

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Active Living Centre Referendum: Community aquatic needs

On October 15, 2022, eligible voters in Vernon will be asked if they are in favour of borrowing up to \$121 million for the purpose of developing the Active Living Centre – a new multi-purpose indoor recreation facility.

The proposed facility includes a new aquatic centre and dry land spaces such as: a double gymnasium with multiple sport courts; an 80-station fitness centre; a 150m synthetic walking/running track; and multi-purpose activity and program spaces.

To help voters make a well-informed decision, the City of Vernon is offering detailed information about the project and the referendum process through a series of weekly media releases leading up to general voting day on October 15.

What amenities are included in the proposed Active Living Centre aquatic area?

- 50m x 8 lane pool with 2 movable bulkheads
- Spring diving boards (1m and 3m)
- a leisure pool with play features, accessible entry, and 3 x 25m lanes
- Steam room and sauna
- Hot tubs
- On-deck viewing
- Pool support areas (i.e., change rooms, storage, spectator seating)



Photo above: a conceptual drawing of the leisure pool area.

What are the aquatic needs of the community, based on public consultation?

Currently, the Vernon Aquatic Centre features a 25m x 8 lane swimming pool, a leisure pool, and hot tubs. Based on the results of the [2018 Greater Vernon Recreation Master Plan](#) and needs assessment, an additional 25m of indoor water is needed to appropriately serve the current and future aquatics needs of Vernon and the surrounding area.

During the [Active Living Centre Feasibility Study](#), the public indicated its preferred option to attain more indoor water is to have a single aquatic centre with a 50m pool, rather than having two 25m pools in different locations.

“The Vernon Aquatic Centre puts a priority on Learn to Swim programs to ensure children in our community are safer around our surrounding lakes,” said Doug Ross, Director, Recreation Services. “Because more of the Aquatic Centre’s available water and pool time is dedicated to Learn to Swim programs, the ability to offer public swimming time is limited.”

Last Sunday (August 21), registration opened for Fall and Winter programming through Greater Vernon Recreation Services. Within the first 24 hours, most swim lesson programs were full and had full waitlists.

If electors vote in favour of the referendum question, an additional 25m of indoor water would become available in the community by Fall 2026, offering the ability to have more swim lesson capacity and multiple programs happening at the same time throughout the day (such as Learn to Swim programs and public swimming), rather than having to choose to offer just one at a time. This is because of the double bulkhead design of the 50m pool, which would allow for various configurations of the pool, such as 2 x 25m swim areas or 3 programmable sections.



Photo above: A conceptual drawing of the 50m pool with two bulkheads moved to create three separate programmable areas.

How could the proposed aquatic centre accommodate the everyday needs of the community and the ability to host events?

The proposed aquatic facility does not include fixed amenities such as a wave pool or wave rider, which may lose public appeal after time.

Instead, the recommendation is to include features such as a rock-climbing wall, water walking mat and rope swing, along with portable amenities such as a floating Wibit or Ninja course that can be brought out on a rotational basis.

This approach would provide versatility within the aquatic centre, while still offering the ability to host 25m and 50m swim competitions.

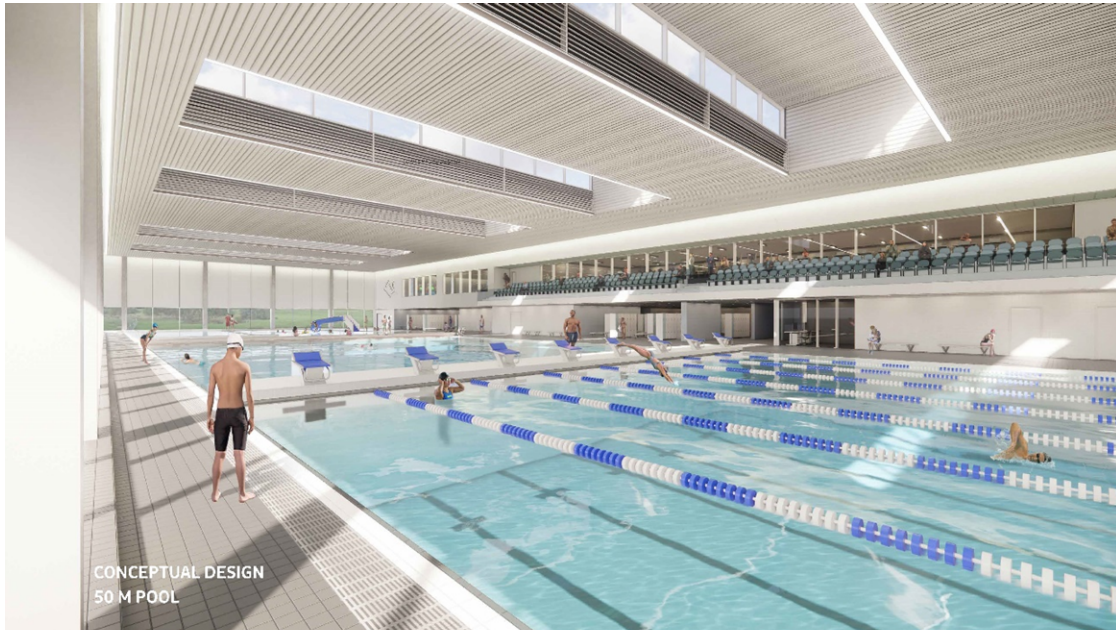


Photo above: a conceptual drawing of the 50m pool with full lane swimming.

What is the plan for the existing Vernon Aquatic Centre site if the Active Living Centre is approved?

The existing Vernon Aquatic Centre is funded through the *Greater Vernon Recreation Facilities and Programming Service Agreement*, with the District of Coldstream and Regional District of North Okanagan Electoral Areas B and C. Should Vernon electors vote in favour of the referendum and the Active Living Centre be built, the City of Vernon will be in discussions with the District of Coldstream and Electoral Areas B and C as to the future of the existing Aquatic Centre.

The Active Living Centre Feasibility Study recommends that if the Active Living Centre is built, the existing Vernon Aquatic Centre be decommissioned.

Where can I find more information?

Visit www.engagevernon.ca/activelivingcentre to learn more about the proposed facility, the results of public and stakeholder engagement regarding the project, and how to participate in the referendum process.

If you have questions about the above information, please contact Doug Ross, Director, Recreation Services, at dross@vernon.ca.