

# 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

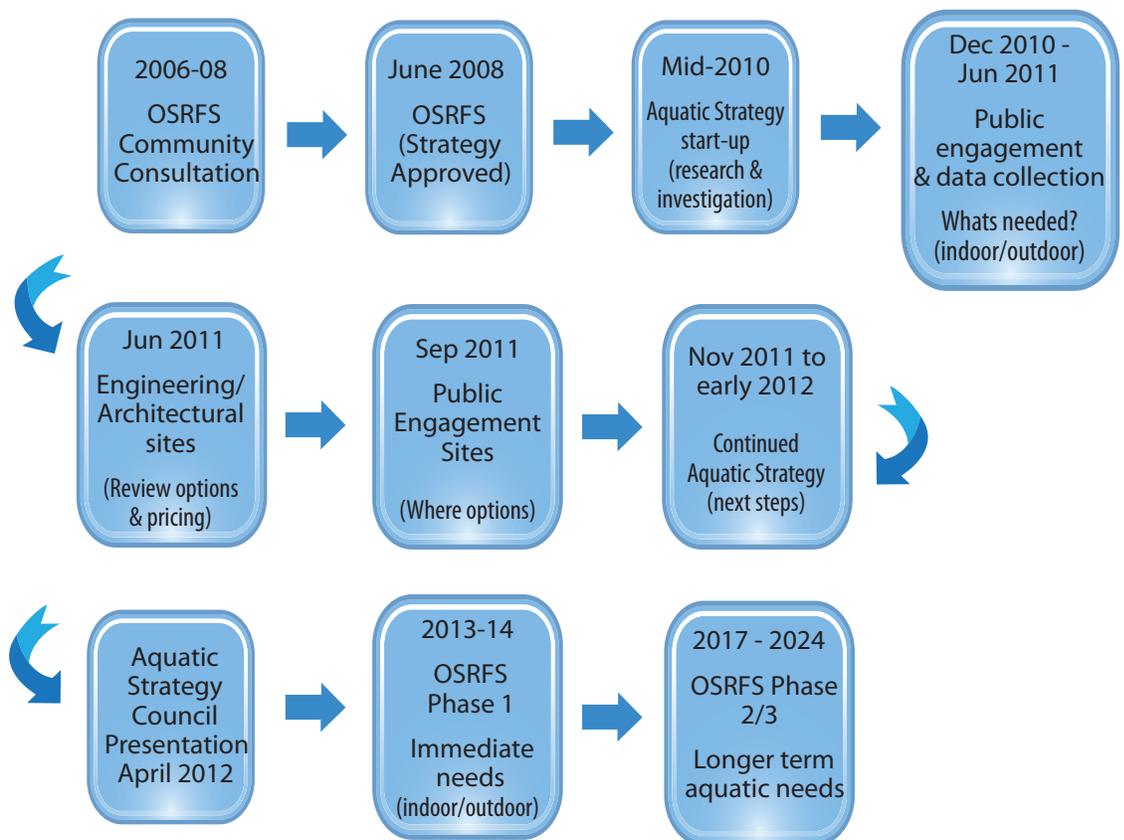
## Where the Aquatic Strategy started

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

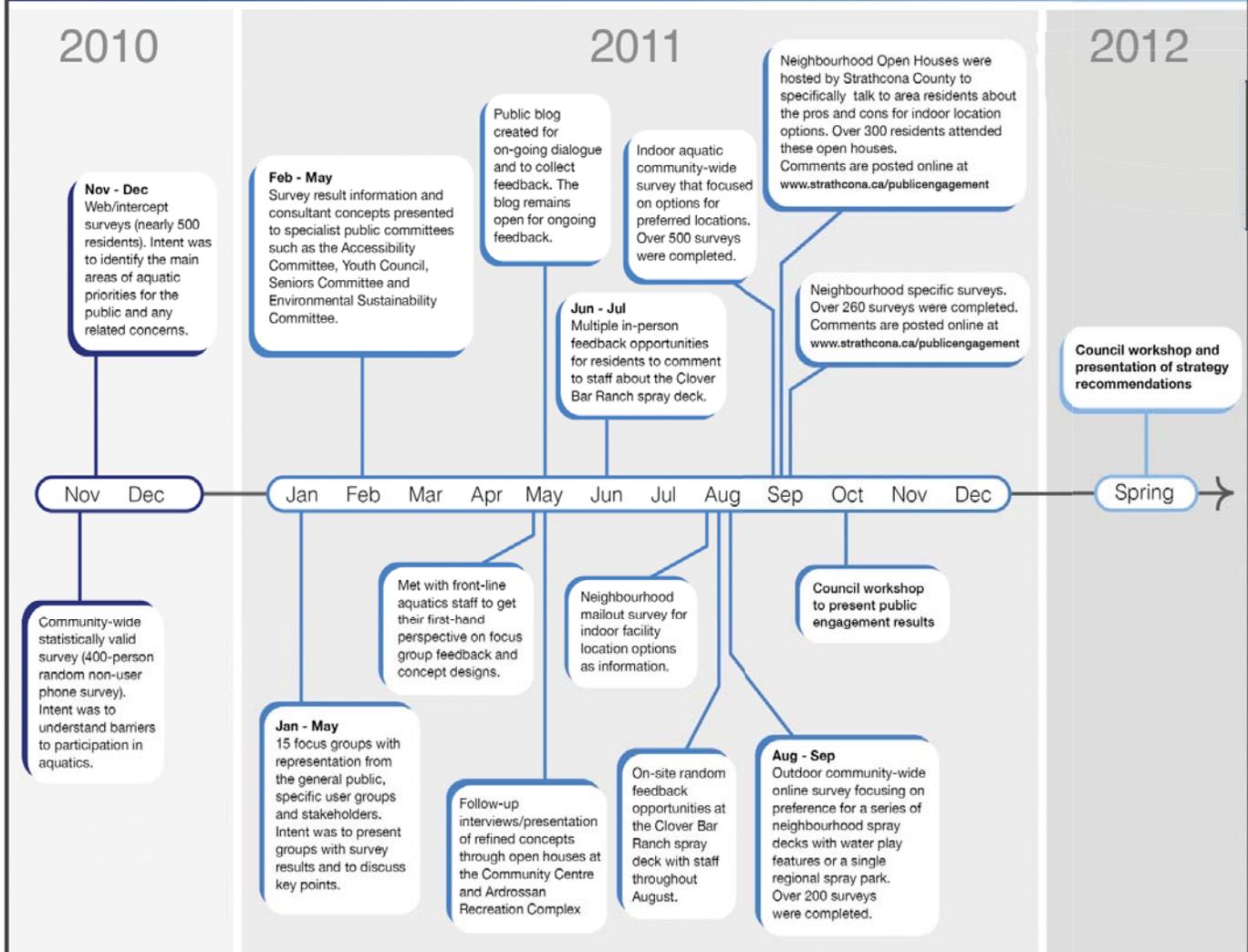
It is Strathcona County's goal to engage residents and stakeholder groups in dialogue regarding the needs and priorities for future indoor and outdoor aquatic options. Public engagement is a critical piece of the development of the Aquatic Strategy.

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**

## Aquatic Strategy Public Engagement Timeline



## Initial Recommendations and Actions

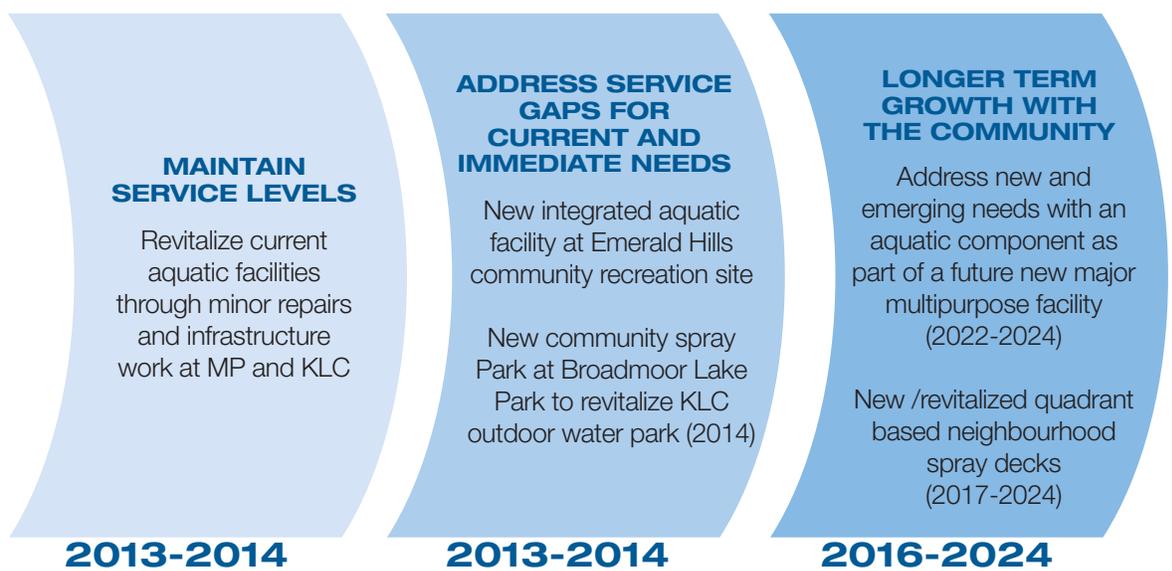
To address current and future needs related to indoor and outdoor aquatics, a series of key recommendations and ongoing actions have been proposed. Actions may be related to further planning, research, or assessment in key areas. Additional recommendations will follow as specific actions are completed.

### 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.

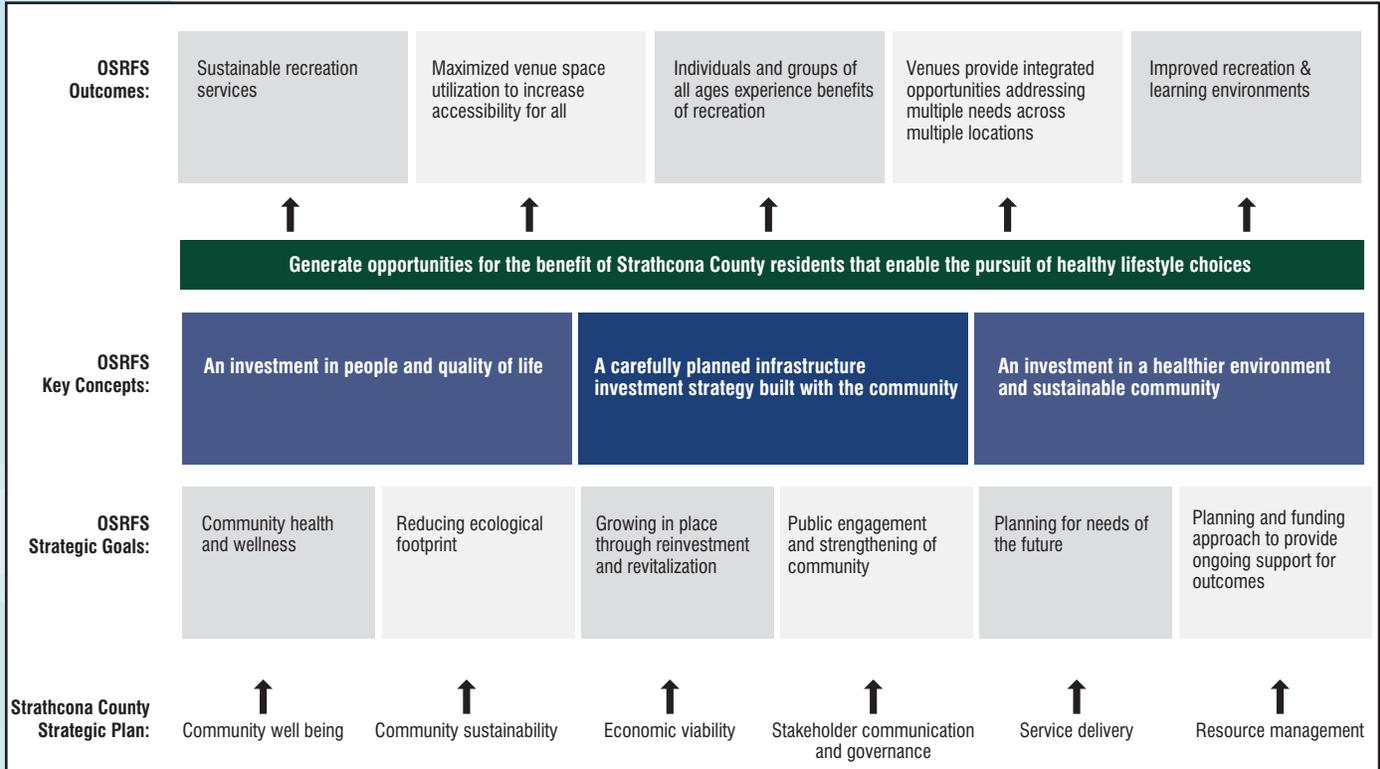
### **Ongoing evaluation of emerging needs**

- 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.

