



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

Staff Report

To: Council

File No.: 1845-20

From: Director of Recreation, Culture and Community Services

Date: September 10, 2025

Subject: Grant Application to UBCM Strategic Priorities Fund - Capacity Building Stream for Recreation Facilities Master Plan

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this staff report is to request Council's endorsement of the grant application to the Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream. This endorsement must include a formal resolution that confirms Council support, willingness to manage the grant, and cover cost overruns.

BACKGROUND:

Recreation Strategic Plan

Following recommendations and key findings in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019) and the Strategic Priorities (2023-2026), the City will be proceeding with the development of the Recreation Strategic Plan (RSP) project later this year as part of the department's 2025 /2026 work plan. Informed through a community engagement process, the RSP will guide the provision of the City's recreation service levels, provide functional program reviews, delivery models, resource allocation and set the vision for Courtenay Recreation into the future. The RSP is a key step in establishing community informed service levels for recreation services, an important component in asset management planning and will drive the conversation for the Recreation Facilities Master Plan outlined in the next section of the report. The RSP project is anticipated to start towards the end of this year and be completed in winter 2026/2027.

Recreation Facilities Master Plan

Currently, feasibility studies for the Filberg and the Lewis Centre are in the department's work plan for 2025/2026 and align with the City's strategic priorities. However, in consideration of the upcoming development of the RSP and its future recommendations and strategies, a more fulsome review of all the City's recreation facilities and how they will deliver recreational services (as conveyed by the RSP) in the long term would be advised by a Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

DISCUSSION:

While the Recreation Strategic Plan will provide high-level recommendations for recreation facilities based on service levels, the development of a Recreation Facilities Master Plan is a critical step to support implementation of the RSP. This plan will establish a long-term strategy for how the City's recreation facilities can best serve residents as the community grows. It will include updated condition assessments of existing recreation facility assets and prioritize facilities that require replacement, upgrades, expansion, or relocation to meet both current and future community needs.

Grant funding is currently available that could contribute up to 100% of the cost of the eligible activities for a Recreation Facilities Master Plan (currently unfunded). The grant is available through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) 2025 Strategic Priorities Fund (SPF) – Capacity Building Stream. The SPF– Capacity Building stream provides grant funding to support local government initiatives such as asset management, long-term infrastructure planning, and integrated community sustainability planning. Projects must align with national objectives of productivity and economic growth, environmental sustainability, and strong, resilient communities.

The application deadline is September 12th, 2025, and the submission must include a Council resolution indicating support for the proposed activities and willingness to provide overall grant management and support any cost overruns.

At the July 30th, 2025, Council meeting, Council approved a separate grant application for the SPF Capital Infrastructure Stream for the East Courtenay Fire Hall project. Staff has confirmed this additional grant application does not affect either the eligibility for consideration or the grant funding amount requested for the East Courtenay Fire Hall project which is capped at \$7 million.

Regarding project timing, the Recreation Facilities Master Plan would initiate in mid to late 2026 with condition assessments and then would shift into facilities planning as the Recreation Strategic Plan nears completion in winter 2026/2027. This would meet grant eligibility, which requires the project to start no later than two years after grant approval and project completion date must be within five years after grant approval. We would anticipate completion of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan in 2028. Should the grant application be successful, staff recommend proceeding with the Florence Filberg Centre’s feasibility study to address and respond to current facility needs and considering recommendations in the Strategic Cultural Plan; however, they would advise delaying planning work for Lewis Community Centre to incorporate it into the Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

Other Considerations:

Background Strategic Documents and Strategies:

The grant application will highlight the project’s alignment with SPF’s funding objectives by highlighting its alignment with policy themes in the City’s existing or in-progress strategic documents listed below that address productivity, economic growth, a clean environment, and strong cities and communities.

- Strategic Priorities 2023-2026
- Official Community Plan (2022)
- Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2019) and Implementation Strategy (2023)
- GHG study (2009)
- Flood Management Plan
- Complete Communities Growth Assessment (2024)
- Strategic Cultural Plan (2025)
- Parks Playground Design Standards (2024)
- Corporate Facilities Energy Management Plan – Draft

Cultural facilities are not included in the scope of the Recreation Facilities Master Plan, as they will be addressed through the Cultural Facilities Space Needs Assessment and Cultural Facilities Master Plan in the

Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department 2025/2026 workplan (pending grant funding through the Department of Canadian Heritage Canadian Cultural Spaces Fund). The project will, however, consider how the City’s recreation facilities can support community arts and culture space and programming needs by aligning with space recommendations in the Strategic Cultural Plan.

