



ALBERNI VALLEY AQUATICS OUTREACH
DIVE INTO THE FUTURE
HELP SHAPE AQUATICS FOR OUR VALLEY



Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study

Technical Memo #1 Appendix

2023-05-12



Appendix - Benchmarking of Aquatic Facilities

1. Comox Valley Regional District.....	16
2. Cowichan Valley Regional District.....	17
3. Regional District of Nanaimo.....	18
4. Cariboo Regional District.....	19
5. Columbia Shuswap Regional District.....	20
6. Qathet Regional District.....	20
7. City of Vernon, Regional District of North Okanagan.....	21
8. District of Kent, Fraser Valley Regional District.....	22
9. Strathcona Regional District.....	22
10. Kootenay Boundary Regional District.....	23
11. Regional District of Central Kootenay.....	23
12. Regional District of East Kootenay.....	24
13. Bulkley-Nechako Regional District	25

Benchmarking – A Survey of Community Aquatic Facilities

Thirteen communities in BC with indoor pools were selected as “benchmarks” for planning purposes. Details are provided for each of the community facilities, including funding models, population numbers, and age of the pool facility. Ownership and governance models are also included.

1. Comox Valley Regional District – Population 72,445

The CVRD owns and operates two aquatic facilities– the fairly new (2010) Comox Valley Aquatic Centre has:

- Wave/leisure pool
- Two waterslides
- Eight lane 25 metre pool
- Sauna
- Steam room
- Whirlpool
- Fitness studio/weight room
- Meeting rooms
- Swim Shop
- Fully accessible with beach access entry, pool slides, family/disabled change rooms, raised hot tub walls, staff available to assist

The second CVRD pool facility is part of the Comox Sports Centre (with two arenas and a fitness area).

The pool is a 25M, 6 lane pool with a whirlpool and sauna. The Sports Centre pool is 48 years old and is near the end of its “useful life” and will need to be replaced in the near future.

All areas of the CVRD (Comox, Courtenay, Cumberland and all the Electoral Areas A, B and C) participate in the funding for all the capital and operating costs for the recreation facilities. Their requisition funds cover 79.9 % of all costs, with the user fees/charges topping up the remaining 20.1%. This year the CVRD is going forward with a \$1,050,000 increase to help fund all the capital works they need to keep both pools operating.

Any surplus funds go into their capital works reserves. The Recreation services budget history is fairly consistent with between \$700,000 to \$850,000 yearly surplus for years 1999-2021. From 2017 onward staff have been trying to forecast the revenues to be much more accurate, as well as completing all capital projects.

All recreation services debt will be paid off as of October 2023, and they will start planning for future facilities by allocating a percentage of revenues into a “future infrastructure” capital reserve.

2. Cowichan Valley Regional District – Population 89,013

The Cowichan Valley owns two aquatic facilities – the Cowichan Aquatic Centre in North Cowichan and the Frank Jameson Community Centre in Ladysmith.

The Cowichan Aquatic Centre, which opened in 2008, includes:

- 8 lane 25M pool
- a wave pool (leisure pool)
- lazy river
- water slides
- steam room
- sauna
- swirl pool.

This facility is operated by North Cowichan. The pool deck was expanded in 2020 to better accommodate the Swim Club.

The Frank Jameson Pool (40 years old) has the following amenities:

- four lane 25 metre pool
- climbing wall
- slides
- rope swing
- basketball hoops

- therapy pool with a lazy river
- whirlpool
- sauna

The facility is operated by the Town of Ladysmith.

The CVRD recently completed a long process to develop and implement a new funding model, based on facility usage numbers. The “Play Fair Pay Fair” initiative provided an opportunity for the entire Regional District population to participate. The RD is very large with four municipalities and nine electoral areas.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), in partnership with its member municipalities, has undertaken a recreation planning project for the past seven years. The phased approach has involved an initial public engagement and needs assessment (Phase 1), collection of facility user data (Phase 2), exploration of regional funding options (Phase 3) and development of a regional recreation strategy (Phase 4).

They are now at the point where a new funding model based on facility usage has been approved by the CVRD Board and was then approved by a Regional Referendum in October 2022.

