From: "Amrolia, Armin" <Armin.Amrolia@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 3/26/2026 3:22:21 PM
Subject: REFM VPB - Confidential Memo to Mayor and Council - Reimagining and Replacing Kitsilano Outdoor Pool – Project Update - RTS 16472 (03-26-2026)
Attachments: REFM VPB - Confidential Memo to Mayor and Council - Reimagining and Replacing Kitsilano Outdoor Pool – Project Update - RTS 16472 (03-26-2026).pdf

---

Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a confidential memo to brief you on the findings and staff recommendations arising from the Reimagine Kitsilano Pool Feasibility Study. A copy has been sent to Park Board Commissioners as well.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach to me at anytime.

Best,
Armin

Armin Amrolia - Deputy City Manager (she/her)
armin.amrolia@vancouver.ca

CITY OF VANCOUVER

CITY OF VANCOUVER

REAL ESTATE, ENVIRONMENT AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
General Manager's Office

**C O N F I D E N T I A L**

# M E M O R A N D U M

March 26, 2026

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Donny van Dyk, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Chris Freek, Director of Civic Engagement & Communications
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Teresa Jong, Administrative Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Mellisa Morphy, Director of Policy, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office

FROM: Armin Amrolia, General Manager, Real Estate, Environment and Facilities Management
Steve Jackson, General Manager, Vancouver Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Reimagining and Replacing Kitsilano Outdoor Pool – Project Update

## Purpose and Executive Summary

To brief Mayor and Council on the findings and staff recommendations arising from the *Reimagine Kitsilano Pool – Feasibility Study* which evaluated adaptive pathways for renewing or replacing Vancouver's iconic Kitsilano Outdoor Pool. The pool, originally constructed in 1931 and rebuilt in 1978, is North America's longest public outdoor swimming pool and a beloved civic amenity. It has reached the end of its service life due to structural damage, aging mechanical systems, and increasing climate-related risks.

A Feasibility Study assessed technical, environmental, and financial considerations and engaged over 10,000 community members. Three options along an adaptive pathway plan were developed including:

- **Protect** the existing facility (~15-year lifespan): $40M cost
- **Renovate** the existing facility (~ 30-year lifespan): $90M cost

- **Replace** with a new facility relocated out of floodplain (~ 75-year+ lifespan): $230M cost ($300M with optional enhancements)

Staff plan to bring forward a funding request as part of the 2027-2030 capital plan which recommends advancing the "Protect" option to balance the immediate functional needs of the aquatic facility, climate resilience, and financial feasibility within the context of city-wide priorities and competing facility needs. This pathway will ensure that the pool operates reliably over the short to medium term while staff implement a Fundraising Strategy to secure the necessary funding for a full replacement in a future capital plan. Staff will look to a final decision from the Park Board on priority setting and Council for overall funding as part of the Capital Plan approval process prior to advancing this work further.

## Council Authority/Previous Decisions

Funding for the Reimagine Kitsilano Pool Feasibility Study was provided in the City's 2023-2026 Capital Plan, allocated as part of the 2024 Mid-Term Update.

Council Motion "Reimagine and Replace Kitsilano Outdoor Pool" passed on June 24, 2024 and directed staff to expedite a feasibility study in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board in order to plan for and fund the replacement of Kits Pool with a new, modernized outdoor aquatics facility that is more resilient to climate change, storm, and storm impacts, and report back to Council with recommendations and options to prioritize the pool replacement project in the upcoming 2027-2030 capital plan.

Relevant policies and strategies include:

- UNDRIP Strategy (2022)
- UNDRIP Action Plan (2024)
- Vancouver Plan (2022)
- VanPlay Framework (2020)
- VanSplash (2019)
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2025)
- Greenest City Action Strategy (2020)
- Park Washroom Strategy (2020)

## Context and Background

Kitsilano Pool is located within Kitsilano Beach Park adjacent to English Bay. Prior to the arrival of European settlers to the area in the late 18th century, families would travel down to this waterfront to fish, hunt, and harvest traditional resources. The area was an important hub for trade, social relationships, and cultural practices.

Figure 1 – Image of Existing Kitsilano Outdoor Pool

Kits Pool is Canada's longest public outdoor pool and Vancouver's only public saltwater swimming pool. The first pool opened on this site in 1931; a tidal pool carved into the ocean's edge in an intertidal zone with no knowledge of future climate conditions and risks. In 1978, a new pool was rebuilt over the old to address changing health regulations around water quality.

