

SH Armstrong Pool Working Group - Final Report

Date: October 4, 2017

To: Community Development and Recreation Committee

From: General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 32 - Beaches-East York

SUMMARY

SH Armstrong Pool, located in the Duke of Connaught Public School in Ward 32, is one of the 27 school pool locations currently used by the City of Toronto for the provision of aquatic program delivery, including swimming lessons and drop-in swimming.

As part of the 2017 Budget process, City Council approved the relocation of programming from SH Armstrong pool to other nearby locations with capacity to accommodate these programs effective July, 2017.

With the availability of temporary funding, Council approved the reinstatement of services at the pool from September to December, 2017.

Council also directed the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation to establish a pool working group to develop and review a plan that increased the utilization of the pool's capacity and report back to the Community Development and Recreation Committee on the Pool's performance by the fourth quarter of 2017.

The purpose of this report is to report back on the success of the working group's efforts in increasing the pool's utilization in Fall of 2017 and to request that Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to continue programming at SH Armstrong pool for the first quarter of 2018 until Council makes a decision on the full reinstatement of programs, as part of the 2018 Budget Cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to continue programming at SH Armstrong Community Centre Pool from January to March 2018 and that this interim extension be funded through savings to be achieved from the planned closure of two other Toronto District School Board (TDSB) pools for capital projects in 2018.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The cost is approximately \$0.043 million gross, and \$0.040 million net, for three months of programming from January 1 to March 31, 2018. This can be fully offset by the anticipated savings from the temporary closure of two other TDSB pools planned in 2018, resulting in no net financial impact.

The 2018 Budget submission for Parks, Forestry and Recreation includes a New and Enhanced request \$0.140 million gross and \$0.134 million net and 0.81 FTEs with incremental impacts of \$0.045 million and 0.28 FTEs for 2019 to re-instate programming on a continuous and ongoing basis.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 2017, City Council directed the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to reinstate fall 2017 programming at SH Armstrong Pool on a one-time basis.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.MM31.5>

At its meeting on July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 2017, City Council requested that the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to include the restoration of aquatic programs, including programming for the Hope Shelter, at S. H. Armstrong Pool, for consideration in the 2018 Budget process with other City priorities, and advise the Toronto District School Board of Council's direction.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.CD21.8>

At its special meeting on February 15, 2017, City Council directed the General Manager Parks, Forestry and Recreation to establish a working committee with representatives of Toronto District School Board, school and surrounding community, the New Hope Shelter, Applegrove Community Complex and Toronto Community Housing, and City staff to review and develop a plan that increases the utilization of the pool's capacity and report to Community Development and Recreation Committee on the SH Armstrong Community Centre Pool's performance by the fourth quarter of 2017.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX22.2>

COMMENTS

The SH Armstrong Pool working group was established in May 2017 with representatives from the City of Toronto - Parks, Forestry and Recreation and Social Development, Finance and Administration Divisions, Applegrove Community Centre, Toronto District School Board Administration, Toronto Community Housing,

representatives from the Ward Councillor's office, School Trustees, liaison for the New Hope Shelter and community members representing preschoolers, school aged children, women, youth and older adults.

The SH Armstrong Pool working group held its initial meeting on May 3, 2017. Subsequent to this meeting, the Pool working group has met frequently with six (6) in-person meetings, two (2) conference calls and a public consultation forum for community members.

Following City Council's authorization to restore programming at SH Armstrong Community Centre from September to December 2017, the Working Group focused its efforts on identifying facility improvements and program changes that would result in higher utilization and a better customer experience. The Working Group's input helped to inform an enhanced offering of instructional and drop-in swim programs for adults, families and children; toddler swim classes, and women-only programs.

The Working Group was instrumental in undertaking a marketing plan for fall programs that included social media, local outreach to residents, schools, agencies and businesses, Councillor and Trustee newsletters, local media, and word of mouth.

The strategy to improve the conditions of the pool through minor state of good repair investments, a refreshed program schedule and a collaborative marketing plan has been very successful. To date, the utilization rate for fall programming is 79% with 562 registrations representing a 100% increase over fall 2016. We anticipate a higher utilization as well as drop-in programming due to the sophisticated network the working group has established, particularly using social media channels. There has also been an additional 400 hours of programming added for fall 2017 over the same period in 2016.

The SH Armstrong Pool Working Group continues to meet regularly and will focus on optimizing non-program times with marketing pool rentals and on programming strategies to support the Red Door and New Hope Shelters. The efforts of the Working Group to optimize the funding opportunity and restoration of services this fall has been effective. With renewed community interest, avoiding a service disruption to residents is desirable in continuing the momentum of programming and community participation at SH Armstrong pool.

While the decision to reinstate services in 2018 has been referred to the 2018 Operating Budget process for Council's consideration, it would be desirable to not disrupt services in January. If approved as part of the 2018 operating budget, staff would plan for sustained services. In the interim, staff require authority to continue services beyond December 2017.

This report, therefore, seeks authority to extend services over the first quarter of 2018 and notify Toronto Lands Corporation ("TLC") and TDSB, to allow services to be delivered at SH Armstrong pool from January through to March, 2018.

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SIGNATURE

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