



## INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	November 5, 2020
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Status and Strategy for Wild Waterworks (HSC20048) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Romas Keliacius (905) 546-2424 Ext. 4722
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Chris Herstek Director, Recreation Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

### COUNCIL DIRECTION

At its meeting of August 11, 2016, the Public Works Committee directed: “That the General Manager of Public Works be directed to develop a capital program to identify life-cycle replacement requirements and an accessibility strategy for current park assets at Confederation Beach Park and Wild Waterworks, and that a funding strategy for the program be identified by Corporate Finance.”

### INFORMATION

Wild Waterworks at Confederation Beach Park is a family, outdoor seasonal water park located on Lake Ontario between the Queen Elizabeth Way and Lake Ontario in the City of Hamilton. The 4.9-hectare (12.1 acre) water park is owned by the City of Hamilton and managed by the Hamilton Conservation Authority. The water park opened in 1983 as a recreation and entertainment resource for the public. At the time of its opening 35 years ago, water parks were still relatively new and consequently, many of the features that we know and enjoy today, either did not exist, or were just developing. At the time, Wild Waterworks was a new and innovative facility, well ahead of its time and offered a great family experience. Over the years Wild Waterworks has become a much-loved, family Regional water park. Attendance over the past 35 years has averaged

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

approximately 110,000 visitors annually. Based on past and current revenue, operations costs, the park breaks even operationally at approximately 100,000 guests per year.

An important issue is the age of the facility and specifically, the mechanical components and individual water attractions. Each of these components have a limited life expectancy, many have already exceeded that service life. These components require an increasing amount of capital annually to maintain the facility in operating condition until it no longer proves to be economical to operate. A better understanding of lifecycle and replacement costs were required to make better informed decisions and plan for capital expenditures.

### Study Background

In 2016, Landscape Architectural Services staff presented the Confederation Beach Park Master Plan and implementation strategy, through Report PW11005(d), both of which were accepted by Council. The Master Plan included Wild Waterworks but did not speak to the future of the facility. As part of the implementation strategy for the Master Plan, a separate Wild Waterworks Master Plan Study was approved.

In August 2018, Forrec Ltd. was hired by the City to complete a master plan study, originally project managed by Policy and Programs staff (a group within the Roads Division). In December 2018, a draft masterplan was presented to internal staff stakeholders and Hamilton Conservation Authority staff. Comments were received for edits to the document, to prepare for finalizing and presenting to Council for approval and direction. Early in 2019, Policy and Programs staff were reorganized and dissolved, and their revised mandate no longer allowed them to continue leading this project. The project was put on hold until a new lead could be determined.

In June 2019, the project transferred from the Public Works Department to the Recreation Division in the Healthy and Safe Communities Department. The transfer was deemed appropriate due to Recreation's experience in managing recreational facilities with paid entry, as well as working with user groups to run facilities (such as tennis clubs, lawn bowling clubs, etc.). The final report was completed in May 2020 and is attached as 'Appendix A' to Report HSC20048.

### Overview of Master Plan

This Master Plan Study investigated the feasibility and economic viability of Wild Waterworks based on varied levels of investment; including no investment and replacing rides/attractions as the current attractions approach their end of life. A detailed Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of existing facilities was carried out for the overall park which guided a range of potential solutions to resolve known or newly identified issues. Four options were objectively considered

for the water park to provide a comprehensive range of solutions for consideration. This review of options assessed the existing Wild Waterworks park and provided recommendations for improvements and redevelopment. The viability of the waterpark was considered together with opportunities for improvement and methods of increasing annual attendance at the water park.

Most of the existing facilities and infrastructure are dated and at a point in their life cycle where they require major refurbishment or replacement. Others are in reasonable repair and require only minor modifications. Many of the weaknesses identified throughout the water park are largely the result of the age of the facility infrastructure and the pressures current attendance place on aging, end of life facilities. All building facilities, while generally structurally sound, are significantly undersized to meet the current attendance levels and are poorly distributed throughout the site. This creates circulation congestion issues throughout, particularly at the entrance area, negative guest experience and the loss of potential revenue. Outdated Point of Sale (POS) systems compound these challenges by reducing the efficiency with which staff can serve guests' needs. The attractions and infrastructure are reaching, at the end of, or far past a reasonable lifespan and are having difficulty functioning under the stress of peak attendance days.

Most of the threats identified in the analysis relate directly to the insufficient size of existing building or site facilities, rides/attractions and the physical degradation of attractions and their corresponding mechanical systems. These systems, rides/attractions and facilities will continue downward on the degradation cycle as most have far exceeded a reasonable operating life cycle. Overall, there are many challenges the park faces including a number of infrastructure issues which must be addressed as soon as possible.

The four options considered in the Master Plan are as follows:

- Option 1 – Do Nothing (\$5 M CDN.)  
Annual attendance falls to 90,000 in 5 years.  
Do nothing, consider the probable remaining life cycle of all facilities. Based on the market and feasibility analysis and estimated attendance, the overall size of Wild Waterworks would remain unchanged. Attendance would gradually decrease in the next 2-5 years falling well below 100,000. As infrastructure, rides and attractions continue to age and are taken out of service, it is expected that the park will become increasingly expensive to operate and would eventually be closed.
- Option 2 - Replace Like for Like (\$24.92 M CDN.)  
Annual attendance increases to 120,000 in 5 years.  
Replacement of existing rides, attractions and facilities with same/similar. Based on the market and feasibility analysis and estimated attendance, the overall size

of Wild Waterworks would remain unchanged. Attendance will slowly increase over the average current attendance, increasing gradually over the next 2-5 years. The size of the water park will remain unchanged for this option as the current park area can generally accommodate the attendance with new building facilities and new rides.

- **Option 3 – Modest Enhancements (\$40.14 M CDN.)**

Annual attendance increases to 145,000 in 7 years.

Replacement of some rides, attractions, dryland climber, sheltered recreation area for adverse rain conditions, improved ticketing systems and Radio-frequency identification (RFID) wristbands. The water park size would need to be enlarged to accommodate increased annual (daily) attendance, as well as provide new rides and attractions for guests. Attendance will increase initially and stabilize after year 3 as a stabilized attendance level is achieved. This will require additional park area and an increased service level of rides and attractions and expanded parking facilities.

- **Option 4 – New Design, New Program (\$61.12 M CDN.)**

Annual attendance increases to 185,000 in 7 years.

New design, rides and attractions and facilities to meet future guest needs and attendance. The water park size would need to be enlarged to accommodate increased annual (daily) attendance, as well as provide new rides and attractions for guests. Attendance will increase steadily over the next 5-8 years until a new stabilized attendance level is achieved. This will require additional park area and an increased service level of rides and attractions and expanded parking facilities.

The Master Plan Study recommends Option 3 – Modest Enhancements as it is considered the most financially viable.

#### Next Steps

Staff will report back to Committee with recommendations on the Master Plans preferred option. This analysis will be done working with Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Division (Corporate Services) and Strategic Planning and Capital Compliance Division (Public Works) to determine the financial and timing implications of the preferred option. This recommendation will be put forward to be included for consideration as part of the 2022 Capital Budget Process.

#### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix “A” to Report HSC20048:            Master Plan Study – May 2020 – Wild  
Waterworks at Confederation Beach Par