Despite recent repairs, storm damage and aging infrastructure have rendered the facility at end-of-life. Its location adjacent to English Bay exposes it to ongoing hazards that are expected to worsen with sea level rise. The pool's significant challenges include:

- **Current site-related risks:** Pool built entirely within a designated floodplain and wave hazard zone. Pool deck is 2m below City's current Flood Construction Level Bylaw;
- **Climate vulnerability:** Sea-level rise projections, and increasing storm surge risks currently threaten the facility and are expected to worsen over time;
- **Aging infrastructure:** Structural and mechanical systems have reached end-of-life; recent storm damage has compounded deterioration;
- **Accessibility gaps:** Current facilities lack inclusive features and barrier-free access.

Figure 2 – Kitsilano Pool during King Tide event, Jan 2022

## Briefing

Reconciliation

The City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy notes that "the government-to-government relationship is at the heart of reconciliation and the work to undo and redress colonial impacts and dispossession on the rights and title holders of these lands." The Feasibility Study process has included government-to-government referrals with quarterly project updates sent to the three local Nations beginning in July 2024. To date, the City and VPB project teams have met with staff from xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam Indian Band), Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Ú xwumixw (Squamish Nation) and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) to outline potential opportunities for collaboration during future phases of work.

In consultation with the local Nations, they indicated that priorities for the local Nations include foreshore restoration, increased setback to enable ecological restoration, full Archaeological Impact Assessment (underway), cultural visibility (languages including naming, planting, artwork), future employment and revenue opportunities. City staff will continue to engage the Nations as appropriate using established protocols.

Community Engagement

Extensive engagement confirmed strong community support for retaining the pool's long-course swimming and saltwater experience while improving leisure swimming, play features, accessibility, comfort, and resilience.

Over 10,000 responses to the summer 2025 public survey identified the following key community priorities:

- Maintaining a long-format lap pool;
- Including a leisure pool with play features including an improved spray pad;
- Improving shade and seating options on the pool deck;
- Enhancing inclusivity with universal change rooms and mobility supports.

Technical and Environmental Considerations


Figure 3 –City of Vancouver 2014 Open Data Portal showing existing floodplain and wave hazard zone

Technical investigations undertaken as part of the Feasibility Study include Geotechnical and Hydrogeological Assessments, Coastal Adaptation Brief, Ecological and Foreshore Restoration Assessments, and an Archaeological Impact Assessment.

## Feasibility Study Adaptive Pathway Plan

Recognizing there are uncertainties about the potential future impacts of climate change and sea level rise, adopting an Adaptive Pathway Plan for Kits Pool allows sound near-term decision making that matches the immediate needs of the facility with the best information on climate conditions and impacts available today. The plan anticipates future decision points that can be calibrated against actual observed conditions. During the intervening time periods, staff will continue to monitor pool conditions, sea level rise and storm impacts, and work to secure the funding necessary to ensure sensible decision making in the future.

