

Open Spaces and Recreation Facilities

*investing in a healthy, active
and green community*



AQUATIC STRATEGY

APRIL 10. 2012



Strathcona
County



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Strathcona County is an active, healthy community with highly utilized trails, parks and facilities which serve as community gathering places and demonstrate the community's commitment to healthy lifestyle choices.

At a time when obesity rates and chronic diseases are skyrocketing, we need to continue to influence the health and wellness of our residents by providing recreation venues and a continued leadership role in delivering quality recreation services. We need to adapt and respond to meet current and changing needs, shifting demographics and growth throughout Strathcona County. Our facilities and outdoor spaces are a source of community pride that offer opportunities for a myriad of positive life experiences including family bonding, improved fitness, fun, education, play, celebration, socialization, personal and spiritual growth, competition, sport and culture tourism, and improved self image.

The Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS) is a document created to help guide and plan for future open space and indoor facility development and redevelopment. The OSRFS is a 15 year plan that addresses immediate needs in years one to five (Phase 1), and considers emerging requirements in years 6 to 15 (Phase 2 and 3). The Aquatic Strategy, which includes both indoor and outdoor aquatic opportunities, is an integral part of the OSRFS.



Kinsmen Leisure Centre



Millennium Place



Clover Bar Ranch spray deck

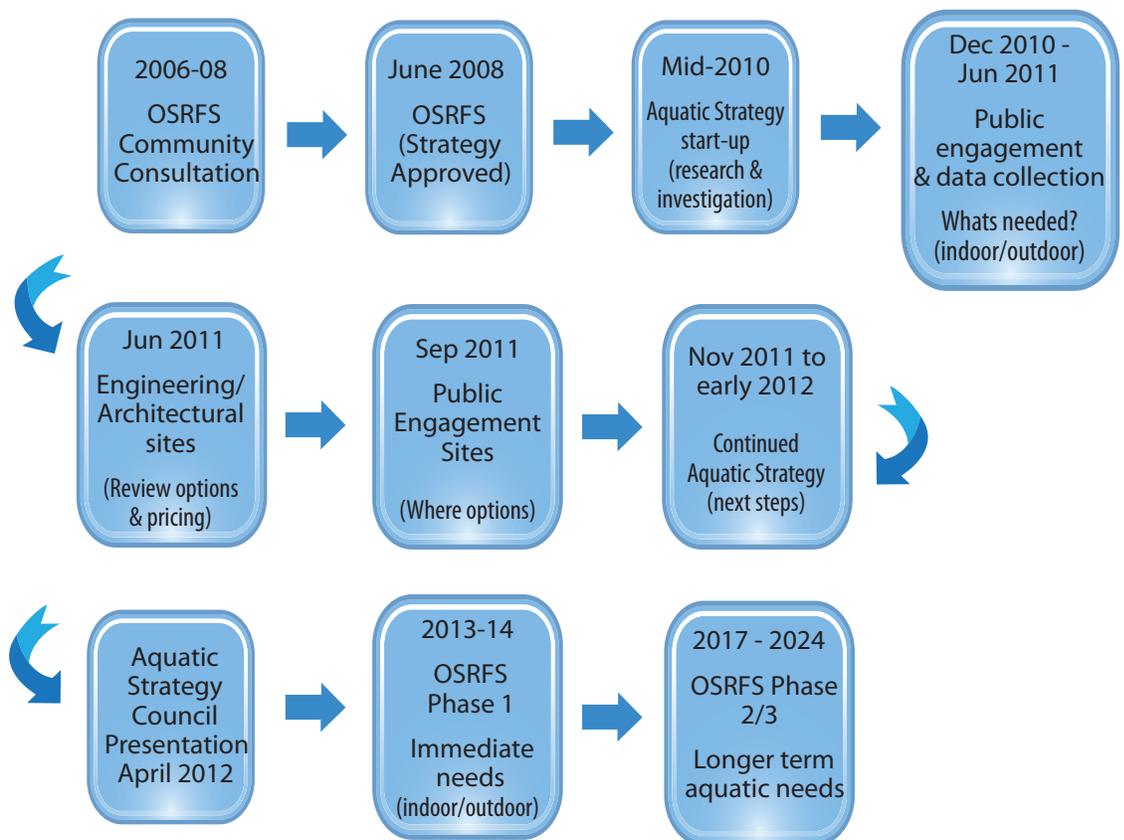
Where the Aquatic Strategy started

The recommendations within the OSRFS have led to the initiation of an Aquatic Strategy for Strathcona County. Aquatics is an important piece of the OSRFS, and is one area of recreation in which virtually anyone can enjoy and see a benefit. From the youngest of babies splashing to our oldest residents who may be physically unable to use other recreational amenities, water is a safe and friendly environment for healthy active living throughout our lifespan. Water safety is also a critical life skill that will be relevant regardless of how old you are or where you are in life.

