



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee

Date: September 21, 2022

From: Elizabeth Ayers
General Manager, Community Services

File: 11-7000-01/2022-Vol 01

Re: **Minoru Centre for Active Living Update**

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled “Minoru Centre for Active Living Update,” dated September 21, 2022, from the General Manager, Community Services, be received for information.

Elizabeth Ayers.

Elizabeth Ayers
General Manager, Community Services

REPORT CONCURRENCE	
CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
<i>Elizabeth Ayers.</i>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: <i>MA</i>
APPROVED BY CAO	
<i>[Signature]</i>	

Staff Report

Origin

The purpose of the report is to provide Council with an update on the programs, operations and activities at the Minoru Centre for Active Living.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

4.1 Robust, affordable, and accessible sport, recreation, wellness and social programs for people of all ages and abilities.

4.2 Ensure infrastructure meets changing community needs, current trends and best practices.

This report supports the following focus areas from the City of Richmond Recreation and Sport Strategy 2019-2024:

Foster Area #1: Awareness and Understanding – Richmond residents understand the opportunities and benefits of participation in recreation and sport.

Foster Area #6: Community Capacity-Building – Collaborations, partnerships and volunteerism are strengthened to expand the reach and impact of recreation and sport in Richmond.

This report supports the following focus areas from the Wellness Strategy 2018-2023:

Foster Area #1: Foster healthy, active and involved lifestyles for all Richmond residents with an emphasis on physical activity, healthy eating and mental wellness.

Focus Area #3: Enhance equitable access to amenities, services and programs within and among neighbourhoods.

Background

The Minoru Centre for Active Living is a multipurpose complex that features state of the art aquatic, fitness, seniors, and sport centres. Together, these facilities create the opportunity for unparalleled synergies and innovation in program delivery.

The following original Guiding Principles for the facility were intended to provide overall direction in the program development, design, construction methodology and eventual operations.

1. Be Exceptional
2. Be Sustainable
3. Be Accessible
4. Be “A Centre of Excellence” for Active Living and Wellness
5. Be Synergistic
6. Be Connected

These principles still guide the facility operations today in program design, delivery and customer service.

Facility Openings

On March 11, 2019, the Seniors Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living proudly opened its doors and showcased to the public its age friendly and accessible design as well as doubled the programming space from the former Minoru Place Activity Centre. The new Seniors Centre includes a lounge, full-service cafeteria and a range of activity rooms, including an arts studio, woodworking shop, billiards room, multipurpose rooms and a dedicated entrance and lobby. The response from the community was immediate and the Minoru Seniors Society membership grew from 2300 to 4300 members in the first year of operation.

On January 1, 2020, the Fitness Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living opened to the public. This space includes 8,500 square feet with high end cardio, strength, functional training and stretching equipment to meet the needs of the Richmond community. With a much expanded exercise area and a huge increase in equipment options and programs, Fitness services brought new opportunities and new clientele to the Minoru Precinct.

On September 21, 2020 the Aquatic Centre at Minoru Centre for Active Living opened in the midst of the pandemic to the eager families and swim enthusiasts of Richmond. This destination space includes 60% more bodies of water to exercise, train, and play, including a lazy river, 2-25metre laps pools, the largest hot tub in Canada and the first municipal cold plunge pool in the country.

Pandemic

The pandemic interrupted the operations of various parts of the building with closures, however, it's important to note that, as with many City facilities, Minoru Centre for Active Living played an important role in the community during the pandemic. Swimming pools and fitness facilities were some of the first facilities to be reopened and quickly became a safe place for residents to gather, explore some leisure activities and connect, at a distance, with others. Pandemic health restrictions evolved on a regular basis and included registered visits, reduced capacity limits and enhanced cleaning protocols. These temporary restrictions were generally well received by the public as the facility became an important lifeline for their health and well being. The Minoru Seniors Society maintained Cafeteria operations with the Meals to Go program which provided a

means to keep seniors supplied with nutritious meals in a time of potential isolation, change and uncertainty. While it took a while for older adult programs to be fully restored, the Senior Centre offered a variety of online programs and services, eventually reopening with restrictions in September 2021.

