



Committee of the Whole Report

For the Meeting of May 9, 2019

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** April 28, 2019
From: Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities
Subject: Project Update: Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre Replacement

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Direct staff to initiate a feasibility study in coordination with School District 61 and community stakeholders, to investigate the potential for the new community recreation facility to be located next to Central Middle School;
2. Direct staff to amend the 2019 Financial Plan Bylaw to allocate up to \$260,000 from the Buildings and Infrastructure reserve for this study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

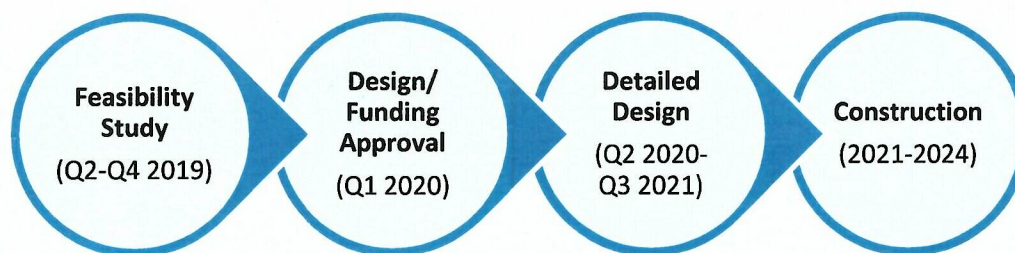
At the November 22, 2018 Committee of the Whole meeting, Council approved two motions relating to the Crystal Pool and Wellness Centre Replacement Project and other community amenities. The first motion directed staff to explore the potential for siting the new facility in the parking lot next to the City's arena, while a second motion related to a potential new facility consisting of affordable housing, a park, childcare, parking and other complimentary uses for the parking lot on Caledonia Street across from Royal Athletic Park.

Over the past several months, staff have focused on the first directive regarding the property at 1952 Quadra Street, currently leased to RG Facilities as part of a long-term agreement for the arena. Staff and representatives of RG Facilities explored the potential opportunities and impacts, in a series of confidential discussions, which were shared with Council in closed meetings. An arrangement acceptable to both parties could not be reached and, as a result, staff have drafted this report on potential siting options.

Staff offer for Council consideration two potential site options for the new community recreation centre and related amenities; the City-owned parking lot across from Royal Athletic Park at 940 Caledonia, as well as a new option on land owned by School District 61 next to Central Middle School. The school site is a new opportunity, which has arisen recently through dialogue with representatives of both organizations about mutual objectives.

Council approval is requested to initiate the necessary feasibility study, which will confirm the facility design and necessary funding requirements.

The graphic below offers a tentative summary of the various phases of work and associated timeframe.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to review siting options and seek Council direction on the preferred location for the new community recreation centre and related amenities.

BACKGROUND

In February 2017, following the presentation of an independent study on community needs and the future of Crystal Pool, Council decided on replacement of the recreation facility in a new location, rather than renovating or rebuilding on the existing site. At the time, councillors acknowledged the dire condition of the existing facility, and prioritized continuity of service for citizens who rely on the programs and services provided at the centre. Council and staff also discussed the anticipated impacts to the park, particularly the disruption during construction, and highlighted the need to include residents in planning changes to the park following demolition of the existing facility.

Throughout 2017 until November 2018, the project team progressed through deliverables including; approval of a project plan, schedule, budget, and risk management framework; refinement of conceptual designs into more detailed plans for the facility and immediate surroundings; extensive public engagement; partnerships with funding agencies, and progress updates to Council.

In November of 2018, Council received information from residents, including individuals from the North Park neighbourhood, requesting exploration of a new site for the facility, in order to expand neighbourhood park space and consider additional amenities.

On November 22, 2018 Council approved the following instructions to staff;

1. *Wrap up design development work on the current proposed project (Project A), and not submit an application for the initial intake of the Investing in Canada Funding Program.*
2. *a) Ask staff to report back with a scope and budget to develop a plan and budget for citing the facility on the arena parking lot including consideration of the amenity and partnership opportunities roughly outlined in the North Park Neighbourhood Association submission at the Committee meeting of November 15, 2018 (Project B). b) Report to Council quarterly on this process.*
3. *Write to the \$1 and \$6 million funders, respectively, and pursue opportunities for extending the timeline for funding availability.*

4. *Continue to work with the federal and provincial governments to pursue options for funding for Project A and Project B (once more clearly defined) including the wider range of funding options and partnerships that may be available for a facility or complex with more amenities than only a swimming pool and recreation centre.*

In a subsequent motion, Council also directed that;

Staff explore the RAP (Royal Athletic Park) parking lot land as a potential site for affordable housing, a pocket park, childcare, parking and other complementary uses.

