

Subject: Direction for New Aquatic Sports Centre

File Number: ACS2024-RCF-GEN-0003

Report to Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 2 July 2024

and Council 10 July 2024

**Submitted on June 7, 2024 by Kevin Wherry, Manager Parks and Facility
Planning, Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services**

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Ward: Citywide

Objet : Directive pour un nouveau centre de sports aquatiques

Numéro de dossier : ACS2024-RCF-GEN-0003

Rapport présenté au Comité des finances et des services organisationnels

Rapport soumis le 2 juillet 2024

et au Conseil le 10 juillet 2024

**Soumis le 2024-06-07 par Kevin Wherry, Gestionnaire, Planification des
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Quartier: À l'échelle de la ville

REPORT RECOMMENDATION(S)

**That the Finance and Corporate Services Committee recommend that City
Council:**

- 1. Approve that the City enter into commercially confidential non-binding negotiations with Carleton University for a partnership to fund, develop, manage and operate a new joint Aquatic Sports Centre including a 50 meter and 25 meter pool; and**
- 2. Direct the General Manager of Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services to undertaken negotiations and report back to the appropriate standing committee and Council with the outcome of negotiations, and if appropriate, with recommendations for a partnership, including facility**

design, required capital and operating commitments, operating model, a proposed ownership or tenancy commitment, and operational agreements necessary to proceed in partnership with Carleton University for the joint development of a new Aquatic Sports Center; and

- 3. Approve the expenditure of up to of \$150,000 from IO#909846 Indoor Major Aquatic Facility - 50M Pool 2027 as the City's contribution to the preliminary design and cost estimation of the joint facility required to achieve a negotiated proposal for Council consideration.**

RECOMMANDATION(S) DU RAPPORT

Que le Comité des finances et des services organisationnels recommande que le Conseil municipal:

- 1. Approuve que la Ville entame des négociations commerciales, confidentielles et non contraignantes avec l'Université Carleton afin d'établir un partenariat pour financer, aménager, gérer et exploiter un nouveau centre de sports aquatiques partagé, doté notamment d'une piscine de 50 m et d'une piscine de 25 m; et**
- 2. Demande au directeur général de la Direction générale des loisirs, de la culture et des installations d'entreprendre lesdites négociations et de faire rapport au comité permanent compétent et au Conseil de leur résultat et, s'il y a lieu, des recommandations de partenariat qui s'en dégageraient en ce qui a trait, entre autres, à la conception des installations, aux engagements requis en matière d'immobilisations et de fonctionnement, à un modèle de fonctionnement, à une proposition d'engagement d'être propriétaire ou locataire des lieux et à tout accord opérationnel requis afin de procéder conjointement avec l'Université Carleton à l'aménagement d'un nouveau centre de sports aquatiques;**
- 3. Approuve l'affectation d'une somme maximale de 150 000 \$ pour l'aménagement en 2027, en vertu de la commande no 909846, d'une piscine de 50 mètres au titre des grandes installations aquatiques intérieures. Ce montant serait la contribution de la Ville à la conception préliminaire et à l'estimation des coûts de l'installation partagée qui seraient requises afin d'en arriver à une proposition négociée à soumettre au Conseil.**

BACKGROUND

The Nepean Sportsplex has long been a sought after location for community-based aquatic sport programs as one of the only 50m aquatic facility in Eastern Ontario with the capabilities to host aquatic sport competitions. Over the years, aquatic sport governing bodies have changed the standards for many aquatic sports, and the Nepean

Sportsplex is no longer an attractive or qualifying option for aquatic sport training and competitions. Consequently, Ottawa is often not considered, nor deemed a competitive option, to host competitive swimming, diving, water polo or synchronized swimming events, and is missing out on the associated local opportunities and economic benefit.

The current inventory of City pools, including the Nepean Sportsplex, cannot address the growth in local demand for access to aquatic facilities or programs. Across the City there is a shortage of available pool time to meet rental requests, the increased demand for municipal learn to swim and other aquatic certification programs, and much needed open access to public swims. When the Nepean Sportsplex was built in 1974, the population of the Ottawa-Carleton area was approximately 520,000¹ people. Today the area's population has grown to approximately 1,080,000 people. The need for a new, 50-meter pool is longstanding and documented and the 2019 Development Charges background report included the requirement for a growth funded 50-meter pool. Further in the 2022 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan (PRFMP), which is the Council approved background study for recreation facilities to be used in the 2024 DC Bylaw replacement, the need for a new 50m pool was validated as a requirement due to growth pressures. The 2024 Development Charges report increased the 2019 value of this project from \$39M to \$54.6M to account for inflationary pressures since original budget forecast was completed.

In November 2021, Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services (RCFS) issued a Request for Expression of Interest (RFEOI) seeking potential partners with an interest in, and the capacity to, develop a new Aquatic Sports Centre. This included the design, construction, management and/or operation of a Centre, preferably within the next five years, or earlier. This Centre would include a 50 meter 10 lane pool, including diving facilities and spectator stands, and a 25 meter 8 lane pool to increase access to the general public and allow the City of Ottawa to host competitive aquatic events.