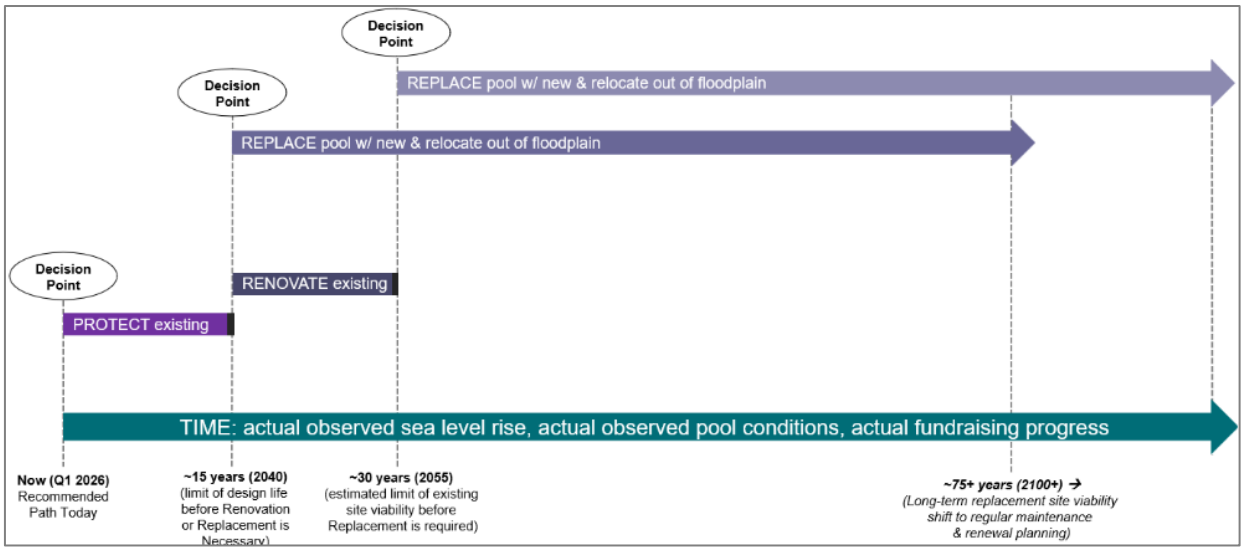


Figure 4 – Kits Pool Adaptive Pathway Plan 2026 – 2100+

Feasibility Study – PROTECT option – Recommended

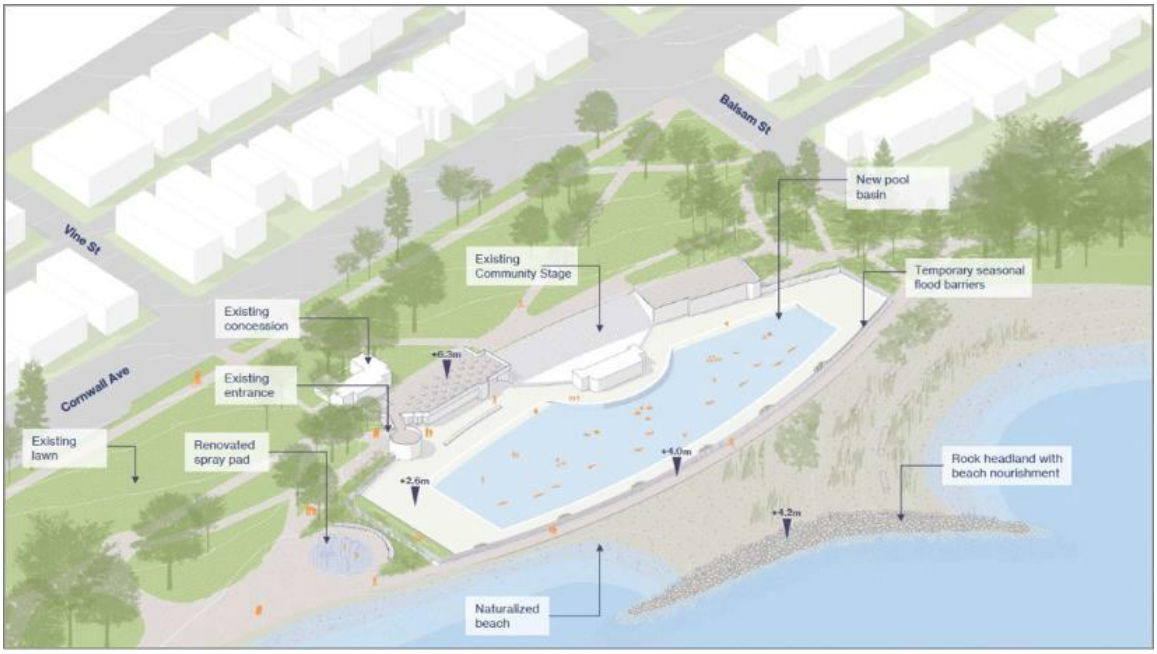


Figure 6 – Protect – planning concept only, not intended to represent final form or design

The limited scope of the "Protect" option addresses the most immediate needs of the pool to ensure it functions reliably over the next approximately ~15 years.

Key Features of the recommended *"Protect"* option include:

- Coastal protection infrastructure such as a rock breakwater and beach infill that will:
  - Mitigate wave energy and prevent future structural damage to the pool.
  - Remain in place and benefit any future pool replacement project on this site.
  - Allow the use of optional seasonal winter flood barriers to manage flood risk over winter storm season without sacrificing views during summer swim season.

