

Key Insights

What we heard and learned in Phase 1

2

Introduction

Introduction 27

Who we heard from in our Public Engagement 29

Current Status + Public Feedback

Indoor Pools 31

Outdoor Pools 37

Beaches 43

Wading Pools + Spray Parks 45

Aquatic Innovations 49

What kind of pools do we currently have?

The strategy works to ensure more equitable access to a range of experiences across Vancouver — accessible via public transport, car, bike, or walking.

Legend

Traditional Aquatics



Indoor Pool



Outdoor Pool



Co-located

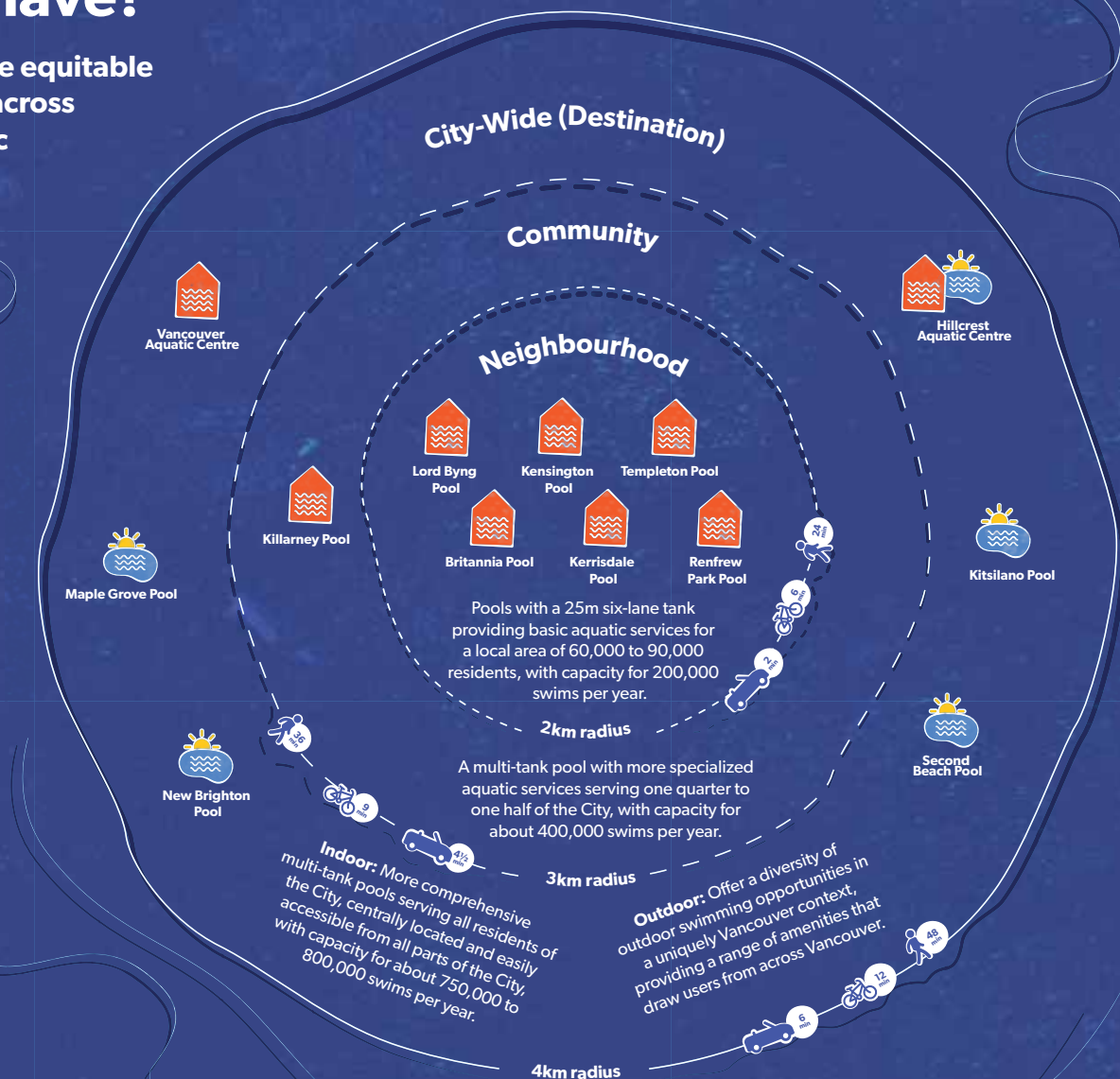


FIGURE 7

Introduction

As discussed in the introductory section of this report, the first phase of *VanSplash* included comprehensive reports regarding the current state of aquatics services in Vancouver, a precedent review looking at global aquatic trends, and a two-phase public engagement process.

