any ongoing operational or parking management requirements that may be applicable.

The approved project budget did not factor an allowance large enough to accommodate site requirements (parking, loading, drop-off/pick-up, and landscaping) as well as the cost for street parking renovations. If endorsed by Council, staff recommend that Council refer the additional budget for the change in scope to the 2019-2023 financial planning following completion of public consultation.

(B) Direct staff to explore the costs and benefits of providing parking for the new facility, through an underground facility, that also preserves park space

Staff have previously responded to Council regarding the potential costs and benefits of underground parking, at a conceptual level based on inquiries received over the past year. The project scope and budget do not currently include this option.

While an underground facility would be much more expensive than either a surface parking lot or the distributed model above, there are benefits such as the ability to consolidate the majority of parking needs and traffic management in one location. There is also an ability to mitigate park impacts through an appropriate roof treatment. The exploration of implications of such an option would require a budget of approximately \$40,000, for design, engineering, and costing services.

Staff recommend pursuing this investigation as part of a comprehensive assessment of potentially viable, future-focused opportunities.

Accessibility Considerations

The new facility is being designed as a leading example for accessibility and inclusivity. All features of the building interior and site considered through a lens that prioritizes access for patrons of all ages and abilities. There are potential risks, relating to equitable access and the quality of the visitor experience upon arriving at the park location, particularly those with mobility challenges. The project team will continue to rely on the expertise of project partners and key stakeholders to ensure such risks are identified and addressed through the assessment of design options.

CONCLUSIONS

The project team continues to progress towards key deliverables in accordance with the schedule recently reported to Council. Over the past two months, the initial analysis of parking alternatives has benefited from additional support and guidance from internal and external subject matter experts. Pending Council approve to proceed with the recommended approach, staff will provide further updates and a formal recommendation on this aspect of the project in the coming months.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Soulliere
Director
Parks Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:

Jocelyn Knapis
Aug 28, 2018

Attachment A – Location and Design of Potential Street Parking Changes
Attachment B – Cost Estimate for Street Parking Changes (Herold Engineering)