

Submission to

**The City of Richmond
Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee**

City Councilors:

Linda Barnes, Chair
Bill McNulty, Cynthia Chen,
Harold Steves, Sue Halsey-Brandt

March 27, 2007

4:00 PM

Regular Meeting
Anderson Room
Richmond City Hall

by the

RICHMOND AQUATIC SERVICES BOARD

An Advisory Board
Appointed by and responsible to
Richmond City Council
1996 – present
Barbara Mathias, Chair
Vice-chair, Rosemary Nickerson

The Board consists of 9 members from the community who have an interest in the ongoing development and promotion of recreational, instructional and competitive aquatic opportunities in Richmond. Although City staff will do much of the “legwork” on the above issues, the Board will provide leadership and direction and set the policy framework within which staff will operate.

History of Aquatic Planning 1992-present -

1992 20-year PRCS plan, Councilors Doug Sandberg, Evelina (Vaupotic) HalseyBrandt
1993 Referendum for Aquatic/Arena Joint Facility; Arena went P3, Aquatics passed 50.8 %
1994 -96 Watermania Building Committee conjoint with City staff and P3 Brent Kerr
1996 to present – Aquatic Services Board (ASB)
2006 PRCS Master Plan

Mandate of ASB, 1999 **Aquatic Services Board – attachment**

Richmond Aquatic Facilities -

1956 Richmond population 25,978

Open:

1958 **Centennial Outdoor Pool**, 6 lanes x 30 meters

1972 **Steveston Outdoor Pool**, 6 lane x 25 meters, + wading pool

1972 **South Arm Outdoor Pool**, free form

1977 **Minoru Aquatic Centre**, 6 lane x 25 meters + warm tank

1984 Centennial **enclosure**, added two hot tubs

1988 SA outdoor **waterslide** addition

1996 **Watermania**, 57 m with bulkhead, wave pool, waterslides, large fitness centre.

1996 Richmond pop. 157,712; aquatic assets: 2 indoor facilities, 2 out-door pools

Fast-forward 10 years:

2006 -07 Richmond pop 185,400; aquatic assets unchanged

2011 projected population 194,246

2021 projected population 212,000

(With population estimates from City web site and City Planner, 2007)

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Average Annual % Change | 1.2% |
|-------------------------|------|

2005-2011 Master Plan - No New Pools planned, though # one priority in plan

Financials –

Strong performance- operating-cost recovery on target; 71 % mandated, (70% recovery rate at WM and MAC exceeds provincial average of 50-55% for indoor aquatic facilities); 50% recovery rate for outdoor facilities

List of Key Achievements -

Strong Attendance figures

Demand for Red Cross Learn to Swim Lessons is high

Championship Events for User groups (economic generator)

School District pass program and redemption

Upgraded Minoru Fitness Room (more wanted)

Implementation of Citywide service approach

Fitness Challenge growth

Elaboration on key achievements:

- Strong attendance (annual aquatic attendance is similar to annual attendance at PNE or Vancouver Aquarium)
- Lesson programs teach important life skill of safety in, on, and around water. Number of lessons offered per year estimated: 4,300 learn to swim lessons, plus another 175 advanced instructional programs = our annual total almost 4,500 classes for all 4 pools.
- Richmond Aquatics hosts many major regional, provincial and national championships
- Swimming is one of few physical activities that reduces access barriers for those with disabilities
- Swimming participation comes from all age groups, ethnicities, and income groups
- Employer for high school and college students (approx 200 staff)
- Citywide service approach provides greater consistency to aquatic programs and services
- 10th annual Fitness Challenge 2007 attracted a record high 1,409 participants and is supporting Richmond's goal of increasing physical activity by 20% by 2010

Feedback on Master Plan -

ASB supports the priority placement of aquatics in the MP, specifically the replacement of Minoru Aquatic Centre within the first five years of implementation.

- The building of any new aquatic facility should first be complete prior to taking an existing facility out of commission
- The rebuild or replacement of Minoru Aquatic Centre, as identified in the Master Plan Capital Projects, should not be considered as providing the **additional** aquatic facilities needed for the community. We need to increase our stock, not merely maintain it.

Facility planning will ideally keep pace with population growth and demonstrated use patterns over the years. Citizens use pools.

Past, Present and Future -

The 'good' news is that Richmond has four facilities that are well used. The 'bad' news is that the last addition arrived in 1996 when our population numbered 157,712. The 'ugly' news is that Richmond has no further plans for additional facilities despite a fast-growing population that is projected to reach over 195,000 by 2011.

In Richmond, citizen visits at aquatic facilities are second only to visits to libraries (for *indoor facilities*, as outlined in the Community Needs Assessment). Citizens use pools. Cities provide for their citizens.

Yours truly,
Barbara Mathias
Chair, Aquatic Services Board
City of Richmond