The outcome of the OSRFS Aquatic Strategy is to provide an assessment of future aquatic options for our residents. The strategy is a guide for capital infrastructure development, future policy, and standards. The Aquatic Strategy is intended to be reflective of the current needs and feedback of users, and incorporates space and amenity requirements, as well as future capital expenditures both in the immediate (2009 – 2014) and longer term (2015 – 2024) phases of the OSRFS. The Aquatic Strategy also considers the balance between indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities and makes recommendations for both indoor and outdoor aquatic amenities to fit into the OSRFS.

The development of the Aquatic Strategy, which includes indoor and outdoor aquatics, follows five phases:

1. Information Gathering
2. Public Engagement
3. Preparation of the draft Aquatic Strategy
4. Review of the draft Aquatic Strategy
5. Final Aquatic Strategy



Inventory of Current Indoor and Outdoor Options

Indoor Aquatics

Strathcona County currently has two indoor aquatic venues: Millennium Place (MP - opened 2000) and the Kinsmen Leisure Centre (KLC - opened 1975). Through various forms of public engagement, it was clear that overcrowding in learn-to-swim programs was the biggest issue for the community. Based on this community feedback, consideration of need was balanced between all user and age groups, as well as County operational statistics and data. The highest priorities for indoor aquatics in the immediate phase are:

1. Learn-to-swim lessons
2. Lap swim lanes for spontaneous use and aquatic fitness
3. Lap swim lanes for swim club use
4. Rehabilitation/therapy space
5. Recreational space for ages newborn to six years old

Through a year-long series of public engagement initiatives including community surveys, focus groups, stakeholder consultations and open houses, the following five potential facility options were identified to address the immediate indoor aquatic needs of residents:

- Ardrossan Recreation Complex
- Emerald Hills regional recreation site (Archbishop Jordan school)
- Glen Allan Recreation Complex
- Kinsmen Leisure Centre
- Millennium Place

The intent of the Aquatic Strategy is to specifically recommend one primary indoor aquatic facility investment, along with smaller reinvestment to existing aquatic facilities that will help provide service for approximately the next 10 years or until community needs indicate a new major multipurpose recreation centre is warranted. In order to address the highest priorities of the aquatic strategy, new (immediate phase) aquatic spaces would include a lap pool with zero depth entry, a warmer water teach/therapy pool with zero depth entry and an adjustable depth bottom, a youth-focused amenity such as a waterslide or water climbing wall, and a zero depth entry hot tub.



Between 2000 and 2009, population of residents aged 50+ grew by 64%. In contrast, the population as a whole increased by only 27%.

This could mean:

By 2015- 39,795 residents ages 50+ driving demand for aquatic rehab/therapy spaces
By 2020- 54,267
By 2025- 74,002 (CPIA)

The most important spray park/deck amenities for residents were washrooms, picnic tables & shading, safety & security

Outdoor Aquatics

Currently Strathcona County has six older, smaller neighborhood spray decks that feature basic waterspouts on a concrete pad. This infrastructure, developed approximately 40 years ago, has been reviewed from an engineering perspective and deemed to be at the end of its lifecycle. These neighbourhood spray decks are located at:

Site	Current Status:
Brentwood Park	Operational
Granville Park	Operational
Kinsmen Westboro Park	Operational
Woodbridge Lake Park	Operational
Village on the Lake Park	Non-operational (2010)
Clover Bar Jr. High	Non-operational (closed approx. 1995)
Clover Bar Ranch Park	Operational (opened 2011)

The Kinsmen Leisure Centre has operated an onsite outdoor water park since 1990. This amenity was available with paid admission to the facility. Mechanical issues, combined with changes required by provincial health legislation, necessitated the closing of this amenity in 2011 with repairs on hold until the completion of the aquatic strategy.

The new Clover Bar Ranch neighbourhood spray deck has eight enhanced water spray features and opened in the summer of 2011. This amenity was designed to meet the immediate outdoor aquatic needs of local residents, while consultation continued with the community.