Commercially confidential meetings (CCM) were held with six of the seven proponents who responded to the RFEOI that provided the City with insight into suitability and potential benefit of a partnership with each organization. Through a second round of CCMs with the short-listed preferred proponents, staff determined that only one proponent, Carleton University (Carleton), fully met the City's RFEOI criteria. Carleton confirmed a significant financial contribution (not including the cost of the land) for the construction of a new facility and demonstrated readiness to break ground within 24 months of finalizing an agreement with a partner. Additionally, Carleton had already begun their own design process for the lifecycle replacement of their existing 50m pool facility. Over the last year, staff have undertaken detailed discussions with the university

¹ The 1976 of Canada shows the population for Ottawa-Carleton at 520,533 people. Source: 1976 Census of Canada. Population: Geographic Distributions; Census Divisions and Subdivisions Ontario, page19.

and have ascertained that sufficient synergy and opportunity exists between the two parties to make a negotiated agreement possible and beneficial for both parties.

On May 28, 2024, the Executive Committee of the Board of Governors approved that Carleton University be authorized to commence non-binding confidential discussions with the City of Ottawa on this project.

DISCUSSION

A new aquatic sports centre will provide a modern standard not currently available to City of Ottawa residents. It will:

- Increase the public's access to various aquatic recreation experiences in one location;
- Offer a 50m competitive pool, a 25m warm-up / community pool and the required supporting amenities to host aquatic special events, competitions, and meet the needs of community access to aquatics; and
- Allow for multiple simultaneous aquatic activities within the same facility, which broadens the scope and availability of community level recreation;

Carleton's response to the City's expression of interest included placement of the facility on their property with no add-on real estate value to the cost of the project. Carleton also confirmed the availability of a financial contribution toward the construction and demonstrated their readiness to break ground within 24 months of an approval date. Discussions to date are based on the City making a negotiated financial contribution from Development Charges to this project, in return for a significant role in the management of the facility to deliver municipal services, including public swimming access, the delivery of learn to swim and aquatic certification programs, and scheduling of community access for local aquatic sports clubs and hosting competitions.

The location of the proposed facility, on the Carleton campus, in proximity to Bronson Avenue, is highly accessible via public transit, road connections to the 417 and airport, and is centrally located to the urban area of Ottawa. Initial discussions indicate that the University and the City could achieve a mutually beneficial operating model through detailed negotiations that provides ample pool access time for municipal and university needs.

Staff are seeking Council approval to enter into detailed confidential negotiations with Carleton in order to develop draft agreements that considers the following:

1. Major infrastructure scope elements, including but not limited to:
 - a. The number of lanes in the pool tanks, the nature of dive facilities and spectator seating
 - b. Change rooms, administration, reception, circulation, storage and

- multipurpose spaces
- c. Facility ownership, leases and service agreements
- d. Facility operations and management from a functional programming perspective (i.e., scheduling, supervision of aquatics components)
- 2. Day-to-day maintenance and long-term asset management from a facility operations and functional programming perspective;
- 3. Facility governance model;
- 4. Development of a construction agreement that will at minimum provide the City with:
 - a. Validation of overall capital costs using a professional cost consulting service;
 - b. The ability to sign off on all stages of design development to ensure compliance with Recreation Facility Infrastructure Standards and City programmatic needs;
 - c. Specified approval rights during construction for any proposed changes to design and/or materials and the nature of payment schedules; and
- 5. A financing model for construction and for ongoing operations in partnership with Carleton.

Should the negotiations for the above items prove to be successful and to the satisfaction of both parties, staff will return to Committee and Council with details of the draft agreements and recommendations for final approval to proceed with the project. This next report to Committee and Council will also include potential impacts and considerations on the municipal facilities in close proximity at Brewer Park, as they too are reaching end of life.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report. There are sufficient funds in IO 909846 to cover the expenditure of \$150,000 as the City's contribution to the preliminary design and cost estimation.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal impediments to approving the recommendations outlined in this report. Negotiations are non-binding and any draft agreements resulting from these negotiations will be subject to Council approval.

CONSULTATION

RCFS released a Request for an expression of interest in late 2021 and held a series of

commercially confidential meetings with six respondents in 2022. Through this process, Carleton University is recommended as the preferred partner.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

The future Aquatics Sports Centre will meet the City's requirement for facilities to be compliant with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA). A new facility, built to modern standards, should help people with disabilities access aquatic recreation.

The Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted on any building design exceptions should they be needed.

DISPOSITION

Following approval of this report at Committee and Council, staff will engage in detailed negotiations with Carleton University to pursue a potential partnership. Details of the negotiations along with the recommendations will be brought back to Committee and Council.