

north shore news

New William Griffin Recreation Centre taking shape in North Vancouver

Council pushes project forward as site demolition ramps up this week

[Jeremy Shepherd](#) / North Shore News

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An excavator strips materials from the William Griffin centre Monday. All materials from the demolition are being sorted and separated for reuse or recycling. Photo Cindy Goodman

The new pool won't be Olympic-sized and the racquetball players won't get a wall of their own, but despite those qualms the William Griffin Recreation Centre moved a step closer to redevelopment Monday.

District of North Vancouver council voted unanimously to push the project forward with the hopes the new centre will open its doors in the fall of 2016, replacing both Delbrook and the old William Griffin centre.

At approximately 40 feet tall and 96,369 square feet, the facility will house a gym, weight room, leisure pool and lap pool, as well as space for seniors and a preschool.

The centre gives a wide berth to Mosquito and Misson creeks. However, 48 trees to the southeast of the facility will likely be felled because of poor health, a wildfire risk, or to make way for the new facility.

Despite his earlier comments that the facility would be better suited for the Delbrook site, Coun. Mike Little congratulated staff on making the best use of "a very tricky site."

A group of racquetball players petitioned the North Vancouver Recreation Commission earlier this year after discovering the

new facility would dump their sport in favour of squash.

"Not only (is the Griffin recreational centre) trying to kill the sport in North Shore, but they are also killing our group, because it's a very social group and we support each other," said racquetball player David Aroeste.

The complaint was carefully considered, but a staff report concluded the facility needs to be as welcoming to as many users as possible.

In 2012, the City and District of North Vancouver elected not to combine forces and build one 50-metre pool. Instead, each municipality will likely build their own 25-metre pool, much to the chagrin of Coun. Alan Nixon, who called the move "verging on the nonsensical."

Nixon praised the design of the centre at Monday's meeting. "I think the architects, from what I can see. .. have done an exceptional job in creating a building that I think we'll all ultimately be very, very proud of. I just wish it was housing a 50-metre pool," Nixon said.

The City of North Vancouver will likely redevelop the Harry Jerome Rec Centre when William Griffin opens, according to district staff.

"I suspect that if that pool is closed, we'll end up with a huge influx of North Van city, Lonsdale rec folks coming in here at the same time we open," said Mayor Richard Walton.

Walton urged staff to think about contingency parking in anticipation of a parking jam when William Griffin opens. Vehicle access for the centre will be at Del Rio Drive.

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