



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Legacy Usage of the West Channel 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games Venue

Date:	December 9, 2013
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Jim Hart, General Manager, Parks Forestry and Recreation Division
Wards:	All
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SUMMARY

This report outlines concrete ways of ensuing legacy use of the most recent 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games (“2015 Games”) capital project approved by Council.

In May 2013, the City received an official request from the Toronto Organizing Committee for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games (“TO2015”) to use the waterways between Ontario Place and Marilyn Bell Park (the “West Channel”) to host Wakeboard and Water Ski, Open Water Swimming and the swim segment of the Triathlon during the 2015 Games. Certain capital works must be completed to the waterways to meet international competition standards (the “West Channel Project”).

In July 2013, Council granted authority to the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to create a new capital project called West Channel and to direct \$2.42 million of the Toronto Pan Am Sport Centre (“TPASC”) budget savings to fund the new West Channel Project. In that same meeting, Council directed the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to report back on the increased activity and programming that can be accommodated as a result of the planned improvements to the West Channel.

Although there are a number of factors limiting motorsport training and competition in the West Channel, the improvements to the Channel will allow the sports of Water Ski and Wakeboard (“WSW”) to host approximately two elite level boat-towed competitions per year, including regional, national and adaptive amateur events, totaling a maximum of 10 days. This increased use would begin in the 2016 season.

Financial Impact

This report has no financial impact beyond what has already been approved.

DECISION HISTORY

In December 2008, City Council endorsed the City's participation in a bid for the Pan Am Games to be held in Toronto and the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.EX26.6>

In February 2009, City Council approved investments totalling \$49.5 million in six City-owned assets to be used as training, competition or festival venues during the Games.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.EX29.10>

In February 2011, City Council approved additional funding of up to \$47 million and three additional projects, for a total City investment of up to \$96.5 million in a total of nine Pan Am Games capital projects.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.EX2.5>

In July 2013, Council granted authority to the General Manager of PF&R to create the West Channel Project and to fund the Project through the TPASC budget savings. Council also directed the General Manager of PF&R to report back on the legacy usage of the West Channel.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.EX33.14>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Toronto is the official host city of the 2015 Games, and a signatory to the Pan Am Games Multi-Party Agreement (the “MPA”), which defines the rights and responsibilities of TO2015; the Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Committees; and the City, Provincial and Federal governments regarding the governance, financing and delivery of the Games.

During the 2015 Games, the West Channel will serve as the venue for Open Water Swim, WSW and the swim segment of the Triathlon. Both Open Water Swim and the Triathlon swim can occur in the West Channel in its current state. WSW, however, requires a glass-like surface for competition. As a result, the waves created by the motorboat must dissipate/attenuate so they do not affect the skier or boarder being towed by the boat.

Significant wave-attenuating seawall and breakwater reconstruction is required in order for the West Channel to meet standards set by the International Waterski and Wakeboard Federation. This work involves changing the seawall/breakwater from emerging vertically from the lake bottom at a 90-degree angle (against which waves crash and return to the water) to emerging on an inclined plane (against which waves dissipate). This reconstruction is required along both the North and South walls of the West Channel.

The budget for the work on solely the South wall of the West Channel (the “South Wall

Works”) is \$5.5 million, including \$2.42 million from the City of Toronto.

COMMENTS

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff held a joint consultation with representatives of the West End Beaches Stakeholders’ Association (WEBSA) and the President of Wakeboard and Waterski Ontario. WEBSA members are leaseholders of shoreline properties West of Ontario Place and are as follows: Argonaut Rowing Club, Boulevard Club, Sunnyside Paddling Club and Toronto Sailing and Canoe Club. Representatives from the Argonaut Rowing Club and the Sunnyside Paddling Club participated in the joint consultation.

The purpose of the consultation was to discuss the usage needs of the WEBSA members, as well as the usage expectations of the WSW community, and then to determine how best to leverage the planned West Channel improvements by integrating the WSW users into the existing programming.