Considering further resident and user group feedback, as well as professional/technical expertise, an outdoor aquatic strategy has been designed that considers the following:

- Desirable features
- Aging neighbourhood spray decks
- Innovative sustainable design
- Water conservation
- Resource partnerships
- Location/population demographics



Clover Bar Ranch spray deck

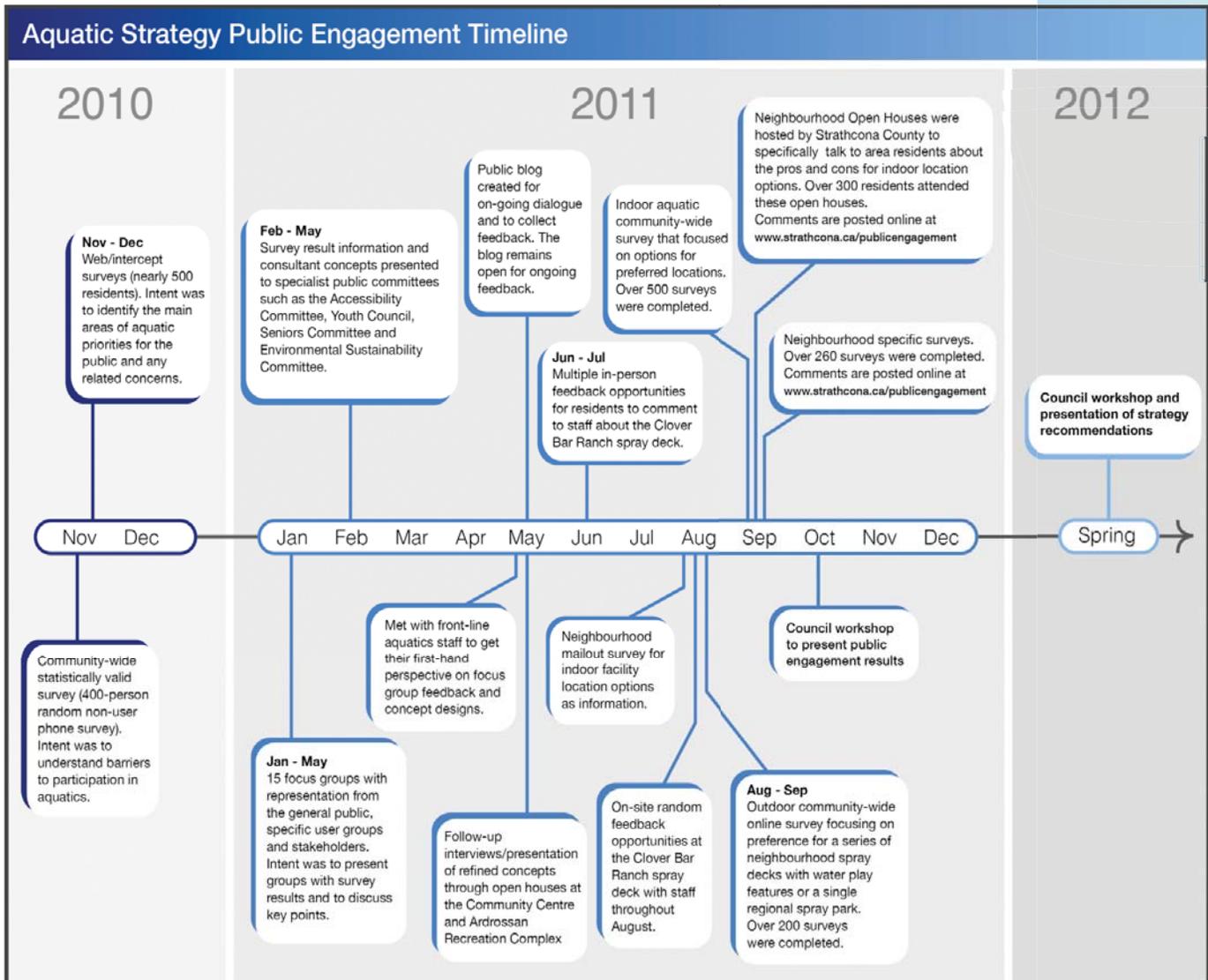
Working Together for Solutions

It is Strathcona County's goal to engage residents and stakeholder groups in dialogue regarding the needs and priorities for future indoor and outdoor aquatic options. Public engagement is a critical piece of the development of the Aquatic Strategy.

Over the past two years, Strathcona County has learned a lot about what features and amenities are important to the community for both indoor and outdoor aquatic opportunities

- Indoor swimming pools: information was gathered to understand community needs for indoor aquatics. Feedback was also solicited regarding the pros and cons for each of the five proposed indoor options, including identifying the best location.
- Outdoor aquatic options: the community shared its preferences for outdoor aquatic support amenities, as well as for a series of neighbourhood spray decks versus a single community spray park.

