



# City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

**To:** General Purposes Committee **Date:** January 5, 2021

**From:** Jim V. Young, P. Eng.  
Director, Facilities and Project Development **File:** 06-2050-20-PCE/Vol 01

Elizabeth Ayers,  
Director, Recreation and Sport Services

**Re:** **Minoru Aquatic Centre – Facility Condition, Program and Costing Update**

### Staff Recommendation

1. That staff be authorized to proceed with Option 1, Demolition of the Minoru Aquatic Centre as described in the staff report titled “Minoru Aquatic Centre - Facility Condition, Program and Costing Update” dated January 5, 2021 from the Director, Facilities and Project Development and the Director, Recreation and Sport Services; and
2. That a capital project in the amount of \$2,700,000 funded by the Rate Stabilization Account to demolish the Minoru Aquatic Centre as described in the staff report titled “Minoru Aquatic Centre - Facility Condition, Program and Costing Update” dated January 5, 2021 from the Director, Facilities and Project Development and the Director, Recreation and Sport Services be approved and included in the Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan (2021 – 2025).

for  
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Director, Facilities and Project Development  
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Elizabeth Ayers  
Director, Recreation and Sport Services  
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REPORT CONCURRENCE		
<b>ROUTED TO:</b> Parks Services Finance Department	<b>CONCURRENCE</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b> 
<b>SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW</b>	<b>INITIALS:</b> MO	<b>APPROVED BY CAO</b> 

## Staff Report

### Origin

On May 8, 2017 Council considered the staff report titled “Viability of Repurposing Minoru Aquatic Centre” which reviewed the merits of repurposing the existing facility for community use or warehouse space suitable for open storage and Council adopted the following recommendation:

*That upon completion and opening of the new Minoru Centre for Active Living, the existing Minoru Aquatic Centre located at 7560 Minoru Gate in Minoru Park be decommissioned and demolished, and that the project be submitted for consideration in the 2018 capital budget as described in the staff report titled “Viability of Repurposing Minoru Aquatic Centre”, dated April 21, 2017, from the Senior Manager, Capital Buildings Project Development and the Senior Manager, Parks.*

At the Regular Council meeting on February 11, 2019, staff received the following referrals in relation to the viability of repurposing the Minoru Aquatic Centre:

- (1) That the Minoru Aquatic Centre Demolition (\$3,392,000) be removed from the proposed 2019 Capital Budget;*
- (2) That the Minoru Aquatic Centre not be demolished; and*
- (3) That Option 1 – Infill Only (allows for only very limited programming use) as per the staff report titled “Viability of Repurposing Minoru Aquatic Centre – Low Cost Option” dated February 1, 2019 from the Senior Manager, Capital Buildings Project Development be referred to staff for consideration and various groups be invited to make submissions on how to possibly use the Minoru Aquatics Centre.*

Staff have followed the Council direction from February 11, 2019 and have not proceeded with demolition of the Minoru Aquatic Centre since it was vacated in September 2020. The facility is currently vacant with building systems being operated at reduced levels to minimize the possibility of mould growth, pipe freezing and trespass.

The purpose of this report is to respond to the referrals from the February 11, 2019 Council meeting.

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

*4.3 Encourage wellness and connection to nature through a network of open spaces.*

This report supports Council’s Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

*Leadership in effective and sustainable growth that supports Richmond's physical and social needs.*

*6.1 Ensure an effective OCP and ensure development aligns with it.*

## **Analysis**

With reference to the referral to investigate low cost programming options, it is necessary to first evaluate the Minoru Aquatic Centre condition, including the extent of hazardous materials that may be present and to confirm suitability for programs and activities other than aquatics. With this information staff can fully understand the impact of building modifications that may be required to support programs other than aquatics.

Prior to inviting community groups to make submissions regarding possible uses of the Minoru Aquatic Centre, creating expectations among user groups, staff are reporting back on the findings of the facility condition, hazardous materials report and the associated cost implications for Council's consideration.

## **Current Facility Condition**

The Minoru Aquatic Centre was originally constructed in two stages, in 1958 and 1977. In 2013, following Council's decision to locate and fund the new Minoru Centre for Active Living, staff proceeded to defer maintenance at the Minoru Aquatic Centre and carried out only the minimum amount of work necessary to keep it operational and safe for staff and public use. Aquatics facilities represent a harsh environment with higher than normal wear-and-tear on building systems. Since the facility was closed to the public the building has continued to deteriorate in various locations.

