



July 13th, 2017

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Dave Hutch, Manager, Planning and Research
SUBJECT : **Stan Stronge Therapy Pool**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide:

- An overview of the Park Board's current programming involvement at Vancouver Coastal Health's (VCH) Stan Stronge Therapeutic Pool;
- An outline of how the Park Board might provide programming currently offered out of Stan Stronge following its closure/renewal, and
- A review of a recent proposal from VCH to the Park Board regarding a replacement facility.

Background

The Pearson Dogwood site, at 57th and Cambie, has been owned and operated by Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) for institutional health care uses since the 1950s. The Stan Stronge Therapeutic Pool is one component of the site, providing aquatic therapy and programming to persons with disabilities.

The warm, shallow pool, which requires a medical referral for users, serves both Pearson residents and the Lower Mainland's broader disability community, offering an inclusive space for individuals with physical, cognitive, and developmental challenges.

Stan Stronge Pool - Existing Park Board Programming

The Vancouver Park Board currently runs 7.5 hours of programming at the Stan Stronge Pool. The Park Board is not levied a rental charge as VCH required a community partner per the grant which funded original construction of the pool. VCH provides one lifeguard while the Park Board is contractually obligated to provide an additional lifeguard during Park Board programming.

The Park Board's programming at Stan Stronge consists of:

- 4 hours of "registered adapted swim lessons", within scope of the Park Board's service delivery.
- The additional 3.5 hours of open swim programming offered by the Park Board is currently out of scope for the Park Board - staff or volunteers often become involved in the changing or physical transferring of customers which is beyond traditional scope of staff.



In 2015, Park Board programming accounted for approximately 69 visits a week including users, staff, attendants and volunteer support, or, 16.7% of the pool's visitors. Additional detail on Park Board programming at Stan Stronge is found in Appendix A.

New Pool: Pearson Dogwood Policy Statement

The site has been purchased and is being redeveloped by Onni Group, Real Estate and Property Developments. The Pearson Dogwood Policy Statement (approved by City Council in 2014) provides direction to redevelop the site under the vision of a healthy community, renewing the current health facilities on the site along with a new mixed use community including market, affordable and health care related residential units, commercial space and a new public park.

The replacement of the Stan Stronge Therapeutic Pool, built to current standard, of equal or greater size, and co-located with any new aquatic facilities built on site, is a condition of the site's redevelopment, at no cost to the City¹. The Pool must be completed during Phase 1 of Pearson Dogwood development, which will be delivered in a phased approach in order to maintain health care service levels.

The original December 2015 rezoning application included a proposal to relocate the Langara Family YMCA (YMCA) from their current location on 49th Avenue to the Pearson Dogwood site. Though the Policy Statement recognized this as a complementary use, the inclusion of the YMCA was not a requirement. In March 2016, the applicant informed the City that despite following a three year process to find a feasible approach to the development of a new facility, the YMCA had decided to respectfully withdraw as a partner in the Pearson Dogwood Project.

The YMCA had undertaken significant work with VCH, seeking a design and operating model that met VCH's available capital funding and met the divergent needs required to meet the YMCA's public swimming mandate, as well as provide a therapeutic pool with the necessary user privacy and adapted change facilities.

Vancouver Coastal Health has cited capital concerns without the partnership and has requested flexibility from the City in their policy obligation to replace the existing pool on site. The City is requiring that VCH meet their obligation to deliver the pool on site but will also give consideration to proposals to co-locate with another off-site aquatic facility. Any off-site proposal must demonstrate that it exceeds the current specifications of the existing pool and better meets the needs of the user community.

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- a. ¹ Warm water: 33 degrees C or higher;
 - b. Shallow depth: ranging from 1.0 m to a maximum of 1.5 m, allowing the use of chairs and stretchers;
 - c. Entry ramp: with a gradual slope allowing easy access into the pool for chairs and stretchers;
 - d. Hot tub: incorporated with and accessible from the pool for ease of transition between pools; and
 - e. Support: multiple supports and access devices to support.



VCH Proposal to the Park Board

In fall 2016, Vancouver Coastal Health met with Park Board staff, seeking a contribution to their replacement pool. Staff indicated that they would be prepared to maintain the current relationship whereby the Park Board provides adaptive programming at a VCH owned and operated facility, but that we would not contribute capital funding or pay rental fees to do so. At the time of these conversations, VCH was collaborating with the YMCA and despite this partnership, were short on capital to fund their component of the facility.

In May, 2017, following the dissolution of the collaboration with the YMCA, VCH reached out to the Park Board again, proposing two scenarios for VCH - Park Board partnership to help them in meeting their obligation for a replacement therapeutic pool:

- Scenario 1: “Construction of a new pool (or possible retention of the existing pool) as a stand-alone facility within the Pearson-Dogwood Park.”
- Scenario 2: “Possible Parks Board contribution towards the development of a pool (either in the Park or embedded in a building) to allow for the construction of a pool that will meet both VCH and the broader community’s needs, as the VCH budget will not allow for Park Board use of a replacement facility.”

