



CITY OF  
ST. CATHARINES

## Capital Priorities Planning Session February 4, 2008

### Summary of Results

At their meeting on February 4, 2008 City Council engaged in a capital priorities planning session and selected the following projects as priorities for the coming years:

#### MAJOR PROJECTS:

*(Estimated value exceeds \$2 million)*

Aquatics Centre or Multi-Use Facility  
Replacement of the Carlisle Street Parking Garage  
Niagara Centre for the Arts

#### MINOR PROJECTS:

*(Estimated value is less than \$2 million)*

Waterplay facilities  
Outdoor soccer fields  
Multi-use field  
Outdoor ice rink

Background information for each of these projects and a list of frequently asked questions are included below to provide further information regarding municipal capital projects and the priority setting process.



## **Background Information: Capital Priorities**

### **Aquatics or Multi-use Facility**

Through various studies, it has become evident that there is significant demand for indoor aquatic facilities and that existing facilities are at or near capacity. Given the age and condition of the only municipal pool, the City of St. Catharines is examining a range of potential models to ensure the needs of the community are met.

On January 14, 2008 City Council committed to enhancing indoor aquatics facilities in the City of St. Catharines. Staff are compiling potential models for consideration by City Council in February 2008.

Anticipated costs:       \$10 million to \$18 million for standalone aquatics facility; from \$18 million for multi-purpose facility

### **Replacement of the Carlisle Street Parking Garage**

A Parking Study undertaken in 2006 identifies an estimated future parking deficiency of 450 spaces in the downtown core. As part of this study, Staff presented a range of options for replacing the current Carlisle Street garage. The City committed to a 700 space utilitarian structure, and Staff was directed to seek partnerships to increase parking and include a retail/commercial/residential component.

The current parking structure at Carlisle Street accommodates 560 parking spaces. Currently, 125 spaces (or 22.3 per cent) are not available due to structural concerns. Annual inspections of the shoring and the post-tensioning system (at an estimated cost of \$30,000 per year) will need to be carried out until the structure is demolished, and additional shoring may be required depending on results of annual inspections.

Anticipated costs:       \$19.2 million for 700 space utilitarian structure (includes demolition of existing structure)

### **Niagara Centre for the Arts**

The City of St. Catharines has partnered with Brock University to pursue a performing arts centre in the downtown core. With the growth of the Brock University School of Fine and Performing Arts, and the lack of purpose-built performing arts space available to the arts community, this project will satisfy demand for space and contribute to downtown revitalization.

On January 14 Council, in partnership with Brock University, approved the retention of Levitt Goodman Architects to undertake a program, site and facility management feasibility study. The anticipated completion date for this study is September 2008.

Anticipated costs: from \$30 million

## **Waterplay Facilities**

Waterplay facilities, or “splash pads,” tend to be more cost effective than outdoor swimming pools and wading pools. The Recreation Facility Master Plan recommends the construction of three additional waterplay facilities over the next ten years. There are currently waterplay facilities at Lester B. Pearson Park and Catherine Street Park.

Currently, outdoor aquatic facilities are geographically distributed throughout the City and are generally deemed to satisfy demand for outdoor services during the summer months. However, some of these facilities are nearing the end of their lifecycle, and future locations of facilities should be considered. At present, sites with appropriate amenities include: Happy Rolfs Park; Lakeside Park; Lancaster Park and Burgoyne Woods.

Anticipated costs: \$250,000 per splash pad

## **Outdoor Soccer Fields**

Field availability is a concern among local soccer organizations. A utilization rate of one soccer field per 90 registered participants suggests that a deficit, particularly considering that nearly all fields on school property are not permitted by the City leaving local organizations to negotiate agreements through non municipal channels. The Recreation Facility Master Plan recommends the provision of 10 new municipal fields by 2016.

Anticipated costs: \$275,000 for minor site; \$510,000 for a major site with lighting

## **Multi-use Field (Outdoor)**

A proposal for a new artificial turf multi-use facility is currently under consideration. In addition to concerns from local soccer organizations regarding field availability, local football clubs have identified a lack of appropriate football fields (with lights and bleachers) that are able to accommodate football, soccer, lacrosse at extended hours of use and extended seasonal use.

Discussions are currently underway with community organizations to pursue partnership opportunities.

Anticipated costs: \$800,000 - \$2 million, including field development, lights, bleachers, parking with community partnerships and fund raising. (If full site development were to be required, costs could range to \$5 million in the absence of community partnerships.)

