



EXPANSION OPTIONS FOR RAVENSONG AQUATIC CENTRE

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion Project proceed with Class B costing for the full expansion (Phase 1 and 2 combined) for advancement to an Elector Approval process to secure the required funds for the project.

BACKGROUND

The need for additional aquatic space in the Oceanside area was confirmed in the RDN District 69 (Oceanside) 2018 Recreation Services Master Plan. The Plan recommended the Ravensong Aquatic Centre be expanded for operational efficiencies in addition to lower construction costs in order to provide more aquatic space in the area noting the Oceanside area population wasn't at the threshold (60,000-70,000) to support a second pool.

The plan provided for the option to construct a second pool, which was favoured by many residents in the Parksville area of the region. While the RDN worked on the Ravensong expansion, the City of Parksville directed their staff to undertake a pool feasibility study for a City of Parksville owned and operated facility.

At the February 11, 2021 Oceanside Services Committee (OSC) meeting, staff, and FaulknerBrowns Architects, were directed to continue to plan for an expansion of Ravensong Aquatic Centre in phases that could be aligned and adapted to the outcome of the City of Parksville's efforts for their own Pool/Multiplex facility.

Parallel to the discussions on the pool facilities, work was also taking place on amending Bylaw 899 for inclusion of Electoral Area E as a participant in District 69 Swimming Pool Service per resolution (21-103) from the February 23, 2021 Board meeting, that directed staff to provide a report on alternative funding models for Ravensong Aquatic Centre.

#21-103

That consideration of the motion regarding the Regional District of Nanaimo District 69 Swimming Pool Local Service Area Establishment Bylaw No. 899, 1993 (Ravensong Aquatic Centre Service) be deferred to a future Board meeting after the Board has conducted the externally facilitated workshop that is to be scheduled to discuss governance and regional service arrangements.

At the June 10, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Oceanside Services Committee (OSC), both a staff report and presentation from Kate Busby, lead architect with FaulknerBrowns, were presented on phased expansion options for Ravensong Aquatic Centre. At this same June 10, 2021 OSC meeting and at the Regular RDN Board meeting on June 22, 2021, the following motions were approved:

#21-333

That the design, project planning and financial planning for an expansion to Ravensong Aquatic Centre proceed with the assumption that there will be a need for a second pool tank in the future.

#21-334

That should an expansion to Ravensong Aquatic Centre be completed in a phased approach over several years that Expansion Option OO (Original Option) and Expansion Option C be the preferred options.

#21-335

That the design, project planning, and financial planning for an expansion to Ravensong Aquatic Centre continue with a target start date of 2023.

#21-336

That a final preferred expansion option for Ravensong Aquatic Centre that considers the effects of the City of Parksville's progress on an aquatic centre be provided at the November 17, 2021, Oceanside Services Committee meeting or sooner.

At the November 22, 2021 Oceanside Services Committee (OSC) meeting, committee members recommended to the RDN Board that staff continue to plan for an expansion of Ravensong Aquatic Centre in two phases that could be aligned and adapted to the outcome of the City of Parksville's efforts for their own Pool/Multiplex facility.

At the regular December 7, 2021 RDN Board meeting, the following resolutions were made:

#21-628

That the preferred Ravensong Aquatic Centre expansion option be Option OO (Original Option).

#21-629

That the financial planning for Phase 1 of Option OO (Original Option) expansion to Ravensong Aquatic Centre, including funding for a referendum, continue within the 2022 Financial Plan.

#21-630

That the next phase for an expansion to Ravensong Aquatic Centre be focused on a review of providing regional aquatic services through either the preferred expansion option (Option OO) to Ravensong Aquatic Centre or a separate stand-alone facility at another location within Oceanside.

At the June 27, 2022 Oceanside Services Committee, the attached report (Attachment 1) was provided which outlines options for expansion to Ravensong Aquatic in two phases or in one build.

From this meeting the two following recommendations were carried and later supported at the RDN Board Meeting held July 12, 2022.

#22-455

That the Regional District of Nanaimo proceed with option 1B as noted on page 4 of the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion and Regional Aquatics for Oceanside Communities 2022-2024 Plan staff report and a referendum occur concurrently with the referendum for the amendment to Bylaw 899.

#22-453

That should funds be awarded to the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion Project from the Canada Community Building Fund Strategic Priorities Fund program stream, the timelines, including phasing options for the project, be re-evaluated, and revised to capitalize on awarded funds.

Throughout the remainder of 2022 and into 2023 the RDN Board and staff focused on the amendment of Bylaw 899 including a public engagement process which ultimately led to Bylaw 899 being amended on January 9, 2024, with Electoral Area E as a participant and the tax apportionment based on 100% usage.

At the September 12, 2023 Board meeting the Board received correspondence from the City of Parksville regarding constructing a pool in Parksville. As a result, a motion was proposed which was then carried as follows:

#23-444

That the Board support the request to examine the feasibility of a pool in the Parksville area based on a letter dated July 17, 2023, from Mayor O'Brien

At the same meeting, the Board carried the following motion that halted the Ravensong Aquatic Centre expansion project.