- Structural reinforcements of the existing 137.5m pool tank and new pool piping that will:
  - Improve resilience, maintenance and repairability to the pool tank and water supply piping in the future.

- Targeted works to the existing community stage (Showboat) that will:
  - Restore the facility to its pre-fire condition. Work following the 2023 fire damage included only temporary safety measures to enable the Showboat's 2025 summer season. Additional minor works are now required to facilitate ongoing operations.

- No change to other existing pool facilities, splash pad, or concession. All retained as is.

Refer to "Appendix A" for more information, images, and cost comparison table for the Protect, Renovate and Replace options including optional additional enhancements.

Fundraising Strategy

Understanding potential funding sources, their indicative value, and any associated conditions or contingencies (such as minimum design requirements linked to specific contributions) will be essential in determining whether a future replacement pool project is feasible. With cost estimates and potential design options now available, this is the appropriate time to begin this work.

Staff will work with community partners to develop and implement a fundraising strategy that begins with a consultant-led market sounding. This will include targeted engagement with potential sponsors, philanthropic funders, and other levels of government, building on early interest already seen through the SAND program. Staff will draw on community fundraising expertise where appropriate.

It will be important that staff do not commit to any individual contribution or design requirement at this stage, as overall feasibility will depend on the combined value of all revenue streams. Keeping the existing pool open during this period will also support engagement.

This work will inform any replacement pool project that is brought forward for consideration in a future capital plan.

**Financial Implications**

The cost to prepare the feasibility study was $2M, funded through the 2023–2026 Capital Plan. Order-of-magnitude Class D estimates for future construction projects range from $40M for immediate protection scope, to $90M for a full renovation on the existing site, $230M for a replacement pool on a relocated site and up to $300M for a replacement pool with optional enhancements.

Staff recommend including $40M for the Protection scope in the 2027–2030 Capital Plan. It would be prudent to explore the opportunity for senior government grands pending Board and Council support to advance this project.

Given the cost magnitude for a replacement pool of a similar scale to current, implementation of a replacement pool project cannot proceed until full project funding is secured.

Given the range of options for delivery and cost, and what is currently known around other large facility investment pressures as highlighted by the OAG, a decision on the path forward for this site is best contemplated during the development and evaluation of the 2027-2030 Capital Plan. The current staff recommendation of protect enables the time required to evaluate fundraising opportunities while also enabling investment focus on other important community facilities.

Sincerely,

Armin Amrolia
General Manager, REFM
| armin.armolia@vancouver.ca

Steve Jackson
General Manager
Board of Parks and Recreation
604.257.8448 | steve.jackson@vancouver.ca

