

# TORONTO STAFF REPORT

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June 21, 2006

To: Economic Development and Parks Committee

From: Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Subject: Aquatic Service Planning and Indoor Pool Provision Strategy: Progress Report  
(All Wards)

Purpose:

To report on the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group's efforts in support of aquatic service planning and progress in developing Phase Two of the Indoor Pool Provision Strategy.

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Funding for additional consulting services to expand the scope of Phase Two of the Indoor Pool Provision Strategy to include work with the school boards to address their facility requirements is estimated at less than \$50,000.00, which can be accommodated within the 2006 Parks, Forestry and Recreation Operating Budget and which may be offset by contributions from the school boards, reducing net cost to the City.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and concurs with the financial impact statement.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division continue to collaborate with the school boards on the planning and delivery of aquatics programs for children and youth, particularly "Swim to Survive" programs, including an evaluation of the 2006 pilot program;
- (2) the Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division collaborate with the school boards to attempt to secure funding for aquatics programs, including grants from the Lifesaving Society and from the Provincial and Federal Governments to support aquatics in Toronto;

- (3) the Toronto District School Board be requested to approve the Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision for the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board, as contained in Attachment 1, and confirm its approval to the City by the end of October, 2006;
- (4) the Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision for the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board, as contained in Attachment 1, be approved subject to its approval by the Toronto District School Board by the end of October, 2006;
- (5) the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation be directed to develop, in consultation with the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group, the Executive Superintendent of Facility Services of the Toronto District School Board, and the Superintendent of Capital Planning and Facilities of the Toronto Catholic District School Board, a work program for expanding the scope of the Phase Two Indoor Pool Provision Strategy to consider aquatic facility requirements for educational purposes and objectives;
- (6) the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group develop a joint funding request for both aquatics infrastructure (state of good repair) and ongoing operating costs for pools that would be presented to the Provincial and Federal Governments for funding that advances their objectives related to enhancing the physical activity of citizens and to reducing health care costs in both the short and long term;
- (7) the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation continue to develop jointly with the school boards, as outlined in the Sports Strategy Framework, a capital plan for sport and recreation facilities that include pools, for consideration in the development of a National Infrastructure Program; and
- (8) the appropriate City Officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

At its meeting on June 14, 15 and 16, 2005, City Council adopted Clause 1a of Report 5 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee which, among other things, recommended a vision for aquatics service and indoor pools for the City, including scenarios for the City's aquatics system, and long-term facility provision strategy.

Further, at its meeting on July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, City Council adopted Clause 18 of Report 7 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee which established the terms of reference for the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group, composed of 3 members of City Council, three Trustees from the TDSB, and senior staff from Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the TDSB.

Also at its meeting of July 19, 20, 21 and 26, 2005, City Council, in dealing with Clause 8 of Report 7 of the Economic Development and Parks Committee, adopted resolutions which supported the offering of free swimming lessons for all Grade 3 (age 8) students by the school boards and/or the City and that the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group report to City Council on providing swimming lessons for Grade 3 children and success in funding from federal and provincial governments.

Comments:

In June, 2005 City Council considered a report outlining a strategy for the provision of indoor pools by the City of Toronto for municipal purposes. This "Phase One" report outlined a preferred scenario for long term pool provision, as based on a variety of analysis, including pool utilization, geographic coverage, and public input. Council adopted the report's proposed vision for aquatic services and indoor pools, and directed staff to proceed with "Phase Two" of the pool study, including examination of scenarios and implementation planning.

The following are the highlights of the Vision for aquatic services and indoor pools approved by Council in June, 2005.

"Everybody Into the Pool" - A Vision for Aquatic Services and Indoor Pools

Vision:

The City of Toronto will provide future indoor aquatic services in ways that will maximize child and youth development and lifelong active living. It will do this in a manner which will minimize barriers to accessing the services and provide the best stewardship for the environment.

Key Goals:

Advance the three key foundations of "Our Common Grounds":

- Child and Youth Development;
- Lifelong Active Living; and
- Environment Stewardship.

