



Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC) Renewal

Recommended Program

Park Board Committee Meeting

February 24, 2025

Reconvened Tuesday, February 25, 2025





RECONCILIATION MISSION, VISION & VALUES

MISSION

Decolonize the Vancouver Park Board

The Park Board recognizes the institution's colonial history and upholds the Board's commitment to the 11 Reconciliation Strategies.

VISION

An evolvable organization in which every employee and Commissioner recognizes the humanity in themselves by recognizing and respecting the humanity of First Peoples; and an organization that sets a worldwide example in treating Reconciliation as a decolonization process.

VALUES

These values are your compass to help guide the way you work, interact with colleagues, external partners and the public.



PATIENCE

Colonialism didn't happen overnight. Untangling it takes time. We will pace ourselves for the marathon, not the sprint. We will adjust deadlines to ensure things are done well and respectfully.



CLARITY

We will focus on how colonialism functions to exclude, not on how to include.



PRAGMATISM

All staff are inheriting a system not of our making. The Park Board Reconciliation Team (PBRT) is here to assist colleagues with examining the ways colonialism continues to damage others. Blame is unproductive.



LEADERSHIP

We will nurture and sustain each other, demonstrating Indigenous principles in the way we function as a team.



LEARNING

We consent to learn in public. We will make mistakes. We will sit with those mistakes, be transparent about them, and use them both to learn and to teach. Our mistakes will be diagnostic tools.



- Seeking Board decision for the renewal of Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC): recommended program resulting from feasibility analysis as outlined in the accompanying report



Existing interior



Proposed interior subject to Board approval

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve the recommended Vancouver Aquatic Centre (VAC) renewal program as described in this report, which includes a 25m lap pool, leisure pool, large hot pool, dive towers, and other aquatic and recreation amenities.
- B. THAT the Vancouver Park Board direct staff to proceed with detailed design work of the VAC Renewal, in collaboration with City staff.
- C. THAT the Vancouver Park Board approve a Capital Plan reallocation of \$9,000,000 from the West End Waterfront Parks Phase 1 Implementation Project to fund the VAC renewal project.

- Executive Summary & Background
- Feasibility Study Analysis
- Recommended Program
- Communications Summary
- Financial Considerations & Project Risks
- Next Steps

- **End-of-life:** Facility is 51 years old and demonstrating signs of failure
- **VAC Renewal:** \$140M secured in 2023-2026 Capital Plan
- **Phased Approach:** Project initially proposed two phases – competition then leisure
- **Feasibility Study Findings:** Phasing and expanding footprint not viable
- **Program Shift:** Transition from training-focused to hybrid facility for broader public use
- **Additional Funding:** \$30M required to deliver proposed program
- **Critical Path:** Decision enables project delivery
- **Mitigating User Impacts:** Commitment to ongoing work with VAC patrons

Year	Milestone
1974	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ VAC opens to the public
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ VanSplash identified VAC nearing the end of its lifespan
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Façade failure prompted acceleration of renewal▪ \$140M allocated toward VAC renewal including \$103M through voter plebiscite and \$37M in the 2023-2026 Capital Plan
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Q1: Project launched with an accelerated schedule▪ Q4: Feasibility study completed
2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Discussions with VAC user groups to review proposed program

Feasibility Study Analysis



Feasibility Study Findings – Site Constraints

- The site is physically constrained:
 - **North:** Beach Ave
 - **East:** Burrard Street Bridge
 - **South:** Shoreline/waterfront
 - **West:** Expansion into Sunset Beach Park
 - Project team completed 12+ test fits to explore potential siting opportunities

Key Takeaway:

- ***Phasing and expanding the building footprint not possible***



Feasibility Study Findings – Testing 50m Options

- Existing 50m pool not compliant with modern competition or accessibility standards
- 50m pool not viable within existing building footprint
- Existing footprint cannot accommodate current 50m (like-for-like replacement) and dive program, leisure pool and amenities



Key Takeaway:

