

# Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool Engagement

## WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

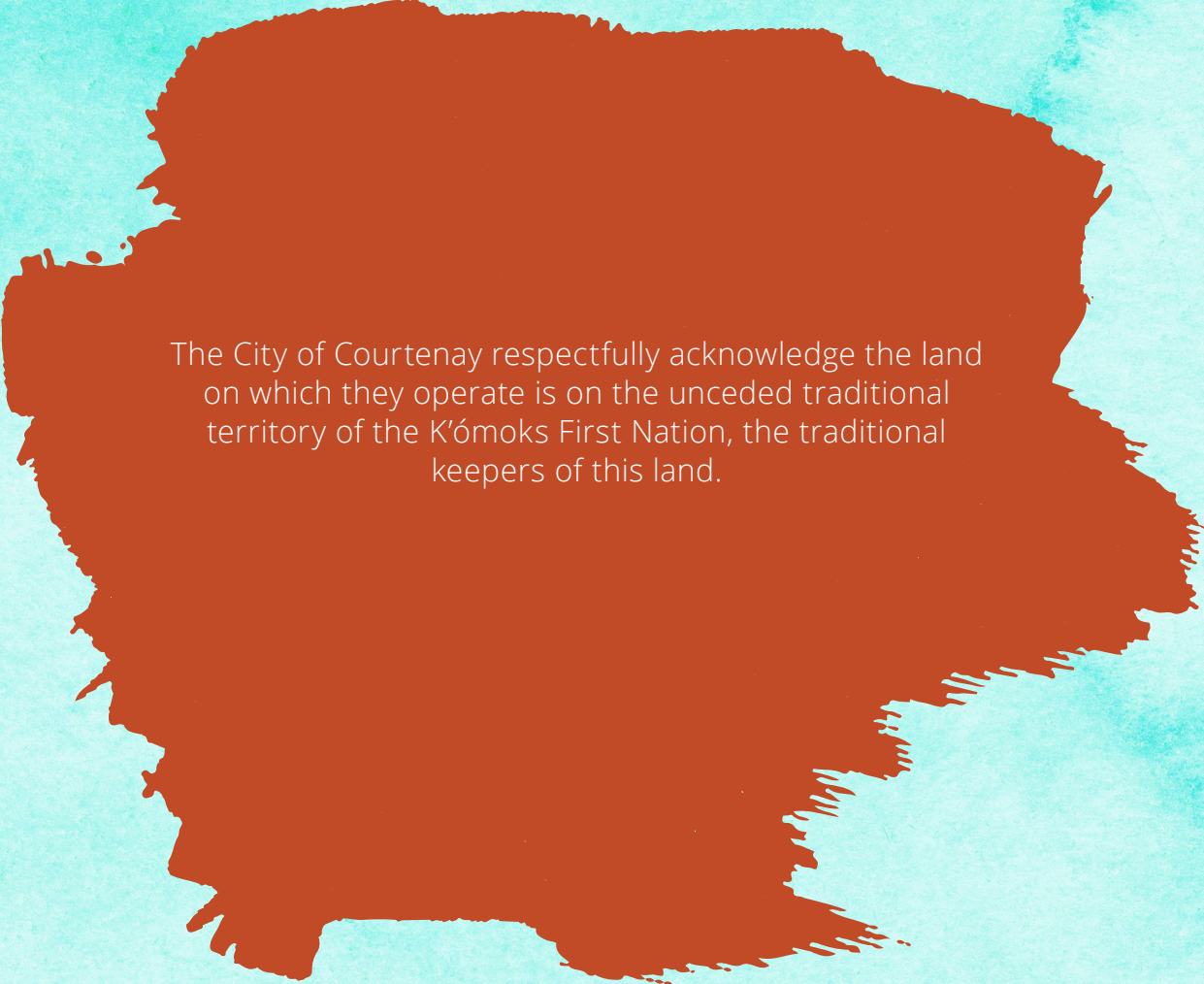
JANUARY 2024



City of  
Courtenay

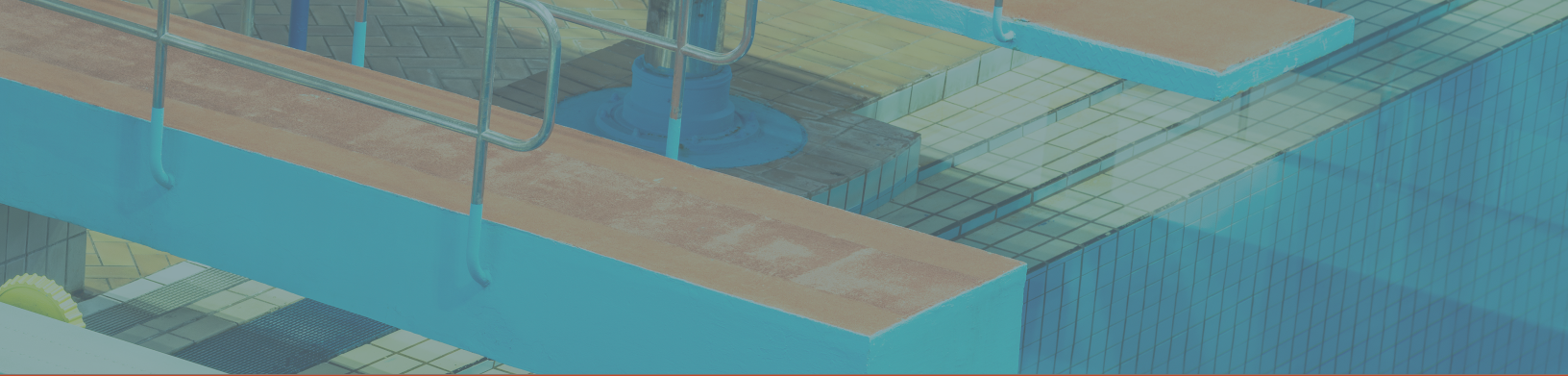






The City of Courtenay respectfully acknowledge the land on which they operate is on the unceded traditional territory of the K'ómoks First Nation, the traditional keepers of this land.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the City of Courtenay enrich the lives of Valley residents and visitors through the provision of three aquatics facilities: the Comox Valley Sports Centre, Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, and the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. To effectively plan for aquatics provision in the Comox Valley, and to reflect changing demands and financial realities, the CVRD and City commissioned an Aquatic Needs Strategy.

Following on from the Aquatic Needs Strategy, the City of Courtenay completed additional community engagement specifically relating to the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. A survey was fielded from mid August to mid September to gather more information from the public about the Outdoor Pool, in particular related to a preferred future. In total 1,800 responses were collected. This report presents the complete findings from this survey.

## Conclusions

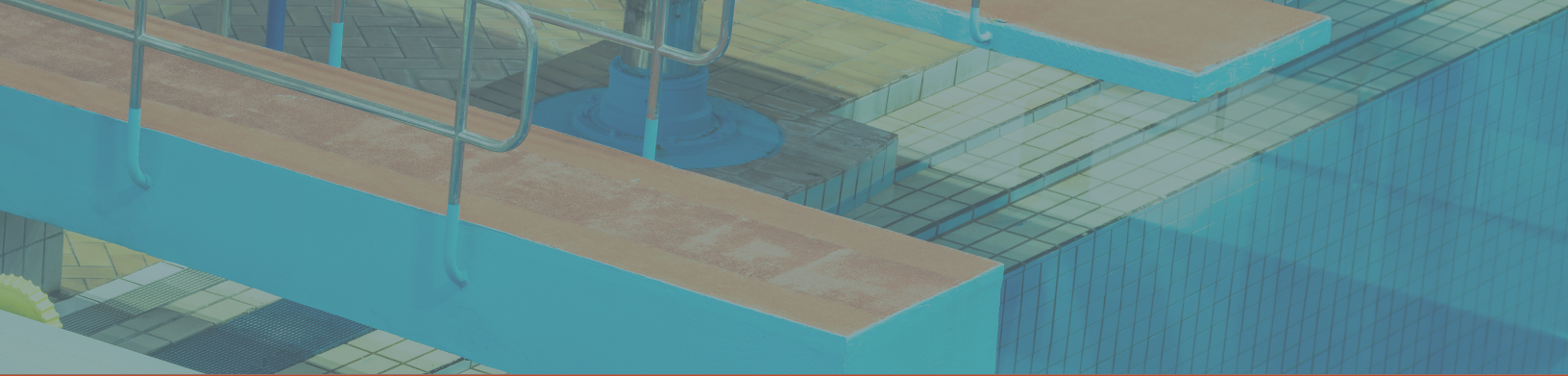
Overall, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a highly valued community facility with approximately two-thirds of respondents having visited the Outdoor Pool in the last two years. While visitation is greater amongst younger respondents, particularly those with younger children, all ages of respondents do use the Outdoor Pool.

Approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly agree that an outdoor pool is an important community facility to have in the Comox Valley Region and the City of Courtenay. Those respondents who did not visit the Outdoor Pool in either 2023 or 2022 agreed about the importance of the pool in the community, in Courtenay, and the Comox Valley.

The outdoor pool is commonly used to experience fun and enjoyment, to socialize and meet new people, and to exercise and look after physical health. Common reasons why people do not make use of the outdoor pool include issues with crowding, parking, the condition and cleanliness, and a preference for ocean / lake / river swimming.

When considering options for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, Option 1 – keep the pool at its current location and maintain current service level – received the greatest amount of support and the least amount of opposition. Option 5 – close the outdoor pool and do not invest in a replacement pool – was the least supported option by respondents and the most opposed. Although there was strong consensus about the value of an outdoor pool to the community, opinions differed on where the pool should be located. Over half (56%) preferred an option that kept the Outdoor Pool on its current site while 41% supported the development of a new pool at another site.

When considering decision making criteria, community benefit is clearly seen as the most important consideration. Responding to community demand is a second criteria strongly supported. While important, cost is considered a less critical decision-making criteria according to survey respondents.



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# 1

## INTRODUCTION

Recreation provision is important to the physical and social wellbeing of individuals and communities. Aquatic facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are important elements of recreation provision. Public pools provide opportunities for residents to participate in a variety of activities and provide important community benefits. From mobility and physical therapy opportunities, social connection and community cohesion, learning life safety skills, and athlete development, aquatic facilities can address many different needs. These facilities, especially outdoor pools, can also support broad community social goals of supporting reconciliation, anti-racism, and inclusion through reduced barriers to access and the social development that occurs through community participation in leisure activities.

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) and the City of Courtenay provide three recreation facilities to area residents: the Comox Valley Sports Centre, Comox Valley Aquatic Centre, and the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. To plan for the future of aquatics in the Comox Valley, the CVRD and City completed an Aquatic Needs Strategy in April 2023.

