

We want to hear from you!

Did we get it right? Your involvement and input helped shape the vision for VanSplash. You are here to let us know your thoughts on the emerging recommendations before we finalize the strategy. The result of this process will be a shared vision for aquatics in Vancouver.

What we are doing

The purpose of VanSplash is to develop a 25 year vision for the future of aquatics in Vancouver, and to recommend a ten year implementation strategy to realize the next steps required to achieve the vision.



You are here
so we can hear you!

Where we are:



The future of aquatics in Vancouver

Vision + Principles

Vision

Deliver a wide range of aquatic experiences for residents and visitors that support Vancouver as a highly-livable, world-class coastal city.

Principles

Goals

- 1** Recognize that water is only one component of the experience.
- 2** Expand the definition of 'aquatics' to include beaches, wading pools, spray parks and new innovative swimming experiences.
- 3** Enhance social inclusion through aquatic experiences.
- 4** Support community and personal well-being.
- 5** Promote and encourage active living through aquatics.
- 6** Provide flexible and functional facilities.
- 7** Establish sustainability targets for aquatics.
- 8** Increase connection to nature in all aspects of aquatics.

* As a result of recommendations made in the 2001 Aquatic Strategy, the annual swims per capita increased from 2.4 to 3.4. The strategy recommends planning for an increased capacity of **5.5** swims per capita, per year.



Take the survey at
vancouver.ca/vansplash

#VanSplash / ParkBoard
@ParkBoard @VanParkBoard



Current Status

Indoor aquatic experiences

The Vancouver Park Board currently manages:  **9** Indoor Pools

Legend

Traditional
Aquatics



Indoor
Pool



Not managed
by VPB



Co-located Indoor
and Outdoor Pool



Indoor Pools:

4km

City-Wide (Destination)

Hillcrest Aquatic Centre, 2010

- Newest facility in system
- Greatest number of annual visits

Vancouver Aquatic Centre, 1974

- Diving, synchro, water polo, and elite aquatic based training
- Least efficient pool in the system
- Highest subsidy per swim, over three times the deficit of the newest facilities
- Previous studies noted problematic structure
- Serves the area with the highest expected population growth over the next 24 years

3km

Community

Killarney, 2006

- New build
- Second greatest number of annual visits

2km

Neighbourhood

Britannia, 1975

- Renovated in 1998
- Overall masterplan currently underway
- Significant service overlap with Templeton

Kensington, 1979

- Currently operates cost effectively, but is an aging facility
- Warmer pool temperature

