

Riley Munro


December 6, 2018

Councillors and Mayor,

I am writing to you as a former lifeguard in Community services for the City of Regina. In that capacity I had the opportunity to both work and manage Wascana and Maple Leaf Pools. I was very concerned to hear of the proposed closure of Maple Leaf Pool and the proposed large-scale replacement of Wascana Pool.

Wascana Pool is an integral part of the park, and has been in need of significant repairs or replacement since I began working there over two decades ago. I am excited to hear that this may come to fruition. The city is in dire need of additional pool space and a destination pool would be welcome, however I am not convinced that this is the right location for it. An outdoor facility has a limited season and a large-scale destination pool would be better suited to an indoor facility. The pool that exists in the park at present has a steady clientele and is well used throughout the season. A less costly replacement is all that is needed and expected of the current user base.

My most significant concern is in the form of the beloved Maple Leaf Pool. Maple Leaf Pool is a unique facility that services a diverse clientele of predominantly children, up to the early teens. The children who come to the pool are most often unaccompanied and the older children will often come as the caregivers for their younger siblings.

Maple Leaf Pool fills an important role in the community. The young adults who are privileged to at work this facility have the opportunity to build relationships with children who don't always have strong parental roles to look up to at home. Staff often are placed in role as both friend and confident to many with quite complicated home situations. Maple Leaf is a safe place within the community where children know that there are caring adults. Adults who will listen, provide first aid and most importantly, protection. Neighbourhood pressures such as bullying and violence can be escaped by coming by the pool.

The proposed changes to the services being cancelled include a possible spray pad or Playscapes. My concern with the spray pad is that it removes adult supervision from the park and is a feature that addresses the needs of only the youngest of Maple Leafs clientele. The option for a Playscape does account for the need of adult supervision. The problem here is that it requires a parent or guardian to register the child, and to be there for drop-off and pick up.

Maple Leaf is a much-needed service for this particular neighbourhood. The benefits to the community and the future savings generated by caring for a community as opposed to policing it far out weigh any cost.

This is one place where I as a lifeguard felt that I was making a real contribution to the community I was working in. The situations we dealt with were troubling, and included attempted suicides, abandoned children, injuries, prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse and gang violence. Each day that we arrived there would always be children waiting for us, knowing that no matter what this was one place where they were appreciated and safe.

Thank you and I hope that you keep this in mind while discussing the proposed changes to this much-needed facility,

Riley Munro