In response to Council's direction, staff coordinated resources and developed an initial action plan. At the end of January, the project team completed the design development work that had been underway for the Central Park site. Staff also reached out to the agencies that had committed funding towards the project, on the change to the project schedule and scope. One of the agencies, the Union of B.C. Municipalities, advised that an extension to condition date would not be approved, and as a result, the \$6 million grant was withdrawn. Meanwhile, Canadian Tire Jump Start Charities agreed to maintain the \$1 million funding commitment for the time-being, and staff have been working with their representatives on an amendment to the funding agreement to this effect.

Over the past five months, staff also engaged with representatives of RG Facilities on the potential for accommodating the new facility in the parking lot area next to the arena. The parties engaged in a good-faith dialogue, however, an acceptable business arrangement could not be reached. With the conclusion of these discussions, staff have updated the information on potential sites, including a new opportunity to collaborate with School District 61.

ISSUES & ANALYSIS

Over the past year, Council has received information from the project team on the advantages and disadvantages of prospective locations for the new facility on City property. In 2018, staff presented information for the two locations in Central Park, as well as the arena parking lot (1952 Quadra St), and parking lot next to Royal Athletic Park (940 Caledonia St). The criteria applied to evaluate the options included variables such as available land area, access, proximity to the central area of the city, programming considerations, integration with existing community amenities, and impacts to neighbouring properties.

In recent weeks, staff and representatives of School District 61 have met to discuss a range of opportunities relating to mutual objectives. In this context, the large open field on the west side of Central Middle School was identified as a location with potential to offer increased community value. Based upon an initial assessment, staff observed that this site possesses a number of redeeming qualities that align with the needs for the new recreation facility. School District representatives have also noted potential benefits for the school population, should the recreation centre be located in close proximity. The co-location of school and recreation facilities is common in jurisdictions throughout the country, often leading to increased utilization of community assets and improved community outcomes (ie social connection, healthy lifestyles, access to programming, etc.).

The table below offers a comparison of the school site to the parking lot at 940 Caledonia St.

High-Level Comparison of Potential Sites

Site	Advantages	Disadvantages
Central Middle School Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprint sufficient to accommodate recreation program (with underground parking) • Central location, close to various neighbourhoods (ie Downtown, Fernwood, North Park, Harris Green, Rockland, S.Jubilee) • Co-location potential with the middle school (ie large gymnasium, program space, outdoor playground and green space) • Close proximity to neighbourhood amenities (ie Vic High School, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria) • Few potential impacts with neighbouring properties or existing trees • Located on primary/secondary arterial roads with multi-modal transportation access (transit, cycling) • Partnership potential with School District 61 for mutual gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property owned by School District (requires agreement) • Loss of greenspace • Construction impact to school operation
940 Caledonia St (RAP Parking Lot)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprint sufficient to accommodate recreation program (with underground parking) • Unencumbered property, City-owned and operated • Central location, close to downtown neighbourhoods • Close proximity to neighbourhood amenities (ie Vancouver St cycle route, Royal Athletic Park, Central Park, arena) • Few potential impacts with neighbouring properties or existing trees • No loss of greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to transit • Construction impact and accommodation of current parking use (including HarbourCats, police vehicles) • Capital cost associated with replacement of existing (220 spaces) as well as new parking underground • Traffic impacts to surrounding residences

Although both locations noted are technically viable, staff suggest that the school location may offer to greater overall benefits to the community, providing the City and School District are able to reach agreement of the use of this land for the new facility. The School District's openness to partnership arrangements for joint use of buildings with community stakeholders is reflected in their long-term facilities plan. The Official Community Plan also contains the following objective with respect to partnerships with other stakeholder groups:

(9.17) Support joint use agreements with the school district, other institutions and private sector to make effective and economic use of recreational and school facilities for community benefit.

A map identifying the two locations is provided in Attachment A.

OPTIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The following are presented for Council consideration:

Option 1 – That Council direct staff to conduct a feasibility study of the Central Middle School site, including the arrangement between the City and School District 61, facility amenities, conceptual design, and cost estimates (Recommended)

A study of the school site will allow the City to clarify, in detail, the opportunities and risks associated with constructing the new community facility next to the school. This would include public engagement on the amenities and impacts, along with details on the partnership between the two organizations, as well as other potential stakeholders. Staff recommend the scope of this study include the existing recreation and wellness program developed for the facility, as well as childcare and affordable housing.

Option 2 – That Council direct staff to conduct a feasibility study of the City property at 940 Caledonia St, including the facility amenities, conceptual design, and cost estimates

Should Council desire a study of the parking lot site, staff would clarify in detail, the opportunities and risks associated with constructing the new community facility next to the sport stadium. This would include public engagement, as well as partnership considerations between the City and other potential stakeholders. Staff recommend the scope of this study include the existing recreation and wellness program developed for the facility, as well as childcare and affordable housing.

Financial Impacts

To carry out the analysis, staff recommend Council approve up to \$260,000 from the Buildings and Infrastructure Reserve for the necessary professional expertise.

