



## Administration Department

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## Media Release

For Immediate Release

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### Recreation Centre Referendum: Community-wide considerations

**SUMMERLAND** – On November 4, 2023, eligible voters in Summerland will take part in a referendum for a new multi-purpose indoor recreation centre. If electors vote in favour of the referendum question, the new facility will replace the Summerland Aquatic & Fitness Centre, which is at the end of its useable life.

The proposed new facility includes an aquatic centre, fitness centre, fitness/activity multi-purpose room, family/youth multi-purpose room, universal access and family change rooms, and modern energy efficiency building standards (minimum LEED Silver).

“Over the last six weeks, we’ve been talking about the details of a proposed new [Recreation Centre project](#) and the decision voters will need to make next month,” said Mayor Doug Holmes. “We’ve talked about what, where, and why a new facility is being proposed and how the capital project would be funded. We’ve discussed the challenges our community is facing related to aging infrastructure and limited program capacity, as well as the proposed solutions to those challenges.”

“We also need to look at this project from a social perspective and have a broader discussion of what we – as a community – want recreation to look like in Summerland going forward. Personally, I see this as more than a referendum on a recreation centre – it’s a referendum on the future of our community and what kind of community we want to be.”

### How do physical activity and local recreation amenities affect a community?

Extensive research has shown that physical activity can improve the physical, emotional, economic and social well-being of a community. According to [BC Healthy Communities](#), physical activity can aid in healthy child development, social connectedness, positive educational outcomes, increased workplace productivity, and decreased demands on healthcare and social services.

Further, a report on [Recreation in Canada](#) in 2015 by the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association indicates the majority of Canadians believe parks and recreation improve health, boost social cohesion, and are a major factor in crime reduction.

“For many people, swimming pools and recreation facilities are considered *community hubs* and they’re recognized as providing much more than just physical benefits. They help bring people together, provide a place of belonging and sense of community, as well as offer resources for a variety of programs and services to meet residents’ needs,” said Mayor Holmes. “This is something we need to consider when we talk about investing in recreation amenities.”

The [2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) began the conversation about replacing the Aquatic & Fitness Centre. Since then, the District has been seeking public input to help Council better understand how Summerland residents value recreation and various types of amenities. Based on the results of that input, a new, larger facility has been proposed that includes the core amenities requested by the community to increase programming and participation capacities and serve Summerland for the next 50 years.

### **How did we get to a referendum on this project?**

Summerland's population has nearly doubled since the Aquatic & Fitness Centre was constructed almost 50 years ago and most recreation programs are regularly full with long waitlists. Based on that information, the results of the [2018 Facility Condition Assessment](#), as well as public input received for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the [2021 Needs Assessment](#), conceptual plans for a new Recreation Centre were developed, and through a [Feasibility Site Fit Study](#), residents indicated a preferred location for a new facility. Eventually, that led Council to send the project to referendum.

"We know the Aquatic & Fitness Centre is experiencing significant and ongoing issues and is at risk of failure, but we also know sport, fitness, recreation and wellness are important to many Summerland residents, so that's why Council chose to hold the referendum – to provide a clear and distinct opportunity for the community to choose what we do next," said Mayor Holmes.

### **What statistics are available for current users of the Summerland Aquatic and Fitness Centre?**

As of September 2023, the number of registered recreation members in the Recreation Department database is 12,159 of which 70% are Summerland residents. These are people who are registered for a recreation or aquatic program, purchase a pass, or book a recreation facility or park.

The database does not include individuals who pay drop-in fees when they attend the pool or fitness room as they are not required to register. Nor does it include individuals who participate in user group programs such as Recope, ORCA Swim Club, ORCA Masters Swim Club, etc.

The following is a breakdown of statistics related to facility usage in 2022:

- 1,618 Red Cross swim lesson registrations
- 1,573 recreation program registrations
- 4,974 Recope visits (aquatic rehabilitation program)
- 112 Orca Swim Club members

Summerland's Aquatic & Fitness Centre is also used by all four of Summerland's schools for learn-to-swim programs, recreational swimming, and focused private lessons for children with special needs. Some Penticton schools also use the Summerland facility for these types of programs, due to limited capacity at the Penticton pool.

In 2022, the Summerland Aquatic Centre hosted 884 school swim participants, including 687 students from Summerland, 99 from Penticton, and 58 from the Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School on the PIB Reserve.

## What types of aquatic facilities do other BC communities of similar size have available?

The following table provides examples of indoor aquatic facilities in other BC communities with populations between 5,000 and 15,000.

Community	Population (2021)*	Main pool basin	Additional pool basin and amenities
Duncan	5,047	8 x 25m	8x25m warm up/wave pool, twin waterslides, 1 & 3m diving boards, lazy river, swirl pool, sauna, steam room
Smithers	5,378	4 x 25m	Leisure pool, water features, shallow & warm tot pool, hot tub, sauna
Creston	5,583	5 x 25m	Leisure pool, lazy river, spray features, climbing wall, hot tub
Fernie	6,320	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, hot tub, steam room
Merritt	7,051	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, lazy river and vortex, tots pool & spray features, 2 hot tubs, sauna
Revelstoke	8,275	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, lazy river, diving board, waterslide, climbing wall, hot tub, sauna and steam room
Castlegar	8,338	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, hot tub, steam room
Ladysmith	8,990	4 x 25m	Leisure pool, hot tub, sauna and steam room
Qualicum Beach	9,303	6 x 25m	Leisure pool (zero depth), hot tub, steam room and sauna
Quesnel	9,889	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, 1m diving board, waterslide, rope swing, hot tub, family sauna and adult sauna
Sechelt	10,827	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, lazy river, waterslide, rope swing, climbing wall and diving boards
Williams Lake	10,947	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, waterslide, lazy river, tots area, hot swirl pool, sauna and steam room
Nelson	11,106	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, hot tub, sauna and steam room
Terrace	12,017	6 x 25m	Warm pool, hot tub, sauna and steam room
Summerland	12,042	6 x 25m	Hot tub, sauna (no secondary pool basin/leisure pool)
Prince Rupert	12,300	6 x 25m	Diving pool and tot pool connected to main pool, hot tub, sauna
Dawson Creek	12,323	8 x 25m	Leisure pool, tots pool, waterslide, lazy river, 1 & 3m diving boards, hot tub, sauna and steam room
Powell River	13,943	6 x 25m	Shallow water leisure pool, swirl pool, sauna
Sooke	15,086	6 x 25m	Leisure pool, swirl pool, sauna

\*2021 population statistics from Ministry of Municipal Affairs

Visit this [link](#) for more information on a BC Pool Comparison chart.

For more information on the proposed Summerland Recreation Centre project and the upcoming referendum, please visit [www.summerland.ca/recreationcentre](http://www.summerland.ca/recreationcentre).

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