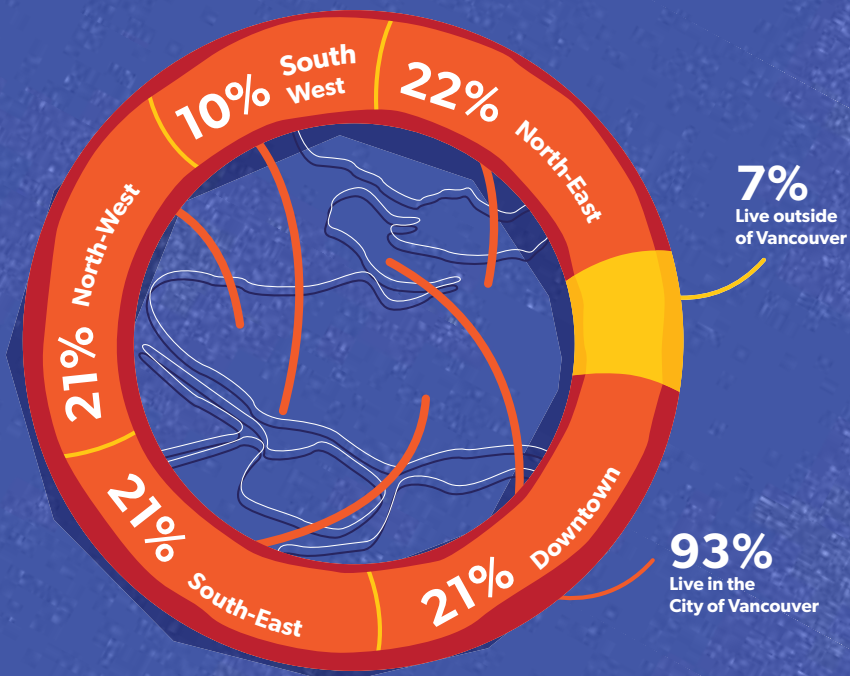
This section of the report highlights the key insights from the *Current State Report*, *Precedent Report*, and the Phase 1 survey results of the *Public Engagement Report*, which intends to present the combined findings relating to the resulting recommendations outlined in the following section. The key insights presented in this section resulted in the draft recommendations for the five types of aquatic services: indoor pools, outdoor pools, beaches, wading pools and spray parks, and aquatic innovations. The draft recommendations, along with key insights from the Phase 1 reports, were presented to the public for feedback during the second phase of engagement.

For further information, refer to the appendices outlined in this Appendix section of this report, which include the above-mentioned Phase 1 reports.

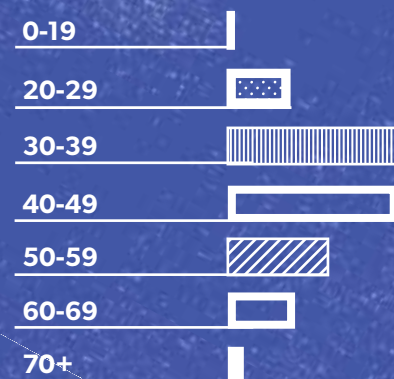
Public Engagement

We heard from over 4500 people and held 5 stakeholder engagement sessions throughout the Phase 1 public consultation.

This is where they live:



Age:



Household Makeup:



FIGURE 8



Public Engagement (Phase 1)

The objectives of the public engagement for the Vancouver Aquatics Strategy were to inform, consult, and involve the community of Vancouver regarding the future and innovation of aquatic amenities. The goal was to:

- Solicit feedback on key functional issues and priorities related to the existing and potential future amenities.
- Create awareness of the project and the issues surrounding the renewal.
- Create a shared understanding of the different community's needs, desires and vision.

The engagement approach was comprised of a Phase 1 comprehensive survey and a series of focus group workshops that provided an opportunity to go into more detail in some areas, and to allow participants to provide more focused feedback.

The long answer survey questions focused on topics such as:

- What are the current aquatic experiences that people enjoy?
- What prevents people from using or enjoying aquatic amenities, both indoor and outdoor?
- What new innovative aquatic experiences do locals want to see in their communities?
- What activities do people enjoy doing at indoor pools, outdoor pools, and public beaches?

The results of the Phase 1 engagement shaped the draft recommendations presented in this report, and are presented in this section to both establish context and to illustrate correlations between what was heard and how the feedback is reflected in the proposed recommendations.

