

# HALIFAX

P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

## Item No. 2

Halifax Regional Council  
November 14, 2017

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

Original Signed by



SUBMITTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Anguish, Director, Parks and Recreation

DATE: November 3, 2017

SUBJECT: **Long Term Aquatic Strategy Approach**

---

### INFORMATION REPORT

#### ORIGIN

- February 7, 2017 Regional Council Meeting Motion:  
MOVED by Councillor Mason, seconded by Deputy Mayor Craig that Halifax Regional Council
  - Approve the use of the Community Facility Master Plan 2 (CFMP2) as a framework for municipal decision-making regarding recreation facilities and;
  - Approve the categorization of the CFMP2 recommendations outlined in Attachment 1 of the staff report dated January 6, 2017, and direct staff to incorporate the recommendations in future annual Business Plans for Council's consideration.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- March 21, 2017 Regional Council Meeting Motion:  
MOVED by Councillor Mancini, seconded by Councillor Cleary that Halifax Regional Council Request a staff report to look at the possibility of building a 50-meter pool in HRM. Staff should consult with community stakeholders including Swim Nova Scotia (SNS) in preparing the report to benefit by technical information, including options and other considerations to inform recommendations for the construction of a 50-metre pool. Options should include looking at building a pool within an existing HRM facility or a stand-alone facility.

**AMENDED MOTION PUT AND PASSED.**

#### LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

*HRM Charter*, sections 79(1) The Council may expend money required by the Municipality for:

- (k) recreational programs;
- (x) lands and buildings required for a municipal purpose;
- (ah) playgrounds, trails, including trails developed, operated or maintained pursuant to an agreement made under clause 73(c), bicycle paths, swimming pools, ice arenas and other recreational facilities.

## **BACKGROUND**

Parks and Recreation promotes lifelong participation toward active and healthy lifestyles. Municipal aquatic services offer a wide range of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to gain valuable life skills that enable safety and enjoyment in and around the water. Furthermore, aquatic programs and services support the *Canadian Sport for Life Long Term Athlete Development Plan* by providing accessible opportunities to get started and continuing along with being active for life.

The development of a Long Term Aquatic Strategy was identified in the 2016 Community Facilities Master Plan 2 (CFMP2) and subsequently approved by Council in the Parks and Recreation 2017/18 - 2018/19 multi-year business plan. In addition, Regional Council's March 21, 2017 meeting motion regarding the feasibility of a 50-metre pool in HRM will be addressed within the Long Term Aquatic Strategy.

HRM has conducted several past studies related to aquatic planning which include:

- *2007 Mainland Common 50 Metre Pool Study* – This study was commissioned to assess the need for an additional 50 metre competition pool in the Halifax region. Its key findings noted that:
  - at the time, there was no defined need for two municipally owned 50-metre competition pools;
  - a new 50-metre pool should only be a replacement to the Centennial Pool (built in 1967 for the Canada Summer Games);
  - any consideration for a new 50-metre competition pool should be done with the support from other partners; and
  - investing in the Centennial pool may extend its life span to about 20 years. As a result, HRM completed a three-phase capital rehabilitation of Centennial Pool which was completed in 2014.
- *2012 Eastern Region Aquatic-Analysis* - Regional Council directed staff to conduct an aquatic needs assessment for the east region of HRM. The direction was initiated by the impending closure at the time of the NSCC Akerley Campus pool which was operated by the YMCA (this closure has occurred). The needs assessment noted that, despite the closure of the Akerley pool, the overall aquatic inventory adequately meets recreational needs and that there was available capacity in other aquatic facilities for users to be accommodated. It recommended a regional and collaborative approach to aquatic service delivery that would enhance access and ensure financial sustainability.
- *2017 CFMP2* – The CFMP2 is a framework for community facility planning. It noted that there is sufficient capacity in aquatic facilities with about 20% of allocated pool time being unused. However, it noted that some users may not get preferred pool times in preferred locations. Although the CFMP2 confirms that HRM has enough aquatic facilities, it indicates that some facilities are near the end of their expected life and that a long-term strategy is needed.