**APPENDIX A**
**Reimagine Kitsilano Pool Feasibility Study – Options & Comparison Table**

## RENOVATE option

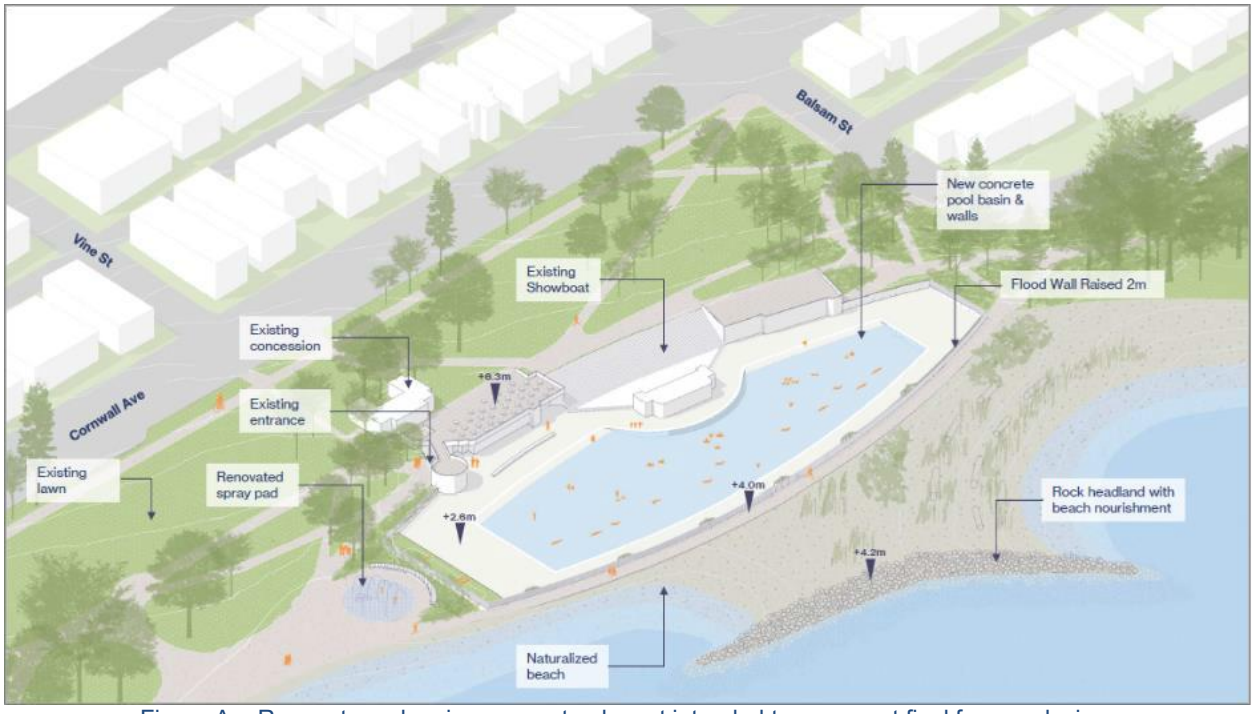


Figure A – Renovate – planning concept only, not intended to represent final form or design

Scope includes all features of the "Protect" option as well as a full renovation of the existing facilities to address broader programmatic, accessibility, and system needs, while ensuring the pool reliably functions over the next 30 years. Climate and coastal modelling estimates that the pool's current site will not be viable in approximately 30 years due to sea level rise. A replacement pool will still be needed in the long-term.

Key features of the "Renovate" option include all features of the "Protect" option above *plus*:

- A flood wall approx. 2m in height to protect from predicted sea level rise over the medium term. Note that a flood wall will impact existing views from the pool deck.
- New Mechanical and Electrical systems including pool filtration and piping.
- Moderate interior and exterior renovations and accessibility upgrades to change facilities, staff and service spaces.
- A renovated splash pad, and improved shade and seating options on the pool deck.
- No changes to community stage or concession. To be retained as is.