Aquatics Program Service Areas:

We will support the following seven pillars of aquatic activity:

- Skill Development - teaching swimming skills;
- Recreation - motive is play or fun;
- Sport Training - formalized training at higher level in partnership with others;
- Fitness - lane swimming, water based aerobic classes or training;
- Rehabilitation/Therapy - purpose is rehabilitation and therapy;

- Leadership Training - training of volunteers and employees in aquatic services; and
- Events - opportunities for Toronto athletes to compete in Toronto venues.

Outcomes and Targets:

With improved programming, staff training, user experience, quality of infrastructure, temperature of waters, and facility cleanliness, state of good repair and safety, we will achieve increased participation by Torontonians in aquatic activities.

Targets:

- double the number of swims per capita to 2.2 swims per capita over 20 years;
- develop performance measures by aquatic activity based on completion of an Aquatic Service Plan; and
- position the City of Toronto as a leader in Aquatic Services that will support all seven pillars of aquatic activity.

In July, 2005, City Council established the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group (TAPSWG). This group includes representation from City Council, the Board of Trustees for the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and senior staff from both Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the TDSB. TAPSWG is co-chaired by Councillor Janet Davis and Brenda Librecz, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation. TAPSWG's mandate is to provide advice to the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation in reviewing options for a new partnership between the City and the TDSB. TAPSWG's roles and functions include:

- (i) to explore opportunities for working together to support the development of an aquatics service plan for the City of Toronto;
- (ii) to advocate to the Province of Ontario for policy changes to support aquatic programs and facilities as an eligible component in educational funding formulae, and to support the Province's "Active 2010" Physical Activity Strategy;
- (iii) to provide feedback to staff in the development of the Aquatic Service Plan, including opportunities for joint program content and funding for a universally accessible aquatics program for the City of Toronto;
- (iv) advise and react to options developed as part of Phase Two of the Pool Provision Strategy;
- (v) assist in the development of public consultation processes;
- (vi) explore options for joint capital funding and external partnership funding; and
- (vii) assist in data collection and analysis.

Following these Council directions, work on the Phase Two Indoor Pool Provision Strategy has proceeded and TAPSWG has met 8 times over the fall of 2005 and into 2006. The following sections of this report provide an update and progress report on the activities undertaken or underway on aquatic service and facility planning.

In May, 2006, the TDSB received an update on the progress of TAPSWG.

### Progress in Aquatic Service Planning and Delivery at TAPSWG

TAPSWG has provided an opportunity to discuss and develop a renewed understanding that the citizens of Toronto can benefit from collaborative efforts between the City and the school boards in many ways.

#### i) "Swim to Survive" Program

Significant progress has been made in developing and implementing a pilot program for elementary level students in both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board based on the Lifesaving Society's "Swim to Survive" in-water drowning prevention program.

During May and June, 2006, some 600 students at 13 schools (9 TDSB schools and 4 TCDSB schools) participated in this pilot program. The 2006 pilot program will provide a basis for developing and expanding basic water survival skills to students in Toronto (Grade 3 and Grade 4 levels).

It should also be noted that the provincial government, as part of its Healthy Schools plan, is supporting the Lifesaving Society's Swim to Survive program through a one-time grant of \$935,700.00, announced on May 15, 2006. The Lifesaving Society invites expressions of interest from boards of education and pool owner/operators, such as municipalities, who want to make Swim to Survive training a reality in their boards. City staff have initiated contact with the Lifesaving Society about this funding.

#### ii) Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision

TAPSWG has also provided an opportunity to discuss an integrated approach for overall aquatic service provision for Toronto. An integrated approach to service provision would provide the basis for a more seamless delivery of aquatic service to Torontonians. An integrated approach would help the City and the TDSB, as the two major public sector providers of indoor pools in Toronto, to focus efforts and better coordinate resources.

As a foundation for such an integrated approach, TAPSWG has developed a Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision for the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board, which is set out in Attachment 1.

