
Rec centre will have to wait for northeast Coquitlam

Motion for earlier date fails as plenty in city's parks plan

[Gary McKenna](#) / Tri-City News

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Northeast Coquitlam residents will have to wait a while for a rec centre close to home.

Photograph By TRI-CITY NEWS FILE PHOTO

Northeast Coquitlam residents will have to wait a while for a rec centre close to home.

A parks master plan adopted unanimously Monday by city council calls for a new facility in the area sometime in 2025 to 2029, with planning getting underway in the next few years. The document said the new complex could have a pool, gym space and, possibly, an ice rink to service the growing population in the city's northeast area.

But Coun. Craig Hodge said he would like to see a facility built sooner and put forward a motion to move up the timeline for completion of the project to between 2020 and 2024.

"I don't think we can spend seven years planning for it," he said. "We have heard loud and clear from residents about the need for services in that part of the city."

But a majority of councillors disagreed, with the vote 5-4 against the proposed amendment.

Coun. Terry O'Neill said the recreation complex is a major part of the parks master plan and moving up the schedule could affect other spending priorities.

Coun. Brent Asmundson said the city may not be able to make the kind of capital commitment required for the project in such a short period of time. He noted that Port Coquitlam's new recreation centre, currently under construction, is expected to cost \$120 million, a figure that could be higher for a facility in the northeast.

"With inflation and everything, you are looking at a huge chunk of money," he said.

Raul Allueva, the city's general manager of parks, recreation and culture services, said staff would like to see how the PoCo complex affects service levels in Coquitlam before committing to a major recreation facility in the northeast.

He noted that operating the proposed Coquitlam complex would likely cost approximately \$2.5 million annually and that planning and development of the site will take at least five years.

"We want to make sure that when it is built, it is built at the right time," he said, later adding: "It is based on metrics to try and make our current facilities as effective as possible... before we embark on major capital investments that have a significant operating impact."

Still, Allueva said there is enough flexibility in the parks plan for different pieces to be moved around as council sees fit. He noted that it may be possible to move up the construction of a recreation facility in the northeast to the earlier part of the 2025 to '29 timeframe.

"I don't think that would make a significant change to us," he said.

While a new recreation complex in the northeast is one of the more costlier items in the master plan, there are other initiatives that are expected to come on line in the next 15 to 20 years, according to the document.

Upgrades to Eagle Ridge and Spani outdoor pools are slated before 2019 while spray parks are included during the same period at Rochester, Glen, Cottonwood and Blue Mountain parks.

A full renovation of Spani Pool is expected in 2020 to '24, along with the opening of the new YMCA in Burquitlam; a new Place Maillardville community centre is slated to be completed by 2019.

Tennis and racquet sport court upgrades are also included for the immediate future while partnerships with the planned Burke Mountain middle school are being explored for some kind of gymnasium sharing agreement.

Work on the parks and recreation master plan began in 2012 and has included years of research, public consultation, surveys and open houses. To view a copy of the plan, go to coquitlam.ca/prcmasterplan.

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