The Strategy outlines a rationale for investment from the CVRD and the City in aquatics services and includes recommendations on the future of the three aquatic facilities. A key recommendation of the Strategy is to consolidate all aquatics facilities at the Comox Valley Aquatics Centre, including the outdoor pool, to capture several benefits including the following:

- Operational efficiencies (staffing, energy systems).
- Capital cost efficiencies (shared change facilities and mechanical / support spaces).
- Opportunity to address emerging community priorities with a new facility design.

Findings from a survey fielded during the development of the Strategy included approximately one-third (31%) of respondents expressing dissatisfaction with the condition, accessibility, and features of the outdoor pool (47% were satisfied). Crowding at the outdoor pool was noted as was a lack of amenities and features as well change rooms in need of updating.

After the development of the Aquatic Needs Strategy, the City of Courtenay undertook additional community consultation regarding the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool. From mid-August through to mid-September a survey was fielded with the public to better understand their use of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool and their preferred future of outdoor aquatics in the Comox Valley. This report presents the findings of that engagement.





# 2

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

A survey was fielded to residents of the Comox Valley to learn about their utilization of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and their thoughts on its future and that of outdoor aquatics generally.

The survey was primarily fielded online however residents were able to request hard copies of the questionnaire. An ArcGIS StoryMap was developed to support respondents understanding of the options being considered for the outdoor pool. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire and Appendix B for screen shots of the interactive the ArcGIS StoryMap. The survey gathered responses from August 14th through to September 12, 2023; over that time 1800 responses were gathered.

A variety of tactics were utilized to promote the survey including the following:

- Promotion on the City's website;
- Promotion on the City's social media; and
- Posters at the Outdoor Pool.

Findings of the survey cannot be considered representative of the community, but findings provide good information that the City can use to support decision making.

### 2.1 Survey Findings

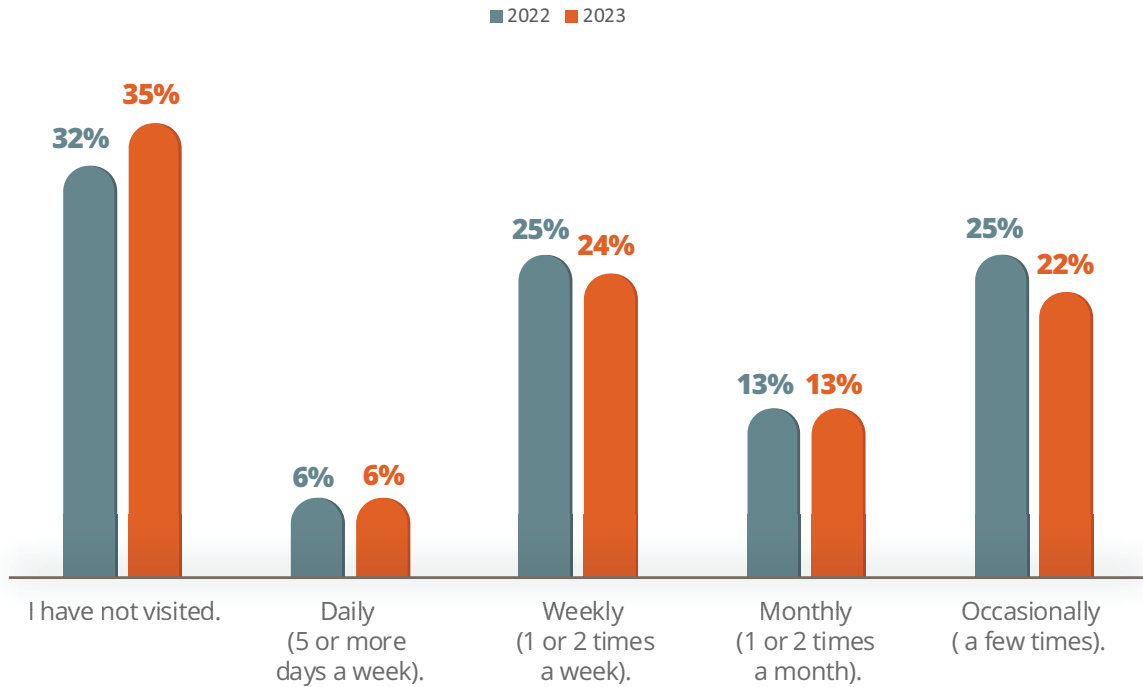
The findings are presented in the order the questions were posed in the survey. They reflect the proportion of respondents who answered the question as not all respondents answered each question. The findings were also examined by some subsegments<sup>1</sup>. Where appropriate and sizable differences exist, mention of the subsegment findings is made in the report. Due to rounding, totals may not equal 100%. Findings to similar questions posed in the resident survey fielded during the development of the Aquatic Needs Strategy (February – March 2022) are presented alongside this Survey's findings (where available).

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<sup>1</sup> Subsegments include: Household composition (households with children compared to those without children); households with children aged 0-9 years compared to households with children aged 10-19 years; Residency (City of Courtenay, Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD), Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland), Age of respondent (39 yrs and younger, 40-59 yrs, 60-69 yrs, and 70 yrs and older), and those who hadn't visited the pool in 2022 or 2023 compared to those who had visited in those two years.



# Graph 1: Frequency of Visiting the Memorial Outdoor Pool



## 2.1.1 Utilization

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify the frequency at which they visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 and in 2023. As shown in Graph 1, frequency of visitation did not vary much between 2022 and 2023. Approximately one-third of respondents (32-35%) said they did not visit the outdoor pool. A similar proportion (30-31%) visited the pool at least weekly (including daily and weekly).

## Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents with children in the home are more likely to have visited the Outdoor Pool in 2023 (74%) compared with respondents without children in the home (51%). This pattern is similar for 2022, where 77% of respondents with children in the home visited the Outdoor Pool compared to 55% of those without children in the home.
- Respondents with children who are aged between 0-9 years are more likely to have visited the Outdoor Pool in 2023 (81%) than respondents with children aged 10-19 years (70%).
- There is a correlation between respondents' ages and visitation to the Outdoor Pool. In both 2023 and 2022 younger respondents are more likely to visit the pool than older respondents. In 2023, 72% of respondents 39 years of age and younger visited the pool compared with 66% of respondents 40-59 years of age, 57% of respondents 60-69 years of age, and 48% of respondents 70 years and older. A similar dynamic occurred for 2022.

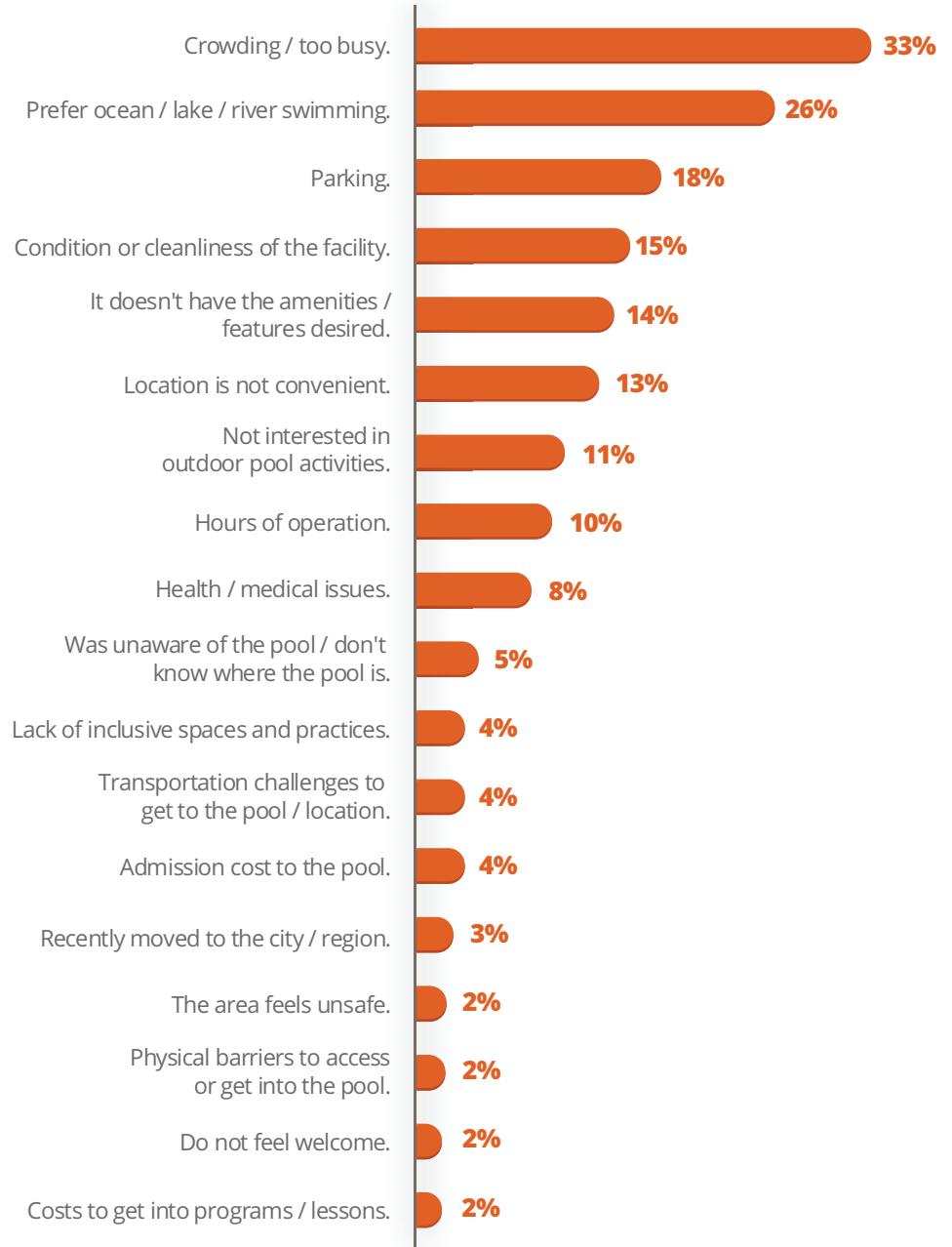
### Aquatic Needs Strategy

- 56% of respondents had used the Outdoor Pool as an active participant with the previous three years.



Respondents who indicated that they did not visit the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 were then asked to identify their reasons for not using the pool. As illustrated in Graph 2, the most common reason is that the pool is too crowded / busy (33%). Approximately one-quarter (26%) of respondents indicated that they prefer to swim in natural environments including oceans lakes and rivers. Parking (18%), condition or cleanliness of the facility (15%), lack of desired amenities / features (14%), and inconvenient location (13%) are the other primary reasons. Refer to the graph for additional findings<sup>2</sup>.