#23-439

That the renovation of the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Facility be put on hold and be re-examined in 2025 and that the contributions to reserves for renovation at the Ravensong Aquatic Centre be set at zero for the 2024 budget.

As a result of this motion, reserve contributions of \$1,328,392 were removed from the 2024 budget reducing the amount available for the expansion project and potentially increasing the reliance on borrowing. The amount available in the District 69 Swimming Pool Reserve for asset management and replacement is \$6,578,941. The majority of this amount is allocated to Phase 1 of the Ravensong Expansion project in 2025 based on motion #22-455 from the July 12, 2022 Board meeting.

Subsequent reports were then provided to the Board in the Fall of 2023 to set up a feasibility service Bylaw (1894) to support the above resolution regarding a pool based in Parksville. The feasibility bylaw was developed, introduced and read three times but did not receive consent from all the service participants as required, with the Electoral Area F Director not signing the consent form. At the January 30, 2024 Board meeting, the Board voted to abandon the feasibility bylaw.

After the January 30, 2024 Board meeting, the Board Chair informed the Board there had been interest from some directors to reconvene the District 69 Swimming Pool Service Select Committee to discuss the options for the Ravensong Aquatic Centre project.

Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion Options for Consideration

The June 27, 2022 Oceanside Services Committee report (Attachment #1) is the most relevant report to focus on currently regarding expanding the Ravensong Aquatic Centre. Although the costs within the report will need to be updated and timelines adjusted, the fundamental options to expand the facility remain as follows:

1. Undertake Phase 1 only (Changeroom / Admin / Dry Space Only – No Aquatic Space – Phase 2)
2. Undertake Phase 1 and 2 at same time.
3. Undertake Phase 1 then in three years undertake Phase 2

As there is no Board support to develop a second pool in Parksville and holding back on Phase 2 was in place until this matter was concluded, the need for aquatic space remains in order to meet existing and future needs of residents of the Oceanside area.

As noted in the June 27, 2022 report, there is added costs to breaking the project in two phases that will need to be considered under this approach. Adding an updated changeroom and improved dry space will not solve the need for additional aquatic space identified in the 2018 Master Plan.

With this information, Board direction is required to either update the full costs of construction to expand the Ravensong Aquatic Centre to then take to Electoral Approval (Alternative Approval Process or referendum) or end the expansion project at this time and remove it from the Five-Year Financial Plan.

Should the Board decide the cost, timing or other reasons of advancing this project is not appropriate, the proposed motion below can be considered as an alternative option to the report's recommendation.

Alternative Option Motion:

That the expansion project for the Ravensong Aquatic Centre cease, the District 69 Pool Service reserve funds allocated for expansion costs be reallocated to asset management replacement of the facility's existing infrastructure and equipment and the 2024 – 2028 Five Year Financial Plan be amended accordingly.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should the Board provide direction to advance the expansion of the Ravensong Aquatic Centre, it is estimated that \$1,600 is required to update the Quantity Survey project costs (Class C update) before advancing to design development and Class B costing. This review will take into consideration changes to the BC Building Code that come into effect on March 8, 2024.

The estimated costs to have a design and Class B costing report prepared for Phase 1 and 2 is \$364,000. Staff are recommending going forward with both phases at once to address the need for additional aquatic space in the Oceanside area. In the originally budgeted plan, Phase 1 would have been started in 2024 and Phase 2 in 2026.

By taking on Phase 1 and 2 together, the project can attempt to get back onto a similar schedule and hopefully avoid the inevitable cost increases that come with extending timelines. As an alternative, the estimated cost to have a design and Class B costing report prepared for Phase 1 alone would be \$228,000 and would require another report to be prepared in the future for Phase 2. Phase 1 focuses on the support areas of the facility such as reception and changerooms and does not provide any enhancements to the pool area. An additional \$25,000 is required to undertake a Geotechnical Assessment of the site for either approach. This would provide all the materials necessary to move to electoral approval. Should the Board advance the project to electoral approval, the costs to conduct a referendum are in the range of \$120,000.

At present there is \$240,000 in the approved 2024-2028 Financial Plan for referendums. There is also the opportunity to use reserves funds to further advance the project to the electoral approval stage. With these in place, an increase to the 2024 tax requisition will not be required. A report will be provided following the completion of the updating of the Class C estimates.

The 2024-2028 Financial Plan includes a project budget of \$9,777,384 for phase 1 in 2025 of which \$6,123,758 is funded from reserves, \$3,575,164 from borrowing with the remainder funded from operations. It also includes \$21,764,415 in 2027 for phase 2 with \$1,000,000 funded from reserves, \$20,685,953 funded from borrowing and the remainder funded from operations. These amounts were based on the report from June 27, 2022.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

Planning and Managing for Growth - Understand and develop an inter-connected framework of strategies and plans to manage growth to support complete communities, including planning, transportation, infrastructure, and fiscal sustainability.

REVIEWED BY:

- D. Banman, Manager, Recreation Services
- K. Komjati, Business Administrator, Recreation and Parks
- T. Moore, Chief Financial Officer
- D. Holmes, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

1. Staff report to Oceanside Services Committee – June 27, 2022