Analysis

Current Operations

Seniors Programs and Services

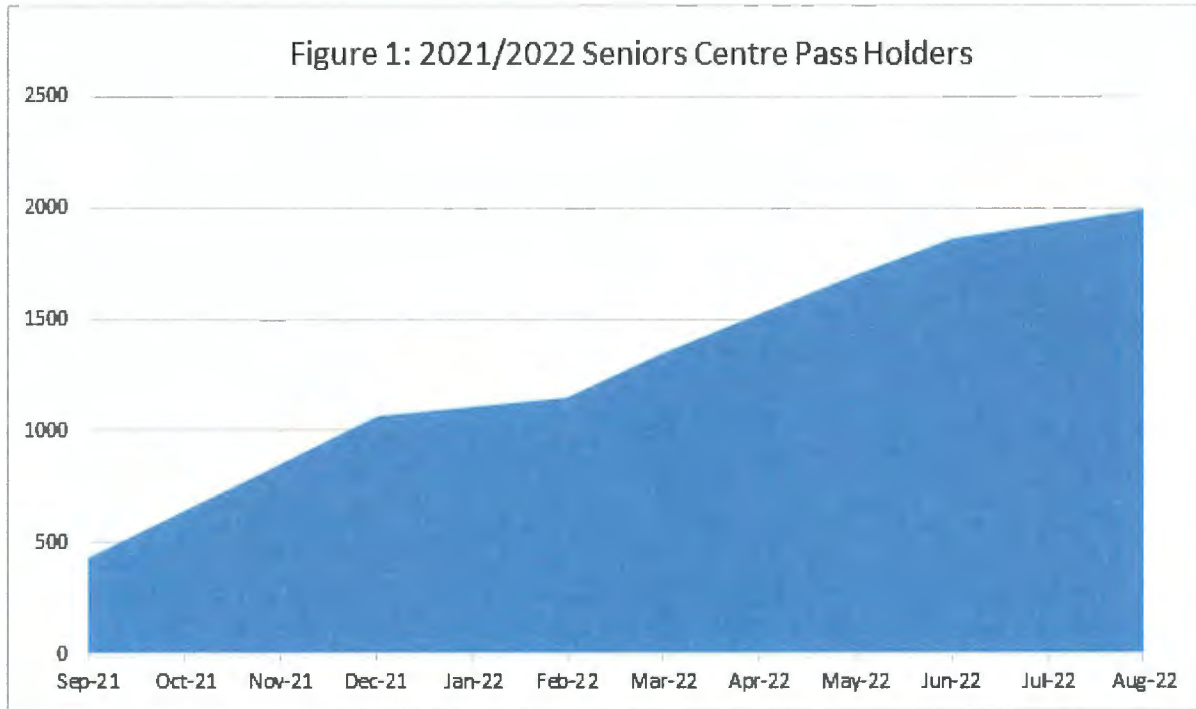
In response to a growing and diverse seniors population, the Seniors Centre at the Minoru Centre for Active Living provides Richmond seniors with new and existing programs and services that are delivered by the Minoru Seniors Society (MSS).

With the new and expanded spaces at Minoru Centre for Active Living, seniors programs and service offerings have increased by 73%. These have built off the strong foundation from Minoru Place Activity Centre and grown with intentionality to meet identified needs in the areas of health and wellness, arts, dance, general interest, out-trips, and language programs. Senior engagement and empowerment continue to be priorities with regular consultation amongst the seniors population and from the MSS Program Committee to ensure programs offered are aligned with community needs.