**Graph 2: Reasons for Not Using the Courtenay & District Pool**



### Aquatic Needs Strategy

#### Factors Limiting Use of Outdoor Pool

- Crowding / too busy 45%
- Prefer ocean / lake / river swimming 28%
- Hours of operation 20%
- Lack of desired amenities / features 16%
- Condition or cleanliness 15%
- Parking 14%
- Location is not convenient 13%

<sup>2</sup> Respondents were informed that “admission cost to the pool” was to be considered prior to the free admission pilot program that started on August 8 when considering whether “admission cost to the pool” is a reason for not using the pool.



Other reasons that respondents mentioned for not using the outdoor pool include the feeling that the pool is more designed for children and that respondents are visiting less now that their children have grown.

*"It's an "OK" pool where it is. It could be bigger because of the crowding.."*

*(Survey respondent)*

## Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents with children in the home are more likely (24%) to identify parking as a reason for not visiting the Outdoor Pool compared to respondents without children (11%).
- Respondents from Cumberland were more likely to say the inconvenient location is a reason for not using the Outdoor Pool (51%) than respondents from Comox (18%), CVRD (10%), and Courtenay (8%).
- Respondents 39 years and younger are more likely to identify the following as reasons for not using the Outdoor Pool compared to other respondents:
  - » Preference for ocean / lake / river swimming (31%) compared to 25% (40-59 yrs), 18% (60-69 yrs), and 14% (70 yrs and older).



Respondents who had visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 were asked to identify their main reasons for using the pool. As illustrated in Graph 3, approximately three-quarters of respondents (77%) said they visit the Outdoor Pool for fun / enjoyment, while approximately half (52%) said their main reason is for exercise and physical health. Just under half of respondents (43%) said they visit the Outdoor Pool to socialize with family and friends. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Other common reasons respondents mentioned for their use of the Outdoor Pool are for cooling off and enjoying the outdoors in the summer months. Some respondents also mentioned that their children visit the outdoor pool during summer camp.

**Graph 3: Main Reason for Visiting the Courtenay & District Outdoor Pool**



## Subsegment Analysis

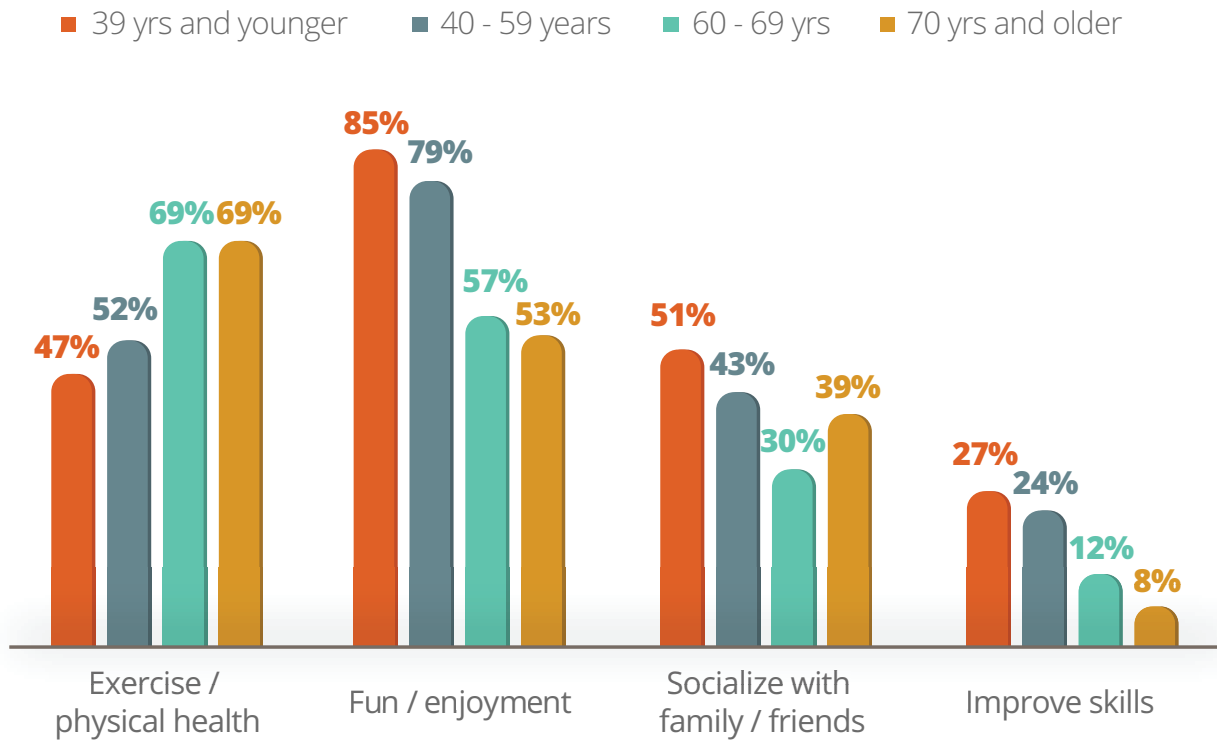
- Respondents with children in the home are less likely to use the Outdoor Pool for exercise/ physical health (45%) compared to respondents without children in the home (72%). Moreover, those with children are more likely to visit the pool for fun/ enjoyment reasons (86%) than those without children (55%).
- Respondents from Comox (50%), Courtenay (45%), and CVRD (40%) are more likely to say they visit the outdoor pool to socialize with family and friends than do respondents from Cumberland (28%).

***“The outdoor pool is much more than a pool. It’s a centrally located gathering place that encourages community building and supportive relationships. The location is important so everyone can access it.”***

***(Survey respondent)***



**Graph 3a: Main Reasons for Visiting the Outdoor Pool**  
(By Age of Respondent)



## 2.1.2 Value

Respondents were provided with several statements and asked to indicate the extent with which they agree with each. As shown in Graph 4, approximately three-quarters of all respondents (78%) strongly agree that it is important for the Comox Valley region to have a public outdoor pool. A similar proportion (74%) strongly agree that the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important community facility. Just under half (47%) of respondents strongly agree that the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important part of their summer recreation experience. Refer to the graph for more findings.

## Subsegment Analysis

- While respondents who had visited the Outdoor Pool in the past two years are more likely to agree with the statements than those who had not visited the pool, both segments of respondents agree that the Outdoor pool is an important community facility; important to have in the Comox Valley; and important for the City of Courtenay to have.

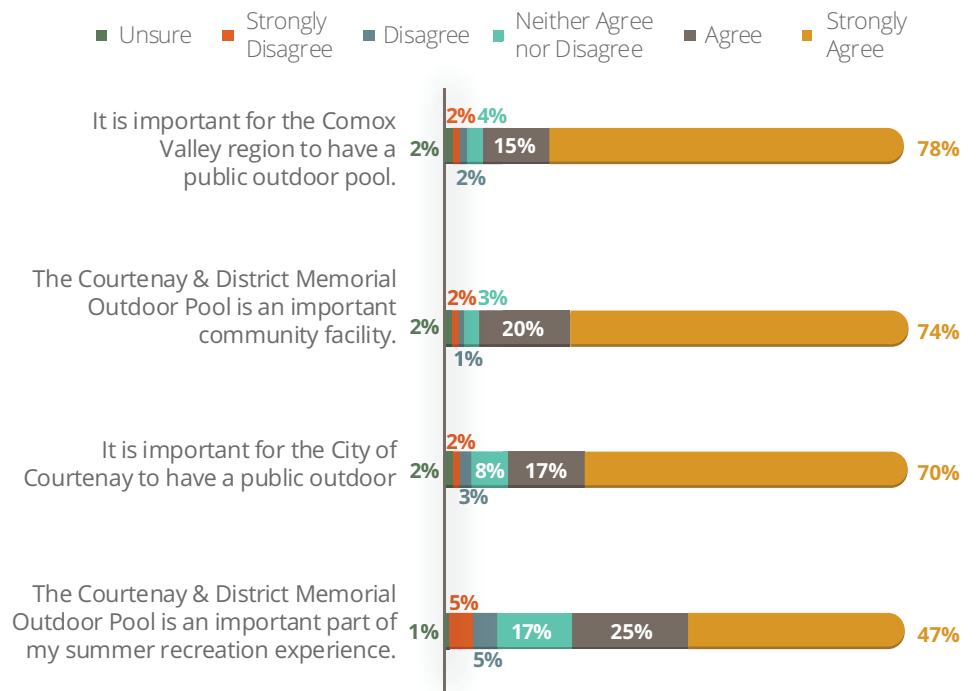
### Aquatic Needs Strategy

#### Agreement Levels

- Comox Valley should have outdoor public pools 77%

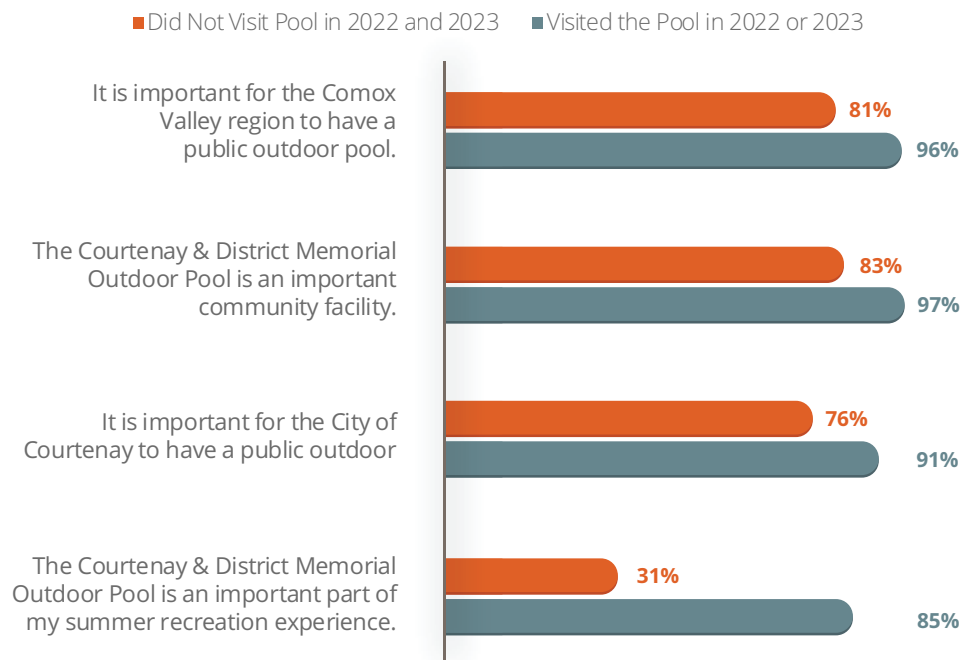
*"This is an important staple in the valley and I enjoy being able to go there week after week in the summertime with my children as I did growing up. It's important to keep these established areas in the valley. It's what makes it such an enjoyable place to live."  
(Survey respondent)*