Strathcona County is currently below Alberta municipal average for number of public aquatic facilities



Initial Recommendations and Actions

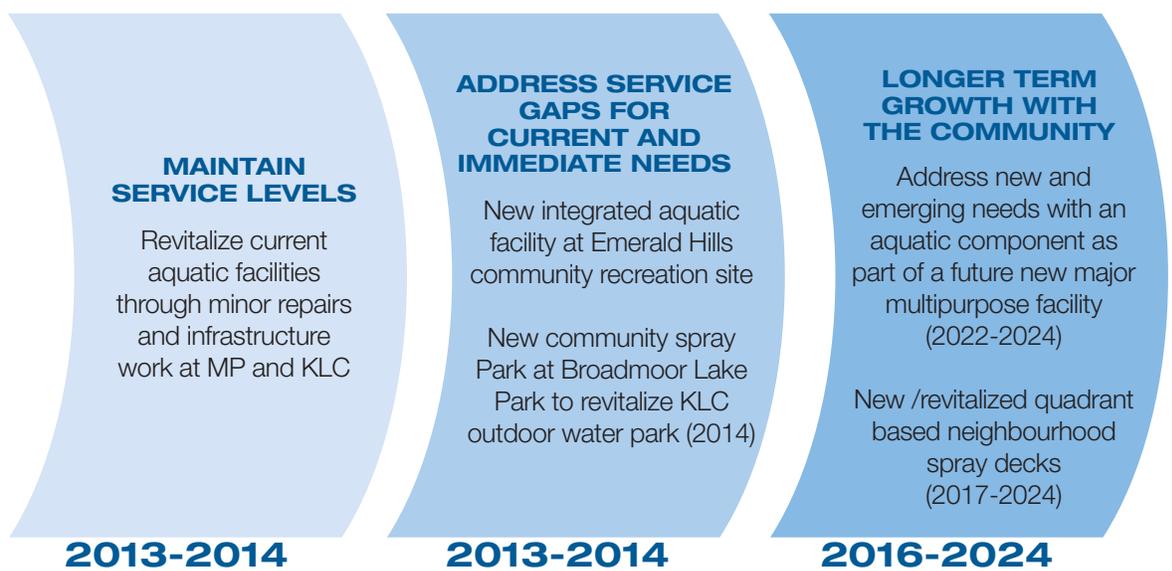
To address current and future needs related to indoor and outdoor aquatics, a series of key recommendations and ongoing actions have been proposed. Actions may be related to further planning, research, or assessment in key areas. Additional recommendations will follow as specific actions are completed.

Key Recommendations:

In order to meet the goals and objectives outlined in this strategy, the County should begin to revitalize existing aquatic facilities as well as build additional aquatic capacity through the construction of new spaces. The combination of these recommendations will alleviate current participation limitations and meet the growing demands placed on existing facilities. Some urgency should be recognized due to the gap in time between the OSRFS originally acknowledging high aquatic demand in 2008, to the earliest potential estimates of 2015 for new aquatic space operations.

1. Aquatic facility reinvestment through minor repairs, additions and infrastructure upgrades should take place at Millennium Place and the Kinsmen Leisure Centre pools in order to maintain service levels.
2. Planning should begin immediately for facility investment through construction of an aquatic facility at the Emerald Hills regional recreation site in order to alleviate the current space issues for all aquatic users.
3. Construction of a community sized spray park at Broadmoor Lake Park is recommended as a revitalization of the outdoor water park amenity previously located at KLC, in conjunction with the lifecycle replacement of the Broadmoor Lake playground.

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In order to plan for the aquatic strategy key recommendations as well as study the outcomes, a number of specific actions are recommended to take place. While some actions should begin immediately in support of key strategic recommendations, others are longer term in nature or are dependent upon completion of key recommendations and preceding actions, and will take place in phases 2 and 3 of the OSRFS. Additional recommendations will come forward to Council as appropriate.