Inclusion and belonging is a key component of wellbeing for seniors and as such, the Minoru Seniors Facility Pass drop-in activity programs continue to be an important element of the services offered. There are 37 unique facility pass activities in total, including the Multicultural Dance Group, Carpet Bowling, Minoru Strummer Ukulele Group and Hanging with the Guys. These groups meet throughout the week and enable members to socialize and connect while participating in meaningful activities at a very low cost.

Since the programs in the Seniors Centre were fully restored in September of 2021, Seniors facility pass holders have gradually started returning to the Centre. It is expected that this trend will continue with increased marketing and promotions, including the recent Public Open House that saw over 800 seniors attend the Seniors Centre to take a tour or participate in the many free programs offered that day.

Please see Figure 1 that shows the number of Seniors Centre pass holders for the period September 2021 to August 2022 and Table 1 for a tabulation of the 2022 Seniors Centre program participation numbers.

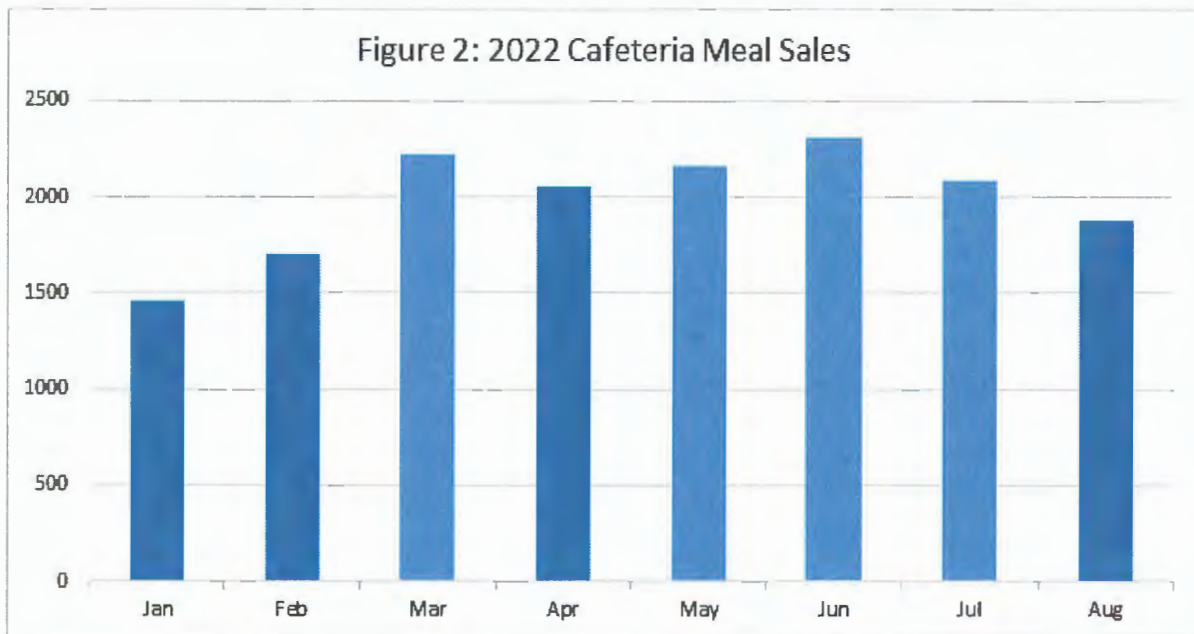


	Number of Programs Offered	Number of Participants Registered	Number of Pass Scans
Winter 2022 (3 months)	47	438	4168
Spring 2022 (3 months)	49	623	8323
Summer 2022 (2 months)	37	489	5786

Food Programs and Services

Minoru Seniors Society (MSS) operates two food service locations at Minoru Centre for Active Living, including a cafeteria in the Seniors Centre and bistro in the Aquatics/Fitness Lobby. This allows MSS members and the community to enjoy healthy and convenient meals and snacks at an affordable price point.

Please see Figure 2 that outlines the number of cafeteria meal sales for the period January, 2022 to August 2022. This includes entrees, sandwiches and soup.