As noted in previous reports, time is of the essence for this project, due to the state of the existing facility, which contains numerous barriers to access and is at end of life, along with the continued increases in the cost of construction. Staff are seeking Council approval on the preferred site through this report to activate the feasibility study immediately. The study will require several months to complete, with a final report planned in the forth quarter of 2019.

Accessibility Considerations

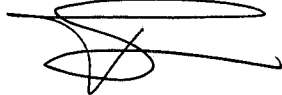
The new facility will be designed as a leading example for accessibility and inclusivity. All features of the building interior and exterior are considered through a lens that prioritizes access for patrons

of all ages and abilities. The project team will continue to rely on the expertise of project partners and key stakeholders to ensure potential barriers are addressed through the assessment of design options.

CONCLUSIONS


This infrastructure project is one of the City's largest and its delivery will positively impact the health and wellness of citizens of all ages living in our community. Staff recommend Council approve the proposed collaboration with School District 61 to clarify the specific opportunities and costs associated with this co-location.

Respectfully submitted,



Thomas Soulliere
Director
Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

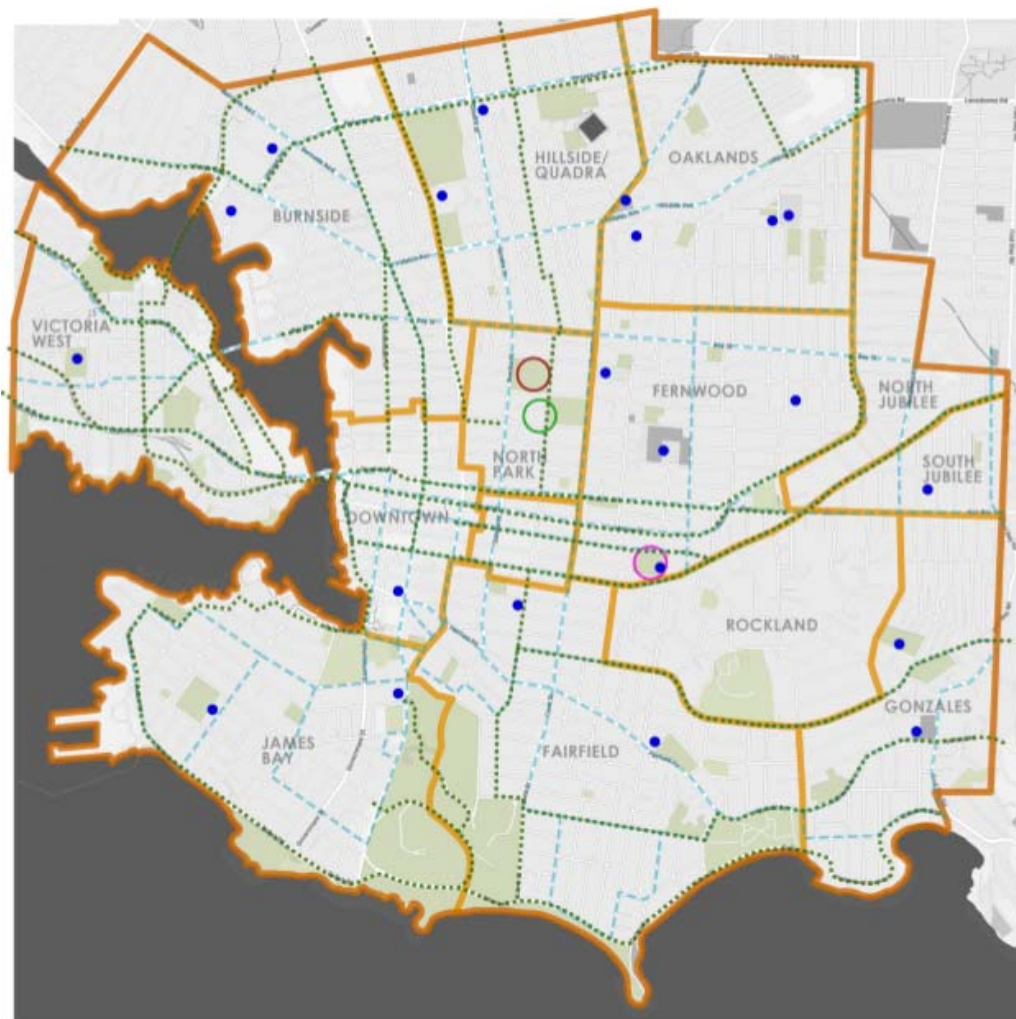

Date: May 3, 2019

Attachments:



Attachment A – Map of Potential Locations

Attachment A

Map of Potential Locations



LEGEND

-  Existing Crystal Pool
-  940 Caledonia Ave.
-  Central School
-  City Boundary
-  Neighbourhood Boundary
-  Bus Routes
-  Bike Routes
-  Green Space
-  Schools