

BRIEFING

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Item # 5.2.1

Community Services Briefing to

SPC on Community and Protective Services
2020 December 09

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Beltline and Inglewood Pools – Update on progress of work

PURPOSE OF BRIEFING

This Briefing provides an update on the Beltline and Inglewood Pools program of work initiated by Council direction in November 2019.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In November 2019, Administration recommended the Beltline Aquatic and Fitness Centre and Inglewood Aquatic Centre (Beltline and Inglewood Pools) be closed. These pools require \$600 thousand each in annual operating support, have low utilization, require intensive capital investment, and are located in a service catchment area that overlaps with other publicly accessible recreation facilities.

The recommendation to close the pools raised concern among pool users and community members. Council directed Administration to explore business and service continuity options for the pools and approved interim funding to keep the pools open until Dec 31, 2021. Council also directed Administration to complete a program of work to determine the pools' long-term future. Please see Attachment 1 for Previous Council Direction.

IMPACT OF COVID-19

As directed by Alberta Health Services, and orders declared under the Municipal State of Local Emergency to help limit the spread of COVID-19, all recreation facilities closed on March 15, 2020. Administration paused Council-directed work on pricing, hours and programming changes at the Beltline and Inglewood Pools.

Recreation services and programming at a subset of City-operated facilities are currently being offered under COVID-19 restrictions. Decisions to re-open select facilities are based on a variety of factors including: limiting the spread of COVID-19, customer and user group demand, community needs, availability of other recreation options in the community, and operational costs in light of reduced capacity and available budget. The short and medium-term demand and use of recreation facilities through and post-COVID-19 remains uncertain. At the time of this Briefing, the Beltline and Inglewood Pools remain closed.

PROGRAM PROGRESS

Administration leveraged the pool closures to focus attention and resources on Council's direction to:

- "Provide recommendations... on city-wide recreation infrastructure needs"
- "[Explore] "...a shift to a partner operated model"
- "Identify long-term sustainable service alternatives and targeted investments to maximize community and social benefits"
- "Engage affected community stakeholders"

Please see Attachment 2 for an overview of program actions, progress and results, and next steps for each directive. Below is a summary of key insights. Note: through delivery of the

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program, work to identify service alternatives and targeted investments has been combined with community stakeholder engagement.

KEY INSIGHTS

Regarding city-wide recreation infrastructure needs:

- Other publicly accessible recreation facilities in the Beltline and Inglewood Pool catchment area provide *fundamental aquatics services* (lane swimming, lessons, and drop-in classes). There would not be a gap in *fundamental aquatics services* in the catchment area if the Beltline and Inglewood Pools were closed. There is a gap in the catchment area for *specialized aquatics services* (water slides, zero entry pools, wave pools, and lazy rivers) however there are no reasonable expansion opportunities at the Beltline and Inglewood Pools to close this gap. Administration is exploring *specialized aquatics service* opportunities in the vicinity, including with partner organizations.

Regarding a shift to a partner operated model:

- Request for Information (RFI) results identified insufficient response to warrant moving to RFP at this time and no innovative social and recreational uses were proposed.

Regarding community engagement, service alternatives and targeted investments:

- Calgarians who live, work and play in Beltline, Inglewood and Ramsay have diverse social and recreational needs. A substantial set of data on these needs, collected through engagement and *design research* (research techniques used to understand complex human behaviours and translate those behaviours into actionable insights) with over 850 participants, has been synthesized into a Discover Phase report. Administration will use this data to generate and test ideas and create recommendations. Please see Attachment 3 for an overview of the program's Design Thinking Cycle process and high-level Discover Phase results.
- Administration has been in contact with the owner of the brewery lands surrounding the Inglewood Pool to discuss the owner's long-term land development plans. Administration will seek opportunities to collaborate through any potential development plans to identify and provide needed public amenities.

NEXT STEPS

Administration will continue to progress the Beltline and Inglewood Pools program of work until Q2, 2021. At that time Administration will present a report with recommendations to address the social and recreational needs of the communities, including the long-term future of the Beltline and Inglewood Pools. This report will consolidate: findings on gaps in aquatics service provision and recreation infrastructure needs, results from procurement efforts to gauge third-party interest in these pools, proposed solutions based on engagement feedback, and outcomes from collaborative work with the owner of the brewery land.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Previous Council Direction
2. Program Actions, Progress, Early Results and Next Steps
3. Program Design Thinking Cycle Overview and High-Level Discover Phase Results