

From: ["van Dyk, Donny"](#)

To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council -](#)

Date: 3/9/2026 4:20:47 PM

Subject: Vancouver Aquatic Centre - Project Update - Board Briefing Memo

Attachments: PB - GMO - Vancouver Aquatic Centre - Project Update - Board Briefing Memo - 2026-03-09.pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

For your information, please see the email below and attached memo that was shared with the Park Board Commissioners and has now been approved for public release.

Thanks, DvD

Donny van Dyk (he/him)
City Manager
City of Vancouver



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x̱m̱əθḵəy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

From: Park Board GM's Office <>
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 2:22 PM
To: Park Board Commissioners -
Cc: PB LT (Leadership Team) - ; Amrolia, Armin
<Armin.Amrolia@vancouver.ca>; Crawford, Craig <Craig.Crawford@vancouver.ca>; Krilic, Marko <Marko.Krilic@vancouver.ca>; Myers, Dylan <Dylan.Myers@vancouver.ca>; Wu, Shirley <Shirley.Wu@vancouver.ca>; Rautenberg, Joyce <Joyce.Rautenberg@vancouver.ca>; Artis, Emma <Emma.Artis@vancouver.ca>; PB Communications <PB.Communications@vancouver.ca>
Subject: Vancouver Aquatic Centre - Project Update - Board Briefing Memo

The purpose of this memo is to consolidate key Board touchpoints and decisions related to the Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC) renewal project into a single document for ease of reference. This memo also provides a current project status update and identifies upcoming milestones.

VAC Decisions and Park Board Touchpoints

The VAC renewal project began in 2022 in response to the facility's deteriorating condition and operational uncertainty. Since that time, information has been provided to the Board through presentations, memos, briefings, and reports at multiple stages of the project. Collectively, these materials have provided increasing levels of detail regarding facility condition, program needs, site constraints, land tenure considerations, budget and schedule implications, and the recommended program.

Project Initiation

Following unexpected damage to VAC's façade, the Board received an in-camera presentation on April 11, 2022, outlining the extent of the damage and early planning considerations for renewal. The project then advanced through the 2023–2026 Capital Plan process, during which the VAC renewal was prioritized due to the significant deterioration of the facility and uncertainty regarding how long it could remain operational.

The VAC renewal project was approved by the Park Board and Council as part of the 2023–2026 Capital Plan on June 29, 2022, with a total budget of \$140 million, including plebiscite borrowing authority of up to \$103 million. The initial project concept contemplated renewal of the existing 50-metre pool and diving component in a first phase, with a leisure pool to follow in a second phase.

Following approval of capital funding, staff provided a memo on December 15, 2022, advising the Board of an upcoming Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) process to procure a consultant team to lead feasibility analysis and develop program and site options for consideration.

As planning progressed, Park Board and City staff gave another in-camera presentation on February 13, 2023, providing an expanded project update, including the planning principles and key considerations informing the emerging program. Topics included site conditions, service levels, land tenure considerations, engagement approach, and overall project schedule. Given the extensive public engagement previously undertaken through the VanSplash process, a more targeted user-group consultation approach was adopted support the next phase of project planning.

Feasibility Work and Options Development

Acton Ostry Architects and MJMA Architecture & Design were retained in December 2023 and the project kicked off in January 2024. Through the feasibility process, it became evident that the site's location adjacent to the foreshore and Burrard Bridge, together with mixed land tenure and ownership, created significant constraints for future redevelopment.

Analysis undertaken by the project team confirmed that these site and budget constraints substantially limited the ability to deliver a renewed 50-metre competition facility. Rather than report back that the project could not proceed, staff explored what could realistically be achieved within these parameters to provide the Board with a viable path forward.

Through this work, staff determined that the approved \$140 million budget was insufficient to renew the 50-metre pool and dive tanks within the existing footprint and required timelines. A 25-metre pool capable of supporting current levels of swim competition, paired with a substantial leisure pool, was identified as the option that could be delivered within the available budget and schedule.