Staff engaged technical experts to review the current condition of Minoru Aquatic Centre and found that major building elements such as the envelope, mechanical and electrical systems have reached or surpassed their serviceable life cycle. Continued operation of this facility for any type of program would require either extensive refurbishment or full replacement of various building components to extend the building life 10 – 15 years with some of the main considerations highlighted below:

- Mechanical systems – Majority of the systems require replacement.
- Electrical systems – Majority of the systems require replacement.
- Plumbing – Significant leaks from cracked pipes at various locations require replacement.
- Building envelope – Roof requires replacement. Additional localized spot repairs in different areas of the building are also required, including skylights, eaves and windows.

The review was completed in the absence of a confirmed program and assumed general use assembly space in the west wing A-Frame, suitable for passive activities or no impact sports.

The facility mechanical system is not energy efficient by today's standards and requires high energy consumption and emissions. Studies have shown that modern HVAC units use 30% to 50% less energy compared to units at the Minoru Aquatic Centre made in the mid-1970s.

### Hazardous Material Remediation

Following the facility condition assessment, staff engaged an environmental specialist to conduct destructive testing in the vacant building to determine the type and extent of hazardous materials that may exist in the facility. Asbestos, for example, was extensively used as a building construction material between 1950 and 1990 and poses a potential health risk when the fibers are disturbed, particularly during renovation work. Construction disturbance must follow the appropriate safe work procedures specific to hazardous material removal and disposal.

The results from the comprehensive hazardous building materials report confirmed the presence of extensive hazardous materials in the building including asbestos, lead, PCB/mercury and silica. Accordingly, the required renovation work affecting areas that contain hazardous materials must be properly removed or abated by a certified abatement contractor and the process monitored by an environmental specialist.

### Suitability for Programming Other Than Aquatics

The Minoru Aquatic Centre was designed for aquatics and has features that make it impractical and/or very expensive to convert for other program uses.

The low cost option of infilling the pool and leveling the pool deck (required for safety) will result in one large program space of almost 11,000 sq. ft.. Indoor group sports are the only programs that need a space of this size and the flooring, perimeter windows, acoustics and ventilation are not suitable for indoor sports without a complete retrofit of the facility. The flooring is suitable for passive activities such as arts and crafts, card games, singing, knitting, and some low impact activities such as carpet bowling, and table tennis. These activities require good acoustics and typically take place in multipurpose rooms of 1,200 – 2,000 sq. ft. It is worth noting all of these activities are already offered at the Minoru Centre for Active Living and other community centres throughout the City.

To prepare the building for passive community group use for a period of 10 – 15 years, the following items need to be addressed at a minimum to ensure the building can be safely accessed and occupied:

- Pools – Infill of the pool basin with a specific structural fill and topping application is required to make the space usable.
- Deck – Pool decks by design are not level, rather they are sloped to facilitate drainage. Leveling of the decks is required to make the space useable and safe.
- Hazardous materials – The recently completed assessment confirms the building contains various types of hazardous materials. Disturbance of these contaminants resulting from renovation work must follow the appropriate safe work procedures.

- Interior modifications – Miscellaneous interior work is required to make the space functional for general use programs including flow into and egress from the building.
- Dedicated mechanical and electrical systems – New heat pumps are required to sufficiently heat and cool the repurposed space. Similarly, new light fixtures are also required to provide adequate lighting in the space.
- Building Code – Upgrades to life and safety requirements are needed to bring the facility up to current building standards. According to BC Building Code, additional washrooms are required to accommodate general assembly use.
- In response to COVID-19, automated features are being implemented in public spaces to limit the spread of the contagion. From the use of touchless technology – automatic doors, hands-free switches, controls and washroom fixtures – to UV light ventilation systems, these features are now becoming more common for reducing the risk of exposure and will have to be considered if the facility is to be repurposed.

### Sustainability Considerations

The building assessment study also highlighted that a new similar sized facility designed and built to suit programming needs which meets LEED Gold standards could perform 80 - 90% better in GHG emissions than the current facility status quo. A new high performance building eliminates the need for fossil fuel energy replacing natural gas with electricity.

The Minoru Aquatic Centre A-Frame has a very high ceiling which is generally a good design for aquatic facilities to maintain good air quality. However, for uses other than aquatics, the high ceiling represents an inefficient space for heating, cooling and air circulation in general. This inefficiency results in higher usage of natural gas and electricity as compared to a purpose built facility to suit the intended program.

