

Attachment 4 – MPCCA Pool Committee Letter to Park Board Bio Pool Comments

In terms of being a 'replacement' for our lost outdoor pools, we question whether a bio pool would fulfill some important functions of the lost pools (e.g., aquafit, swim lessons, and diving). Bio pools seem to be more about appearance and ecology than function.

Standard pool edges serve uses such as to roll off of, to dangle feet into the water from, to do exercises from, and to help navigate the pool. Graded pools are really not for swimming in and certainly not for diving into - even the toddlers at Mount Pleasant Pool used to roll off the low board in addition to jumping off of the edges of the pool.

Pools with a graded depth generally have a 3-4 foot deep bubble in the centre, with the rest of the pool devoted to access. Also, graded entry impedes access for some people. They can work for wheelchairs, but are not great for crutches or anyone with balance or other walking issues. Even wheelchairs would have trouble if the slope was soft and had aquatic grass growing on it, meaning that a bio pool could be less accessible for many people.

Studies supporting this type of pool, as well as consultations around location, then planning and design, would take even more time to complete. It is unlikely that it could be built in the less than three years remaining in this term of the Park Board, especially if it is not started until the aquatic study is completed and recommendations passed. Although a bio pool is an inviting concept that could be a welcome addition to Vancouver's landscape, the timeline for completion by 2018 does not work. Besides, Vancouver already has a natural bio pool, Trout Lake, which could be modified to become suitable for swimming again. Resources should only be allocated to outdoor swimming pools to provide the widest range of swimming experiences for the greatest number and diversity of people until our inventory of outdoor pools matches Park Board stated priorities.

A bio pool requires a large land area due to its graded entry and need for an adjacent filtering field.¹ Bio pools with "hard edges" do exist, but require an even larger retaining pond adjacent for filtering. It would be difficult to find a suitable park in Vancouver that is large enough to accommodate a multi-purpose bio pool, adjacent filtration field, and pool house with change rooms and bathrooms.

¹ In addition to about 20,000 residential installations, over 900 NSPs throughout the world have been successfully constructed and enjoyed in venues both public (municipal) and commercial (hotels, resorts, campgrounds, or training schools). BioNova® has been instrumental in the design and construction of the first Public NSP in North America. The [Webber Natural Swimming Pool](#) for the City of Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board provides 21,000 sq.ft. of swimming zone with a separate 16,000 sq.ft. of regeneration zone; both summer swimming and winter ice skating will be available.