Fitness Programs and Services

Minoru Centre for Active Living has drop-in group fitness, yoga and cyclefit classes, guided fitness orientations, personal and group fitness training and a full complement of registered program opportunities including classes targeting the prevention and management of various chronic diseases. The equipment and layout is designed to be age-friendly and inclusive for community based participation. 130 drop in fitness classes are offered each week including over 25 classes that are targeted specifically to the older adult population. The fitness offerings at Minoru Centre for Active Living reflect Richmond's diverse community and capitalize on synergies with Aquatic and Senior Services, to best serve the Richmond community in their active living and wellness pursuits.

Aquatic Programs and Services

The community has embraced the new Aquatic Centre and the variety of features, quickly becoming one of the premier Aquatic Centres in Lower Mainland and British Columbia. The core programs and services offered in aquatics include swimming lessons for all ages, leisure/recreational swimming, aquatic fitness classes and length swimming.

Lane swimming is one of the best forms of exercise and is available from 6:00am to 10:00pm, seven (7) days a week for a total of 128 hours. Aquafit classes to build endurance and strengthen muscles and bones are offered 16 times per week with the majority of participants over 55 years of age. Learning how to swim is a vital life skill for Richmond residents and Minoru Centre for Active Living provides instruction and water safety to almost 1300 children each week.

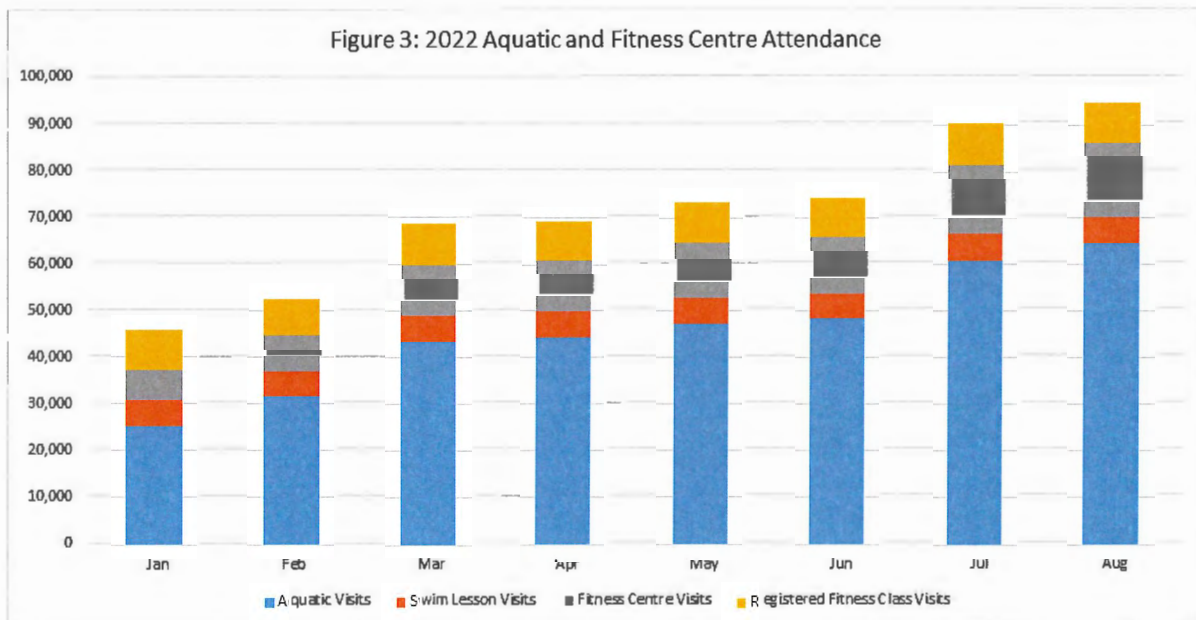
The “spa” features of the facility including the hot tubs, saunas, steam room and cold plunge pool have been well received and are some of the heaviest used areas of the facility. Along with the tremendous amount of health benefits from swimming, aquatic centres have important social benefits as they provide an important place to connect, belong and feel a sense community.