The funding model will be phased in over three years:

- Year One (2023) will be 1/3 based on usage and 2/3 based on existing funding models
- Year Two (2024) would be 2/3 based on usage and 1/3 on existing funding models
- Year Three (2025) would be based fully on usage (and every year moving forward)

The funding will support nine Regionally Significant recreation facilities. These facilities are each owned and operated by different jurisdictions:

- Cowichan Aquatic Centre
- Cowichan Community Centre
- Cowichan Lake Sports Arena
- Cowichan Performing Arts Centre
- Cowichan Sportsplex
- Frank Jameson Community Centre
- Fuller Lake Arena
- Kerry Park Recreation Centre
- Shawnigan Lake Community Centre

3. Nanaimo Regional District - Population 170, 367

The Nanaimo Regional District has one indoor pool – the Ravensong Aquatic Centre. A major expansion, with a budget of \$20M is anticipated to start sometime in 2023.

The Regional District is working through the renovation process for the Ravensong Aquatic Centre. It is currently a traditional lap pool with a hot tub and tot pool.

The NRD has recently undergone a public consultation regarding the model for operating funds for the facility. The two changes they are considering are:

1. Change the current funding model of one-half assessment and one-half usage; to a model based on one third property assessment, one-third usage, and one third population. The Regional District of Nanaimo Board reviewed a variety of funding models and determined this approach to be the preferred model to pay for the pool service.
2. Add Electoral Area E as a participating area to the Pool Service. Currently Electoral Areas F, G, H as well as City of Parksville and the Town of Qualicum Beach. Currently the residents of Electoral Area E – Nanoose Bay do not pay into the pool service.

4. Cariboo Regional District - Population 62,931

The Cariboo Regional District has two pools:

The Cariboo Regional Complex pool operated by the City of Williams Lake with:

- Lane swimming area
- Leisure pool
- Spray feature
- Tot's pool area
- Hot tub

The Quesnel and District Arts and Recreation Centre Pool

- Six lane 25 metre lap pool
- Leisure pool
- Hot tub
- Sauna
- Family changerooms

This pool is 40 years old and needs to be replaced.

The Cariboo Regional District and the South Cariboo Joint Committee postponed their planned referendum in 2022 was postponed until later in 2023, to allow time for more discussion and decision making regarding a new recreation service.

The new recreation service is being considered for the South Cariboo which would include all Electoral Areas: G, H and L and the District of 100 Mile House. Based on feedback from the public during initial consultation, the South Cariboo Joint Committee felt the proposal

needed to include the potential for a major new recreation facility, such as an aquatic centre.

5. Columbia Shuswap Regional District – Population 57,721

The Columbia Shuswap Regional District, working with the Town of Golden (population 4,000) has undertaken the development of an indoor pool. Golden currently only has a seasonal outdoor pool and it is almost a two-hour drive to the nearest pool in Revelstoke.

The new pool was approved at a referendum in 2022. The process leading up to the approval of the new pool included extensive public consultation and analyses of numerous pool facilities around the province.

The projected capital and operating costs were calculated and used to determine the impact on the residents.

The operating costs of the facility are anticipated to be \$940,000 per year, which includes a \$125,000 contribution to a capital reserve account. Revenue projections are estimated at \$220,000 for a net of \$720,000 annual operating costs.

The operating cost estimate works out to \$0.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Based on this estimate, on average a residential property owner would pay about \$115 per year to operate the facility. They already pay to operate the outdoor pool, which would be taken out of service costs.

The project was taken to a referendum to borrow funds for a new indoor aquatic centre in the Fall of 2022 and passed. The CSRD is now moving ahead with the design plans and construction drawings.

The operating and capital costs will be shared by the Town of Golden and Area A of the CSRD as per the formula. The management of the pool will be under the jurisdiction of the Town of Golden.

6. Qathet Regional District – Population 21,496

At the heart of this community is the Powell River Recreation Complex (original building is 49 years old) operated by the City. This Complex includes a large aquatic centre as well as an arena, fitness centre & studio, the 720 seat Evergreen Theatre, and several meeting rooms. The pool features are:

- Six lane, 25 metre pool
- Leisure pool, with water features
- Large swirl pool
- Sauna (recently renovated)

- Universal, male, and female changerooms

There is an agreement for a funding contribution by Qathet RD to help fund the City of Powell River Recreation Complex. In the current budget it is \$178,500. Electoral Areas A, B and C all contribute to this fund, as parts of these areas are close to the City of Powell River. Areas D and E are islands and do not contribute.