Kerrisdale, 1955

- Renovated in 1996

Lord Byng, 1974

- Never renovated




Renfrew, 1963

- Renovated in 1970, 2005 and 2010

Templeton, 1974

- Never renovated, one of the oldest facilities in system

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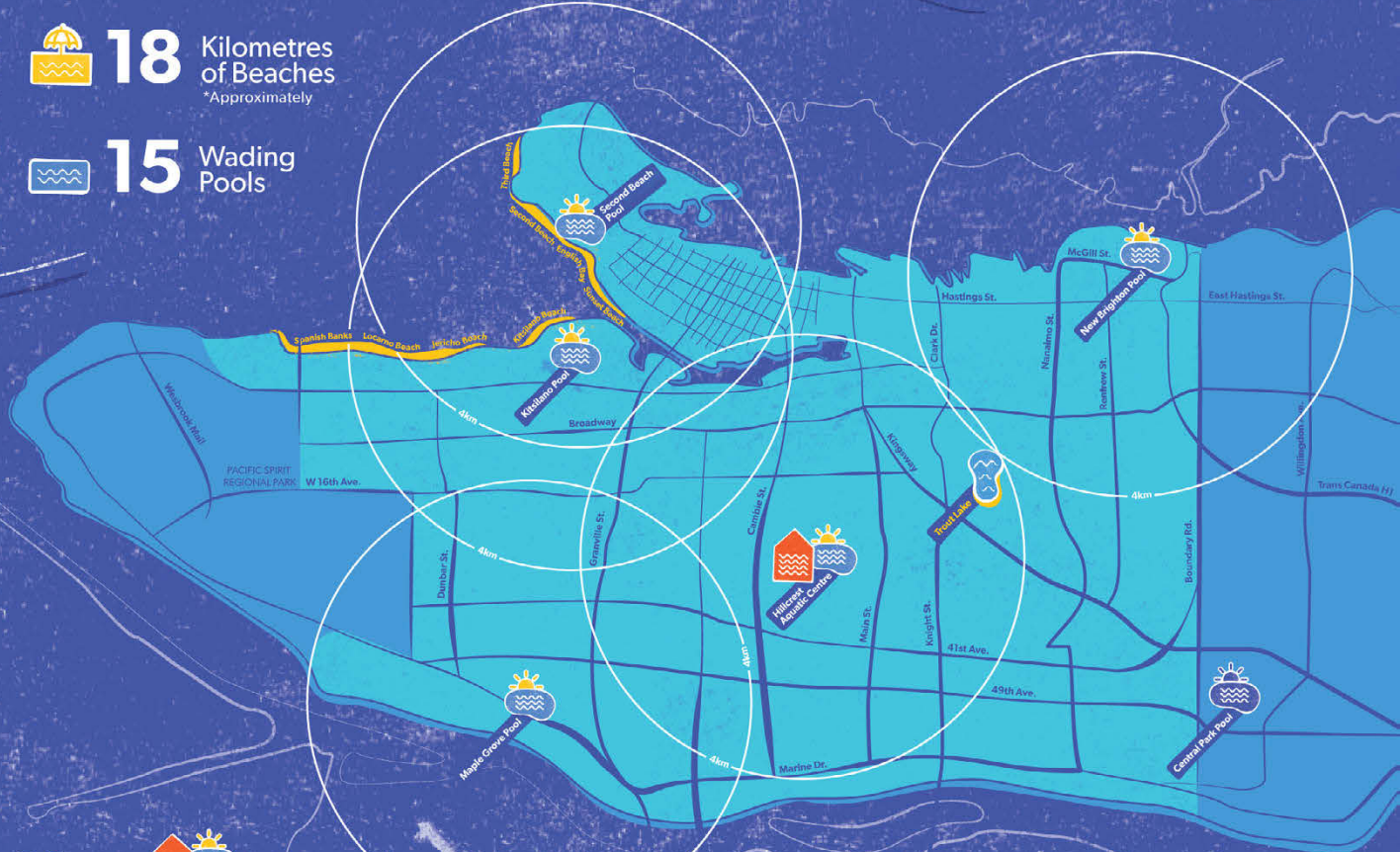
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Current Status

Outdoor aquatic experiences

The Vancouver Park Board currently manages:



Legend

Traditional Aquatics



Outdoor Pools:

City-Wide (Destination)

Hillcrest, 2010

- Newest facility in system
- Co-located in Hillcrest Park co-located with fitness, arenas, and indoor pool

Kitsilano, 1979

- Extremely long length, ideal for length swimming
- Located on cycling route, walking path, and tourist area
- Connected to Kitsilano Beach

Maple Grove, 1995

- Popular venue for children's groups and family days
- Large green space
- Quiet location within a park

New Brighton, 1973

- Mostly recreational use
- Expansive views to North Shore mountains and water
- Located within New Brighton Park, limited green space with minimal shading at pools
- Limited parking

Second Beach, 1995

- Located off seawall in high-traffic pedestrian and tourist area
- Large pool deck area with minimal shading
- Second most popular outdoor pool in system
- Located in Stanley Park

Lifeguarded Beaches:



