

CELOS INFORMATION BULLETIN: DUFFERIN GROVE PARK WADING POOL FACELIFT

The story so far:

The \$5 million citywide wading pool project: the big picture

A wading pool is basically a sloped concrete basin with a waterpipe and a drain. The older city wading pools were very solidly built, with thick cement – reportedly up to four feet in some places. The Dufferin Grove wading pool renovation is part of a much larger project, for which City Council last year approved \$500,000 annually to a total of **\$5 million** over eight years. **All of it is new debt.** Some



Carlton pool - no shade, few people

*is one of the most environmentally hazardous materials in the world, adding more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than the entire weight of the global airline industry,” wrote **The Guardian** on May 11 2006.*

That’s why local architect **Yves Bonnardeaux** wrote to the neighborhood e-list last year: *“As they say: it’s better to maintain than to repair, better to repair than to replace.”*

The small fix: The long straight seams in the pools are actually expansion joints, plugged with asphalt filler each year so they don’t leak. About five years ago, the city began using a newer material that sealed the expansion joints permanently, for about \$5000 a pool.

Financing: The cheaper the fix, the smaller the amount of money goes into the “capital projects” payroll account to pay the staff. They meet their payroll with a percentage of the borrowed funds for new projects. So **small** doesn’t work for them, and they need to push for **big**. But in this case, **big** doesn’t work for the taxpayers, or the environment.

The good news: The **City forester** wrote in his report last summer that the big old shade trees around the pool might not survive the bulldozers necessary to remove all that concrete. So the architect was sent back to the drawing board. The result was better – the Dufferin Grove wading pool will stay, to be covered by a thin layer of new material on top. This is good news not only for Dufferin Grove, but possibly also for the rest of this massive project. **If it works well here, the City may apply the technique more generally, and there will be far less waste.**

older wading pools will be replaced with newer ones, for \$200,000 or more. Some will just have their service vaults redone (where the plumbing is) for \$135,000. Some will get re-sodding and new signage, for \$55,000 per location. Many of those pools are actually in good condition already. They need **shade** more than anything else. But there is no mention of tree-planting or other shade measures in the wading pool project.

Environmental impact: Tearing up the wading pool cement and replacing it with new cement not only costs a lot, it also has a big environmental impact. To make Portland cement, limestone and clay are burned together at 2700 degrees Fahrenheit until they fuse. “Cement



Fred Hamilton pool - fixed for \$5000



Dufferin Grove - everyone likes a shady pool

Wading pool audit

The 2006 audit of the Dufferin Grove's wading pool problems shows only one "high priority" item – the broken drinking fountain. The report's *comments* section also ranked the scarcity of grass around the pool as a concern, perhaps unaware of the function of sand play. (See the whole audit posted on the park bulletin board or at www.dufferinpark.ca)



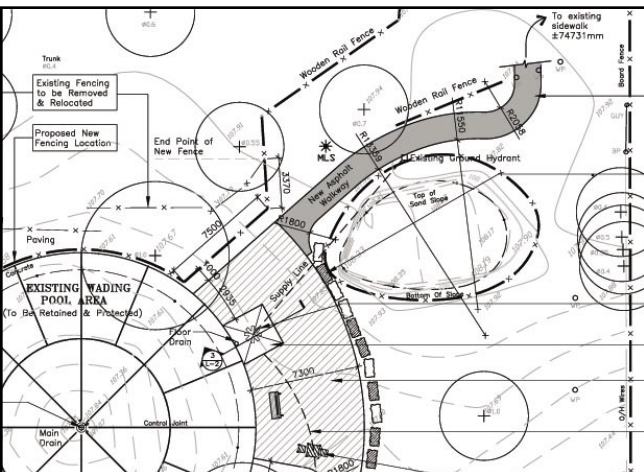
Existing valve pit

All the rest of the Dufferin pool problems were ranked as either "average" or "low" priority. One of the "low" priorities was the pool piping and valves. But the valves are so stiff and rusted that the wading pool staff can barely make them turn. The audit didn't consult with the any wading pool staff.

When the pool staff got the chance to describe the valve problem to the landscape architect at the public meeting last summer, they told him about a better mechanism at Carlton Park wading pool. That mechanism is now in the revised plan.



Better system at Carlton Park



The asphalt path is too near the sandpit

Copies of the wading pool renovation blueprints are posted inside the rink house, and will be moved to the playground when the weather warms up. Park users who know how to read blueprints: please share your knowledge with other playground users. That way, problems can be picked up in time. One problem we know already: the asphalt wheelchair access path from the east is located so close to the sandpit that it will soon be covered up by drifting sand. It needs to be put a little further away. Do you see other problems? Speak to the recreation staff and they'll pass it on, or call the councillor's office: 416 392-7012.