Staff presented these program options at an in-camera Board meeting on October 7, 2024. The presentation outlined site constraints, including land tenure and ownership considerations, and the associated budget and schedule implications. It also explained why a 50-metre pool could not be accommodated within those constraints. Two options were then presented for feedback: Option A, a 25-metre pool without diving, and Option B, a 25-metre pool with a dive component. Staff also responded to questions regarding service impacts, user groups and project risks. While no formal decision was sought at that meeting, the session provided an opportunity for Board feedback. The same presentation was provided to Council on October 8, 2024.

In early 2025, staff continued to provide updates. A January 6, 2025, memo informed the Board and Council of upcoming user group meetings and provided key messages for potential media and public inquiries. The project team subsequently presented the recommended program to the user groups, and staff committed to continuing discussions, including exploring how specific needs could potentially be accommodated elsewhere within the aquatic system.

Decision Points

On February 24, 2025, at the Board Committee Meeting, staff brought forward a report and presentation at the Committee meeting seeking direction on the recommended program. A confidential memo was distributed in advance of the public Committee meeting, responding to Commissioner enquiries regarding the estimated cost and resource implications of accommodating a 50-metre pool, addressing questions raised in user group correspondence, and providing legal advice

maintained that a 50-metre pool remained feasible. The Board subsequently directed staff to report back within one month on the feasibility of accommodating a 50-metre pool option and related considerations.

The follow-up report was delivered at the March 31, 2025, public Board meeting and included both a public report and presentation, together with an in-camera component providing additional information regarding the Provincial Sponsored Crown Grant process and related project implications. Staff provided the following recommendations for the Board's consideration:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to proceed with the February 24, 2025 recommended program, as presented in the report titled, [Vancouver Aquatic Centre Renewal – Recommended Program](#); and
- B. FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve a Capital Plan reallocation of \$7,600,000 from the West End Waterfront Parks Phase 1 Implementation Project.

Should the Vancouver Park Board not approve the recommendation above, the following alternate direction may be considered.

THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to place the Vancouver Aquatic Centre Renewal on hold, until additional funding can be secured to deliver a 50-metre training pool to ensure compliance with the BC and Federal Accessibility Act and the Rick Hansen Gold Standard, including a large hot pool, dive towers, and other aquatic and recreation amenities, with a leisure pool to be delivered in a future phase.

Following deliberation, the Board directed staff to proceed with the recommended program previously presented on February 24, 2025. At the same time, the Board also affirmed several related commitments, including:

- maintaining the long-term commitment to a 50-metre pool;
- planning for the provision of a 50-metre pool within the next 10 years; and
- reporting back on the feasibility of a temporary pool.

The recommended program required an additional \$30M, bringing the total project budget to \$175M. As part of the March 31, 2025 decision, the Board also approved a re-allocation of \$6.7M from the West End Waterfront Park Phase 1 Implementation project and Council approved an extra \$22.5M on June 18, 2025 through a quarterly budget adjustment process.

Staff also reviewed and reported back on the feasibility of a temporary pool through a memo dated

constraints, prohibitive costs and construction complexities associated with the waterfront location.

Taken together, these updates, analyses, and Board decisions reflect a multi-stage process of feasibility review, Board oversight, and iterative refinement in response to site, budget, schedule, and service considerations.

Project Status

Work is underway to advance the project toward the next phase of implementation. The next key milestone impacting services will be the closure of the facility to enable deconstruction. Cross-departmental teams are working towards a closure date sometime in Late June/Early July 2026.

This closure date and other upcoming related milestones are as follows:

- Week of March 23, 2026: notification to VAC staff regarding facility closure date
- April - May 2026: Bid Committee public report to Council seeking approval of construction contract (date to be confirmed)
- Summer 2026: facility closure and building clear-out
- August 2026: anticipated commencement of demolition
- December 2026: anticipated commencement of construction
- Q4 2029: anticipated substantial completion / facility opening

Service Group Impacts and Updates

Staff have also continued operational planning related to the VAC closure. Meetings were held with aquatic user groups on December 3, 2025, and February 18, 2026, regarding reallocation planning. This work forms part of a broader affiliation and allocation strategy for the aquatics system, with interim procedures to apply until final policy work is complete.