Current Status

Indoor aquatic experiences

 **9** Indoors
Pools

Legend

 Indoor Pool
 Not managed by VPB
 Co-located Indoor and Outdoor Pool

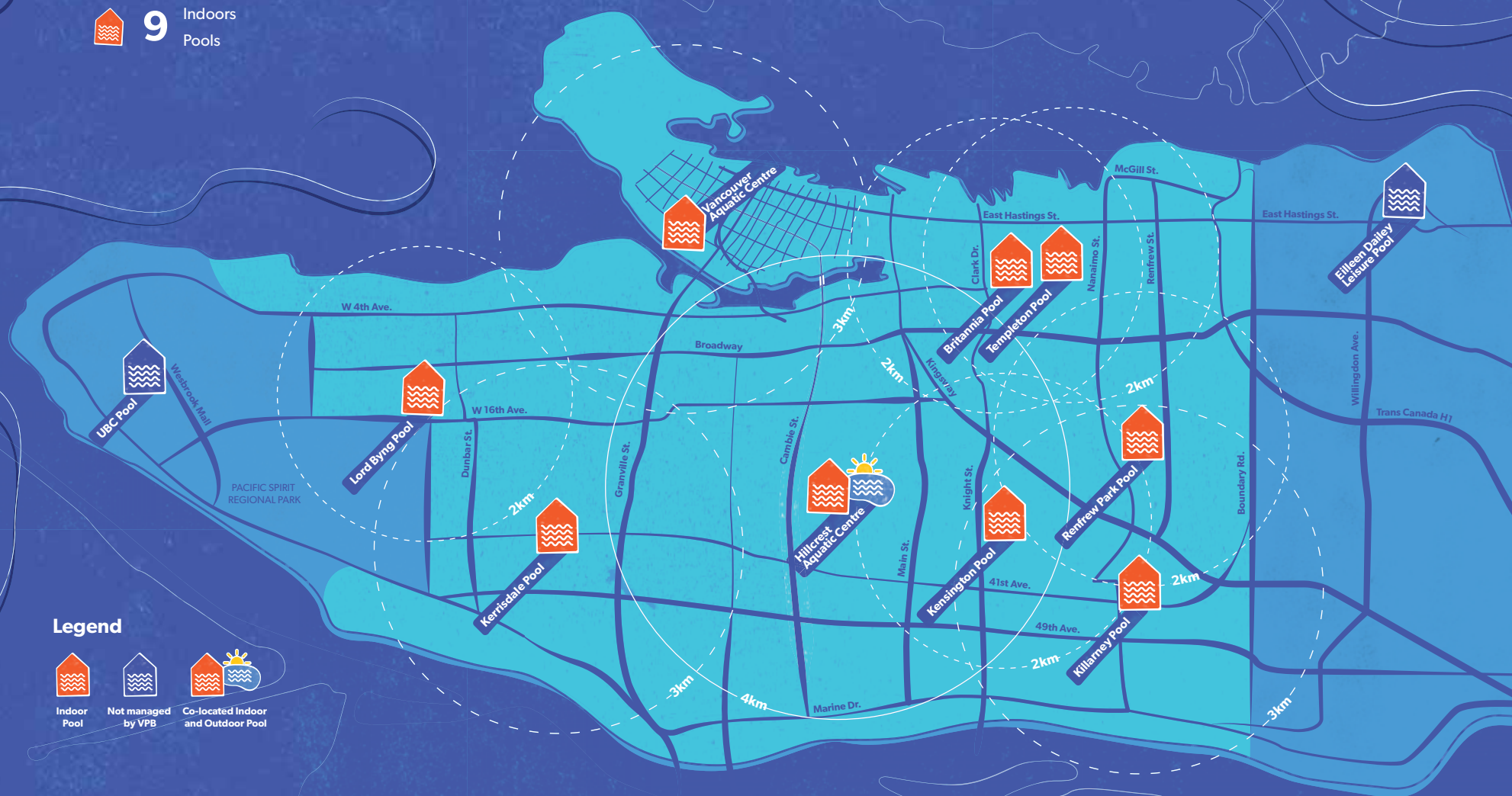


FIGURE 9

4km CITY-WIDE (DESTINATION)

Hillcrest Aquatic Centre, 2010

- Newest facility in VPB
- Greatest number of annual visits
- 50m, 8-lane main tank with a separate leisure tank

Vancouver Aquatic Centre, 1974

- High demand for diving, synchro, water polo and elite aquatic based training
- Within the area of highest expected population growth over the next 24 years
- While the pool capacity of VAC qualifies it as a city-wide pool, the range of amenities limits its current usage to community level, so it is shown throughout as a community pool
- 50m, 8-lane tank with connected dive tank and separate teach tank

3km COMMUNITY

Killarney, 2006

- One of the newest facilities in VPB
- Second greatest number of annual visits
- 25m, 6-lane tank with leisure tank

2km NEIGHBOURHOOD

Kensington, 1979

- Currently operates cost effectively
- Warmer pool temperature
- 15m, 4-lane shallow tank

Britannia, 1974, renovated 1998

- Overall masterplan currently underway
- Significant service overlap with Templeton
- 25m, 6-lane main tank plus small leisure tank

Lord Byng, 1974

- Never renovated
- 25m, 6-lane main tank

Templeton, 1974

- Never renovated
- Service overlap with Britannia
- 25m, 6-lane main tank with separate teach tank

Renfrew, 1963, renovated 1970, 2005, 2010

- Third most well-used facility after Hillcrest and Killarney
- 25m, 6-lane tank plus shallow water tank

Kerrisdale, 1955, renovated 1996

- 30.5m, 6-lane tank

Indoor Pools

There are currently nine indoor public pools in Vancouver. Eight of the nine city pools are operated by the Vancouver Park Board and one, Britannia, is operated by a partnership of public agencies.

As Figure 9 shows:

There is reasonably good coverage of indoor pools in Vancouver, with the possible exception that:

- There is a small area in south central Vancouver that is not within the service delivery area of an indoor pool;
- There is a significant amount of overlap in service areas, with the most dramatic overlap being the area served by both Templeton and Britannia pools.

For further detail on each facility, refer to Chapter 3 of the *Current State Report*.

Expected Demographic Growth Over Next 25 Years

population density (persons per hectare)



0 500

FIGURE 10

Park Board Committee Meeting - December 11, 2017

Indoor Pools

In 2012, Urban Futures, researchers in demographics and economics, completed the most rigorous population projection available as a basis for planning. According to that analysis the population is expected to grow by up to 15% over the next 25-years (see Figure 10), and is expected to age significantly with fewer net school aged children, particularly in the downtown core and the West End.

