



Presentation to Council Re. Maple Leaf Pool Closure

Dec. 10, 2018

Presented by:

Shayna Stock, Executive Director, Heritage Community Association

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Good Evening Mayor Fougere and City Councillors,

My name is Shayna Stock and I'm the Executive Director of the Heritage Community Association.

It is not an overstatement to say that Heritage residents are devastated and outraged by the planned closure of Maple Leaf Pool. It is frustrating that it has gotten to the point of immediate closure without there being a succession plan. We've all known for many years that Maple Leaf Pool was getting old and run down. It is hard to understand why the City did not engage our community in creating a plan for its replacement sooner. There's nothing we can do about this fact now, so I don't want to dwell on it. But the City does have other outdoor pools that are the same age as Maple Leaf, and I want to strongly recommend that Council and City staff begin talking *now* about the future of those facilities, so that those communities do not experience the gap in services that Heritage is about to experience.

Maple Leaf Pool receives an average of 134 visitors a day. These numbers are not declining; they have remained roughly the same over at least the last 5 years according to numbers provided to me by City administration. Throughout the summer, this represents roughly 11,000 visits.

As the only rec facility in our neighbourhood, Maple Leaf Pool is a lifeline for many families and individuals. Many children spend all day every day at that pool, providing them with safe, supervised recreation while their parents or guardians work or take care of younger children. One third of Heritage families are single-parent families, and the pool is a major support for these, and all families, while school is out.

The pool is also well used by seniors, many of whom live in one of several nearby seniors complexes.

With heat waves becoming more common, the pool acts as a neighbourhood cooling centre on the hottest days, especially for people whose apartments or homes don't have AC.

I have spoken to Police Chief Evan Bray about the potential impact of the pool closure on crime and safety in our neighbourhood. He agrees that the pool is vital to keeping people - especially youth - engaged in safe, positive activities during the summers, and shares our concerns that its closure may be damaging to the safety of our neighbourhood. Chief Bray is here today and available to answer questions if you have any.

In a neighbourhood and a city that can often feel very divided by socio-economic and racial lines, Maple Leaf Pool offers a central, neutral meeting place where people from all backgrounds and ages play, exercise, make friends, and socialize with one another. It is a community hub, and a treasured neighbourhood resource, whose benefits extend far beyond recreation and physical health.

This is about more than losing an option for leisure; residents' concerns are coming from a place of real fear for the health and safety of their families and our neighbourhood, and also from a place of deep pride and appreciation for what is an exceptional asset to our community.

The Core Neighbourhood Sustainability Action Plan, endorsed by the City in 2012, calls for the rehabilitation of Maple Leaf Pool, or the building of a new recreation facility and pool on that site. It states: "Maple Leaf pool is a valued and well-used community gathering space. Investigating opportunities to use sustainable energy to heat the pool would offset operation costs and set a great example of sustainable development in the neighbourhood."

The City's own Official Community Plan identifies "complete neighbourhoods" as a key Community Priority, which it defines as "safe and inclusive neighbourhoods that are easy to get around and that have a mix of housing choices, amenities, and services." The Plan explicitly identifies recreation as one of the "daily lifestyle needs" that residents of a neighbourhood should have easy access to as part of a "complete neighbourhood." Maple Leaf Pool is the only recreation facility in our neighbourhood. Decommissioning it will mean we have none.

Within the OCP, our neighbourhood is identified as an Intensification Area, where the City wants to encourage development and population growth. Removing one of our neighbourhood's most prized assets is not conducive to attracting more people to the area.

The OCP also calls for the City to "Ensure access to a variety of recreation programs and services in all neighbourhoods" and to "Study the application of new financing strategies and development incentives to provide, maintain and operate recreation facilities." One of the stated objectives of the Core Neighbourhood Plan within the OCP is "to enhance community based recreation to meet the needs of Core Neighbourhood residents."

We appreciate the City's offer of programming in our neighbourhood to meet some of the needs left behind by the pool, but programming will not replace the unstructured, drop-in recreation opportunities and community hub that a pool provides.

The City's current plan calls for the pool to be replaced by another outdoor recreation facility -- or mix of facilities -- that costs much less to build and maintain and will likely be unsupervised. The proposed timeline means that facility wouldn't be built for at least 4 or 5 years. We believe strongly that the City needs to keep the value of Maple Leaf Pool in the Heritage neighbourhood; if a pool costs \$4M to re-build, we do not want to see the cost of that removed from our neighbourhood and re-invested in a city-wide facility. We also believe strongly that 4 or more years is too long for our neighbourhood to wait for another recreation facility; even 1 year will have a significant impact on our community.

We respectfully request that the City invest in re-building the pool, with a goal of re-opening it by summer 2020. We also request that, in 2019 (or until Maple Leaf Pool re-opens), there be free transportation and admission to Wascana Pool for residents of Heritage and Al Ritchie, and an investment in programming in Heritage.

We have nothing against a destination aquatic facility in Wascana Park -- we suspect many of our residents may enjoy it from time to time -- but a leisure facility of that nature should not happen at the expense of a vital neighbourhood asset like Maple Leaf Pool. Maple Leaf Pool needs to be prioritized,

and if that means the Wascana facility is delayed while the City raises additional funds, we believe that's a much smaller sacrifice than the cost of our community being without a recreation facility for several years.

Regardless of Council's decision tonight, I want to emphasize that the Heritage Community Association is eager to continue working with City staff on making sure the recreation needs of our neighbourhood are met to the best of our collective ability. We have offered to work together to access capital grants that are available for community-based facilities like this. We appreciate the City's willingness to engage us in next steps, and look forward to working together to make the best of this difficult situation.