It is important to note that, in light the construction of the new Western Beaches Watercourse for the 2006 World Dragonboat Team Championships and the resulting increased capacity to host special event competitions, Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff sought out WEBSA to form an advisory committee (Western Beaches Watercourse Advisory Committee – BWAC) to advise on the permitting of the West Channel and other waterways West of the site. Through input from BWAC members, requests for permitted use are coordinated and conflicting requests are resolved.

Critical Limiting Factors

There are critical factors that limit the permitting of WSW training and competition on the West Channel and render hosting such events an onerous task.

(a) Toronto Shoreline Speed Limit

The Toronto Port Authority regulates Toronto’s shoreline. Its Practices and Procedures, made pursuant to the *Canada Marine Act*, are intended to promote, among other things, safe and efficient navigation of the waters in the Port of Toronto. Under Section 59(1)(a) of the *Canada Marine Act*, it is an offence if a person or ship does not follow the Toronto Port Authority’s Practices and Procedures.

Paragraph 14.1 of the Toronto Port Authority’s Practices and Procedures states:

No vessel shall exceed a speed of 5 knots (10 km/hr) within 150 meters of any shoreline or breakwater.

In competition and in training, Wakeboard and Water Ski boats reach speeds in the range of 40 km/hr and 60 km/hr, respectively. As a result, special permission from the Toronto Port Authority to exceed the speed limit for specific time frames must be sought and granted before WSW training or competition can take place.

(b) Impact of WSW Training and Competition on West Channel Traffic

The configuration of the Channel is such that no other vessels can enter the Channel during competition and training for WSW. As a result, vessels entering or exiting the Ontario Place Marina must be restricted, which is both disruptive and inconvenient. In addition paddlers, rowers and sailors are unable to enter this eastern section of the West Channel during competition and training for WSW. As a result of the lack of access during these times, arrangements must be made for Toronto Port Authority officials to be positioned at all openings to the Channel in order to prevent entry by others during WSW competition and training.

Increased WSW Use of the Channel

The wave attenuating reconstruction of the North and South walls of the West Channel will create an international calibre watercourse that will be a highly appealing WSW venue. The site was used for national Water Ski championships until the 1950s and for shows during the Canadian National Exhibition (the “CNE”) from the 1950s to the mid-1990s.

Taking the needs of the flat-water users into account, as well as the above noted limiting factors, it is anticipated that at least two elite level boat-towed WSW events will be held annually, combined with regional and national events, totaling approximately 10 days. There are also special events that could be occasionally added to the total, subject to recommendation by BWAC. All WSW events, annual or special, would occur mid-day, between 10 am to 5 pm, and will allow the flat-water sport participants access to the site during their core training times in the mornings and/or evenings. Flat-water athletes would be allowed access to the site whenever competition or training is not taking place.

(a) Potential Annual Events

- 1 Regional event (3 days)
- 1 to 2 National events, including Water Ski parasport (7 days)
- 1 to 2 Pro International events (1 to 2 days), combined with:
 - Canadian Masters Water Ski
 - Canadian Masters Wakeboard
- Wakestock wakeboarding event (3 to 5 days)
- WSW shows during the CNE (1 to 3 shows/day, approximately 1 hour in length)

(b) Potential Special Events

- Water Ski World Cup stop
- Wakeboard World Cup stop
- Water Ski Show World Championships
- World Adaptive (parasport) Championships
- World Barefoot Championships
- Water Ski World Championships

(c) Potential Event Attendance

Based on recent attendance at similar WSW events held elsewhere, attendance at West Channel WSW events is estimated as follows:

- Regional events - 1,000 to 2,000 per day
- National events - 1,000 to 2,000 per day
- Pro International events – 8,000 – 10,000 per day
- Wakestock – 10,000 per day
- CNE – 5,000 per day

The proposed increased use would begin in the 2016 season.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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