With an aging population, a change in swimming programming is anticipated, potentially resulting in an increased provision of therapeutic amenities to complement other aquatic offerings.

Work by the City of Vancouver shows that the growth referred to in the Urban Futures report will most likely be focused along a north/south spine that begins in the downtown core and proceeds south along the Cambie corridor as shown in Figure 10.

Indoor Pools

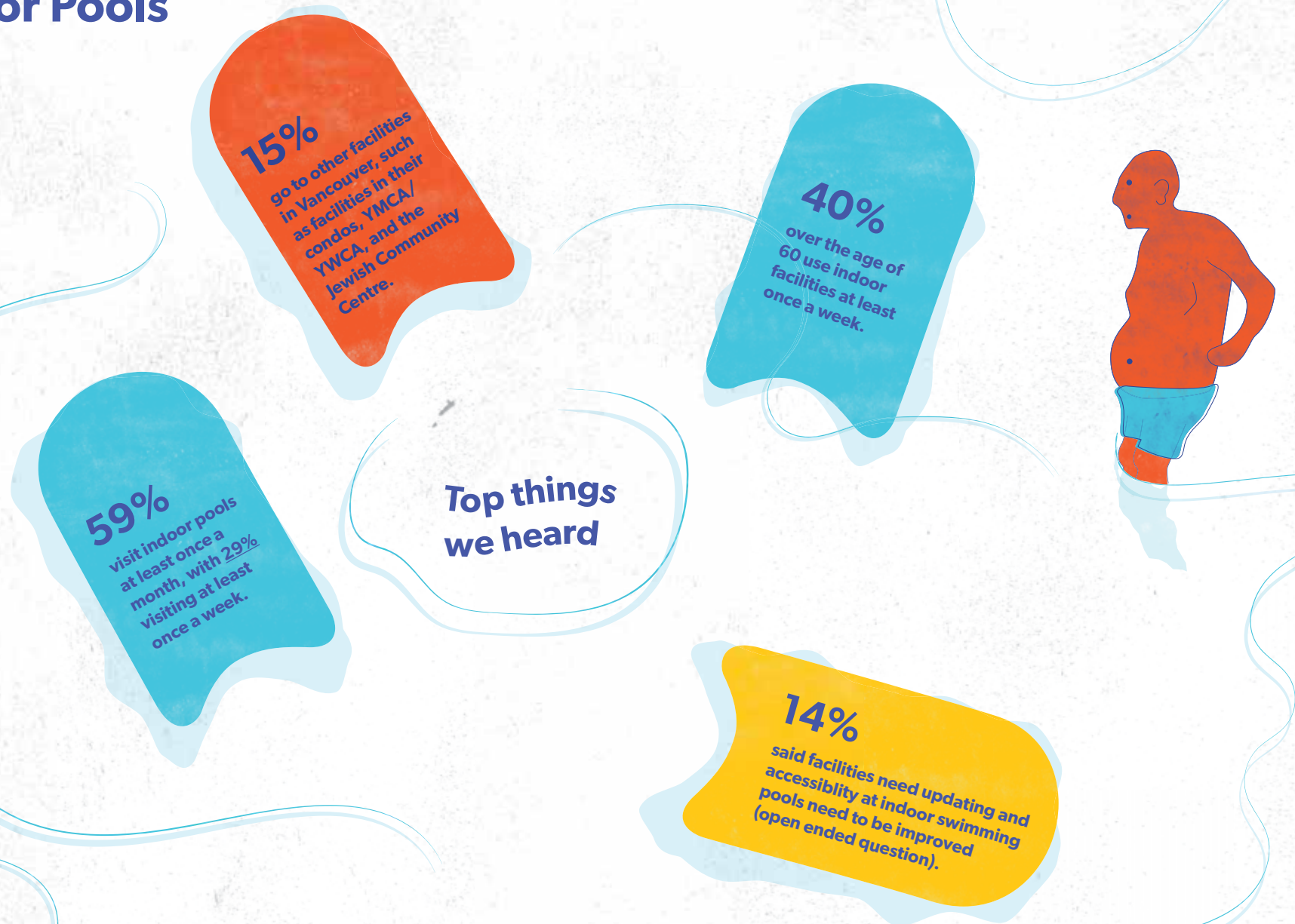


FIGURE 11

Indoor Pools

KEY INSIGHTS

- Hillcrest attracts visitors from across the city and often operates close to its designed capacity.
- The heavy usage of Hillcrest reflects how people travel further and 'skip' the neighbourhood pools to reach a facility with a greater diversity of aquatic offerings.
- However, the perception of overcrowding at Hillcrest is a deterrent for some users.
- Additional city-wide pools will more evenly distribute use across the city and will address overcrowding.
- New or renovated pools are the best utilized and most financially efficient (Renfrew, Killarney, Hillcrest). Indoor pools nearing the end of their lifespan are the least used, least efficient and require the most investment to operate.
- It is difficult to access swim lessons at newer, more popular pools.
- Overall, pools became more efficient between 2011 and 2014. The operating costs increased marginally, as did the operating revenues and the net deficit. However, since the use increased substantially, the net subsidy per swim decreased.