- ***Delivering a 50m pool not possible***

- 2022 Plebiscite funding requires construction to begin by Q4 2026
- Additional design or on-site work will result in schedule delays
- Deferring VAC renewal to the next capital plan would require reprioritization among upcoming Park Board and City projects (Kits Pool, community centres, etc)
- Unpredictable future service life



Key Takeaway:

- ***Board/Council approvals are critical path***

- Included 7,000+ engagement touchpoints over 3 years
- Identified priorities for aquatic service and amenity needs
- **VAC-specific Recommendations:**
 - Downtown location should **serve families and visitors**
 - Deliver a **competition facility** capable of hosting large competitions (without specifying a proposed or potential location)
 - Design should provide opportunities for socializing and **community building**



Key Takeaway:

- A large, **multi-purpose facility** serving the needs of a **wide variety of user groups** including wellness, health, sport training, competitive meets, diving, lessons, and more

- **Population Growth**

- VanSplash identified VAC as located within the area of the highest expected population growth over the next 24 years – VAC is the only public pool in the downtown core
- Growing population of older adults – need for rehabilitation and therapeutic amenities

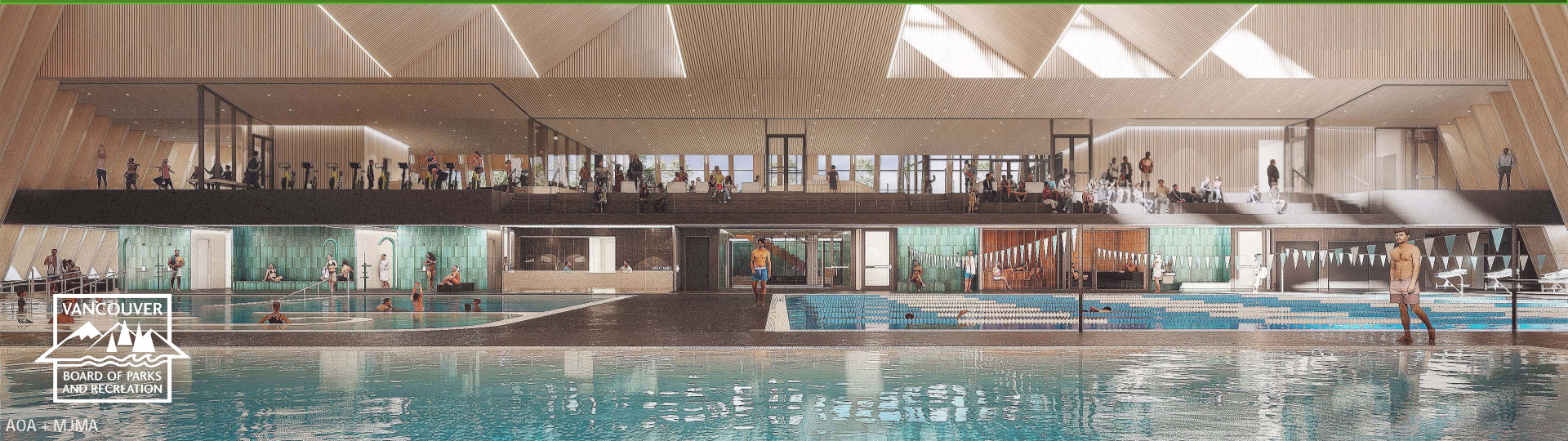
- **Unmet Demand**

- Current waitlist for registered programs – for every 2 individuals, there is 1 waitlisted to access learn-to-swim activities
- Capacity constraints of existing warm water pool – need for leisure

Key Takeaway:

- Program should accommodate demand and respond to population growth and needs

Recommended Program





Concept:

Phase 1 – 50m lap pool and diving pool

Phase 2 – Leisure aquatic facility
(pending future funding)