## Graph 4: Agreement With Value Statements



## Graph 4a: Agreement with Value Statements

(Visited the Outdoor Pool Last 2 Years vs Did Not Visit the Outdoor Pool)



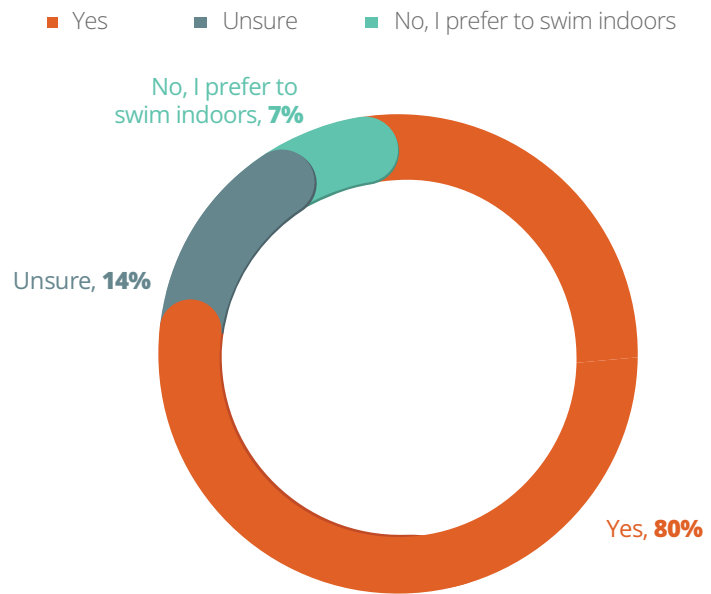


Respondents were next asked whether there are times in which they would use the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool instead of an indoor pool in the region. As illustrated in the following graph (Graph 5), over three-quarters of respondents (80%) said they would sometimes pick the outdoor pool over an indoor pool.

### Subsegment Analysis

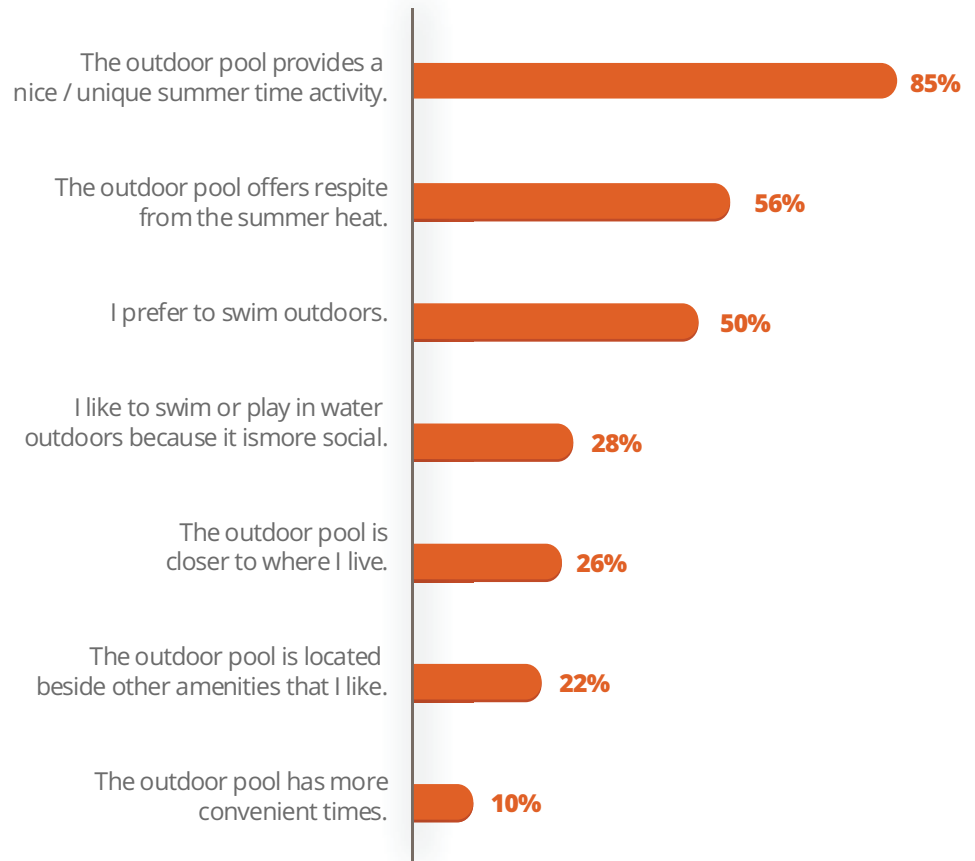
- Respondents who visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely (87%) to choose the outdoor pool instead of an indoor pool at times than respondents who did not visit the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 (56%).

### Graph 5: Would Choose to Use the Outdoor Pool Instead of Indoor Pool at Times



Main reasons for respondents' decision to use the outdoor pool instead of the indoor pool include the outdoor pool providing a unique summer recreation activity (85%). Approximately half (56%) also felt the pool offers respite from the summer heat, and half (50%) expressed an overall preference for outdoor swimming. Refer to Graph 6 for more information.

## Graph 6: Reasons for Using the Outdoor Pool Instead of the Indoor Pool



*"The services provided by the city are very important to the citizens that live here. They provide children, teens and adults with enjoyment and memories for life. Access to Swimming is a life skill and knowledge of water and water safety should be a priority especially since this is an ocean community. Everyone should have access. As taxpayers, we want good quality services that are equitable for everyone."  
(Survey respondent)*

## Subsegment Analysis

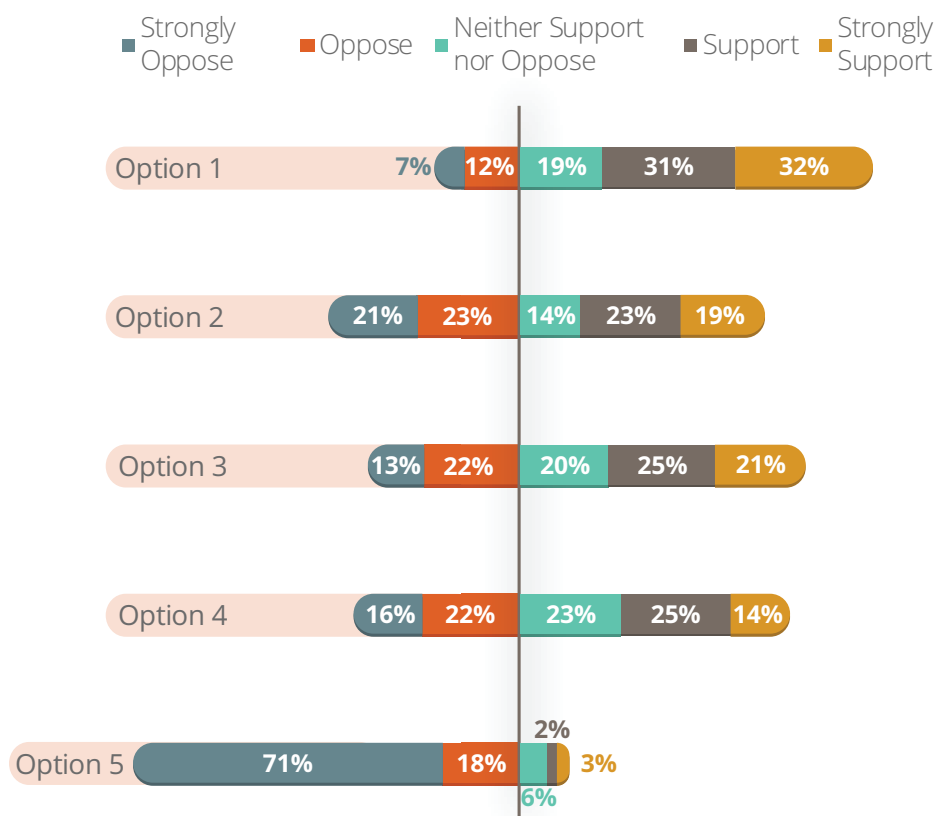
- Respondents with children are more likely to say they use the Outdoor Pool because it provides a nice / unique summer-time activity (90%) than those without children in the home (78%). Those with children are more likely (61%) to say they use the outdoor because it provides respite from the summer heat, than those without children (48%).
- Respondents from Cumberland (38%) and Courtenay (37%) are more likely to use the Outdoor Pool than one of the indoor pools because of it being closer to where they live than respondents from CVRD (16%) and Comox (4%),
- Respondents who visited the Outdoor Pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely to identify the following as reasons for choosing the Outdoor Pool instead of an indoor pool compared to respondents who did not visit the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023.
  - » Prefer to swim outdoors (53% vs 37%).
  - » Outdoor pool offers respite from summer heat (59% vs 42%).



## 2.1.3 Options

The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. It requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. Respondents were presented with a series of options for the future of the Outdoor Pool in Courtenay and were asked to indicate how strongly they support each option. As illustrated in Graph 7, the greatest amount of opposition was for Option 5 – close the Outdoor Pool and not replace it. Approximately three-quarters (71%) of respondents strongly opposed this choice. Option 1 (maintain the current service and address its issues) received the greatest amount of support with approximately two-thirds (63%) saying they strongly support it (32%) or support it (31%). Refer to the graph for further details.