English Bay

Jericho Beach

Kitsilano Beach

Locarno Beach

Second Beach

Spanish Banks

Sunset Beach

Third Beach

Trout Lake

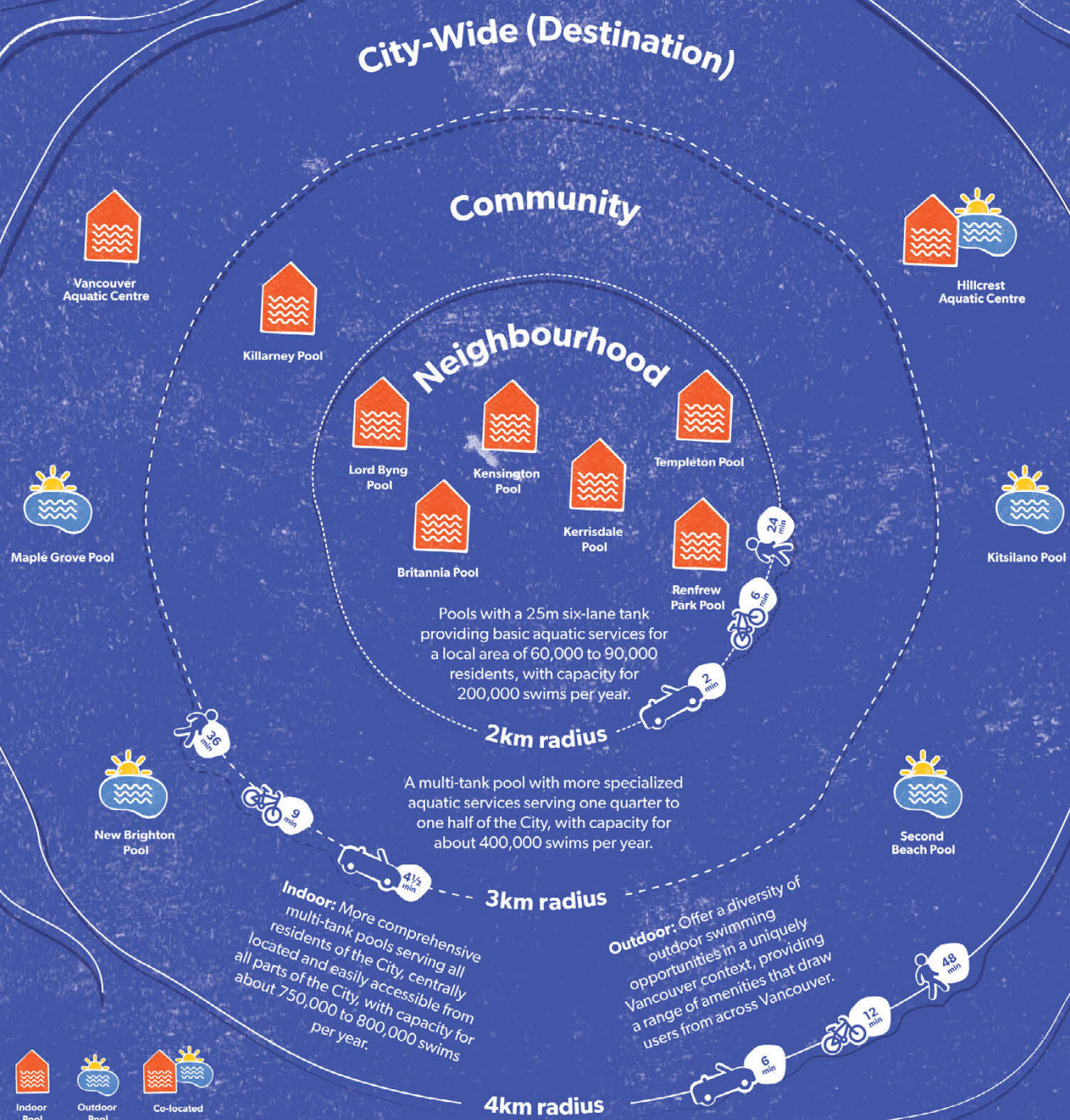
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What kind of pools do we currently have?

