

Wading Pool Feedback Wanted!



Councillor Giambrone is looking for more feedback from people about the proposed wading pool reconstruction and pool design changes for Dufferin Grove Park. Please let him know your thoughts by phone at 416-392-7012 or by email at councillor_giambrone@toronto.ca.

WADING POOL RECONSTRUCTION: IN FAVOUR

From Chris Gallop, assistant to Councillor Giambrone: According to Parks Capital Staff, the reason this project is needed is: An audit of all the City of Toronto's water plays and wading pools was conducted by AEI Engineers as a means to determine the priority and repairs required as part of our State of Good Repair program. The wading pool at Dufferin Grove Park was found to be one of the worse in terms of condition given it was built in 1955 and was given a top priority of all 136 evaluated.

The report indicated that the pool piping and valve, pool water supply and drainage and the pool tank and deck were found to be in poor condition and have reached the end of their serviceable life. Although the concrete decking may look to be sound, it is fairly weathered and the expansion joints are continuously filled with rubberized asphalt due to the deterioration of the joint which is an indication of leaking, and possibly creating voids under the existing deck where the water has leaked over the years. As well, there is no telling as to when concrete over 50 years old may fail by cracking or when the plumbing under the deck may leak.

The replacement of the pool deck and plumbing are the two major components of this project, we will be introducing barrier free accessibility to the site, improved lighting, new furniture, a new drinking fountain, informal seating with armour stone and better pedestrian circulation of the site with paths and a wider paved aprons for better mobility as indicated in the audit report."

From two Havelock Street residents: *We were very happy to hear that the Dufferin Grove Wading Pool was slated for a rebuild. It seems long overdue. In the July issue of the Park Newsletter we learned the pool was built in the 1950s and still had some original and "rusty pipes" in place....it appeared there were real strides being made in innovative, ecologically-friendly pool improvements. The dollar amount attached to the project --\$250,000 -- was printed with an (!) at the end. Sorry if we read this wrong, but the pool reno seemed like good news to us.*

So why the about-face? Toronto's not going to pull itself out of a half-billion dollar budget deficit by putting a wading pool project on hold. Even if it could, why should The City balance its budget on the backs of children in Davenport?....If we pass that funding up now there is no way of knowing when, if ever, it would come around again.

We support all and any efforts to protect the existing trees around the pool area. Community members would certainly insist that every precaution be taken. So many great things are happening at Dufferin Grove. Let's not hurry to fall on our swords.

WADING POOL RECONSTRUCTION: AGAINST



From Jutta Mason:

There is nothing much wrong with the wading pool except for the plumbing arrangements, mainly in the "pit," (a.k.a. "tank" and "pool piping and valve" mentioned in the report from the Capital Projects staff). The plumbing can and must be modified. (A guess: \$50,000 tops?) Other than that, the Dufferin Grove wading pool works well. It was very solidly built by (Italian?)sidewalk workers in 1954 with rather nifty expansion joints, which are perhaps not necessary, but easy to seal up permanently (for about \$5000, done by City workers at several other city pools already). This wading pool does not lose water. The idea that there may be unseen "voids" under the concrete is therefore unlikely. But the question of what is UNSEEN does point to the biggest problem, namely that there's no way to know how the tree roots are situated under the pool.

Construction and those big trees: Even if the workers are very careful with their jackhammers and loaders, it will be tough for them to rip up that very high-quality, solidly built concrete without harming an extensive ecosystem of tree roots. And if the construction company loses even one of the four giants -- growing between 10cm and 1 meter from the pool's edge -- playground users lose that shade for many years.

In Ward 18 there are quite nice, but mostly unshaded, wading pools at Carlton Park, Dovercourt Park, MacGregor Park, Campbell Park, Northumberland Park, and a splash pad at Perth Square. *They get a fraction of the use of the Dufferin Grove wading pool.* The SHADE of the big trees is why this wading pool is used so much.

City Forestry report:

It was noted that no trees are scheduled to be removed for the reconstruction, however due to the maturity and condition of the trees, Urban Forestry cannot ensure the survival or safety of the trees due to the reconstruction.

Any damage or injury to any tree shall be addressed by the contractor. This may include, but not limited to, pruning, fertilization, aeration and/or removal. Restitution for damage to the park trees may include payment of tree value and/or replacement tree plantings. Ten trees near the wading pool site were assessed. The overall value of the trees within the work area is \$150,000.00.

From a listserv writer: *"Perhaps this is an obvious question but WHY if the wading pool is in good repair with only minor plumbing needed would there even be a \$250,000 reconstruction plan being talked about?? No doubt it will be more than that when all is said and done, not to mention all the hours spent by our City staff to discuss and plan etc and paid for by us. I am at a complete loss to understand this.*

People are losing their jobs, having hours cut and we want a new wading pool when the existing one is in good working order?"

From Georgie Donais' letter to Councillor Giambrone: The shade trees are what make that pool a haven for children and their families; a newly refurbished pool in full sun will be unused and unusable. Since the health of the trees cannot be guaranteed, I ask for the work to be delayed until the Norway Maples are closer to the end of their lifespan; I understand that the Forestry Department suggests that the trees might last another ten years.

Right now, many people are scrambling to find after-school care for their children in the wake of impending Monday community centre closings. The cancellation of an expensive and elective project such as the pool redo would demonstrate to constituents that our ward is interested in helping to reduce the city's debt load. This would be an easy way to cut costs while maintaining quality of life (pool still works, shade remains). Let's do the needed repairs, spare the trees and save the money.

HOW DO YOU VOTE?

Leave a voice mail for the Councillor
this week and let him know:

416 392-7012

e-mail: Councillor_Giambrone@toronto.ca