### Graph 7: Support for Options for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool



**Option 1:** Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility.

**Option 3:** Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase the service level and improve accessibility.

**Option 5:** Close the Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool.

**Option 2:** Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre site.

**Option 4:** Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay.

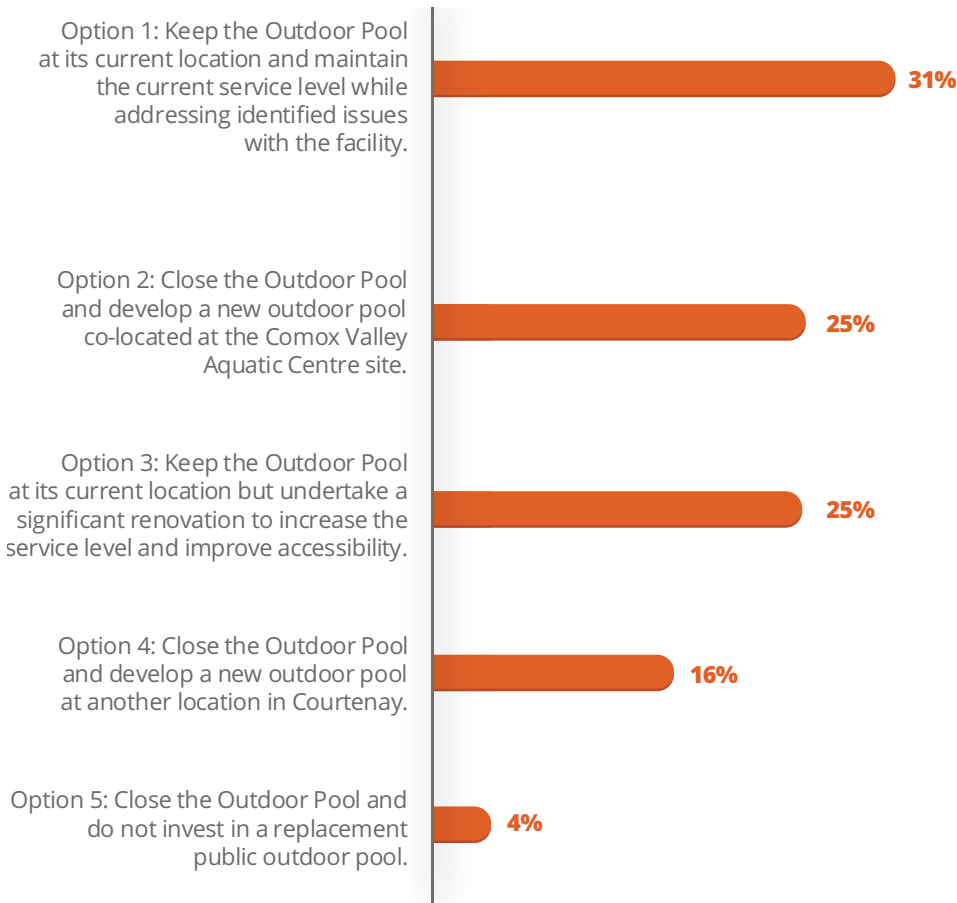
### Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents from Comox are more likely to support Option 2 (56%) – relocate the outdoor pool at the Aquatic Centre – than respondents from CVRD (41%), Courtenay (40%), and Cumberland (27%).
- Respondents from Cumberland are more likely to support Option 4 (57%) – develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay – than respondents from CVRD (40%), Comox (39%), and Courtenay (37%).
- Respondents 70 yrs and older are less likely to support Option 2 – redevelop the outdoor pool at the Aquatic Centre – (28%) than respondents 39 yrs and younger (48%).
- Respondents who had visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023 are more likely to support the following options compared to respondents who had not visited the outdoor pool in 2022 or 2023:
  - » Option 1 – maintain current service (66% vs 50%).
  - » Option 3 – undertake significant renovation with existing pool (48% vs 36%).

## 2.1.4 Most Preferred Option

Respondents were then asked to identify their most preferred option. As shown by Graph 8, Option 1 was the preferred option of the largest segment of respondents, with 31% of respondents expressing preference for keeping the pool at its current location and maintaining the current service level. One-quarter of respondents (25%) expressed preference for Option 2 (Close the pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre) and Option 3 (Keep the pool at its current location and undergo renovations). Option 5 (Close the pool and do not reinvest in a new one) was the least supported option with just 4% of respondents selecting this as their most preferred option. Approximately half (56%) of respondents favoured an option that had the pool remaining at its current location: Option 1 (31%) and Option 3 (25%).

**Graph 8: Most Preferred Option for the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool**



### Subsegment Analysis

- Option 1 - keep the pool at its current location and maintain its current service level – was most strongly supported by older aged residents. Approximately one-third (38%) of respondents 70 yrs and older and respondents 60-69 yrs identified this as their favourite option compared to 26% of respondents 39 yrs and younger.



Respondents had the option to provide further feedback to explain the rationale for their preferred option. (A total of 884 comments were provided.) Key concerns about the current location include the need for more parking and accessibility improvements. However, it is important to note that many people have nostalgic attachments to the pool's current location and appreciate its central location in the community and therefore, suggest investing in upgrades and renovations to improve accessibility and modernize the facility. Within the feedback it was noted that building a new pool outside of the floodplain and closer to areas with growing populations should be a key consideration to inform future investments in outdoor aquatics. Overall, the outdoor pool is valued as a community facility, but improvements (and a potentially new facility) are recognized as needed to better serve the growing population and enhance accessibility to outdoor aquatics.

**Key themes that emerged from the analysis of all responses includes the following:**

- Highly valued community asset that is family friendly (22%).
- The current location is centrally located (18%).
- Ensuring recreation facilities and amenities are easily accessible throughout the Valley / Region (16%).
- Concerns over the amount of investment required (15%).
- Concerns with the facility being located on a flood plain (13%).
- Lack of available parking and connection to public transit is a concern (11%).



## Rationale for Preferring Option 1 - maintain current service (n=410)

- Preferred location for the outdoor pool (36%)
- Most cost-efficient option (34%)
- Valued, historical community asset (27%)

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Keeping the existing outdoor pool is the lowest cost option that maintains public outdoor swimming pool. While I would love to see a more inclusive and modern facility in Lewis Park I feel there are too many variables and potential challenges with this location."
- "It's a summertime classic! Lovely pool, great central location. Accessible for summer camps."
- "I think up keep, maintenance and repairs of the current facilities makes the most sense logically and financially."

## Rationale for Preferring Option 2 - new outdoor pool at Aquatic Centre (n=342)

- Central location that provides more space (33%)
- Improved parking and public transit access / service (27%)
- Not located in flood plain (25%)
- Cost effective approach (15%)

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Due to the wider space over by the aquatic center, I feel there will be less crowding and more accessibility especially for those with wheelchairs. I also feel like the change rooms at the current location cannot be altered to make room for a possible gender neutral change room because of how tight the space is already, inside and outside"
- "The traffic is so heavy in its current location. We have small children and parking and accessibility is currently an issue. Putting an outdoor pool next to the indoor pool would be a better location."
- "Lowest cost of the new pool options, close to home, more parking, easier to get in and out of that parking lot. Maybe a combo option of upgrading aquatic centre and an outdoor pool together."

## Rationale for Preferring Option 3 - significant renovation on current pool (n=341)

- Preferred location due to nostalgia, vistas, central location, and walkability (82%)
- Valued community asset (25%)
- Need for renovations to current pool (19%)
- Wanting to maintain current summer programming and camps (15%)

*\*Note: location was primarily mentioned to explain this preference however that theme was coupled with other factors.*

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- "The location is central but the pool could definitely use a renovation. New features for kids would be great."
- "A new facility would make coming to the pool much more enjoyable. Having nice change rooms, lockers, and nice pool deck would make my swimming experience awesome."
- "The outdoor pool in Courtenay means a lot to the community, it's a summertime staple. My grandparents swam there in the 50s, my father learned to swim there in the 60s, I learned to swim there in the 90s and now my children take summer swim lessons at the outdoor pool. Wouldn't it be wonderful to offer it to the next generation? It does however require significant modernization. A family change room is needed and accessible features so that all community members can enjoy the outdoor pool."

## Rationale for Preferring Option 4 - develop new outdoor pool at another location (n=239)

- Improve geographic balance of recreation opportunities (35%)
- Develop a larger pool (25%)
- Ability to improve and expanding parking (22%)
- Not located in flood plain (13%)

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- "The outdoor pool is nice, but most of the time I swim in the river instead. It's doesn't add value to build a pool next to the river. A pool located away from the river would provide swim opportunities in areas where there are none."
- "Currently the outdoor pool and both indoor pools are on the east side of the bridge. It would be great to see an outdoor pool on the west side."
- "The current location does not have favorable parking options and is on the east side of the bridge. It would be lovely to have a facility located on the west side of the Valley given its substantial growth over the years"

## Rationale for Preferring Option 5 - close and do not replace the outdoor pool (n=52)

- Ability of residents to use outdoor water access to swim (40%)
- Concerns over cost (25%)
- Cost concerns / other community needs that should be addressed (25%)

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- "Building another indoor pool would be a better investment as it can be used year round, there are many lakes, rivers and oceans nearby for outdoor swimming."
- "We are surrounded by water. People should go to a beach. The costs will balloon they always do. Don't waste our money. If you decide to go ahead with a renovation or rebuild plan it should be privately funded not taxpayer funded. I opt out."
- "The costs are too high to invest in this type of recreation. Our community has other options"



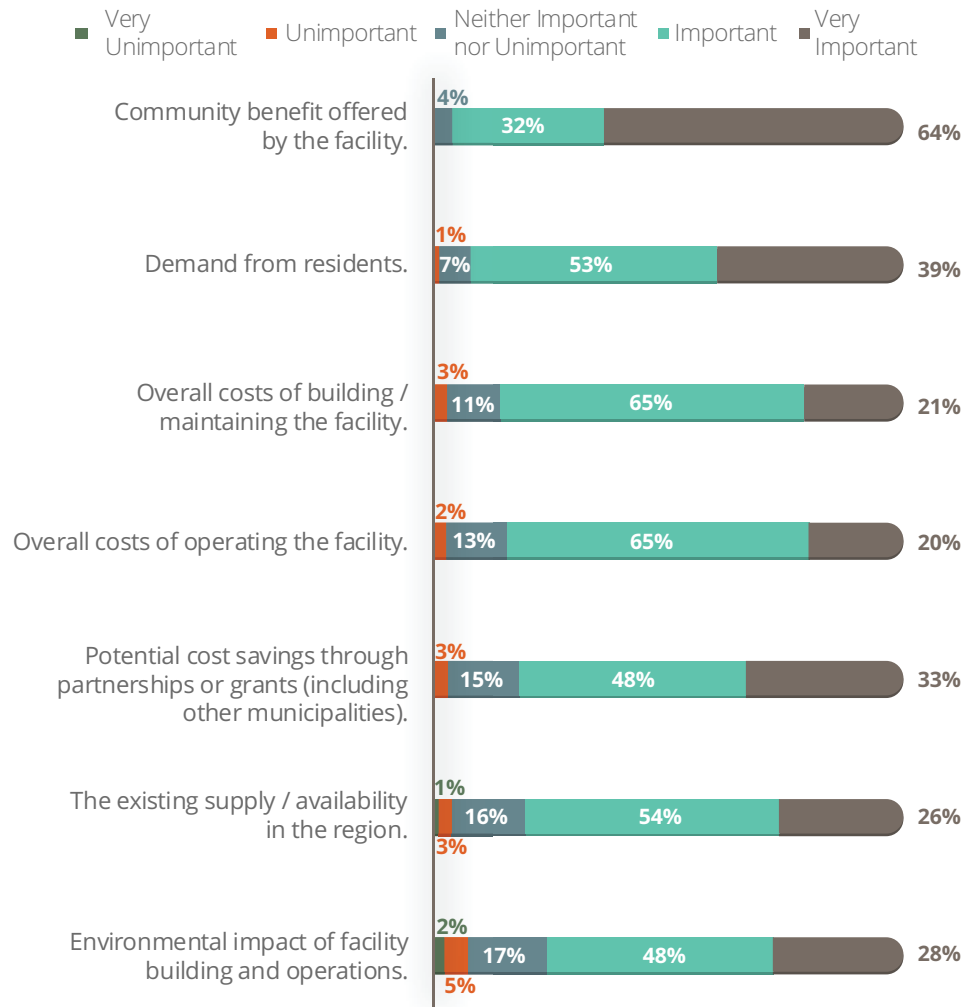


## 2.1.5 Decision Making Criteria

Due to resource limitations, some recreation and parks facilities and amenities, including outdoor pools, must be prioritized over others. Respondents were provided with a list of factors that the City could use to prioritize investment in one facility or amenity over another. For each factor they were asked to identify how important it should be when the City prioritizes one facility or amenity project over another.