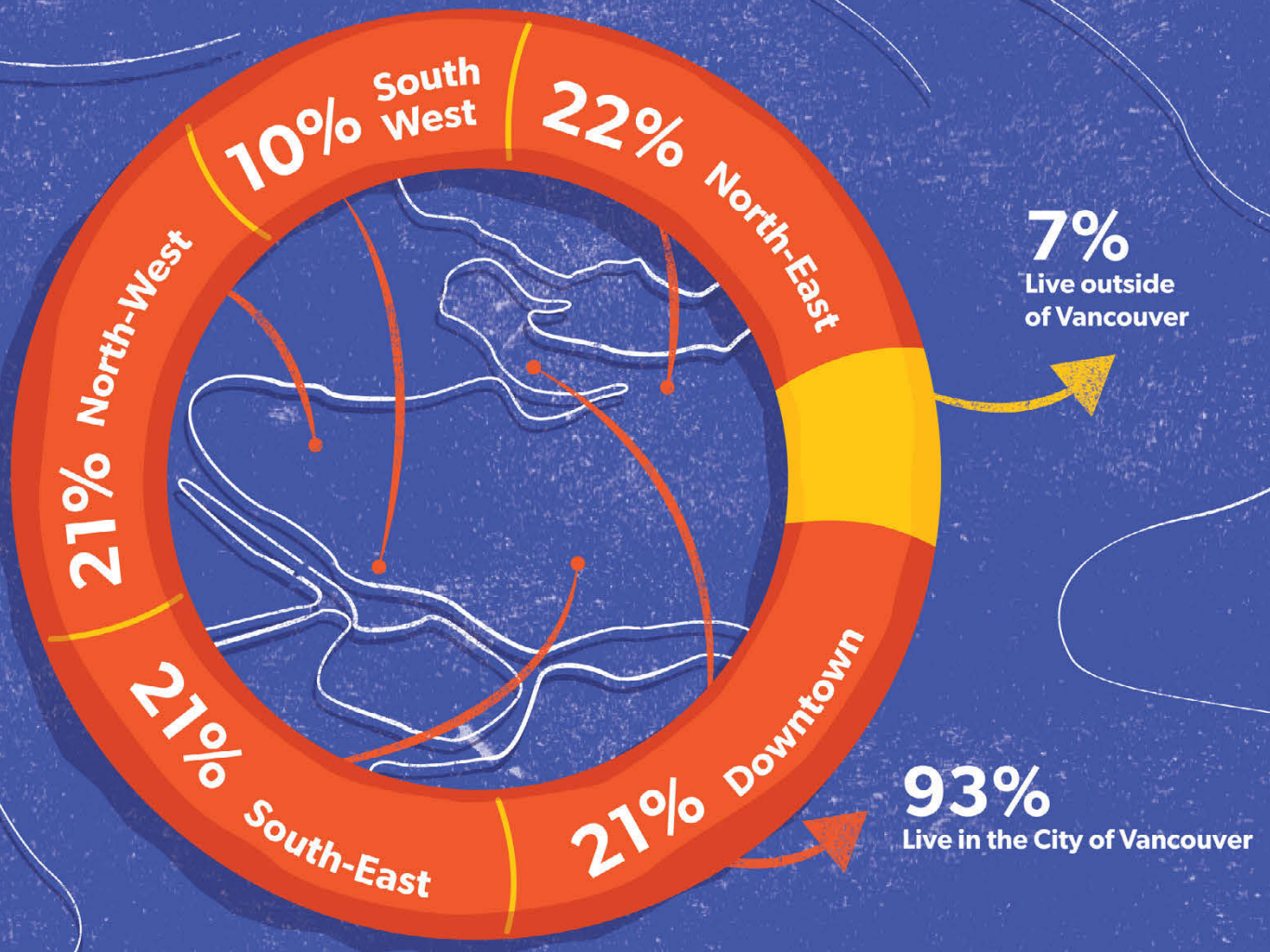
The strategy works to ensure more equitable access to a range of experiences across Vancouver — accessible via public transport, car, bike, or walking.



Public Engagement

We heard from over **4500** people throughout the phase 1 public consultation.

This is where they live:



More than half of respondents indicated that recreation, fun and relaxation were their main motivations to visit pools and beaches.

We reached you by



Online survey



Two public outreach events



Social media



Email comments



6 stakeholder workshops

(48 individuals representing community associations, community centres, swim clubs, swim teams, aquatic sports clubs, seniors and other community groups)

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Innovation

We heard you want more “non-traditional” aquatic amenities that add opportunities for recreation, fun and relaxation.

67%

Identified a natural outdoor swimming pool as an innovative feature they wanted to see as a part of Vancouver aquatics.



55%

Selected a swimming pool in the ocean as their top innovation.