# INTRODUCTION

## The Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy

The Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS) is the guiding document and master plan for open space and indoor recreation facility redevelopment and development in Strathcona County. This document was approved by Council in 2008. The OSRFS follows the guiding principles of Strathcona County's Strategic Plan.



This Strategy was the result of two and a half years of community engagement, research and dialogue across a wide spectrum of stakeholders. The OSRFS addresses a variety of indoor and outdoor requirements that serves the needs of individuals, community groups, learn-to programs, and activity program participants from many age groups. It also addresses the feedback compiled by both rural and urban residents.



### **Rationale for Aquatic Strategy**

When the OSRFS was approved in 2008, there were several areas in which further study was required to make more informed planning decisions. Aquatics was identified through the OSRFS as an area that required further analysis, specifically in the areas of learn-to-swim and outdoor aquatic play options. Strathcona County's Aquatic Strategy takes into consideration the OSRFS implementation model through first using public engagement, maximizing current usage and flexibility within spaces to improve service and access to facilities, then to continue to pursue ways to grow with user demand and with the demographics of the community. The steps recommended within the Aquatic Strategy will include infrastructure reinvestment and revitalization of existing spaces as well as identifying partnership opportunities. As a final step, long term recommendations for new indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities are defined.

### **Guiding Documents and Information Used to Develop the Aquatic Strategy**

- Strathcona County's Strategic Plan, as well as the Environmental, Social and Economic Frameworks – the Sustainability Committee was consulted for assistance in interpreting the Social, Economic and Environmental frameworks into an aquatic recreation context.
- Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy – a guiding document to create consistency within the Aquatic Strategy
- Strathcona County Seniors Strategy – specifically recommended aquatic rehab/therapy space be considered
- Aquatic Federation of Canada's seven categories of Aquatics Usage. Categories were used by administration to assist in defining the user groups of aquatic facilities and understanding the unique needs of each.
- Swimming Canada's Long Term Athlete Development Strategy was used to define and understand the needs of aquatic athletes in Strathcona County.
- Strathcona County Public Engagement Framework as a guide to gathering feedback from the public and stakeholder groups.
- Strathcona County Social Media Policy as a guide to sharing information and gathering feedback via social networks.
- Parks Master Plans – existing Park Master Plans for Kinsmen-Westboro Park, Heritage Hills Park, Brentwood Park, and the Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan have shown, through the feedback received during their public participation activities, that outdoor aquatic infrastructure was a common request. In each of these plans, it was recommended that no further development of outdoor aquatics on these sites be pursued until the Aquatic Strategy has been finalized.
- Municipal Development Plan, Area Structure Plans, and Land Use Bylaw
- Statistics Canada – activity levels and sport/recreation trends.
- Strathcona County historical census data and projections.

## APPROACH (Methodology)

### The key objectives for this strategy were:

- To consider each of the Aquatic Federation of Canada's seven major categories (recreational, skill development, leadership training, sport training, rehab & therapy, fitness and hosting events) of aquatic facility usage when assessing usage and community needs.
- To assess indoor and outdoor aquatic user needs based on a comprehensive public engagement process, guided by Strathcona County's Public Engagement Framework.
- To conduct a review of existing County and regional policies and plans relevant to indoor and outdoor aquatics.
- To project future demand for indoor aquatics facilities and specific types of indoor aquatic activities in Strathcona County, established through existing user demand, future demographics and upcoming trends for the immediate (0-5 years) and longer term (8-10 years+).
- To develop an Aquatic Strategy that supports the County's policies within the Strategic Plan, the Municipal Development Plan, the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy, Master Plans, and recreation strategies (i.e. Sportsfield Strategy, Trails Strategy).
- To build awareness and compile feedback for the Aquatic Strategy through timely public engagement opportunities and internal administrative meetings.

The overall objectives described above were accomplished through completion of the following five phases:

- 1) Information Gathering – Reviewing data obtained through the creation of the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy (OSRFS). Information from the County registration system, provincial/national statistics, and from subject matter experts within the County was also reviewed to understand trends, pool utilization, and current and/or future capacity of aquatics spaces in the County. Immediate and longer term demand projections based on demographic information, utilization and trends for each of the seven categories of aquatics usage was calculated. Due to the unstaffed, non-registered nature of outdoor aquatic activities, such information was not available for County spray decks at this time. Future planning will require more emphasis on data collection for outdoor aquatics.



- 2) Public Engagement – As guided by the Public Engagement Framework, residents of Strathcona County were consulted numerous times for their insights into indoor and outdoor aquatic spaces and their future needs for aquatic use. This consultation was helpful in determining overall satisfaction with the existing indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities as well as compiling the public’s priorities for changes in the future to meet their evolving needs. This engagement process also provided direct feedback from current users on suggestions for operational practices for existing indoor and outdoor aquatic spaces.
- 3) Preparation of the Draft Aquatic Strategy – A draft strategy was prepared which encompassed the overall goals and objectives of the public and administrative findings and provided direction for future recommendations. In addition to this, architectural and engineering consultants were retained to provide preliminary structural recommendations for indoor and outdoor aquatic facility revitalization projects. Suggested timing of these recommended upgrades and their conceptual level capital costs were provided.
- 4) Review of the Draft Aquatic Strategy – further engagement with County subject matter experts, internal departments (Communications, Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs, Planning and Development Services, Capital Planning and Construction, Facility Services and Utilities), groups such as the sustainability committee, and from the public in the form of open houses and online input opportunities, allowed for refinement of the draft Aquatic Strategy.
- 5) Final Aquatic Strategy – Input from the public, key administrative stakeholders as well as architectural and engineering consultants have been integrated into the final Aquatic Strategy.



## INVENTORY ANALYSIS

### Aquatic Strategy Definitions

Strathcona County looked to the Aquatic Federation of Canada's definitions of the seven major categories of aquatic usage to help understand the diverse needs of aquatic facility users. These categories were considered throughout the Aquatic Strategy in order to ensure the needs of as many users as possible would be met through strategic recommendations.

- Recreational: usually takes place in a leisure pool or standard 25m pool where the primary motive is play or fun. Includes outdoor aquatic parks/play structures.
- Skill development (learn-to-swim): teaching of swimming or other aquatic skills (diving, water polo, underwater hockey), or beside-water skills by municipalities and other organizations such as the Red Cross to prevent drowning and promote health and safety
- Leadership training: where people are trained to be volunteers or employees in aquatic services, providing leadership development opportunities for youth as well as enhancing employment prospects.
- Sport training: includes some skill development but is primarily a formalized training session or format undertaken in one of the four disciplines: swimming, water polo, synchronized swimming or diving, or other newer sports such as triathlon, pentathlon or underwater hockey. Involves training for and participating in competition.
- Rehab and therapeutic uses: including service to special populations including seniors and some use by people with disabilities or injuries, where the primary motivation is rehabilitation or therapy.
- Fitness: either lane swimming or water based aerobic classes or training. May also include Masters / seniors athlete training.
- Hosting events: mainly aquatic sporting events; may also include community events within an aquatic facility.



### **Outdoor Aquatic Recreation Facilities**

Examples of some types of outdoor aquatic facilities are spray decks, spray parks, wading pools, outdoor pools, interactive play structures, fountains and water art, water walls and water curtains, urban beaches, swimming lakes, and large scale interactive water parks.

**Wading Pools** are small outdoor pools with a depth of less than 60 cm and are historically a precursor to modern spray decks for many communities. These facilities are typically filled daily with unheated tap water. This water is chlorinated at the beginning of each day and then drained at the end of the day. Staff are required to monitor the water quality as per revised Alberta Swimming Pool Regulations (2011).



(Etobicoke, Ontario)

**Manmade Swimming Lakes** have the ability to combine higher water quality with features such as white sand beaches. Historical development of swimming lakes such as Lake Summerside in Edmonton has been undertaken by the developer without participation or assistance from the municipality. Initial costs are, comparable to the construction of an indoor multi-purpose facility (Edmonton's recently approved outdoor site at Borden Park is projected at \$14M). Construction costs include the installation of water management systems and sometimes fish, as in Summerside, that maintain the water quality and increase swimming desirability. Upon completion, a resident's association is typically created with fees collected from homeowners each year to fund the maintenance and staffing of this facility. These lakes are generally only open to local residents, however may be used to host events such as Triathlons.



(Lake Summerside, Edmonton)

**Urban Beaches** have been seen as an option for communities wishing to combine an aquatic facility with a social gathering place, either in combination with or without a park setting. These facilities are typically highly flexible as a municipality can create a site that meets the community's needs and culture. These areas may include spray features but are intended for a mixture of participants of all ages.



(Dundas Square, Toronto)

Although Alberta has a limited season of hot, sunny weather, residents typically try to enjoy those rare days and seek opportunities to play outdoors. Outdoor water play spaces, otherwise known as splash pads, spray decks, or spray parks, are recreational facilities that can vary in size and scope, depending on the location and needs of the community.

For the purposes of the Aquatic Strategy, we refer to Strathcona County's existing (pre-2010) outdoor aquatic facilities and future neighbourhood sized sites as "Spray Decks", and any future large outdoor aquatic facilities as "Spray Parks".

Neighbourhood level outdoor spray decks typically are smaller in size, with three to ten spray features and are not designed to include extra amenities like parking, washrooms, etc., as these amenities are intended for larger community parks. Community level spray parks are larger in size with more than 12 spray features and are designed to include supportive amenities such as enhanced parking, bathrooms/change rooms, picnic areas and shading.

**Spray Deck:** Existing infrastructure example (pre-2010)



Neighbourhood Level new infrastructure example (note that Clover Bar Ranch is a larger than standard neighbourhood spray deck)



**Spray Park**

Community Level (examples of these sites would include the spray parks in Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert and Beaumont)



**Aquatic Art Features**

Aquatic art features or fountains are common in front of public buildings and can be a place for individuals to enjoy the water on hot days. Designing of these showpieces can serve as an interactive community gathering places with features like hydraulophone fountains, which play different musical notes as users block the water flow.

# Strathcona County Existing Aquatic Facilities

## Indoor Aquatic Facilities

### Kinsmen Leisure Centre

The Kinsmen Leisure Centre was built in 1975 and initially housed a 12.5 m<sup>2</sup>, 4 m deep dive tank with 3 m and 1 m diving boards, a Tarzan Rope, as well as a six lane, 25 m lane pool with a graduated depth of .99 – 1.3 m. In 1990, the facility was expanded and retrofitted with the addition of a 70m waterslide emptying into the existing lane pool, preschool teach pool with a fountain and waterfall, a steam room, whirlpool, and outdoor water park.

Divided into stages through 2004-2007, there was a significant upgrading of the mechanical systems and water filtration capability, as well as expansion of the lower lobby and addition of two small specialty change rooms for users with special needs or mobility issues. There was an addition of administrative and preschool space, as well as improved accessibility to the second floor viewing area and the installation of a lift to the second floor.

### Millennium Place

Built in 2000, Millennium Place offers the community a 10 lane, 25 m lap pool, a 300 person capacity warm leisure pool with waves and zero depth entry, a Lazy River, an aquatic play structure, large hot tub, as well as steam room and dry sauna. The facility offers some of the first family change rooms in the province, as well as a large accessible / special needs change room.

2006 saw Strathcona County getting ready for the 2007 Western Canada Summer Games. In preparation, Millennium Place aquatic centre saw the addition of space adjoining the lap pool to install viewing bleachers, along with specialized timing equipment for swimming events. The lifecycle maintenance program replaced the wave pool play structure and the addition of new beach play amenities in 2008.

In response to user feedback in 2009, the family change rooms were renovated and modified to better suit their needs. The existing individual change stalls were adapted and family showers were added to replace showers in individual stalls.

## Outdoor Aquatic Facilities

### Hastings Lake Outdoor Pool

Although not a Strathcona County owned aquatic facility, the Hastings Lake Bible Camp owns and maintains a small rural outdoor pool on the south shore of Hastings Lake. It was built in the 1970s and was last renovated in 1997. Pool depth is graduated from .91m at the shallow end, to 2.4m at the deep end, where a diving board is located.

Strathcona County has rented this pool for outdoor swim lessons each summer since the mid 1990's, with staff traveling out to the site and bringing extra teaching equipment. The challenge of using this facility for lessons is the unpredictability of weather, with adverse conditions requiring the cancellation of lessons.

## Spray Decks / Parks

The six existing spray decks within Strathcona County were constructed in the early 1970's by the municipality and are located in neighbourhoods that had the highest density and appropriate demographics at that time to support these amenities.

Located in the Westboro, Brentwood, Millshaven, Glen Allen, Woodbridge, and Village on the Lake neighbourhoods of central/west Sherwood Park, these spray decks are simple concrete pads utilizing unheated tap water from basic spouts. No additional chemicals are used to treat the water, and used water drains to the storm water management system, or directly into the wastewater system.

After the approval of the Open Space and Recreation Facility Strategy in 2008, a recommendation was made to incorporate a spray deck north of Baseline Road. Council provided funding in 2009 to move forward with a spray deck in the Clover Bar Ranch Park. A park revitalization plan was then created through a neighbourhood engagement process, whereby a thorough park planning process assessed the existing site and explored its strengths and weaknesses. This public engagement process allowed stakeholders to participate in the development of plans for their neighbourhood park.

The Clover Bar Ranch spray deck was added to the County's inventory in 2010 and was operational for the 2011 season. It is a neighbourhood level spray deck with eight spray features, and is located next to an existing playground. There are no current plans to add upgraded amenities to this site and it will be maintained at a neighbourhood park service level. However, feedback during the first operational season from users of this new site was that a washroom facility is necessary. A portable washroom was installed for most of the 2011 season and will be reviewed for subsequent years.

As the majority of Strathcona County outdoor aquatic facilities were constructed prior to 1980, they are located in older, more centralized areas of Sherwood Park. Rural areas, as well as areas north of Baseline Road and east of Clover Bar Road, do not incorporate the same concentration of outdoor aquatic facilities.

In addition to the six aging spray decks and determining an appropriate strategy for revitalization, new neighbourhoods and growth nodes within Strathcona County, as well as existing hamlets, need to be considered for potential outdoor aquatic facility projects while taking into consideration the changing demographics of existing areas.



## Assessment of Existing Aquatic Facilities

### Indoor Aquatic Facilities

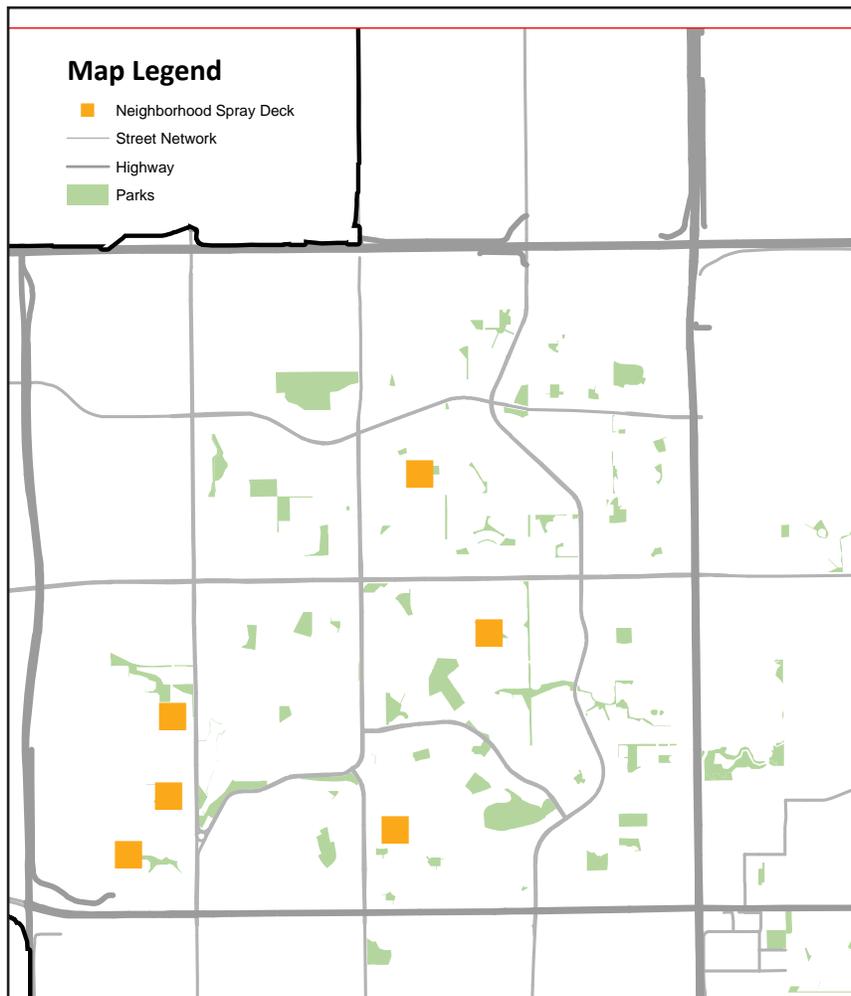
Preliminary engineering and architectural assessments for five aquatic facility options can be found within the final consultant report (Appendix 9). These assessments are meant to be the first step in determining options for increased indoor aquatics space within Strathcona County that will meet the previously identified needs of all user groups.

- 1) Ardrossan Recreation Complex – Multipurpose facility including arena ice, curling, wellness, indoor track, indoor playground, and program rooms
- 2) Emerald Hills – Planned wellness space
- 3) Glen Allan Recreation Complex – Multipurpose facility including wellness, racquet courts, arena ice, curling, and program rooms
- 4) Kinsmen Leisure Centre – houses aquatics space, indoor preschool playground, and preschool program rooms
- 5) Millennium Place – Multipurpose facility including twin arenas, twin indoor fields, leisure ice, indoor track, youth lounge, indoor gymnasium, indoor playground, wellness, aquatics and program rooms



## Distribution of Outdoor Spray Decks in 2012

Sherwood Park, Alberta



### Outdoor Aquatic Facilities

The six existing spray decks in Strathcona County (Village on the Lake, Woodbridge, Brentwood, Granville, and Kinsmen - Westboro) have been in operation for close to four decades and are now considered to be at the end of their lifecycle. An engineering study commissioned in 2009 stated that the mechanical systems at these spray decks (spray heads, water distribution systems, in ground vaults, and deck drain systems) are in need of repair or replacement. Each spray deck location is reviewed below, in alphabetical order.

In addition to the free spray decks located in public open spaces, KLC has had an outdoor water park amenity, accessible with paid facility admission, since 1990. Due to both changes in health codes requiring water filtration / treatment, as well as cracked underground pipes, the water park was closed in 2011. The Aquatic Strategy will consider this amenity as part of the outdoor infrastructure inventory, and make recommendations as to future function of the space.

# 2009 Engineering Study Summary Recommendations

	Location	Replacement Cost		Replacement	Comments
	Suitability*	Low	High	Priority	
Village on the Lake	poor	\$170,000	\$190,000	5	Consider abandoning or installing a small spray deck
Woodbridge Lake Park	very good	\$170,000	\$230,000	1	very good location for an upgraded water park
Kinsmen Westboro Park	moderate	\$200,000	\$260,000	4	some site and utility difficulties
Brentwood Park	very good	\$170,000	\$220,000	2	very good location for an upgraded water park
Granville Park	moderate	\$200,000	\$260,000	3	some site and utility difficulties

- order of suitability criteria = poor/moderate/good/very good

*\*\*Clover Bar Jr. High spray deck has been non-operational since approximately 1995, and was not included in the 2009 study.*

## **Brentwood**

### Description

The site is in a good location with a large green area adjacent to an existing playground and has a clear view to the roadway. The existing parking in the graveled lot and along the roadway makes this site more favorable for a neighborhood level spray park. A park master plan has also been completed for this site (2010).

### Participation

Changing demographics in the area indicates that more young children are moving into this older neighborhood. The site is within walking distance of several child care centers.

### Engineering Report Findings

A future water spray deck would require a new connection at the two inch valve below grade at the CC valve and a new two inch line brought up to service the new amenity, complete with a larger water meter. A larger six inch connection to the existing sanitary system would need to be constructed to replace the existing three inch line. A 110 volt service could be connected to the existing building onsite by trenching across the gravel parking lot and using the existing building power.

## **Granville Park (Glen Allen neighborhood)**

### Description

The site is in a large green area adjacent to an existing playground. The site is located a fair distance from road access and is somewhat shielded from public view. Parking availability will likely be inadequate for an upgraded site and would result in people parking along the residential streets, namely Granville Crescent and Glamorgan Drive. This site should be considered for decommissioning as a spray deck and repurposed with alternate non-aquatic features.

### Participation

Changing demographics in the area indicates that more young children are moving into this older neighborhood.

### Engineering Report Findings

A future water spray deck would require a new connection at the four inch valve below grade at the CC valve and a new three inch line brought up to service the new amenity complete with a larger water meter. A new connection to the sanitary system would need to be constructed. This connection could be either to the sanitary line under Glamorgan Drive or the line under Granville Crescent. A 110 volt power source could be difficult at this location and likely requires constructing a new service from the power supply near the street.

## **Kinsmen Westboro Park**

### Description

The site is in a secluded location with a fairly long walk from the roadway. The current location has a large green area and is adjacent to an existing playground but with poor sight lines to roads and other public areas. The existing parking in the graveled lot and along the roadway can be used by users of the spray deck. There are some utility difficulties but the site has potential for a neighborhood sized spray park if it can be moved closer to the road. This spray park was also identified to be moved/redeveloped as part of Kinsmen Westboro Park Master Plan (2010).

### Participation

Changing demographics in the area indicates that more young children are moving into this older neighborhood.

### Engineering Report Findings

A future water spray deck would require a new three inch water line be run from the building to the existing site as the current line will be likely be inadequate. Connection to the storm sewer system will require a new connection to the line that runs through the south side of the park. Connection to the sanitary system would require connection beneath Strathcona Drive at an additional cost (estimate \$20,000 – in 2009 dollars). A 110 volt service could be connected to the existing building onsite or by tapping into one of the lights near the site.

## **Village on the Lake**

### Description

This spray deck is located in the Village on the Lake Park at 488 Village Drive. This park includes the lands on the west and east side of the community's storm water management facility (SWMF). The spray deck, playground and sitting area are located on the east side of the SWMF. On the west side is open park space. This is a neighborhood level park designed to accommodate local resident participation and does not encompass the extra amenities often found in community level parks. This site should be considered for decommissioning as a spray deck and repurposed with alternate non-aquatic features.

### Participation

Due to the aging infrastructure and lack of interesting spray features, this facility has not been turned on for the past two summer seasons. A letter informing local residents of the site closure in May of 2010 returned only one concerned response. Demographics analysis suggests that there is not a high concentration of young children within Village on the Lake at this time, although the neighborhood may be beginning a new family cycle.

### Engineering Report findings

A future water spray deck would require the one inch line from the water meter to the CC be replaced with a two inch line. The preferred and most cost effective option for drainage would be to continue to discharge the spray deck water to the pond, however if this is not approved by the County a connection to the sanitary system could be constructed. The existing 250 mm sanitary line runs on the north side of the park. A 110 volt service would be required to power the controller that regulates the spray deck operation. A connection to the existing light would be the most cost effective option for this site.

## Woodbridge Lake Park

### Description

The spray deck is in a good neighborhood location with a large green area adjacent to the popular existing playground which can accommodate a large number of users. There is parking available and a chain link fence to separate the park from the roadway. The existing water supply and drain makes this site a potential candidate for a somewhat larger revitalized spray deck.

### Participation

This site is walkable by several neighborhood child care centers and is also located in a somewhat higher density area. The availability of local, free outdoor aquatic options would benefit those who may not have transportation to or be able to afford other recreation options.

### Engineering Report Findings

A future water spray deck would require a new connection at the four inch valve below grade at the CC valve and a two inch or three inch line brought up to service the new amenity complete with a larger water meter. The preferred and most cost effective option for drainage would be to continue to discharge the spray deck water into the storm water manhole to the north of the existing deck. However if this is not approved by the County a connection to the sanitary system could be constructed. The nearest sanitary line runs below Woodbridge Way, east of the park, but a significant additional cost would be incurred (estimated \$50,000 - in 2009 dollars). A 110 volt service will be required to power the controller that regulates the spray deck operation and a connection to the existing lights would be the most cost effective option for this site. The existing water supply and drain (if the storm system continues to be used) makes this site a good candidate for a somewhat larger water spray park/deck (2000 to 2500 sq ft). If it is planned to connect the drain to the sanitary system, higher costs can be expected (\$230,000 – in 2009 dollars).

Revitalization of existing outdoor aquatic facilities should be the first step as per the OSRFS, prior to building entirely new facilities. When considering which spray deck to either revitalize or remove and repurpose, a full park master plan should first be executed in order to refine the needs of the local users. Those parks with a completed park master plan that incorporate a spray deck or spray park should take precedent over those which do not.



## Innovation in Outdoor Aquatic Facilities

Options exist for the treatment and recirculation of water used in spray park/deck features. This recirculation saves water but requires the use of chemicals to maintain water quality. Additional staffing is required to test and maintain water quality due to new provincial regulation. Cost is also added to the capital requirement for a spray park/deck due to the mechanical and filtration systems required for recirculation.

Water storage and reuse options have become more popular with municipalities choosing to store water in tanks and redistribute via a pump system. Another reuse option is to have spray park/deck water drain into local lakes, and in turn these storm water management facilities can be used to irrigate municipal park areas such as golf courses, treed areas, and planting beds.

The addition of solar panelled heating systems could also be included in any new spray park/deck designs. This would warm the water and could broaden the usable season of the amenities.

### **Outdoor Aquatics - Operational Practices**

Historically, Strathcona County managed the operation, maintenance, and utility costs for the six operating spray decks up until the mid 1990's. At that time, it was decided these sites would be closed due to budget constraints. Resident feedback indicated that the spray decks were a valuable recreational facility to them. Service was restored with the help of local service clubs such as the Elks and Lions funding the water costs and by volunteers who managed the daily operations. Strathcona County Recreation, Parks and Culture retained the responsibility of the ongoing maintenance for these spray decks.

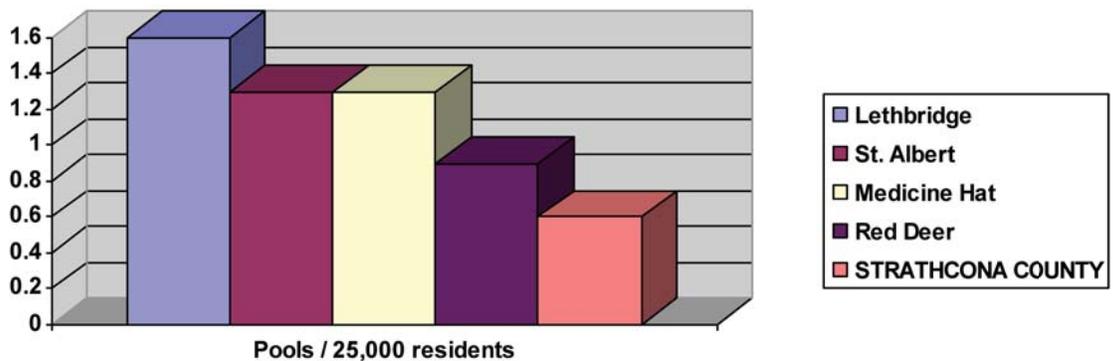
The daily operations and maintenance of any new sites should be considered when selecting the number of, type, and distribution of spray decks/parks. With an increased number of features, current spray park/deck models can use a large amount of water, despite basic conservation controls. Utility costs for a single upgraded spray deck the size of Clover Bar Ranch can be more than six times the combined annual cost of the five basic spray decks Strathcona County has operated up to this point. Investment in multiple water conservation methods should be undertaken to minimize operational costs for any new sites as the County inventory increases.

With this investment in conservation methods comes an increase in staffing requirements needed for daily and ongoing maintenance. A higher number of small spray deck sites will result in higher staffing costs, whereas the cost for large sites would be relatively lower.

## NEEDS ANALYSIS

### Assessing Indoor Aquatic Needs

As a benchmark comparison, the City of Lethbridge Needs Analysis Study from 2006 utilized data from the Western Canada Parkland Comparative Study and compared the provision of various recreational amenities in municipalities throughout the western provinces. Based on this standardized comparison, Strathcona County sits below average in terms of indoor pool facilities. The average of all municipalities studied was 1.0 indoor aquatic facilities per 25,000 residents, with Strathcona County having 0.6 aquatic facilities per 25,000 residents at the time of the study. Based on a municipal population of 87,898 at the time of the study, this level puts the County below other provincial municipalities such as Red Deer, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and St. Albert. Due to increases in population since the comparison study, the County aquatic facility ratio has continued to decrease.



### Strathcona County Aquatic Practices and Programs

#### Review of Strathcona County Practices

- RPC and EOSP working group review spring/summer 2010
- statistics, previous facility surveys, comment cards and other user feedback

#### Review of Service Levels

- existing issues around lessons, lanes, aquatic fitness based on registration information and user feedback (2010/2011)
- lap swimming, youth aquatic sport, and aquatic fitness participation has increased steadily to fill the new space at Millennium Place opening in 2001
- The need for aquatic rehabilitation and therapy options has become apparent both through the public consultation process and by increasing requests seen at local facilities. Regional aquatic rehabilitation sites have reported having wait lists from Strathcona County residents, with multiple closures of hospital-based rehab/therapy pools leaving a significant service gap for our aging population. Additionally, Strathcona County's Primary Care Network (Alberta Health Services) has indicated that they are increasingly referring patients to service providers outside the County due to lack of local capacity in this area.

## Maximizing Space Within Strathcona County Indoor Aquatic Facilities

- **Water Walking - Additional Time**  
Millennium Place has traditionally made the wave pool available to spontaneous use from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., seven days per week. It became apparent in recent years that there was increasing demand for an accessible, warm water space for residents to use for water walking or rehabilitation exercises. Starting in 2005, extending wave pool availability in the morning hours between 5:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. allowed for a multitude of aquatic fitness and rehabilitation options for older adults, people with health conditions, injuries and/or disabilities, as well as providing additional lap swim lanes.
- **Kinsmen Leisure Centre - Additional Lap Times**  
Beginning in January 2010, the KLC has opened up lap swimming throughout the day when possible. These swim times make the most out of daytime slots when preschool lessons also are in parts of the pool, but there is still some lane availability. This has the potential to decrease demand on other busy lap swim times at KLC and Millennium Place.
- **Preschool Lessons - Additional Registrants**  
In spring of 2010, Recreation, Parks and Culture moved from an in-house preschool learn-to-swim program to the Red Cross Swim Preschool program. The change was implemented in order to address increasing demand for learn to swim programs for preschoolers and the continually increasing wait lists. Over the course of the first year of the new program, RPC opened up an additional 778 spots resulting in an average increase in participation of 13 percent.

At the point of writing, class sizes and the use of space for swimming lessons at KLC have reached a tipping point where any further modifications will compromise the quality of programming offered. The addition of lessons at Millennium Place is not ideal for staff, program participants, spontaneous facility users, or parents. This addition would necessitate the loss of pool time/space for other user groups, and split programs up between the two aquatic facilities. Public engagement feedback has indicated that splitting lesson offerings into less than two full, separate sets (Red Cross preschool through to level 10 at each site) would not be desirable.



## Demographic and Population Analysis

Visual representations of current registration distributions show that the majority of indoor aquatic program registrations are concentrated in the north/east sections of Sherwood Park, as well as the south/east portions of Strathcona County (see Appendix - Location Analysis for Aquatics Program Registration)

At this point, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of Sherwood Park's more mature neighbourhoods may be experiencing a new family cycle. Demographic change within these areas, specifically Brentwood, Glen Allen, Westboro, and Woodbridge neighbourhoods, should be reviewed prior to planning, designing and implementing any new aquatic facilities or revitalization projects.

Strathcona County Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs has projected that the Sherwood Park urban service area will be built out by approximately 2017, which indicates that the long term planning of recreational facilities like indoor pools and spray parks should consider the location for a new urban area outside of Sherwood Park. Including recreational facilities into appropriate new urban areas will encourage growth and contribute to the desirability of that neighbourhood. Any future recreation development will also consider the County's Growth Strategy, and RPC will endeavour to include future recreation facilities in the earliest stages of future neighbourhood development.

Strathcona County should continue to pursue developer contributed outdoor recreation infrastructure on Municipal Reserve Lands. This infrastructure should not be limited to playgrounds, landscaping or trail networks, but should also include outdoor aquatic facilities.

In 2010, Council approved funding to implement an expanded wastewater system project for the Ardrossan area. Although an expanded water system has not yet been approved, any increase in the provision of utilities to this hamlet will allow future development and growth opportunities.



# Review of Aquatic Trends & Service Issues

## Facilities

- Amenities to retain older youth users past the age of swimming lesson drop-off and to encourage physical activity, such as water slides, wave riders, and water climbing walls.
- Options to retain older adults within recreation facilities such as warmer water options for activity create opportunities to remain active for individuals who may not be able to participate in land-based activities.
- Warm, shallow water options for toddler and preschool aged children to help kick-start healthy lifestyle habits as recommended in the Canadian Sport for Life Athlete Development Strategy
- There is a continuing trend for spontaneous leisure spaces and the ability to do multiple activities within one larger space.
- Outdoor aquatic spaces are increasingly being seen as multigenerational community meeting places as well as providing multi-activity recreation options.

## Operations

- Ability to create the appropriate environment for each user group with regards to air and water temperature.

The Aquatic Exercise Association lists the following as recommendations for appropriate water temperatures for different user groups.

Resistance Training .....	28 – 30°C (minimum range)
Therapy & Rehab .....	33 – 35°C
Multiple Sclerosis .....	26.5 – 29°C
Pregnancy.....	25.5 – 29°C
Arthritis.....	29 – 31°C (minimum range)
Fibromyalgia.....	30 – 35.5°C
Older Adults .....	28 – 30°C (moderate - high intensity)
Older Adults .....	30 – 31°C (low intensity)
Children, fitness.....	30°C
Swimming lessons .....	27.5+°C (minimum varies with age, class length)
Obese .....	26.5 – 30°C

Swimming Canada has identified a preferred level of 54°C for combined air and water temperatures. Required water temperatures for competition are between 25 – 28°C.

The difference in ideal temperatures for such a variety of aquatic activities creates the need for a variety of basins that can be kept at varied temperatures, each accommodating specific activities most appropriately.

### Participation Projections

- 10 year Strathcona County census population projection shows an **increase of 18 percent** to 104,869 residents (16,871 new people).
- Based on current usage trends, the lap swim usage projection within 10 years indicates a potential **increase of 80 percent** (158,562 additional visits annually)
- If continued, current usage trends for recreational swimming opportunities indicate a potential **increase of 46 percent** (309,348 additional visits annually) within 10 years.
- If the demand for lessons within Strathcona County matches pace with 10 year population projections, there will be a minimum need for **2500 additional spaces** in learn-to-swim programs annually by 2021.

### Program/Scheduling Trends

- Older adult aquatic fitness opportunities, both programmed and spontaneous
- Aquatic personal training
- Private learn-to-swim opportunities
- Triathlon and other adult aquatic sport training
- Multi-use options, such as having the ability to swim laps or take an aquatic fitness class while your child is taking lessons

### Staffing

Strathcona County has developed a number of systems to attract, retain, and develop aquatic instructors and lifeguards to assist with staffing challenges. Among these is the redevelopment of the Tidal Waves Lifeguard Club for youth between 8 - 16 years of age, acting as a one-stop-shop for members to obtain all of their required instructing and lifeguard certifications. The nature of the club allows aquatic programmers to meet and develop relationships with each of the club members and potential future staff over a period of three years.

The Next Wave program was a new initiative introduced in 2011 to retain and develop aquatic instructors by immersing them in hands-on training and the culture of the program facility (KLC). This program targets youth age 12 – 15 years who are in between completing aquatic levels and being of age to become certified as instructors.

Regional staffing needs will continue to increase significantly with progress in local aquatic facility construction. Alberta's job market is also predicted to become more competitive in upcoming years due to recovery within the oil and gas sector. Strathcona County has an ongoing need to focus on developing capacity in lifeguarding, instructing, and fitness leadership areas in order to maintain service levels for new or expanded aquatic facilities. Currently it is difficult to plan and schedule staff training or certification sessions due to pool and facility space limitations; these limitations affect the amount of staff development that can take place.

### Regulations and Codes

Alberta Wading Pool and Water Spray Park Regulation (2011): A wading pool is defined as a facility with a standing water depth of less than 60 cm. As of January 1, 2011 all wading pools must have a filtration and circulation system and comply with pool filtration, circulation and disinfection standards. This would require mechanical chemical feeders, an automated pH and chlorine monitoring system as well as a recirculation system complete with filtration.

A water spray park is defined as a “structure where water is sprayed but does not accumulate”. Water spray parks that use water from a potable water source do not have to meet pool filtration, circulation and disinfection standards. The current spray decks and new spray park in Clover Bar Ranch meet these stipulations.

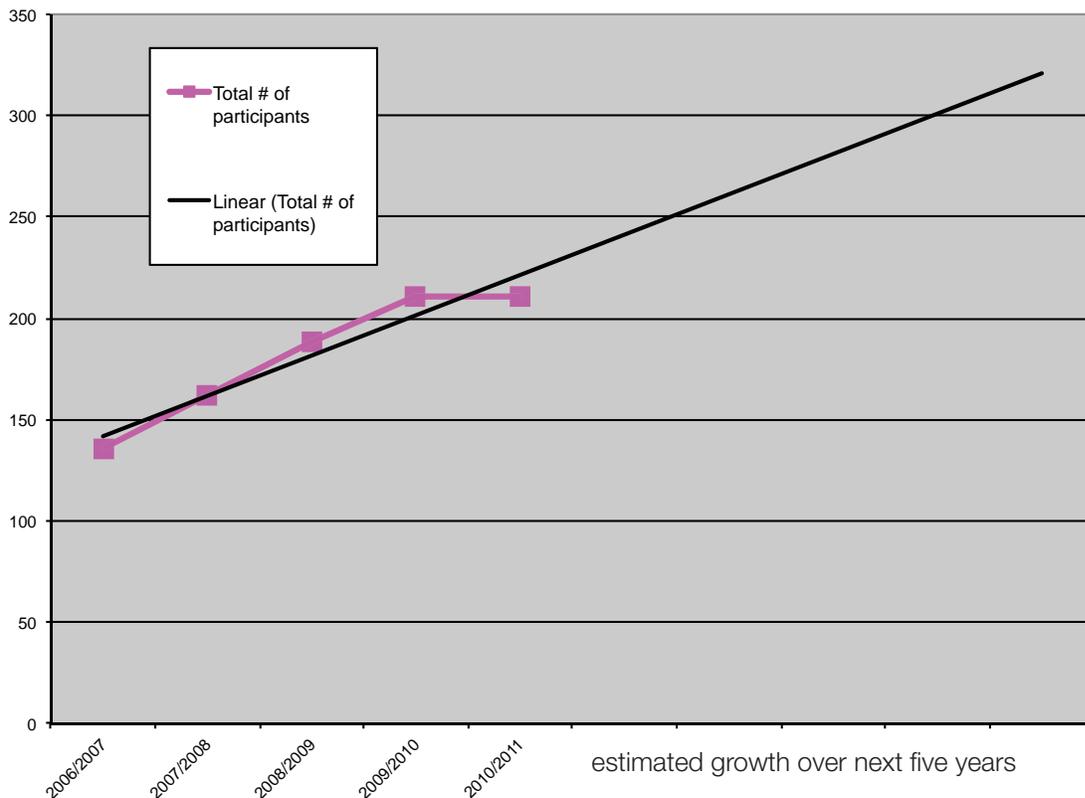
In order to meet this new regulation, the Kinsmen Leisure Center’s (KLC) outdoor spray park would require a significant infrastructure re-investment. Investment in this site was put on hold until recommendations of the Aquatic Strategy were made, as the cost associated with needed repairs and upgrades was estimated to be close to \$100,000.

**Aquatic Facility Usage**

Participation in facilities-based swimming activities has held relatively steady within the past 25 years. It continues to be ranking among the top five favourite activities for Albertans according to Stats Can. However, both provincially and nationally, inactivity levels continue to be on the rise, with 2011 statistics indicating that only 54.3 percent of Albertans are physically active enough to receive health benefits.

Strathcona County is an active community with high levels of participation in a wide variety of recreational activities. Local trends for activities appear to contradict provincial and national numbers in some cases related to aquatics. Nationally, youth participation in competitive swim programs is dropping, whereas Strathcona County clubs continue to see registration increase over and above those associated with population increases. Total youth aquatic sport registrations from 2006 – 2011 increased from 143 to 249 participants.

**All Minor Pool Users**



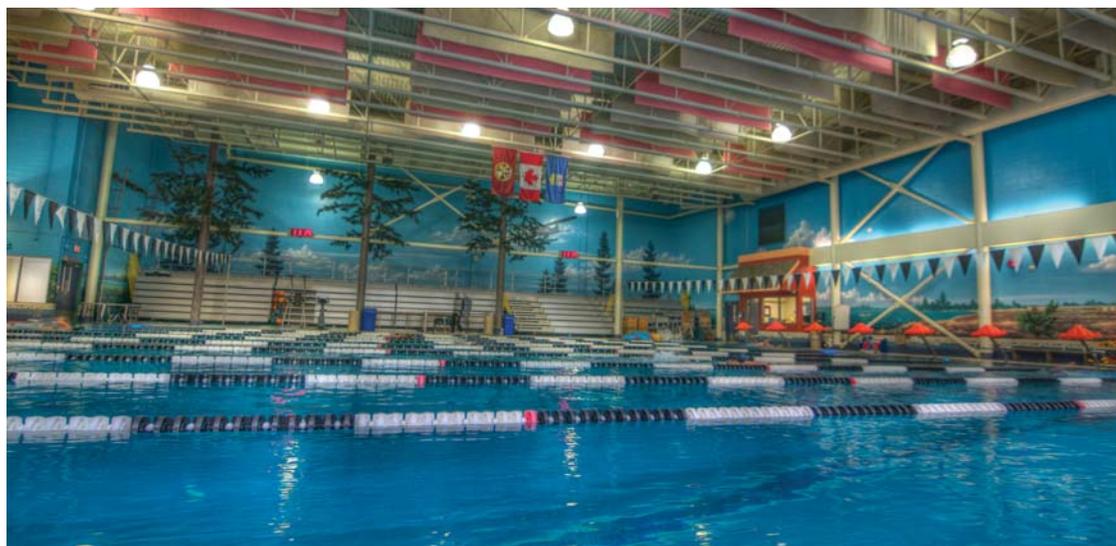
### 2010/2011 Competitive Aquatic Sport Club Registrations

Silver Tide Swim Club	Sherwood Park Swim Club	Strathcona Synatics Synchro Club	Marlins Summer Swim Club	Total Participants Registered
129	57	25	38	249

KLC has been honoured as the facility with the highest per-capita participation levels for learn-to swim programs throughout Alberta. This award puts usage of Strathcona County programs above larger municipalities, with annual registrations for swimming lessons approaching 15,000. These participation rates continue to grow with our population.

Steady growth has been documented in all components of aquatic activities within Strathcona County. The availability of water space, classroom space, and having adequate staff have been the areas most required to maintain service levels and allow for growth with the community.

Aquatic facility usage from Elk Island Public Schools and Elk Island Catholic Schools has been steady for many years, with a limiting factor being the ability to schedule opportunities around existing programming. Both school systems currently participate in swimming lessons, recreational swimming, sport training, and other specialized aquatic activities such as scuba diving. A new provincial framework for Physical Education K-12 has been introduced, with the new “Wellness Education” focus being on foundational skills and providing opportunities to use community programs and services to meet course requirements. (APPENDIX) This framework advocates for an emphasis being placed on lifelong recreational pursuits as opposed to traditional sport. From an aquatics standpoint, this could result in more local school groups participating in programs such as swimming lessons, aquatic fitness classes, and alternative activities such as water polo, underwater hockey, or deep water running.



## **Regional Aquatic Opportunities**

Indoors (see program registration distribution map – appendix 11)

Three new major recreation facilities are scheduled to open on the east side of the City of Edmonton within the next several years, adding wave/leisure pools as well as lanes and increased regional opportunity for aquatics.

### **The Meadows Community Recreation Centre at 17th Street and 23rd Ave - opening 2014 (9.8km from central Sherwood Park)**

- Large multipurpose recreation complex
- Aquatic centre will feature
  - o leisure pool (with water features and children's pool)
  - o lane pool (8 lanes)
  - o 5m dive platform
  - o 1m & 3m springboards
  - o waterslide
  - o whirlpool
  - o steam room
  - o spectator seating

### **Commonwealth Leisure Centre at 11000 Stadium Road – opened March 2012 (17.4km from central Sherwood Park)**

- Small family leisure centre facility
- Aquatic centre will feature
  - o 4 lane lap pool
  - o Leisure / tot pool
  - o Whirlpool

### **Clareview Community Recreation Centre at 38th Street and 139th Ave – opening 2014 (16.4km from central Sherwood Park)**

- Large multipurpose recreation complex
- Aquatic centre will feature
  - o leisure pool (with spray features)
  - o 25m lane pool (10 lanes)
  - o 5M dive platform
  - o 1m & 3m springboards
  - o waterslide
  - o whirl pool
  - o steam room
  - o spectator seating

These facilities have the potential to divert some of the facility usage and program participation that Strathcona County currently sees from Edmonton residents, and will also allow for more regional choice in aquatics amenities for Strathcona County residents.

Leduc and Beaumont have also constructed new major multipurpose recreation facilities containing aquatics spaces within the past two years. Fort Saskatchewan is a source of aquatic recreation for many rural residents in Strathcona County. Although aquatic space was identified as a priority within their recreation master plan, there is no current plan to increase the provision of indoor or outdoor aquatics in the short term. An aquatic facility addition to the Dow Centennial Centre is planned to start in 2023, with operations projected for 2025.

### 50 metre competition pool availability

Public engagement feedback indicated some degree of interest in a 50m competition pool option with deck / staging space, spectator seating, and additional parking for Strathcona County. Primary drivers for this specialized facility included members of the youth aquatic sport clubs within the County, as well as adults training for Triathlons and other individual aquatic sports.

There are currently four facilities within the capital region that combined, house five 50m pools, a per-capita regional inventory that is more than most others in Canada. Additionally, the University of Alberta intends to renovate one of their existing pools into a 50m competition pool in the near future, although not within the next 3 - 5 years due to lack of available funding.

A number of national / international sport and recreation associations consider a range in ratios of one 50m pool, between 500,000 – 1M residents to be recommended. Based on this ratio, the Capital region's five 50m pools to just over 1M total residents are above average. A number of Alberta municipalities (Grande Prairie, Fort MacMurray) have recently built 50m competition pools as part of large multipurpose facilities, with the consideration that there are no other aquatic options within a reasonable distance. Red Deer is currently in the planning stages of a competition pool venue, however the projected budget of approximately \$80M has pushed construction out of their 10 year capital plan.

### Distance from Sherwood Park to facilities with 50m pools in the Capital Region

- Kinsmen Sports Centre (Edmonton) ..... 15.4km\*
- (PLANNED) University of Alberta..... 16.0km
- NAIT..... 18.8km
- Peter Hemingway Sport and Leisure Centre ...21.4km
- Terwilligar Community Recreation Centre.....26.5km

*\* Kinsmen Sport Centre (Edmonton) will house two renovated 10 lane - 50m pools upon completion of its planned facility revitalization.*

### Outdoors

Most municipalities within the Capital Region currently operate outdoor aquatic facilities. Recent construction projects include Mundare (2009), opening a spray park similar in size to the Clover Bar Ranch spray deck. In addition to upgrades at multiple smaller sites, Edmonton's Jackie Parker Park opened a large spray park area in 2010, and a new community spray park project was also completed in Castledowns (2011). Additional outdoor aquatic facilities are planned in conjunction with the two multipurpose facility projects in the neighbourhoods of The Meadows and Clareview. These projects are projected to be open within the next few years.

Fort Saskatchewan and Beaumont have community spray parks that draw many Strathcona County residents due to the relatively close proximity. St. Albert has the largest spray park in Western Canada, with up to 2,000 visitors per day. It was built in 1994 intended for a bather load of 400 and upgraded in 2007. This is currently the only staffed spray park within the region.

Leduc does not include any outdoor aquatic facilities within their new Open Space Master Plan due to frequent water bans, but intend to review the issue based on public demand. Spruce Grove has no specific plans for outdoor aquatics, but is also reviewing the issue.

## Review of Best Practices

### Indoor Aquatic Facilities

- combination of pool area / fitness area in same facility
- zero depth ramp used for accessible beach-like entry, other enhanced accessibility standards both into aquatic basins and throughout the aquatic centre space
- water quality – based on drinking water, elimination of chlorine by-products
- combination of indoor/outdoor aquatic elements to encourage multiple age ranges and activities
- shallow teach pools separate from lane pool areas
- underwater therapy (underwater treadmills/underwater bikes)

### Outdoor Aquatic Facilities

Typically, municipalities have moved away from single function outdoor lap pools to achieve the following objectives:

- reducing operating deficits by providing a mixture of services (e.g. sharing space with other municipal facilities, adding entertainment features).
- providing easy access deck space; elevated areas for lounging, eating, meeting, and adequate spectator spaces.
- enhancing programming and services to serve a broad range of user needs.
- operating within the context of multi-level partnerships that involve users, municipalities, and sport organizations.
- moving away from wading pools to alternative low water designs that feature shallow water experiences and interactive play, and to reduce the needs for required certified staffing (lifeguards).
- designing play sites with no standing water to address public health risks associated with untreated water.
- moving towards the integration of indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities to support enhanced fitness and healthy lifestyles.
- allocating more space for social and community gatherings and including concessions, change rooms and expanded shade areas.
- multi-season combinations of spray park and leisure ice amenities
- retractable shelter over spray park to extend use/season

Alberta's climate should not be seen as a barrier to four season outdoor aquatic opportunities. Typically, usage is high from May to September and then drops entirely from October to April. In order to promote year-round usage, outdoor aquatic facilities can potentially be designed to also accommodate winter activities like ice skating, ice climbing, and ice mazes.

Members of the County Environmental Advisory Committee were consulted in the planning for the aquatic strategy. One of the recommendations from this group was to consider goals stated in the Strathcona County Environmental Sustainability Framework. Among these is to municipally "improve water efficiency by 30 percent"; all new or revitalized outdoor aquatic facilities should therefore be designed to reflect this direction.

Environmentally friendly technologies that are intended to encourage water conservation, filtration and recirculation of water should be incorporated. Child activated water jets, sprays and cannons are some of the fun ways in which participants can see and experience water conservation. Water that has been enjoyed within the spray parks can also be stored and reused for irrigation of municipal plantings, with little or no chemical treatment required.

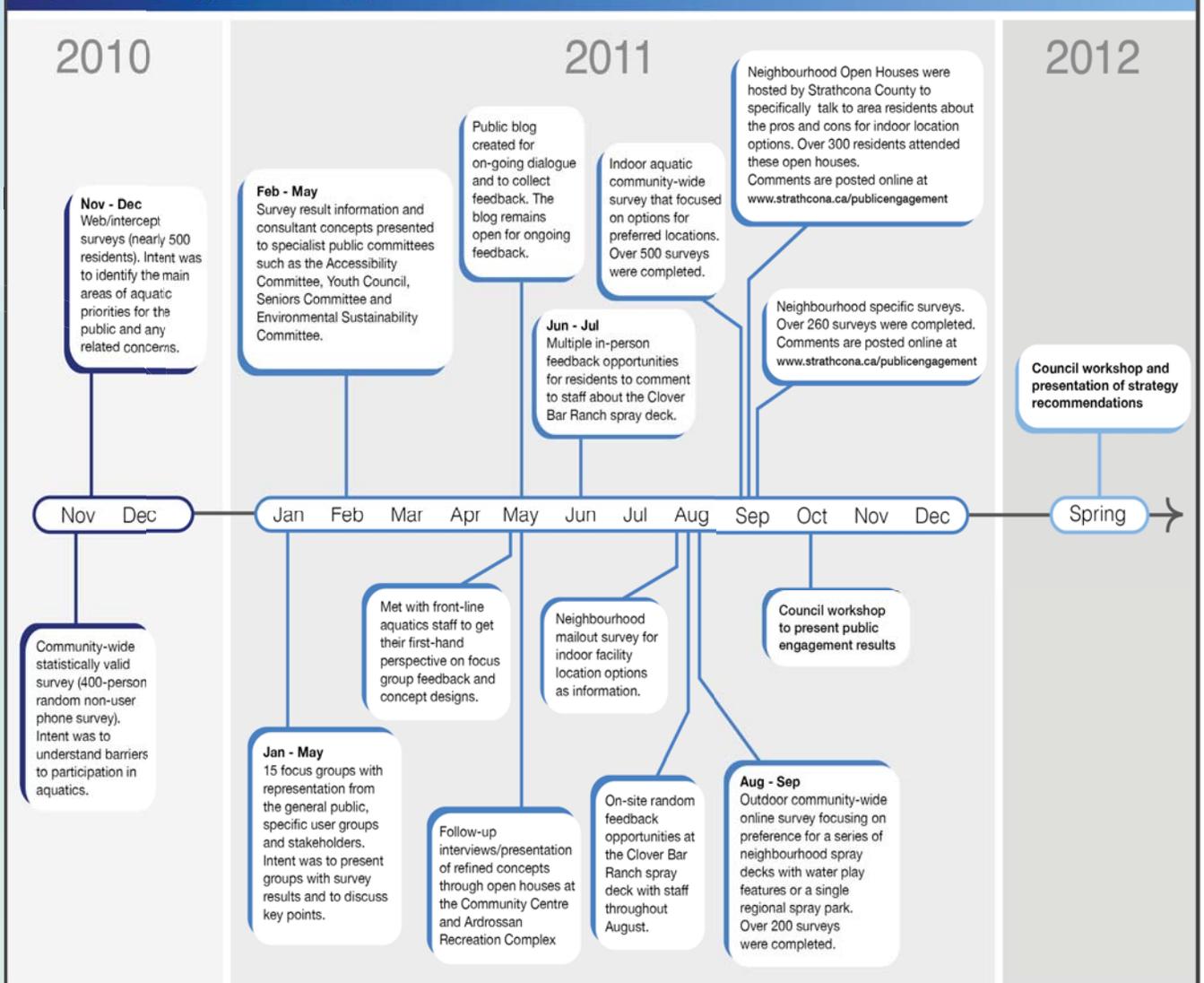


## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

A public engagement process took place from 2006-2008 as part of the initial background work for the OSRFS. Surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups were used to create the base of information that eventually led to the priorities and recommendations for the various OSRFS implementation phases.

At the time that the OSRFS was written, it was recognized that indoor and outdoor aquatics would require a more detailed analysis. The Strathcona County's Public Engagement Framework assisted with the planning and guidance of the public engagement approach that suited the needs of the Aquatic Strategy. All information gathered as part of the Aquatic Strategy is available on the County webpage.

### Aquatic Strategy Public Engagement Timeline



## Initial Random Survey Findings

The initial phase of the public engagement work involved two public surveys specific to aquatics. One was a random survey available on-line or through intercept methods, and the other survey was a statistically valid telephone survey.

The first survey was available online and it focused on residents who are users of Strathcona County aquatics facilities. It was initially advertised using entirely social media and facility advertising. Subsequent awareness of the survey was raised through the Sherwood Park/Strathcona County News and community television. A variety of stakeholder groups were also contacted, inviting them to participate in this survey opportunity. Finally, in an effort to capture a more diverse group of users, this same survey was used in an intercept survey format at the Sherwood Park Mall and events such as the Community Centre grand opening.

During November / December, 2010, 483 participants responded to a random survey either online or in person. The survey was designed to focus predominately on outdoor aquatic facilities as there was a need for updated data pertaining to outdoor aquatic user needs. Substantial indoor aquatic data and feedback existed, so questions related to indoors focus on confirming community priorities for indoor aquatics needs.

The questions within the survey were intended to capture what kinds of things participants value the most in regards to aquatic opportunities, from size and location of facilities, to preferences of supportive amenities.

Of the participants that responded to the online survey, 89 percent believed that Strathcona County needs an outdoor spray park and the majority of these respondents preferred that the County focus resources on one larger community level spray park with specific adjacent amenities. The most requested amenities at any size spray park/deck were onsite bathrooms and change rooms, safety and security measures and picnic tables with shading.

Regarding indoor aquatics, 62 percent of respondents believed that more options were needed within the County with availability of learn-to-swim programs (lessons), recreational amenities (such as slides or play structures), and recreational swimming options for ages 0-6 being the highest priority. 69 percent of responders said that they would be willing to drive between 5km and 15km for access to an aquatic facility.

## Telephone Survey

The second survey was a statistically valid telephone survey also completed in November/December 2010. It was designed by administration / Corporate Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs, and conducted by Bannister Research. Contacting random County households split 70/30 between urban and rural areas; respondents were included in the survey if they had NOT used Strathcona County aquatic facilities within the past three years. The intent of surveying non-users was to better understand the barriers to participation and any service gaps that may exist specific to aquatics. A statistically significant 400 residents (30/70 rural urban split) participated in the non-user version of the survey, from an older demographic than those who typically answered the online version. More than 80 percent were over 45 years old, with the majority being adults who no longer had children living at home.

Feedback from this survey group indicated highest interest in specific areas of aquatics such as aquatic rehab/therapy programs, specialty aquatic fitness classes, and age-specific activity times. Highest priority for future County resources were preferred to be directed towards recreational and swimming lesson availability, as well as accessibility for people with disabilities. Indoor aquatics were of higher concern for this group than were outdoor aquatics.

### **Focus Groups**

Information from both aquatics surveys were summarized and used to create discussion questions for a series of 15 focus groups held January to May, 2011. The focus groups were comprised of volunteers recruited through the survey process and aquatics stakeholders in various combinations. Strathcona County Youth Council, Accessibility Committee, Seniors Advisory Committee, Environmental and Social Sustainability Committees were also included in the focus group series as targeted groups for consultation.

The focus groups were presented with a summary of both survey results, as well as a document outlining their role in the public engagement process. Each group was asked similar questions, but the group discussion was different, depending on the makeup of the group and the interests of its members. The intent of the focus group discussion was to refine details reported within the most recent surveys, as well as previous data collection. At the same time, facilitators welcomed other comments regarding any area of aquatics as part of the Listen-and-Learn phase of the engagement process.

### **Outdoor Aquatics Feedback**

Participants were presented with the top priorities requested for both indoor and outdoor aquatics and asked for their opinions and feedback. The most preferred outdoor aquatic priorities expressed through the survey were onsite bathrooms and change rooms, safety and security, and picnic tables with shading. There was a preference indicated for one large community spray park as opposed to a network of smaller neighbourhood level spray decks spread throughout the community. It was determined through further discussions that those who prefer a smaller neighbourhood spray deck still wanted to see typical community spray park amenities such as parking, bathrooms, and adjacent playgrounds. Groups also confirmed the survey findings that they would not likely walk to a neighbourhood spray deck even if it was close to their home.

Further discussion of the survey results indicated that the statement of “priority of safety and security” meant that users wanted fencing incorporated around any new Strathcona County spray deck/park. This would be a similar design to the St. Albert community spray park. Additionally, physical safety for children was important, with requests to investigate alternative surfaces for the park that would be softer or less likely than concrete to cause scraped knees in a fall.

Another theme of discussion for several groups was the accessibility of spray parks/decks for people with disabilities or parents with strollers. Although the spray park/deck itself may be accessible, it was also seen as important to ensure future sites are on level ground, with paved paths leading from roadways, sidewalks or parking areas.

### **Indoor Aquatics Feedback**

The indoor aquatic priorities were presented as being learn-to-swim (lessons), lap swimming and aquatic fitness lanes, aquatic club lane availability, rehabilitation/therapy space, and recreational options for ages 0-6. The groups were generally in agreement with the order of priorities and were strongly in favour of planning for flexibility within spaces for different kinds of aquatics usage. An important theme that was highlighted repeatedly was the importance of both air and water temperature in relation to the type of activity an individual was participating in.

Outside of the specific scope of the Aquatic Strategy, the Strathcona County Seniors Strategy identified a warm water therapy pool as priority for older adults in Strathcona County. Additionally, using schools as community wellness hubs and taking advantage of partnerships for providing recreation programs and services were recommended.

Accessibility for aquatic activities, both indoor and outdoor, was a concern at all levels. Participants requested a focus on access for all populations; from the parking lot or transit stop, through to change rooms or outdoor walkways, onto pool or spray decks and physically into all pool basins. A priority has been identified to review all access standards and upgrade existing options where possible. For any new aquatic spaces and amenities, access should be to the highest possible standard so as to be inclusive of all users.

Upon consultation with a broad representation from both the Elk Island Public and Elk Island Catholic school boards, it was noted that parents highly value the ability for children to take swimming lessons through the schools, as opposed to having to coordinate another evening timeslot with other extracurricular activities. There is an additional benefit to having children attend lessons during the day in that it frees up evening timeslots for those who are not able to attend during the day.

There was additional concern from teachers that students were not taking swim lessons if they were not offered through the schools, as some parents did not place a high value on aquatics. Teachers and principals from both school boards consider physical literacy in aquatics to be a basic life skill; critical to the physical development of students, as well as for their safety and wellbeing around bodies of water.

At this point, schools at both the elementary and high school level have felt the need to limit their participation in aquatic lessons and other activities due to lack of space and difficulty scheduling appropriate time slots at the KLC or Millennium Place. Most schools would participate more if pool space and time availability were not as much of an issue within Strathcona County facilities.

Local aquatic sport users are feeling pressure from both a growing population as well as continued interest in competitive sport. Both swimming and synchronized swimming clubs are currently limited in their ability to hold competitions due to the deck space and spectator areas at Millennium Place.

The regional availability of 50m pools for competition and training is becoming limited to some degree as sport participation continues to grow in neighbouring municipalities. The preference of local County aquatic sport clubs, as well as that of representatives from Swim Alberta, is for Strathcona County to consider building a 50m pool as part of the Aquatic Strategy.

### **Community Surveys**

Two surveys ran from August through late September 2011. The first survey focused on preferences for indoor aquatics locations (Ardrossan Recreation Complex, Emerald Hills, Glen Allan Recreation Complex, Kinsmen Leisure Centre, and Millennium Place). There were also neighbourhood-specific versions of the indoor location survey that were sent to residents living within one kilometre of a proposed site. The two different survey versions attempted to understand the difference in opinions for those residents living near the proposed sites and those residents in the general community. Respondents were given information as to the pros and cons of each site, as well as the estimated cost associated with each option.

The indoor location survey gathered a statistically significant number of responses (over 500), with the Glen Allan Recreation Complex and Ardrossan Recreation Complex neighbourhood versions also reaching statistically significant values for the area population. The remaining facilities did not see high participation in the neighbourhood versions.

88 percent of respondents to the community-wide survey either agreed or strongly agreed with the priorities identified for indoor aquatics (space for learn-to-swim programs, lanes for lap swimming and aquatic fitness, lanes for aquatic sport club use, warm water rehab/therapy space, recreational space options for ages 0-6)

As a broader community, respondents preferred the Glen Allan Recreation Complex over the other facility options for an aquatic addition (41 percent). Residents living nearest to GARC however, were less in favour of this site than were the residents living closest to the other four location options (64 percent of the immediate neighbourhood agreed or strongly agreed to support GARC as their preference). In comparison, the residents of Ardrossan were most heavily in favour of an aquatic addition at the Ardrossan Recreation Complex (96 percent agreed or strongly agreed).

The second survey focused specifically on outdoor spray parks / spray decks. It was determined through focus group feedback that residents did not have a good understanding of “community spray park” vs. “neighbourhood spray deck”, nor was it understood that only a large community site would have support amenities such as washrooms, parking, etc. Respondents were given additional information as to the difference in types of sites, as well as some of the costs associated with each, in order to give a more educated opinion.

67 percent of the over 200 respondents to this survey indicated a preference for a single, large community sized spray park with associated amenities, as opposed to a network of smaller neighbourhood sites. Additionally, 67 percent of responses suggested that funding for such a site should not come entirely from Strathcona County, but that partnerships and sponsorships should be investigated.

### **Public Open Houses**

The first series of open houses took place in May 2011 with one session held at the Strathcona County Community Centre and another held at Ardrossan Recreation Complex. These open houses presented the basic concepts from the consulting team and asked for unguided feedback from residents. Approximately 20 people attended at the Community Centre and eight at the Ardrossan Recreation Complex. At this time, most people were attending for information purposes and gave feedback on preferences for specific amenities at the various sites. These open houses were promoted to individuals who had previously given aquatics feedback and stakeholder groups, as well as advertised in the Sherwood Park / Strathcona County News and through social media.

In addition to the traditional open house concept, a virtual open house was also created, which mirrored the information available during the open house sessions. The information was then accessible at any time. Participants were then able to give feedback via a blog, with others also able to comment on specific feedback points.

A second series of open houses took place in September 2011, geared to gather site-specific feedback for the five indoor aquatic location options. Letters were sent to residents living within 1 kilometre of each site, giving background on the aquatic strategy and what had taken place up to that point. A substantial amount of information was also available online.

Residents were presented with all five concepts at each open house, as well as a list of some of the pros and cons for each site. They were asked to consider each location and write down any comments or ideas they had for each location. County staff were available to talk individually with participants and record any other specific feedback they had, as well as answer questions.

### **Glen Allan Recreation Complex – September 7, 2011**

Over 150 residents attended this session, held at the facility. Concern was heard from a number of residents with regards to the communication process leading up to the open house, as well as the way the information had been presented. Themes from this session were primarily related to a potential loss of green space adjacent to GARC in Greengrove Park, as well as traffic concerns along Georgian Way during peak school times. It was brought up that the Council and RPC Director at the time GARC was built (1979), there had been a promise that no further expansion of the facility would take place. There were participants who also believed that an aquatic facility would be a benefit to the neighbourhood and would provide a walkable option for a large population. As GARC had been presented with a 50m pool option, there were residents also in favour of that design, although not the majority.

### **Emerald Hills / Millennium Place – September 8, 2011**

The sessions for Emerald Hills and Millennium Place were combined as there are no residential properties immediately adjacent to Millennium Place. Approximately eight participants gave feedback for this session, with concern being heard from non-aquatic sports groups as to the impact a four month, full-facility shutdown would have on the many sports groups that operate out of Millennium Place. Concern was also heard from representatives of Elk Island Public Schools regarding a potential loss of green space for Wes Hosford students if there was a large expansion to GARC. Emerald Hills was seen as a positive option for residents in that immediate area, especially as any residents moving in would be aware of existing construction as opposed to expanding an existing facility in a dense residential neighbourhood.

### **Kinsmen Leisure Centre – September 13, 2011**

Approximately 40 residents took part in this session, held at the facility. Primary concerns from this session included the loss of the overflow parking lot north of KLC, which often fills during the winter season for hockey games and community special events at Broadmoor Lake Park. Some residents voiced objections to additional road traffic to the area. Bringing more users into an already busy facility was not seen as a significant benefit, with most participants preferring a new site over expansion of a current aquatic facility.

### **Ardrossan Recreation Complex – September 14, 2011**

Approximately 80 residents took part in the session held at the facility. The overwhelming preference of participants was to bring an aquatic facility to Ardrossan. Many residents thought there were no cons to bringing a pool to the area and indicated that rural residents deserved such a facility since Sherwood Park already had two pools within the urban service area. Water / wastewater availability was also not seen to be a concern, with residents being under the impression that the issue had already been resolved by the County. Increased access to recreation opportunities for rural schools was seen as a benefit for selecting a rural indoor aquatic option.



# STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Considering Options

### Indoor Facilities

Five existing indoor recreation facilities were reviewed in accordance with the OSRFS guiding principle of reinvesting in existing infrastructure before constructing new infrastructure. KLC and Millennium Place were included in the review as both of these multi-purpose recreation facilities have aquatic components to them. GARC, ARC, and the regional park site adjacent to the Emerald Hills (Archbishop Jordan High School), were also considered but are sites that do not have existing aquatics spaces.

Strathcona County engaged the services of Marshall Tittimore Architects, MacLennan Jaunkalns Miller Architects, and Williams Engineering to complete a general structural review of the multi-purpose recreation facilities as well as engineering assessment of all five sites, specifically focusing on the general condition, and ability of each building and site to accept additional indoor and outdoor aquatic spaces.

Administration also completed an assessment regarding the operating feasibility of each site based on current and future community needs, and the ability to address the key objectives of the Aquatic Strategy. Feedback from the public engagement process, as well as internal statistical information, formed the basis for the design concepts. An assessment tool was also created for both indoor and outdoor aquatic options to ensure a transparent, unbiased comparison of the potential site options available and to be reflective of the complexity of the aquatics function.

The indoor design concepts were essentially the same in each case; the size of each was dependent on facility and site limitations. In order to address the highest priorities of the aquatic strategy, the aquatic spaces would include a shallow water lap pool (four to six lanes) with zero depth entry, a warmer water teach pool with zero depth entry and adjustable depth bottom, a waterslide, and zero depth hot tub

**Visual example of a similar multi-purpose aquatic facility:**



Woolwich Memorial Centre  
Elmira, ON

The following options are listed in alphabetical order only. See appendix for concept design drawings of the five proposed sites, as well as a multi-site option and three site possibilities for a 50m pool option.

### **Ardrossan Recreation Complex**

#### **Design Concept**

- six lane, 25m lap pool
- leisure pool with zero depth accessible entry
- zero depth entry whirlpool
- on deck run out waterslide
- male/female/family change rooms
- outdoor seasonal change rooms to serve potential adjacent spray park

### **Emerald Hills (Archbishop Jordan High School)**

#### **Design Concept**

- six lane, 25m lap pool
- leisure pool with zero depth accessible entry
- zero depth entry whirlpool
- on deck run out waterslide
- male/female/family change rooms

### **Glen Allan Recreation Complex**

#### **Design Concept**

- six lane, 25m multi-use lap pool
- leisure/lesson pool with zero depth accessible entry
- zero depth entry whirlpool
- on deck run out waterslide
- accessible family change rooms
- increased parking space
- outdoor seasonal change rooms to serve potential adjacent spray park

### **KLC**

#### **Design Concept**

- multifunction, single basin shallow water leisure/lap pool with zero depth access
- renovation to existing Esso Swim Safe Centre
- on deck run out waterslide
- new steam room and zero depth entry whirlpool
- expanded lobby with off deck viewing
- addition of accessible family change rooms
- modification of male/female change room entryways
- improved accessibility to deep tank
- updated pool area interior
- outdoor seasonal change rooms to serve possible adjacent spray park

### **Millennium Place**

#### **Design Concept**

- multifunction single basin shallow water leisure/lap pool with zero depth entry
- upgrades to lighting and water treatment systems
- toddler specific recreational pool space
- older youth amenities (on deck run-out waterslide, aquaclimb)
- improved accessibility to lap pool
- new, larger family change rooms

## **GARC | KLC | MP - Multi-Site Option**

### **Design Concept**

This option shares the capital expenditure over three facilities providing the minimal but most essential programming at each location for GARC, KLC and MP, and follows most closely the OSRFS principle of revitalizing existing infrastructure before building new.

#### GARC

- addition of rehab/therapy focused pool basin only

#### KLC

- small additional pool basin specific to preschool learn to swim programs
- renovation of Esso Swim Safe Centre
- addition of family change rooms
- lobby expansion

#### MP

- four lane shallow pool basin
- on deck run-out waterslide

## **50m Option**

### **Design Concept**

(possible to incorporate at the Emerald Hills, Glen Allan Recreation Complex and Ardrossan Recreation Complex sites)

- 10 lane, 50m lap pool
- 600 seat spectator bleachers
- 200 seat competitor bleachers
- leisure pool with zero depth accessible entry
- zero depth entry whirlpool
- on deck run out waterslide
- accessible family change rooms
- increased parking space



## GAPS AFFECTING SUCCESS

## OPTIONS

### ARDROSSAN RECREATION COMPLEX

Lack of servicing capacity to meet aquatic facility needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build planned servicing upgrades sooner and to higher capacity</li> </ul>
Smaller population density to support aquatic programs (increased vehicle travel)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider busing programs to encourage urban residents to use rural aquatics</li> </ul>

### EMERALD HILLS

Proximity to Millennium Place aquatics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure complementary and unique programming in aquatics and wellness to serve different community needs than MP</li> </ul>
Site constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider other spaces on park site</li> </ul>
Operating costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• build with complementary amenities such as planned OSRFS wellness component</li> <li>• work with partners such as EICS, Strathcona Community Hospital, Alberta Health Services etc.</li> </ul>

### GLEN ALLAN RECREATION COMPLEX

Traffic volumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with stakeholders on traffic management modifications</li> </ul>
Resident concerns for greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with architects to ensure minimal impact to greenspace</li> <li>• create park re-planting plan to remediate any lost treed areas</li> </ul>
Resident concern for parking lot construction taking place adjacent to residences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure construction takes place only on west side of facility</li> </ul>

### KINSMEN LEISURE CENTRE

Special event / Broadmoor Lake Park parking impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider creating new spaces south of existing KLC parking</li> </ul>
12-18 month shutdown of facility for construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• look at changes to spontaneous use at Millennium Place to allow for lessons during shutdown</li> <li>• consider space availability and partnership potential with Edmonton YMCAs</li> </ul>
Less ability to meet identified community needs (smaller volume of water, less flexibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider additional changes to other facilities to meet gaps</li> <li>• plan for aquatic component of new major multipurpose facility to be constructed sooner</li> </ul>

### MILLENNIUM PLACE

4 month shutdown of entire facility to relocate services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shift activities to other County facilities where possible</li> <li>• consider partnerships with other municipalities to provide services during closure</li> <li>• consider temporary structures (tents, trailers) to provide for certain activities</li> </ul>
Additional 12 month shutdown of aquatic facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider partnerships with regional municipalities, Edmonton YMCAs to provide aquatic opportunities for residents</li> </ul>
Less ability to meet identified community needs (smaller volume of water, less flexibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider additional changes to other facilities to meet gaps</li> <li>• plan for aquatic component of new major multipurpose facility to be constructed sooner</li> </ul>

## Outdoor Facilities

### Aging Spray Decks

The six aging spray decks located in the neighbourhoods of Village on the Lake, Westboro, Woodbridge Farms, Brentwood, Millshaven (Cloverbar Jr. High) and Glen Allen are in need of either significant revitalization or closure and remediation. The public engagement portion of the Aquatic Strategy provided further feedback suggesting not only did the respondents prefer a large community spray park, as opposed to smaller neighbourhood spray decks, but that regardless of the size; they would prefer supportive amenities such as washrooms, parking and shaded picnic areas.

The Clover Bar Ranch spray deck is the largest and newest outdoor aquatic facility the County operates. Not only is the spray deck new to residents and visitors, but also to Strathcona County departments that will plan, design, construct, and maintain future spray parks/decks. Data compiled from the use of this site will be crucial in future planning for other outdoor aquatic sites.

The Westboro and Brentwood Parks are the only two urban parks that not only have aged spray decks, but also completed and approved Park Master Plans. The Ardrossan Community Recreation Master Plan is the only rural park and recreation plan that also includes a spray park. These plans have suggested waiting until the completion of the Aquatic Strategy to determine how best to handle either their aged spray decks or any new spray park requests.

It should be noted, the upgrading of specific existing sites can be considered outside of the aquatic strategy by way of the Community Partnership Project process. Support from the community can help provide greater access to new infrastructure than what would be available within the County budget process alone.

### New Spray Parks/Decks

The second area to address within outdoor aquatics is the issue of new infrastructure; be it smaller spray decks or larger community spray parks.

Smaller neighbourhood sites promote walkability, community connectedness, social responsibility, and social inclusion. Neighbourhood parks are not designed to accommodate elaborate recreational facilities, but are better suited for smaller infrastructure intended for local residents, thereby not overloading traffic flow, creating increased noise levels, and allowing for other pieces of recreational infrastructure to be included such as small playgrounds, natural areas, trails, etc.

Larger community spray parks are seen as desirable as part of a “destination” recreation site, with other features such as ample trails and large connected playgrounds; allowing families to engage in multiple activities in close proximity over a longer time period. These sites are typically in central areas and on transit routes for easier access to a greater portion of the entire community. Centralizing the use of available resources into one larger site can also elicit some cost savings over a longer operational time period.

The regional standard for the majority of new or expanded spray parks is to work in partnership with either local service clubs (Elks, Lions, Kinsmen, etc), or local community associations for financial support. It is not the norm for a municipality to completely fund the capital construction of these amenities, although the municipality typically bears the majority of ongoing operational and maintenance cost.

The priorities brought out through public consultation reveal that the demand for spray parks/decks within Strathcona County is specifically focused on a large, community-sized amenity. During analysis, it became clear that both capital and operational costs for outdoor spray parks/decks are considerably reduced if that outdoor amenity is co-located with an indoor recreation facility of some kind. Significant synergies through staffing, water quality maintenance, security, and other support amenities can be realized. It is recommended that any new spray parks/decks be located immediately adjacent to indoor recreation infrastructure in order to take full advantage of these synergies.

### **Aquatic Art Features**

Aquatic art features were not identified as a concern or priority during the public engagement process. The potential demand for these amenities should be assessed at a neighbourhood level when completing any new park master plans, or in the development of future public gathering spaces. As with future spray parks/decks, the assistance of developers, as well as the general community through the Community Partnership Project process, should be sought.



## Recommendations



Due to the complex issues involved with recommending sites for aquatic facility investment or reinvestment, multiple decision making tools assisted in the comprehensive assessment of the five potential locations for indoor aquatics. The tools and data used were:

- OSRFS principles and County guiding documents
- community/facility impacts
- capital and operating costs
- community input and usage data
- engineering, architectural and operational opinions
- site servicing, traffic, parking and population distribution

The outcome of individual tools and data review was then incorporated into a vital set of metrics tied to OSRFS principles, community input and impacts, and the ability to meet immediate community aquatic needs. The following chart provides a summary of this multi-faceted assessment process.

Positive --- Neutral --- Gap to Success	Ardrrossan Recreation Complex	Emerald Hills	Glen Allan Recreation Complex	Kinsmen Leisure Centre	Millennium Place
Reinvesting in existing infrastructure	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Interrelatedness of facilities/functions to maximize usage and flexibility	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
Maintaining service levels in the face of growth	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Interconnection with planned or longer term projects	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red
Community, education or health partnership opportunities	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow
Ability to meet immediate community needs	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Minimal impacts to current community use (construction period)	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red
Operating cost synergies with existing building	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green
Minimal neighbourhood impacts	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
Site – traffic, parking, servicing/utilities, transit, greenspace impact	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Red
Area population density and walkability	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow

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.

### 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.

#### **MAINTAIN SERVICE LEVELS**

Revitalize current aquatic facilities through minor repairs and infrastructure work at Millennium Place and Kinsmen Leisure Centre

#### **ADDRESS CURRENT GAPS**

New indoor aquatic facility in Emerald Hills  
New community spray park at Broadmoor Lake Park

#### **GROW WITH THE COMMUNITY**

Address new and emerging needs with an aquatic component as part of a future new major multipurpose facility

New / revitalized quadrant based neighbourhood spray decks

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.

### **Regarding 50m competition aquatic facilities**

The Swimming Canada Long Term Athlete Development strategy advocates seven stages of development relevant to budding athletes: Active Start, FUNDamentals, Learn to Train, Train to Train, Train to Compete, Compete to Win, and Active for Life. Within the short term recommendations of the Aquatic Strategy, Strathcona County can provide for all but the Train to Compete and Compete to Win stages, as these stages require national level competition facilities for high performance sport clubs.

It is recommended that Strathcona County focus current resources on providing for the majority five athlete development stages in Phase 1, and look to meet the needs of the remaining two development stages in the long term planning of an aquatic component within a future major multipurpose recreation facility. This would include careful consideration of a 50m competition pool and associated support amenities.

It is recommended that Strathcona County undertake an additional, extensive public engagement effort specific to aquatics, as usage rates begin to approach projected threshold levels. This should also include an updated, detailed analysis of changing demographics within Strathcona County. At this point, planning should begin for a second major multi-purpose recreation facility, to include a large scale aquatics complex. A 50m competition pool option should be carefully considered at this time; any new facility site will be better able to appropriately meet the specific needs associated with this type of pool, such as parking, traffic, deck space, spectator spaces, staging and warm-up facilities, and enhanced change spaces.

The viability of a regional partnership between municipalities for high level competition venues should be explored in detail at this point. Such a partnership would allow for the provision of more enhanced sport and recreation amenities than those within the capability of Strathcona County alone. County staff have begun a partnership building relationship with the City of Edmonton (Kinsmen Sports Centre) to investigate the potential for County aquatic sport groups to enter into the allocation process for 50m pool space in Edmonton facilities for the immediate term.

A future 50m competition aquatic facility for Strathcona County would need to be the subject of substantial further needs assessments, as well as business planning analysis. Although a number of Alberta municipalities have constructed such facilities in recent years, it should be noted that none have access to such a facility in regional centres as Strathcona County has within Edmonton.

Substantial construction and operational costs for such a facility may be somewhat offset within a large facility containing more revenue generating functions such as wellness, retail, and multipurpose functions. Programming of such a facility can also be complex, as water temperatures ideal for competition are not desirable for most other users, creating the potential for conflict or less-than-anticipated usage from other groups. Any planning must carefully consider a balance between expected revenue streams, operational costs, programming, functional expectations, as well as sport tourism revenues within the community. It is recommended that adequate financial and staff resources be set aside to review this issue in depth as the OSRFS moves through Phase two.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In order to meet the goals and objectives outlined in this Strategy, the County should begin to revitalize existing aquatic spaces 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.

The recommended immediate-term combination of revitalization and reinvestment in aquatic infrastructure will allow for enhanced flexibility in options and programs available to residents, as well as the addition of programs and services previously unavailable, but in high demand. Based on demographic projections and usage trend data for each of the aquatic user types, the solutions as recommended are projected to provide adequate indoor aquatic opportunities for residents until approximately 2021.

## SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME AND CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

### 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



## OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

### Indoor Aquatic Requirements

Planning and project management funding would be required for the new pool site, as well as increased training budget to create a third full group of aquatics staff. Full Time Equivalent positions should be planned for an aquatic programmer, head lifeguard and full time lifeguard, as well as a potential assistant facility supervisor. Significant part-time staffing needs of up to 75 people will be required for any new indoor site. Partnership funding may be required in support of an arrangement between the City of Edmonton and Strathcona County to ensure access to competition pool allocation processes for local aquatic sports clubs.

### Outdoor Aquatic Requirements

Funding would be required for individuals to compile operational and usage data at Clover Bar Ranch spray deck, annually over the next three years. Planning and project management funding would be required for a new community site, as well as increased capacity for a community partnership liaison position. Staffing for the community spray park facility would be shared with an indoor aquatic recreation facility.

### Partnership Opportunities and Alternate Funding Sources

Partnership opportunities were explored with the City of Edmonton, City of Fort Saskatchewan and the Edmonton region YMCA. Potential benefit was recognized for Strathcona County to contribute financially towards the City of Edmonton Kinsmen Sport Centre (KSC) revitalization plans. This would allow County aquatic sport clubs to gain access to the City pool allocation process and secure use of the KSC 50m pool for regular training. This would ensure local athletes training for long course events have access to the type of facility required within a close proximity of 15km. This partnership endeavour requires further discussion, but it has been made clear that such opportunities are available. Strathcona County will continue to build a relationship with the City of Edmonton in the interest of better serving our aquatic athletes.

Although the Edmonton YMCA showed interest in the operation of a YMCA facility in Strathcona County, administration determined that the YMCA model would not meet the priority needs identified for aquatics in the immediate term. The YMCA focus mostly on recreational and programming opportunities in the area, therefore, local aquatic sport clubs would not see a benefit from this partnership. Additional differences were seen in the operating models between the County and YMCA facilities, potentially creating “tiers” of service and access. A fracturing of the existing County recreation facility operational model would be likely with membership erosion to the YMCA partner facility. The YMCA model also requires a large portion of capital funding to come from community fundraising initiatives, as well as significant volunteer roles in facility operations.

In addition to municipal partnerships, Strathcona County should work towards creating funding models that may incorporate developer contributions. These funding opportunities could be collected for new neighbourhoods which would require supportive outdoor recreational facilities like spray parks. These funds could then be supplemented with matching grants from other levels of government. The County will continue to seek out and apply for any grants from other levels of government, and will assist community groups in doing so through the CPP.

The new CPP process may contribute to an increase in outdoor aquatic infrastructure implementation on a shorter timeline than the traditional capital funded project could provide. Community groups that wish to see outdoor aquatic facilities within their neighbourhoods could share in the effort of providing the additional infrastructure.

Strathcona County will seek out significant sponsorship for both aquatics capital construction funding, as well as ongoing operational support from local business and interested individuals. Local service organizations have a long history of supporting outdoor aquatics within the County, and such valued relationships will be maintained and potentially expanded for future projects. However, obtaining new financial support for facilities is challenging. Many new multipurpose facilities have struggled to obtain substantial sponsorship to help defray some of the capital construction costs. The latest multipurpose facility in Alberta (Grande Prairie Multiplex) has reached a sponsorship level of approximately \$3.6M out of the more than \$110M cost of the facility. This sponsorship was shared among over twenty companies, service groups, and individuals.



## 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 request in 2013 for existing aquatic facilities revitalization (KLC and MP), new indoor aquatic facility construction at Emerald Hills.
- Community spray park planning and design funding for 2013.
- Capital construction 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.

### **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.

## APPENDICES

1. Aquatic Concept Drawings
2. OSRFS Executive Summary & Aquatics Function
3. 2009 Strathcona Water Park Audit
4. Swimming Canada LTAD Strategy
5. Alberta Physical Education/Wellness education framework
6. Costing Package – Indoor
7. Indoor aquatics usage threshold projection summary
8. 50m pool summary
9. Final Architectural/Engineering Consultant Report:
  - technical site & building assessment
  - architectural outline specs
  - scope of work
  - program area requirements
  - engineering design briefs
  - engineering facility evaluation
10. Public engagement documentation
  - Non user phone survey
  - Themed open house comments
  - Themed survey comments
  - Aquatics public engagement continuum
  - Process summary
  - Schools feedback
  - Focus group comments
11. Aquatic program registration distribution
12. Spray decks / spray park mapping – proposed future sites
13. Community Partnership Project Guidebook
14. Traffic Assessment - DRAFT
15. Ardrossan Utilities background summary
16. Parking detail – land use bylaw
17. Aquatic centre locations population analysis

## AQUATIC STRATEGY



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