As shown by Graph 9, all criteria were deemed as important to some degree by respondents. When examined by ratings of “very important”, approximately two-thirds of respondents (64%) identified “community benefit offered by the facility” as a very important criterion. Next, demand from residents was considered “very important” by approximately one-third of respondents (39%). One-fifth of respondents (21%) said operating cost is a very important criterion. Refer to Graph 9 for additional details.

### Graph 9: Prioritization Criteria



Respondents were able to identify other factors that should be considered when prioritizing facilities or amenities. There were 300 comments provided. Common factors included:

- Cost efficiency.
- Accessibility for elderly as well as youth.
- Geographic balance of facilities in community.
- Seasonality of outdoor pools verses indoor pools that can be used year-round.
- Lane capacity to accommodate a range of user groups.
- Heritage value of the outdoor pool.
- Input and feedback from the community.
- Projected community and population growth.
- Co-location of community facilities and amenities.

***“With the aging population it’s important to realize that going swimming in any of the local beaches is NOT a reality for many. As well, NIC college students may not own transportation so summer swimming always relies on public transit that may not fit tide times. I also feel that the pool being relocated to be adjacent to the wave pool will relieve traffic congestion and potential traffic accidents.”***

***(Survey respondent)***



## 2.1.6 Other Comments

Finally, respondents could provide any other comments about the provision of outdoor aquatics in the City of Courtenay. There were 282 comments provided.

Within the concluding comments, a general theme was that the outdoor pool should be preserved and improved, with suggestions for upgrading change rooms and accommodating a family change room, adding water slides and wading areas, and increasing accessibility. There is also a need for improved parking, as well as enhanced program offerings and expanded swim lesson options. Additionally, some respondents did suggest alternative options to the current facility, such as using the river or connecting a new pool to other facilities. Overall, the community values the pool as a gathering place for families and friends and recognizes its importance in creating community bonds and providing a unique summer experience.

### Examples of Direct Quotes

- “Wonderful facility. Well used. Lots of fun programs. Highlight of summer fun.”
- “I hope the current site of the outdoor pool can be transformed into something else that fills some of the needs the pool fills now. Public outdoor recreation, a place to cool off, a safer alternative to river swimming. I would love to see more park space in that location, an additional splash pad with increased accessibility including for adults!”
- “The outdoor pool is a very unique facility in the Comox Valley, and it provides a summer experience that the indoor pools can’t provide.”
- “The outdoor pool is a critical part of summertime culture in the valley, this is an incredible chance to shape the next 100 years of summer aquatics in Courtenay!”
- “I would really appreciate having more options for aquafit through the day and evenings at the outdoor pool, increased accessibility for people with disabilities, and more swim times that are adult only. I also find that many of the programs in this town are during the day which doesn’t work for people who work 9-5 jobs so more aquafit classes and adult only swim times outside of regular working hours would be greatly appreciated.”





## 2.1.7 About You

Respondents were asked several questions about them. The responses are presented in the following table.

<b>Where do you live?</b>			<b>Household with Children</b>		
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*		Survey Respondents	2021 Census*
City of Courtenay	54%	39%	Yes	62%	44%
Comox Valley Regional District	20%	34%	No	35%	56%
Town of Comox	16%	21%	Prefer not to say	3%	
Village of Cumberland	7%	6%	<b>Ages of Children in the Home</b>		
K'ómoks First Nation	<1%	N/A		Survey Respondents	2021 Census*
Other	3%	-	0-4 years	31%	-
<b>Where in the Comox Valley Regional District?</b>			5-9 years	53%	-
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*	10-14 years	40%	-
Electoral Area A	21%	32%	15-19 years	21%	-
Electoral Area B	40%	30%	20 years or older	7%	-
Electoral Area C	39%	37%	Prefer not to say	2%	-
<b>How long have you resided in the Comox Valley?</b>					
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*			
Less than 2 years	7%	-			
2-5 years	12%	-			
Longer than 5 years	80%	-			
Prefer not to say	2%	-			
<b>Age of Respondents</b>					
	Survey Respondents	2021 Census*			
19 years of age and younger	1%	-			
20-39 years	32%	24%			
40-59 years	45%	31%			
60-69 years	16%	21%			
70-79 years	5%	16%			
80 years and older	1%	8%			
Prefer not to say	1%	-			

\*Information is not available

# 3



## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is a **highly valued community facility** with approximately two-thirds of respondents having visited the Outdoor Pool in the last two years. While visitation is greater amongst younger respondents, particularly those with younger children, **all ages of respondents do use the Outdoor Pool.**

Approximately three-quarters of respondents strongly agree that **an outdoor pool is an important community facility** to have in the Comox Valley Region and the City of Courtenay. Those respondents who did not visit the Outdoor Pool in either 2023 or 2022 agreed about the importance of the pool in the community, in Courtenay, and the Comox Valley.

The outdoor pool is commonly used to experience fun and enjoyment, to socialize and meet new people, and to exercise and look after physical health. Common reasons why people do not make use of the outdoor pool include issues with crowding, parking, the condition and cleanliness, and a preference for ocean / lake / river swimming.

When considering options for the future of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool, **Option 1 – keep the pool at its current location and maintain current service level – received the greatest amount of support and the least amount of opposition.** Option 5 – close the outdoor pool and do not invest in a replacement pool – was the least supported option by respondents and the most opposed. Although there was strong consensus about the value of an outdoor pool to the community, opinions differed on where the pool should be located. Over half (56%) preferred an option that kept the Outdoor Pool on its current site while 41% supported the development of a new pool at another site.

When considering decision making criteria, community benefit is clearly seen as the most important one. Responding to community demand is a second criteria strongly supported. While important, cost is considered a less critical decision-making criteria.





# 4

## APPENDICES





# Appendix A: Questionnaire

City of Courtenay

## OUTDOOR POOL SURVEY

### Introduction

#### Project Background:

Earlier this year, the City of Courtenay and the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) completed an Aquatic Needs Strategy which provided direction for the future of aquatic services in the region. The draft strategy can be found here. The City of Courtenay is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool at Lewis Park. The Comox Valley Regional District operates and maintains the Comox Valley Sports and Aquatic Centres.

#### Fast facts about the Courtenay Outdoor Pool:

- Built in 1949 as memorial pool to honour veterans and their service.
- Nearing end of facility life, according to a 2015 condition assessment, it requires approximately \$1 million capital investment over the next ten years to remain operational. The remediation of a leak issue will likely result in additional capital costs.
- It does not meet current physical accessibility requirements.
- It is located in a flood plain.
- Community engagement found that the facility is well-used and a valued community asset.

Next we're going to ask you a few questions about how you use the Courtenay Outdoor Pool and your thoughts on its future. At the end of the survey you will be able to enter into a draw to win a 10 punch drop-in pass at the City of Courtenay Lewis Centre. You have until September 12, 2023 to provide your response.

*The personal information collected as part of this survey is collected under the authority of Section 26 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used solely for the purpose of planning the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Should you have any questions about the collection, use and protection of your personal information, please contact the City of Courtenay Manager of Business Administration at rcs@courtenay.ca or 250-703-4859.*

### Utilization

1. How frequently have you visited the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool in 2023?

I have not visited in 2023.

Daily (5 or more days a week).

Weekly (1 or 2 times a week).

Monthly (1 or 2 times a month).

Occasionally (a few times)

2. How frequently did you visit the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool last year (2022)?

I did not visit in 2022.

Monthly (1 or 2 times a month).

Daily (5 or more days a week).

Occasionally (a few times)

Weekly (1 or 2 times a week).

3. What are your reasons for not using the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool? (Select all that apply.)

Not interested in outdoor pool activities.

Physical barriers to access or get into the pool.

Health / medical issues.

Lack of inclusive spaces and practices (i.e. accommodates disabilities and individual needs / considerations such as gender neutral spaces, adult change tables).

Costs to get into programs / lessons.

Admission cost to the pool (prior to the free admission pilot program that started on August 8, 2023).

Do not feel welcome.

Hours of operation.

Prefer ocean / lake / river swimming.

It doesn't have the amenities / features desired.

Condition or cleanliness of the facility.

Crowding / too busy.

Was unaware of the pool / don't know where the pool is.

Transportation challenges to get to the pool / location.

Parking.

Location is not convenient.

Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your main reason for visiting the outdoor pool? (Select all that apply.)

Exercise and / or physical health.

Meet new people.

Fun / enjoyment.

Improve skills.

Restoring mental well being / relaxing.

Learn new things.

Therapy and / or rehabilitation.

Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

Socializing with family and friends.

## Value

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Unsure
The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important part of my summer recreation experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is an important community facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important for the Comox Valley region to have a public outdoor pool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important for the City of Courtenay to have a public outdoor pool.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Are there times in which you would choose to use the Courtenay & District Outdoor Pool instead of one of the region's indoor pools?

No, I prefer to swim indoors.

Yes.

Unsure.

7. Why would you use the Outdoor Pool instead of one of the indoor pools in the region? (Select all that apply.)

I prefer to swim outdoors.

The outdoor pool is closer to where I live.

The outdoor pool has more convenient times.

The outdoor pool is located beside other amenities that I like.

I like to swim or play in water outdoors because it is more social.

The outdoor pool provides a nice / unique summer time activity.

