

To continue to inform the design planning and programming for a new purpose built therapy pool on the Pearson Dogwood site, VCH Community Engagement supported 3 information discussion sessions with 60 pool users. This compilation of their feedback provides their perspectives and ideas for what they feel are important programming elements to ensure the new pool meets the needs of users. This input will be provided to the project team to inform decisions that will ensure that the pool will provide the needed programming; within the framework of space and staff capacity. Not all of this feedback may be possible to implement, but we are looking for every opportunity to ensure that the new Pearson Therapy pool meets the needs of our pool users.

## What we heard ...

### Reduce barriers to use

- Add additional evening hours, create weekend access
- Ensure the walk distance from entry to pool is not a barrier to accessing; HandyDart drop off should be as accessible and the walk to pool minimal
- Provide parking for people with mobility limitations
- Provide enough space at the entrance to the building and in the elevators for motorized chairs
- Ensure access to a changing table and someone to assist and help
- Access to lockers that are within reach if the person is in a chair and can be opened easily; punch key pad lock or easily manipulated locking mechanism
- More shower access
- Programming to support rehab trajectory and transition points
- The volunteer program is crucial and need to expand to support pool users
- Need to know when volunteers are available to help clients access the pool
- Create a model that has regular pool volunteers who can assist multiple clients with activities and swimming
- Consider option for home support workers to meet clients at pool to assist with changing for program participation or have home support workers available at the pool to assist regularly as needed
- Provide the name of who we (pool users) can write to advocate for more therapy pools
- Cost should never be a barrier; keep class and admission costs the same or lower
- Keep the drop-in cost the same
- Keep parking free or low cost
- Acknowledge and celebrate the benefits of people using the pool and the reduced cost to the health care system as a result of clients pool use
- Find a way to accommodate allowing tall pool users to get up to their neck in the water; water level change or props to accommodate different heights
- Raise awareness of the pool and its intended use

## **Populations of focus for pool use**

- Expand options for therapeutic use
- Allow access for people who are post-operative with hip, knee and ankle surgery to support rehabilitation
- Funding to expand the client base to include clients with short term disabilities who are transitioning from an acute phase to community based resources
- Continue programming for children and add additional access hours for speciality children programming (consult with Developmental Disabilities Association to understand scope of need)
- Provide programs that offer transition support between acute episodic and rehab to recovery or the other way from initial diagnosis to debilitation
- Expand current programming to build capacity for initial intended purpose – serving people with disabilities both short term and permanent
- Have specific programming for cardiac patients

## **Continue programming and provide more**

- Keep Watsu therapy and add more; Watsu provides safe touch for clients
- Aquatic body work
- Keep Post-Polio classes and add another; broaden access to other populations and consider a different name for the post polio as it does not reflect the client
- Have waterworks exercise offered at other times besides mornings
- Keep the adaptive program through Vancouver Parks Board
- Keep morning Ai-chi class and add an afternoon session
- Have the same number of drop –in user hours or add more hours in the evening
- Maintain programming that is currently in place
- Consider growth of programs that are seeing capacity
- Lap swim – provide more options per week
- More exercise boards in the pool

## **New programming**

- Have classes that use equipment in the pool (i.e. stationary bikes)
- Consider adding stroke and cardiac recovery programming
- Add more afternoon exercise classes from 1-3 pm
- Add land based exercise programme
- Offer swim classes for adults
- Add supported swim time
- Early years programming is very important
- Provide support to para-athletes through programming
- Develop a vision for the pool that really meets the needs of all the users
- Provide weights and therabands to use in pool
- Have aquatic yoga program
- Consider programmes that have evidence based outcomes
- Have walking therapy programme
- Provide a higher level exercise therapy program
- Provide high intensity program

## **Programming flow**

- Provide more time between the children's programming and drop-in time (challenging to vacate change area in the time allotted)
- Provide a schedule of all programming when people register
- Consider how to create good flow of people into the change rooms and pools and then out again
- Consider how to accommodate transition times in change rooms to allow enough time but not too much time taken
- Consider transition time allotment between community use (classes) and rental use and ensure it is sufficient to allow time to change
- Arrange scheduling to avoid crowding and back up in change area

## **Pool and Surrounding Areas**

- Ensure there is a place to watch; a viewing area
- The current pool length limits lap length
- Maintain even flooring levels throughout the pool and surrounding areas
- Create an outside space to accommodate gatherings
- Set up a structure to accept donations to bolster a fund for the pool
- Provide yoga mats and an area to do yoga at side of pool
- Create an area for land based exercise equipment
- Have steam showers
- Have a steam room, have a sauna/ infrared sauna
- Add more showers
- Put mirrors or flag markers on ceiling to support swimmers to note edge of pool
- Newer water chairs with foot pedals
- Additional ceiling lifts in change rooms
- Wider changing tables
- More grab bars in changing room
- Higher sink so wheelchair can go under to wash hands
- Maintain an environment that promotes calmness and healing; colours and design elements such as lighting minimizing walk through or walk around traffic
- Create a surrounding environment that is calming and promotes healing i.e. trees and landscaping

## **Staffing**

- Staffing should increase to meet demand
- Have more instructors
- More funding for staffing; lifeguards, short term care

## **Communication**

- Continue to be respectful in all communications to pool users and families

## Questions:

1. When will the new pool open?
2. What will the transition time between the old pool and new pool be?
3. Is the pool bigger?
4. Why is the pool the same size?
5. Why is the pool size smaller? If the pool is smaller and the classes are bigger how will this all work?
6. Where is the location of the new pool?
7. What will the pool depth be? Does the pool have to be as deep as it is planned as this makes the ramp angle steeper? Why is there only one ramp in the pool?
8. Will there be steps out of the hot tub to the poolside?
9. Will the door to the hot tub be easier to open?
10. What elements of the pool design are still able to be influenced or changed?
11. How can the pool be accessed from the Dogwood Long term care?
12. Will there be the same number of hours for Drop in?
13. What support is needed to get more funding for hours to be increased?
14. Will there be increased community use?
15. Will there be more hours for exercise classes?
16. Can we put bikes and other equipment into the water?
17. Will the lockers be accessible from a wheelchair?
18. Can there be access to lockers through a small fee and users not have to supply their own locks.
19. What will the parking availability be? Will there be a cost or will it be free?
20. Will there be wheelchair ramps?
21. Where is the HandyDart entrance? What is the length of the walkway from the HandyDart drop off to the pool?
22. Will the walkway be covered?
23. How will it flow to go through all the changing and showering activities in a common space?
24. Can the change rooms be larger?
25. Why the decision to have a universal change room? Will the universal change room allow for privacy?
26. Can the universal change room really offer privacy related to gender and cultural requirements?
27. How will we accommodate male support staff with female client and female support staff with male client in the change room?
28. Will there be a family change room?
29. Is the shower area a common space or private?
30. How many lifts will there be?
31. Will there be place to park chairs?
32. Will there be access to support in the change rooms and pool areas?
33. What about security? What is the security plan for the change rooms and common areas?
34. Will there be a coffee shop nearby?
35. Will there be a phone number to call to ask questions or get pool info?
36. How is this project being funded?
37. If the community who needs a facility like this is growing why are there not additional facilities being funded by other funding streams?
38. How can we get another pool in East Vancouver?