The proposed Joint Vision is modeled on the Vision adopted by City Council as part of the Phase One Indoor Pool Strategy, but has been expanded to reflect a role in aquatics for the TDSB, as a major pool provider in Toronto. It should be noted, however, that the delivery of aquatics programs is not funded by the current Provincial funding model for education. TDSB stands

alone as the only public school board in the province that funds and delivers aquatic programs. To continue to deliver aquatic programming, TDSB is actively seeking alternate funding sources.

The Phase One Indoor Pool Strategy identified a goal of doubling the rate of “City swims” over the next 20 years from 1.1 swims per capita to at least 2.2 swims per capita (“City swims” being swims provided through City aquatics programs).

Work with the TDSB at TAPSWG proposes a significant increase in the number of swims hosted by the TDSB, from the current annual rate of 0.9 swims per capita to 1.2 swims per capita. This proposed increase, if achieved, would greatly enhance the current aquatic program delivered by the TDSB.

Taken together, the City and TDSB are proposed to increase swims from a combined 2.0 swims per capita to some 3.4 swims per capita.

For both the City and the TDSB, the goal is to provide increased quantity and quality of swims throughout the categories of aquatic services as set out in the following table:

Summary of Existing and Projected Swims per Year

Swim Category	City Swims		TDSB Swims		Combined City and TDSB Swims	
	Total Now	Projected	Total Now	Projected	Total Now	Projected
Recreational	635,550	2,100,000	64,000	110,000	699,550	2,210,000
Fitness	527,400	800,000	55,000	123,000	582,400	923,000
Skill Development	1,057,100	1,300,000	1,800,000	2,500,000	2,857,100	3,800,000
Sport Training	450,050	700,000	178,000	200,000	628,050	900,000
Rehab/Therapy	24,800	200,000	1,800	2,000	26,600	202,000
Events	19,300	200,000	24,000	30,000	43,300	230,000
Leadership Training	53,300	100,000	27,000	35,000	80,000	135,000
Other			77,000	77,000	77,000	77,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,767,500</b>	<b>5,400,000</b>	<b>2,226,800</b>	<b>3,077,000</b>	<b>4,994,300</b>	<b>8,477,000</b>

The proposed joint vision in Attachment 1 should be approved by both the City and the TDSB as the two main providers of aquatic services and facilities in Toronto. It will provide the basis for a new partnership between the City and the TDSB with respect to aquatic services and indoor pool facilities.

An integrated approach to service provision based on the joint vision would guide both the individual and collective efforts of the City and the TDSB as aquatic service and facility

providers, including potential for collaboration and synergies between service and facility providers.

### iii) Progress on Short-term Improvements to City Aquatic Services

In approving the report outlining Phase One of the City of Toronto's indoor pool strategy in June, 2005, Council also directed staff "to undertake the development of an Aquatic Service Plan that would ensure the coordination of operational issues identified in the consultant's report and immediately implement quick start changes to enhance aquatic programs and services and provide an update report in June 2005".

Subsequently, staff developed a Short-term Aquatic Service Plan (with a 3-year time frame).

Initial actions and priorities to increase the number of swims in Toronto's pools and improve pool operations in the Short-term Aquatic Service Plan include:

- developing a marketing plan to help target aquatics program delivery and awareness;
- improving promotions for aquatics programs;
- developing learn-to-swim programs, including "Swim to Survive" programming;
- improving daily maintenance and frequency of cleaning; and
- developing a preventative maintenance program.

The Short-Term Aquatic Service Plan has been presented and discussed at TAPSWG.

### iv) Joint Advocacy for Federal and Provincial Involvement

The City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board have come together at TAPSWG to develop a joint vision and action plans for the delivery of aquatic services. This joint work on aquatics illustrates the benefits of facility and service partnerships, but the support and engagement of federal and provincial governments will be needed to improve opportunities for active and healthy living in our communities, a shared objective of all levels of government.