Event Centre Programs and Services

The Event Centre provides a hub for Richmond’s sport and event community to host tournaments or events, and offer coaching and other support programs for the their clubs. For example, in November 2021, Richmond Lacrosse held their annual field lacrosse tournament which hosted over 500 athletes from across the lower mainland and British Columbia and, in March 2022, the Event Centre supported the Vancouver Whitecaps and their national player identification camp with over 300 players from across the country.

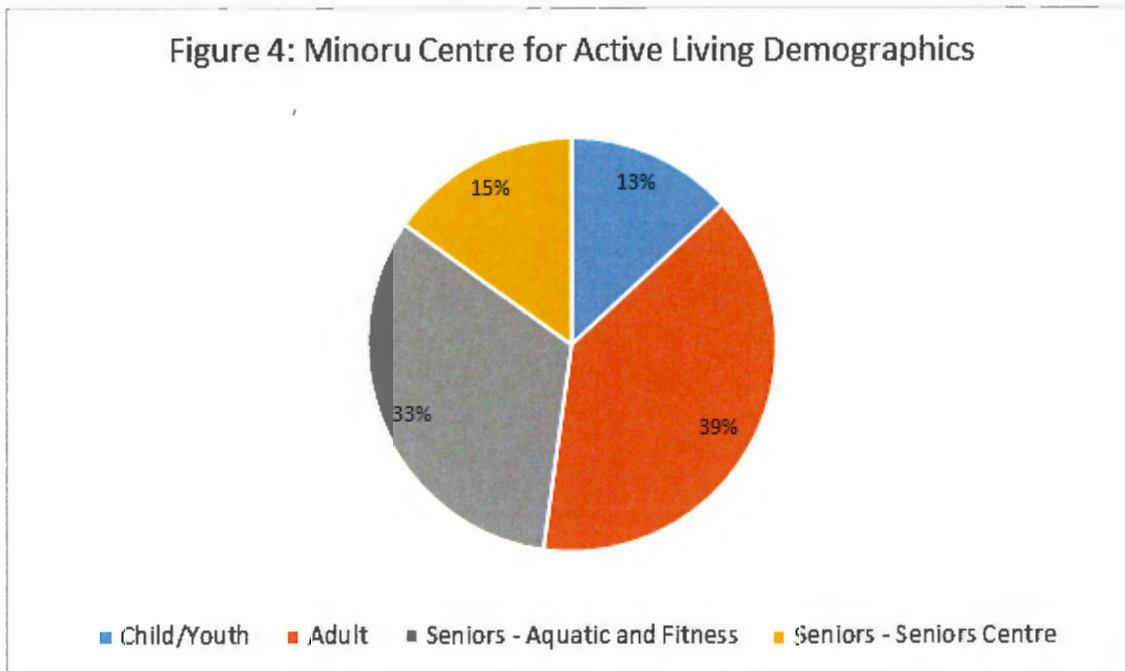
2022 Participation and Demographics

For the period January thru June 2022, an average of 2,100 individuals came through the doors each day in the aquatic and fitness centres and in July and August this number grew to almost 3,000 individuals visiting the pool and fitness centre daily, for a total of 185,000 visits. The average summer daily attendance of almost 3,000 is more than double the attendance at the former Minoru Aquatic Centre. Please see Figure 3 that details the monthly attendance at the Aquatic and Fitness Centre for the period January 2022 to August 2022.



Reflecting the vision for the facility, the Minoru Centre for Active Living serves a diverse population including individuals from newborn infants to the oldest senior at 109 years of age.

Please see Figure 4 below that shows the demographics of the more than 2650 visits per day to the Minoru Centre for Active Living in 2022.