Top things we heard from you

37%

Feel that swimming for fun and socializing is an activity that needs to be improved in Vancouver.



10%

In an open call for comments said they want more fun activities as a part of Vancouver aquatics.



32%

Want more spa-like experiences at pools.



What we learned



Waterfront cities around the world are focussing on bringing swimming back. Vancouver could benefit from innovative, non-traditional aquatic services.



Beaches are the most visited aquatic experience in the system. Interestingly, the majority of visitors do not actually swim in the water, but spend time on the sand or grass.



There are currently no outdoor public hot tubs available in Vancouver.



Spray parks offer an opportunity for all ages, from very young children to adults, to play, socialize, and seek respite from summer heat together.



Internationally, a trend is emerging toward natural, environmental and thermal spa experiences that have been popular in areas such as Scandinavia and Iceland as a cultural bathing experience.



Innovation

Recommendations



A combination of temporary and permanent recommendations.



Build destination spray parks for fun and cooling aquatic experiences in urban areas.



Provide wellness amenities, connected with existing and future pools.



Create urban beaches for relaxation and play.



Build a harbour deck for improved access to our inlet.



Add outdoor hot tubs to outdoor pools that aren't co-located with an indoor pool or hot tub.



Build a naturally-filtered outdoor pool for better connection to nature.



Provide play structures in the ocean at existing beaches.

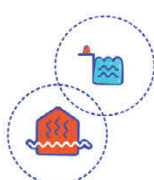


Assess feasibility of a floating pool in False Creek.

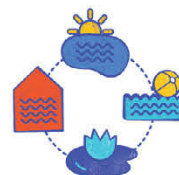
What do these recommendations mean for you?



A greater variety of aquatic activities.



More innovative experiences to enhance traditional aquatics.



More equal access to aquatic facilities and activities across Vancouver.



Indoor Pools

What we heard + learned

15%

go to other facilities in Vancouver, such as facilities in their condos, YMCA, and the Jewish Community Centre.

40%

over the age of 60 use indoor facilities at least once a week.

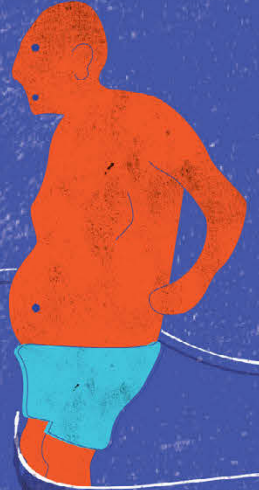
59%

visit indoor pools at least once a month, with 29% visiting at least once a week.

Top things we heard from you

14%

said facilities need updating and accessibility at indoor swimming pools need to be improved (open ended question).

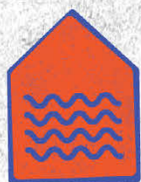


What is working

- Vancouver's newest or renovated pools (Renfrew, Killarney, Hillcrest) are the best utilized and most financially efficient. Indoor pool use has increased since these improvements, from 2.4 to 3.4 annual swims/capita.
- We learned that Hillcrest attracts visitors from across the city and often operates close to its designed capacity.

What is not working

- Indoor pools nearing the end of their lifespan are the least used, least efficient and require the most investment to operate (Vancouver Aquatic Centre, Kerrisdale, Britannia, Lord Byng, Templeton). These pools make up only 34% of all visits to indoor pools.
- It is difficult to access swim lessons at our newer, more popular pools.
- All areas of Vancouver are well served by indoor pools (10 minute drive), with the exception of a small area in South Vancouver.



Indoor Pools

Recommendations



1 Move away from neighbourhood scale pools and deliver a greater diversity of swimming experiences at larger, destination aquatic centres like Hillcrest.



2 Co-locate facilities with arenas and community centres, similar to Killarney, to take advantage of diversity of services offered at one destination.



3 Co-locate outdoor pools with indoor pools to offer a greater range of aquatic experiences at each facility.



4 Existing stand-alone whirlpools in community centres should be decommissioned.

Plan to decommission or replace older pools, which are operationally less efficient, require higher subsidies and are less popular with users:

5 Replace Templeton and Britannia with one community pool on the Britannia site.

Renovate Kensington to enhance accessibility and increase opportunities for adaptive swimming.