The outdoor pool offers respite from the summer heat.

Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_



## Options

8. The Courtenay and District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and is nearing the end of its useful life. It requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. There are several options as it relates to the future of the outdoor pool in Courtenay. Please consider each of the following options and indicate the extent to which you support each option. (Note: you can support more than one option; in the next section you will be asked to identify your preferred option.)

*Note: the costs identified below are estimates taken from the Aquatic Needs Strategy 2023.*

	Strongly Support	Support	Neither Support nor Oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Option 1: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility. (Estimated cost at least \$1.0 million plus additional costs to remediate a leak issue.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 2: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre site. (Estimated cost \$12.0 million, does not include cost of decommissioning outdoor pool.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 3: Keep the Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase the service level and improve accessibility. Note that this option requires significant flood plain concerns to be addressed and feasibility is to be determined. (Estimated cost \$18.2 million including cost of decommissioning outdoor pool.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 4: Close the Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in Courtenay. Note: no site is currently identified. (Estimated cost is \$16.6 million, not including purchase of additional land.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Option 5: Close the Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool. (Estimated cost is \$1.0 million for decommissioning outdoor pool, pending further study to confirm cost.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Most Preferred Option

9. Considering the five (5) options, please select the option you favour most.

- Option 1: Keep the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool at its current location and maintain the current service level while addressing identified issues with the facility.
- Option 2: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool co-located at the Comox Valley Aquatic Centre.
- Option 3: Keep the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool at its current location but undertake a significant renovation to increase service level and improve accessibility. Note that this option requires significant flood plain concerns to be addressed and feasibility is to be determined.
- Option 4: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and develop a new outdoor pool at another location in the City of Courtenay. Note that no site is currently identified.
- Option 5: Close the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool and do not invest in a replacement public outdoor pool.

a. Please explain your reason for selecting the one option.

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## Decision-Making Criteria

10. Due to resource limitations, some recreation and parks facilities and amenities, including outdoor pools, have to be prioritized over others. Please indicate how important each factor should be when the City prioritizes one facility or amenity over another.

	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Demand from residents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall costs of operating the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall costs of building / maintaining the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental impact of facility building and operations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The existing supply / availability in the region.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Potential cost savings through partnerships or grants (including other municipalities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community benefit offered by the facility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

a. Are there any other factors the City should consider when prioritizing facilities or amenities?

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## Other Comments

11. Do you have any other comments about the provision of outdoor aquatics in the City of Courtenay?

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## About You

12. Where do you live?

City of Courtenay

Comox Valley Regional District

Town of Comox

Village of Cumberland

K'ómoks First Nation

Other - Write In: \_\_\_\_\_

a. Where in the Comox Valley Regional District?

Electoral Area A

Electoral Area B

Electoral Area C

13. What best describes your age?

19 years of age and younger.

20-39 years.

40-59 years.

60-69 years.

70-79 years.

80 years and older.

Prefer not to say.



14. Do you have children living in your home?

Yes

No

Prefer not to say.

a. What best describes your age?

0-4 years.

5-9 years.

10-14 years.

15-19 years.

20 years or older.

Prefer not to say.

15. How long have you resided in the Comox Valley?

Less than 2 years.

2-5 years.

Longer than 5 years.

Prefer not to say.

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions. The information you have provided is important and, along with all other responses, will be considered by the City as it determines the future for the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

**Thank You!**

**Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.**

## Draw Entry Form

Thank you for taking the time and participating in our survey, we appreciate it!

If you would like to be entered into a draw to win a 10 punch drop-in pass at the City of Courtenay Lewis Centre, please provide the information below. Please note that the information you provide will only be used to conduct the draw and notify the winner. Additionally, your name is not connected to the answers that you provided.

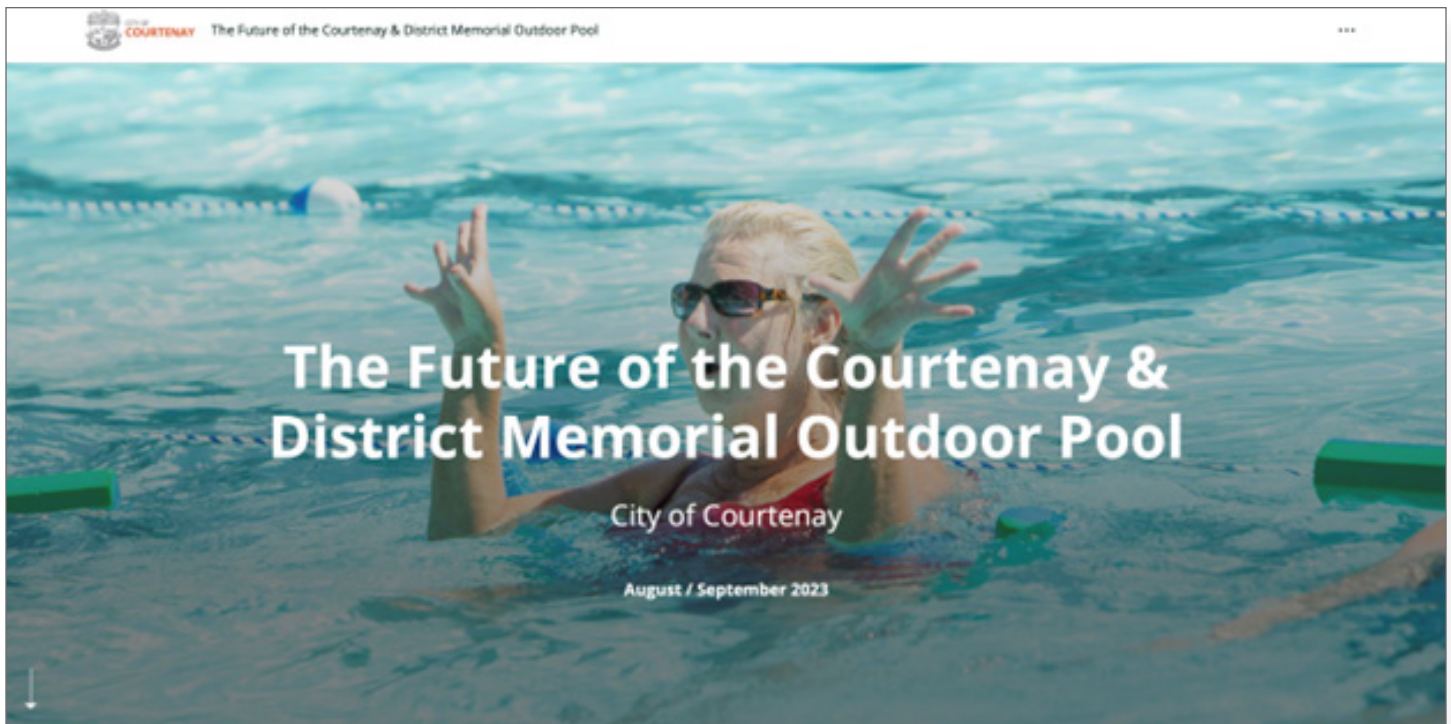
Name (First Name Only): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

The personal information collected as part of this survey is collected under the authority of Section 26 (c) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used solely for the purpose of planning the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool. Should you have any questions about the collection, use and protection of your personal information, please contact the City of Courtenay Manager of Business Administration at [rsc@courtenay.ca](mailto:rsc@courtenay.ca) or 250-703-4859.

## Appendix B: ArcGIS StoryMap



The image shows a text and image section of the ArcGIS StoryMap. On the left is a text box with a white background and black text. On the right is a photograph of a young girl with brown hair and blue goggles swimming in a pool, holding a white and yellow kickboard.

**To better understand the aquatic needs of residents, the City of Courtenay and Comox Valley Regional District completed an Aquatic Needs Strategy (2023) to provide direction for the future of aquatic services in the region.**

**The key findings of the Strategy include the following.**

- Existing aquatic facilities are well utilized and highly valued community spaces.
- Currently there is no need to increase water capacity (no additional





**The Aquatic Needs Strategy contains three strategic objectives to guide the Comox Valley Regional District and City of Courtenay in the delivery of aquatic services.**

1. High quality aquatic facilities that are adaptable and responsive to community need.
2. Provide accessible, affordable and inclusive facilities and services.
3. Facilities and services are well planned, maintained and managed.

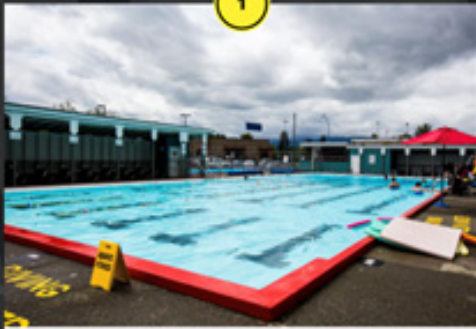


**The Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool is 74 years old and requires substantial investment to continue to offer outdoor aquatic opportunities. There are several options as it relates to the future of the outdoor pool and the City of Courtenay wants to hear from residents and users to help plan for its future.**

- Built in 1949 as memorial pool to honour veterans and their service.
- Nearing end of facility life, according to a 2015 condition assessment, it requires approximately \$1 million in capital investment over the next ten years to remain operational. The remediation of a leak issue will likely result in additional capital costs.

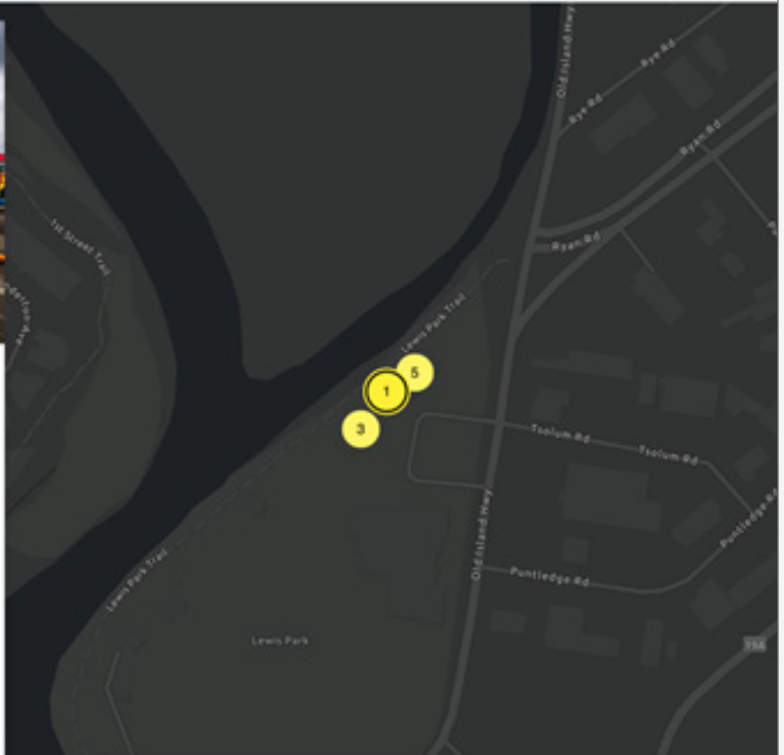






### Option 1: Status Quo

- Estimated Cost \$1.0 million plus additional costs to remediate a leak issue.
- Maintain outdoor pool in current location and configuration while addressing required facility maintenance.