The By-law for this agreement was implemented in 2019 and can be extended for a renewal term of five years. It states: “ The annual funding contribution will be determined by multiplying 32.52% of the recreation amenity/space in the Recreation Complex (the area of the swimming pool, fitness centre and skating rink) by 25.22% of the net recreation complex budget (the per capita portion for Electoral Areas A, B, and C), but not to exceed \$178,500 (less the administration fee as per the Qathet Regional District Administration Charge Policy) during the first five (5) years”.

7. City of Vernon, Regional District of North Okanagan – Population 44, 519

The City of Vernon has received approval through a referendum in 2022 to develop the Vernon Active Living Centre, and approval to borrow up to \$121 Million.

The City of Vernon is developing the Vernon Active Living Centre, to replace the current Vernon Aquatic Centre, which was renovated in 1994, with an eight-lane pool and leisure pool. The City of Vernon and the surrounding areas have grown significantly, and the current pool cannot satisfy the demand for swimming lessons and public swim times.

The proposed new facility includes a new aquatic centre that features:

- a 50m pool with two movable bulkheads
- leisure pool; two hot tubs
- sauna and steam room.

The new facility will feature several dry land spaces such as a double gymnasium with multiple sport courts; an 80-station fitness centre; a 150m synthetic walking/running track; and multi-purpose activity and program spaces.

The current Vernon Aquatic Centre is funded through the *Greater Vernon Recreation Facilities and Programming Service Agreement*, which includes Vernon, District of Coldstream and Regional District of North Okanagan Electoral Areas B and C. An agreement has not yet been developed for the contribution from the District of Coldstream and Electoral Areas B and C for the Active Living Centre. There will also be discussion of options for participation of residents from Electoral Areas D, E and F in the Regional District of North Okanagan.

8. District of Kent, Fraser Valley Regional District- Population 6,300

The District of Kent is part of the Fraser Valley Regional District. They are fundraising and developing plans for an indoor pool facility. The facility be available to all neighbouring electoral areas, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs, and the First Nations communities and without a different rate for “non-residents.”

The District of Kent received a \$10 million Federal and Provincial grant for their proposed indoor pool facility. There are five First Nations in the District of Kent, and the District recently officially named the new facility “Lets’emot Regional Aquatic Centre”.

The Halqemeylem word “Lets’emot” stands for ‘One Heart, One Mind’ and the District will be incorporating this concept with plans for the new indoor pool in the spirit of embracing all the neighbouring communities.

The Pool design is an 8-lane lap pool plus a leisure pool – attached to the current Community Centre, on land donated by the District of Kent. The District contribution is listed as \$6,400,000 (this includes the land). The current cost estimate is \$21 Million.

The District has set a community fundraising goal of one million. They are currently actively fundraising through individual contributions under their “Fill The Pool” initiative.

9. Strathcona Regional District – Population 48,150

The Strathcona Regional District owns and operates the Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex, which was constructed in the 1970’s. The SRD has embarked on a project called REC-REATE Strathcona Gardens. The goal is to renew the facility to address aging components and to deliver recreation services that the community desires in an exciting, safe and inclusive environment.

An expansion budget for REC-REATE has been approved by the SRD and actual borrowing will go to referendum or the alternative approval process. If the public approves borrowing then the project will proceed into construction in late 2023, early 2024.

The plan is to replace the current aquatics facility with:

- 8 lane, 25 metre pool tank, a
- large accessible therapy pool
- hot pool
- leisure pool with play features
- beach access style entry
- renovated & expanded change rooms
- new sauna and steam rooms
- new aquatic supervision and admin spaces

The original pool was constructed in 1978, with the leisure pool, hot tub and waterslide added in 1995. In 2010 the pool hall change room and pool deck were renovated.

10. Regional District of Kootenay Boundary - Population 33,152

The Regional District of Kootenay Boundary has two aquatic centres, one in Trail (population 7,921) and one in Grand Forks (population 4,112). Both facilities are owned and operated by the RDKB.