Replace Kerrisdale with a new community pool as part of future arena and/or community centre renewal.

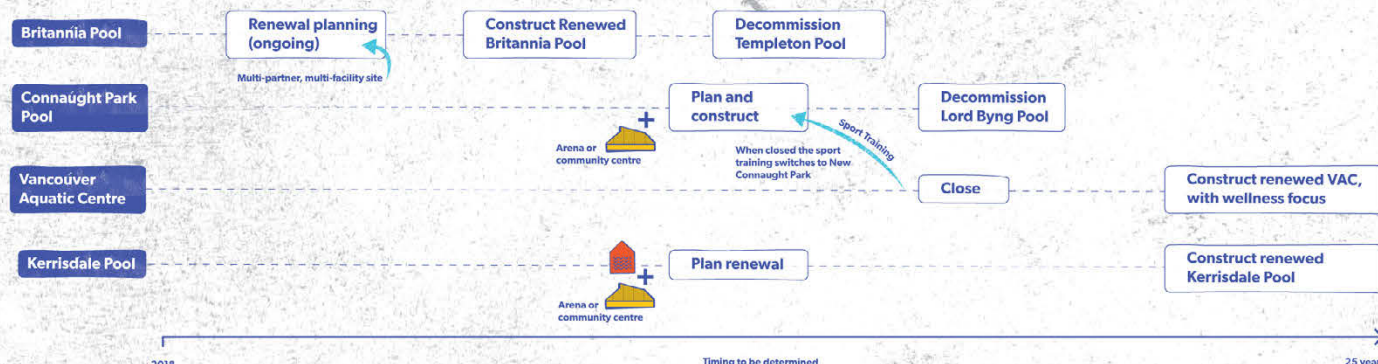
Replace Vancouver Aquatic Centre with a new wellness-oriented city-wide (destination) pool on the same site.

Replace Lord Byng with a new city-wide (destination) pool with a sport-training focus, potentially at Connaught Park.

Continue to pursue a partnership with the YMCA for an aquatic facility in South Vancouver.

Sequencing:

Indoor Pool Recommendations



What do these recommendations mean for you?



4 future (new or replaced) facilities

2 x city-wide (destination)

A wellness oriented facility and a sport-training focused facility

2 x community facilities

- Broad access to a variety of aquatic experiences.
- Increased indoor swimming capacity across the City resulting in less-crowded facilities.
- More evenly distributed aquatic services across Vancouver in both quantity and type of facility.



Outdoor Pools

What we heard + learned

80%

use outdoor pools for recreation, fun and socializing.



15%

noted more child-friendly features as a priority for improvement.

19%

indicated that they think Vancouver needs more outdoor pools.

Top things we heard from you

49%

use outdoor pools for fitness, lengths and aerobics.

38%

noted improvements to existing outdoor pools (e.g. newer changing rooms, renovated pool) would encourage them to visit more often.

75%

under the age of 30 visit Kitsilano pool in the summer.

67%

identified a natural outdoor swimming pool as an innovative feature they wanted to see.

55%

visited outdoor pools at least once a month in the summer.

What is working

- Vancouver has a series of city-wide (destination) outdoor pools that are well-loved 'jewels' within the aquatic system, including several ocean front pools that are unique within Canada.
- Outdoor pools support multiple activities from lap swimming to leisure and play.

What is not working

- The outdoor pools are not currently providing adequate changing facilities.
- Many of the outdoor pools are aging and require mechanical or pool upgrades.
- Concession stands and food services at all outdoor pools could be improved.



Outdoor Pools

Recommendations



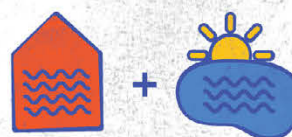
Continue to invest in the existing outdoor pools to keep them as unique city-wide (destination) facilities within Vancouver.

- Upgrade or replace change rooms
- Upgrade or replace concessions and food services
- Upgrade mechanical equipment and pool basins where required



Prioritize locating new outdoor pools to fill current service area gaps in south-central and south-east Vancouver.

