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Town of Aurora

General Committee Report

No. OPS23-024

Subject: Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) Skatepark Repair and Alternative Location Options

Prepared by: Sara Tienkamp, Director of Operations

Department: Operational Services

Date: October 3, 2023

Recommendation

1. That Report No. OPS23-024 be received; and
2. That the condition on the approval of a total of \$1,195,000 in Capital Budget authority for Capital Project No. 72281 – AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction be lifted, and the project proceed; and
3. That the total Capital Budget authority for Capital Project No. 72281 be increased to \$1,775,500 representing an increase of \$580,500 to be funded by \$445,500 from the Parks Asset Management and \$135,000 from the Growth & New reserves; and
4. That the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) skatepark remain in its current location.

Executive Summary

This report provides further information on the replacement for the AFLC skatepark, including potential repair options, with alternative locations for the replacement that may be suitable for construction of a new skatepark:

- Parkland and existing Recreation building locations identified for potential future skatepark construction; however, skatepark should remain in its current location at the AFLC.
- Staff engaged Landscape Design Consultant to investigate alternative repair options in a Feasibility Study.
- AFLC Skatepark Feasibility Study Recommendation is for full replacement of facility.

- Recently updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) recommended replacement of the facility.
- Staff to inspect skatepark in April prior to the 2023 season for deficiencies and safety concerns.

Background

In 2018, the Town retained the services of an engineering consultant to investigate the deterioration and to provide remedial alternatives and associated costs. The research found critical deficiencies related to design and construction. As such, the consultant recommended the Town replace the skatepark and provided a budget cost estimate of \$400,000-\$600,000 for the reconstruction of the structure to ensure safe, long-term, recreational use of the facility.

In June 2019, Council approved Report No. OPS19-016 to lift its conditional approval of Capital Project No. 72281 AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction for \$600,000.

Following the approval, staff developed a survey to engage the users regarding the skatepark facility to explore the use of amenities and potential improvements to enhance the overall experience. Improvements included lighting for safety in evenings, shade structure and water bottle filling station. Information was included in the RFP to retain a consultant to design and prepare Tender documents for construction.

Preliminary cost estimates from the consultant for the reconstruction exceeded the allotted budget funding significantly. Replacement of the concrete surface was estimated at \$550,000, not including the removal of the original concrete, drainage works, and additional amenities requested by users.

As part of the 2021 Capital Budget, staff requested an increase of \$520,000 to the total approved budget authority for Project #72281 AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction. Council did not approve the requested increase and instead asked staff to report back on alternative locations for the construction of a new replacement skatepark and the potential for a parking area to be constructed at the ALFC, where the existing skatepark sits, should it be relocated.

In June 2021, Report No. OPS21-012 was received for information and staff were asked to report back with additional options for repairs other than full replacement.

Analysis

Parkland and existing Recreation building locations identified for potential future skatepark construction; however, skatepark should remain in its current location at the AFLC.

Staff investigated three (3) sites for the potential construction of a new skatepark, as follows:

- Aurora Community Centre (ACC)
- Stronach Aurora Community Centre (SARC)
- Stewart Burnett Park

All sites have advantages and disadvantages, as it relates to suitability, and those findings were presented in Report No. OPS21-012.

Removal of the skatepark from the AFLC would allow for additional parking; however, the current location of the skate park and other activities available that focus on youth, suggests the most logical location for the skatepark is for it to remain at the AFLC in its current location.

In addition, the location is central to Town, outside of a residential area where noise is a significant factor and relocating the skatepark would increase costs for infrastructure servicing and excavation of materials. The disadvantages of the other locations also outweigh the advantages (Attachment #1).

Staff engaged a Landscape Design Consultant to investigate alternative repair options in a Feasibility Study.

Landscape Planning Limited (LPL) was retained by staff to complete a Feasibility Study for the AFLC skatepark. LPL worked with Newline Skateparks as a respected skatepark specialist to analyze the park infrastructure and to provide expertise on mitigation of park deficiencies. The study explores six (6) options and analyzes strengths, weaknesses, threats, opportunities, and costs for each possibility (Attachment #2):

1. Remediation works – incorporation of drainage, patch work of concrete to extend life/mitigate risk of current park.
2. Remediation and build out – remediation work as per Option 1 and building a small skatepark with a few amenities in another park.
3. Reduced footprint – removal of existing AFLC skatepark and rebuild smaller version to fit budget.

4. Phase reconstruction – project phasing to spread out budget over time.
5. Status quo – continue to monitor/repair to a dollar threshold and when park deemed unsafe and inoperable it be closed and other options explored.
6. Full replacement – previously recommended.

AFLC Skatepark Feasibility Study recommendation is for full replacement of facility.

The six (6) options considered in the Study were evaluated based on strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT) analysis, including the anticipated costs. Options 1-5 all had a significant number of weaknesses and threats which outweigh the strengths and are detailed and expanded upon in the report. The following chart illustrates key strengths vs. drawbacks of each option:

	Options	Strengths	Weaknesses/Threats	Costs
1.	Remediation	Lower capital costs, public perception maintained, reduced disruption to users	Temporary solution - key drainage/soil issues not alleviated - risk of damage to existing facility during remediation - unclear how repairs will increase lifecycle - risk exposure - material/construction cost volatility – availability of qualified contractors	\$260,000- \$465,000 *Within current approved budget
2.	Remediation/ Build Out	Budget can be established and scoped to suit – Town will net one (1) additional skatepark – public perception maintained	Key drainage/soil issues not alleviated - risk of damage to existing facility during remediation - unclear how repairs will increase lifecycle - risk exposure - material/construction cost volatility – potential debate of new location – site conditions of new potential skate location unknown – added maintenance of new facility	\$260,000- \$465,000 for Remediation \$85,000 – \$195,000 for Buildout Total \$350,000- \$660,000 *Additional funding required, not within current budget

	Options	Strengths	Weaknesses/Threats	Costs
3.	Reduced Size	Full removal of existing failing facility – liability mitigated –original budget can remain – ongoing remedial works/staff time will be minimized significantly – customize based of user feedback	Smaller facility may not meet users needs/ expectations as service level precedent has been set – additional amenities (shade/seating) removed to maximize usable space, added time to complete design, public consultation, documents - material/construction cost volatility – availability of qualified contractors	\$495,000 Within current approved budget
4.	Phased Reconstruction	Full removal of existing failing facility – liability mitigated –original budget can remain for initial phase – ongoing remedial works/staff time will be minimized significantly – customize based of user feedback	Interim first phase smaller than existing facility and established service level – site disruption more than once, additional time, future capital costs not guaranteed – increasing material construction costs – market uncertainty	\$495,000 *Phase 1 (2024) \$805,000 Phase 2 (TBD) – cost estimate will increase depending on year works to occur *Phase 1 within current budget. Would require additional budget for Phase 2
5.	Status Quo	Minimal service disruption currently – costs and associated remedial works completed by staff/budgets	Increased risk exposure – drainage/soil issues not addressed – ongoing maintenance issues and design flaws not addressed – user group concerns – future repair requirements beyond	\$30,000-\$60,000 Currently \$8-\$12,000 per year in operating

	Options	Strengths	Weaknesses/Threats	Costs
			Town staff capabilities – increased operating budget and replacement costs will continue to increase the longer decisions are pushed on replacement or remediation are pushed.	costs for repairs
6.	Full Replacement plus additional amenities (lighting/water station/shade canopy) Recommended	Full removal of existing failing facility – liability mitigated – additional amenities identified by users can be achieved – design and tender documents completed	Perception of replacing a nine (9)-year-old facility – full season service disruption – additional capital budget required – increasing material construction costs – availability of qualified contractors – new amenities represent an increased service level with increase operating and capital funds to sustain facility.	*\$730,000 required in addition to original \$675,000 budget plus and additional * includes an additional \$40,000 for contract management by LPL. Total budget \$1,405,000

LPL and New Line Skateparks Inc. both recommend the full replacement of the facility based on the SWOT analysis, Greenview Environmental Management Plan (2018) findings, site investigation, and long-term lifecycle objectives.

Recently updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) recommended replacement of the facility.

Recommendation #20 within the PRMP sets a high priority on the replacement of the skatepark:

“Advance the reconstruction of the AFLC Skateboard Park to ensure safe, long term recreational use of the facility. Seek input from users on the redesign of the park.”

Prior to design, staff engaged the patrons of the park in a survey to assess their needs and comment on future design. These comments were shared with LPL and included in the new design.

Staff to inspect skatepark in April prior to the 2023 season for deficiencies and safety concerns.

Parks staff routinely inspect the AFLC skatepark facility and prior to re-opening, after winter closure, a pre-opening inspection is completed in April each year. Previous start-up inspections have exposed cracking, delaminating of the concrete surface and pooling of water, increasing the risk of injury to users.

Mitigation of the deficiencies carry on through patching and grinding of the concrete deficiencies, utilizing various measures and methods to help alleviate the ongoing problems and reduce risk to users.