Recommended Actions

1. Review current pool allocation - competitive / non competitive swim club needs.
2. Review program registration process and waitlists.
3. Explore partnership with the City of Edmonton (Kinsmen Sport Centre) for enhanced access to 50m training and competition opportunities for Strathcona County youth sport clubs.
4. Investigate short term lesson options through Edmonton YMCA and other pools.
5. Compile further information on usage, trends, maintenance, and operations of the Clover Bar Ranch spray deck to anticipate further expansion of existing spray decks in quadrant model.
6. Facilitate the inclusion of members representing all aquatic facility users into the existing youth pool allocation committee to create a diverse group to aid in the future allocation of new aquatic space inventory and the shifting of activities between facilities upon opening of a third aquatic site.
7. Pursue funding opportunities for a major outdoor spray park facility, i.e. other levels of government, service organizations, industry, community groups, etc.
8. Update Open Space Development Standards (OSDS) on spray decks, spray parks, and developer guidelines.
9. Investigate multi-season outdoor amenity options in more detail (leisure skating / spray park combination).
10. Consider retrofit of Clover Bar Ranch spray deck to include water recycling or recirculation technology to reduce long-term operational costs and increase environmental sustainability.
11. Maintain and evaluate operations and community usage patterns of existing neighbourhood spray decks until community spray park has been operating for one year.
12. Site remediation of non-operational spray decks at Village on the Lake and Cloverbar Junior High School.
13. Consider revitalization of existing spray decks or construction of new neighbourhood level spray decks in geographically diverse areas throughout Strathcona County (quadrant based), using demographic and site analysis, combined with community-wide and neighbourhood-specific public engagement processes to determine best locations. Explore options through the Community Partnership Projects and grant funding.
14. Analysis of existing indoor spaces, service levels, usage, and community needs for potential large scale aquatics complex as a component of a new major multipurpose recreation facility, including an updated detailed business case for a 50m competition facility.
15. Assess future outdoor aquatic needs as further development nodes are established, considering outdoor aquatic options in the design of future recreation facilities.
16. Planning and conceptual design for aquatic component of major new indoor multipurpose recreation facility, with locations designated as part of the County's growth strategy

Construction of new aquatic space at Emerald Hills will allow current capacity for swimming lessons to double - up to 30,000 spaces per year

County lap swimming trends show potential for an 80% increase in participation over the next 10 years

Timeframe for Key Immediate Phase Recommendations

2012

- Planning and design for proposed aquatic facility revitalization at Millennium Place and Kinsmen Leisure Centre (2012 budget)
- Planning and design for proposed new aquatic / wellness facility (2012 budget)

2013

- Capital budget request – initial estimate of \$1.75M for proposed indoor facility revitalization at KLC and MP (to begin 2013)
- Capital budget request – initial estimate totalling \$21M - includes \$13.7M for proposed new aquatic facility at Emerald Hills (construction 2013-15, open 2015) integrated with estimated \$6M Emerald Hills community wellness space
- Planning and design for proposed community spray park at Broadmoor Lake and other OSRFS immediate phase projects

2014

- Capital budget request – initial estimate of \$1.5M for proposed community spray park construction at Broadmoor Lake Park

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A potential 3,500 preschool lesson spaces can be added annually with the revitalization of the KLC Esso Swim Safe Centre



Next Steps

The Aquatic Strategy is reflective of the current needs of residents for indoor and outdoor aquatics, and incorporates space and amenity requirements. The Aquatic Strategy also addresses future capital expenditures, both in the immediate (2009-2014) and longer term (2015-2024) phases of the larger OSRFS.

Strathcona County will continue to keep residents informed as it moves forward with the capital budget process and detailed planning of the indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities. Work will be ongoing to maintain the momentum of the OSRFS and the aquatic strategy. Some of the items planned throughout 2012 and 2013 are:

Reporting back to the community

Upon approval by Council, the final Aquatic Strategy report along with video messages for key recommendations will be posted on the County webpage, via social media and communicated via e-newsletters to residents who have participated in the creation of the Strategy (Spring 2012).

Budget process

- Capital construction budget request in 2013 for existing aquatic facilities revitalization (KLC and MP), new indoor facility construction at Emerald Hills.
- Community spray park planning and design funding budget request for 2013.
- Capital construction budget request for Broadmoor Lake Park community spray park and other OSRFS immediate phase projects in the 2014 budget process.

Detailed planning for Aquatic Strategy recommendations begin with budget approval

- Detailed design funding for indoor aquatics was approved as part of the 2012 budget process. Design for the proposed new aquatic facility at Emerald Hills will begin upon approval of the Aquatic Strategy recommendations, with construction to begin in 2013 [pending capital approval 2013 capital budget].

Interim changes based on public engagement and internal analysis feedback

- An internal operating/programming review has begun, and will creatively work within current limitations, continuing to provide exceptional service until additional aquatic space is available.

Ongoing evaluation of emerging needs

- RPC will begin an OSRFS community recreation survey in 2012 that will track and monitor changing needs and gather feedback for all areas of recreation, including aquatics. These and other data collection methods will allow for informed decision making as the County plans for the next phases of the OSRFS.

AQUATIC STRATEGY



Expanding the capacity of safe, affordable and accessible indoor and outdoor aquatic opportunities that promote healthy lifestyle choices for all residents