### Options

Staff have prepared two options for consideration as outlined below. Should staff not receive direction from Council, the Minoru Aquatic Centre will continue to be left unused. There is an estimated annual operating cost of \$110,000 for security, fire safety, power, pest control, landscaping and minimal maintenance. Costs in this regard commenced in September 2020 and are currently ongoing.

#### Option 1 - Demolish Facility - Recommended

The estimated cost to complete demolition is \$2,700,000 (2021 dollars). The estimate has been reduced from 2019 based on the new findings and recommendations summarized in the hazardous building materials report. Should Council endorse Option 1, project funding will be submitted in the 2021 budget process.

An interim landscape treatment (grass) will be provided until a decision is made on this site as part of the Minoru Park Vision Plan. Funding for the interim landscape treatment is already in place as part of the 2018 Capital Program. An annual Operating Budget Impact (OBI) cost of \$4,600 (2021 dollars) would be required to maintain the interim park.

This option would include a review of building materials that could potentially be salvaged and reused on other City projects. Those items that are not salvaged will be removed from the site according to the Council Policy 2308 which targets a waste diversion rate of 80% by weight for major facility renovations.

### Option 2 - Repurpose Facility for Low Cost Options- Not Recommended

Taking into consideration the requirements for building modifications to facilitate limited programming, the cost to bring the existing west portion of the Minoru Aquatic Centre to current building standards for the next 10-15 years and prepare the building for limited programming is estimated to be \$8,800,000 (order of magnitude 2021 dollars). The overall estimated cost has increased since the previous 2019 staff report as the updated estimate now includes the following:

- abatement and disposal of hazardous materials including supervision;
- roof replacement due to continued deterioration;
- significant repairs to plumbing leaks recently emerged in various locations;
- localized spot repairs in different areas of the building, including skylights, eaves and windows due to continued deterioration;
- dedicated mechanical system such as heat pumps to sufficiently heat and cool the repurposed space;
- new light fixtures to provide adequate lighting in the space;
- 10% increase in demolition waste recycling from 70% to 80%;
- updated building code requirements in relation to life safety;
- additional washrooms are required to accommodate general community use to comply with the building code;
- automated features such as touchless technology in response to COVID-19; and
- inflation.

Cost estimates were prepared by an independent cost consultant and general contractor. Should Council endorse Option 2, project funding will be submitted in the 2021 budget process.

If the west portion of the facility is utilized for programming by a community group, the annual operation and maintenance cost for the entire facility is estimated to be \$165,000 (2021 dollars). There may be an additional annual operating cost associated with the proposed use based on program needs and the community group's proposal. Although Option 2 addresses only the west portion of the building, the east portion of the building would remain in place, boarded and fenced for safety. The ongoing costs to maintain the east portion of the facility includes security, pest control, fire safety and fire monitoring.

Should a community group with a suitable program be identified, creation of additional surface parking may be required depending on the extent of the programming. This may impact park space. The cost estimates provided in this report do not include allowances for additional parking or a parking study that may be required.

The overall cost to remediate and operate the Minoru Aquatic Centre is high and exceeds the community benefit of the limited programming opportunities that may be implemented.


**Financial Impact**

Should Council endorse the staff recommendation to demolish the Minoru Aquatic Centre, the estimated cost is \$2,700,000 (2021 dollars) which includes the removal of hazardous materials present in the facility. Staff recommend that a capital project submission in the amount of \$2,700,000 be submitted to the 2021 budget process, funded by the Rate Stabilization Account. If the site becomes a park, the above cost will be included in the City's Development Cost Charges program and funded accordingly.

Funding for the interim landscape treatment noted under Option 1 is already in place as part of the 2018 Capital Program. An annual OBI cost of \$4,600 will be required to maintain the interim park and will be considered in the 2021 budget process.

**Conclusion**

The recommended option is to demolish the existing Minoru Aquatic Centre (Option 1), and convert the site back to much needed green park space, regaining park area that was lost to the Minoru Centre for Active Living. The concept design for the future renewal of the Minoru Aquatic Centre site will be considered as part of the Minoru Park Vision Plan process and presented to Council. While it is feasible to repurpose the existing facility, the cost to upgrade the building to a functional level and adapt for reuse is not considered economically viable.



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