

north shore news

New Harry Jerome rec centre on the horizon for North Vancouver

Council approves new timeline for aging rec centre's replacement

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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A timeline has been approved by city council for a rebuild of the Harry Jerome Recreation Centre.

Expect constructions workers and heavy equipment going to work on a replacement for North Vancouver's Harry Jerome Recreation Centre by the end of 2016.

Exactly what the rec centre will consist of and how the project - last estimated to cost \$70 million - will be paid for, however, still hasn't been decided.

Under a timeline approved by council April 28, city staff will do a facility assessment and site planning between now and December to come up with conceptual design options. Discussions on financing and public consultation will start in early 2015 with council approval by fall.

Council also voted to put up \$250,000 to develop more design options and program planning.

"I have to congratulate staff," said Coun. Rod Clark "I put a notice of motion forward to have a shovelready project ready when William Griffin opens and that is not too distant in the future. I challenged staff to do that. They came back in spades and have brought forward such a time frame."

Beyond trying to time its construction with the rebuilds of other North Shore rec centres, the city would do well to start construction for financial reasons, Coun. Don Bell added.

"The building itself is suffering physical problems - breakdowns - and those are only going to increase as time goes on, so it's going to get more costly so the sooner we can move it ahead, the better," he said.

The city is no longer sticking to council's "preferred option" for a layout as selected by council in the fall of 2012.

Council has not yet decided whether it will borrow money, spend reserves or find other ways to finance its construction.

Filling the extra space on the site with townhouses and condos, however, was not a palatable thought even for council members who are typically in favour of density bonusing for community amenities.

"I'm not interested in much, if any, density at that site," said Coun. Linda Buchanan.

But, Harry Jerome is just one very big-ticket spending item without a clear funding plan on the city's horizon, Coun. Pam Bookham warned. Beyond the new rec centre, waterfront redevelopment and North Shore Neighbourhood House, the taxpayers will also be on the hook for a yet-unknown portion of a \$700-million replacement for Lions Gate Wastewater Treatment plant. Metro Vancouver has been lobbying the province and federal government to chip in one-third each, as has been the standard practice for major infrastructure projects. So far, there's no indication what percentage Metro will pay and, of that, how much will appear on North Shore homeowners' utility bills.

The federal government has mandated a tight deadline of having the facility up and running by 2020.

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