The completion of the Long Term Aquatic Strategy will build on this previous work and provide the recommended regional approach to the assessment of overall aquatic service delivery.

## **DISCUSSION**

Similar to the work undertaken in the previously completed Long Term Arena Strategy (LTAS), the Long Term Aquatic Strategy will assess the long-term aquatic needs for the region and provide recommendations to Regional Council regarding the future provision of aquatic services. This information report provides an update regarding the approach to developing the Long Term Aquatic Strategy, which will be generally similar to that used in the completion of the LTAS.

### **Principles**

The development of the Strategy will be lead by the Parks and Recreation Business Unit and guided by the following principles:

- Evidence based decision making
- Community and stakeholder engagement (reflective of community interest and needs)
- Lifelong participation in active, healthy lifestyles
- Safety in and around the water
- Access and inclusion
- Collaborative service delivery
- Service excellence
- Financial responsibility

### **Scope**

The Scope of the Strategy includes:

- HRM owned and operated indoor and outdoor pools
- HRM owned and community operated indoor and outdoor pools
- Non-municipally operated indoor and outdoor pools (i.e., not for profit, DND, University, etc.)
- Competition aquatic facilities (50 metre-pools)
- supervised beaches (Municipal and Provincial)
- splash pads
- an examination of the allocation of pool time, access and equity

Hotel pools, natural unsupervised swimming locations, private pools that are not available for public use, and aquatic fees (currently underway as part of the Fee Review Study) are out of scope of the Strategy.

### **Purpose**

As noted above, the purpose of the Strategy is to assess the long-term aquatic needs for the region and provide recommendations to Regional Council regarding the provision of aquatic services. Specifically, it will include:

- an overview the aquatic service provision and mandate
- a review of condition assessments of existing municipal aquatic facilities
- a review of existing polices and practices
- demographic analysis and benchmarking with comparable cities
- an understanding of utilization and equity of access within aquatic facilities
- support required for competitive aquatics
- an understanding of the features that are desired in new facilities
- community and stakeholder feedback
- approaches in providing aquatic facilities including municipal beaches, indoor pools, outdoor pools and splash pads

### **Stakeholder Working Group - Engagement**

Community and stakeholder engagement is a key component in developing the Strategy and informing recommendations. A stakeholder working group made up of representatives from Sport Nova Scotia, Swim Nova Scotia, Diving, Synchro, Water Polo, Aquatic Safety Training (Lifesaving Society, Canoe/Kayak NS) Dalhousie University, and the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage has been established to provide ongoing technical information, user input, participant data, potential partnership opportunities, and general advice through the Strategy's development. Throughout the project, input will also be sought from facility users, aquatic stakeholders, and pool operators. In addition, HRM Councillors will be engaged to provide insight to the project. Priority will be placed on the scope of the project related to a potential 50m pool, as staff would understand this is to be Council's short term priority for information.

### **Timeline and Approach**

The following outlines the major timeline and approach components for the project:

Summer 2017

- Initiation meeting with the stakeholder working group regarding the projects approach (completed)

Fall 2017

- Councillor informal feedback meetings
- Stakeholder working group meetings
- User data collection, facility condition assessments

Winter 2018

- Best practice research, benchmarking
- Development and implementation of online engagement and feedback
- Stakeholder working group feedback workshop
- Feedback sessions with pool operators and other users

Spring/Summer 2018

- Development of draft Strategy
- Feedback from stakeholder working group
- Internal review

Fall 2018

- Report to Regional Council

Modifications to the workplan may occur as the project is advanced.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications associated with this information report. Work on the Strategy will be completed within the current Parks & Recreation staff complement and operating budget.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The stakeholder working group includes members of the aquatic community. In addition, community engagement processes will be incorporated into the Long Term Aquatic Strategy Project including engagement with aquatic users, stakeholders, pool operators and Councillors.

**ATTACHMENTS**

None

---

A copy of this report can be obtained online at [halifax.ca](http://halifax.ca) or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Philip Hammond, Recreation Planning Specialist, 902.233.0593

---