## Outdoor Ice Rink

In January 2008, Council received a proposal from a citizen to cover a portion of the cost to purchase a temporary artificially frozen ice surface with freezing system and railings to be installed in Montebello Park. The final installation would include rubber walkways, benches and a sound system for special events and music. Upgrades to the park would include winterization and remodeling of the existing washroom and maintenance building and improved lighting.

A report on this initiative will be presented to Council early this year for consideration, with further information regarding potential costs.

Anticipated costs:       The ice rink and plant are estimated at \$255,000. Staff are currently investigating potential costs, and there may be operational and capital costs (lighting, building alterations, winterization of park facilities, maintenance equipment, site restoration etc.) that could amount to more than \$1.1 million.



## **Capital Priorities Planning**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

#### **Why did City Council participate in a capital priorities planning session?**

Given that City Council has committed \$31 million toward the construction of the Niagara Health System Complex in St. Catharines, there are concerns regarding the municipality's capacity to deliver potential capital projects within a short timeframe. Prioritization of these projects helps to ensure resources are more efficiently allocated toward common objectives.

The session also provided a valuable opportunity to seize provincial funding. The Government of Ontario has established a new, application-based infrastructure program, called the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative (MIII). The deadline for funding applications is February 15, 2008 (further information about this program can be found at [www.infrastructureontario.ca/en/miii/index.asp](http://www.infrastructureontario.ca/en/miii/index.asp)). At their planning session, City Council agreed to apply for funding through this program for an aquatics or multi-use recreational facility in St. Catharines.

#### **What criteria were used in the priority setting process?**

A five point priority setting framework was proposed to assist Members of City Council in the selection of capital priorities. This framework included the following criteria:

1. Relevance to the strategic plan and stated council priorities;
2. Mandate based on legal, environmental and safety considerations;
3. Community demand;
4. Consistency with municipal budget; and,
5. Availability of external support

## Did City Council consider other capital projects?

Yes. Over the last few years, a number of capital projects have been identified for further consideration, either through Council mandate or through needs assessments undertaken by City staff. Projects were categorized according to scale, with major projects defined as projects with anticipated costs exceeding \$2 million and minor projects as those less than \$2 million, and included:

MAJOR	MINOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aquatics or multi-use facility</li><li>• Indoor soccer facility</li><li>• Niagara Centre for the Arts</li><li>• Welland Canal Centre redesign</li><li>• Spectator arena</li><li>• Municipal beach revitalization</li><li>• Pollution control</li><li>• Replace undersized watermains and construct missing links</li><li>• Replace parking garage on Carlisle Street</li><li>• Fire station 1 replacement</li><li>• Fire Station 4 replacement</li><li>• Geneva site replacement (RCS)</li><li>• Lake Street Service Centre rehabilitation</li><li>• Municipal service facility (Courthouse building)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skateboard park</li><li>• Multi-use sportsfield</li><li>• Outdoor soccer fields</li><li>• Water play facilities</li><li>• Mountain Lock Trail</li><li>• Outdoor ice rink</li><li>• Westcliffe Park Trail</li></ul>

## Is the capital priority setting process complete?

The establishment of capital priorities is an ongoing process. This session was important to ensure that resources are allocated most effectively to those priorities that have been established through consensus by Members of City Council. These projects will be continually reassessed based on new challenges and opportunities that may arise in the City of St. Catharines and the Niagara region.

## How can I participate in the development of capital priorities?

Capital projects are normally identified through Council mandate, or through needs assessments undertaken by City staff. Residents and businesses in St. Catharines may express their views on priority projects at any time by contacting their representatives on City Council or the Office of the Mayor at (905) 688-5601 extension 1550 or [bmcullan@stcatharines.ca](mailto:bmcullan@stcatharines.ca). Depending on the nature of the project, views on capital projects may also be communicated to staff in the responsible department. To see a list of departments and contact information, please visit the City's website at [www.stcatharines.ca](http://www.stcatharines.ca).

If you have questions or concerns specifically related to the priorities selected at the February 4 session, or the process used to determine priorities, please send your comments to [ehoski@stcatharines.ca](mailto:ehoski@stcatharines.ca) or contact the Corporate Planning Officer at (905) 688-5601 extension 1703. Information will be kept on file and reported to Members of City Council on an ongoing basis.

**How do I learn more about strategic planning at the City of St. Catharines?**

Further information may be obtained through the Corporate Planning Officer at (905) 688-5601 extension 1703 or [ehoski@stcatharines.ca](mailto:ehoski@stcatharines.ca).