

December 8, 2021

Report To: Mayor and Council

From: Travis Rob, Manager of Operations and Facilities

RE: Development of a Splash Pad

At the Council meeting held November 8, 2021 a petition for the construction of a splash park was referred to the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee with input from the Planning and Development Executive Committee.

Since that time Administration has been talking with equipment suppliers and other communities operating these types of parks to try to understand the costs associated with construction, operation, and maintenance of these assets. Based on the recommendation of location from PDEC, which is attached to this report, some work needs to be done to help determine the path forward in terms of servicing availability however at this time, specifics on servicing requirements are unknown. There are many aspects of this type of development that need to be carefully considered as things like a water recycling system compared to a flow through pad that wastes all water used at the site doubles the costs of construction and maintenance. Due time needs to be taken to understand these costs from both an initial capital expenditure standpoint as well as an ongoing maintenance cost standpoint.

At either site suggested by PDEC we are looking at extensive sewer, water and electrical installation, the construction of a building for pump equipment, change rooms, washrooms as well as accessibility upgrades to meet the requirements of the AODA. In addition to these upgrades, at Legion Park, Council should consider the replacement of the equipment at that site as well as the equipment is quite old and should be updated in the near future. For the Legion Park site, the reconstruction of Lillie Avenue should be considered as part of the accessibility installations in addition to providing better parking and upgraded sewer and water infrastructure as the sanitary main was installed in 1945 and the watermain in 1969. Further the Legion Park is situated on Kings Highway and due consideration needs to be given to increased pedestrian traffic from the north side of the highway safely crossing the highway to access this park. This highway is a Connecting Link Highway so any addition of traffic control devices must be approved by MTO before installation. Council should consider input from the Traffic Safety Committee on pedestrian access should Legion Park be chosen as the final location.

Typically, in other communities these types of developments have been constructed through an initiative spearheaded by a local service club or group who get together to fundraise for the development, plan the development and in some cases construct the development. This is similar to how the Skate Park was constructed and more recently the tennis courts in Fort Frances. There are many options to consider when looking at this type of development and there should be a mechanism in place to select the features that best suit the community wants and by extension the community financial support. If Council recalls, there was a substantial steering committee struck for the development of the Rainy Lake Market Square to guide the features included in that development with representatives of the stakeholders most effected by that space.

At this point in the year, most grant programs are closed and there are limited grant opportunities to offset the construction of a splash pad. There were some programs that were available earlier in the fall that would have fit this project well however we have missed the application deadlines for those programs. In addition, at this time we have a tremendous amount of work ahead to do to develop the scope of work to construct a splash park, projects like this don't happen successfully over night, they

take time to plan and organize. In addition, Council needs to be cognizant of the projects it currently has committed to and capital funds being expended for projects for which we have received funding, projects we have applied for funding for and committed projects and purchases which are to be funded totally out of reserves. Council does not have unlimited funds and needs to balance the needs set out in the Town's Asset Management Plan with projects undertaken to expand the services provided within the confines of our available funding.

Given the late time of the year this was brought forward, and the limited time Administration has to prepare cost estimates for a complicated project of this nature before the Capital Budget Meetings scheduled in early 2022, it is the recommendation of Administration that 2022 is used as a planning year with maybe some funds allocated for design works if determined necessary. Further that 2022 is used as a year to try and secure funding to offset the capital costs of a proposed development of this type and that a public call be put out for a group to take this project on with the support of Town Administration. In addition, before design works and planning can truly get underway, Council must select a final location. A development at Shevlin Green has totally different design challenges compared to a development at Legion Park.

It is the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that:

1. Council selects a final location for the development of a splash pad to allow planning to begin for the future construction.
2. Administration use 2022 to plan for the construction of a splash pad development in Fort Frances.
3. That funds be considered in the 2022 capital budget for the design of related infrastructure to support a future splash pad at the desired location.
4. That Administration watch for grant opportunities in 2022 to offset the costs related to the development of a splash pad and apply for funding as it comes available.
5. That council put out a public call for a group to spearhead the development of a splash pad in Fort Frances with the assistance of Town Administration.
6. That the Traffic Safety Committee review the proposed development at the Legion park and make recommendation on measures to improve safe pedestrian and vehicular access.

Respectfully Submitted



Travis Rob, P.Eng
Manager of Operations and Facilities

Council approval of this report will agree with the recommendation of the Operations and Facilities Executive Committee that

- 1. Council selects a final location for the development of a splash pad to allow planning to begin for the future construction.**
- 2. Administration use 2022 to plan for the construction of a splash pad development in Fort Frances.**
- 3. That funds be considered in the 2022 capital budget for the design of related infrastructure to support a future splash pad at the desired location.**
- 4. That Administration watch for grant opportunities in 2022 to offset the costs related to the development of a splash pad and apply for funding as it comes available.**
- 5. That council put out a public call for a group to spearhead the development of a splash pad in Fort Frances with the assistance of Town Administration.**
- 6. That the Traffic Safety Committee review the proposed development at the Legion park and make recommendation on measures to improve safe pedestrian and vehicular access.**