Current Status

Outdoor aquatic experiences

5 Outdoor Pools



FIGURE 12

4km **CITY-WIDE (DESTINATION)**

Hillcrest Aquatic Centre, 2010

- Co-located with indoor pool
- Leisure pool
- Newest facility in VPB

Second Beach, 1995

- Located off seawall in high-traffic pedestrian and tourist area
- Lap and leisure pool
- Large pool deck area with minimal shading
- Second most popular outdoor pool in system

Maple Grove, 1995

- Quiet location within a park
- Leisure pool
- Large green space
- Popular venue for children's groups and family days

Kitsilano, 1979

- Located next to Kitsilano Beach
- Extremely long length, ideal for length swimming (137.5m)
- Located on cycling route, walking path, and tourist area
- Most visited outdoor pool

New Brighton, 1973

- Located within New Brighton park with expansive views to North Shore mountains and water
- Lap and leisure pool, mostly recreational use
- Limited green space with minimal shading at pool
- Limited parking

Outdoor Pools

The Park Board has five outdoor pools, as shown in Figure 12, offering a total of 2.4 million swims per year.

Although the number of outdoor pools in Vancouver is relatively small compared to some other urban centres in Canada (e.g. Montreal and Toronto), at least two of the Vancouver outdoor pools are quite large, and therefore the total capacity for swimming in public outdoor pools in Vancouver is at least as high as cities that have more pools. For example, the Kitsilano pool has the equivalent capacity as about fifteen regular 25m six lane pools.

For further detail on each facility, refer to Chapter 3 of the *Current State Report*.

