

Van Splash

Advisory
Group
Report



**VANCOUVER
NEEDS MORE
POOLS!**

July 2019

Written by Delaney + Associates on behalf of advisory group members.

Note: All photos contained in this report were taken by staff or the VanSplash Advisory Group facilitation team. All photos are from advisory group meetings, including the aquatics facilities tour. Some of the photos depict discussion tools and techniques used during meetings.

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Executive Summary

In late 2018, a call for applications was promoted for a community advisory group to provide insights to Vancouver Park Board staff on the Draft VanSplash Strategy – a 25-year vision and high-level implementation plan for aquatics across the City of Vancouver.

When the draft strategy previously came forward for approval in 2017, public concerns were raised about several aspects – primarily the strategy's recommendation to move away from a predominantly neighbourhood-scale indoor pool system. The Board referred VanSplash back to staff for further consideration in early 2018, and the decision was made to establish an advisory group as an additional phase of community engagement.

The VanSplash Advisory Group selection process was designed to establish a group with a diverse range of aquatics experience and perspectives. The 19-member group of volunteers included a range of ages, backgrounds and residents from different locations across Vancouver. Members included aquatic sport coaches, parents of children in swim lessons, people living with disabilities, aquatics advocates, former competitive athletes, recreational aquatics users, ocean swimmers, and a range of other perspectives and group affiliations. The VanSplash Advisory Group was launched in January 2019 and met nine times between January and June. The group was coordinated and facilitated by a neutral, third-party consultant and all meeting notes and presentation materials were

posted to the VanSplash webpage for public access. Group members were asked to communicate the group's work to their networks and contacts, and members of the public were able to submit letters by email for the group to consider. The mandate of the group was to review and provide insights to Park Board staff on: a) the content of the Draft VanSplash Strategy, with a focus on the strategy's draft Recommendations, b) the amendments proposed by Commissioners at the January 29, 2018 Board meeting, and c) concerns raised by residents.

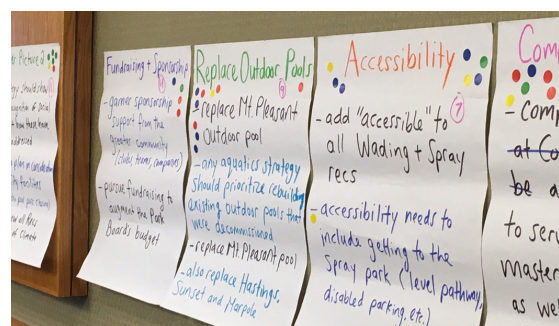
The first few meetings were intended as a learning phase and included a tour of Lower Mainland aquatics facilities and presentations on aquatics planning and trends. The group then focused on deliberations and providing input to Park Board staff on the contents of the Draft VanSplash Strategy, proposed amendments and community concerns. The majority of group discussion time was spent on the strategy's draft Recommendations, and through these discussions many of the proposed amendments and community concerns were addressed. The amendments and concerns were also covered separately in group discussions.

The VanSplash Advisory Group's input includes:

- Input on the draft Vision, Principles and Goals
- Input across all draft Recommendations

- Input on individual Recommendations, including those related to Indoor Pools, Outdoor Pools, Beaches, Wading Pools and Spray Parks, and Innovation
- Other group suggestions and ideas not specifically related to the Recommendations

Park Board staff will consider the VanSplash Advisory Group's insights as they work to update the VanSplash strategy. The updated strategy will come forward to the Board in Fall 2019 for decision.





The Advisory Group's Input

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the group was tasked with providing insights on the Draft VanSplash Strategy, with a focus on the Recommendations. The group was also asked for input on the draft Vision, Principles and Goals, community concerns, and amendments proposed by Commissioners in January 2018.

The group worked hard to reach consensus on all of its input to the Park Board. The group's input below is all consensus-based, except where explicitly noted. See Page 20 for more information on what is consensus.

INPUT ON VANSPLASH VISION, PRINCIPLES AND GOALS

The group suggests that the wording of the draft vision is more suitable as a mission statement. The vision should be aspirational and describe the desired future state, while the mission should be about how to reach the vision. The group developed a new suggested vision, and provided some suggested changes on the previous vision to put forward as a suggested mission.

Current draft Vision:

Deliver a wide range of aquatic experiences for residents and visitors that support Vancouver as a highly-livable, world-class coastal city.

Suggested Vision:

Building communities of aquatics users for a lifetime.

Suggested Mission:

Deliver a wide range of accessible aquatic experiences for residents and visitors that support Vancouver as a highly-livable, world-leading coastal city.

To be consistent with this language, the group also suggests changing the wording in Goal 1 to say: **Continue to increase annual aquatic visits per capita** (instead of swims).

Current draft Principle #2:

Expand the definition of 'aquatics' to include beaches, wading pools, spray parks and new innovative aquatics experiences.

The group suggests **adding "competition"** to this principle.

The group did not have any further consensus insights on the draft Vision, Principles and Goals.



Notes:

Text in **blue bold** is advisory group input.

Text in **gray bold** is existing draft VanSplash content provided for reference to indicate what the group is commenting on.

The group was specific in choosing "aquatics users" for the vision, as opposed to "swimmers," as they recognize that many non-swimmers are also using aquatics facilities.



INPUT ON VANSPLASH RECOMMENDATIONS

Input Across all Recommendations

In recognition of the urgent need for increased aquatics capacity in Vancouver, an overarching message from the VanSplash Advisory Group is **“we need more pools”**. The group agreed this should be the title of the advisory group report.

Across all recommendations, ensure meaningful consultation is done with impacted communities, user groups and stakeholders – based on the City of Vancouver’s core values and guiding principles for engagement.¹ Revisit how consultations have been done

with impacted communities. Consultation processes should include evaluation to measure effectiveness.

Clear and transparent communication should be a focus and high priority for both Park Board staff and elected officials. The VanSplash Advisory Group has identified a lack of public trust in VanSplash and the Park Board, and the group believes in part this stems from a lack of clarity and clear, accessible information.

Indoor Pools Recommendations

Suggested new recommendation:

Vancouver needs a competition facility adequate in capacity to serve local age group, master and triathlete as well as water polo, diving and synchronized swimming - big enough to host provincial and national competitions. In planning for such a facility, consult with National Sports Organizations, Provincial Sports Organizations and other user groups.

¹ <https://vancouver.ca/your-government/how-we-do-community-engagement.aspx#values>



Note:

The group intentionally put forward this suggested recommendation (previous page) without specifying a proposed or potential location for such a facility.

Group input on current draft Recommendation 1:

Move away from a predominantly neighbourhood scale pool system and deliver a greater diversity of swimming experiences at larger, community and destination scale facilities

- The group supports the amended Recommendation 1, as proposed by Commissioners in January 2018: **“Support a balanced delivery model that includes neighbourhood scale pools as well as larger community and destination scale facilities to deliver a greater diversity of aquatic experiences.”**

Additional group insights related to Recommendation 1:

- **Neighbourhood pools are important**
- **Consult the local community**
- **No one is opposed to a destination pool, but where it is located is important**

Group input on current draft Recommendation 2:

Where feasible, co-locate outdoor pools with indoor pools to offer a greater range of aquatic experiences at each facility and to maximize operational efficiencies.

- **Problems with definitions of “outdoor pool” i.e. newer one at Hillcrest is a wading pool; not big enough for an adult to swim there**
- **Community input should determine type of pool built**
- **Co-location should be expanded to other community facilities, not just indoor pools**

The group supports draft Recommendation 3 as-is:

Decommission existing stand-alone whirlpools in community centres which have safety and operational challenges.

Group input on current draft Recommendation 4:

Replace Britannia neighbourhood pool with a new Community-plus scale pool on the Britannia site.

- **More / better consultation and listening is required with this community and user groups to understand what they want:**
 - **Be sure to include all classes and ethnicities**

Group input on current draft Recommendation 5:

Once the Britannia Community-plus pool is fully operational, engage with pool users, community members, key stakeholders to determine the impact of the new Britannia pool on Templeton Pool.

- **Any future consultation should start from an understanding that both Templeton and Britannia are needed in 2019 for capacity**
- **Retain neighbourhood pools:**
 - **Values, qualities, experience, accessibility can’t be replaced by larger facility**



Note:

See Page 9 for additional input on Recommendations 5 and 7

Group input on current draft Recommendation 6:

Provide a new City-wide destination pool with sport-training focus, at Connaught Park as part of a future arena and/or community centre renewal.

- **Need to consult community**
- **Sport-training-focused facility needs to include diving, synchro, water polo, etc.**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 7:

Once the Connaught pool is fully operational, engage with pool users, community members, and key stakeholders to determine the impacts of the new Connaught Pool on Lord Byng Pool.

- **Byng and Connaught areas have diverse needs**
- **Need to plan for increase in population on Jericho lands**
- **Mix of pool sizes is key**

Group input related to both
Recommendations 5 and 7
(re: Templeton and Byng):

- **Templeton and Byng would remain open for a minimum of five years following the new pools (Britannia and Connaught) becoming fully operational. During this time, there would be a formal consultation process, and a thorough impact study. The group also calls for how engagement is done to be revisited, and that the engagement processes would include evaluation.**

The rationale provided for this input was to give the Byng and Templeton pool communities a level of comfort around a specific timeframe for the pools to remain open, and request a commitment to thoroughly assess the impacts of the new pools on existing pools before any decisions are made about the future of Byng and Templeton pools. The group wanted to directly address the concerns of the Byng and Templeton communities so that the VanSplash strategy can move

Note:



Two Advisory Group members oppose this input, and one member is undecided. Consensus was not reached. As part of this group discussion, the members in opposition wanted the group to discuss and consider an alternative recommendation, drafted and put forward by one advisory group member, that: "All currently existing neighbourhood pools (as of 2019) will continue to exist and will be maintained, retrofitted, renovated or replaced and not demolished". The initial group response to this suggestion was largely uncertain - based on an exercise where each member held up colour-coded cards - and several group members felt this suggestion would be in contravention of the Jan. 14, 2019 Board of Commissioners motion for the VanSplash Advisory Group to "only consider the possible future expansion and improvement of Vancouver's aquatic facilities". Therefore, the alternative recommendation was not discussed further. No other alternatives to replace the input supported by the majority of the group were suggested. The group decided to include this input in the report, despite consensus not being reached, noting that two members were opposed and one undecided.

forward, allowing some new pools to be built and increase much-needed capacity in the system.

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 8:

Replace the Vancouver Aquatic Centre with a new City-wide destination pool with a health and wellness focus, with co-located outdoor aquatic amenities

- **Health and wellness focus is too narrow**
- **Should be a large, multi-purpose facility serving the needs of a wide variety/ all user groups – wellness, health, sport training, competitive meets, diving, lessons, etc.**
- **Downtown location needs to serve families, visitors, etc.**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 9:

Replace Kerrisdale pool with a new Community scale pool, as part of a future Community Centre and/or arena renewal to take advantage of co-location synergies including energy savings, operational efficiencies, and the community interest in larger facilities offering a diverse range of amenities and services in one location

- **Support recommendation but it should be a higher priority moved up in timeline**
- **Intensive consultation with community is needed**
- **Be sure to include schools in consultation**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 10:

Renovate Kensington Pool to enhance accessibility and increase opportunities for adaptive and therapeutic swimming

- **Ensure therapy components are offered at all pools**
- **More discussion/community consultation required**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 11:

Continue to consider building partnerships with other agencies to gain opportunities for public use of non-park board aquatic facilities

- The group supports the amended Recommendation 11, as proposed by Commissioners in January 2018: **“Continue to consider building partnerships with other agencies to gain opportunities for public use of non-park board aquatic facilities consistent with Park Board goals of accessibility and equity.”**
- **Concern that partnerships will make it more expensive for users (higher admission fees)**

Outdoor Pools Recommendations

Suggested new recommendation:
Renovate Hillcrest outdoor pool to make it a legal competition-size pool. The group suggests this will meet the needs of community members calling for an outdoor pool in Mount Pleasant.



Note:

This group discussion began with a recommendation put forward by one advisory group member to “replace Mount Pleasant outdoor swimming pool”. However, several members expressed opposition or uncertainty about this suggestion and consensus was not reached. An alternative recommendation to renovate Hillcrest outdoor pool was put forward and consensus was reached.

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 3:

Provide a balance of recreation, fun, socializing and fitness, through a range of outdoor pool facilities and experiences

- **Don’t limit uses**
- **Don’t create individually focused facilities**
- **Need to ensure ability/space for actual swimming in all outdoor pool facilities**
- **Dedicated swimming spaces with lines and straight walls**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 4:

Consider an outdoor pool or spray feature with every new indoor pool facility where possible with site constraints and site planning objectives

- **As long as size and scope of indoor pool isn’t compromised**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 7:

Provide a new City-wide naturally filtered destination outdoor pool in South Vancouver i.e. non-chlorinated



• Don't limit to South Van

The group supports all other draft Outdoor Pools Recommendations as-is:

- Recommendation 1: **Continue to invest in the existing outdoor pools to keep them as unique city wide (destination) facilities within Vancouver**
- Recommendation 2: **Prioritize locating new outdoor pools to fill current service area gaps in southcentral and southeast Vancouver**
- Recommendation 5: **Revitalize existing outdoor pools: Improve or replace changing facilities, improve food and beverage service offerings, improve or replace mechanical equipment, improve new spray features and improve deck areas to enhance quality of experience**
- Recommendation 6: **Provide a new co-located outdoor pool in South Vancouver considering Killarney or Marpole Community Centres as possible locations**

Beaches Recommendations

Group input on current draft Recommendation 3:

Invest in maintaining and enhancing existing beaches: upgrade or replace changing facilities, upgrade food and beverage service offerings, provide opportunities for shade.

- **Add beach accessibility for people with disabilities**

The group supports all other draft Beaches Recommendations as-is:

- Recommendation 1: **Consider activating or enhancing the range of aquatic experiences offered at beaches, i.e. temporary water play**
- Recommendation 2: **Find a better way to collect information on how many people use our beaches and how they use them**
- Recommendation 4: **Consider enhancing the diversity of experiences at/from beach**
- Recommendation 5: **Invest in Swimming improvements at Trout Lake**

Wading Pools and Spray Parks Recommendations

The group suggests **adding “accessible”** to all six of the draft Wading Pools and Spray Parks Recommendations. The group emphasized that **accessibility needs to include getting to the spray park (level pathway, disabled parking, etc.)**

With these additions, the group supports the draft Wading Pools and Spray Parks Recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: **To facilitate the emerging spray park system, continue to convert wading pools to spray parks or decommission them, pending locational criteria and consultation with communities**
- Recommendation 2: **Provide spray parks at destination and highly urban parks serving large populations**
- Recommendation 3: **Provide neighbourhood spray parks based**

on greatest social and geographic need and through consultation with local communities

- Recommendation 4: **Consider co-locating accessible spray parks with indoor or outdoor pools, and/or with washrooms and community centres**
- Recommendation 5: **Where possible, design spray parks in a way that water can be recycle for park use, i.e. adjacent irrigation or water features**
- Recommendation 6: **Distribute spray parks more evenly throughout the City corresponding to population distribution and density**

Innovation Recommendations

Group input on current draft Recommendation 2:

Provide wellness amenities, connected with existing and future pools

- **Include accessibility and therapeutic aspects**

Group input on current draft Recommendation 6:

Build a Harbour deck for improved access to our inlet

- **Inlet should be plural – False Creek and Coal Harbour**

Group input on current draft
Recommendation 7:

Provide play structures in the ocean at existing beaches

- **With consideration of ecological and environmental impacts**

The group supports all other draft Innovation Recommendations as-is:

- Recommendation 1: **Provide a combination of temporary and permanent aquatic innovations**
- Recommendation 3: **Add outdoor hot tubs at larger destination outdoor pools that aren't co-located with an indoor pool or hot tub**
- Recommendation 4: **Build destination spray parks for fun and cooling aquatic**
- Recommendation 5: **Create urban beaches for relaxation and play**
- Recommendation 8: **Build a naturally-filtered outdoor pool for better connection to nature**
- Recommendation 9: **Assess feasibility of floating pool in False Creek**

ADDITIONAL INPUT

- **Include a glossary in the updated VanSplash strategy report**
- **Ensure First Nations are included in consultation processes and that communities' cultural traditions re: water / aquatics are considered and consulted on**
- **Plan in consideration of climate change**
- **Address water quality in outdoor bodies of water for swimming**
- **Plan facilities with recognition of existing programs**
- **Reduce the use of chlorine whenever possible**
- **Extend the Kitsilano Pool season, as this is the most unique pool in Vancouver and extended season would increase capacity in the system**
- **Empower communities to fundraise for public aquatics facilities**
- **Develop an upgrade and renovation plan, extending operational life-span for all aquatic facilities, to increase sustainability and operational efficiency including consideration of implementing green technologies**

Note:

The last bullet point is adjusted wording of one of the amendments proposed by Commissioners in January 2018.



VanSplash Overview and Context

The goal of VanSplash is to develop a 25-year vision and high-level implementation plan for the future of aquatics across the City of Vancouver, in anticipation of a changing and aging population.

VanSplash includes indoor pools, outdoor pools, beaches, wading pools, and spray parks.

THE VANSPLASH JOURNEY

The current Draft VanSplash Strategy report was released in fall 2017, following a 19-month development process that included two phases of broad community and stakeholder engagement.

Building on the mandate of the 2001 Aquatic Services Review, the document proposes a 25-year vision, a set of recommendations, and a 10-year implementation plan for the delivery of aquatic services in Vancouver. The draft strategy is informed by a technical study summarizing research

and data analysis, a precedent review, and community and stakeholder engagement input.

VanSplash was presented to Park Board Commissioners for approval in December 2017. At that time, members of the public raised a variety of concerns about the strategy, with the largest theme of concerns related to the draft strategy's recommendation to move away from a predominantly neighbourhood-scale pool system. The Board referred the strategy back to staff for "for further consideration, including the role of neighbourhood pools in relation to the qualitative experience they offer residents".

A decision was then made to establish a community advisory group to review the draft strategy in detail, and provide insights to Park Board staff about how the strategy's recommendations might be adjusted to address concerns.

With the advisory group process now wrapped up, and its recommendations presented in this report, the VanSplash Strategy will be updated where possible and brought forward to the Board for consideration in Fall 2019. While Park Board staff are responsible for developing and updating VanSplash according to the Board's direction, the elected Board of Commissioners will make the decision whether to approve the strategy.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Over two phases in 2016 and 2017, the VanSplash stakeholder engagement process resulted in over 7,000 interactions with stakeholders and the public to inform the strategy recommendations. Engagement opportunities included five open house outreach events, six focus group sessions and two TalkVancouver online surveys with a combined total of over 6,300 responses, in addition to over 185 email submissions.

The process aimed to engage both aquatic facility users and non-users, and included outreach to over 150 groups including aquatic user groups, community centres, neighbourhood houses, immigrant services, City of Vancouver advisory committees, LGBTQ2 representatives, diverse advocacy groups, persons with disabilities and seniors. The engagement process was one of Park Board's most extensive processes to date in terms of numbers and diversity of groups engaged.

The VanSplash Advisory Group represents a third phase of engagement on the strategy, with the goal of obtaining broad perspectives and input from a range of stakeholder and user groups, along with members of the public who access a variety of aquatics services.

Advisory Group Overview

What's an advisory group?

Advisory groups are a form of community engagement that provide a constructive forum for in-depth dialogue over time. Membership typically consists of a small number of people who each bring different interests and unique perspectives to the group. An advisory group process is often effective in balancing trade-offs and conceptualizing broader needs - in this case, the needs of Vancouverites.

The decision was made to establish an advisory group for VanSplash in order to achieve a robust and thorough engagement process. An advisory group process is often effective for finding solutions to complex issues. The Vancouver Park Board has had success with other advisory groups, such as those formed to provide input on the People, Parks and Dogs Strategy, and the On-Water Strategy.

Who participated and how were they selected?

VanSplash is a long-term strategy that must consider all Vancouver residents and aquatics users. The aquatics community in Vancouver is varied and includes everyone from casual, social visitors to elite athletes and users in between. The goal for the

VanSplash Advisory Group was to include broad perspectives and diverse aquatics experience from across the City.

An independent engagement and facilitation firm, Delaney + Associates, was selected through a competitive process to develop a fair and equitable advisory group selection process, receive and evaluate applications according to the Board-approved process, and short-list 20 volunteers to be invited to join the advisory group.

Early in their work on the project, Delaney + Associates completed seven informational interviews with key stakeholders. Interviewees included aquatics advocates, members of aquatics sport groups, and individuals who use a range of facilities. The purpose of the interviews was to listen and learn from stakeholders about concerns and aspirations for the advisory group approach and process, so their insights could help to inform the design of the advisory group, including the selection process.

The selection process, which was approved by the Board in November 2018, outlined that the VanSplash Advisory Group would include up to 20 volunteer members, with four seats under each of the following five categories of aquatics use:

1. Recreation, leisure, socializing
2. Skill development

3. Fitness
4. Sport training / competitive
5. Therapy / rehabilitation

Within and then across these categories, the Delaney + Associates selection team evaluated a variety of applicant information, outlined below, for the sole purpose of creating as broad and varied group makeup as possible:

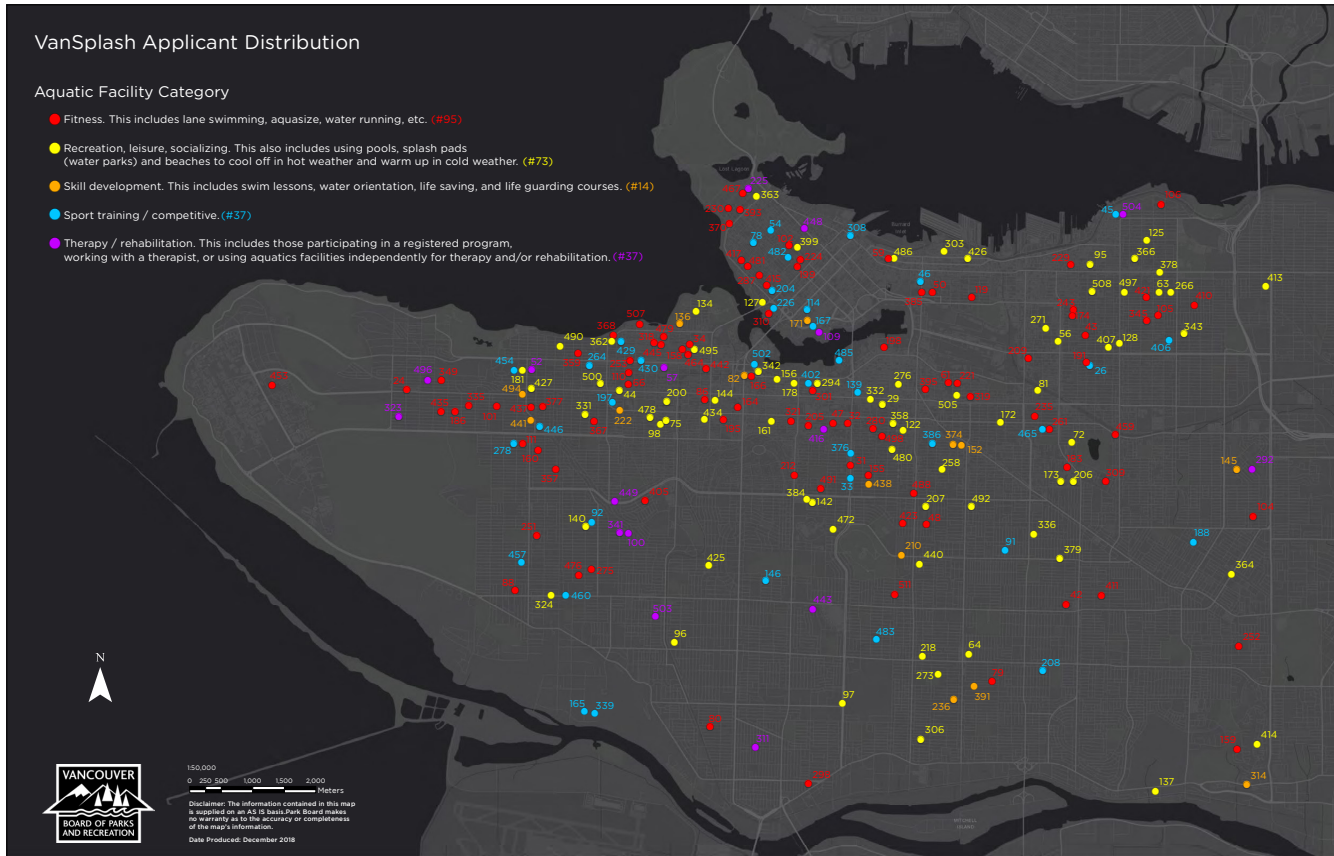
- Aquatics group affiliation(s)
- Location in the City (postal code)
- Type of facilities used (indoor pools, outdoor pools, spray parks/wading pools, beaches)
- Top 3 facilities most often used
- Frequency of use
- Age and gender identity
- Interest in serving on the advisory group
- Other community connections and networks
- Previous participation in VanSplash engagement

After a two-week application period and a variety of communications efforts to promote the call for applications, a total of 256 completed applications were received for the 20 advisory group spots.

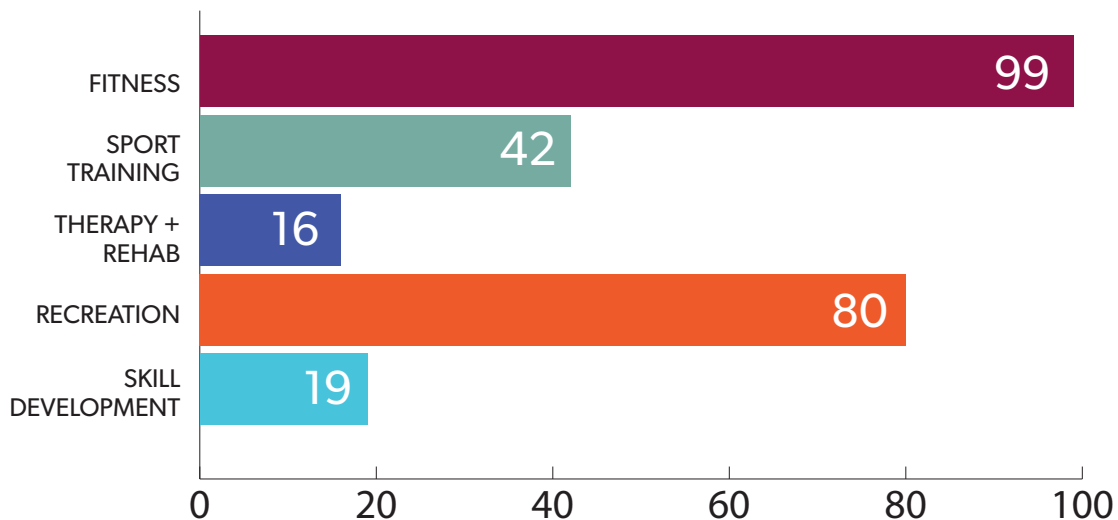
All applications were reviewed and assessed by Delaney + Associates and a short list of recommended applicants was developed for the Park Board's consideration.



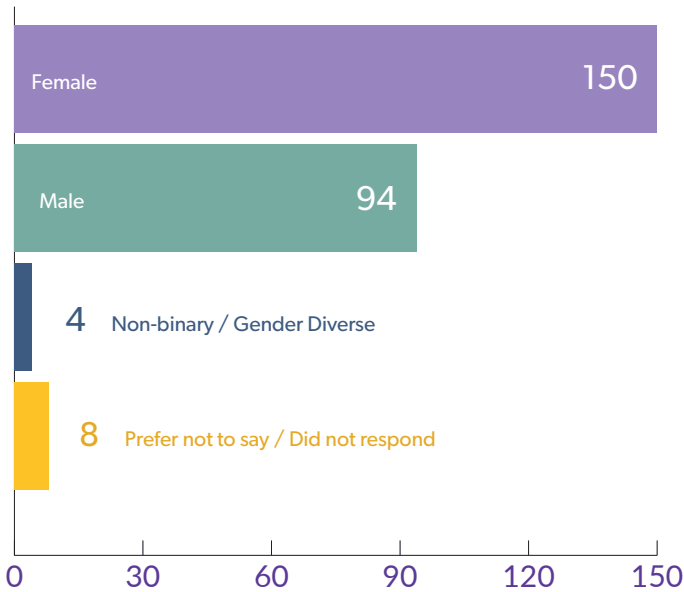
APPLICANT DISTRIBUTION: GEOGRAPHY



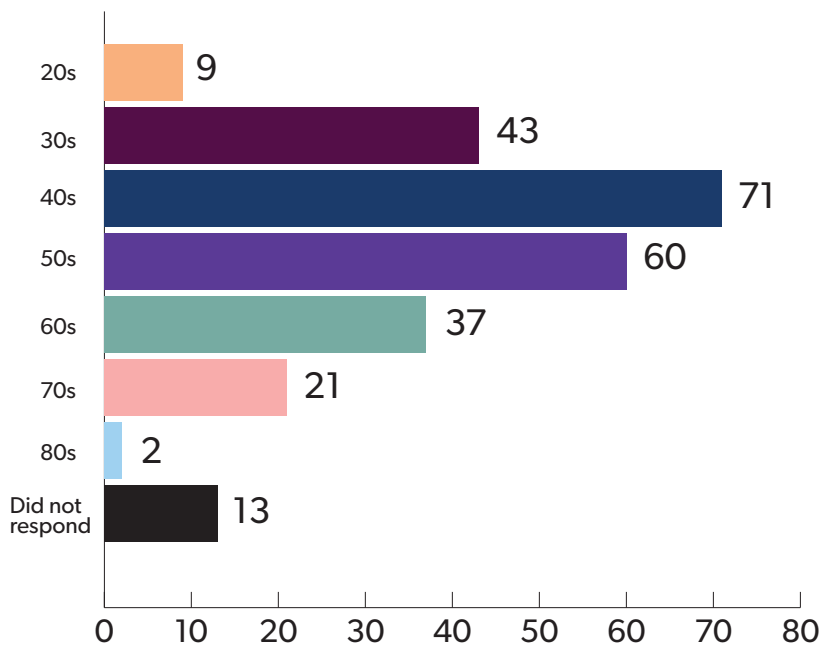
APPLICANT DISTRIBUTION: AQUATIC CATEGORY



APPLICANT DISTRIBUTION: GENDER IDENTITY



APPLICANT DISTRIBUTION: AGE



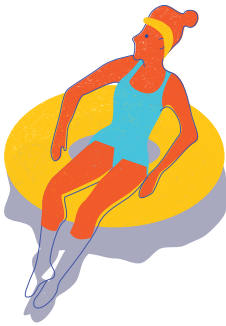
CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

- 103,000+ e-blast recipients
- Posters & postcards at pools
- Newspaper advertising
- 75,000+ views of social media posts & advertising
- Letter to Community Centre Association Presidents
- Direct outreach to aquatics stakeholder groups
- 14-day application period

256
completed
applications
received

The Board of Commissioners approved the recommended short-list of applicants in December 2018, and those 20 volunteers were invited to join the advisory group. Two successful applicants declined the invitation to join the group, and subsequently two alternate applicants from the same aquatic use category, who shared similar qualities, were invited in their place. One of these alternate applicants initially agreed to join the group, but was not able to attend the first several meetings and regretfully stepped down. The group agreed to continue with 19 members.

VANSPLASH ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS:



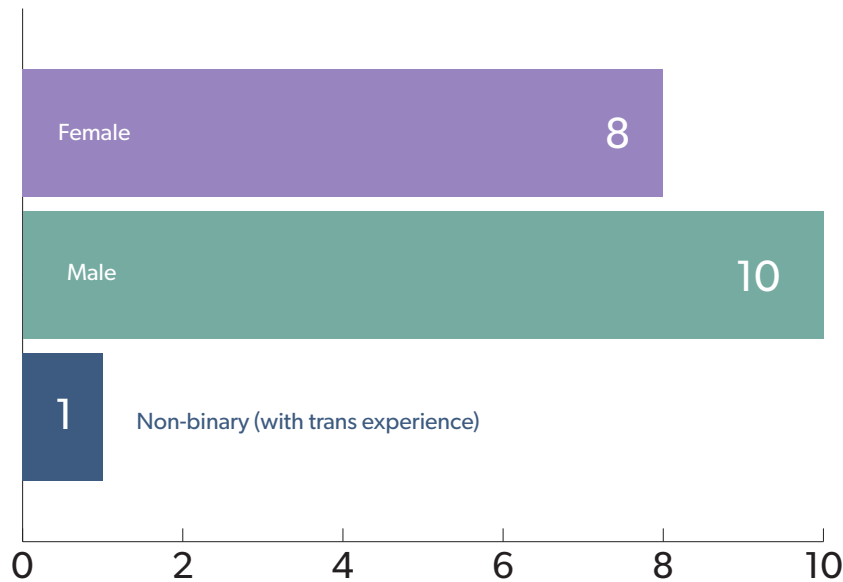
- ANTHONY ABRAHAMS
- JEAN CAMPBELL
- KAYE CHAPMAN
- CLIFF CHENG
- MICHAEL DIPIETRO
- DALE EDWARDS
- ABBY FERRIS
- SAMANTHA GARRETT
- IGOR KOPECKY
- CAROL MARTIN
- BRONWEN MEARS
- ANTHONY MEHNERT
- BARRY MORRIS
- STEVIE NGUYEN
- CHARLES TAI
- ARTHUR TSAI
- JARRETT VAUGHAN
- MARIANNE WIELAND
DE ALVAREZ
- PETER WONG

ADVISORY GROUP: NEIGHBOURHOOD SUMMARY

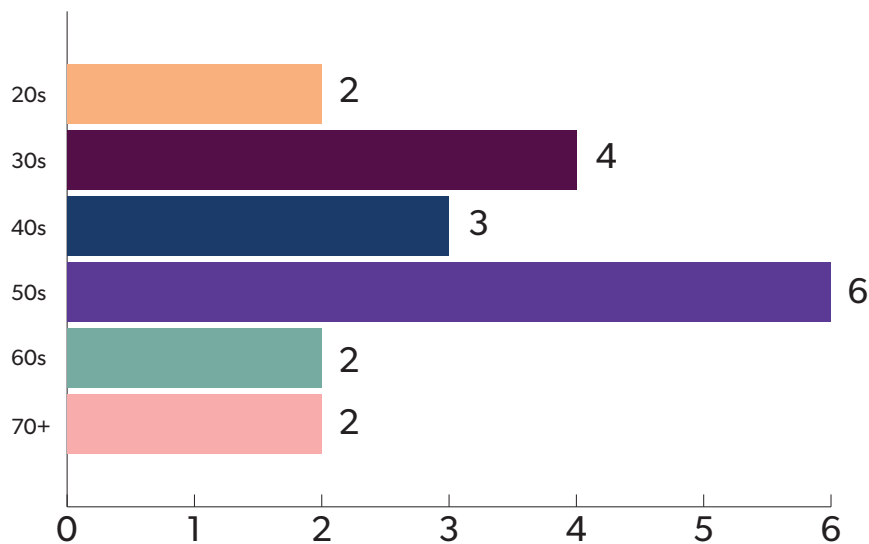


ABOUT THE ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

ADVISORY GROUP: GENDER SUMMARY



ADVISORY GROUP: AGE SUMMARY



DISABILITIES IDENTIFIED

Osteoarthritis (2)
Degenerative disc disease
Child with autism
Child who uses wheelchair
Depression and anxiety
Yes - prefer not to say

FACILITIES USED

Britannia
Hillcrest
Kensington
Kerrisdale
Killarney
Lord Byng
Renfrew
Templeton
Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC)
Kits Pool
New Brighton
Second Beach Pool
English Bay Beach
Sunset Beach
Kits Beach
Spanish Banks
Jericho Beach

Aquatics groups represented:

FastLane swim group, Exceleration Triathlon and Multisport, Vancouver Open Water Swim Association (VOWSA), Vancouver Society for the Promotion of Outdoor Pools, Swim BC, Swim Canada, Canadian Dolphins Swim Club, Killarney Gators Swim Club, Honu Para Swim Society, English Bay Swim Club, Masters Swimming Association of BC, Masters Swimming Canada, iDive, BC Diving, IGLA: International LGBTQ+ Aquatics, advocate for Templeton Pool, advocate for Lord Byng Pool

Other related groups that members are affiliated with:

All Bodies Community (ABC) Fitness, SportAbility, Canadian International Dragon Boat Festival, Residents Association of Mt. Pleasant, Downtown YMCA, Metro Vancouver Alliance, Renfrew Park Community Association, Killarney Community Centre Society

Other relevant roles and experience of members:

Aquafit instructor, sport coaches, parents of children in swim lessons, synchronized swimming experience, former lifeguards, former competitive swimmers and athletes, para swimming experience, research and experience with aquatics facilities in other cities, formal education in city planning, communications expertise, Cantonese and Mandarin speaker, volunteering experience, board member experience, experience with swimming community in United States, newcomer experience

Was the group intended to be representative?

Although the membership of the VanSplash Advisory Group is diverse, it was not intended to represent the overall demographics of Vancouverites. Participation was based on a voluntary response to a call for applications, and the demographics of applicants did not represent the general population of Vancouverites or aquatics users. A different process would have been used to establish a representative sample based on population demographics.



PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS:

6 months

9 meetings (includes 1 facilities tour)

27 hours of meeting time per member

400+ hours of collective meeting time

100s more hours devoted outside of meetings to read emails from public, engage with networks and contacts, prepare for meetings, complete assignments, review meeting notes, etc.

While the Board-approved selection process was designed to create a diverse group with a wide range of perspectives, Park Board staff, Commissioners and advisory group members were all conscious of the limitations of a 19-member group in being able to include all perspectives. However, a larger group would have introduced difficulties in achieving productive meetings within time constraints; in fact, this was an identified challenge with 19 members, and the advisory group eventually agreed to longer meetings and additional meetings to ensure more time for discussion.

During Meeting #1, advisory group members discussed and identified potential groups and voices that were missing from the table, such as youth, First Nations and Urban Indigenous, homeless and vulnerable Vancouverites, and non-English speakers, among others. Group members then discussed how they could leverage their contacts and networks to help bring these voices into the conversation.

How did the group operate?

The VanSplash Advisory Group launched in January 2019 and completed eight regular meetings, plus a full-day aquatic facilities tour, before wrapping up its deliberations in June.

One additional meeting is planned for Fall 2019 to report back to the group how its input was used.

All advisory group **members had equal standing** and the group operated without a chair. Group meetings and communication were coordinated by the external facilitator, and meeting notes were captured

by an independent notetaker from Delaney + Associates. Members had an opportunity to review all draft meeting notes before they were posted online for public access.

The group's work was guided by a **Terms of Reference**, which outlined its mandate, term, structure, application and selection process, roles and responsibilities, etc. A Process Framework was also developed to outline the meeting schedule and focus topics for each meeting. Group members had an opportunity to provide input on both the draft Terms of Reference and Process Framework during Meeting #1, before they were finalized.

During the first meeting, the group also worked together to develop a **"Code of Conduct"** for group meetings, which included values such as: "we will work together in the spirit of collaboration and compromise," "we value diversity and inclusion," and "challenge ideas, not people." The facilitator reminded the group of the Code of Conduct at the beginning of each meeting.

Group **members were consulted** on decisions related to the operation of the group whenever possible. For example, meeting dates and times were chosen based on members' availability, and members helped decide the mix of City of Vancouver and non-Vancouver pools to visit on the facilities tour.

Before beginning deliberations on the draft VanSplash content, members discussed and considered whether the group would **aim for consensus in its advice** to Park Board staff. The facilitator explained that delivering consensus input would mean that staff would receive



What is Consensus?

Consensus is a lack of disagreement. It implies compromise and cooperation. The root of consensus is "consent."

Consensus means you might not agree 100%, or you may not get everything you're looking for, but you can accept and live with the outcome.

clear feedback, from the group as a whole, to consider incorporating into the updated VanSplash strategy - as opposed to potentially conflicting advice from various individual members. The group decided to strive for consensus, and periodically discussed this approach throughout its deliberations. In one situation, consensus could not be reached and the group decided to put forward the insights with a note that two members disagreed and one was undecided.

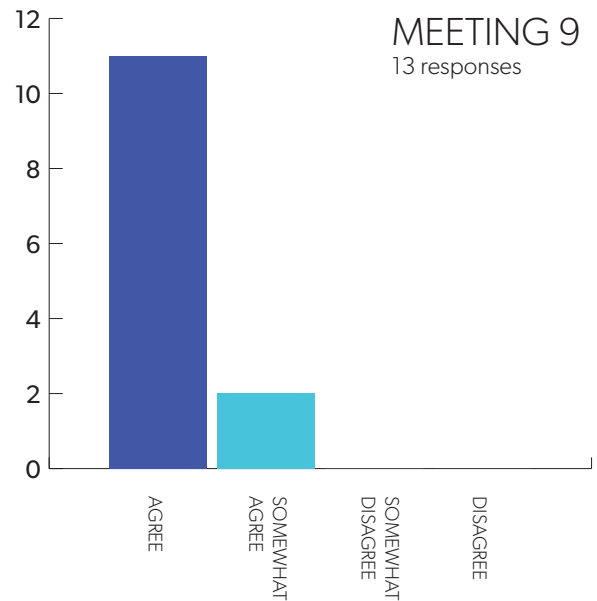
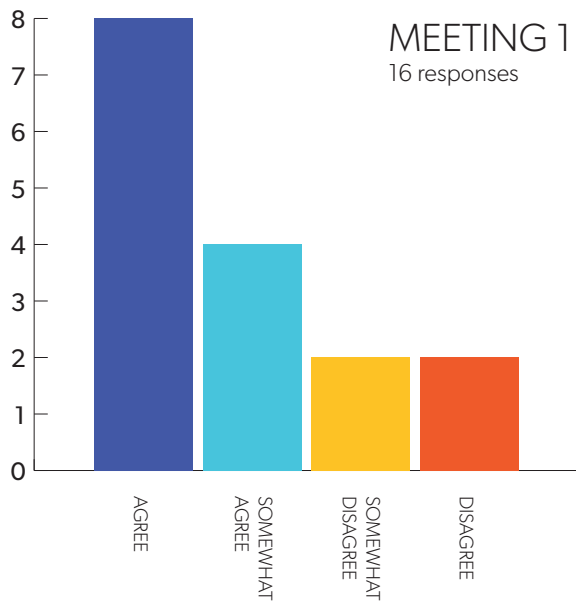
A **variety of activities and tools were used** to support members in their discussions and help identify initial levels of agreement or support for content in the draft VanSplash strategy. For example, in one meeting members used tokens to anonymously indicate their level of agreement with each of the draft indoor and outdoor pools recommendations. The results of this exercise were then used as a starting place for deliberations and suggestions for advice to Park Board staff on these recommendations.

At the end of every meeting, members were invited to complete a short **evaluation survey** to provide feedback on the structure and content of the meeting. The evaluation results were used by the facilitation team to continually adjust the approach to help meet members needs and preferences. For example, members identified in early meeting evaluations that meetings felt rushed and there was not enough time for discussion. Based on this feedback and the group's preferences, meetings were extended to three hours each, two additional meetings were added, and assignments were developed for members to complete outside of meetings. Evaluation results and written feedback were shared with all group members following each meeting.

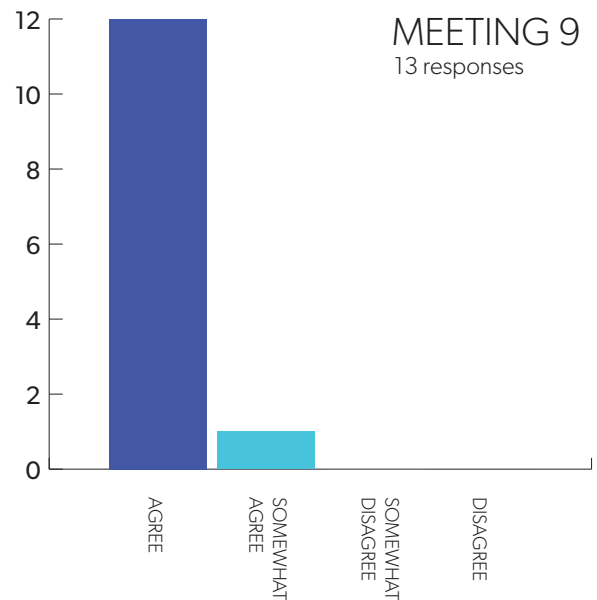
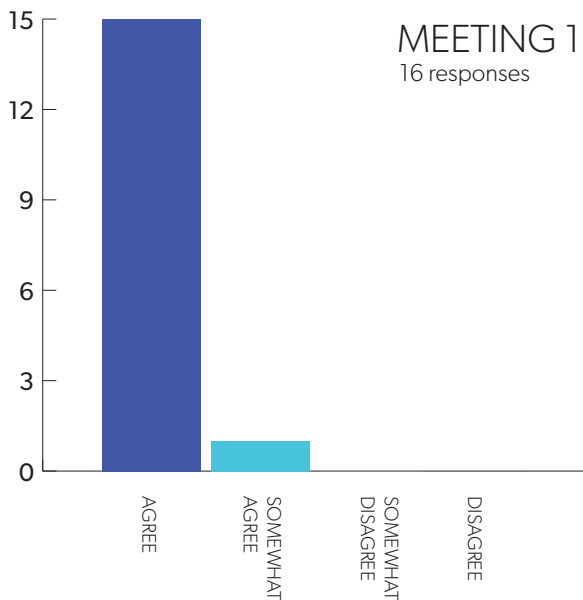
EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

Some of the evaluation results from Meeting #1 in January and Meeting #9 in June demonstrate some of the group's progress. Additional evaluation questions asked members to write what they liked most and what they liked least about the meeting, and to rate whether the meeting was facilitated in an impartial way by the external facilitator.

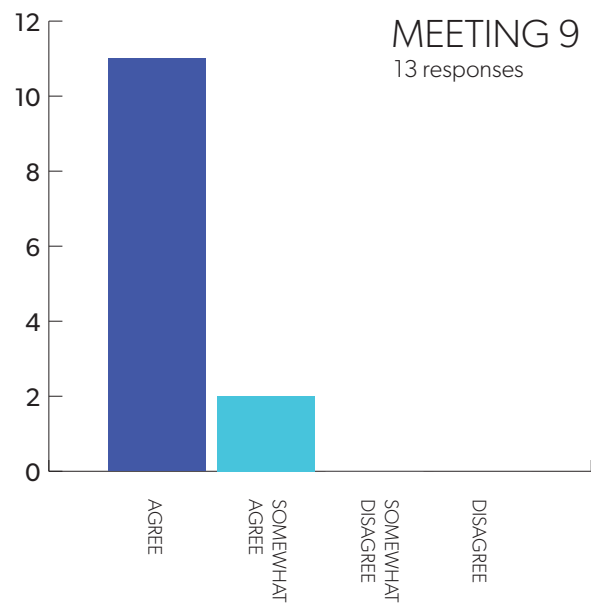
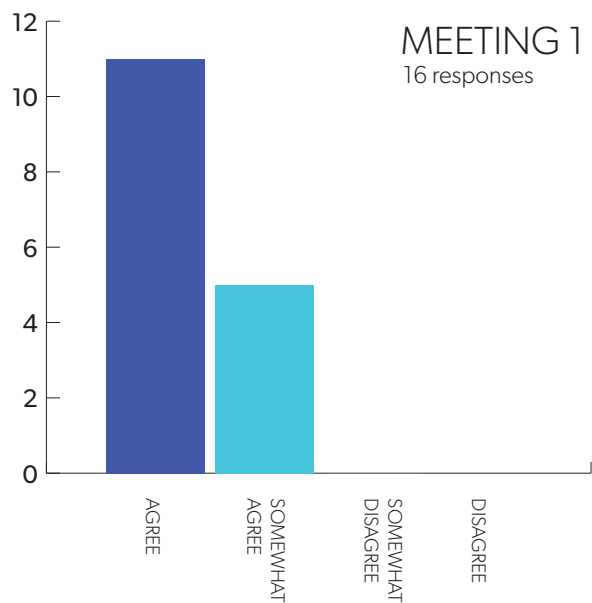
1) The session content enhanced my knowledge of the draft VanSplash Strategy and Vancouver's public aquatics system.



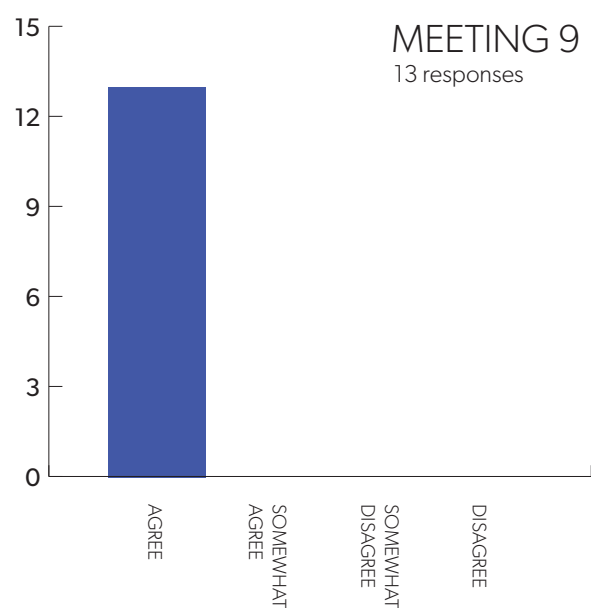
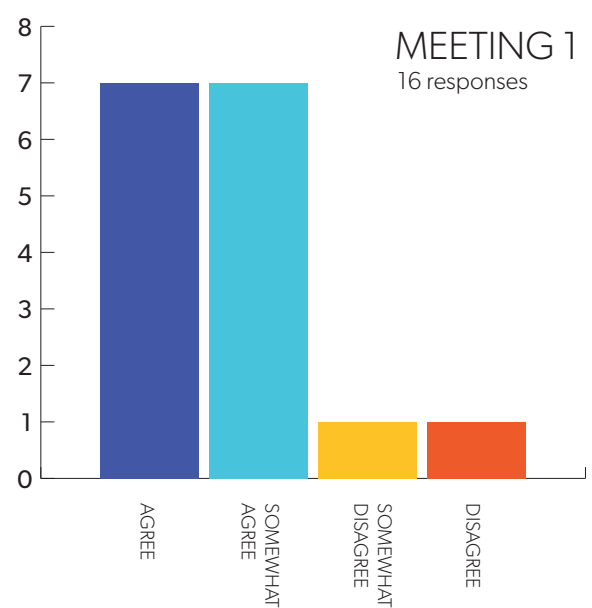
2) I was encouraged to share my thoughts and/or feedback during this engagement.



3) I had the information I needed to participate in a meaningful way.



4) I understand the VanSplash advisory group process and what the group can and cannot influence.



The Advisory Group Process

Between January and June 2019, the group met regularly to learn about Vancouver's existing aquatic system, review the draft strategy and other information, and provide input on the draft VanSplash Strategy.

MANDATE

The group's mandate was clearly outlined in the Terms of Reference:

"The role of the VanSplash Advisory Group is to review and provide insights to staff on the content of the draft VanSplash strategy, with a focus on the strategy's Draft recommendations. In addition, the group will review and provide insights on the amendments proposed by commissioners at the January 29, 2018 Board meeting, and concerns raised by residents who spoke at the December 11 and 12, 2017 and January 29, 2018 Board meetings.

The advisory group is being established to provide insights and advice to Park Board staff. Based in part on the advisory group's input, Park Board staff will revise the VanSplash strategy and bring it to the Board in 2019 for decision. The final decision-makers are the Park Board Commissioners.

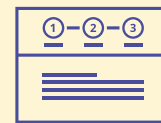
Motion of January 14, 2019:

The Vancouver Park Board directs its VanSplash Advisory Group to only consider the possible future expansion and improvement of Vancouver's aquatic facilities."

The mandate was referenced regularly in meetings and discussed by the group, with a view to ensuring its review, insights and advice were within scope.



Advisory Group Timeline



ONBOARDING
January 2019

LEARNING
February—March



**DISCUSS
RECOMMEN-
DATIONS +
COMMUNITY
CONCERNS**
April—June

**DISCUSS
GROUP
IDEAS**
June



REPORTING
June—July

PROCESS OVERVIEW

Meeting 1, January 16: Kick-off and desired outcomes – discussed group Process Framework and Terms of Reference, discussed group's mandate and measures of success for process

- Materials covered / provided: Terms of Reference, Process Framework, Board's motion of Jan. 14, 2019 re: advisory group scope

Meeting 2, February 3: Aquatic facilities tour – visited six Greater Vancouver pools²; three City of Vancouver facilities (Renfrew, Killarney and Vancouver Aquatic Centre) and three non-City facilities (Guildford, Edmonds and UBC)

- Information provided for each facility: Year opened, cost to build, annual operating costs, annual revenue, facility features, accessibility features, capacity and usage trends

Meeting 3, February 13:

Overview of planning approach and VanSplash strategy – presentations on aquatics planning, capital planning, facilities planning and trends in aquatics

- Materials covered / provided: Current Draft VanSplash Strategy report, overview of aquatics planning, capital planning, facilities planning, trends in aquatics

Meeting 4, March 11: Vision, Principles and Goals – discussed and provided feedback on draft Vision, Principles and Goals

2. Advisory group members were asked in Meeting 1 if they wanted to visit only City of Vancouver pools or a mix of COV and non-COV pools. The group's feedback was to tour a mix of facilities.

within the VanSplash strategy

- Materials covered / provided: Existing draft Vision, Principles and Goals; book created by Byng and Templeton pool users: "The Power and Magic of Neighbourhood Pools".

Meeting 5, April 3: VanSplash draft Recommendations – identified the least-supported indoor and outdoor pool recommendations, and discussed several of the indoor pool recommendations

- Materials covered / provided: Existing draft indoor and outdoor pools recommendations, additional context and information on the recommendations provided by staff; first batch of emails from public addressed to the group; information about YMCA proposal for new pool facility in South Vancouver

Meeting 6, April 29:

Recommendations continued – continued detailed discussions on the draft indoor pools recommendations

- Materials covered / provided: Existing draft beaches, wading pools + spray parks and innovation recommendations, with additional context and information on the recommendations provided by staff; staff presentation on Park Board land and land considerations / constraints for aquatics; updated Process Framework to reflect additional meeting and other process changes; additional emails from public addressed to the group; information in response to member requests: information about the current Britannia Master Plan process, and about funding for construction of Hillcrest

COMMUNICATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

20 documents from meetings posted to VanSplash webpage

3 e-blasts to VanSplash subscribers

Update posters in all community centres

10 postcards for each member

1 Facebook ad campaign

210+ emails received for advisory group members



information about Sherbrook Pool in Winnipeg, which was referenced by a member as an example of refurbishing older facilities; suggested email text for members to share with their networks and contacts with an update on the advisory group process and invitation to provide input through members; additional emails from public addressed to the group

Meeting 8, June 10:

Recommendations continued and member submissions - returned to previous discussions on indoor pools Recommendation 1, discussed beaches, wading + spray and innovation recommendations, and discussed member submissions for additional recommendations / feedback

- Materials covered / provided: Board Meeting Minutes from Jan. 29, 2018; proposed amendments to VanSplash (copied from minutes for easy reference); video link for Jan. 29 meeting video; supplemental report of VanSplash that briefly looked into the physical suitability of proposed new pool at Connaught Park; submissions from advisory group members for additional recommendations for the group to consider and discuss; cost estimates of renovating Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC) vs. cost estimate for replacement; background and history of Mount Pleasant outdoor pool; additional emails from public addressed to the group

Meeting 9, June 12: Community concerns and proposed amendments - discussed community concerns heard about the current VanSplash draft, discussed the amendments proposed by previous Commissioner

in January 2018, returned to the previous discussion on draft Vision, Principles and Goals, discussed next steps to wrap up advisory group process

- Materials covered / provided: Additional emails from public addressed to the group

Role of staff

Park Board staff's primary role for the VanSplash Advisory Group process was to provide information, data, context and background on aquatics infrastructure, planning and industry best practices. During the first several meetings, the advisory group's learning phase, staff had a more active role in delivering this information through presentations and answering questions from the group. The VanSplash project manager was present for all advisory group meetings, and additional Park Board staff, City staff, and the consultant that was hired to help develop the VanSplash strategy were invited to some meetings to deliver contextual presentations to the group.

After the learning phase, when the group started to deliberate and discuss the VanSplash draft content, staff's primary role was to listen, and staff attendance was kept at a minimum. Advisory group members were asked for their preferences on staff's role in later meetings, particularly for discussions on community concerns. Staff volunteered to leave part of one meeting for a particular discussion about lack of trust in the Park Board, to ensure that advisory group members were comfortable speaking frankly. Following this, an anonymous survey was developed and conducted by the facilitation



team, which identified that a majority of group members wanted Park Board staff to be present for all remaining discussions and meetings.

Role of facilitator

Delaney + Associates acted as neutral, third-party facilitators and was responsible for planning, organizing and running all advisory group meetings. A purpose statement and objectives for each meeting were developed by the facilitator and approved by Park Board staff, and then the facilitator created the meeting agenda based on the approved objectives. The facilitator also developed the meeting activities and materials, with the exception of any aquatics-content related presentations or other material.

Throughout the process, the facilitation team also created several online surveys for advisory group members to provide their anonymous input outside of meetings. The survey input was shared with all members and used as a starting place for discussions in meetings, with the aim to maximize efficiency of meeting time.

The facilitation team was also responsible for taking notes during advisory group meetings. Following each meeting, the notes were provided to members for review and any corrections before being posted online.

Additionally, the facilitator coordinated all email communication with advisory group members - circulating meeting agendas, background information, email correspondence received for the group and all meeting follow-up materials.

Sharing the process with Vancouverites

Efforts have been made by both group members and the Park Board to communicate the advisory group's progress and work with the broader public. As part of the Park Board's commitment to transparency, all meeting material and detailed notes have been posted on the VanSplash webpage following each meeting.

Between January and June, three e-blasts were distributed to the VanSplash email list (approx. 3,000 subscribers) with updates on the group's process and reminders about meeting notes being available online. Staff also distributed posters to all Park Board community centres and swimming pools to encourage



people to check out the meeting notes and presentation materials, and a Facebook ad campaign was also used in May to share this information.

These communications materials included the vansplash@vancouver.ca email address so people could directly contact the VanSplash project manager with any questions or concerns. All emails addressed to the advisory group that were received via the VanSplash project manager and/or the facilitator were shared with members. More than 210 emails were received between April and June and shared in batches with the advisory group. A summary of correspondence received was also provided by the facilitator at the beginning of meetings.

Group members were also asked to share information about the group's work and listen to input from community members, interested groups and individuals. The facilitation team helped support group members to do this by providing a draft email update that members could copy and paste to their contacts and networks. Park Board staff also provided update postcards for group members to distribute.

Next Steps

HOW WILL THE ADVISORY GROUP'S INPUT BE USED?

Park Board staff will consider the VanSplash Advisory Group's insights as they work to update the VanSplash strategy. The group's suggestions must be considered within the context of existing Park Board policies and plans, as well as constraints such as available land and financial considerations. Staff will work to incorporate as much of the group's input as possible.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR VANSPLASH?

Park Board staff plan to bring the updated VanSplash strategy forward to the Board in Fall 2019. At that time, the Board will discuss the planning document and will make a decision on whether to approve the revised strategy, including staff recommendations.

