



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Toronto Beaches Plan – Options for Extending Sunnyside Beach Containment Area

Date:	February 20, 2009
To:	City Council
From:	General Manager, Toronto Water
Wards:	13, 14
Reference Number:	P:\2009\Cluster B\TW\cc09006

SUMMARY

The Toronto Beaches Plan includes a recommendation to construct an enclosed swimming area within Lake Ontario at a location in the Western Beaches. The enclosure is intended to provide a contained body of water that meets Ontario's recreational water quality standard and is suitable for swimming. It will be run as a three year pilot project to gain knowledge about design issues and operating procedures and costs. This report discusses the implications of extending the containment area.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

The Executive Committee, at its meeting held on February 2, 2009 recommended adoption of the Toronto Beaches Plan (Item EX29.2). The committee also requested the General Manager, Toronto Water, to submit a report directly to Council for its meeting scheduled to be held on February 23, 2009, on the options available for extending the containment area for Sunnyside Beach.

See Item EX29.2 in:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/decisions/2009-02-02-ex29-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2006, City Council requested the Deputy City Manager responsible for waterfront redevelopment to prepare both an integrated beach management strategy for the entire City shoreline and also a Western Waterfront Master Plan that includes the shoreline area from Humber River to Marilyn Bell Park. Both studies had to deal with the issue of poor water quality for swimming at the Western Beaches. The Western Waterfront Master Plan also had to consider the future of the Western Beaches Breakwall.

The integrated beach management strategy was presented to the Executive Committee at its meeting on February 2, 2009 under the title of Toronto Beaches Plan and included a recommendation that a three-year pilot project be undertaken at Sunnyside Beach to enclose a portion of the swimming area and provide water that meets Ontario's recreational water quality standard.

The Western Beaches Master Plan is scheduled to be on the agenda of the Executive Committee for its meeting on April 7 and will include both short term and long term recommendations for improvements to the shoreline at the Western Beaches.

The Western Waterfront Master Plan has been presented to the public and received general support. It identifies the installation of an enclosed swimming area in the lake at Sunnyside as a short term measure, consistent with the Toronto Beaches Plan. Should the pilot project for the enclosed swimming area be successful, the second step identified by the Master Plan is scaling up the concept by reconstructing the breakwall and sealing the remaining gaps from Sunnyside to the mouth of the Humber River to create a much larger lake-based pool.

COMMENTS

The intention of this pilot project is to build a full scale prototype of an enclosed swimming area that will be large enough to provide a real operating environment, but also small enough so that any necessary changes can easily be made during the operating season. We will be in a better position to consider expanding to a larger area after gaining knowledge of how the system behaves, how materials stand up to wear and tear, what its environmental impacts are and how much it costs to operate.

Expansion of the containment area for Sunnyside Beach in 2009 is not operationally viable at this time. There is a limited amount of electrical power available at the site to run recirculation pumps and ultra violet lamps and prevents large quantities of water from being treated. The purpose of this pilot project is to determine if water quality can be improved. While our goal is to improve the Sunnyside swimming area, expansion of the site is not financially practical and could prevent completing construction of the beach containment area for the 2009 swimming season.

The current pilot project is not subject to the Province of Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act, but a project involving permanent facilities may be. The Western Beaches Master Plan will cover the first two phases of a Class Environmental Assessment, but further work and public consultation may be required to complete the requirements under the EA Act.

The installation of the enclosed swimming area at Sunnyside in 2009 is entirely consistent with the proposed Western Waterfront Master Plan, and does not preclude any further shoreline improvements envisioned in the Western Waterfront Master Plan. The report to Executive Committee in April on the Western Beaches Master Plan will discuss the implications of extending the enclosed swimming area, as well as other shoreline improvements, beyond the 2009 pilot project.

This report has been prepared in consultation with the Waterfront Secretariat.

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SIGNATURE

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