

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: July 21, 2025

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: John Woolgar, Director, Recreation and Culture

SUBJECT: Swimming Pool Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study Funding Reallocation Request

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve reallocating up to \$50,000 from the Arts & Culture Infrastructure Concept Plan capital project to complete a swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study for a public swimming pool.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of White Rock does not have a public swimming pool to offer swimming lessons and other aquatic programs to residents. Neighboring municipalities have implemented priority registration for residents in recreation programs, which restricts White Rock residents from accessing swimming lessons in South Surrey or other communities. Learning to swim is an important life skill, especially for a seaside community located along Semiahmoo Bay. A comparison across the Metro Vancouver Region indicates that each municipality has either an indoor or outdoor public swimming pool. It is recommended that funding be reallocated for a swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study to explore potential options for a public swimming pool in the City of White Rock.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Drowning is a leading cause of unintentional death in Canada with an average of 400 victims each year. The World Health Organization's Global Report on Drowning Prevention (2024) states that one of the key strategies to prevent drowning is through swimming and water safety training.

Swimming and water safety are crucial life skills that prevent water related injury and death and drowning is the number one cause of unintentional death for children ages 0-5 years in Canada. With over 1900 children in White Rock under the age of 14, the ability to offer swimming lessons to residents is a core and necessary service for residents.

Swimming is also known to be a highly beneficial form of cardiovascular exercise by boosting heart and lung health, lowering blood pressure, and improving circulation. Many people opt for this activity as it is a low impact form of exercise. The resistance from the water makes it appealing for those who have joint and mobility challenges. Due to these reasons, most municipalities offer swimming pools and aquatic programming as a core municipal service.

Table 1 below provides an overview of municipalities in the Lower Mainland, their population, and the number of indoor and/or outdoor swimming pools they own and operate.

| Municipality | Population | Indoor Pool | Outdoor Pool |
|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Kent | 6,300 | 0 | 1 |
| Hope | 6,686 | 1 | 0 |
| Pitt Meadows | 19,146 | 0 | 1 |
| White Rock | 21,939 | 0 | 0 |
| Port Moody | 33,535 | 0 | 2 |
| Langley City | 35,316 | 0 | 1 |
| Mission | 41,519 | 1 | 0 |
| West Vancouver | 44,122 | 1 | 0 |
| Port Coquitlam | 61,498 | 2 | 2 |
| New Westminster | 78,916 | 1 | 2 |
| North Vancouver | 88,168 | 4 | 0 |
| Maple Ridge | 90,990 | 1 | 1 |
| Chilliwack | 97,174 | 2 | 1 |
| Delta | 113,347 | 3 | 2 |
| Coquitlam | 159,285 | 2 | 1 |
| Langley Township | 162,269 | 2 | 1 |
| Abbotsford | 168,478 | 2 | 1 |
| Richmond | 222,954 | 2 | 2 |
| Burnaby | 270,264 | 3 | 4 |
| Surrey | 633,234 | 5 | 8 |
| Vancouver | 706,012 | 9 | 5 |

Table 1: List of Pools in the Metro Vancouver Area

Current State of Swimming Lesson Availability

After the COVID-19 pandemic, a large shortage of lifeguards and swim instructors across the country has impacted the ability of cities to offer an adequate amount of swimming lessons in their public pools to meet the demand. Registration for these swimming lessons fills within minutes of opening for registration which has led to many municipalities across the lower mainland to implement priority registration for their residents.

As of January 1, 2025, the City of Surrey has implemented priority registration for swimming lessons which allows Surrey residents priority registration for three (3) weeks before it opens for residents of neighbouring municipalities. With a large demand for these programs, this has made it very challenging for White Rock residents to register into swimming lessons. If they cannot access public swimming lessons in neighbouring municipalities, their only other option is to enroll in spots with private company which are typically four (4) times more expensive than municipal programs. Staff are suggesting a swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study be conducted to determine different ways Recreation staff could provide this crucial service to White Rock residents.

Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study

Staff are requesting up to \$50,000 from the Arts & Culture Infrastructure Concept Plan capital project to be re-allocated towards a Swimming Pool Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study.

The successful proponent of the Swimming Lesson Feasibility Study Request for Proposal will be asked to study and examine public demand, swimming pool location options, benefits of indoor vs outdoor pools, capital and operating costs. The proponent will also be asked to explore alternate delivery models, which may include securing pool access within a new development or partnerships with community stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff are requesting up to \$50,000 to be re-allocated from the Arts & Culture Infrastructure Concept Plan capital project to fund a swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Residents will be informed and consulted during the Swimming Pool Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This funding requests aligns with the following strategic priorities:

Community: We foster a livable city with connected residents enjoying distinctive places and activities.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following alternate options are available for Council's consideration:

1. Not approve reallocating up to \$50,000 from the Arts & Culture Infrastructure Concept Plan capital project to complete a swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study.

CONCLUSION

The absence of a public swimming pool in the City of White Rock presents a significant gap in essential community services, particularly in a coastal city where water safety is paramount. With surrounding municipalities prioritizing their own residents for aquatic programs, White Rock residents face limited and costly alternatives for accessing swimming lessons.

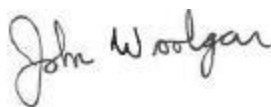
A comprehensive swimming pool needs assessment and feasibility study will provide critical insights into potential facility models, locations, and partnerships, ensuring that any future aquatic investment aligns with community needs and long-term sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,



John Stech
Manager of Community Recreation

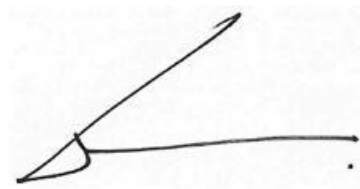
Reviewed and Approved,



John Woolgar,
Director, Recreation & Culture

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot at the end.

Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer