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Media Release

For Immediate Release

DATE: September 7, 2023

Recreation Centre Referendum: Why a new facility is being proposed

SUMMERLAND – On November 4, 2023, eligible voters in Summerland (including residents and non-resident property owners) will be asked if they are in favour of the District borrowing up to \$50 million for the development of the Summerland Recreation Centre – a multi-purpose recreation facility intended to replace the Summerland Aquatic & Fitness Centre.

Over the next several weeks, the District will be providing a series of media releases with detailed information about the project, the results of extensive public and stakeholder engagement that helped shape the proposed facility, the funding strategy and anticipated impact for Summerland taxpayers, and much more.

All of the information is also available right now online: www.summerland.ca/recreationcentre.

The District's objective is to share accurate, fact-based information about the project to help voters make a well-informed decision on November 4.



Below are the first few frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to the project and the upcoming referendum.

Why is there a referendum on this issue?

The Province of B.C. requires public approval of long-term borrowing. The District of Summerland is asking the public to approve borrowing up to \$50 million for detailed design and construction of a new multi-purpose recreation centre, which includes a new aquatic centre and dryland spaces. The facility would be located at 8820 Jubilee Road E, adjacent to the Summerland Arena & Curling Club.

Why is a new Recreation Centre being proposed?

The Summerland Aquatic & Fitness Centre is at end-of-life. The original facility was constructed in 1976, when Summerland's population was approximately half of what it is today. Offices were added to the facility in 1988, and a larger fitness centre was built in 1996.

Based on a [Facility Condition Assessment](#) that was completed in 2018, all major building mechanical, electrical and pool systems have exceeded their expected usable life. Most of the building envelope is in poor condition with significant air and water leakage and potential for mold. The facility is consuming approximately 86% more energy per unit of floor area than the average swimming pool. The facility does not have fully modern accessible, universal, or family change rooms.

Additionally, the current facility is experiencing the following ongoing issues:

- Termites that compromise the structure of the building
- Ant and rodent infestations
- A leaky roof that requires major repair
- Hot tub failures
- Instability of the main pool basin
- Inability to source facility replacement parts due to antiquated electrical, plumbing, and pool systems

Most aquatic programs are at maximum capacity with long waitlists. Due to the current size of the aquatic centre, only one activity may take place at a time. This results in current demands not being met for public sessions, programs, swim clubs, and rental requests.

Based on a community survey that was completed for the [2018 Parks & Recreation Master Plan](#), the community indicated replacing the current facility was one of the highest priorities for residents. The [2018 Facility Condition Assessment](#) report also recommends constructing a new facility that is 50% larger than the current facility to meet demands based on the community's population growth and residents' recreation needs, now and into the future.

Did the District of Summerland complete a Needs Assessment regarding recreation services and facilities in the community?

Yes, in 2021, the District of Summerland completed a [Needs Assessment](#) report to explore a Community Recreation & Health Centre, which included a comprehensive community engagement process with 620 respondents to the first public survey and 386 responses to the follow-up survey.

Community survey results indicated 83% strongly supported and 10% somewhat supported (total 93%) replacing the existing Aquatic and Fitness Centre, and a willingness to pay. The number one indoor recreation space identified as a priority was aquatics.

The community advocated for the minimum/priority (core) spaces in a new recreation facility to include a separate six-lane pool and leisure pool, hot tub, universal change rooms, fitness centre, multi-purpose fitness/activity classroom, youth/family multi-purpose program room, and access to a gymnasium.

Other enhancements for a recreation facility were explored, but were considered "secondary" priorities, and were not included in the design, including: eight-lane competition pool (additional two lanes), child care centre, gymnasium, health centre, tennis centre.

What amenities are included in the proposed facility?

Based on the community input received during the Needs Assessment and a subsequent [Feasibility and Site Fit Study](#), the proposed facility includes the following:

- 6-lane, 25m lap pool, leisure pool, hot tub, steam or sauna room
- Modern change rooms including fully accessible and family/universal change spaces
- Fitness Centre

- Fitness/activity multi-purpose room
- Youth/family multi-purpose room
- Lobby, pool viewing, reception, administration offices
- Modern energy efficiency building standards (minimum LEED Silver)

For more information on the proposed Summerland Recreation Centre project and the upcoming referendum, please visit www.summerland.ca/recreationcentre.

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