- Build one new natural outdoor pool located in a future park beside the Fraser River



Co-locate outdoor pools with indoor pools to offer a greater range of aquatic experiences at each facility.

- Build a new outdoor pool in South Vancouver co-located with Killarney indoor pool.



Provide a balance of recreation, fun, socializing and fitness, through a range of outdoor pool facilities and experiences.

- Add spray features for toddlers and children of all ages at outdoor pools
- Provide shade through umbrellas, planting, or shade screens
- Add/expand green space surrounding pool decks
- Add outdoor hot tubs to outdoor pools that aren't co-located with an indoor pool or hot tub
- Build a harbour deck for improved access to our inlet
- Assess feasibility of a floating pool in False Creek



Consider an outdoor pool or spray feature with every new indoor pool facility.

What do these recommendations mean for you?



Renewal of the existing outdoor pools we know and love.



Addition of a new stand alone city-wide (destination) outdoor pool and new co-located outdoor pool.



A range of outdoor aquatic pool types, distributed throughout Vancouver.



Beaches

What we heard + learned

We heard

80%

visit beaches with the primary goal of relaxation.

The most visited beaches were:



45%

recommend more shaded areas as an improvement.

37%

want alcohol to be allowed on beaches and available at beach concessions (4% don't want alcohol to be allowed on beaches).

18%

want swim lessons at the beach.

24%

said they love the beaches as they are.

Top things we heard + learned from you

We learned



3.1 million

annual visitors to beaches (observed in life-guarded season), but, there is a lack of clear data collected on how many people visit the beach and why, compared to our understanding of pool usage.



Beaches provide a range of amenities, varying by beach, such as: concessions, seasonal life guards, sand volleyball courts, playing fields, swimming rafts, playgrounds, picnic areas, and tennis courts.



Vancouver's beaches offer a unique, natural, outdoor aquatic experience available in very few urban centres in the country.



People are willing to travel farther from their homes to visit beaches.

What is working

- Beaches are well-loved and very well-used.
- Vancouver is known world-wide for the quality of its urban beaches.
- Beaches offer natural aquatic experiences at lower capital and operating costs than indoor and outdoor pool facilities.

What is not working

- Changing and washroom facilities at some of the life-guarded beaches need to be improved.
- There is a lack of adequate shade.
- Concession stands and food services need to be improved.



Beaches

Recommendations

Maintain and enhance the quality and nature of our beaches.

- Upgrade or replace change rooms
- Upgrade or replace concessions and food services
- Provide additional shade



Consider activating or enhancing the range of aquatic experiences offered at beaches, i.e. temporary water play.

Continue to improve water quality at Trout Lake, per the draft John Hendry Park Master Plan (with City Engineering).

Find a better way to collect information on how many people use our beaches and how they use them.



Consider installing temporary urban beaches to increase equity of beach experience at key locations in Vancouver.



What do these recommendations mean for you?

Vancouverites will continue to have access to some of the most incredible urban beaches with improved amenities

Note that the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is undertaking a broad study to develop a strategy specifically focused on non-motorized activities on water that will take into account beach access and amenities to support these uses.





Spray Parks

The Vancouver Park Board currently operates:



15

Spray Parks



15

Wading Pools

Fill-and-draw wading pools, are gradually being converted to spray parks or decommissioned, consistent with trends across Canadian urban centres.



Top things we heard from you

(during Brewers Park and Clinton Park Renewal Consultation, 2016)

- 1 Spray parks are more dynamic and more fun than a wading pool.
- 2 Water needs to be activated for more hours of the day and for more days of the week; spray parks provide this flexibility.

What is working

- Wading pools and spray parks provide an introduction to water.
- Spray parks offer a greater range of use and accessibility, greater level of safety and are more socially-inclusive.
- Spray parks can be activated as play areas outside of summer, and do not need to be supervised, extending their use to more hours of a day.
- Spray parks can be designed as public space attractions.

What is not working

- Existing wading pools do not meet Health Act regulations, compelling significant conversion or removal.
- Current wading pools must be filled daily with potable water.
- Current wading pools do not provide universal access.