Outdoor Pools

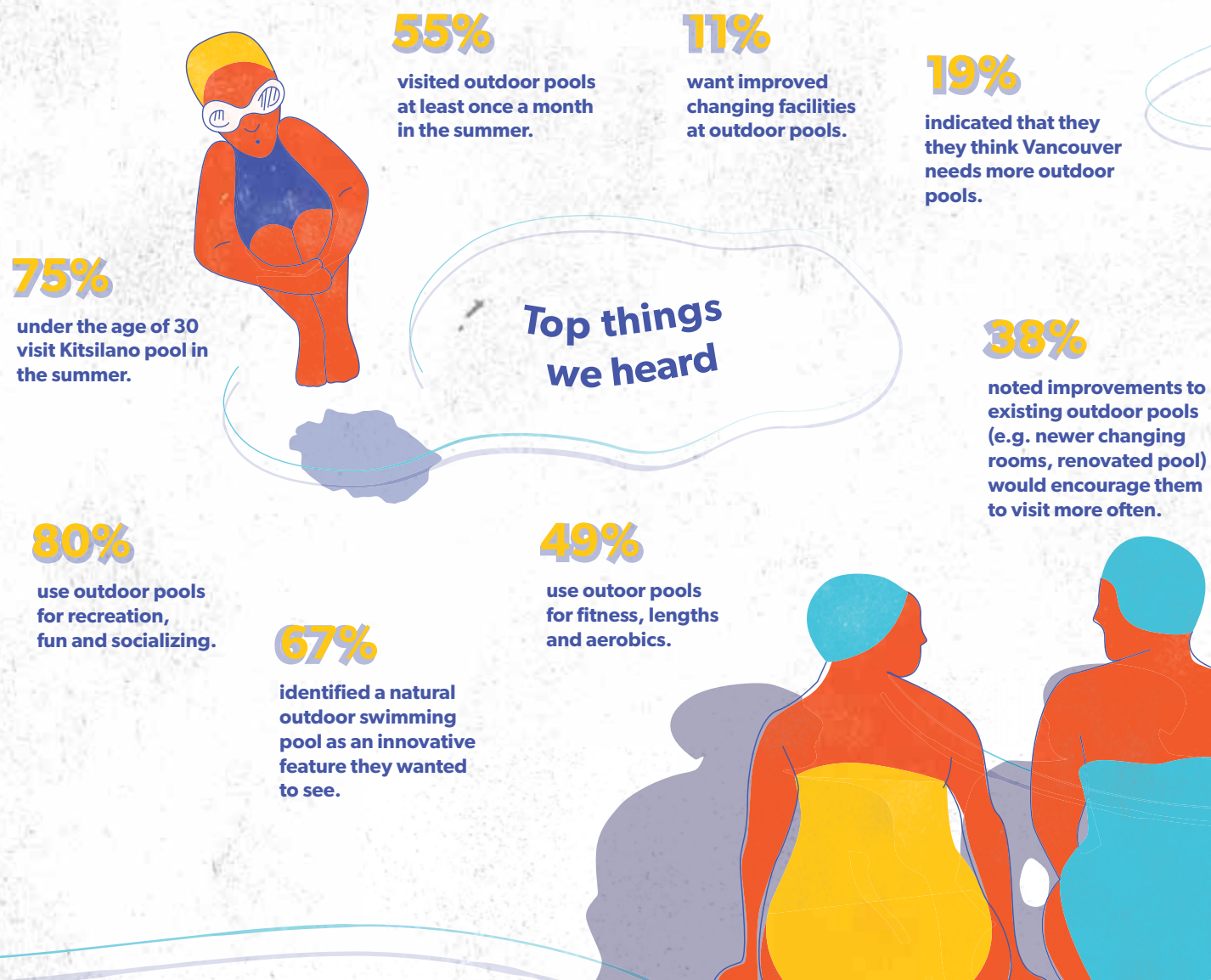


FIGURE 13

Outdoor Pools

KEY INSIGHTS

- Generally, different outdoor pools are optimized to provide different types of aquatic experiences. Vancouver's outdoor pools are destination pools, offering a range of experiences and drawing residents from across the city.
- The public engagement highlighted an interest in innovative facilities, such as outdoor naturally filtrated pools and a floating pool.
- The outdoor pools are not currently providing adequate changing facilities.
- Many of the outdoor pools are aging and require mechanical or pool upgrades.
- Concession stands and food services at all outdoor pools could be improved.
- Outdoor pools support multiple activities from lap swimming to leisure and play.
- Location for outdoor pools should be carefully considered as they compete with land with other park uses, many of which offer year round use.

Current Status

Outdoor aquatic experiences



18 Kilometres
of Beaches
*Approximately

Legend

 Guarded
Beaches



Lake

FIGURE 14

Beaches

The Vancouver Park Board manage 9 life guarded (from late May until early September annually) beach areas totaling approximately 18 linear km of beach area (shown in Figure 14). Eight are on the ocean and one is at Trout Lake, and amenities offered at each vary. Similar to outdoor pools, beaches in Vancouver currently play a very significant role in providing respite from heat and recreation and socializing. Beaches see a large proportion of their use focused not necessarily on patrons in the water, but on a desire to be near the water. Beaches also see many engaging in ocean play and swimming, as well as fitness uses on the water (kayaking, wind-surfing, boogie boarding) and at the edge of the water, such as skim boarding.



LIFE GUARDED BEACHES

Trout Lake
Sunset Beach
Third Beach
Second Beach
English Bay
Locarno Beach
Kitsilano Beach
Jericho Beach
Spanish Banks

Beaches

The most visited beaches were:



45%

recommend more shaded areas as an improvement.

Top things we heard + learned

80%

visit beaches with the primary goal of relaxation.

24%

said they love the beaches as they are.



3.1 million

annual visitors to beaches (observed in life-guarded season), but, there is a lack of clear data collected on how many people visit the beach and why, compared to our understanding of pool usage.



Beaches provide a range of amenities, varying by beach, such as: concessions, seasonal life guards, sand volleyball courts, playing fields, swimming rafts, playgrounds, picnic areas, and tennis courts.



Vancouver's beaches offer a unique, natural, outdoor aquatic experience available in very few urban centres in the country.



People are willing to travel farther from their homes to visit beaches.

FIGURE 15

Beaches

KEY INSIGHTS

- Based on information collected by lifeguards in 2010, there were over 3.1 million users during guarding season — over 1.0 million greater than the combined annual indoor and outdoor pool swims recorded for 2010.
- Highest beach use was seen at Kitsilano and English Bay beaches.
- Beaches play a significant role in meeting the 25-Year Vision for the future of aquatics in Vancouver.
- There are opportunities for beaches to play a greater role in meeting service needs in the nine categories of aquatics, with potential to increase their role in skill development, fitness and special events.