Information shared with user groups to date includes:

- reallocation of permit hours under interim procedures is expected to begin for the Fall 2026 permit season;
- staff are reviewing capacity across the aquatics system to identify opportunities to partially offset VAC-related losses at other pools, including substantial reallocation of swim clubs to Hillcrest with access to the 50m lane configuration;
- interim affiliation criteria and allocation priorities are being applied pending final policy completion; and
- final Affiliation and Allocation Policies are anticipated to replace the interim process in 2027, aligning aquatics with existing approaches used for arenas and outdoor sport fields.

With respect to VAC user groups, specific lane allocations have not yet been finalized as this work will occur in May. At this stage, staff are reviewing all pools—both indoor and, where applicable, outdoor - during the summer season to identify reallocation opportunities to support displaced users. Hillcrest will be reconfigured to operate in a 50-metre format four days per week.

As part of this process, staff will first assess current club usage at Hillcrest and then overlay the needs of VAC users. Subsequent allocations will then be developed for other clubs at Hillcrest and across the broader aquatic system. Early-morning training windows will be made available at appropriate pools, and after-school prime-time hours will also be reviewed. The proportion of total lane space to be allocated to each group is still under development and will be confirmed through the May allocation process. Staff anticipate further discussions with VAC aquatic user groups and will report back to the Board as additional information becomes available.

Regards,

Sarah Iacoe (she/her) B.Sc., MBA, PgMP, PMP

Director, Strategic Operations and Board Relations – Vancouver Parks and Recreation

APPENDIX – SUMMARY TABLE

Date	Format/Forum	Purpose/Outcome
Apr 11, 2022	In-camera presentation	For information – recent damage and planning for renewal
June 27, 2022	Park Board Special Meeting	The VAC renewal project was approved by the Park Board and Council as part of the 2023–2026 Capital Plan.
June 29, 2022		The initial project concept contemplated renewal of the existing 50-metre pool and diving

	meeting	follow in a second phase.
Dec 15, 2022	Memo	For information – status of VAC project and Requests for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) process
Feb 13, 2023	In-camera presentation	For information – project update (including capital planning principles and project considerations)
Oct 7, 2024	In-camera presentation	Seeking feedback (no formal decision) – Staff shared constraints impacting ability to deliver a 50m pool. Presented program comparisons with existing VAC program, Option A (25m + no diving) and Option B (25M + including diving).
Jan 6, 2025	Memo	For information – communications/user group meetings update
Feb 11, 2025	Briefing – presentation	For information – to provide additional context for upcoming Feb 24 decision (included information about site constraints, 50M pool feasibility and review of recommended program)
Feb 20, 2025	Memo	Response to Commissioner enquiry – estimate cost /range and resources required to accommodate 50m pool; address questions in user group letters; legal opinion re: capital plan
Feb 24, 2025	Board meeting – report & presentation	For decision – presentation of recommended program Decision: report back on 50m option (with additional considerations) in one month
Mar 31, 2025	Board meeting – report & presentation *Note there was an in-camera portion prior to the public Board meeting	For decision – Staff recommended to proceed with the recommended program from Feb 24, 2025 (25m + diving). An alternate option was provided to enable the delivery of a 50m training pool by placing the project on hold until funding could be secured. Decision: Approval to proceed with staff recommended program (additional considerations including re-affirming commitment to 50M pool, provision of 50M pool in the next 10 years and report back on temporary pool feasibility) *In-camera presentation provided additional information re: Sponsored Crown Grant process and project implications

*All in-camera/confidential memo items have since been publicly released, with the exception of the April 11, 2022 presentation.



March 9, 2026

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Director, Strategic Operations and Board Relations

SUBJECT : **Vancouver Aquatic Centre - Project Update - Board Briefing Memo**

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Regards,

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Sarah Iacoe (she/her) B.Sc., MBA, PgMP, PMP
Director, Strategic Operations and Board Relations – Vancouver Parks and Recreation



Copy to: Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager, Park Board Leadership Team, Craig Crawford, Director, Facilities Development, Marko Krilic, Associate Director, Facilities Development, Dylan Myers, Associate Director, Recreation Services, Shirley Wu, Manager, Strategic Initiatives, Joyce Rautenberg, Senior Planner, Emma Artis, Project Manager

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Oct 10, 2025	Memo	For information – report back on VanSplash service delivery and temporary pool feasibility

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