



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF COURTENAY

BRIEFING NOTE

To: Council

File No.: 7710-05

From: Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Date: July 12, 2023

Subject: Comox Valley Aquatic Service Needs Strategy Update

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this briefing note is to update Council on:

1. The feedback received on the draft Comox Valley Aquatic Service Needs Strategy;
2. The status of the draft Comox Valley Aquatic Service Needs Strategy; and
3. Up-coming public engagement activities seeking feedback on the outdoor pool.

BACKGROUND:

At the January 11, 2023 Council Meeting, staff presented the Comox Valley Aquatic Needs Strategy Draft Report. Council resolved the following:

THAT the Draft Comox Valley Aquatic Services Needs Strategy (Attachment 1) be received for information and Council direct staff to proceed with posting the draft report for public engagement and feedback.

DISCUSSION:

Public Feedback on the Draft Comox Valley Aquatic Services Needs Strategy:

In conjunction with the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), it was agreed that the draft Comox Valley Aquatic Strategy would be posted on the City of Courtenay (City) and CVRD project websites from February 6, 2023 to March 6, 2023. Hardcopy versions were also made available at CVRD and City facilities and e-mail notices were sent to community groups who had participated in earlier engagement activities. Feedback on the draft report was provided through an online survey through which respondents could provide written feedback on the draft report.

A synopsis report of the feedback received was provide by the project consultant, RC Strategies (Attachment 1), and is summarized below:

- 73 total responses received (70 online survey and 3 Facebook comments)
- Summary of comments received:
 - Questioning or disagreement of the single location for regional aquatics at the Aquatic Centre and inconvenient for users, particularly current outdoor pool patrons (20)
 - Inability to access Aquatic Centre due to limited active transportation and lack of parking which will become more of an issue with the future adjacent student housing project.
 - Capacity calculations questioned with respondents indicating there is overcrowding at key times (19 responses)
 - Compliments on the level of detail of the strategy (11 comments)

- Support for a new aquatic facility with others supporting central location (7 comments) and that it made financial sense (5 comments)
- Requests to make enhancements to existing pool facilities (7), Sport Centre Pool and Courtenay and District Outdoor Pool (the outdoor pool) which included additional lanes, leisure capacity, change rooms, space and maintenance, and wellness amenities.

Comments specific to the outdoor pool are provided verbatim in Attachment 2 and are summarized below in three major categories:

- No need for an outdoor pool (5 comments);
- Support for an outdoor pool (9 comments);
- Other comments related to the outdoor pool facility (11 comments):
 - Issues with the outdoor pool due to lack of appropriate infrastructure (parking, change rooms, lack of shade and size)
 - Support for co-location with other CVRD facilities
 - Concern with noise in potential new location adjacent to the Aquatic Centre
 - Consider utilizing the natural river area to create a beach or pool built into the river.

Due to the limited number of responses received regarding the Draft Aquatic Services Strategy, especially related to future planning of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, staff have engaged RC Strategies to conduct additional public engagement specifically related to the Outdoor Pool. A public survey will be launched in August to gather feedback on the Draft Aquatic Services Strategy recommendations specifically related to the Outdoor Pool as well as gain feedback on other considerations such as but not limited to the Outdoor Pool's potential closure, relocation, or renovation. To ensure Comox Valley residents are informed about the survey, a press release, social media promotion, and promotional materials will be made available to support participation. Findings from the engagement will be presented at a future Council meeting.

Updated Draft with Capacity Scenarios

Following receipt of the Draft Comox Valley Aquatic Services Strategy, staff requested further analysis of the capacity calculations. Staff requested additional analysis be completed to understand the impact of a change in public access to 19 Wing Base Pool or if the outdoor pool were to be decommissioned. The draft report was updated with the requested scenarios in which the following aquatic facilities are removed from the regional inventory and usage was displaced into the remaining regional facilities:

Aquatic Facility	Resulting Regional Pool Operating Capacity Rates
19 Wing Base Pool	40%
Outdoor Pool	38%

In both scenarios, the region's indoor pools would still be operating below the recommended 85% swim capacity for operational efficiency. This information will be included in the final report.

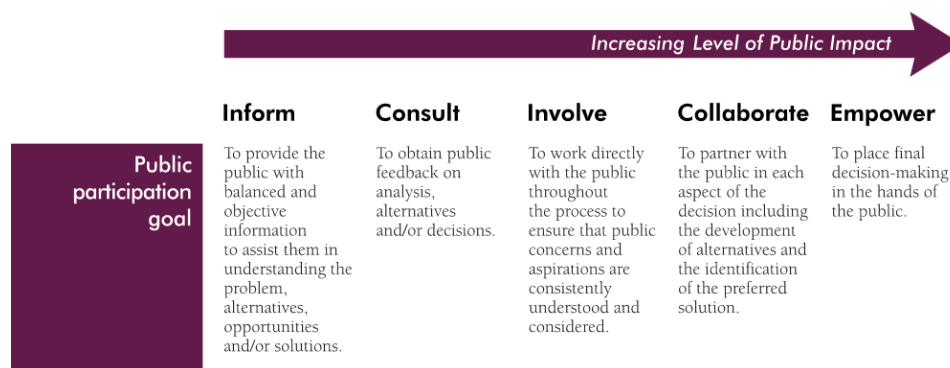
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Parks and Recreation - Complete recreation facilities need assessments and capital improvements: Florence Filberg Centre, Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Lewis Centre

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Staff would consult the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



© International Association for Public Participation www.iap2.org

CONCLUSION:

Staff will be in a position to report back later this year on a final recommendation regarding the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool after:

1. Considering the feedback received from the additional engagement this summer on the outdoor pool;
2. Finalizing assessment of the current condition of the outdoor pool that will be completed after the current pool season ends; and
3. Seeking feedback from the CVRD on the impact of the final recommendation on service levels at CVRD aquatic facilities.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT Council receive the "Comox Valley Aquatic Service Needs Strategy Update" briefing note.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Comox Valley Aquatics Draft Strategy Review Synopsis
2. Comox Valley Aquatics Draft Strategy Review Outdoor Pool Verbatim Comments

Prepared by: Joy Chan, Manager of Business Administration
Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

Reviewed by: Susie Saunders, Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

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