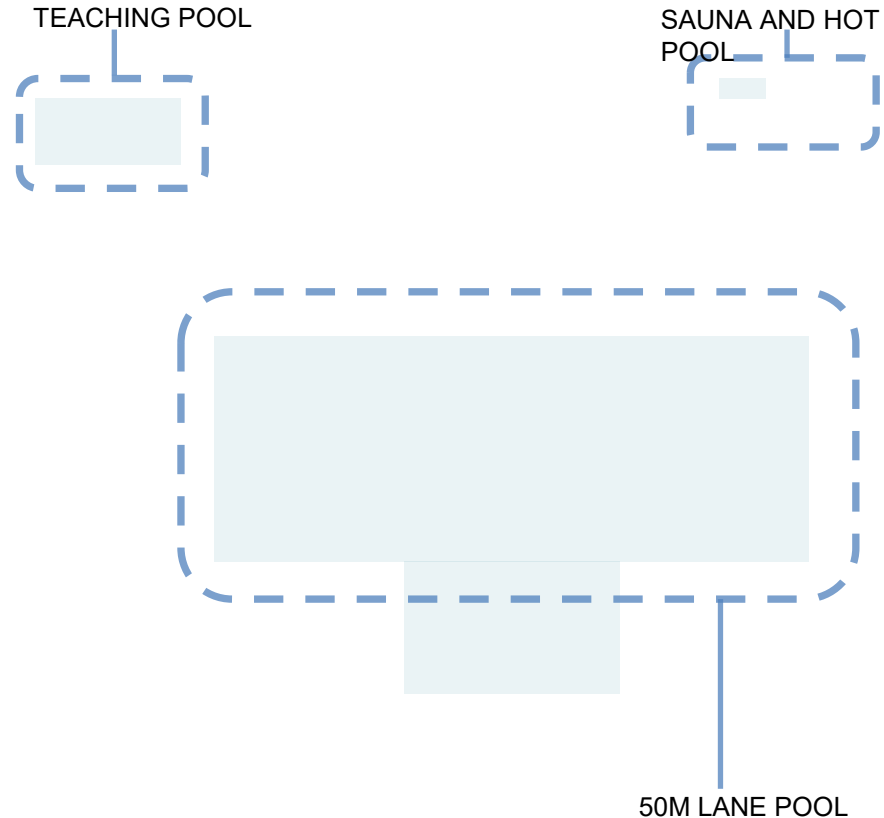
Recommended:

25m swim and competition, dive training and competition, leisure pool and amenities

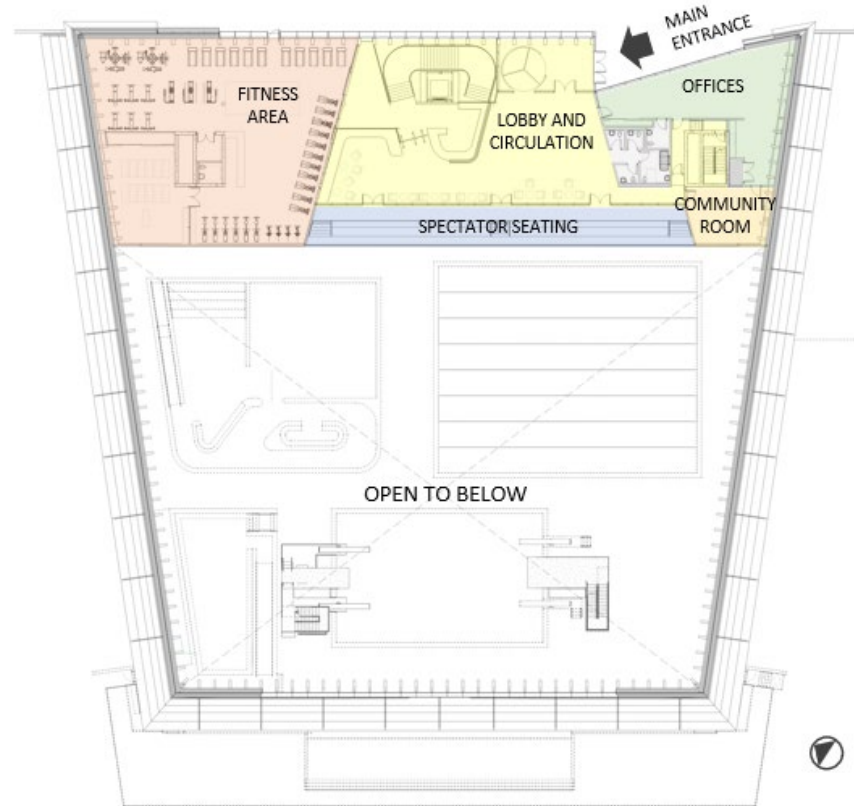
Entire facility delivered in one phase

Existing VAC Facility

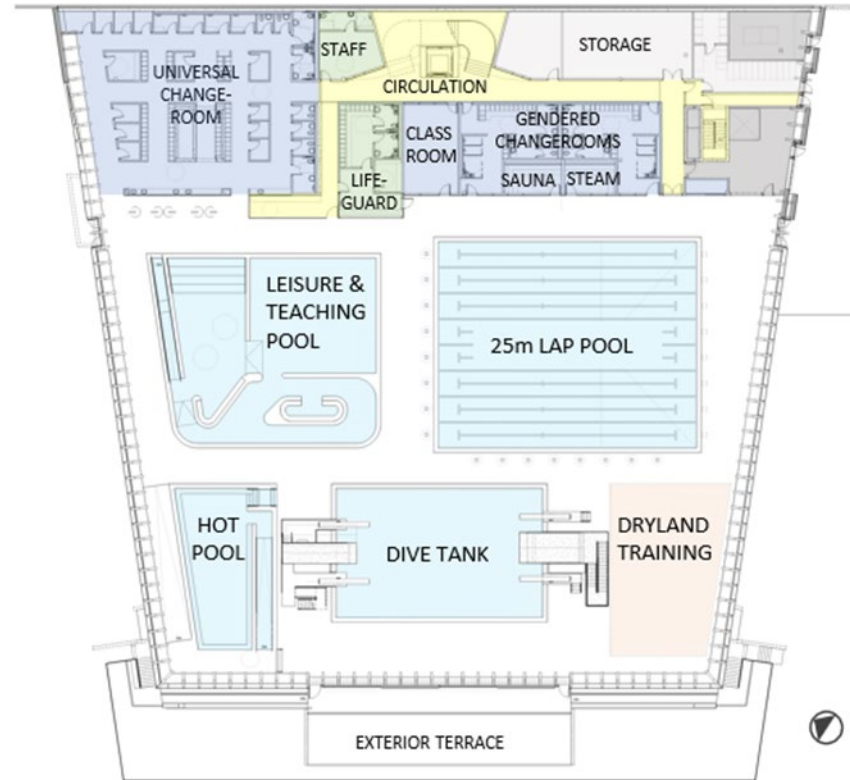
- **Aquatics:** 50m lap tank, small teaching tank, dive tank and towers, and hot pool
- **Other recreational amenities:** sauna, spectator seating area, fitness centre and changerooms
- **Competitions:** three 25m short course swim competitions & two regional dive competitions annually.
**No 50m competitions since mid 1990s*



Recommended VAC Facility – Upper Level



Recommended VAC Facility – Pool Deck Level



- **Program Maintains:**

- Aquafit and other deep-water programming
- Water Polo
- Artistic Swimming
- Underwater Hockey

- **Program Impacts:**

- 50m training

- **Program Improves:**

- 25m swim competitions
- Dive training and competitions
- Swim lessons
- Therapeutic and rehabilitation programming
- Hot tub/sauna/steam room
- Leisure pool
- Fitness Centre
- Lifeguard training and development

EXISTING

8-lane 50m lap pool

meets 8-lane 25m local competition requirements

10m, 7.5m, 5m dive platforms

does not comply with WA standards

2x 1m (non-synchro) + 2x 3m (synchro)
springboards

130 sqm dry-land training

Shallow teaching/tot pool

9 sqm hot pool

sauna

No leisure pool



PROPOSED

8-lane **25m** lap pool

meets 8-lane 25m local competition requirements

10m, 7.5m, 5m, **3m**, **1m** dive platforms

complies with WA standards

2x 1m (**synchro**) + 2x 3m (synchro)
springboards

160 sqm (±) dry-land training

teaching pool **integrated with leisure pool**

125 sqm family hot pool

sauna + **steam room**

**leisure pool with stepped beach entry
and children's play area, hydro-therapy
zone, lazy river**

EXISTING

PROPOSED

156 sqm fitness centre	➔	465 sqm fitness centre
changerooms: learner's, boy's, girl's, men's, women's	➔	changerooms: universal + men's, women's / teams
no wet classroom	➔	wet classroom
no dedicated viewing area	➔	on-deck dedicated viewing area
170 sqm spectator seating (bleachers)	➔	75 sqm spectator seating (bleachers)
28 sqm multi-purpose room	➔	40 sqm multi-purpose room
132 sqm outdoor terrace	➔	590 sqm outdoor terrace + event space

Recommended Program - Benefits



- Increases public benefit and delivers on VanSplash recommendations
- Increases aquatic capacity
- Decreases subsidy per swim
- Improves visual connection to park and waterfront setting
- Enhanced design: sustainability, accessibility and Indigenous elements

Service Loss Interruption Mitigations

- New proposed citywide approach to maintain 50m training
 - Hillcrest – increase 50m configuration to support swim club and public access continuity
- Network reallocation during construction phase will help mitigate loss
- 50m pool feasibility will be considered for future aquatic projects





Renderings





Artistic Rendering – North Approach, subject to Park Board approval



Artistic Rendering – View of Dive Towers (facing South), subject to Park Board approval



Artistic Rendering – Interior View (facing Southeast), subject to Park Board approval



Artistic Rendering – Leisure Pool with Viewing Area in Far Distance, subject to Park Board approval



Artistic Rendering – Lobby and Reception, subject to Park Board approval

An architectural rendering of a waterfront park deck. The scene is set on a paved area with several lounge chairs and large white umbrellas. People are depicted in various leisure activities: some are sitting on chairs, one is drinking water, and another is on a bicycle. The deck is bordered by a railing overlooking a body of water with a bridge in the distance. The sky is blue with scattered clouds. A green horizontal bar is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text.

Communications Summary

- **Prior Engagement:**
 - Neighbourhood input gathered through VanSplash, VanPlay, West End Waterfront Masterplan and West End Community Hub
- **User Group Meetings:**
 - Engaged VAC swim and dive groups in January 2025 to review program and impacts
- **Ongoing Support:**
 - Staff will continue working with impacted groups on relocation and transition

Feedback from User Group Conversations



Theme	Feedback	Response
Dive Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive, with input on heights and elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporated feedback to enhance the program
Swim Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concerns over 50m pool loss, capacity and reduction in citywide swim space; request to increase 50m swim capacity elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledged impact and committed to increasing 50m configuration access within the aquatic system
General Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leisure components meet the needs of downtown community (e.g. seniors, families); concerns about construction service disruptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acknowledged impact and committed to ongoing transition support

Financial and Project Risk Considerations



- 2023-2026 Capital Plan allocated **\$140M** to VAC renewal
- Preliminary cost estimate for proposed program is **\$170M**
- Seeking additional **\$30M** through Council Quarterly Budget Adjustment process
- **Seeking Board direction to reallocate \$9M** from WEWP Phase 1 Implementation

	Risk	Project Implication
Schedule	Funding	Schedule delays will put the plebiscite funding (\$103 million) at risk of expiring, requiring another plebiscite vote during the 2026 municipal election.
	Budget	Schedule delays will result in increased project cost escalations during economic uncertainty
	Service Disruption	Schedule delays will increase the risk of unpredictable shutdowns.
	Board & Council Direction	Delay in decision or alternative direction will result in schedule impacts to the project.

Next Steps



Timeline	Milestones
Q1 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="382 299 1715 342">▪ Funding decision: March 11 Council Quarterly Budget Adjustment
Q3 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="382 382 981 423">▪ Tender documents complete<li data-bbox="382 434 948 476">▪ Construction services RFP
Q4 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="382 505 780 547">▪ Construction start
Q4 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="382 584 817 625">▪ New facility opens

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