## REPLACE option

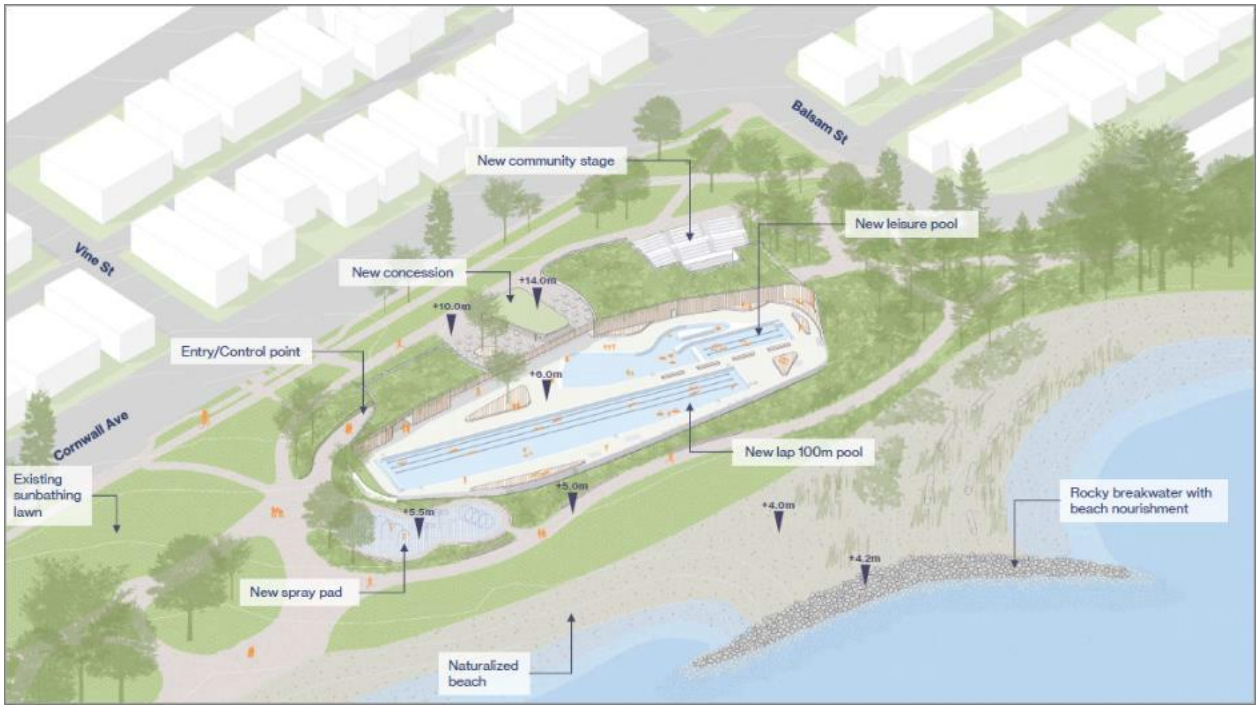


Figure B – Replacement – planning concept only, not intended to represent final form or design

Scope provides similar spaces and activities as today such as outdoor aquatics, change facilities, a splash pad, community stage, and concession. Improved aquatic programming on a long-term viable site. The replacement pool is shifted south toward Cornwall Ave and located out of the floodplain and wave hazard zone.

Key features of a “Replacement” include:

- All facilities relocated out of the floodplain and wave hazard zone. Pool deck raised to meet flood construction standard. Direct views over beach, water and mountains.
- Rocky breakwater, naturalized beach, foreshore restoration and habitat creation.
- A 100m long lap tank supports existing and future projected swim capacity.
- A separate leisure pool with 25m lane area, play features, and shallow beach entry.
- New splash pad and improved shade and seating options on the pool deck.
- New change facilities with improved accessibility and gender-neutral options.
- New community stage and concession facilities required due to pool relocation.

## ENHANCED REPLACEMENT option

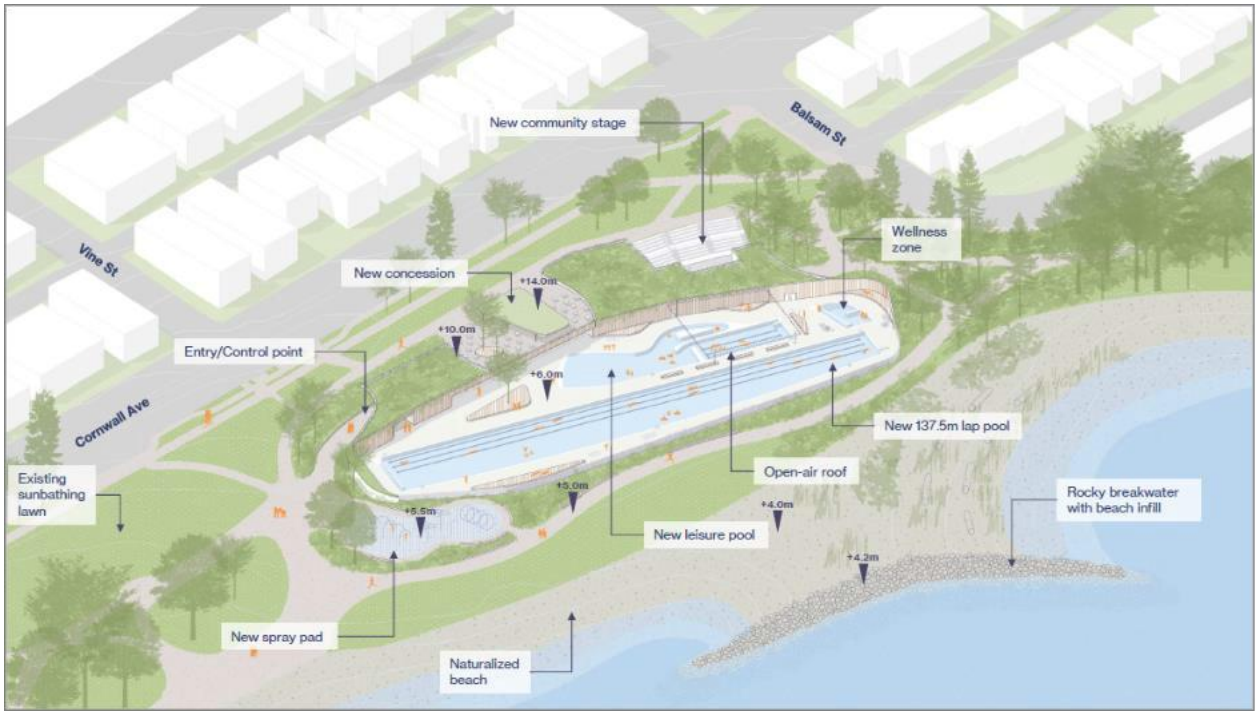


Figure C – Enhanced Replacement – planning concept only, not intended to represent final form or design.