Furthermore, the Courtenay and District Memorial Pool will not be included in this project as long term facility plans are being considered through the Outdoor Pool Options Analysis currently underway.

Community Servicing Facility Space Needs

Key findings and strategies identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019) (PRMP) for indoor recreation facilities that support the RFMP are as follows:

- the City has popular and highly used facilities; three of the City’s key facilities need upgrading, expansion and/or replacement.
- The City offers diverse programs that are well attended; the community is continuing to grow, but program expansion is limited by the availability of appropriate space.
- The key strategy is to explore opportunities for upgrading and expanding the key facilities and maximize use of the Florence Filberg Centre and the Lewis Centre.
- Expand programs if and when more space becomes available.

There are approximately twelve recreation facilities with an average building age of 30 years, except for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, which is over 75 years old. The building ages for the City’s main recreation facilities are summarized below in Figure 1:

Figure 1: City of Courtenay Main Recreation Facilities Ages

<i>Recreation Facility</i>	<i>Year Built/Year of Improvements</i>
Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool and Outbuildings	1949, 1979, 1980
Filberg Centre	1987
Lewis Centre	1948, 1991, 2012
LINC Youth Centre	1960, 2006
Native Sons Hall	1928, 2004, 2010

Park washroom facilities have an average building age of 50 years. As these recreation facilities age, condition assessments are valuable tools to help prioritize future capital investments.

It’s also important to note that several of the City’s major facilities are in the flood plain and require decisions around planning for climate resiliency through this facility planning process. This could impact the Florence Filberg Centre, Lewis Centre, Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool and the LINC Youth Centre.

The Recreation Facilities Master Plan will incorporate an assessment of both current and projected community space needs and how and where geographically is it best to deliver recreation facilities that serve all residents across the city. As the City continues to expand its social infrastructure, there is a growing need for facility spaces that extend beyond traditional recreational functions and serve broader regional purposes.

Key community service functions with regional impact include but are not limited to:

- Emergency management support, such as warming and cooling centres during extreme weather events.
- Emergency reception centres to assist residents during local emergencies.

These facility needs reflect the City's commitment to resilient infrastructure and inclusive service delivery.

Recreation Facilities and Economic and Tourism Development

Recreation facilities can significantly contribute to economic and tourism development by creating jobs, attracting visitor spending, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the overall appeal of a community, thereby boosting local GDP and tax revenues. Communities become more desirable places to live, work, and visit as a result of their direct expenditure on operations, indirect spending on nearby vendors, and employee-induced spending. Recreation facilities can also support tourism development through supporting placemaking, events and potential sport hosting.

Asset Management

Critical to the Recreation Facilities Master Plan work will be a fulsome review of facilities and detailed analysis to facilitate sound asset management planning. By conducting condition assessments in parallel with future use planning, asset management analysis can then be performed to inform asset lifecycle decisions around maintenance and renewal vs new capital investment. This can then be used to develop a detailed capital and maintenance program that ensures recreation facilities meet the needs of the community for years to come.

POLICY ANALYSIS:

Regional Growth Strategy:

Objective 7-B: Increase public education and awareness around the links between population health and land use planning

Building awareness of the connections between population health and the physical layout and design of our communities is critical to achieving healthier built environments and maintaining the region's high quality of life. Re-engaging health professionals in land use planning and educating residents and the planning/development community on healthy built environments is equally important.

Official Community Plan (2022)

Land Use Objectives:

LU 15 Coordinate infrastructure upgrades and system extensions with the growth management principles and policies established in the OCP.

LU 16 Prioritize infrastructure investment using a multiple bottom line decision-making approach based generally on the following parameters and priorities:

- a. High-growth areas;
- b. Public health and safety;
- c. Environmental responsibility;
- d. Regulatory need;
- e. Asset management principles;
- f. Economic efficiencies and impact, such as partnerships, project coordination, and economic spinoffs.

LU 19 Review servicing master plans, including associated asset management plans, periodically to align with the land use policies. Identify existing servicing capacities to determine upgrade requirements for capital planning and assess the long-term viability of these infrastructure systems.

Municipal Infrastructure Objectives:

MI 1 Conduct a high-level risk assessment (HLRA) to determine potential risks to Courtenay's infrastructure and identify priority areas for adaptation interventions.

MI 2 Make infrastructure planning, investment and operations and maintenance decisions with a long-term life-cycle full cost accounting asset management perspective for the design, maintenance, and renewal of infrastructure and utilities, including natural assets.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2019)

Facility Recommendations:

4.1.2 Conduct a long-range facility needs analysis for the future expansion of the Lewis Centre

4.1.4 Review the possible expansion of the Florence Filberg Centre.

4.1.6 Collaborate with the CVRD, Comox and Cumberland to identify opportunities for new sports facilities, including accommodation of indoor pickleball court needs.