Scenario 1- Park Board Staff Feedback

The Pearson-Dogwood development includes a 2.5 acre neighbourhood park to serve the additional population. The park will not have sufficient open space to site a facility. Its location was selected in order to maintain many of the site’s most significant trees and will be serving a large population, many with mobility limitations and caregivers, necessitating large areas of passive space, seating and ample, well graded pathways. The park is scheduled to be delivered in Phase 3, whereas the pool commitment is scheduled for Phase 1; in order for health care service delivery to be maintained during construction, phasing will not allow for earlier delivery of the park.

The size of a shared pool facility, built to the Park Board’s community pool standard in order to accommodate greater community use, as well as required parking, would be approximately the size of the park.

Scenario 2 - Park Board Staff Feedback

The Park Board does not require sufficient access to require a stand-alone therapeutic pool to necessitate providing a contribution towards the new therapeutic pool:

- If the renewed VCH pool should be unable to support the 4 hours of registered adapted swim lessons that the Park Board offers at Stan Stronge, this programming could be absorbed at another Park Board aquatic facility.



- The additional 3.5 hours of open swim programming offered by the Park Board is currently out of scope for the Park Board - staff or volunteers often become involved in the changing or physical transferring of customers which is beyond traditional scope of staff. Programming of this nature is highly specialized and is typically provided by specialized health providers, not by municipal aquatic systems. Staff will continue to review leading practices for serving individuals with disabilities in our aquatic system.

If the Park Board were to consider a joint facility with VCH to serve broader public needs, as well as the specialized therapeutic needs, the following should be considered:

- The needs of the therapeutic pool and a public pool differ significantly in their scale, design and programming, and cannot be easily integrated with public facilities. A stand-alone therapeutic pool is not compatible with general public use.
- Should the Park Board partner on a shared facility, the Park Board would be best positioned by constructing a community-scaled pool with the ability to serve 400,000 people, alongside a separate, isolated, purpose-built therapeutic pool, funded by VCH.
- The pool location does not meet the principle of co-location with other Park Board and City-owned facilities such as community centres, arenas and libraries.
- The Park Board is entertaining a nearby partnership with the YMCA, as the service provision mandates are complimentary, and therefore advantageous, to the Park Board in providing additional swimming opportunities in South Vancouver.
- The incorporation of a Park Board pool, built to Park Board specifications would represent a significant change to the rezoning proposal. The rezoning application is going before City Council for a public hearing on July 20th, 2017: The Park Board seeks sites with significant on-street public frontage and would require significant parking, which may not be attainable without a highly revised rezoning application.

The ongoing VanSplash Aquatics Strategy draft recommendations considers the needs of Vancouver's changing demographic, recognizing the need for some of our future facilities to include tanks with warmer water, moveable floors and the improved management of noise. These are appropriate for seniors, as well as adaptive programming. Consideration may be given to future modifications to Kensington Pool, if the Park Board is seeking to offer additional adaptive programming.

Conclusion

Given the minimal level of programming and participation, staff are not proceeding with further discussion with VCH on the therapeutic pool on the Pearson Dogwood site. Staff suggest that the Park Board will face similar challenges faced by the YMCA, a similar service provider to the Park Board, in attempting a partnership with VCH given their budgetary and programming constraints.



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Any adaptive programming currently provided at Stan Stronge Pool within the Park Board's current mandate can be met at existing Park Board facilities, or adaptation of existing facilities such as Kensington Pool.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Hutch". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dave Hutch
Manager, Planning and Research

DH/KA

Copy to: PB Senior Management Team
PB Communications



Appendix A

<p>Registered adapted swim lessons</p> <p>Tuesdays 4:30 - 8:30pm Fall, Winter & Spring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VCH requires doctor’s referral for individuals to participate ▪ Specialized swim instruction to meet the needs of children and youth of various abilities with instructor to student ratios of 1:1 to 1:3 ▪ The smaller size and quieter environment provides less adverse stimulation to children and youth for whom noise and busy atmospheres cause distress. ▪ Lessons are 30 minute sets with parents bringing child/ youth to pool deck with a transfer at ladder to swim instructors ▪ Requires 3 staff (two swim instructors and a PAI mentor (former staff)) ▪ Program benefits from volunteers to assist instructors
<p>Registered open swim</p> <p>Thursdays, 5:30 - 9:00pm Year round (except for pool maintenance closure)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VCH requires doctor’s referral for individuals to participate ▪ Adults arrive with and without attendants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adults without attendants receive support from Park Board staff (3 staff) plus volunteers for changing into and out of swim wear and transfers from street wheelchair to change table to water wheelchair - water wheelchair facilitates ramp access to pool ○ Change and transfer not provided by VCH for non-VCH program attendees ▪ Informal range of motion programming provided as an opportunity for individuals to enhance their joint mobility