For example, support for aquatics opportunities for Torontonians will help achieve the provincial government's Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, ACTIVE2010. An action plan of the Ministry of Health Promotion, ACTIVE2010 supports provincial collaboration with major urban centres undertaking initiatives to enhance physical activity.

TAPSWG has developed materials in support of an advocacy effort with provincial and federal levels of government to support aquatics programs and facilities, including better recognition of aquatics as part of educational funding allocations. Currently the cost of pools and aquatic programs are not considered a component of the funding formula for physical education, which is a concern for both the City and the TDSB. There are also efforts underway to develop a long term national program dedicated to sport and recreation infrastructure. As part of its mandate,

TAPSWG members plan to meet with provincial and federal elected representatives and officials in an advocacy role that will emphasize:

- strong partnerships with the provincial and federal governments to work with the City, TDSB and other partners;
- capital investment for both new and renewed aquatic and sport infrastructure; and
- financial support for ongoing operations of pools and programs, including the Grade 3 drowning prevention program.

This advocacy work is consistent with the Phase One Indoor Pool Strategy approved by Council in June, 2005 as well as other Council-approved plans and strategies specific to parks and recreation services and facilities: Our Common Grounds (July, 2004), Recreation Facilities Report (October, 2004) and the Sports Strategy Framework (May, 2006).

#### Progress on Phase Two Pool Indoor Pool Provision Strategy

In approving the report outlining Phase One of the City of Toronto's indoor pool strategy in June, 2005, Council directed staff to proceed with Phase Two of the strategy detailing the pool provision scenarios and implementation planning.

Work to date on Phase Two has focused on 1) further development of scenarios outlined in the Phase One report considered by Council in 2005 and 2) reviewing existing pool facilities and sites to identify which ones have the most potential for consideration as part of the City's system of pools over the next 30 years.

As described in the Phase One report, the City's pool infrastructure is aging, with many pools at or near the end of their expected lifespan. Plans need to be made for replacing this aging infrastructure with larger, higher-quality indoor pool facilities that will attract significantly greater numbers of swimmers than the current network of indoor pools and provide for more efficient and economical operation.

In general, Phase Two work has identified the need for several more pools than the 37-39 pools estimated in the preferred Phase One scenarios, with some 42-45 indoor pools required to achieve service coverage for City purposes. More work is required to ensure the scenarios provide sufficient pool capacity across the City, including population density and geographic barriers to access.

Work at TAPSWG and consultation with TAPSWG on the Phase Two strategy has shown the opportunity and potential benefits of broadening the strategy to consider the school boards' pool requirements for educational purposes. Consideration of the school boards' pool requirements and their overall pool infrastructure would allow a fuller picture of overall aquatic facility needs and would support the development of a more integrated approach to aquatic service and facility provision.



Work on the Phase Two strategy already includes a high-level understanding of the TDSB's aquatic program requirements, based on consultation and collaboration with TDSB to date. The Phase Two work can be expanded to consider the aquatic requirements of the two main school boards. This would expand the scope of the Phase Two work program, requiring additional work by the consultant currently retained by the City to do the Phase Two work. A preliminary cost estimate for the additional work is in the range of \$35,000.00 to \$50,000.00, which can be accommodated within the existing Parks, Forestry and Recreation budget. The school boards may also be able to contribute to the cost of this work, which will reduce the net cost to the City.

As outlined in the Phase One report, implementation of the indoor pool strategy is anticipated to occur over 20-30 years. As such, there are ongoing requirements to invest appropriately in the City's existing pools to maintain public service and address opportunities for operating efficiencies (e.g., energy management). This work will need to be part of the City's capital plan, and is estimated to require approximately \$5 million annually as part of state of good repair programs. In light of potential changes to the City's pool network, however, expenditures will need to be evaluated in light of ongoing work on the pool strategy to ensure they provide long term value for the City's pool system.

#### Conclusions:

Further to Council's adoption of a Phase One strategy and vision for aquatic services and indoor pools in June, 2005 and the establishment of the Toronto Aquatic and Pool Strategy Working Group (TAPSWG) in July, 2005, work on planning aquatics programs and facilities has proceeded.