Recommendations

- Continue to phase-out all wading pools, converting to spray parks or closing them through consultation with local communities.
- Consider adding destination spray parks at destination and highly urban parks serving large populations.
- Consider adding neighbourhood spray parks based on greatest social and geographic need.
- Consider co-locating spray parks with indoor or outdoor pools.
- Where possible, design spray parks in a way that water can be recycled for park use, i.e. adjacent irrigation or water features.
- More evenly distribute spray parks.

What does this mean for you?

- VanSplash will set a direction for spray parks and wading pools, but the closure of specific wading pools, and decision to build new spray parks will come later, through future park renewals and consultation.
- Locational criteria will be finalized through Vancouver's Park and Recreation Master Plan in 2018.

Dive into the future of Vancouver's pools and beaches

Your involvement helped shape the vision for VanSplash, Vancouver Park Board's Aquatic Strategy.

We are now in the final phase of our consultation and we need your input! Let us know if you believe the recommendations are right for you and for Vancouver.

Frequently Asked Questions

The recommendations are based on a review of Vancouver Park Board aquatic facilities expected demographic shifts, and inspired by innovative aquatics trends around the world.

I like these new pool ideas, but don't want Templeton or Lord Byng to close.

Many of the Park Board's indoor pools are nearing the end of their lives and need to be either renewed or replaced. The proposed locations provide better coverage across the City and will support serving more residents through larger facilities with more diverse amenities. Users of Templeton will be most closely served by a new, larger pool at Britannia, and users of Lord Byng pool will be most closely served by a new pool at Connaught Park, or the UBC pool, which opened in early 2017.

Why are there fewer neighbourhood pools in the long term vision? I like them because they feel more intimate.

The City's population is growing and larger pools will help to accommodate current and new residents.

In Phase 1 of consultation, we overwhelmingly heard that people would like more diverse aquatic experiences, including increased focus on health and wellness, and leisure swimming (opportunities for play) for all ages. These are best accommodated through larger, more economical facilities with more varied amenities, under one roof.

The system will continue to include a smaller number of neighbourhood and community scaled pools.

Why is an outdoor pool at Mount Pleasant Park not being proposed?

VanSplash's proposed outdoor pool locations prioritize geographic gaps in the outdoor pool system, and areas of expected population growth. VanSplash carries forward the 2001 Strategy's recommendation from the 2001 Aquatic Strategy to co-locate outdoor pools with indoor pools and other recreation facilities for better energy use, efficiency, cost, and to provide more varied activities for families at a single location.

A 2015 study considering the placement of an outdoor pool at Mount Pleasant Park determined that it was not recommended: Mount Pleasant is close to other pools, would require high operating subsidies, and is not well served by transit or other services. The park is well used year round, and the neighbourhood is deficient in park land, with limited green space opportunities.

Why doesn't VanSplash include any therapy pools?

The needs of a therapy pool and a public pool are very different. Most therapy pool programming is highly specialized and typically provided by specialized health providers, not by municipal aquatic systems.

The Park Board continues to offer adaptive swimming lessons and improved access, and VanSplash recommends modifications to Kensington Pool to expand our adaptive swimming programs. Future pool designs will continue to consider best practices for universal accessibility and inclusivity.

Wellness amenities, such as hot tubs and steam rooms, and accessibility features such as beach entry and warmer water are being considered at new pools.

The Phase 1 engagement included significant feedback regarding liquor and licensing issues at beaches. Why are these not addressed here?

The feedback received will be considered by the Park Board's commercial operations team as part of ongoing work on concessions.

In Phase 1, 26% of respondents indicated that less expensive admissions would encourage them to visit indoor pools more often. Why are lower fees not being considered?

Municipal aquatic systems are highly subsidized as the benefits of public pools are considered to outweigh the cost. Vancouver's admission, program and rental rates are lower than most neighbouring municipalities. The Park Board's Leisure Access Program Card provides low-income Vancouver residents with free admission and 50% subsidy on swimming lessons.

Beaches, wading pools, and spray parks provide other non-user pay free-of-charge aquatic opportunities.

This is your chance to tell us if we got it right.
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