



SUBJECT: Future vision of the Waterfront Centre

TO: Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Cttee.

FROM: Recreation, Community and Culture

Report Number: RCC-09-23

Wards Affected: Ward 2, all

File Numbers: 925-01

Date to Committee: June 1, 2023

Date to Council: June 13, 2023

Recommendation:

Direct the Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services to retain a consultant to provide options for the capital renewal and/or replacement of the outdoor amenities at the Waterfront; and

Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to transfer \$60,000 from the Waterfront Reserve Fund to fund the study as outlined in recreation, community and culture department report RCC-09-23.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

Spencer Smith Park is a significant focal point and landmark on the Burlington waterfront, highly sought after by visitors year-round. During winter, the park attracts many visitors who come to the ice rink and the festival of lights. In the summer months, the park experiences a significant surge in visitors, drawn in by many events, walking trails, the spray pad, reflecting pond, and beach access. The Waterfront Centre, which

opened in 2006 and is located within Spencer Smith Park, is home to Spencer's at the Waterfront. Apart from the restaurant, the facility also supports many park amenities, such as parking, the reflecting pond, ice rink, and spray pad, and provides public access to gathering spaces and park washrooms.

The park has seen an increase in visitors and users causing a strain on the infrastructure, and demand on the park washroom that exceeds its' capacity. In addition to the increased usage of the park and its' amenities, over the past number of years we have experienced more precipitation and milder winters which have resulted in a rise in the number of closures to the ice rink due to unsafe ice conditions.

Over the years, there have been several improvements and updates to the facility, including a roof replacement to both the observatory and the restaurant along with interior renovations of the observatory, restaurant, and the lower lobby. The renewals have supported both the public and tenant needs and have been completed in partnership with Spencer's. In December 2019, there was a watermain break that occurred in the lower level which resulted in a full replacement of the pond and spray pad filtration equipment.

The ice plant refrigeration equipment is operated by R-22 (freon). Through government environment action plans, R-22 was removed from production in 2020 and freon equipment will be removed by 2030 and as a result, the ice plant must be replaced. The outdoor components of the spray pad, such as the concrete pad and jets, are also approaching end-of-life. The artificial turf and drainage system is being repaired this spring but will require a full replacement in spring of 2024, in advance of the larger spray pad renewal.

Strategy/process/risk

The need for facility renewal and replacement has provided staff with the opportunity to collectively review the overall services and amenities, including the ice rink, spray pad, and park washrooms, and to improve operational efficiency and community experience. As a result, city staff have developed short- and long-term plans.

In the short term, staff will perform life cycle maintenance on the ice plant and repair the spray pad turf to extend their lifespan. For the long term, staff plan to conduct a comprehensive review of services, amenities, and the operating model with the assistance of a consultant who will provide different design options and Class D costings for each. The consultant will consider service levels and standards, environmental factors, and possible synergies with other projects, such as the Civic Square Renewal, Beachway Master Plan, Parks and Recreation, Cultural Assets Master Plan (PRCAMP), and Climate Resilient Burlington. Additionally, staff have received

feedback over the years, both formally and informally, indicating the need for more seating, park washrooms, and shade structures to support the community's needs at the Waterfront.

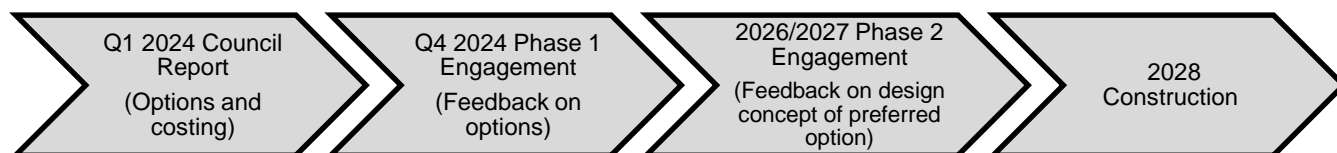
The consultant will develop options with Class D cost estimates based on the following design considerations;

1. Minimize impacts to adjacent greenspace.
2. Materials and options will consider climate impacts.
3. Options will consider community needs.
4. Options will align with the overall downtown vision and partners at the Waterfront Centre.
5. Options will consider accessibility requirements.
6. Capital and operating costs.