Programs and Service Recommendations:

4.2.2 Review programs regularly in terms of content, timing, and instructors, to ensure they are meeting the needs of participants and are the best use of the space, considering some of the requests during this process.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The grant funding request for the Recreation Facilities Strategic Master Plan is estimated at \$400,000. There is no current budget allocated for this project in the 2025-2029 Financial Plan. However, the project will be included though the 2026-2030 Financial Plan with funding coming from the SPF grant. Funding for the Recreation Strategic Plan in the amount of \$175,000 is in the 2025 Operation Budget and funded through surplus as summarized in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Project Budget and Funding Summary

Project	Year Budgeted	Budget/Proposed Budget Amount	Funding Source
Recreation Strategic Plan	2025	\$175,000 (2025-2029 Financial Plan)	Surplus
Filberg Feasibility	2025	\$75,000 (2025-2029 Financial Plan) in 2025, to be deferred to 2026	Surplus
Recreation Facility Master Plan	2026	\$400,000 (unbudgeted)	SPF Grant – Capacity Building Stream
Lewis Feasibility	2026	\$100,000 (2025-2029 Financial Plan) for 2026, to be deferred to 2027	Surplus

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:

The Recreation Strategic Plan and the Recreation Facilities Master Plan will be led by the Recreation, Culture and Community Services Department with input from other internal departments with overlapping service areas. The Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering Asset Management team will also provide support to ensure sound asset management principles and planning are followed.

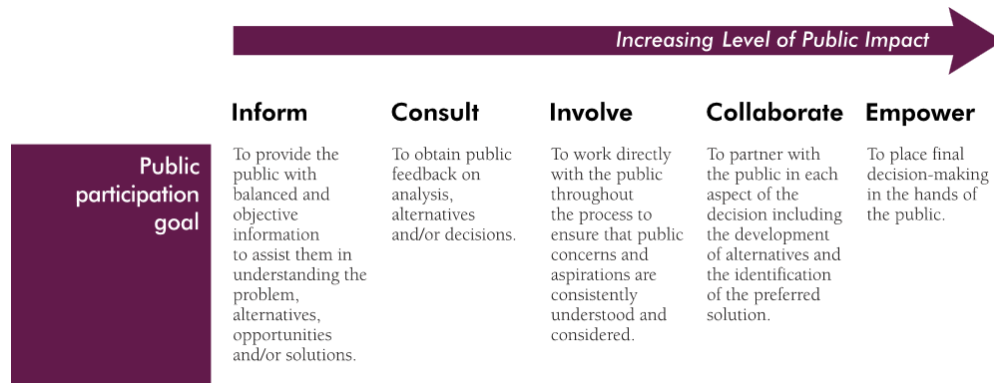
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Parks and Recreation - Optimize active public spaces to respond to density increases and increased park use
- Parks and Recreation - Complete recreation facilities need assessments and capital improvements: Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Lewis Centre
- Parks and Recreation - Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics
- Municipal Infrastructure - Complete accessibility audit of public facilities and develop implementation policy for capital improvements
- Social Infrastructure - Identify roles for the City in the delivery of social infrastructure outlined in the OCP; Implementation plan for delivery of social infrastructure
- Public Safety - Build capacity for emergency planning and local response
- Natural Environment - Integrate climate change commitment into our governance work: Include climate change lens in staff reports
- Financial Sustainability - Ensure capacity to accommodate big change

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

The public will be informed, consulted, and involved throughout the development and completion of the Recreation Strategic Plan as part of its community engagement strategy that will align with the Communication Strategy and Engagement Framework. The Recreation Facilities Master Plan will build on the community engagement of the RSP and will inform the public.



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OPTIONS:

1. THAT Council direct staff to submit a grant application for the Recreation Facilities Master Plan to the UBCM Strategic Priorities Fund – Capacity Building Stream; THAT Council supports the project, and is willing to provide overall grant management, and support any cost overruns; and THAT Council include the project budget for the Recreation Facilities Master Plan in the 2026-2030 Financial Plan. (Recommended)
2. THAT Council provide alternative direction to staff.

Prepared by: Joy Chan, Manager of Business Administration
Reviewed by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services
Chris Davidson, P.Eng, PMP, Director of Infrastructure and Environmental Engineering
Adam Langenmaier, BBA, CPA, CA, Director of Financial Services

Concurrence: Geoff Garbutt, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, City Manager (CAO)