Tue, dec 1

Dear city of Regina

My name is Tasia, I used to live on Halifax Street in the heritage community and I go to Thomson School, in the summer time I would take my 3 younger siblings to Maple leaf pool to go play or swim because it was free and because it was close by, but if you build this new building that will cost four dollars and fifty cents then my mom probably won't let us go because she can't afford it cause she still has to pay for groceries and our clothes and every time she buys groceries she spends over four hundred dollars because we're a family of six and she still has to pay her bills.

I am writting in to ask you not to close Maple Leaf Pool.

Sincerely, Tasia

Dear City of Regina

dec 4, 2018

My name is Mason Sparvier I am from the Heritage Community. I go to Thomson Community School.

I am writing in to ask you not to close Maple Leaf pool. my friends and I always meet at Maple Leaf pool in the summer. It was an easy way to cool down when it was hot. Maple Leaf is so close by my house that I would go almost every day. If I can't go then I would stay at home and do nothing or play video games.

Sincerely, Mason Sparvier

Dear City of Regina,

My name is Albert Winkler and I come from the beridge community. I live on Front St. and go to Thomson School. I'm writing in to you because of the closing of maple leaf pool. Can you please don't close maple leaf pool. Maple leaf has help make a stronger community. Lots of people including my self, trust this pool with no worries of people hunting others. Whether we were sitting or swimming people would spend their time at this pool. In some eyes, they would see that people would try to make friends at this pool. Maple leaf to most families, is really close to home and affordable. My friend go to the pool because they can go there and still get in. Lots of families can't afford the cost for a car. Some won't take buses due to safety problems. I know my family won't let me on buses by myself and won't pay for entry fees.

Dear, City of Regina

My name is Phoenix and I am from the heritage community. I live on quebec st and I go to thomson community school. I am writing in to ask you not to close Maple Leaf Pool. My first reason is that Maple Leaf is a free to go pool and its really fun for people to go because they live close by and they would rather be in a pool than a spray pad. I think that is a good reason because I have been going to maple leaf for most of my summers and for myself that is really heart breaking for someone like me since that was a really good thing to do for summer but since its closing that really isn't an option for all families anymore. My second reason is I have a lot of friends and family who go to maple leaf and that made it a lot more fun so you could talk to people you know other than talking to a bunch of random people and I think that this is important because there are a lot of random people there that you don't know and that makes it uncomfortable.

Sincerely- Phoenix

Dear City of Regina,

Dec, 4/8/19

My name is Veronica I am 14 years old I live in the heritage community, I go to Thomson School, and I live a couple house's down from maple leaf Pool.

I am writing in to ask you not to close maple leaf pool.

My reason 1 for you is that it's free and it's close by

Some people can't afford to go swimming there are other things that **NEED** to be payed for. We don't want to have to go so far just to go swimming

My reason 2 for you is that it give's people a reason to come out of their house's.

When the pool is closed, I stay in my room or I go shopping with my Perants. When the pool is open I see alot of people there, I never get bored of it I always have fun with my friends.

Sincerely,

Veronica

Dear City of Regina,

I am Elias and I go to Thomson School. I live in Bladme park and I bike to go to the pool. I am writing to ask you NOT close ^{Maple} Leaf pool. I get really bored during The Summer and love to go swimming so I'm not bored anymore. I love maple leaf pool because my family has 6 kids and can't afford to give us money for swimming all summer.

Sincerely
Elias

Dear, City of Regina

Hi my name is Abshir I am 13 years old. I live on Toronto Street I go to Thomson Community School. I live 1 block away from the pool and I go to Maple Leaf almost everyday. I am writing in because Maple Leaf is closing down Maple Leaf maybe old but it is a one of the best things for children I saw over 20 children each day and i'm not guessing there were even plenty of adults with there children and they were happy they all had fun and the parents that brought there kids kept coming back. I have a couple reasons of why Maple Leaf should be kept open, The new Aquatic Centre is \$4.50 each time I think that if I came each day for 2 months it would be \$250 I don't think I would do that everyday. I can't take my little brother on the bus with me because anything can happen to us were just kids. My friends will just be bored so will I what will we do each day Just basketball thats boring.

I Hope You will choose right. ☺

sincerely, Abshir

Hello,

My name is Matriel Desnomie, I come from Pepeeekisis First Nation Treaty 6, I live in Regina Saskatchewan and Thomson Heritage community I am in grade 8 and I am writing in for the Maple leaf pool and I am wondering why? Maple leaf pool is fun in the summer but if your guys gonna shut it down then how will I enjoy my summer how will I get my daily exercise in the summer swimming is kinda like exercise, it exercise our arm muscles and our upper body to, I think I will freak out if your guys gonna close it how will I have fun in the summer I went there every year even when I was a baby my mom took me there I have a whole bunch of good memories there and you guys want to take it away.

Sincerely Matriel

Dec 4, 2018

Dear City of Regina,

My name is Raj Metkar and I live in Heritage community. I go to Thomson School. I am writing this letter to request you to please keep the maple leaf pool open because the pool is really near to my house and I like to go there. If its closed, I won't be able to swim because other pools have fees and I live in a family just came to Canada so my dad can't afford for three of us to pay \$4.50 each. My dad won't allow me alone with my friends on a city bus. Maple leaf pool was the only pool near to Hospital or my house in emergency. It was a safe place and I liked it. Now I can't go swimming because its closing 😞. This pool is also an entertainment for me is summer in holidays so that I don't get bored. Please keep the pool open or my only physical activity will be gone. And in the end of the school year we go to swim so if there is no pool near us our school won't be able to go to swim.

Sincerely
Raj