

Memorial Park pool revitalization delayed as City continues to seek grant funding

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2022

Welland, ON – Anticipated work to revitalize the Memorial Park pool is on hold while the City staff explore new grant opportunities to fund most of the project.

Memorial Park pool was built in the late 1950s. After over 60 years of operation, this location remains Welland's busiest outdoor public pool, attracting over 14,500 visits during the 2019 season. The revitalization of this pool continues to be a top priority given the facility's age, current condition, and, most importantly, the need in the community.

In anticipation of the City's award of the Green and Inclusive Community Building grant from the Federal Government, staff initiated a competitive bid process for the Memorial Park pool project in May 2022. Unfortunately, all tender bids came in over budget, and the City was unsuccessful with this highly competitive grant opportunity that was expected to fund 60 percent of the project.

"All staff were excited and hopeful that the City would be awarded this grant. Unfortunately, this did not transpire this time. I don't believe this is a question of if the City will be awarded a grant, but rather when we would expect to see a grant," said Rob Axiak, director of community services. "Staff will look to maintain the current pool to stay open for the public until we can secure the necessary funding for the revitalization. This project continues to remain a top priority for the City."

On June 28, Council approved delaying the work, confirming staff continues to seek all grant opportunities to help fund this important project. The current design would remain in effect until a grant is applied for and awarded and the project re-tendered.

Staff also feel that Memorial Park Pool can operate for an additional season (2023) should this be required, with minimal renewal requirements.

Given the delay, Council approved the staff-recommended increase in budget from \$6.4M to \$7.75M. The escalation of costs has been difficult to predict in the current financial climate. However, staff are forecasting a 10 per cent increase in prices by extending this project by an additional year into 2023. To learn more about pools in the City of Welland and available programs and activities visit:

<https://www.welland.ca/RecCulture/publicswimming.asp>.

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