The skatepark condition will continues to be inspected and monitored daily, April through November, by Parks staff ensuring the facility is safe for use as per the Park Maintenance Standard Service Levels.

Advisory Committee Review

Skatepark Design will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) when a more detailed design has been developed by the landscape design consultant.

Legal Considerations

The Town has a duty to maintain the Skatepark. Failure to do so may result in claims against the Town. To date, the Town has not received any claims regarding the Skatepark.

Financial Implications

Staff recommend that the Town proceed with the presented Option 6 being the full replacement of the existing skatepark which will include the proposed service enhancements at an estimated total cost of \$1,572,800 including all contingencies and unrecoverable HST to be located at the AFLC.

Table 1
AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction (Project # 72281)

Description	Total Budget	
Previous Commitments - Consulting		\$202,700
Reconstruction of skate park	\$1,215,000	
New additional amenities (lights, water filling station, shade canopy)	\$135,000	
Landscaping	\$15,000	
Consulting	\$40,000	\$1,405,000
Contingency (10%)		\$140,500
Non-Refundable taxes (1.76%)		\$27,300
Total Budget Required		\$1,775,500
Less: Conditionally Approved Budget		\$1,195,000
Budget Variance		\$(580,500)

To date, total Capital Budget Authority of \$675,000 has been approved by Council for Capital Project No. 72281, AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction. It is recommended that Council formally approve the previous conditionally approved capital budget authority of \$1,195,000, representing an increase of \$520,000 from the current approved amount.

In addition, it is recommended that this project's Capital Budget Authority be increased by a further \$580,500 to a total of \$1,775,500. This proposed increase would be funded by \$445,500 and \$135,000 from the Parks Asset Management and Growth & New reserve, respectively. Table 2 presents a summary of this project's recommended funding sources.

Table 2
AFLC Skatepark Reconstruction Funding Source Summary

Reserve	Conditionally Approved	Increase	Total
Park Asset Management	\$1,120,000	\$445,500	\$1,565,500
Growth & New	-	\$135,000	\$135,000
Building Asset Management	\$75,000	-	\$75,000
Total Funding Allocation	\$1,195,000	\$580,500	\$1,775,500

Communications Considerations

No communication implications at this time. Should there be any closures in the future, the Town of Aurora will inform the public of by posting to social media, the Town website and having appropriate signage at the site.

Climate Change Considerations

The recommendations from this report do not immediately impact greenhouse gas emissions or impact climate change adaptation; however, when the project progresses to detailed design, green infrastructure for storm water, soft landscape, material disposal and green procurement will be considered as they all play an important roll mitigating the impacts of a changing climate.

Link to Strategic Plan

Skatepark facilities support the Strategic Plan Goal of Supporting an Exceptional Quality of Life for All, by encouraging an active and healthy lifestyle.

Develop a long-term needs assessment for recreation programs, services, and operations to match the evolving needs of the growing and changing population.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may choose not to approve Capital Project No. 72281 for the replacement of the skatepark as part of the 2022 Capital Budget and ask that the project be placed in a future year of the 10-year Capital Plan. This will pose ongoing safety concerns and lead to the potential closure of the facility when the deficiencies cannot be effectively managed to mitigate risk.
2. Council could approve repair of the skatepark, Option 1- Remediation presented in the Feasibility Study with a cost estimate of \$260-465,000. Previously approved \$600,000 in Capital Project No. 72281 will be utilized for the remediation works for the skatepark.

Conclusions

Staff recommend that the AFLC Skatepark remain in its current location at the AFLC. This location is best suited for the amenity as this community building has a strong focus on youth activities. It is also recommended that AFLC Skatepark reconstruction along with proposed amenities proceed, and the requested total budget authority of \$1,775,500 be approved.

Attachments

Attachment #1- Alternative Skate Park Location Advantages/Disadvantages

Attachment #2- AFLC Skatepark Feasibility Study – August 31, 2023

Attachment #3 - Capital Project No.72281 – AFLC Skate Park Reconstruction

Previous Reports

OPS21-012 Alternative Locations for the Aurora Family Leisure Complex (AFLC) Skateboard Park, June 1, 2021

CS19-029 Memorandum re: Skate Park, July 16, 2019

OPS-19-016 Aurora Family Leisure Complex Skate Park, June 18, 2019

PR13-021 Skateboard Park Options, April 16, 2013

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on September 14, 2023.

Approvals

Approved by Sara Tienkamp, Director, Operational Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer