

APPENDIX A

AQUATIC PROGRAM REVIEW

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

June 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Vancouver has set the goal of increasing pool usage by 70% over the next decade. This represents increasing the current number of annual swims from 1,400,000 to 2,400,000 swims by 2015 or sooner. The current rate of swimming in Vancouver is quite low at 2.5 swims per capita per year; this compares to an average 4 or more swims per capita in most other communities.

The *2001 Aquatic Services Review* primarily addressed the need to improve or replace the existing aquatic facilities, particularly the indoor pools that had an average age of 32 at that time. This has resulted in the opening of the new Killarney Pool (community pool) and the major renovation of Renfrew Pool (neighbourhood pool) as part of Phase 1. The final component of Phase 1 is the construction of a new city-wide aquatic complex at the Percy Norman/hillcrest site by 2010. Phase 2 would involve the redevelopment of VAC (community), and Kerrisdale, Lord Byng and Templeton as neighbourhood pools.

The *Aquatic Program Review* focuses on how the pools are operated and programmed in ways that increase attendance and operational efficiencies and effectiveness. It is clearly not enough just to change the physical facilities if they are not programmed, scheduled and marketed in the best possible manner to increase and sustain pool usage by Vancouver residents and visitors.

Organization of the Aquatic Program Review Report

The Report is organized into four sections as follows:

- **Section 1 - Introduction and Program Forms:** This section provides the background rationale for carrying out the Aquatic Program Review, its purpose and objectives, the guiding principles behind the report, and the methodology utilized.
- **Section 2 - Pool Types and Use:** This section focuses on the current use of indoor pools, programming and scheduling of activities and profiles of current users. Topics covered include trends in attendance, types of user groups, pool allocation policies, and the scheduling of activities and profile of current pool users.
- **Section 3 - Financial and Operational Sustainability:** The financial review focuses on both pool revenues and expenditures, including identifying efficiencies and practices which will enable the pools to operate within their financial allocations. The revenue analysis includes a review of the current fees and charges schedule for pools, the sources of pool revenue as well as best “financial” practices from other cities. The staffing analysis focuses on pool operations, office and maintenance support, as well as the relationship between payroll and pool revenue.
- **Section 4 - Future Directions:** Based on the analysis of current indoor pool uses, operations and finances provided in Sections 2 and 3, along with a review of aquatic operations in other communities, Section 4 outlines future directions in pool programming, scheduling, staff selections and training, facility and equipment improvements, marketing and planning.

Recommendations Made in the Report

A total of 25 specific recommendations are made in the report within Sections 2, 3 and 4. They are listed here by Section:

Section 2 - Pool Types and Use

Recommendation 1: Based on consensus reached by the Task Force, it is recommended that the following priorities be adopted for pool allocation:

First	Public Swim Sessions and Programs
Second	Minor Sport/Children and Youth Clubs
Third	Adult Sport Groups
Fourth	Commercial Groups

Recommendation 2: To ensure the efficient and effective use of pools, it is recommended that scheduling decisions will be made on a city wide and/or district level.

Recommendation 3: To ensure diversity in programming, it is recommended that pool schedules provide for a wide range of opportunities (a balanced program) with respect to day and time, including school and early evening access to public sessions, lessons, club access, etc.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that public swim sessions be provided at a variety of days and times to increase the use by children youth and seniors, including weekday afternoons and early evenings, weekend evenings, late nights, etc.

Recommendation 5: A more detailed analysis of pool use and user demand be completed for each pool, including programming influenced by local demographics and the rationalization of pool to pool differences identified in this report.

Recommendation 6: A consistent methodology for tracking use at all pools should be instituted, based on the implementation of pass scan software in 2007.

Recommendation 7: That an Aquatics Advisory Committee be established to advise the City on the allocation of pool time to aquatics clubs.

Recommendation 8: That a new Rental Group Allocation Policy be developed based on:

- the adoption of the City of Surrey's pool use measures as standard unit of measure for club use;
- minor sport groups be given priority over adult groups in the allocation of pool time;
- local sport groups be given priority over non local groups in the allocation of pool time;
- minor sport groups are defined as having 80% of the membership under the age of 19 (standardizes definition with rink allocation policy);
- community groups are defined as having 70% of the membership from the local community (allowances are to be made to waive residency for a set period of time to allow new groups to establish themselves in the community or for sports organized on a regional level);
- the new Aquatics Advisory Committee will establish terms of reference to review pool allocation for aquatic clubs;
- the scheduling of aquatic club use is coordinated on a city wide level to ensure fair and equitable access to pool time as well as a balanced aquatic program;

- exclusive uses of pool time should primarily occur outside regular operating hours (excluding special events).

Section 3 - Financial and Operational Sustainability

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that a consistent budget format be created for individual pools to be able to measure expenditures, revenues, and recovery rates so that valid annual budget comparisons can be made for each pool and between pools.

Recommendation 10: As a general policy, the Task Force recommends that youth groups qualify for subsidized pool fees. The subsidized fees would apply to programs for youth and affiliated programs for those under the age of 19 years.

Recommendation 11: Fees for programs which have mixed aged group will be based on the following criteria: If participation is of a mixed age group during the rental period (adult participation is greater than 20%), the adult non-subsidized rate will be applied to those hours.

Recommendation 12: The Board consider introducing a new adult club rate at a level similar to the fees charged in other Lower Mainland for introduction in the Fall of 2007.

Recommendation 13: It is recommended that the Board establish standards for both staffing and accounting with regards to guarding, office coverage and daily maintenance.

Recommendation 14: The Guarding Standard for full time SIA staff should be based on a ratio of 70-80% guarding/instructing and 20-30% administrative and program development.

Section 4 - Future Directions

Recommendation 15: That the Board review and improve public swim opportunities creating greater access, better timing, increased marketing, and using a coordinated approach between the indoor pools.

Recommendation 16: That the Board commit to the introduction of new aquatics equipment and games in identified public swims throughout the indoor pool system.

Recommendation 17: That a City-wide Aquatics Marketing Plan be developed, updating and building on the 2003 Plan, along with marketing plans for individual indoor pools.

Recommendation 18: The Park Board develop and foster partnerships with minor sport aquatic groups to ensure that these aquatic activities are available to public.

Recommendation 19: That identified lifeguard staff attend the Waterpark course offered by the Lifesaving Society in 2007, including the option of an additional special course being directly offered at Killarney.

Recommendation 20: That in-service courses on aquatic games and equipment use be offered on an ongoing basis. It is also recommended that identified aquatic staff be exposed to other Lower Mainland or Island leisure aquatic environments for in-service purposes.

Recommendation 21: That an analysis of major aquatic leisure equipment opportunities is carried out, and priorities for equipment purchase and installation are identified in subsequent year budgets.

Recommendation 22: That at least one large inflatable toy be purchased and rotated between identified indoor pools; its location would be cross-marketed.

Recommendation 23: The Park Board ensure adequate funds to maintain the aquatic facilities.

Recommendation 24: That the pool programmers report directly to the Recreation Supervisor - Aquatics, as part of a centralized aquatics function.

Recommendation 25: That the Recreation Supervisor - Aquatics create an Aquatics Functional Team with the pool programmers, and that this team develop a three year Aquatics Implementation Plan as well as an annual aquatic business plans.

The intent of the recommendations reflects the two pronged approach to reaching the target of increasing the number of swims in City of Vancouver indoor pools by 70% over the next decade. The development of improved and more vibrant aquatic facilities is vital; the new Killarney Pool, redeveloped Renfrew Pool, and proposed Percy Norman Pool represent a strong start in that process. Truly successful aquatic systems, however, show excellence in the manner in which pools are programmed and operated. This Report is focussed on ensuring that Vancouver's indoor pools will play an increasingly important role in improving the quality of life and health of the city's residents.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

In 2000, the Vancouver Parks and Recreation Board hired Roger Hughes + Partners to develop the *Aquatic Services Review*. This was a 10 to 15 year strategy to reconfigure the Board's aquatic services and facilities to meet the current and future local and city-wide needs in a cost-effective and fiscally sustainable manner. The Review included a number of strategies for indoor pools which were based on the description of an optimal service profile. The key strategies proposed:

- the development of recreation swimming in a more centralized model (destination or city wide pools);
- the maintenance of basic lessons, fitness and training swimming in a decentralized model (current distribution of "neighbourhood" pools);
- an increase of 70% in pool usage over the next 10 years (currently at 1.4 million swims per year, increasing to 2.4 million swims).

Based on these strategies, the Aquatic Services Review's recommendations included:

- a substantial reinvestment in indoor aquatic facilities over the next 10 years;
- a new or rebuilt indoor pool system with a capacity of 2.4 million swims per year, prioritizing recreational swimming and efficiently and effectively programming fitness swimming, lessons, therapeutic swimming, swim club training and rentals;
- a rebuilt system consisting of three types of indoor pool facilities: neighbourhood pools (25 m tank), community pools (two tanks, leisure component) and city wide, destination pool (two to three tanks, multi purpose aquatic facility).

Since this Review, the Board has undertaken a major retrofit of Renfrew Pool as a neighbourhood pool and rebuilt Killarney Pool as a community pool. The new Killarney Pool consists of a 25 metre tank as well as a leisure pool. Percy Norman Pool is slated for replacement by 2010 and will be rebuilt as a city wide destination facility consisting of a 50m tank, a leisure pool, fitness centre and outdoor pool.

Purpose of the Aquatic Program Review

As a companion piece to the Aquatic Services Review, the Park Board initiated this *Aquatic Program Review* in 2005 to guide the operation and programming of the Board's indoor pools. The objectives for this review are to rationalize the Board's aquatic programming to meet the expectations set out in the Aquatic Services Review, as well as to integrate indoor pool programming and operations with the current Park Board Strategic Plan directives to:

- a) engage people to ensure accessibility, wellness and active living;
- b) maintain fiscal responsibility;
- c) plan for long-term renewal and revitalization of parks and recreation facilities.

The Aquatic Program Review was directed by a Task Force comprised of:

- senior staff representatives (exempt staff)
- Vancouver Park Board staff representatives (programmers)
- representatives of a cross-section of aquatic users.

It is recognized that the Task Force only represents the opinions of its members and does not necessarily represent the opinions of a sport or a specific user group.

The Aquatic Program Review Task Force was guided in its deliberations by terms of reference (see Appendix A). The goal for the Aquatic Program Task Force is to update and recommend a comprehensive aquatic programming and allocation policy for the Park Board's consideration. This programming and policy renewal will enable the Board to achieve the following **objectives**:

- operate the aquatic services and facilities in an equitable, cost-effective and fiscally sustainable manner;
- balance local services and needs with those of the City as a whole;
- provide aquatic users and stakeholders the opportunity to influence policy development;
- meet current and future demands for both organized and casual participants.

1.2 Guiding Principles for the Aquatic Program Review

Prior to reviewing and/or developing programming and policy recommendations, the Task Force agreed that the following principles would serve as the framework for program and policy development and evaluation:

Access and Equity: both in terms of access to pool time (programming and allocation) as well as in the application of fees and charges.

Efficiency: given the limited supply of pool time, aquatic programming is to ensure the effective and efficient use of facilities, both in terms of time and space.

Diversity: programming/scheduling to provide for a wide range of opportunities (a balanced program).

Financial Sustainability: operating budget must be within the financial limitations of the Park Board; fees and charges structure must be within the financial limitations of user groups.

Civic Role: recognition of the primary role municipal pools play in the delivery of aquatic programs, especially in accommodating youth activities.

Partnership: policy to recognize the importance of partnerships in the delivery of aquatic activities (aquatic clubs/groups especially at the minor sport level).

1.3 Format of the Report

This Report is organized into three major sections as follows:

Section 2 – Pool Types and Use

This section focuses on the current use of indoor pools, programming and scheduling of activities and profiles of current users. Topics covered under pool use include the identification of performance measures for indoor pool use, trends in attendance, user surveys regarding use, pool allocation policies, the scheduling of activities and the demographics of current pool users.

Section 3 – Financial and Operational Sustainability

The financial review focuses on both pool revenues and expenditures, including identifying efficiencies and practices which will enable the pools to operate within their financial allocations. The revenue analysis includes a review of the current fees and charges schedule for pools, the sources of pool revenue as well as best “financial” practices from other cities. The expenditure analysis will primarily focus on payroll but will also comment on expenses and utilities. The staffing analysis focuses on pool operations, office and maintenance support as well as the relationship between payroll and pool revenue.

Section 4 – Future Directions

Based on the analysis of current indoor pool uses, operations and finances provided in Sections 2 and 3, along with a review of aquatic operations in other communities, Section 4 provides a number of recommended shifts in pool programming, scheduling and staffing.

The views of the Task Force are reflected in a number of the recommendations made within the three major sections, along with an indication of whether consensus or majority support was attained.

1.4 Methodology and Analysis Notes

The focus of this Review is on the future direction for aquatics. It is not intended as a critique of past performance. Two of the major outcomes of this review are: the establishment of baseline data from which future aquatic programming decisions can be based and evaluated; and the recognition of both internal and external best practices which can be applied to the aquatic operations. It would not be fair to critique pool performance prior to the collection and recognition of this information. With regards to the analysis, it is also important to recognize that this Review is at the “macro” level. There could be “on site” factors not identified in the analysis which are effecting an individual pool’s operation.

The baseline data used in this analysis is primarily from the 2002 to 2005 year period. Sources of data used included Park Board operating statements, point of sale software information, user surveys as well as estimated patronage visits. Given the limitations in

the data available, a number of assumptions have been made (identified within the Review) to determine various trends.

Year to year comparisons for the individual pools are also analyzed, although the extended closures of Killarney and Renfrew significantly influenced some of the pool operations. This is especially true for those pools located closest to the Killarney and Renfrew communities (Templeton, Kensington and Percy Norman Pools).

2. POOL TYPES AND USE

2.1 Pool Types and Components

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation is granted the authority to manage park and recreation activities through the Vancouver Charter. Specifically, the Charter grants the Park Board the responsible for establishing, maintaining and operating indoor and outdoor swimming pools (Section 489 – swimming pools). Services or programs historically provided in these pools include public swim sessions; learn to swim programs as well as rental opportunities for aquatic clubs and groups. These programs and services are considered core services for the Park Board – i.e., these services and programs are aligned with the Park Board’s mandate.

The Vancouver Park Board is the primary provider of indoor aquatic activities in Vancouver. The Board operates eight indoor facilities, the majority of which are “older” 25m tanks with limited amenities. Most of the pools were built in the 1960/70’s and the facilities/amenities are typical for this period. The accompanying **Figure 1** outlines the pool size and amenities for the Park Board pools.

Figure 1 - Vancouver Park Indoor Pools

Pool	Pool Size	Teach Pool	Leisure Pool	Dive Tank	Weight Room	Fitness Centre
Kensington	Small		Yes			Yes
Lord Byng	25m – 6 lane				Yes	
Kerrisdale	30m – 6 lane					
Templeton	25m – 6 lane	Yes			Yes	
Killarney - 2006	25m – 6 lane		Yes			
Percy Norman	25m – 6 lane			Yes		Yes
Renfrew	25m – 6 lane					Yes
Van Aquatic Centre	50m – 8 lane	Yes		Yes		Yes

In the above chart, a “Fitness Centre” refers to a large fitness facility equipped with a variety of weight training and cardio equipment, while a “Weight Room” is a small fitness facility with limited weight training and cardio equipment.

In addition to the 8 pools listed in Figure 1, the City operates a 25m pool plus leisure tank at Britannia Community Complex. Other providers of indoor pools within the city include the South Slope Y, Jericho Hill and the Jewish Community Centre complexes.

Recently, the Board has undertaken a major retrofit of Renfrew Pool as a neighbourhood pool and rebuilt Killarney Pool as a community pool. The new Killarney Pool consists of a 25 metre tank as well as a large leisure pool. However, given the age and design of the other Park Board pools, the Board’s provision of aquatic opportunities lags behind those

in municipalities with newer aquatic complexes. The current standard for “signature” aquatic facilities is a 50m tank with a large leisure pool. Such pools can be found in West Vancouver, Burnaby, Richmond, Surrey and Langley. The new Percy Norman Pool planned for Hillcrest Park is a 50m plus leisure tank pool. This pool is scheduled to be open in 2009.

When making comparisons, it is important to compare facilities of similar size (water surface) and with similar amenities. For purposes of analysis, the indoor pools are grouped accordingly:

Small leisure tank with fitness centre: Kensington

25m tank: Lord Byng, Kerrisdale, Templeton

25 m tank with fitness centre: Percy Norman, Renfrew

50 m tank with fitness centre: Vancouver Aquatic Centre

It is recognized that there are differences in amenities within these grouping as Templeton and Vancouver Aquatic Centre have teach pools, Lord Byng and Templeton have small weight rooms and Percy Norman and the Vancouver Aquatic Centre have diving tanks. The addition of these amenities could increase use of these facilities.

2.2 Programming of Pool Activities

Basic Program Forms

The majority (80%) of activities provided in Park Board indoor pools are “public” sessions and programs. These programs are organized and conducted by Park Board staff. Public sessions include public swimming, age specific sessions, length swims and aquafit. Registered programs consist of learn to swim programs as well as lifeguarding courses.

Other organizers of activities who rent pool time in Park Board pools include school groups and non profit aquatic clubs. Schools primarily utilize pools during the school day for learn to swim or swim sessions. Non profit groups offer aquatic programs to the general public (competitive swimming, diving, etc.) and these programs are offered primarily on a registration basis. These activities occur during and outside of regular hours of operations. A more detailed breakdown of rental use is included in the Scheduling of Pool Activities section (2.3).

Allocation – Priority for Use

The Park Board does not have a “priority for use” policy for indoor pools. Currently, the Board allocates and schedules pool activities on an historical basis.

The objective for a priority of use policy is to ensure that a balance of quality aquatic programs and opportunities are available to all residents. A balanced program helps to ensure that the greatest number of residents realize the benefits associated with aquatic services. A priority for use policy also serves as a framework to make fair and equitable pool allocation decisions.

The best practices review indicated that most municipalities have a priority for use policy. The first priority for pool allocation in all policies reviewed is municipal public sessions and programs. Surrey distinguishes this priority by age group - youth activities receive priority over adult sessions. The second priority in most other policies are minor sport programs/children and youth programs. School programs are given second priority for allocation of pool time during the school day. Most policies conclude with adult sport rental groups followed by commercial (for profit) groups. **Recommendation 1** outlines the recommended priority of use allocations for City of Vancouver indoor pools.

Recommendation 1

Based on consensus reached by the Task Force, it is recommended that the following priorities be adopted for pool allocation:

First	Public Swim Sessions and Programs
Second	Minor Sport/Children and Youth Clubs
Third	Adult Sport Groups
Fourth	Commercial Groups

The Task Force believed that this priority for allocation matched the principles for allocation as outlined in the preamble - balance of programming, special consideration to youth programs, etc. The rationale for public programming receiving the highest priority relates to high level of public funding required to operate the Board's indoor pools.

2.3 Scheduling of Park Board Pool Activities

The review of scheduling is based on pool schedules for the fall of 2005. It is important to note that many pool sessions accommodate more than one activity – examples include shared tank use between public length swimming and swim club use, the provision of a swim lane during public sessions and aquafit with a deep water public swim. For the purpose of analysis, the activity which uses the most water surface is considered the primary activity – i.e., a public swim session with one lane for length swimming is recorded as a public swim. Killarney Pool is not included in the analysis as it was under construction during this period.

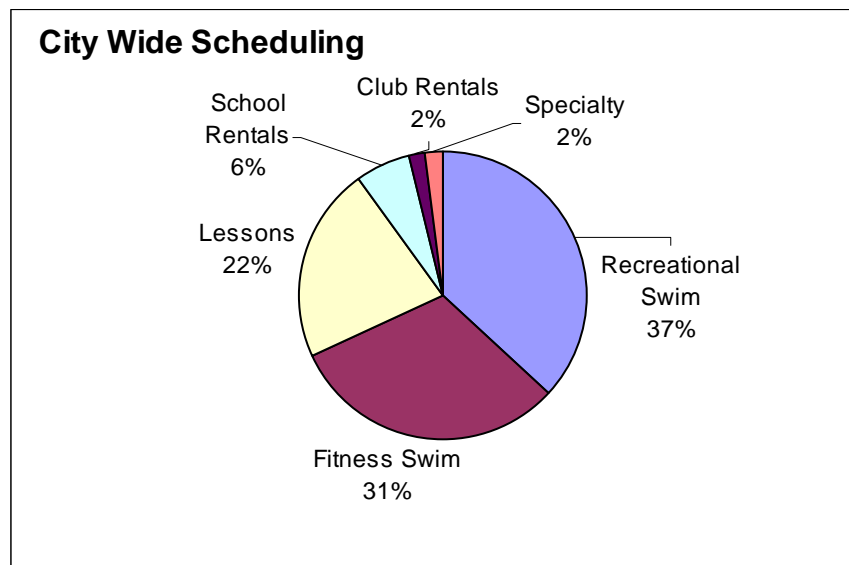
Scheduling During Operating Hours

The total scheduled hours of operation per week for the Park Board's 7 indoor pools was 617.5 hours per week. On average, the 25m pools are scheduled approximately 85 to 90

hours per week while the 50m Vancouver Aquatic Centre is scheduled at 100 hours per week. This figure does not include rentals outside of operating hours.

As the **Figure 2 - City Wide Scheduling Chart** indicates, the most prominent scheduled session is recreational swimming followed closely by fitness swimming. Lessons are scheduled into approximately 20% of the pools' hours of operation. Exclusive use by aquatic "clubs" is limited to less than 2% of the scheduled pool hours although this figure does not include shared use and or use outside operating hours by clubs.

Figure 2 - City Wide Scheduling



Does not include "after hours" use.

The scheduling of activities at the individual pools varies significantly depending on pool size, configuration and user demand. By virtue of size and tank configurations, larger facilities offer more diverse programming:

- tot pools allow for parent and tot sessions and preschool lessons;
- diving tanks allow for deep water swims, aquafit, lessons;
- 50 metre tank with bulkheads allow for sectional programming.

The size (50m) and configuration (bulkheads, dive tank and teach pool) at the Vancouver Aquatic Centre allows for the accommodation of multiple activities at any given time. This enables the scheduling of public sessions (swims or lengths) throughout the day while at the same time accommodating the demand for lessons, club and specialty programs. The VAC offers the public the most flexible or varied aquatic schedule of any Park Board pool.

Smaller facilities such as 25m pools do not have the water area to accommodate such programming thus they offer a less diverse program. The Board's 25m pools commit between 20 to 30 percent of their operating hours to lesson programs and this dramatically reduces the hours available for public sessions. The distribution of the types

of scheduled uses for the five 25m pools is shown in **Figure 3**, while **Figure 4** provides the same analysis for the two non 25m pools, and **Figure 5** compares a typical 25m and 50m pool (Kensington and VAC).

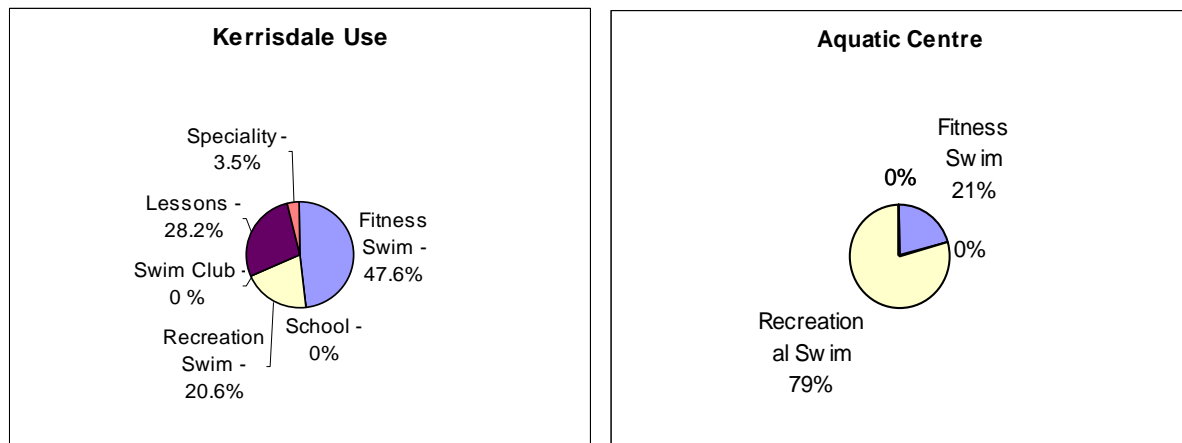
Figure 3 - Scheduling of 25m Pools

Schedule	Lord Byng	Kerrisdale	P Norman	Renfrew	Templeton
Fitness Swimming	37 %	51 %	37 %	38 %	37 %
Public Sessions	19 %	24 %	29 %	23 %	22 %
Lessons	27 %	25 %	20 %	32 %	20 %
Rentals - Schools	15 %	0 %	7 %	6 %	17 %
Swim Club	2 %	0 %	7 %	2 %	4 %
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100%	100 %

Figure 4 - Scheduling of Non 25m Pools

Schedule	Kensington	VAC
Fitness Swimming	14 %	17 %
Public Sessions	59 %	83 %
Lessons	27 %	Shared
Rentals – Schools	0 %	Shared
Swim Club	0 %	Shared
Total	100 %	100 %

Figure 5 - Scheduling for a 25m vs. 50 m Pool



Reviewing the daily schedules for Park Board pools reveals a very high degree of standardization/duplication in scheduling. The “base” weekday schedule for the 25 m pools is:

- an early morning length swim
- a mid morning aquafit

- a noon length swim
- after school to early evening lessons
- a mid evening aquafit
- an adult swim session

Lesson programs for school age children dominate Monday to Thursday during the after school to early evening session. This is due to a combination of demand and staff scheduling commitments (a 4 hour minimum staffing requirement). However, there is a significant difference in scheduling of public swims during this time period between individual pools. This is most evident when one compares Kerrisdale and Renfrew’s weekday schedules in **Figure 6**:

Figure 6 – Kerrisdale/Renfrew Schedules
Kerrisdale Pool **Renfrew Pool**

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
3:30	Lesson				Swim	3:30	Swim	Lesson	Swim	Lesson	Club
4:00						4:00					
4:30						4:30					
5:00						5:00	Lesson				
5:30						5:30					
6:00						6:00					
6:30						6:30		Swim		Swim	Swim
7:00						7:00					
7:30	Aqua	Aqua	Aqua	Aqua		7:30					
8:00	Fit	Fit	Fit	Fit		8:00	Swim		Swim		
8:30		Swim		Swim		8:30		Aqua		Aqua	
9:00						9:00		Fit		Fit	
9:30						9:30					

During Monday to Thursday 3:30 to closing timeframe, Kerrisdale Pool schedules lessons and adult programs while Renfrew Pool offers a balance of lessons, afternoon and early evening public swims and adult programs. Kerrisdale’s schedule does not provide opportunities for children or families to participate in public swimming during the week.

All 25m pools schedule public swim sessions on Friday afternoon and evening and all pools closing by 8:30 p.m. Weekend scheduling primarily starts at 9:00/9:30 am with length swim followed by lessons and public swim sessions. All of the 25m pools close by 6:00 p.m. on weekends.

Key Findings on Scheduling

1. The scheduling/programming of Park Board pools is influenced by:

Facilities – larger facilities can offer a more diverse program – i.e., size of water surface, availability of secondary tanks (teaching, diving);

Target Audience – the scheduling of children’s session restricted to after school and early evenings on weekdays or on weekends;

User Demand – there is a high demand for learn to swim classes, aquafit, etc;

Union Contract – 4 hour minimum call out combined with high demand for lessons has resulted in the scheduling of lessons over public sessions.

2. Most pools are programmed as multi-use facilities with more than one activity scheduled in the pool tank.

3. The current decentralized programming model has resulted in a standard/duplicate schedule. This has restricted swim opportunities (no public swims on Saturday/Sunday evenings after 6:00 p.m. at 25m pools). The current scheduling does not result in either an effective or efficient use of pools.

Recommendations for Scheduling

Two scheduling related recommendations are made:

Recommendation 2

To ensure the efficient and effective use of pools, it is recommended that scheduling decisions will be coordinated on a city wide and/or district level.

Recommendation 3

To ensure diversity in programming, it is recommended that pool schedules provide for a wide range of opportunities (a balanced program) with respect to day and time, including school and early evening access to public sessions, lessons, club access, etc.

2.4 Public User Profiles and Trends

Factors Affecting User Profiles and Data

User profiles for indoor pools are strongly influenced by the scheduling of activities, pool configuration and amenities. Examples of programming influencing the demographics of pool users include:

- the scheduling of fitness related activities/the provision of fitness centres attracts adult users;
- the scheduling of public swimming during the after school-early evening and weekends attracts more families as well as children and youth;
- support amenities such as teach pools will attract parents with pre-schoolers;
- speciality programs will attract specific age groups (seniors – gentle aquafit);

- higher risk programs or amenities such as rope swings, diving towers tend to attract more youth.

Thus, the current user profiles for individual pools should reflect programming as well as the provision of support amenities.

The Park Board collects limited data regarding the demographics of users of indoor pools. Sources of data include annual attendance figures, lesson registration and paid admissions and counts for strip ticket, flexi and leisure access pass use. In addition, the Board records the point of purchase (revenue) for strip tickets and passes. The most accurate sources of data are those which can be verified or audited through revenue – e.g., paid admissions, lesson registration and the point of purchase for strips tickets and flexi – passes. Annual attendance figures and the counts for flexi and leisure access pass use are based on staff estimates thus they may have a margin for error.

It is possible to further categorize some the “use” data collected for indoor pools. Revenue purchases can be broken down into age categories – child (under 12); youth (13-18 years), adult (19-64 years) and seniors (65+ years). Counts for pass and leisure access use are recorded by total use and not by age category. It is not possible to categorize use by activity – i.e., attendance for length swimming, public swimming or for a fitness centre.

Based on the information available, it is still possible to determine trends in pool user profiles. However, this requires that the following assumptions be made:

- strips and passes primarily reflect admission to programs and fitness swimming;
- strip/pass purchasers primarily use the facilities where they purchased the strip or pass;
- admissions primarily reflect admission to public swim sessions.

The rationale for these assumptions is based on the fact that to achieve the economic benefit of purchasing a pass requires the patron to attend more than 2 sessions per week. This frequency of use is typical for “fitness” users – i.e., those patrons attending length swimming, aquafit or a fitness centre. This is also true for strip tickets although a higher percentage would be purchased by “frequent” recreational swimmers. The majority of admission revenues are from casual users who are primarily recreational swimmers. This is especially true for those patrons charged the family admission fee as this fee category requires the attendance of at least one parent and child. However, this assumption should be adjusted for facilities with fitness centres as fitness centres have a higher drop-in use (admission) rate. Again, the data presented in this section are for 2005.

Public Admissions by Type

As previously mentioned, the most accurate data for admission to pools are paid single admissions as they are reconciled with revenues. **Figure 7** lists the totals (2005) for paid single admissions (paid admissions, loonie and toonie fees) as well as the annual estimates for total visits for public sessions and counts for strip tickets, flexi and leisure access pass use. There are significant discrepancies between the estimated attendance as

compared to the addition of admission, strip and pass counts for Kensington, Templeton, Percy Norman and Renfrew Pools.

Figure 7 – Totals of Admissions by Type

Pool	Estimated Annual Attendance	Counts	from	Point of	Sale	
	2005 Visits	Paid Admissions	Loonie Toonie	Leisure Access	Pass Strip	Total
Kensington	68,754	11,913	3,021	25,774	45,982	86,690
Lord Byng	76,098	13,409	4,962	5,319	49,922	73,612
Kerrisdale	57,886	7,869	5,201	8,125	32,904	54,099
Templeton	104,415	7,243	6,538	62,342	60,268	136,391
Percy Norman	106,424	12,032	11,305	39,648	64,962	127,947
Renfrew	98,034	18,103	6,014	37,018	48,356	109,491
VAC	249,347	49,265	3,998	32,770	161,780	247,813

A more detailed analysis can be conducted on admissions and strips and passes. It is important to note the pattern in estimated use by leisure access card holders at the 25m pools: for Lord Byng and Kerrisdale Pools, LAC use accounts for under 15 % of admissions; for pools with the fitness centre (Percy Norman, Kensington, and Renfrew), LAC use accounts for 30% of use; and at Templeton Pool, LAC use accounts for 45% of use. This use corresponds with the “income” demographics for the neighbourhoods surrounding the various pools – i.e., Templeton Pool should have a higher percentage of LAC visits due to lower household income as compared to the neighbourhoods surrounding either Kerrisdale or Lord Byng Pools.

Single Paid Admissions: The single paid admissions by individual pool are outlined in **Figure 8**. As previously mentioned, these figures do not include strip or flexi pass nor leisure access pass use.

Figure 8 – Paid Admissions

Indoor Pool Facility	Adult	Youth	Senior	Child	Family	Other	Total
Kensington Pool (Fitness Centre)	6,523	1,017	405	782	3,116	70	11,913
Kensington Pool (Fitness Centre)	55%	9%	3%	7%	26%	1%	100%
Lord Byng Pool	5,367	556	519	1,473	5,481	13	13,409
Lord Byng Pool	40%	4%	4%	11%	41%	0%	100%
Kerrisdale Pool	3,091	492	561	1,133	2,592		7,869
Kerrisdale Pool	39%	6%	7%	14%	33%	0%	100%
Templeton Pool	3,826	378	546	561	1,931	1	7,243
Templeton Pool	53%	5%	8%	8%	27%	0%	100%
Killarney Pool -closed in 2005							
Killarney Pool -closed in 2005							

P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	6,794	963	541	1,094	2,536	104	12,032
P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	56%	8%	4%	9%	21%	1%	100%
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	8,644	2,156	478	1,744	4,978	103	18,103
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	48%	12%	3%	10%	27%	1%	100%
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	36,361	1,481	1,042	1,677	8,690	14	49,265
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	74%	3%	2%	3%	18%	0%	100%
Grand Totals	70,605	7,043	4,092	8,464	29,324	305	119,833
% of total	59%	6%	3%	7%	24%	0%	100%

The key findings regarding paid admissions include:

- the programming flexibility of the 50m tank, as well as the provision of diving and teach tanks, enables the VAC to accommodate almost three times the paid admission of the most popular 25m pool (Renfrew);
- facilities with staffed fitness centres have higher adult admissions as compared to 25m pools;
- if the family rate is used as the best indicator of recreational swimming, then Lord Byng and Renfrew accommodate nearly double the swimmers as compared to Percy Norman and Kerrisdale in their public swim sessions.
- programming and amenities at Renfrew, Kensington and Percy Norman attract more youth as compared to the other 25m pools;
- drop-in pool use by seniors is constant through the city which is reflective of the similar daytime scheduling of activities – aquafit, noon lengths, mid day public swims.

Pool to pool differences that are of interest include:

- Lord Byng admissions are almost double as compared to neighbouring Kerrisdale Pool even though Kerrisdale schedules more public swim sessions per week.
- Renfrew has 50% more admissions as compared to Percy Norman pool which can be attributed to more after school and early evening public swim sessions at Renfrew.
- Kerrisdale and Templeton have similar total paid drop in admissions but very different neighbour demographics.

Strip Tickets: **Figure 9** outlines the number of strip passes purchased at each of the pools broken down into age groups.

Figure 9 – Strip Pass Purchases by Pool

Indoor Pool Facility	Adult	Youth	Senior	Child	Trainer	Total
Kensington Pool (Fitness Centre)	563	33	226	19	26	867
Kensington Pool (Fitness	65%	4%	26%	2%	3%	100%

Centre)						
Lord Byng Pool	1,412	56	480	127		2,075
Lord Byng Pool	68%	3%	23%	6%	0%	100%
Kerrisdale Pool	1,371	112	878	86		2,447
Kerrisdale Pool	56%	5%	36%	4%	0%	100%
Templeton Pool	468	22	169	22		681
Templeton Pool	69%	3%	25%	3%	0%	100%
P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	1,691	71	458	57	7	2,284
P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	74%	3%	20%	2%	0%	100%
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	997	152	299	81	4	1,533
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	65%	10%	20%	5%	0%	100%
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	5,225	87	510	159	3	5,984
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	87%	1%	9%	3%	0%	100%
Grand Totals	11,727	533	3,020	551	40	15,871
% of total	74%	3%	19%	3%	0%	100%

Analysis reveals that there is a fairly consistent purchase of strip tickets at 25m pools. However, Kerrisdale Pool sells more senior strip tickets and Kerrisdale and Renfrew Pools sell more youth strip tickets versus the other 25m pools. This is a reflection of the programming offered at these pools (i.e., aquatic programs for seniors at Kerrisdale Pool).

Flexi Passes: The sale of passes is reflective of “fitness” use, as the economic value of the passes requires more than twice a week use. Pools with extensive length swimming programs and fitness centres should have high pass sales. Since adults are the primary users of pools for fitness, they represent the majority of sales. The pass sales by pool (2005) are presented in **Figure 10**.

Figure 10 – Flexi Pass Purchases by Pool

Indoor Pool Facility	Adult	Youth	Senior	Child	Total
Kensington Pool (Fitness Centre)	1,740	203	148	23	2,114
Kensington Pool (Fitness Centre)	82%	10%	7%	1%	100%
Lord Byng Pool	522	27	137	10	696
Lord Byng Pool	75%	4%	20%	1%	100%
Kerrisdale Pool	417	37	205	9	668
Kerrisdale Pool	62%	6%	31%	1%	100%
Templeton Pool	661	24	99	6	790
Templeton Pool	84%	3%	13%	1%	100%
P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	1,551	103	299	11	1,964

Centre)					
P Norman Pool (Fitness Centre)	79%	5%	15%	1%	100%
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	2,029	175	288	25	2,517
Renfrew Pool (Fitness Centre)	81%	7%	11%	1%	100%
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	4,042	44	277	7	4,370
VAC Pool (Fitness Centre)	92%	1%	6%	0%	100%
Grand Totals	10,962	613	1,453	91	13,119
% of total	84%	5%	11%	1%	100%

The Vancouver Aquatic Centre issues the most passes as its facility size and configuration allows for more length swimming opportunities. For 25m pools, pools with staffed fitness centres issue double the passes of 25m pools without this amenity.

Kerrisdale, Lord Byng and Templeton issue similar numbers of passes although Kerrisdale issues significantly more senior passes and Templeton more adult passes. Use of Kerrisdale Pool by seniors is consistent with its neighbourhood demographics. Given the differential in income demographics between the neighbourhoods, it is surprising that Templeton issues more flexi passes than Lord Byng and Kerrisdale.

Lesson Participants

Registration in lesson programs for the Winter 2006 program session serves as the “snap shot” for the demographics of lesson participants. Unfortunately, detailed information for Kensington Pool was not available.

The age breakdown for lesson participants was:

- 14 % preschoolers
- 80% children and youth
- 5% adult
- 1% seniors

The vast majority of the Park Board lesson program is targeting children and youth. **Figure 11** provides a breakdown of lesson registration by age group and pool.

Figure 11 - Lesson Registration for Winter Session 2006

Age Group	Lord Byng	Kerrisdale	Templeton	P Norman	Renfrew	VAC
Preschool	151	120	58	150	121	204
Child/youth	686	888	418	1036	1221	345
Adult	58	29	37	29	49	81
Senior	23	11	0	8	2	2
Total	918	1048	513	1223	1393	632

Analyzing lessons participants by individual pools reveals that:

- Percy Norman and Renfrew have the largest lesson programs which is reflective of neighbourhood demographics (large child/youth populations) and scheduling;
- Templeton Pool has the smallest lesson program even though it has a teaching pool (neighbouring Britannia Pool has a larger lesson program);
- Vancouver Aquatic Centre has the largest preschool program – reflective of the neighbourhood’s changing demographic (more young families) and the existence of a teach pool.

Recommendations for General Public Use

In summary, the analysis indicates that the Park Board is primarily accommodating adults in public swim sessions and children and youth in lesson programs. Three recommendations are made for consideration by the Park Board.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that public swim sessions be provided at a variety of days and times to increase the use by children youth and seniors, including weekday afternoons and early evenings, weekend evenings, late nights, etc.

Recommendation 5

A more detailed analysis of pool use and user demand be completed for each pool, including programming influenced by local demographics and the rationalization of pool to pool differences identified in this report.

Recommendation 6

A consistent methodology for tracking use at all pools should be instituted, based on the implementation of pass scan software in 2007.

2.5 Scheduling of Rental Groups

Rental Groups Types

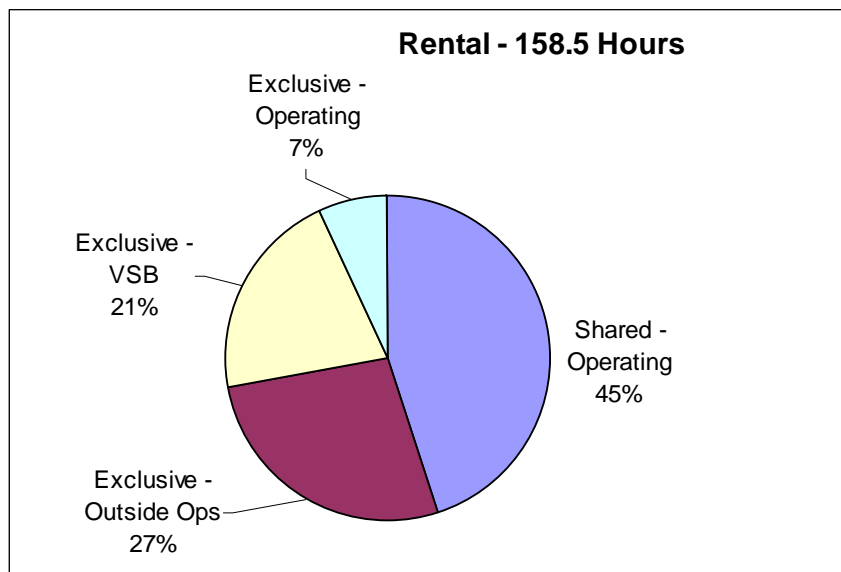
Schools and aquatic clubs are the two major rental groups. There are also occasional private rentals. School rentals include both public and private schools, with public elementary school use being the most common. Rental groups range from regularly scheduled (weekly) groups such as aquatic clubs to one time rental for special events (birthday parties). These rental groups utilize Park Board pools both during as well as outside of regular operating hours. Groups can either share or have exclusive use of the pool tank.

During the fall of 2005, “scheduled” groups rented 158.5 hours of pool time per week. This breaks down into:

- 11.5 hours of exclusive use during operating hours;
- 69.5 hours of shared use during operating hours;
- 43.5 hours of exclusive use outside of regular operating hours;
- 34 hours of exclusive use during operating hours by the Vancouver School Board, primarily at Lord Byng and Templeton Pools.

Figure 12 provides a breakdown of the rental group use of Vancouver’s indoor pools for the fall of 2005 in chart form.

Figure 12 - Scheduled Rental Use – Fall 2005



It is important to note that these rental figures only include regularly scheduled groups; they do not include one time or limited use rentals (e.g., once a month rentals).

Rental use by schools is only included if this use is included in individual pool’s weekly schedules. Lord Byng and Templeton Pools are located adjacent to high schools and have a reduced rental rate to encourage school use. Other than Lord Byng and Templeton Pool, most school use is not included as regularly scheduled use.

Aquatic Clubs in Vancouver

Aquatic clubs are community based organizations whose membership may consist of children, youth and adults. **Figure 13** indicates swim club membership while **Figure 14** provides membership information for other aquatic clubs for the 2006 season.

Figure 13 - Swim Club Membership in 2006

Club	Pool	Youth Member	Adult Members
Dolphin	VAC	110	60
English Bay	VAC		110
Gators	Killarney	50	
Masters	Percy Norman		23
Pace Makers	Templeton		10
Pacific Dolphins	Lord Byng	135	
Percy Norman	Percy Norman	15	
Super Sharks	Templeton	30	
Vikings	Lord Byng + Others	150	
Total	Swim Clubs	490	203

Figure 14 – Other Aquatic Clubs in 2006

Club	Pool	Youth Member	Adult Members
Divers	VAC	60	13
Triathlon	Templeton	27	8
Waves Syncro	Kerrisdale Templeton	20 30	
Vikings Water Polo	Kerrisdale	27	
Total	Aquatic Clubs	164	21

Almost 900 swimmers are registered in the city’s aquatic clubs - 75% of which are under the age of 19 years old. While club membership is relatively small, these groups are “intensive” users of Park Board indoor pools.

Current Policy for Rental Group Use

Aquatic Clubs: The allocation of pool time to swim clubs is currently guided by the Board’s Competitive Club Allocation Guidelines. Originally adopted by the Board in 1980, these Guidelines outline a pool allocation process which includes definitions for:

1. Allocation entitlements for swim clubs:
 maximum of 20 hours per week as pool schedule permits:
 1 hour prime Monday to Thursday; 2 hours prime on Friday;
 14 hours of non prime (depending on availability)
2. Swim meets
 one free day per club at Percy Norman (or VAC) per year
3. Prime and non prime time
 prime time - 10:00 am to 10:00 pm daily; weekend adjustment to non prime if more convenient for Park Board to schedule club use during prime time.
4. Cancellation requirements – 72 hours notice

Currently, these guidelines are only being loosely applied. This is not surprising given that the guidelines have not been officially updated in over 25 years. Allocations to groups are based more on historical use rather than the allocation guidelines. In addition, the guidelines are for swim clubs only, so there are no guidelines for diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, and other aquatic sports.

Schools: Historically, schools have been given preference with regards to bookings during the school day. In additions, Lord Byng and Templeton Pools are located adjacent to high schools and have a specific rental fee to encourage school use.

Best Practices for Rental Groups Allocation

The Task Force reviewed the club allocation policies for Surrey, Langley, Richmond and Guelph, Ontario. These policies were much more descriptive in terms of defining minor sport criteria, residence requirements and pool use measures. In addition, these policies significantly differed in their definition of prime and non prime time allocations.

Minor Sport Criteria: The policies for the lower mainland municipalities all defined a minimum percentage of registered members required to meet the definition for a minor sport – i.e., under the age of 19 years. These definitions were:

- Surrey: 80%
- Richmond: majority of program organized for children and teens
- Langley: 80%

All other groups are designated as adult groups.

In terms of priority of use, minor sport is given priority over adult groups for pool time allocations.

Residency Requirement: Policies generally outlined the minimum percentage of participants residing in the local municipality that is required to qualify for priority in the allocation of pool time. These percentages were:

- Surrey: 80%
- Richmond: 70%
- Langley: 50%

Groups from the local community are given preference over non community groups although most policies make allowances to waive residency for a set period of time to allow new groups to establish themselves in the community.

Advisory Boards: All of the lower mainland municipalities have allocation advisory boards made up of staff and user group representatives; Langley and Surrey have detailed terms of reference for their boards. Although the aquatic staff are responsible for allocating pool time as per policy, the boards provide staff with advice on pool allocation. The meetings serve as a forum to discuss and make recommendations regarding pool use and allocation, efficiencies, etc. However, any changes in policy are the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Pool Use Measures: The City of Surrey has adopted the following standard units to measure pool usage in order to make fair and equitable decisions regarding the allocation of pool time:

- One lane hour is equal to one rental hour multiplied by the number of 25m lanes available in the pool:
 - 25 m pool – six lanes = 6 lane hours
 - 50 m pool – eight lanes = 16 lane hours

Thus, for the Park Board’s 25m pools, one hour of exclusive use is equivalent to 6 lane hours; for the VAC – one hour of eight 50 m lanes is equal to 16 lane hours. Diving tanks, teach pools and Kensington Pool are not included in the analysis in this measure.

Aquatic Club Use

The accompanying **Figures 15-17** illustrate current use of pools by aquatic clubs using Surrey’s measurement of pool use. **Figure 15** indicates club use by pool and whether the club’s use is shared or exclusive.

Figure 15 – Club Use by Pool

Pool	Total Lane Hours	Percentage of Total Hours	Exclusive Use Lane Hours	Shared Use Lane Hours
Percy Norman	56	6 %	30	26
Renfrew	33	4 %	30	3
Lord Byng	85	10 %	45	40
Kerrisdale	66.5	8 %	32	34.5
Templeton	88.5	9 %	36	52.5
VAC	562.5	63 %	NA	NA

The VAC accommodates over 60% of the Board’s total use by aquatic clubs. This is primarily due to the size and sectional design of the pool’s 50m tank which allows for multi-use programming and shared usage of this facility. Individually, the Board’s 25m pools accommodate the same level of exclusive use, but vary significantly on the level of shared use by clubs.

Figure 16 provides an analysis of aquatic club use by day and time.

Figure 16 – Club Use by Period

Club Use	Lane Hours	% Of Use
Monday AM	35.25	4 %
Monday PM	55.25	6 %
Tuesday AM	19	2 %
Tuesday PM	139	16%
Wednesday AM	37.25	4%
Wednesday PM	53	6%
Thursday AM	17.5	2%
Thursday PM	136	15%
Friday AM	31	4%
Friday PM	70.75	8%
Saturday AM	122	14%
Saturday PM	42	5
Sunday AM	123.5	14%
Sunday PM	10	1%

This analysis reveals that the highest use by clubs occurs on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons/early evenings (31% of use) and on weekend mornings (27% of use). Correlating exclusive/shared use with day and time use indicates that weekday use is primarily shared while weekend use is primarily exclusive use. In addition, the exclusive weekend use is outside of regular operating hours.

Figure 17 illustrates the lane hours allocated to the various aquatic clubs and their estimated 2005 membership.

Figure 17 – Allocation by Aquatic Club

Swim Club	Lane Hrs	Membership
Dolphins	335	170
English Bay	141.5	110
Pacific	78	135
Gators	64	50
Percy Norman	42	15
Super Sharks	20	30
Vikings	8	150

Masters	7.5	23
Pace Makers	6	10
Waves Syncro	42	50
Triathlon – Jr.	9	27
Triathlon – Sr.	6	8
Vikings Water Polo	110	27

Analyzing pool time allocated to the various clubs reveals that there are significant differences in lane hours allocated between club types. The programming of swim clubs allows for the shared use of facilities, thus pool time can be accessed throughout the day. Sports such as water polo or synchronized swimming require exclusive use of 25m tanks, restricting their access to outside a pool's regular hours of operation (usually weekends). In addition, competitive clubs such as the Dolphins require more training time than recreational clubs.

Recommendations on Rental Group Allocation

The Task Force recommends the following actions be incorporated into a new Rental Group Allocation Policy:

Recommendation 7

That an Aquatics Advisory Committee be established to advise the City on the allocation of pool time to aquatics clubs.

Recommendation 8

That a new Rental Group Allocation Policy be developed based on:

- the adoption of the City of Surrey's pool use measures as standard unit of measure for club use;
- minor sport groups be given priority over adult groups in the allocation of pool time;
- local sport groups be given priority over non local groups in the allocation of pool time;
- minor sport groups are defined as having 80% of the membership under the age of 19 (standardizes definition with rink allocation policy);
- community groups are defined as having 70% of the membership from the local community (allowances are to be made to waive residency for a set period of time to allow new groups to establish themselves in the community or for sports organized on a regional level);
- the new Aquatics Advisory Committee will establish terms of reference to review pool allocation for aquatic clubs;
- the scheduling of aquatic club use is coordinated on a city wide level to ensure fair and equitable access to pool time as well as a balanced aquatic program;
- exclusive uses of pool time should primarily occur outside regular operating hours (excluding special events).

3. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Operating Budgets

The costs of operating indoor pools are partially offset by revenues from admission fees, lesson programs and pool rentals. The net operating loss (subsidy) for indoor pools is incorporated in the annual Park Board operating budget. The Board can influence pool revenues by encouraging increased use of the facilities through scheduling and marketing and/or by adjusting the fees and charges for aquatic programs and services. The Board can also ensure that the indoor pools are operated in a cost efficient manner. Both of these approaches can result in decreased subsidization of the indoor pools.

The Park Board operating budget reflects the day to day operations for indoor pool. This budget does not include costs associated with major maintenance repairs or capital improvements. Major maintenance repairs include structural repairs to the pool tank, building and physical plant. The annual cost for these repairs ranges from \$100,000 to \$150,000 per pool.

Figure 18 - Net Cost Budget vs. Actual Cost - illustrates the trend in indoor pool operations since 2001. During the past five years, there has been a fairly consistent discrepancy between the expected costs vs. the actual costs to the Park Board. For four of the past five years, actual costs have exceeded expected costs. For 2005, indoor pool costs were approximately \$160,000 more than expected.

Figure 18 - Net Cost Budget vs. Actual Cost

Year	Budget	Actual	Difference	%
2005	2,192,799	2,351,668	(158,869)	107
2004	2,129,900	2,246,403	(116,503)	105
2003	1,995,100	2,122,297	(127,197)	106
2002	2,141,500	2,061,192	80,308	96
2001	2,090,600	2,453,712	(363,112)	117

(excluding Killarney and Renfrew Pools)

Operating costs for the pools can be broken down into expenditures (payroll, operating expenses, city equipment costs, utilities) which are offset by revenues and cost recoveries. While pool revenues have exceed budgeted projections since 2002, operating costs to achieve this level of service have increased even more - creating additional operating losses of between \$ 116,000 to \$159,000 per year.

Figure 19 better illustrates where the net differences between budget and actual revenues and expenditures occurred from 2002 to 2005. The expenditure categories used are payroll, utilities and other expenses (equipment, supplies, chemicals, etc.)

Figure 19 – Budget/Cost Differences by Category in 2005

Category	2002	2003	2004	2005
Revenue	123,508	175,938	260,565	156,869
Payroll	(18,724)	(219,839)	(337,657)	(272,659)
Expenses	(65,594)	(82,251)	(83,377)	(98,543)
Utilities	41,118	(1,045)	43,966	55,464
Total - City Wide Indoor Pools	80,308	(127,197)	(116,503)	(158,869)

(excluding Killarney and Renfrew Pools)

It appears that revenue budgets have been conservative, while regular over-expenditures have occurred primarily in payroll, along with other expense types to a lesser extent.

Many recreation facilities that generate revenues use “Recovery Rate” as a prime indicator of fiscal performance. Recovery rate is the ratio of revenues to expenditures, so a recovery rate of 80% means that actual revenues amounted to 80% of actual expenditures. The estimated recovery rates for Vancouver’s indoor pools in the *Aquatic Services Review* was 40%, but this figure was impacted by inconsistencies in what was included in the budgets, especially when the pool is a part of a larger complex. Recovery rate can be a valuable management tool, but consistency is required for year-to-year comparisons for individual facilities and between facilities of the same type.

Focus of the Following Sections

The revenue analysis in Section 3.2 includes a review of the sources of pool revenue (admissions, lesson registration, and rentals), current fees and charges schedule (rates, prime/non prime designation) as well as best “financial” practices from other cities. The expenditure analysis in Section 3.3 will primarily focus on payroll, but will also comment on expenses and utilities. The staffing analysis in Section 3.4 will focus on pool operations, office and maintenance support as well as the relationship between payroll and pool revenue. It is important to note that annual and individual pool revenues/expenditures have been impacted by the closures of Renfrew and Killarney Pools.

Recommendation on Budget Analysis

Recommendation 9
 It is recommended that a consistent budget format be created for individual pools to be able to measure expenditures, revenues, and recovery rates so that valid annual budget comparisons can be made for each pool and between pools.

3.2 Revenue Analysis

Sources of revenue for indoor pools include admissions, programs and rentals. In addition, the revenues from the sale of goods, childcare and adjoining fitness centres may be included in revenues for some indoor pools. The differences in revenue opportunities

are reflected in the revenue projections for the individual pools. These projections are adjusted to reflect the facility's revenue history as well as for economic access considerations - i.e., Leisure Access Card discounts. This is best illustrated when comparing the revenue projections for Templeton and Lord Byng Pools – Templeton's revenue projection is approximately \$135,000 lower than Lord Byng's projection due to its history of Leisure Access discounts as well as lower lesson revenue. Due to this variety in revenue sources and economic access considerations, direct comparisons between pools should be limited to similar facilities with similar amenities.

Figure 20 provides revenue comparisons between facilities that are of similar sizes and amenities.

Figure 20 – Revenue Comparisons by Pool Type

Pool	Description	Additional Revenue Source	Revenue Projection 2005 Budget
Kensington	Small leisure pool	Fitness Centre	\$ 257,300
Lord Byng	25m pool with weightroom		\$ 349,700
Kerrisdale	25m pool		\$ 365,800
Templeton	25m pool - teach/weightroom		\$ 214,400
Killarney	25m pool		Closed
Percy Norman	25m pool with dive tank	Fitness Centre	\$ 430,400
Renfrew	25m pool	Fitness Centre	\$ 558,300
Van Aquatic Centre	50m pool with dive/teach tanks	Fitness Centre	\$ 886,500

Direct comparisons of annual indoor pool revenue is not possible due to the closure of Renfrew (February) and Killarney (July) Pools in 2004 for capital improvements. Renfrew Pool's drop in revenue in 2003 is attributed to loss swim lesson revenue usually received in December for the Winter 2004 session. Total revenues from indoor pools from 2002 to 2005 are outlined in **Figure 21**.

Figure 21 - Indoor Pool Revenue by Facility

Activity	2002 Actual	2003 Actual	2004 Actual	2005 Actual
Kensington Revenue	(240,336)	(257,883)	(308,576)	(297,253)
Kerrisdale Revenue	(327,849)	(347,030)	(355,158)	(356,098)
Lord Byng Revenue	(355,467)	(400,837)	(395,636)	(387,106)
Templeton Revenue	(211,983)	(233,133)	(277,531)	(217,698)
Killarney Revenue	(392,854)	(385,910)	(162,751)	(2,020)
Percy Norman Revenue	(435,799)	(435,011)	(502,133)	(507,167)
Renfrew Revenue	(526,292)	(359,004)	(51,760)	(460,762)
VAC Revenue	(848,127)	(861,509)	(859,358)	(895,612)
Indoor Pool Revenue				

(all Pools)	(3,338,706)	(3,280,317)	(2,912,903)	(3,123,716)
Indoor Pool Revenue (excluding Killarney and Renfrew Pools)	(2,419,560)	(2,535,403)	(2,698,392)	(2,660,934)

Comparing actual annual revenues for individual pools draws the following conclusions:

1. the Vancouver Aquatic Centre (50m pool) generates approximately 75% to 95% more revenue compared to a 25m pool with similar amenities;
2. annual revenue for the city's pools furthest away from the pools closures (Lord Byng, Kerrisdale and VAC) appear to be stable.

It is interesting to note the impact the closures of Killarney and Renfrew Pools had on the revenues for the remaining pools. Overall annual revenue dropped by approximately \$370,000 from 2003 to 2004 while the annual revenue for the remaining pools increased only by \$163,000. The remaining pools were successful in capturing approximately 45% of the overall revenue loss from the closures at Killarney or Renfrew Pools.

Closer analysis of the source of revenue from the remaining pools indicates that admissions actually decreased between 2003 and 2004 while lesson registration (+15%) and rentals (+20%) increased significantly between 2003 and 2004. This suggests that lesson patrons and rental groups which were displaced due to the capital improvements at Killarney and Renfrew were to some degree accommodated at other Park Board pools but the Park Board was not successful in capturing the revenue from public sessions lost from the closure of Killarney or Renfrew Pools.

Sources of Pool Revenue

The primary source of pool revenue is admission fees followed by lesson registration and rentals. Over the past four years, approximately 53% of indoor pool revenue came from admissions (admission, strip tickets and passes); 35% from learn to swim programs; and 9% from rental groups such as the Vancouver School Board and swim/diving clubs.

The various contributions of revenue sources are shown in **Figure 22**.

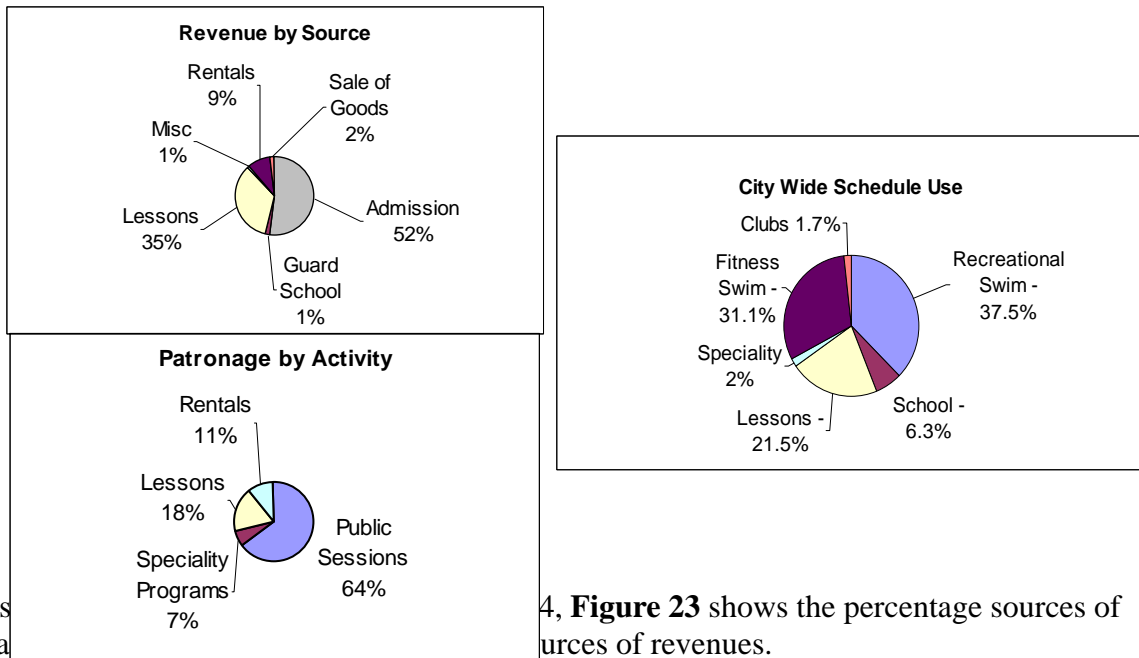
Figure 22 - Annual Indoor Pool Revenue by Source

Activity	2002	2003	2004	2005
City Wide Admissions	(1,753,925)	(1,736,915)	(1,515,331)	(1,687,484)
City Wide Childcare	(3,830)	(4,152)	(3,878)	(4,484)
City Wide Fitness	(16,632)	(15,061)	(15,100)	(9,174)
City Wide Lessons	(1,218,681)	(1,194,459)	(1,052,629)	(1,070,726)
City Wide Misc.	(2,811)	(5,076)	(2,579)	
City Wide Rentals	(298,498)	(276,509)	(273,878)	(302,318)
City Wide Sale of Goods	(44,330)	(48,146)	(49,510)	(49,530)
City Wide Revenue	(3,338,706)	(3,280,317)	(2,912,903)	(3,123,716)

Correlating the source of revenue with scheduling and patronage statistics reveals that:

- public sessions are allocated approximately 70% of pool time, accommodate 64% of the patronage and 53% of revenue;
- learn to swim programs are allocated approximately 22% of pool time, accommodate 18% of the patronage and generate 35% of the revenue;
- rental programs are allocated approximately 9% of pool time (during operating hours), accommodate 11% of the patronage and generate 9% of the revenue.

These respective revenue contributions in comparison to types of uses and time allocation are shown in pie-chart form below.



4, Figure 23 shows the percentage sources of sources of revenues.

Figure 23 - Sources of Individual Pool Revenue by Activity

Activity	VAC	Kensington	City Wide	Renfrew	P Norman
Admissions	70%	61%	53%	54%	52%
Lessons	10%	35%	35%	37%	41%
Rentals	12%	2%	9%	9%	3%
Other	8%	2%	3%	0%	4%
Activity	Templeton	Kerrisdale	Lord Byng	Killarney	
Admissions	46%	41%	38%	30%	
Lessons	37%	53%	49%	60%	
Rentals	17%	6%	12%	10%	
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	

An analysis of revenue sources for individual pools illustrates the significant differences in the primary source of revenues for pools. This is attributed to differences in the scheduling or programming of sessions, facility size and configuration, neighbourhood

demographics and marketing. The higher admission revenues at Vancouver Aquatic Centre, Percy Norman and Renfrew Pools can be attributed to the inclusion of fitness centre admissions. The Vancouver Aquatic Centre is located in a more adult community thus the pool has a stronger demand for public sessions (more scheduled hours per week) and less of a demand for learn to swim lessons. In addition, its 50m tank and diving tower allows for simultaneous accommodation of public sessions, lessons as well as rentals groups such as swim and diving clubs. Historically, Lord Byng, Kerrisdale and Killarney Pools have had a strong lesson program and this has translated into scheduling more hours for lessons and fewer hours for public sessions.

Admission Revenue

Admission revenues consist of paid admission, strip ticket and monthly pass fees. Admission revenues for Kensington, Percy Norman, Renfrew and the Vancouver Aquatic Centre also include fitness centre admissions. **Figure 24** breaks the admission revenues into the three admission types by pool.

Figure 24 – Admission Revenue Types by Pool

Pool	Admission Revenue	Percent	Strip Tkt Revenue	Percent	Pass Revenue	Percent	Total Revenue
Templeton	32,254	29.7%	20,118	18.5%	56,349	51.8%	108,722
Kerrisdale	30,391	21.6%	69,800	49.7%	40,263	28.7%	140,453
Lord Byng	53,742	35.0%	59,580	38.8%	40,046	26.1%	153,369
Kensington	45,965	26.3%	29,408	16.8%	99,407	56.9%	174,780
Percy Norman	45,200	20.1%	69,219	30.7%	110,878	49.2%	225,296
Renfrew	68,050	27.0%	42,342	16.8%	141,690	56.2%	252,082
Aquatic Centre	198,124	31.4%	195,565	31.0%	237,025	37.6%	630,715
Total	473,726	28.1%	486,032	28.8%	725,659	43.1%	1,685,417

As outlined in the Pool User Profile section, the following assumptions have been made to determine trends in pool use:

- strip tickets and passes primarily reflect admission to fitness swimming and programs as well as to fitness centres;
- strip/pass purchasers primarily use the facilities where they purchased the strip ticket or pass;
- admissions primarily reflect admission to public swim sessions.

Based on these assumptions and rationale, the following conclusions can be made:

- the majority of revenue from admission revenue is from passes/strip tickets and thus are fitness users – lengths, aquafit and fitness centre participants. This is

- most prevalent at pools with fitness centres – Kensington, Percy Norman and Renfrew;
- the size (50m tank, fitness centre and diving and teach tanks) and variety of programming enables the VAC to have 37% of the Board’s total indoor pool admission revenue; the VAC’s admission revenue is approximately three times higher than a 25m pool with a fitness centre (Renfrew);
 - the scheduling of more public sessions during the week explains the \$23,000 difference in admissions between Renfrew and Percy Norman Pools.

These conclusions are consistent with those made in the User Profile section.

Lessons Revenue

Lesson revenue is primarily from program registration in preschool, children and adult learn to swim programs. **Figure 25** indicates that annual lesson revenue (demand) is fairly stable, especially at Kerrisdale and Lord Byng Pools. Lesson revenue increases in 2004/05 at Kensington, Templeton and Percy Norman Pools can be attributed to the extended closures at Renfrew and Killarney Pools.

Figure 25 - Annual Lesson Revenue

Indoor Pool	2002	2003	2004	2005
Kensington Lesson	(84,710)	(87,412)	(120,919)	(113,705)
Kerrisdale Lesson	(176,363)	(177,849)	(196,830)	(182,901)
Lord Byng Lesson	(172,178)	(199,282)	(196,921)	(180,635)
Templeton Lesson	(77,637)	(85,688)	(104,084)	(78,109)
Killarney Lesson	(231,142)	(236,216)	(81,760)	66
Percy Norman Lesson	(160,146)	(176,891)	(239,564)	(214,991)
Renfrew Lesson	(210,579)	(115,066)	83	(177,561)
VAC Lesson	(77,079)	(85,151)	(77,290)	(122,890)
City Wide Lessons	(1,189,833)	(1,163,554)	(1,017,284)	(1,070,726)

The increase in lesson revenue at the Vancouver Aquatic Centre can be attributed to significant increase in the preschool lessons program – reflective of the neighbourhood’s changing demographic (more young families) and the existence of a teach pool.

Rental Revenue

Rental revenue consists of school rentals, aquatic club use and a small number of private pool parties. School rentals occur during the school day, aquatic club use includes shared use during and exclusive use outside operating hours while private rentals occur outside

operating hours. As the chart indicates revenues have remained fairly stable even during the Renfrew and Killarney closure periods.

Rental revenue is related to rental activity and is influenced by historical use and the home base of aquatic clubs. The 50m tank at the VAC allows for the accommodation of multiple aquatic clubs. Percy Norman and Lord Byng historically have accommodated more aquatic club use. As a result, there is not an even distribution of rental revenue between the 25m pools as illustrated in **Figure 26**.

Figure 26 - Annual Rental Revenue

Indoor Pool	2002	2003	2004	2005
Kensington Rental	(4,079)	(4,615)	(3,028)	(5,171)
Kerrisdale Rental	(18,980)	(19,769)	(12,576)	(26,620)
Lord Byng Rental	(41,415)	(43,222)	(46,052)	(44,887)
Templeton Rental	(35,652)	(40,424)	(44,170)	(30,867)
Killarney Rental	(40,731)	(32,685)	(18,122)	(19)
Percy Norman Rental	(13,895)	(10,464)	(22,664)	(56,908)
Renfrew Rental	(40,035)	(31,161)	(69)	(31,119)
VAC Rental	(103,711)	(94,170)	(127,198)	(106,728)
City Wide Rentals	(298,498)	(276,509)	(273,878)	(302,318)

3.3 Fees and Charges

Aquatic user fees are approved annually by the Park Board. The general policy for Park Board fees and charges is to establish an adult rate and then discount this rate by 25% (youth) to 50% (child) to determine a subsidized rate. To encourage pool use in off peak time periods, the Board further discounts rental fees by 50% during these times.

Historically, the adult rate has been based on comparisons with related service providers including other municipalities, other non-profits and the private sector. Fees for pool use can be split into two categories: a) Admission Fees (single, strip tickets and passes), and b) Rental Fees (prime, non prime, school, minor sport, etc.). Besides single paid admissions, the following multiple admission options are available for regular users:

- Strip Tickets – volume admission discounts, with 10 admissions for the cost of eight single admissions.
- Flexi Pass – unlimited access to Park Board aquatic and fitness facilities; sold in monthly increments and based on one, three, six and twelve months.
- Leisure Access Pass – a program which enables individuals on government assistance or low income, unlimited access to public swimming programs and a 50% discount for lesson registration.

Admission Fees

The Board's current fee schedule for single admissions, strip tickets and passes is inline with those in surrounding municipalities. The City of Vancouver's partial 2007 Admission Fee Schedule is as follows:

Single Admissions

- Adult - \$4.85
- Child - \$2.45
- Youth - \$3.65
- Senior - \$3.40
- Other: Fees at Killarney are approximately 10% higher; a family is charged at the child rate with a minimum charge of \$4.50 for one adult and one child; and children 5 and under are free if accompanied by an adult.

Strip Tickets (10)

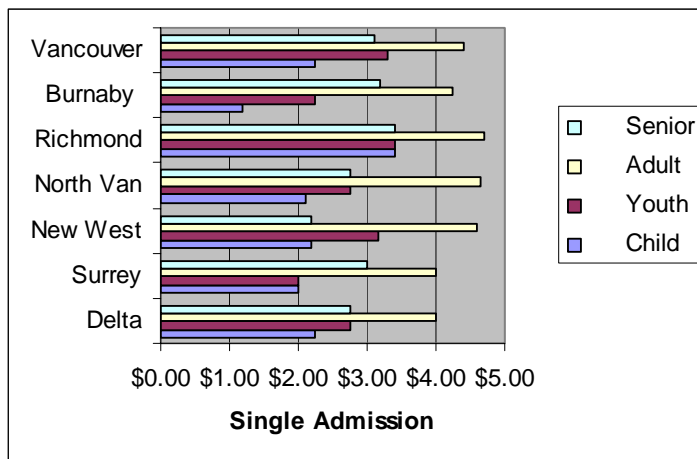
- Adult - \$38.85
- Child - \$19.40
- Youth - \$29.15
- Senior - \$27.20
- Other: Strip tickets of 20 are also provided; Killarney strip tickets are approximately 10% higher.

Flexi Pass (one month and one year)

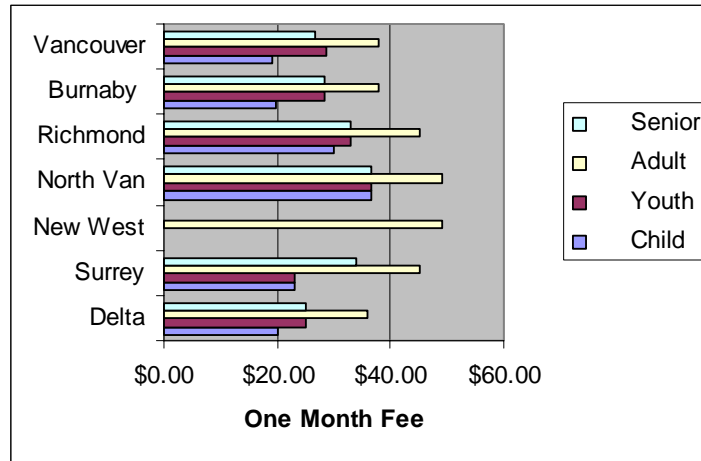
- Adult - \$39.00 and \$320
- Child - \$19.50 and \$160
- Youth - \$29.25 and \$240
- Senior - \$27.35 and \$240
- Other – three and six month Flexi Passes are also offered.

Figure 27 provides a comparison with other 2006 Lower Mainland municipalities for standard 25m pools.

Figure 27 – 2006 Fee Comparisons on the Lower Mainland



One Month Pass Fee



Standard 25m pool

Rental Fees

The Park Board 2005 fee schedule for pool rentals consists of private rental rates and aquatic club rates. These are shown in **Figure 28**

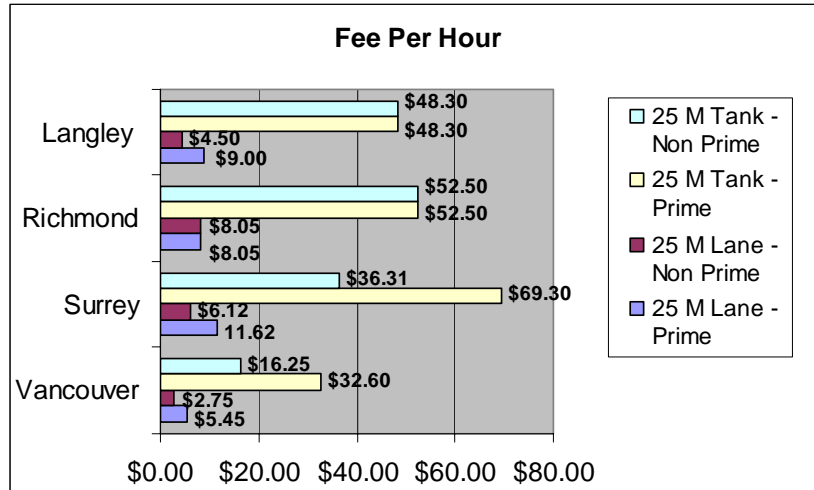
Figure 28 - 2005 Rental Schedule – Indoor Pools

Facility Rental	Regular Rate	Aquatic Club Rate	Percent of Regular Rate
50m Tank	\$267.50	\$104.85	39.2%
50m Lane	\$33.90	\$13.40	39.5%
25m Tank	\$101.35	\$33.50	33.1%
25m Lane	\$17.20	\$5.60	32.6%

Although aquatic club rates were originally applicable to youth clubs, the rate is currently being applied to a number of adult groups. The percentage discounts given to aquatic clubs are similar to the discount given to minor sport groups using ice rinks. However, adult rink users are charged the regular rental rates.

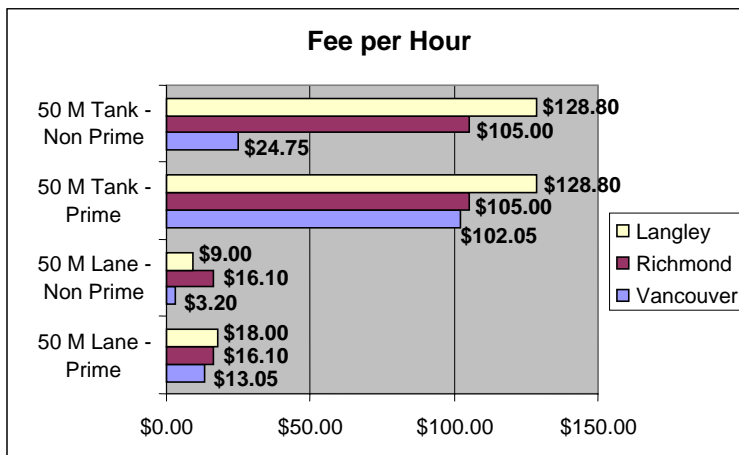
Best Practices: Overall, Park Board rental rates are in-line with other municipal private rental rates, but are significantly lower for minor sport and adult club rates (for both prime and non prime time). The best examples are the fee schedules for minor sport groups for 25m and 50m pools in **Figure 29** for both lanes and the whole tank.

Figure 29 - 25m and 50m Pool Minor Sport Rental Fees



Surrey’s 25m rental rates for minor sport use are more than double the Park Board’s rate while Richmond and Langley’s fee are 25% to 50% more than Vancouver. All three municipalities have strong youth aquatic clubs. The higher fees in these municipalities do not appear to be a deterrent to participation in aquatic club activities. The differences in fees are most evident for non prime time use of 50m pools as shown in Figure 30.

Figure 30 – 50 Meter Pool Rental Fees



Fees for the prime time use of the Vancouver Aquatic Centre are fairly consistent with those charged in other municipalities. The Board’s non prime fees are significantly less, however, than those charged in Richmond and Langley.

Overall, compared to Vancouver’s current fee structure, surrounding municipalities’ fee structures are designed to recover more from subsidized groups.

Prime – Non Prime Fees Definitions

The concept for designating a prime and non prime price structure is to encourage use by discounting rental fees during traditional low demand periods. Currently, Vancouver uses the 1980 Policy defines prime and non prime time as:

- Prime: Daily 10 am to 10 pm;
- Non Prime: Daily 10 pm and 10 am.

These time definitions for prime and non prime time do not appear to match the demand for pool time. There is strong demand for weekday before school and early mornings on weekends by aquatic clubs.

Best Practices: Figure 31 shows how other municipalities define prime and non prime.

Figure 31 – Comparison Definitions

Municipality	Prime Hours	Non Prime Hours
Surrey	Mon to Fri 6am to 8 am Mon to Fri 3 pm to 10 pm Sat – Sun 6 am to 10 pm	Daily 10 pm to 6 am Mon to Fri 8 am to 3 pm
Langley	Daily 8am to 10pm	Daily 10 pm to 8 am
Vancouver	Daily 10am to 10pm	Daily 10pm and 10am

Langley’s definition of prime/non prime hours is fairly similar to the Park Board’s; prime time, however, begins daily at 8:00 am instead of 10:00 am. Surrey’s schedule for prime/non prime reflects higher demand levels as prime time is defined any time expect late night and during the school day.

Adult Groups

Discussion during Task Force deliberations focused on the rationale for subsidizing “adult” programming as well as the priority of allocation of prime pool time to subsidized adult groups. As a matter of policy, economic need not affiliation serves as the rationale for the Park Board’s discounting of adult fees and charges. Age group financial discounts are usually reserved for children/youth programming.

A number of the adult group activities are similar to those organized/programmed by Board – e.g., master swimming during length swims. It does not appear to be equitable that adult programming such as masters swimming should be eligible for discounted pool rates over regular adult users.

Best Practices: Adult or mixed age group activities do qualify for a discounted rate in a number of other jurisdictions, however this is at a rate substantially more than the minor sport rate. Comparisons between minor and adult sport rental rates for 25m tanks among Lower Mainland municipalities are shown in **Figure 32**.

Figure 32 – Minor and Adult Sport Comparisons

Municipality	Minor Sport	Adult Non Profit	Private
Surrey	\$ 69.30	\$ 162.64	\$ 218.43
Burnaby	\$ 60.50	\$ 60.50	\$ 163.71
Delta	\$ 55.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 165.00

Richmond	\$ 49.50	\$ 183.10	\$ 183.10
Vancouver	\$ 32.60	\$ 32.60	\$ 101.35

The Park Board’s adult club use rate is not in line with other municipalities. In fact, it is approximately three to five times below the adult rate in other municipalities.

Recommendations on Rental Fees and Charges

The admission fees for the City of Vancouver are appropriate and in line with best practices. Group rental fees, however, need to be reviewed. While there was not full consensus around the following recommendations, it is felt that they are appropriate.

Recommendation 10
 As a general policy, the Task Force recommends that youth groups qualify for subsidized pool fees. The subsidized fees would apply to programs for youth and affiliated programs for those under the age of 19 years.

Recommendation 11
 Fees for programs which have mixed aged group will be based on the following criteria:
 - if participation is of a mixed age group during the rental period (adult participation is greater than 20%), the adult non-subsidized rate will be applied to those hours.

Recommendation 12
 The Board consider introducing a new adult club rate at a level similar to the fees charged in other Lower Mainland for introduction in the Fall of 2007.

3.4 Staff Analysis

Indoor pools are staffed with a combination of full time, regular part time and auxiliary employees performing programming, guarding/instructing, fitness, cashiering and maintenance activities. Overall management of the indoor pool operation is the responsibility of Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics. This position has responsibility as the primary Park Board aquatic resource representative in the development, co-ordination and management of aquatic programs, facilities and staff throughout the City. Functioning as an effective collaborative team leader and liaison, this position facilitates a city wide aquatic programming staff team in developing quality and cost effective programs for both indoor and outdoor aquatic opportunities. The responsibilities of this

position are carried out through the development of partnering relationships with various Park Board staff associated with the delivery of aquatic programs.

At the local level, each indoor pool is assigned a Recreation Programmer II who is responsible for the programming of the facility. The VAC and Percy Norman Pools are assigned an additional Recreation Programmer II to program their attached fitness centres. The programmers report to complex supervisor – either a Community Recreation Coordinator or a Recreation Supervisor.

Aquatic operations are performed by regular full time, regular part time and auxiliary Swim Instructor Attendants (SIA's). Support services are provided by Head Cashiers, Cashiers, Building Service Workers, and Utility Maintenance Workers. **Figure 33** outlines the 2005 guarding, office and maintenance staffing levels for regular full time and regular part time for each pool, by position.

Figure 33 - 2005 Staffing Levels by Position

Pool	Regular	Full	Time	Staff	Regular	Part Time
	Swim Instructor	Head Cashier	Utility Maint. Worker	Building Service Worker	Swim Instructor	Cashier
Kensington	1				1	2
Kerrisdale	2	1	1			
Killarney	2		1		2	
Lord Byng	2	1	1		1	
Percy Norman	2	1	2		2	
Renfrew	2	1	2		2	1
Templeton	2	1	1		2	1
VAC	3	2	4	3	2	3

Note: Table does not include pool programmer or maintenance technician positions.

This analysis illustrates that there is not consistency in the assignment or reporting of staff costs for indoor pools. While all pools have cashier and maintenance costs, these positions may be charged to another operating budget (e.g., Kensington and Killarney cashiers are charged to the community centre). Thus, direct budget comparisons between pools must be viewed with caution.

Core Staffing – 25m Pools: Based on current and historical staffing, the core full time staff levels for a 25m pool are defined as:

Pool Operations	Maintenance	Office
Recreation Programmer Swim Instructor Attendant (2)	Utility Maintenance Worker	Head Cashier

Each facility operation is supplemented with auxiliary and regular part time positions and the level of funding depends on attendance, programming and scheduling requirements. The core full time staffing for each of the indoor pools is fairly consistent. The only significant deviation is funding of an extra maintenance position at Percy Norman and Renfrew Pools. This will be further analyzed in the Maintenance Operations section.

Analyzing Staff Costs

There are various methods to analyze and evaluate staffing costs for indoor pools. As previously mentioned, staff costs can be broken down into three categories – pool operation costs, maintenance costs and office costs. The level of staffing required depends on pool attendance, programming and scheduling requirements. These factors may be summarized as follows:

- pools with higher attendance (pubic sessions and lessons) may have higher staffing costs;
- pools with longer operating hours may have higher staffing costs;
- pools with larger water areas and support amenities may have higher maintenance costs.

The evaluation of staff costs includes historical comparisons for individual pools, as well as pool vs. pool for similar sized pools with similar amenities. Ratios that are analyzed include staff costs vs. attendance (estimates) and staff costs vs. revenue (actual). The objective for the analysis is to identify staffing which is both efficient and effective.

Payroll vs. Revenue

There is a relationship between payroll costs and pool revenues. A pool’s revenue and payroll projections are based on programming, the size of the facility and the provision of amenities. Revenue projections for individual facilities are adjusted for such factors as leisure access use, rentals, etc.

The relationship between payroll and revenue can be expressed as a ratio by dividing the budgeted payroll costs into projected pool revenues. The 2005 budgeted payroll to program revenue ratios for Park Board’s indoor pools are shown in **Figure 34**.

Figure 34 - 2005 Payroll to Program Revenue Ratio

Pool	Budget Program Revenues	Budget Payroll Expenditure	Ratio
Percy Norman	(430,400)	662,700	\$0.65
Renfrew	(558,200)	600,400	\$0.85
VAC	(886,500)	1,470,700	\$0.60
Kensington	(257,300)	399,300	\$0.64
Lord Byng	(349,700)	520,300	\$0.67
Kerrisdale	(365,800)	515,900	\$0.71
Templeton	(214,400)	483,600	\$0.44
Killarney	Closed		

The ratios for individual pools vary significantly primarily due to differences in revenue. Payroll for facilities with similar amenities is fairly consistent, for example, Kerrisdale and Lord Byng are within \$5,000, and Percy Norman and Renfrew are within \$2,000. There are significant differences in revenue projections primarily due to historical patterns. Templeton's projection is approximately \$140,000 lower than Kerrisdale/Lord Byng due to a higher use by patrons with leisure access cards; Renfrew's revenue is higher than Percy Norman's projection due to historically higher attendance.

The decision to provide additional programming, (more public sessions or lessons), beyond the budgeted payroll expense/program revenue ratio should be based on the premise that the increased revenues will offset increased expenditures – e.g., an expanded lessons program should only be offered if additional revenues offset the additional payroll costs. This has not been the case in recent years. Even though revenues have exceeded budgeted targets at many pools, payroll costs have increased more, resulting in a higher operating deficit at some pools. This is demonstrated in **Figure 35**.

Figure 35 – Payroll/Revenues - Operating Surplus or (Deficit)

Pool	2002	2003	2004	2005
Kensington	3,676	(8,154)	8,628	22,114
Lord Byng	22,589	(3,881)	(27,164)	(25,115)
Kerrisdale	46,009	10,667	3,042	4,101
Templeton	(14,570)	(34,921)	8,693	(33,392)
Killarney	(30,706)	(42,078)	(45,404)	Closed
P Norman	(3,873)	(44,304)	(42,248)	(72,105)
Renfrew	(44,545)	(85,686)	61,150	(75,153)
VAC	50,505	36,456	(27,117)	(11,427)
Total	29,085	(171,900)	(60,419)	(190,978)

From 2003 to 2005, the payroll costs have exceeded the program revenues in most facilities. There may be explanations why this has occurred in particular pools, but the overall trend is of concern. A further review of pool operations, office and maintenance support costs highlight where the payroll expenditures are occurring.

Pool Operations

Swim Instructor Attendants (SIA) are responsible for the on deck pool operations. The full time SIA's are assigned both guarding/instructing and administrative duties. Historically, this ratio has been approximately 80% guarding and instructing and 20% administrative duties. Assisting the full time SIA's are regular part time and auxiliary SIA's who perform on deck duties only. These tasks include guarding and instructing as

well as the performance of minor maintenance (cleaning showers) and relief cashiering functions.

Public Sessions: The Health Act requires one lifeguard per 100 swimmers during public sessions. In a 25m pool, the Board usually operates with a two guard minimum although during early sessions, some pools may operate with a single guard with a cashier backup.

Lessons: The instructor to participant ratios varies with the age and skill level of the participants - a ratio of 1 instructor to 4 preschoolers; 1 to 8 children for lower level learn to swim lessons; and ratio 1 to 10 children for upper level learn to swim lessons. Lessons operate on a breakeven (SIA staff cost recovery) or plus basis. Compared to public sessions, learn to swim sessions are labour intensive with up to six instructors working at the same time (25m tank). The primary challenge in scheduling lessons is the four hour minimum work requirement for instructors. This combined with the high demand for lessons has resulted in the scheduling of 3 to 4 hour blocks for lessons.

Analyzing Guarding Costs: Guarding costs have been increasing in recent years. A portion of this increase can be attributed to the extra staff costs associated with the increase in demand for public swim and lesson programs due to closure of Killarney and Renfrew Pools. However, the increases have not been consistent at the individual pool level. Costs have significantly escalated at Lord Byng, Percy Norman and Kensington Pools as compared to the other pools as shown in **Figure 36**.

Figure 36 - SIA Costs - 2002 vs. 2005

Pool	2002	2005	Percent
Kerrisdale	314,089	308,449	-1.8%
Lord Byng	273,450	383,039	40.1%
Templeton	263,742	287,015	8.8%
Killarney	341,351	Closed	
P Norman	314,863	407,554	29.4%
Renfrew	358,561	392,535	9.5%
Kensington	182,806	234,660	28.4%
VAC	414,858	461,392	11.2%
Total	2,463,719	2,474,645	

There are two ratios which can be used to analyze guarding costs: SIA costs vs. attendance and SIA costs vs. program revenue. The SIA vs. attendance ratio (SIA costs/annual attendance) expresses the SIA costs per swim. A lower cost ratio represents a more efficient pool operation. As previously mentioned, a pool's programming as well as the provision of support amenities greatly influences a pool's attendance. Generally, public swim sessions and use of fitness centres are less labour intensive as compared lesson or aquafit programs. Thus, pools with higher attendance in admissions to public

swim or fitness centres should have lower SIA to attendance ratios. These ratios are presented in **Figure 37**.

Figure 37 - SIA to Attendance Ratio

Pool	SIA Cost	Attendance	SIA to Attendance Ratio
Kensington	234,660	82,870	\$2.83
Lord Byng	383,039	157,384	\$2.43
Kerrisdale	308,449	110,081	\$2.80
Templeton	287,015	145,466	\$1.97
Killarney	Closed		
P Norman	407,554	188,400	\$2.16
Renfrew	392,535	146,325	\$2.68
VAC	461,392	349,255	\$1.32
Total	2,474,645	1,179,781	\$2.10

The VAC has the lowest SIA cost per visit for Park Board pools. This can be attributed to amenities such as the 50m tank, fitness centre and teach pool, as well as the scheduling of more public swim sessions. Templeton's and Percy Norman's lower SIA to Attendance ratios can be attributed to their well attended public swim sessions. Renfrew's higher ratio (as compared to Percy Norman's) can be partially attributed to the pool's extended closure in 2005.

Comparing SIA costs to program revenue, (admissions, passes, lessons), results in an expenditure to revenue ratio, with the higher ratio the better. Given the differences in facility size, amenities provided and Leisure Access Card usage, pool vs. pool comparisons should focus on only similar facilities with similar neighbourhood demographics. In addition, a year to year comparison by pool will give insight to any changes in the pool operation.

The SIA and program revenue ratio is presented in **Figure 38**.

Figure 38 - SIA Cost vs Admission/Lesson Revenue in 2005

Pool	SIA Cost	Admission & Lesson Revenue	Revenue to SIA Ratio
Kensington	234,660	288,484	\$1.23/1
Lord Byng	383,039	334,004	\$.87/1
Kerrisdale	308,449	323,354	\$1.05/1

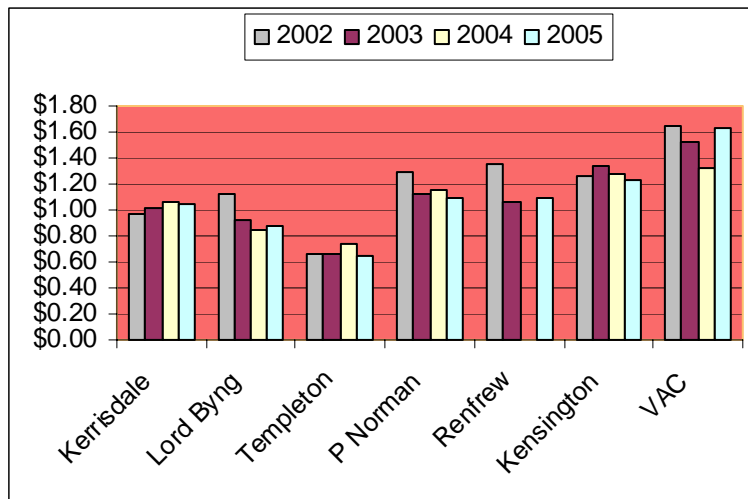
Templeton	287,015	186,831	\$.65/1
P Norman	407,554	446,287	\$1.10/1
Renfrew	392,535	429,643	\$1.09/1
VAC	461,392	753,605	\$1.63/1
Total	2,474,645	2,762,208	\$1.12/1

The table indicates that:

- 50m pools have a higher SIA to revenue ratio as compared to 25m pools;
- pools with fitness centres have high ratios regardless of size and other amenities;
- Templeton's lower ratio can be attributed to the pool's high use by non revenue LAC passes;
- Kerrisdale has a significantly higher ratio as compared to neighbouring Lord Byng Pool;
- Renfrew and Percy Norman are similar facilities with similar SIA to revenue ratios.

Since 2002, SIA costs to program revenue ratios have been declining as shown in **Figure 39**. This indicates that costs for pool operations are increasing at a higher rate than revenues. This is especially true for Lord Byng and Percy Norman Pools. It is interesting to note that Kerrisdale Pool's ratio has increased during this timeframe.

Figure 39 - Pool Operation Cost to Pool Revenue Ratio – 2002 to 2005



Reasons for declining SIA to revenue ratios can be attributed to:

- over staffing of sessions: not maintaining guarding and/or lesson ratios;
- expanding programming without recovering operating costs;
- not maintaining administration to on deck time ratio for full time SIA's (20% administration/80% on deck);
- inefficient staff scheduling due to 4 hour minimum shift requirement.

Office Operations

Office staff consists of head cashiers and cashiers who provide customer services such as processing admissions and program registration, answering inquiries as well as performing clerical tasks. As the table indicates below, office support costs have increased significantly during the past 4 years – especially at Kerrisdale and Lord Byng. **Figure 40** shows the trends in these costs between 2002 and 2005.

Figure 40 - Office Costs 2002 -2005 Comparison

Pool	2002	2005	Increase
Kensington	76,424	94,881	24.2%
Kerrisdale	55,701	86,127	54.6%
Lord Byng	63,054	86,609	37.4%
Templeton	91,543	96,688	5.6%
P Norman	91,600	116,467	27.1%
Renfrew	113,083	112,561	-0.5%
VAC	177,615	236,169	33.0 %
Total	669,020	829,502	24.0 %

Comparing office costs to program revenue results in a corresponding office cost to revenue ratio. As in the pool operation analysis, comparisons should be limited to similar facilities. In addition, allowance should be made for leisure access (non revenue) use. The office cost to revenue ratio is shown as **Figure 41**.

Figure 41 - Office Cost vs Admission/Lesson Revenue in 2005

Pool	Office \$	Program Revenues	Ratio
Kensington	94,881	288,484	3.04/1
Kerrisdale	86,127	323,354	3.75/1
Lord Byng	86,609	334,004	3.86/1
Templeton	96,688	186,831	1.93/1
P Norman	116,467	446,287	3.83/1
Renfrew	112,561	429,643	3.82/1
VAC	236,169	753,605	3.19/1
Total	829,502	2,762,208	3.33/1

Analysis reveals that the indoor pools have a fairly consistent office to revenue ratio with the exception of Templeton due to high levels of leisure access use.

Maintenance Support Costs

As shown in **Figure 42**, maintenance costs have remained stable over the past five years as overall maintenance costs have increased just over 6%.

Figure 42 - Maintenance Costs 2002 -2005 Comparison

Pool	2002	2005	Change
Kensington	5,296	0	NA
Lord Byng	51,979	57,191	10.0%
Kerrisdale	3,992	58,526	NA
Templeton	66,416	74,272	11.8%
P Norman	119,757	135,757	13.4%
Renfrew	91,307	87,748	-3.9%
VAC	433,279	454,942	5.0%
Total	816,786	868,436	6.3%

Another method to review and evaluate maintenance costs is the cost per square foot ratio. **Figure 43** provides the cost per square foot ratio for 2005.

Figure 43 - Maintenance Cost per Square Foot – 2005

Pool	Building Sq Ft	Costs for 2005	Cost per Sq. Ft.
Kerrisdale	11,416	58,526	\$5.13
Lord Byng	15,731	57,191	\$3.64
Templeton	17,846	74,272	\$4.16
P Norman	24,156	135,757	\$5.62
Renfrew	12,830	87,748	\$6.84
VAC	64,775	454,942	\$7.02
Total	146,754	868,436	\$5.92

Note: Kensington maintenance costs are charged to Community Centre
Killarney Pool was closed in 2005

The cost per square foot ratio suggests that the Vancouver Aquatic Centre and Renfrew Pools have significantly higher maintenance costs per square foot as compared to the other pools. Lord Byng has a significantly lower cost per square foot ratio, perhaps due to role of guards in supporting maintenance activities.

Staffing Recommendations

Current office and maintenance staff standards vary considerably. These levels need to be reviewed based on type and size of facility and operation. It is important to note that pool staff costs have been escalating faster than pool revenues. It is very important that these costs are either justified or fiscally managed through the efficient and effective deployment of staff.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that the Board establish standards for both staffing and accounting with regards to guarding, office coverage and daily maintenance.

Recommendation 14

The Guarding Standard for full time SIA staff should be based on a ratio of 70-80% guarding/instructing and 20-30% administrative and program development.

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

4.1 Introduction and Program Forms

The City of Vancouver has set the goal of increasing pool usage by 70% over the next decade. This represents increasing the current number of annual swims from 1,400,000 to 2,400,000 swims by 2015 or sooner. The current rate of swimming in Vancouver is currently quite low at 2.5 swims per capita per year; this compares to an average 4 or more swims per capita in most other communities.

The *2001 Aquatic Services Review* primarily addressed the need to improve or replace the existing aquatic facilities, particularly the indoor pools that had an average age of 32 at that time. This has resulted in the opening of the new Killarney Pool (community pool) and the major renovation of Renfrew Pool (neighbourhood pool) as part of Phase 1. The final component of Phase 1 is the construction of a new city-wide aquatic complex at the Percy Norman/hillcrest site by 2010. Phase 2 would involve the redevelopment of VAC (community), and Kerrisdale, Lord Byng and Templeton as neighbourhood pools.

The *Aquatic Program Review* focuses on how the pools are operated and programmed in ways that increase attendance and operational efficiencies and effectiveness. It is clearly not enough just to change the physical facilities if they are not programmed, scheduled and marketed in the best possible manner to increase and sustain pool usage by Vancouver residents and visitors.

Highly successful indoor pools tend to share a number of common characteristics:

- They offer a variety of aquatic opportunities based on a solid and ongoing assessment of needs;
- They are attractive and stimulating places to be;
- The pool environments include a number of “fun” elements and many of these are not static and change;
- The staff are customer service oriented and have strong programming skills to create new experiences;
- There are social elements within the facilities;
- They constantly market and communicate; and
- They are innovative and resourceful in the way that they plan and manage.

Program Forms

There are a number of typical program forms that take place in indoor pools. These common forms are:

- Recreational – public swims and drop-in lap swimming;
- Lessons and Programs -learn to swim, parent and tot, stroke improvement, learn to kayak, etc.;
- Fitness – hydro fit, water walking and jogging, deep/shallow water exercise, fitness challenges (e.g. count laps to “swim the Fraser”);
- Therapeutic – water resistance exercises, “arthrocise” and other rehabilitation programs
- Aquatic Clubs – training and competitions for swimming, diving, synchronized, water polo, masters, triathlon;
- Other Rentals – schools, private and group rentals.

Vancouver’s indoor pools appear to do an admirable job in many of these areas. There are opportunities for additional growth in programs, fitness, therapy, private rentals and overall swim lessons, although swim lessons for children will be challenged by the shrinking demographic of elementary school aged children.

By far the greatest area of opportunity for increasing pool usage and revenues, however, is the one where Vancouver is doing the weakest job – public swims. Public swim attendance dropped 10% between 1994 and 1999 and forms a lower portion of total swims, and allocated swim times, than most other comparable pool systems. The following sections identify a number of ways of increasing public swims and overall attendance.

The construction of Killarney Pool and the planned development of Percy Norman will create additional venues with ongoing public swim capacity and attractive features. The potential for the 25m neighbourhood pools to have increased and more focussed public swims cannot be ignored as part of the mix. Children and families will still seek experiences in pools that are in relatively close proximity. The renovations to Renfrew need to be extended in Phase 2 to the other 25m pools, and done in a manner that will also attract additional public swimming.

4.2 Increasing Public Swimming and Overall Attendance

Scheduling and Differentiation

With some exceptions, Vancouver’s indoor pools offer fewer public swim times, shut down earlier on week nights and weekend evenings, and offer fewer targeted public swims than other communities’ indoor pool systems. As a general rule, most other indoor pools are open until 10:00pm or later on weeknights, and until 8:30 or 9:00pm on Saturday and Sunday. In contrast, only the Vancouver Aquatic Centre, Killarney, and Britannia offer a similar schedule. Most of the 25m pools close between 4:00 and 6:00pm on Saturday and Sunday and often between 8:00 and 9:00pm on weekdays. Even during

the opening hours, there are some 25m pools with few public swims, including ones that start too late (after 7:00pm) to attract families and children.

There is no question that the 25m pools face significant challenges in accommodating all of the competing demands, but a greater priority needs to be given to increasing public swim hours and ensuring that evening start times for general public swims are ideally at 6:30 and no later than 7:00pm. There also does not appear to be a correlation between schedules at pools in relatively close proximity to provide good overall provision of public swims in an area.

There is a trend for indoor pools to offer late night adult swims on one or more days a week that go until midnight or 1:00am. These are most successful in areas where there are large numbers of university students or shift personnel (hospitals, etc) nearby. Friday evening is often used as a prime night to offer early evening special pre-teen swims, followed by young adult 16+ swims. There is also increased differentiation in the types and marketing of public swims in many indoor pool systems. In addition to the general "Everyone Welcome" swims, these include special "Fun Swims" aimed at children, "50 and Better", "Adult Leisure and Lengths", "Family Swims", etc. Based on the local demographics surrounding a pool, there may be a need for a women's only swim.

Moving the scheduling to a centralized process (as per Recommendation # 2) should improve the overall scheduling and increase public swim times in the system.

Making Public Swims Fun

Indoor pool systems that have high volumes of public swim attendance combine "fun" physical elements (slides, equipment etc.) with staff-led activities and games that especially engage children throughout the swim. The new Killarney Pool has the first ingredient. It is a vibrant, attractive place with a waterslide, a number of pool types, spray and play elements, toys and lots of shallow water area. Retaining and building its user levels, however, will require that its lifeguard staff play a more active role as "fun leaders" who engage children in games and equipment use. The rationale for engaging children in fun activities is not only to increase their use, but also that of their families. In addition, it can increase combined uses, where a parent uses the fitness room or attends a program while their child is in the pool. While adults may not be attracted to games, there are pieces of equipment that attract "children of all ages".

This expanded leadership role will also need to apply to aquatic staff in the other indoor pools. In designated "Fun" swims, staff may create a relatively constant flow of activities according to a solid plan. In more general "Everyone Welcome" swims, the games and activities would still be planned, but more interspersed. The key elements are:

- Equipment Use (individual, major moveable, major fixed, on deck)
- Games
- Special Events
- Staffing Options
- Planning.

Equipment Use: There are a variety of equipment elements that can be introduced into the pool environments. These include:

- Individual – such as mats, inner tubes, balls, noodles, floating games and other small pieces for individual use.
- Moveable – these include large inflatable toys and water walkways for planned, supervised use.
- Fixed – these are equipment elements fixed to the deck, walls or ceiling trusses and used in one area of the pool and for planned, supervised use; examples include small slides, human hoist, skywalker, rope swing, climbing wall, bungee swing, and trolley ride.
- On deck – these are elements for spontaneous individual or small group use such as table tennis tables, board games (e.g. giant checkers on a mat).

Equipment purchase and development is discussed more fully in Section 4.4.

Games: These are planned group activities including penny toss, human whirlpool, and ball target toss off small slide or any number of simple activities led by the staff requiring minimal financial investment beyond supplies.