Community Involvement and Engagement

The Minoru Centre for Active Living operates with input from several community partners and stakeholder groups. These include the Minoru Seniors Society who operate the programs in the Seniors Centre and the Richmond Fitness and Wellness Association who, until recently, employed the fitness staff. The Aquatic Advisory Committee who provide guidance and advice on the programs and service delivery in the swimming pools and the Richmond Sports Council who play a pivotal role in ensuring the sports community is connected to the facility. All of these groups have representatives on the Minoru Centre for Active Living Program Committee that ensure the original guiding principles of the facility are honoured while providing input, advice and feedback on the use, programming and services provided at the Minoru Centre for Active Living. As representatives of the community as a whole, the Committee is expected to make recommendations to ensure comprehensive and efficient service to the community and maximized facility use to serve the needs of all intended uses and users.

Awards

The Minoru Centre for Active Living has quickly been recognized for its excellence in design and program delivery with the receipt of the following awards:

- 2021 Architecture Prize for Accessibility from the International Olympic Committee, International Paralympic Committee, and International Association for Sports and

Leisure Facilities. This award aims to increase the accessibility of all sports and leisure facilities and architectural structures worldwide so everyone has an opportunity to practice and view sport freely and without barriers.

- 2022 Bill Woycik Outstanding Facility Award from the Recreation Facilities Association of British Columbia (RFABC) for Minoru Centre for Active Living. The award recognizes new recreation, sport or leisure facility that meets a demonstrated community need through innovations in design, energy management, operations, revenue generation and services.
- 2022 Athletic Business Facilities of Merit Award. This award recognizes innovative athletic, fitness and recreation facilities from across North America with excellent community value, design, relationship of building to site and features.

Community Impact

Reflecting the original guiding principles, Minoru Centre for Active Living is an exceptional facility with program offerings and attendance that continues to grow to support the active living and wellness needs of the Richmond community. The facility, programs and services offered further a number of Council's Strategic Goals as well as the Recreation and Sport Strategy and Wellness Strategy.

The Aquatic Centre provides opportunities for all ages and abilities to be active, learn valuable skills, play and connect. The Fitness Centre invites youth, adults and seniors to be more physically active, prevent and manage health conditions, and improve mental wellbeing. The Seniors Centre facilitates and serves Richmond's older adult population in pursuing diverse interests and hobbies, creating social connections, enjoying nutritious food and improving overall wellbeing. The Event Centre connects the sports community to the facility, supporting opportunities for lifelong participation in sport and physical activity, skill development, and social connections. Reflecting the original guiding principles, Minoru Centre is truly a hub of activity and social connection for all ages and has become "A Centre of Excellence" for active living and wellness in Richmond.

One grateful patron stated:

"Just walking into the building for me, along the plaza and by the beautiful sculpture makes me aware that I am truly entering a facility that will support my active living. The generous lobby provides for easy access, and the choices of change "rooms" and dressing and showering spaces gives me lots of choices whether by myself or bringing my 2-year-old granddaughter. Entering the swimming hall, is always inspiring for me. The abundance of natural light that floods the space from the floor to ceiling windows, the skylights and clerestory windows always connect me with my water activities to what's happening outside, be it raining or brilliant blue skies and the sun streaming in. This is how one should feel when they are coming to swim, a connection with the water and with nature outside."

A member of the Minoru Seniors Society shared the following:

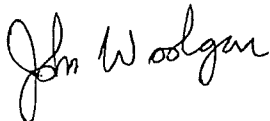
“I was fast and furious before my retirement. I was really burnt out. I retired and I had nothing to do, so I came to the seniors centre. I thought OK, I can do something, I can spend my time here. Now being a volunteer here, I learned a lot of things....The Seniors Centre is a home away from home.”

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

The Minoru Centre for Active Living is a centre of excellence for active living and wellness for residents of all ages and abilities. The expanded programs and service offerings are providing opportunities for individuals to be healthy, active and connected to their community, while supporting the achievement of the City’s Wellness Strategy vision of “Richmond... active, caring, connected, healthy and thriving.”



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