

RDN Receives Funding for the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion Project

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce that a contribution of \$7 million for the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion project has been approved under the Government of Canada's Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program. The contribution forms a significant portion of the \$36 million project budget. With this announcement, the project will be funded through the contribution, long-term borrowing if approved through the referendum on April 5, 2025, and \$6 million from capital reserves. The federal contribution will reduce the RDN's reliance on borrowing the full amount of the proposed \$30 million and provide a financial buffer during a shifting economic period.

Constructed in 1995, Ravensong Aquatic Centre, which is owned and operated by the RDN, remains the most used indoor recreation facility in Oceanside and has been unable to meet community demand since 2006. This pressure puts users in competition for oversubscribed pool space and limits the diversity of programs offered in this aging, inefficient facility. The expansion, combined with inclusive design, almost doubles the facility's size and will better serve the community while aligning with the RDN's objectives for climate-resilient facilities and corporate carbon neutrality by 2032.

Ravensong Aquatic Centre is the highest greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting RDN-owned facility. Once the expansion is complete, GHG emissions will be reduced by about 94 per cent, and energy demand will be 25 per cent better than the standard set by the National Energy Code for Buildings. These emission and energy reductions will be achieved through several design elements, including:

- Full building electrification vs natural gas, which is the current primary heating source
- Use of highly efficient electric heat pumps that will deliver the bulk of space and water heating
- Solar photovoltaic systems to support electrical needs
- Retention of the existing structure, preventing unnecessary construction waste going to the landfill
- Use of low-carbon building materials, including low-carbon concrete and insulation, and mass timber roof decking
- Improvements to the building shell, including triple glazing and added insulation

To ensure the facility and programming are accessible to all community members, the expansion is designed to meet the Canadian Standards Association's technical standard, Accessible Design for the Built Environment and the accessibility requirements of the BC Building Code. The inclusive design approach will include accessibility features such as:

- Universal change rooms offering single user cubicles, family rooms and accessible changing areas
- Universal washrooms and showers
- Two multipurpose rooms that respond to the need for diverse programming for vulnerable and equity-seeking groups, including seniors, those with disabilities and low-income families

Get Involved RDN!

For more information on the Ravensong Aquatic Centre Expansion project and to sign up for project updates, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/ravensongexpansion.

On April 5, eligible electors from the City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and RDN Electoral Areas E, F, G and H will decide if the RDN can borrow up to \$30 million to expand Ravensong Aquatic Centre. For information on the referendum, visit getinvolved.rdn.ca/rac-expansion-referendum and rdn.bc.ca/ravensong-referendum.

Quotes

“This investment in green community infrastructure will ensure more families in the Oceanside area have access to modern, inclusive, and sustainable recreation spaces for years to come.”

The Honourable Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

“The Regional District of Nanaimo is grateful for this contribution, which will support our efforts to provide Oceanside residents with vital health, social, and recreational opportunities through a more accessible and inclusive Ravensong Aquatic Centre. In addition to supporting community well-being, the expansion project highlights how we can use thoughtful design to reduce greenhouse gases emitted from our facilities.”

Vanessa Craig, Chair, Regional District of Nanaimo

“An inclusive design approach ensures Ravensong Aquatic Centre and the programming delivered in the facility will be welcoming, safe and accessible to all residents of the Oceanside area. Improved accessibility, reduced competition for pool time and expanded space for more diverse programming will help break down current barriers to participation.”

Sean Wood, Chair, RDN Oceanside Services Committee

“The upgrades to Ravensong Aquatic Centre will improve energy efficiency, reduce costs and help ensure that it remains an affordable, sustainable and welcoming space for residents of all ages to gather, connect and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. We look forward to when this project begins on this treasured recreation facility critical to maintaining our residents’ healthy lifestyles.”

Teunis Westbroek, Mayor, Town of Qualicum Beach

“The expansion of Ravensong Aquatic Centre will more than double the size of the existing facility and alleviate the significant demand for aquatic amenities for the residents of Parksville and throughout Oceanside. The changes will also ensure that it will be a more sustainable, environmentally friendly facility that is an accessible and inclusive recreational hub.”

Doug O’Brien, Mayor, City of Parksville


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