The Grand Forks Aquatic facility opened in 1987. It includes:

- four 25 metre lanes
- large, shallow leisure area
- sauna
- whirlpool

It has not had any significant renovations or upgrades.

The Trail pool facility was built in 1996. It includes:

- eight lane main pool
- leisure pool
- Waterslide
- Diving Boards
- Water feature
- Steam room
- Changerooms (men, women, family)

11. Regional District of Central Kootenay – 62,509

The RDCK owns and operates three community complexes.

Creston & District Community Complex:

This facility serves a population of about 10,000.

A referendum was held to debenture 18.25 M (the cost of the project) in 2006. About \$2 million was received through a Federal Grant. The \$18.5 M was invested for two years prior to the start of construction, with the interest revenue going back into the project. The facility was built in 2008 and includes:

- Five lane 25 M pool, with diving boards
- Multi-use leisure pool with lazy river and spray feature (tea cup)
- 25-person hot tub

- Three separate pool tanks
- Pool storage
- On-deck viewing
- Changerooms – men, women, family (with provision for disabilities)

The pool is operated by the Regional District. Taxpayers in four areas – Creston, Areas A, B, C pay into this service through taxation.

User fees contribute to the cost at a rate of about 35% cost recovery, or 65% subsidy. This is the amount on the whole facility – which includes the arena and the curling rink. The facility also includes a fitness centre, meeting/program rooms, food service, physio office. There is one fee to access the whole facility. Complete complex user pass system.

Castlegar & District Community Complex

- 25 M pool
- leisure pool
- whirlpool

Nelson and District Community Complex

- 25 metre pool
- leisure pool
- hot tub
- sauna
- steam

12. Regional District of East Kootenay – Population 65,896

The RDEK owns and operates three aquatic facilities:

Cranbrook, - the *Western Financial Place*

- 8 lane competitive pool with a lift
- leisure pool with beach access
- large hot tub
- steam room
- dry sauna
- one metre board
- rope swing
- water slide

Fernie Aquatic Centre

- 6 lane lap pool
- small leisure pool
- large slide
- 25-person hot tub
- spray feature
- steam room

Kimberley Aquatic Centre

- five lane lap pool
- small leisure pool

13. Regional District of Bulkley - Nechako - Population 37,737

There are three pools within the boundaries of the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako. Each is owned and operated in a different manner.

The Vanderhoof Aquatic Centre is owned by the District of Vanderhoof operated by the YMCA (under contract). The facility opened in 2019.

The Vanderhoof facility includes:

- A six lane 25 metre pool (fully accessible)
- A fully accessible leisure pool
- Water spray feature
- Family changerooms
- Sauna

The Houston Leisure Facility is owned and operated by the Town of Houston.

- This pool serves about 4,000 residents. It was built in 2006.
- They had two referendums. The first one covered Houston plus the rural areas, and it failed (rural area voted it down). The second referendum was split into two – Houston and Rural. It passed in Houston, and they were able to get a by-law passed to get a loan. Non-residents had to pay a higher admission fee. This higher fee was abolished in September 2019. Although the senior citizens were most opposed to the pool, they are now the largest user group.
- This facility includes:
 - Leisure pool
 - Lazy river
 - Tea Cup spray feature

- Spray arch, geyser
- Swirlpool
- Hot tub
- Steam room

The Bulkley Valley Regional Pool (in Smithers) is a not-for-profit facility owned by the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako and operated by staff under the direction of a Non-Profit Board of Directors (with representation from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, the Town of Smithers, and local residents).

The Facility includes:

- Four lane 25 M lap pool,
- Leisure pool with water fountains
- Tot pool
- Hot tub
- Dry Sauna

An annual grant is provided by the Bulkley-Nechako Regional District Rural Area A, the Town of Smithers, and the Village of Telkwa. This funding amounts to 65% of the operation budget, and the rest is generated from user pay services and programs.

The pool was constructed in 1990 at a cost of 1.7 million. The community raised all of the construction funds, plus another .5 million of in-kind donations.

The facility recently underwent a Facility Function and Program Review Report, and staff are working towards implementing the recommendations. The goal is to expand the current facility.