

Date: January 17, 2007



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Sunset Community Centre and Pool**

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## RECOMMENDATION

- A) THAT the Board approve the removal of the existing Sunset Community Centre and Pool at the later of the:**
- (i) opening of the new Sunset Community Centre; or**
  - (ii) end of the 2007 outdoor pool season at Sunset.**
- B) THAT the Board instruct staff to consult with the community on the landscape plans for the space vacated by the Community Centre and Pool, and bring these plans back to the Board for approval.**

## POLICY

The Board approves the removal of buildings and structures on parks.

## BACKGROUND

In October 2005, the Board approved the construction of a new Community Centre on Main Street to replace the existing Community Centre on 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Prince Edward Street. The construction of an entirely new facility at a more prominent location was determined to be more economical than renovation of the old building, based upon a thorough assessment of its physical condition, seismic issues, programmability and siting.

Adjacent to the building is an outdoor pool, which was built in the 1950s. Part of the pool's mechanical plant is housed in the Community Centre, thus rendering the pool inoperable once the existing centre is removed.

The future of this pool and its counterpart at Mount Pleasant Community Centre have been the subject of Board discussion and resolutions since 2002.

In 2002, the Aquatic Renewal Strategy was adopted and included the following:

“Mount Pleasant and Sunset outdoor pools are in worse condition and form part of aging community centres. They should be closed as they wear out and as new indoor/outdoor

opportunities are developed to replace them. No new stand-alone outdoor pools should be developed.”

Prior to adoption of the Aquatic Renewal Plan, the Board had closed similar pools at the Oak and Hastings Community parks, rather than rebuilding them.

The Aquatic Renewal Strategy also included provision for a new Percy Norman Aquatic Centre at Hillcrest Park. This new Aquatic Centre, which includes an outdoor pool component, is presently being tendered.

On October 31, 2005, the Board passed the following resolutions.

- “A. THAT the Mount Pleasant and Sunset Outdoor Pools continue to be operated through the 2006 and 2007 summer seasons, as long as no extraordinary additional costs are incurred in doing so;
- B. THAT the Mount Pleasant outdoor pool be retained at the Mount Pleasant site;
- C. That the Board plan for the continued operation of one or both of the pools for the 2008 season and beyond, taking into consideration the following:
  - the state of readiness of the new Mount Pleasant and Sunset Community Centres
  - the outcome of a public consultation process in the Sunset Community
  - the distribution of public outdoor pools throughout the city
  - the commitment by the Mount Pleasant community to immediately begin fundraising towards building a new outdoor pool in the current location, with the assistance of Park Board staff in providing financial and technical information to support the fundraising efforts, with the proviso that any financial contribution from the Park Board would not likely be available until the 2009-11 Capital Plan at the earliest
  - the availability of operating funds to keep the existing Mount Pleasant pool operating after the community centre has been re-located, until such time as funding can be secured to build a new outdoor pool, or the existing pool becomes inoperable
  - should the consultation process in the Sunset Community identify retaining an outdoor pool in that location as a priority, the availability of operating funds to extend the life of the current pool, and identification of capital funding to build a replacement pool;

- D. THAT staff be directed to meet with representatives of the Mount Pleasant community to consult on fundraising for a new outdoor pool, with the initial meeting to take place no later than January 31, 2006;
- E. THAT staff be directed to report back to the Board with recommendations with respect to the consideration in Part C, on or before March 2007.”

On January 9, 2007 the Board’s Planning Committee received a report back from staff and heard from the Sunset Community Centre Association and some local residents. The Association delegation noted their resolution in support of the Park Board Aquatic Renewal Strategy with reference to the demolition of the old Centre and Pool, and the need for green space in their community. The Committee also heard from delegations in favour of retaining a swimming pool at Sunset.

The Planning Committee concluded as follows:

“The Planning Committee recommended that staff report back on a consultation framework for Sunset Park and report back on the cost and feasibility of keeping the existing Mount Pleasant Community Centre open until 2009.”

## **DISCUSSION**

### Community Centre

Construction of the new Sunset Community Centre is progressing well, with anticipated completion by early summer and the first scheduled program season starting in September of 2007. The centre staff, programming and budget will be transferred from the old to the new facility, and the old building will be decommissioned. Reusable components, including mechanical and electrical equipment, would be salvaged prior to award of any contracts for deconstruction.

### Pool

The pool was built in the 1950’s and its structural, mechanical and electrical components are at the end of their expected life span. Physically the pool is surviving on borrowed time.

The annual attendance at the pool in recent years has been around 10,000 visits. These numbers contrast sharply with the early days of the pool, when it was one of the few places in town to swim, and people used to line up outside the pool fence, waiting to get in.

The 2006 operating cost was approximately \$84,250 and the patronage 10,557 visits. This yields about \$7.98 per swim, of which \$1.92 was recovered through revenue, leaving a balance of \$6.06, representing the level of Park Board subsidy per swim.

It would be extremely challenging to find money to rebuild Sunset Pool in future Capital Plans, given the many priority projects identified in the Board's approved long range renewal plans. Replacement of the outdoor pool would be in the \$4-5 million range, over and above the capital renewal investment planned in the Aquatic Renewal Strategy. The Aquatic Renewal plan will increase the capacity of the Park Board aquatic system from 1.8 million swims to 2.4 million swims per year. The annual patronage at Sunset would amount to less than half of one percent of this future patronage.

An outdoor pool is being built as part of the new Percy Norman Aquatic Centre, just off Main Street at 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This facility will offer an alternate outdoor swimming experience directly accessible by public transit from the Sunset community.

### Park Development

The site to be vacated by the pool and the Community Centre is adjacent to a formal playfield to the south and a school/school ground to the west. Park objectives for this site might include an expanded playground, informal grass/lawn area, benches, small plaza, community gardens, and/or sports court.

Staff suggest that a community consultation be undertaken around design options for these functions, prior to the Board considering the park redevelopment and budget requirements.

### **SUMMARY**

With the completion of the new Sunset Community Centre, the existing centre needs to be removed. With this removal comes the closure of the pool and the need to develop a landscape plan for the area vacated. This report recommends that a public consultation process for the new public park area be undertaken to determine a design concept for costing and Board approval.

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PR