



ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM

TO: MAYOR J. LEHMAN AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: K. OAKLEY, ACTING DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

NOTED: D. FRIARY, DIRECTOR OF ROADS, PARKS AND FLEET

B. ROTH, DIRECTOR OF RECREATION SERVICES

A. BOURRIE, RPP, ACTING GENERAL MANAGER OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

M. PROWSE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

RE: SPLASH PAD IN SOUTHWEST BARRIE – COMMUNITY SUGGESTION
(FILE: A09-VO)

DATE: JANUARY 7, 2019

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with information that was prepared in response to a suggestion submitted by members of the public through the City of Barrie's online suggestion forum. The submitted suggestion is to build a splash pad in the southwest area of Barrie, with a preference in location for Holly Community Centre. The suggestion obtained enough support from Barrie residents to have staff investigate its viability.

Background

The City of Barrie currently has two water play areas that are independent of water bodies. The first is the Heritage Park spray pad, which functions as a fountain water feature but is available as a cooling water area. The second water play area is located in Lampman Lane Park and opened to the public in 2015. The Lampman Lane facility is termed a Splash Pad, which is specifically designed for water play.

Both locations operate with potable municipal water and are placed adjacent to public access change rooms and washrooms. Both water play facilities are open to the public at no user cost (with the exception of pay parking required at Heritage Park).

Online Suggestion Merits

Resident comments in the suggestion forum convey a desire to create more outdoor drop-in water play options. The benefits expressed in the public suggestion forum for creating a splash pad in the southwest end of Barrie include:

- Being able to avoid the barrier of crossing Highway 400 to get to Kempenfelt Bay.
- Not having to travel so far, closer by bus and walking.
- Increasing the amount of non-centralized water play areas across the city (Lampman Lane is the only other splash pad/water play area not at the waterfront), reduce crowding.
- A great way to get kids out and active and families connecting.

While Holly Community Centre offers pool facilities, there is a cost to residents to access the pool. Limited Open Swim times and pool closures can impact pool use availability for residents during the warm season.

Splash Pads are an alternative to pools that provides a cooling recreational amenity with drop-in convenience and extended hours of operation.

Potential Issues & Concerns

There were no issues or concerns expressed by the public through the online suggestion forum.

Staff concerns include:

- Facility fit: An assessment of the spatial fit adjacent to existing building for public access washroom/change facility, and a suitable size for a variety of water play features has not been completed. Holly washrooms/change rooms are not publicly accessible without paying and should not be considered available to support a splash pad.
- Servicing: An assessment of the existing infrastructure to determine water service connection feasibility, adequate electrical service capacity and any storm water impacts has not been completed.
- Financing: The capital plan does not include a splash pad at Holly Community Centre. In order to provide a full assessment of the costs, additional investigation would be required (splash pad installation, public access change rooms), to propose capital funding strategy for implementation and ongoing operational and maintenance costs.

Analysis and Master Plan Recommendations

Barrie's waterfront is in high demand during the summer months and a need to offer decentralized community cooling activities was recognized in the 2013 Parks and Recreation Growth Strategy (PRGS) and the Hewitt's and Salem Secondary Plans.

The PRGS report recommended a service level ratio of one splash pad for every 5,000 youth (aged 0-9 years). The report inventoried one existing splash pad at Heritage Park and calculated based on this service level that five new Splash Pads in total would be required by 2031 to serve a total population projection of 210,000.

The PRGS report recommended that two new splash pads be installed between 2012 and 2021, with one in Lampman Lane Park and one in the Hewitt's Secondary Planning Area (SPA). Further, it was recommended that once the first two are constructed, the need for additional facilities in the future (in Salem SPA and other) should be re-evaluated by assessing the current use of the existing splash pads and Barrie's demographic makeup, before constructing additional facilities.

Barrie's second splash pad facility was constructed at Lampman Lane Park in 2015.

In 2016, Statistics Canada Census for Barrie reported a total population of 22,745 for youth aged 0-9 years old. This created a ratio of 1 splash pad per 11,372.5 youth, representing an existing deficiency of roughly two splash pads for Barrie's current population when applying the PRGS recommended service level.

In order to build Splash Pads with the required public washrooms, change rooms, parking, and significant infrastructure, staff consider that they are best accommodated next to community centre facilities. Splash Pads are subsequently a proposed amenity associated with each of the new recreation centres in the Hewitt's and Salem Secondary Plans. This will place a splash pad in both the southwest and the southeast sectors of Barrie.

As per the 2018 Capital Plan, the current timing of the development of the Hewitt's Recreation Centre is proposed for construction in 2021 and opening in 2023. The Salem Recreation Centre located in Barrie's south-west corner is projected to be constructed in 2027 and opening in 2029.

A facility assessment update to the PRGS was initiated in the spring of 2018. The new Outdoor Recreation Facility Study will include a reassessment of the splash pad recommendations and is targeted for completion in the first quarter of 2019.

Suggestion Implementation

Once the Outdoor Recreation Facility Study has been completed in 2019, and the Hewitt's Recreation Centre splash pad has been opened, staff propose to re-evaluate the splash pad service level recommendations. Upon completion of the re-evaluation, any proposed projects that were identified will be included into the capital planning process.