Special Events: The staff should plan major special events around times like Spring Break and Christmas vacation, and around Pro D days and other holiday days and themes. Some pools will use different approaches for some specific events. For example, holding a “non-Halloween” swim on Oct.31 and marketing to local churches and parents looking for another option, or hosting a free swim on Christmas afternoon with a donation of a non-perishable food item.

Staffing Options: Public safety remains a priority, and typically only one of the lifeguards on duty is involved in play activities at one time, while others remain in a guard capacity. In some pools, a designated “Fun Leader” leads the majority of the games, and supervises the use of fixed and moveable equipment pieces. Other pools expect that all lifeguard staff will rotate into this role and lead a game or use of play equipment at some time during a public swim. Staff development to play these roles is discussed in Section 4.3.

Planning: These fun activities require careful planning. A planning sheet with the activity sequence, supplies and prizes, designated staff leads, etc. needs to be developed before each identified public swim. A Games and Equipment manual needs to be developed at each facility and a separate supplies locker provided. An ongoing budget for supplies and small equipment needs to be provided for each facility.

Marketing to Increase Attendance

Successful indoor pool operations make a consistent investment in marketing and involve their staff in this process. As identified in Section 4.5, a city-wide Aquatics Team should be developing a three year and annual plans to improve aquatic provision in Vancouver. A Marketing Plan had been developed in 2003, but was only partially implemented. It will serve as a strong starting point. The addition of the Marketing Coordinator will also support better planning in this area. In addition, individual pools, especially the larger

ones, should develop their own annual marketing plans. There are a number of potential elements within the City-wide and individual pool marketing plans.

City-Wide Marketing Plan: Elements might include:

- Aquatic images within the website, Active Vancouver campaign, etc.;
- Individual brochures and schedule cards for Killarney and VAC focussing on positive fun and fitness initiatives;
- Cross marketing of public swim opportunities for the 25m pools;
- Consistent and attractive uniforms;
- Combined special event promotions and prizes;
- Ongoing surveying of customer satisfaction;
- Coupon campaigns for focussed periods, and with city-wide organizations;
- A review of city-wide demographics and the development of marketing approaches, (e.g. signage and promotions in various languages, use of ethnic media), that reflect the rich cultural diversity of Vancouver, including the needs of new residents.

Individual Pool Marketing Plans: Elements might include:

- Direct marketing through schools with flyers and coupons for special events;
- Open houses for swims and fitness;
- Contact with local groups (e.g. Scouts, Guides, home schooling) and businesses for special swims;
- Displays and special promotions;
- Knowing your local demographics and shaping some swims around them;
- Announcing what's coming up on an ongoing basis;
- Special events with a local theme.

A number of individual marketing efforts are already happening, with the VAC appearing to be the most active at this time in individual marketing efforts. Again, a more formal Aquatics Marketing Plan needs to be developed at a city-wide level, along with individual pool marketing plans.

Recommendation 16

That the Board commit to the introduction of new aquatics equipment and games in identified public swims throughout the indoor pool system.

better timing, increased marketing, and using a coordinated approach between the indoor pools.

Recommendations for Increasing Public Swims

Recommendation 17

That a City-wide Aquatics Marketing Plan be developed, updating and building on the 2003 Plan, along with marketing plans for individual indoor pools.

4.3 Partnering with Minor Sport Aquatic Groups

It is important to recognize the value minor sport plays in the delivery of aquatic programming. It is recommended that the Park Board develop and foster partnerships with minor sport groups to ensure that these aquatic activities are available to public. Examples of how to improve this partnership include the representation of these groups on an aquatic Advisory Committee, the joint promotion of activities, etc. Such initiatives will ensure both sustainability of these clubs as well as the offering of a balanced and diverse aquatic program.

Recommendation 18

The Park Board develop and foster partnerships with minor sport aquatic groups to ensure that these aquatic activities are available to public.

4.4 Staff Training and Selection

Staff Training

The Vancouver Parks Board has a proud tradition in providing continuing lifeguard education through its Lifeguard School. The offerings range from basic NLS pre-certifications and re-certifications to more specialized courses in emergency care. Vancouver aquatic staff is well known for their guarding and emergency response skills, and have done well at various lifeguard competitions. While there is a half-day public relations seminar offered by the Lifeguard School, there is a lack of opportunities for staff to learn programming and customer service skills in a leisure pool environment such as Killarney.

One formal opportunity to learn some of these skills is the 35 hour Waterpark course offered by the Lifesaving Society of BC and the Yukon. A few leisure pool operations (e.g. Saanich Commonwealth Place) require this course as a prerequisite for employment, while others encourage guarding staff to take the course. These courses are offered in Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island locations each year. Developing aquatic game skills and using specific leisure equipment is generally done through in-services. In addition to the updating of guarding and instructing skills, municipalities that stress a fun approach to public swims host at least one games/equipment related in-service each year. They also include this training in their development of new staff.

It is important, especially for the staff at Killarney, that they be exposed to in-service training such as the Waterpark course that are related to guarding in a leisure pool environment that has major pieces of equipment. The staff still use lane ropes in the leisure pool to create lap opportunities, but restrict informal activity. Waterpark courses should be supplemented with specific training on aquatic games development. Staff at other pools would also benefit from both forms of training.

Staff Selection

Leisure pool environments, and more conventionally shaped pools that have made a commitment to creating fun in public swims, place a good deal of emphasis on selecting and training staff who have good leadership and programming skills. Some pools place a high emphasis on hiring people who have both instruction and guarding certification on that premise that swim instructors have better interpersonal skills, especially with children. Other aquatic systems place an emphasis on gauging the personality of prospective guards and make it clear that being a play leader will be part of their role – including getting into the water with children for certain activities.

Many successful aquatic systems use a system of “shadow guarding” in the selection process. The prospective employees put in approximately 20 hours in shadowing a guard as they perform their duties and filling in reports/checklists on what they have learned. Part of this preliminary training is to observe and participate in games and equipment use. This process allows the employer to further observe customer service and programming skills in addition to guarding/safety competencies.

It is recognized that guards will have specific strengths. While some may work well with children, others are more effective and comfortable with older adults or teens and should be deployed with that clientele for the majority of their shifts. A common ingredient should be a customer service orientation and good communication and people skills.

Shifting from a Guarding to a Leisure Culture

Organizations that have successfully shifted staff to a more leisure oriented culture have found that while there is some initial resistance, the balance between creating both a safe and fun environment becomes the normal expectation within a few years. Some of the key ingredients in the successful transition were:

- Receiving clearly communicated buy-in from senior management;
- Involving staff at all levels in the planning;
- Having key leaders at each facility;
- Providing solid and ongoing training, including exposure to successful operations in other communities;
- Making investments in improving the facilities and equipment;
- Providing a budget for supplies and resources;
- Recognizing staff for their successes; and
- Reporting on successes to validate the approach, including increases in attendance and registration.

Recommendations for Staff Development

Recommendation 19

That identified lifeguard staff attend the Waterpark course offered by the Lifesaving Society in 2007, including the option of an additional special course being directly offered at Killarney.

4.5 Facility and Equipment Improvements

Equipment Improvements

Recommendation 20

That in-service courses on aquatic games and equipment use be offered on an ongoing basis. It is also recommended that identified aquatic staff be exposed to other Lower Mainland or Island leisure aquatic environments for in-service purposes.

There is significant opportunity to add pieces of leisure equipment to the Vancouver Aquatic Centre and selected 25m pools provided that they are easily transferable to those facilities when they undergo renovation within Phase 2. At the present time, fixed equipment is largely limited to small slides and basketball hoops in some pools. An evaluation of fixed equipment opportunities and priorities should be carried out in the near future to identify the most appropriate pieces and locations. The primary opportunities are:

- The VAC has the greatest potential to increase public swim use with additional amenities;
- Killarney may have additional opportunities adjacent to the 25m tank;
- Renfrew has been renovated but still lacks equipment;
- Lord Byng, Templeton, and Kerrisdale have potential - although the fabric roof at Kerrisdale will restrict options there;

No major equipment additions should be considered for Kensington which has very limited potential because of its size.

The most immediate consideration should be for the purchase of one, or ideally two, large inflatable toys. These should be rotated and cross-marketed between the 7 indoor pools identified above as schedules allow. The rotation could be on a 2-4 week basis at each pool. The inflatable would create an exciting opportunity in a short period of time at all venues. In addition, on-deck and individual equipment needs and opportunities should be reviewed, and a supplies and minor equipment budgets supplemented as required.

Facility Improvements

There are a number of general considerations for the Phase 2 projects in addition to the inclusion of additional leisure amenities and equipment. These include:

- **Fitness Rooms:** These rooms are too small to be a major attractor and should be enlarged if the sites allow.
- **Control Points:** These are poorly planned and are not adequate to control access to change rooms, pool areas and fitness rooms. It is clear that a considerable

amount of slippage (unpaid or approved access) and revenue loss is occurring in the system.

- **Family Change Rooms:** Some facilities only have a temporary space, while others have family change rooms in awkward locations. Creating adequate, convenient family change rooms should be a priority for the redevelopment projects - and at Renfrew where the need is unresolved.

Equipment Recommendations

Recommendation 21

That an analysis of major aquatic leisure equipment opportunities be carried out, and priorities for equipment purchase and installation be identified in subsequent year budgets.

Recommendation 22

That at least one large inflatable toy be purchased and rotated between identified indoor pools; its location would be cross-marketed.

4.6 Maintenance of Aquatic Facilities

Although this review focused primarily on the day to day cleaning of indoor pools, the proper maintenance of change rooms and showers, deck surfaces and the physical plant is as important to the swimming experience as providing good customer service, scheduling and equipment. It is recommended that the Board ensure adequate funding for all aspects of an aquatic facility's physical plant.

Recommendation 23

The Park Board ensure adequate funds to maintain the aquatic facilities.

4.7 Aquatics Staff Supervision and Planning

As previously noted, the Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics currently does not have direct supervision over the Recreation Programmer responsible for each indoor pool operation. These individuals now report to the complex's Community Recreation Coordinator or Recreation Supervisor. While the senior aquatics people in Vancouver now meet on a monthly basis, a more centralized and coordinated approach to aquatic planning, policies and practices, scheduling, training, marketing and evaluation is recommended. This will be accomplished by having the aquatic staff at all facilities report to the Supervisor of

Recreation – Aquatics on the technical aspects of their work. Daily site concerns and issues outside the aquatic operation will remain the responsibility of complex’s supervisory staff. The office and maintenance staff at each pool should continue to report to complex staff; especially when the pool is part of a larger operation. The Programmer while reporting directly to the Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics, will also need to maintain a positive reporting relationship within the facility complex and District.

Recommendation 24

That the Recreation Programmer in each indoor pool, report directly to the Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics, as part of a centralized aquatics function.

Aquatics Committee

The Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics and the Recreation Programmers will form an “Aquatics Functional Team”. A priority of the Aquatics function team would be to develop a three year Aquatics Strategic plan, as well as annual aquatic business plans. These plans are to be shared with senior management and local aquatic staff.

Involving Programmers and SIAs in the development of program and other initiatives will help to keep highly motivated staff within the aquatics system because of the additional opportunities, challenges and personal growth. This will support internal staff development and succession planning.

Recommendation 25

That the Recreation Supervisor – Aquatics create an Aquatics Functional Team with the Programmers and that this team develop a three year Aquatics Strategic Plan as well as an annual aquatic business plans.

**AQUATICS PROGRAM SERVICES TASK FORCE
Terms of Reference**

Objective

The objective for this review is to develop and implement a comprehensive aquatic program for the Park Board which will enable the Board to achieve the following:

- operate the services and facilities in an equitable, cost-effective and fiscally sustainable manner;
- meet current and future demands for both organized and casual

- participants; and
- balance local services and needs with those of the City as a whole.

The Board approved the Aquatic Services Review - 2001 as the basis for the physical renewal of our aquatic facilities. The Aquatic Services Review's strategies for indoor pools were based on the description of an optimal service profile stemming from public opinion survey input proposing:

- the development of recreation swimming in a more centralized model (destination or city wide pools);
- the maintenance of basic lessons, fitness and training swimming in a decentralized model (current distribution of "neighbourhood" pools);
- an increase of 70% in pool usage over the next 10 years (currently at 1.4 million swims per year, increasing to 2.4 million swims).

Based on these strategies, the Aquatic Review's recommendations included:

- a substantial reinvestment in indoor aquatic facilities over the next 10 years;
- a new or rebuilt indoor pool system with a capacity of 2.4 million swim per year, prioritizing recreational swimming and efficiently and effectively programming fitness swimming, lessons, therapeutic swimming, swim club training and rentals;
- a rebuilt system consisting of three types of indoor pool facilities: neighbourhood pools (25 m tank), community pools (two tanks, leisure component) and city wide, destination pool (two to three tanks, multi purpose aquatic facility).

Since this Review, the Board has undertaken a major retrofit of Renfrew Pool as a neighbourhood pool and is currently rebuilding Killarney Pool as a community pool. The new Killarney Pool will consist of a 25 metre tank as well as a large leisure pool. The pool is scheduled to open in the fall of 2005.

Significant issues to be addressed by the study are briefly summarized as follows:

- While overall revenue expectations for indoor pools have exceeded budget by 5 to 11% in the past 3 years, operating costs to achieve this level of service have increased even more, creating additional operating losses of between \$80,000.00 and \$116,000.00 per year.
- Beyond the payroll costs of a Programmer II for each pool, the range of staffing costs per annum per pool range from \$325,000.00 to \$1,264,000.00. There is no single policy grid into which these variations can be assessed and hence evaluated.
- Pool time allocation to clubs while representing only 5% of the overall program still competes for valuable time slots and is allocated on historical practice. This needs objective review.

- d) It is important to establish programming benchmarks and performance measures for indoor pools as this will enable the Board to measure its success in achieving the goals of the Aquatic Services Review.

Aquatic Program Study - Terms of Reference

The Aquatics Program Study will be directed by a Task Force comprised of:

- senior staff representatives (exempt staff)
- Vancouver Park Board staff representatives (programmers)
- Representatives of a cross-section of aquatic users.

The Task Force will be supported by a team of staff, who will carry out the work program outlined in the Terms of Reference and develop draft policies and procedures for Task Force review. The Task Force will review and approve the project Terms of Reference and establish a Project time line.

Work Plan

The work program will be organized into two phases:

Research Phase - Historical Benchmarks

Use Assessment: listing of activities programmed; responsibility for program (Park Board, Rental, etc.); allocation by activity; pool use by time of day as well as by user group; seasonal factors.

User Demand: participation volume; trend indicators including Lower Mainland and provincial trends; developmental and organizational requirements.

Financial Assessment: revenue and expenditures for the past three years.

Staffing: staffing requirements and standards; safety and first aid coverage; role of programmers, full time and regular part time swim instructor attendants, etc.; role of Recreation Supervisor - Aquatics and the local recreation supervisor or community recreation coordinator.

Analysis Phase

Supply vs. Demand: current service capacity vs. present and future demand; optimum service configuration; options for closing the service gap and/or increasing service capacity; efficiency of use and demand management;

Cost Efficiencies and Recovery: management of pool operations; deployment of staff; fees and charges; recovery rates; service improvement strategies.

Review of Pool

Allocation Policies: review and analyze pool allocation policies from surrounding municipalities.