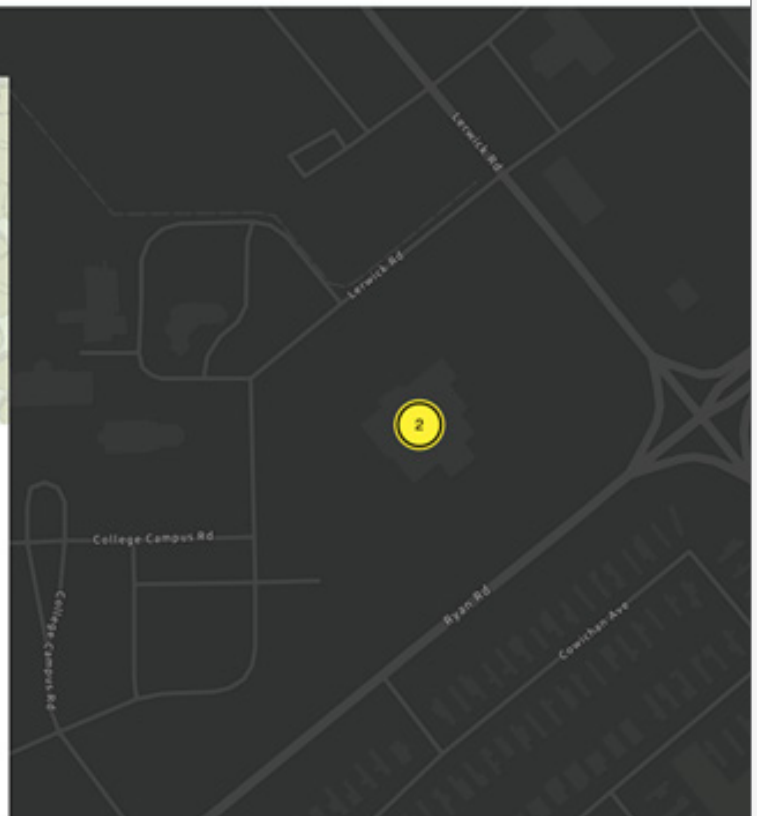


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/  
05

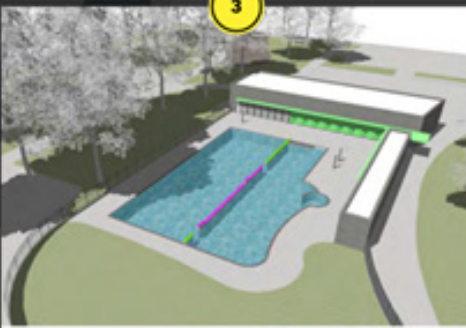


### Option 2: New Outdoor Pool co-located at Comox Valley Aquatic Centre

- Estimated Cost: \$12 million.
- Enhanced accessibility features.

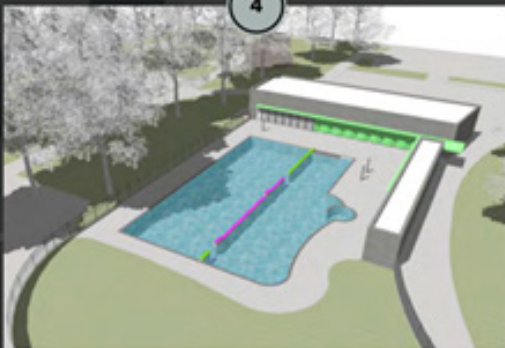
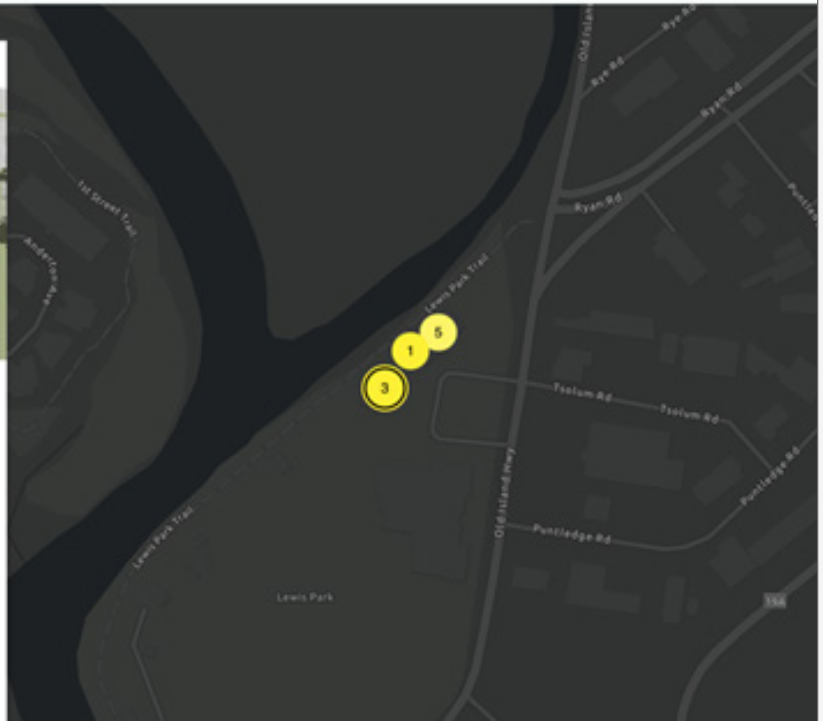


02  
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05



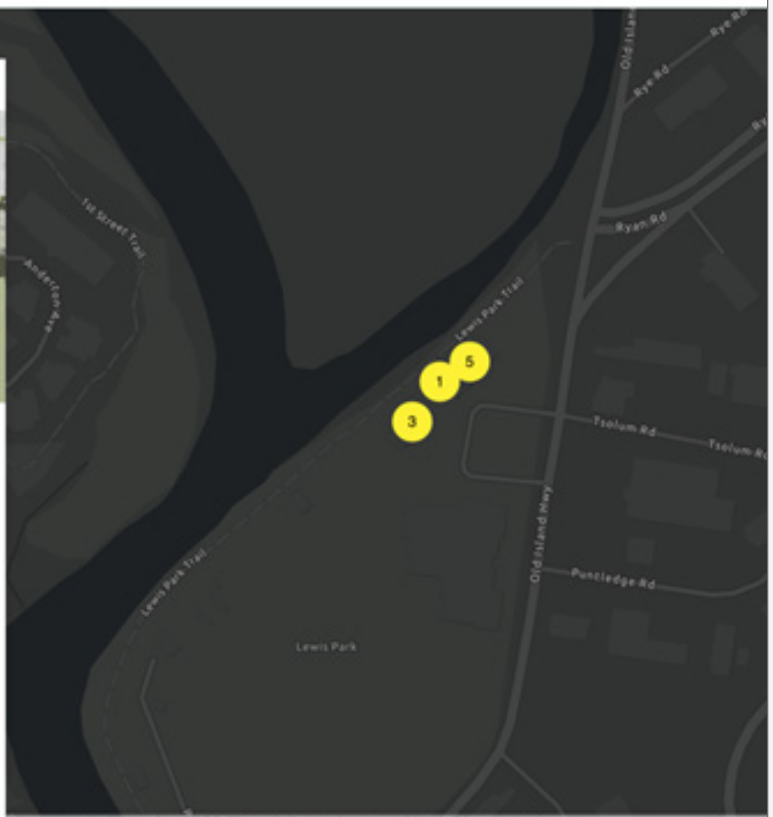
### Option 3: New Outdoor Pool at Existing Site

- Estimated Cost: \$18.2 million.
- Feasibility of redevelopment in flood plain is to be determined through further study.



### Option 4: New Outdoor Pool at New Site

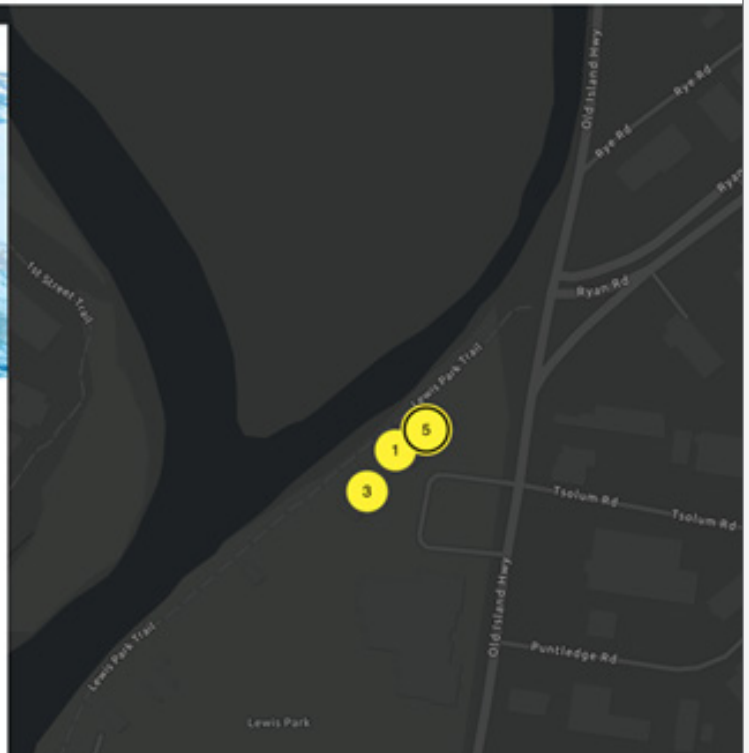
- Estimated Cost: \$16.6 million.
- Improved quality of outdoor aquatics.
- Enhanced focus on leisure and wellness.





## Option 5: Closure of Outdoor Pool

- Estimated cost: \$1 million for decommissioning (pending further study to confirm cost).
- Permanent closure of outdoor pool in Courtenay with no replacement.



### We Want to Hear from You!

The City of Courtenay would like your opinion on the future of the Courtenay & District Memorial Outdoor Pool.

Please complete a short survey to provide your feedback by **September 12, 2023**.

[Participate in the Survey](#)