Areas of progress include: 1) a proposed joint vision for aquatic service provision between the City and the Toronto District School Board; 2) a pilot "Swim to Survive" program involving the City and both the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board; 3) development of a short-term aquatic service plan; and 4) advocacy efforts in support of securing federal and provincial funds for aquatics programs and infrastructure in Toronto. The proposed joint vision is recommended for approval by the City of Toronto and the TDSB as the two major providers of aquatics programs and facilities in Toronto.

Work on Phase Two of the indoor pool strategy has progressed, with scenarios outlined in the Phase One report being detailed and analyzed, including consultation with TAPSWG. The proposed joint vision for aquatic service provision between the City and the TDSB presents an opportunity to expand the Phase Two work program to include consideration of educational swims as part of an overall network.

Given the interest in renewed partnerships between the City and the TDSB on aquatic services and facilities, there are benefits in broadening the indoor pool strategy to consider the school boards' pool requirements. Consideration of the school boards' pool requirements and their overall pool infrastructure will allow a fuller picture of overall aquatic facility needs and would support the development of a more integrated approach to aquatic service and facility provision in Toronto.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment 1: Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision for the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board

## Attachment 1

### Joint Vision for Integrated Aquatic Service Provision for the City of Toronto and the Toronto District School Board

The City of Toronto in conjunction with the Toronto District School Board will work to provide future indoor aquatics services that will maximize child and youth development and lifelong active living. This will be done in ways which minimize barriers to accessing services and which provide the best stewardship for the environment.

The Toronto District School Board will focus on swim instruction for all students in the school system while offering fitness swims, CPR training and opportunities for competitive swimmers to participate in swim competitions, e.g., swim meets, synchronized swimming, water polo games, etc.

The City will offer aquatic programs for all children that will enrich school experiences. The City will also offer programs that reach out to others including preschoolers and families, adults and older adults. The City will offer programs and services that provide opportunities for skill and fitness development, family recreation, leadership training, sport development, special events, therapy and rehabilitation.

This vision will be delivered by:

- Providing a quality indoor pool experience which is sufficient to achieve the child and youth development and lifelong active living goals;
- Teaching every Toronto child to safely enjoy the water (and thereby reduce the number of drownings);
- Fostering aquatic fitness activities for all (thereby increasing health and reducing obesity);
- Providing indoor pool opportunities within reasonable proximity (includes all students);
- Removing physical, cultural and financial barriers to using pools;
- Nurturing sustainable partnerships which increase the effectiveness of pool provision and protect long term interests of all citizens;
- Using indoor pools in schools as a key component of a quality Health and Physical Education program;
- Using indoor pool environments as a focal point of community activity;
- Supporting school and community based aquatics clubs and groups;
- Celebrating and showcasing aquatic sport athletes in competition;
- Enhancing health and wellness through using water as an ideal medium for therapy and rehabilitation for able bodied residents and those with disabilities (includes students in specialized schools);
- Fostering opportunities for families to recreate together;
- Realizing the need for providing services differently and providing different services in response to the differing needs of Toronto's various communities; and
- Achieving all of the above using less energy than is now used and being as environmentally efficient as possible.

The main goal for indoor swimming in Toronto is to significantly increase the swim rate over the next 20 years, from 2.0 to over 3.4 swims per capita. For the City, this means an increase from 1.1 to 2.2 swims per capita. For the TDSB, this means an increase from 0.9 to 1.2 swims per capita.

Fundamental to the goal is an increase in both quantity and quality of opportunities in all seven categories of aquatic service: recreational, fitness, skill development, sport training, rehabilitation/therapy, events, and leadership training. Both the City and TDSB also have a goal to increase the overall quality of swims and indoor pool facilities.

Independent of the physical improvements, there are a number of operational issues which will need to be addressed to increase service as well. While the physical improvements may contribute to about 80% of the goal of doubling swim rates and increasing quality, the operational issues will contribute to the remaining 20%.