Current Status

Wading Pools + Spray Parks

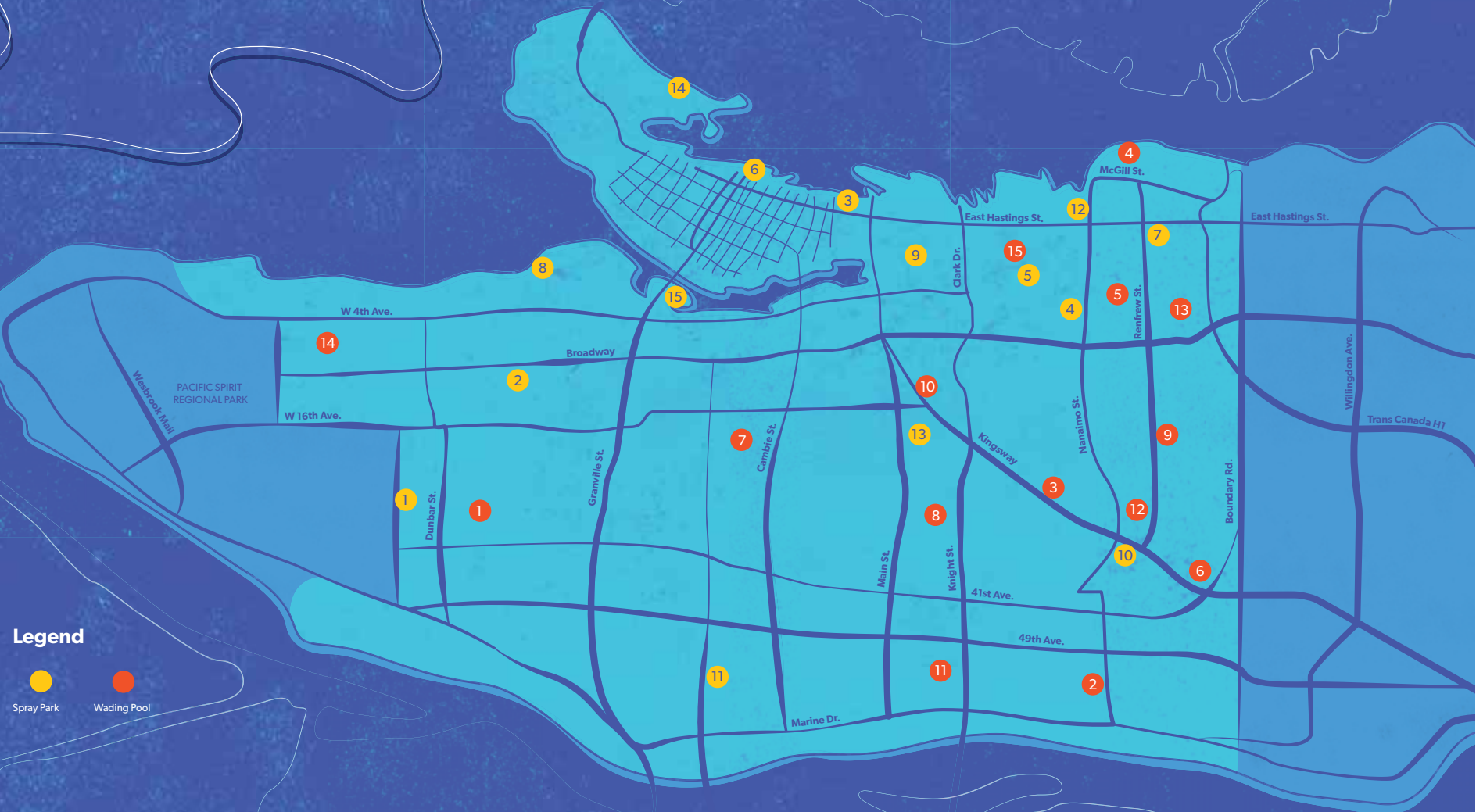


FIGURE 16

● SPRAY PARKS

1. **Chaldecott Park**
2. **Connaught Park**
3. **CRAB Park at Portside**
4. **Garden Park**
5. **Grandview Park**
6. **Harbour Green Park**
7. **Hastings Community Park**
8. **Kitsilano Beach Park**
9. **MacLean Park**
10. **Norquay Park**
11. **Oak Park**
12. **Pandora Park**
13. **Prince Edward Park**
14. **Stanley Park (Lumberman's Arch)**
15. **Granville Island**
*not operated by the VPB

● WADING POOLS

1. **Balaclava Park**
2. **Bobolink Park**
3. **Brewers Park**
4. **Burrard View Park**
5. **Clinton Park**
6. **Collingwood Park**
7. **Douglas Park**
8. **Gray's Park**
9. **Renfrew Community Park**
10. **Robson Park**
11. **Ross Park**
12. **Slocan Park**
13. **Sunrise Park**
14. **Trimble Park**
15. **Woodland Park**

Wading Pools + Spray Parks

Fifteen spray parks are licensed to operate in Vancouver - fourteen are operated by the Vancouver Park Board and one by the Community Centre at Granville Island. See Figure 16 for a map of all wading pools and spray parks in the City of Vancouver.

The VPB currently has, in its inventory, 15 wading pools, largely constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. They are required to be licensed as pool features under the Health Act regulations and need to be staffed. Wading pools are gradually being phased out in Vancouver, as they are in many municipalities across Western Canada, in favour of spray parks. This is due to revisions to the Health Act regulations that render the wading pools non-compliant.

Both wading pools and spray parks play a role in providing an introduction, and in some cases a 'first touch' water experience for young children. However, Vancouver's fill and draw wading pools are aging, and do not meet current Health Act standards. Additional shortcomings for existing wading pools are that they do not provide universal access, and must be staffed. The daily maintenance is water intensive and wading pool operation is costly as it requires staff for maintenance and supervised operation to meet Health Act requirements.

Spray parks, alternatively, offer a similar introduction to water, but offer a greater range and diversity of uses, do not require full-time staff to operate, and have an extended usage period as they can be used for more hours of the day and can be access year round (no fences or gates) during the off-season as 'terrain parks' and play spaces when water features are no longer operating. Spray parks also tend to appeal to a greater range of users, and are more socially as well as physically inclusive.

Wading Pools + Spray Parks

What is working

- Wading pools and spray parks provide an introduction to water.
- Spray parks offer a greater range of use and accessibility, greater level of safety and are more socially-inclusive.
- Spray parks can be activated as play areas outside of summer, and do not need to be supervised, extending their use to more hours of a day.
- Spray parks can be designed as public space attractions.
- Spray parks do not need to be supervised.

What is not working

- Existing wading pools do not meet Health Act regulations, compelling significant conversion or removal.
- Current wading pools must be filled daily with potable water.
- Current wading pools do not provide universal access.
- Wading pools must be supervised.

Top things we heard

1

Spray parks are more dynamic and more fun than a wading pool.

2

Water needs to be activated for more hours of the day and for more days of the week; spray parks provide this flexibility.