Scope includes all the features of the “Replace” option as well as additional optional enhancements such as a longer lap pool to match the length of the current pool, new wellness amenities, partial roof cover, and enhanced food and beverage facilities to support potential extended season benefits.

Key features of an “Enhanced Replacement” include all features of a “Replacement” *plus*:

- A 137.5m long lap tank that exceeds existing and projected future swim capacity.
- Wellness amenities such as hot pool, cold plunge, steam bath, and sauna.
- Partial roof cover over leisure pool to support potential extended season benefits.
- Enhanced food and beverage facilities to enable potential year-round service.

## Scope and Cost Comparison – All Options

| MODIFY EXSTING POOL | | | BUILD NEW POOL | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **PROTECT** | **RENOVATE** | | **REPLACE** |
| SCOPE SUMMARY | Limited modifications to protect the pool in the medium term. Adaptive decision making approach over time. No investment in support facilities, community stage or concession - all retained as is. | Fully renovated facility, improved resilience and accessibility. Flood wall impacts views. | SCOPE SUMMARY | New outdoor pool on relocated site ensures long-term viability and improved aquatic functionality. |
| SITE RISKS | Lowest initial cost and highest site risks, moderate site risks. Future city finances and community fundraising capacity may not support replacement and relocation when needed. | Moderate initial cost & low site risk over the medium-term but pool site may not be viable after 30yrs due to sea level rise. | SITE RISKS | Long-term viable solution to 2100 and beyond. Relocating pool eliminates site risks. Shift to regular maintenance and asset management framework. |
| **ESTIMATED LIFESPAN** | **~15 YEARS** | **~30 years** | **ESTIMATED LIFESPAN** | **~70+ years** |
| PHASE 1 | • Moderate coastal protection to limit storm damage and seasonal flooding.<br>• Optional temporary seasonal flood barrier.<br>• Targetted works to the existing community stage (Showboat) restoring to pre-fire damaged condition.<br>• No change to other existing pool facilities, splash pad, or concession. All retained as is. | • Structural reinforcement to existing ~137.5m pool<br>• Moderate interior and exterior renovations and accessibility upgrades. Renovated splash pad.<br>• Intensive coastal infrastructure including flood wall that limits views from pool, rocky breakwater and beach infill. Moderate foreshore habitat potential.<br>• Targetted works to the existing community stage (Showboat) restoring to pre-fire damaged condition.<br>• No change to other existing pool facilities, splash pad, or concession. All retained as is. | BASE SCOPE | • Two new pool tanks: 100m lap pool + leisure pool w/ beach entry, whirlpool & 25m lap zone together accommodate the current and projected future capacity.<br>• New support buildings and improved accessibility throughout. New splash pad, community stage and concession building required due to pool relocation.<br>• Adaptable coastal infrastructure. Rocky breakwater and beach infill can be phased in over time as future coastal conditions are known. High social ecological habitat and recreational potential. |
| SERVICE DISRUPTION | **Yes:** up to 1 summer season | **Yes:** up to 2 summer seasons | SERVICE DISRUPTION | **Yes:** up to 3 summer seasons |
| **COST** | **$10M** | **$90M** | **TOTAL COST** | **$230M** |
| PHASE 2 | • 'Structural reinforcement of existing ~137.5m pool tank.<br>• New pool piping. | ---- | OPTIONAL ENHANCEMENT | • Increase lap pool to 137.5m long.<br>• Add wellness amenities incl. hot pool, cold plunge, sauna, etc.<br>• Add partial roof cover over leisure pool and enhanced food and beverage facilities. |
| **COST** | **$30M** | **--** | **ADDT'L COST** | **+ $70M** |
| **TOTAL COST** | **$40M** | **$90M** | **TOTAL COST** | **$300M** |

Figure 5 – Feasibility Options Comparison Table with Costs representing the full capital project cost

*********