In 2024, staff will complete the required renewal of the existing ice plant to extend its' life cycle to 2028 as well as the repairs to the artificial turf and drainage system that supports the spray pad. With the timelines indicated below, staff will report back to council with consultant options along with the various estimated capital and operating costs for each option in Q1 of 2024.

Following a report to council with consultant options and estimated capital costs, staff will engage with the community. The focus of this engagement phase will be to gather input from the community on the renewal and replacement options provided by the consultant to improve user experience and the efficiencies of the spray pad, pond, and ice rink.

Subsequently, a secondary phase of engagement will occur in 2026 and 2027, prior to construction on the preferred concept design based on the information collected in the first phase of community engagement.



Options Considered

Staff have considered a full spray pad renewal in 2025 and a synthetic ice surface for the ice rink. The synthetic ice surfaces that are currently available in the market are not

a viable solution and do not provide the customer with a comparable experience to skating on real ice. The decision to renew the spray pad will be provisional based on the outcomes of the consultant's report.

Financial Matters:

Through report PR-08-15, the Waterfront Centre and the outdoor amenities have operated under a net zero model since 2016, mirroring the operating models at Paletta Mansion and LaSalle Banquet Centre. The net zero operating model allows for an annual contribution to a reserve fund which represents the revenues collected through tenant agreements offset by the operating expenses to maintain the asset.

The reserve fund was designed to financially support any future capital replacements and renewals on a like for like basis. With the rising costs of goods and services along with an unplanned replacement of the freon ice plant system, this will impact the financial forecasts previously estimated.

It is anticipated that the cost for the consultant to complete the review of the renewal and replacement options described within this report is \$60,000. The balance of the reserve fund is \$286,287. The consultant will investigate the options presented and provide concept drawings with Class D costing. With the options and costing provided by the consultant, staff will review the capital renewal forecast along with the operating cost for each options provided to help determine the future operating model of the Waterfront Centre.

Total Financial Impact

Depending on the renewal or replacement options recommended; there may be a need to adjust both the capital and operating models accordingly.

Climate Implications:

The plan to eliminate R-22 has been initiated in phases, the most recent of which occurred on January 1st, 2020, Currently R-22 is only available from recycled and stockpiled supplies, which is very costly. The final stage is to have a complete removal all R-22 by January 1st, 2030; at this time, the government will officially ban the remaining production and import of R-22. The renewal of the ice plant will support the environmental initiatives to protecting the ozone. Future options will consider environmentally friendly replacements of the R-22.

Engagement Matters:

Once staff have options for renewal and replacement that will improve efficiencies of the spray pad, pond, and ice rink, the community and stakeholders will be engaged along with improved community experience. With the council approved options staff would complete phase 1 of community and stakeholder engagement in the summer and winter of 2024 to hear from the park visitors and amenity users.

With preferred options by the community and council, a phase 2 engagement will be completed prior to construction to select a preferred concept design.

Staff will also have meaningful conversations and engagement with the tenant to discuss synergies with facility renewals and lease renewal negotiations to align with any outdoor amenity's construction.

Conclusion:

Given the end-of-life assets and new legislative requirements for replacing the ice plant, there is an exciting opportunity to revitalize the outdoor space as part of the renewal process. After reviewing the considerations and guiding principles, staff are eager to provide options that offer the most promising opportunities for the community. As such, staff recommend the engagement of a consultant to provide guidance on effective operations and options, as well as cost estimates for construction and maintenance.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Holmes
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Manager of Facility Operations

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Aerial of the Waterfront Centre

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.