

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

2. Reimagining and Replacing Kitsilano Outdoor Pool

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung and Mayor Sim

WHEREAS

1. The Kitsilano Outdoor Pool (Kits Pool) is one of Vancouver's most unique pools and has been a cherished and beloved community asset in the city for 50 years, providing residents and visitors alike with recreational and instructional swimming opportunities;
2. Kits Pool is Vancouver's only saltwater swimming pool and the longest of its kind in North America at 137 metres in length, with approximately the same capacity as fifteen regular sized 25-metre six-lane pools;
3. Kits Pool is heated, has a water park, two slides, is wheelchair accessible, and located in an unbeatable oceanside location;
4. At about 50 years old, and having sustained storm damage to the structure, Kits Pool is now at the end of its service life, with many components failing, deteriorating, and in need of significant repairs and/or complete replacement;
5. Despite investments, membrane renovation work completed in 2018 in response to sustained damage, and further repair work over the past year during the off-season, Kits Pool continues to leak millions of gallons of water daily, and therefore pool chemicals cannot be kept in proper balance to meet established public health standards. As a result, a disappointing decision was made to close the pool entirely for the Summer of 2024;
6. It is expected that the extended closure of Kits Pool in 2024 will allow staff to fully investigate the ongoing water loss and make the needed repairs to the underground piping and basin to extend the facility's useful life on an interim basis through measures such as by installing a cost-effective custom liner, while planning for next steps;
7. An opportunity exists to reimagine and replace Kits Pool to better serve the needs of Vancouverites and the City's growing population, while enhancing accessibility and incorporating sustainable, climate resilient design principles;
8. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation approved the Vancouver Aquatics Strategy (VanSplash) on October 28, 2019 laying out a 25-year vision for the future of aquatics in the City, and made the case for significant capital investment to deliver new pools for residents.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council affirm the value of the iconic Kitsilano Outdoor Pool by committing to an urgent process to reimagine and replace the pool as a priority action for this Council;

FURTHER THAT staff be directed to work in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board to provide a report on an urgent basis regarding all measures that can be taken to sustain the ongoing use of the existing Kits Pool in the interim short-term horizon before a new, reimagined Kits Pool can be constructed and operational, including identifying various costing and funding options.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to expedite the Kits Pool replacement feasibility study work recommended in the mid-term Capital Plan update, in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board, in order to plan for and fund the replacement of Kits Pool with a new, modernized outdoor aquatics facility that is more resilient to climate change, storm, and storm impacts, and report back to Council with recommendations and options to prioritize the pool replacement project in the upcoming 2026-2030 capital plan;

FURTHER THAT this direction to staff include exploration of additional aquatics amenities in association with a replacement Kitsilano Outdoor Pool to provide for the health and wellness needs of residents and pool users, such as whirlpools, steam baths, and greater levels of accessibility, in addition to Kits Pool's primary function for leisure swimming.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to seek relevant funding opportunities for major community infrastructure projects and climate adaptation and resilience projects through senior governments to support the capital costs of a new, modernized, and more resilient Kits Pool.

- D. THAT in recognition of the significant public affection for Kits Pool, staff be directed to engage with Park Board staff and report back by the end of July 2024 with a plan for consideration by Council and Park Board to establish a dedicated fund for the public, corporate and philanthropic sectors to contribute and donate to the capital costs of a new, modernized replacement pool, including plans for a communications campaign to support the efforts to raise funds.

- E. THAT Council encourage Park Board to include Kits Pool in the civic asset sponsorship work currently underway and identify Kitsilano Outdoor Pool as a prime, priority sponsorship opportunity.

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