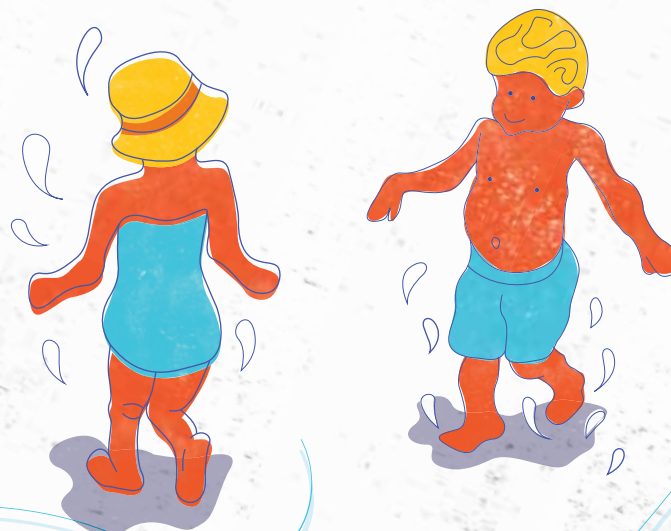


FIGURE 17

Wading Pools + Spray Parks

KEY INSIGHTS

- Spray parks provide more opportunities to serve a broader range of ages and needs, and provide much greater flexibility in meeting activity needs than wading pools.
- Spray parks are more inclusive, offering access to a range of people, from very young children to adults of varying physical abilities, to play, socialize, and seek respite from summer heat together.
- Spray parks also offer the possibility of year-round use, as the topography and some of the features offer opportunities for imaginative play even when the water is not running.
- Spray parks are more economical to run as they do not require staffing to operate.
- During the operating season, spray parks can be used during all park operating hours, while wading pools, which must be staffed, are only in operation during limited hours.

Aquatic Innovation Definitions



FLOATING POOL

A Floating Pool creates a sanitary swimming environment within a body of water that is often too polluted to permit safe swimming practices. Situating a floating pool in such an area would offer an alternate experience and enhance the enjoyment of the water.



FLOATING SAUNA

In many cultures, saunas play an important role as a part of daily culture, and in some cases connection to nature and the outdoors. Floating saunas are water-based or water's-edge saunas that provide a sauna experience as part of a larger aquatic wellness experience that could be related to ocean swimming, or associated with outdoor or indoor swimming facilities.



NATURAL POOLS

Natural Swimming Pools are defined as pools that use naturally occurring biological water filtration and treatment methods to provide pure and clean bathing facilities that mirror natural bodies of water, without the use of chemical treatment.



URBAN SPLASH PARK

Spray park features combined with public art and/or urban water features, creating a more 'mature' environment that appeals to a wider age range of people, often in highly prominent places. They are free and can be enjoyed by a larger cross section of users in warmer months, while still serving a public function (art), in colder months. They offer respite in a high density urban environment during hot days, but also offer a high degree of 'spectacle' and community building: there are often ample opportunities for people watching and social gathering, and a lot of the settings attract residents but are also tourist draws due to their stunning settings and opportunities for photo-ops.



OCEAN PLAY

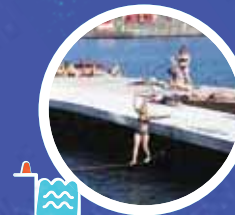
Water play structures made of inflatable elements are aquatic playgrounds that can be located at existing beaches. The various elements can include slides, wheels, and trampolines. Easily arranged to create obstacle courses, these structures provide active waterpark experiences suitable for a wide age range.



URBAN BEACH

Urban beaches simulate beach environments within urban settings, often taking advantage of nearby water features. With the introduction of sand, beach umbrellas, and seating, and the insertion of an urban beach offers a surprising, alternative space to relax within the cityscape in areas away from natural bodies of water.

The installation of urban beaches increases the equity of beach experience in key locations of the city.



HARBOUR DECK

These urban swimming structures extend the urban landscape into the water, encouraging city dwellers to interact and connect with the water that surrounds their cities. These public swimming holes, through extensions to the public promenade, docks or the seawall, offer an urban harbor landscape of piers, ramps, cliffs, playgrounds and pontoons, completing the transition from land to water and making it possible to go for a swim in the middle of the city.

Harbour decks place an emphasis on public gathering, with areas for seating, sunning, socializing and taking in the spectacle and the activity are as important, if not more important, than the areas dedicated for fitness and leisure swimming, and diving platforms.

FIGURE 18

Aquatic Innovations

As part of the 2017 Vancouver Aquatics Strategy, a global precedent review was carried out of current trends around the world related to aquatic experiences. The questions asked as part of this research were:

- What are the latest trends in aquatic experiences around the world?
- What new specialty pool typologies are emerging?
- What are the current best practices and how do we see them being applied in new aquatic forms in Vancouver's context?

KEY INSIGHTS

- In addition to traditional indoor and outdoor pools, there has been a recent rise in aquatic experiences that do not fit the traditional model of a user-pay aquatic facility focused on fitness and leisure swimming.
- Globally, there is a shift in aquatic services to include a broader range of water based experiences that focus on social gathering, community building, health, wellness, joy, and a renewed connection to nature, in many cases through no-cost entry facilities.