



REIMAGINING RECREATION SERVICES CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT AREA

COMMUNITY MEETINGS – WHAT WE HEARD

PHASE 1: UNDERSTANDING
THE CONTEXT

JANUARY 2025







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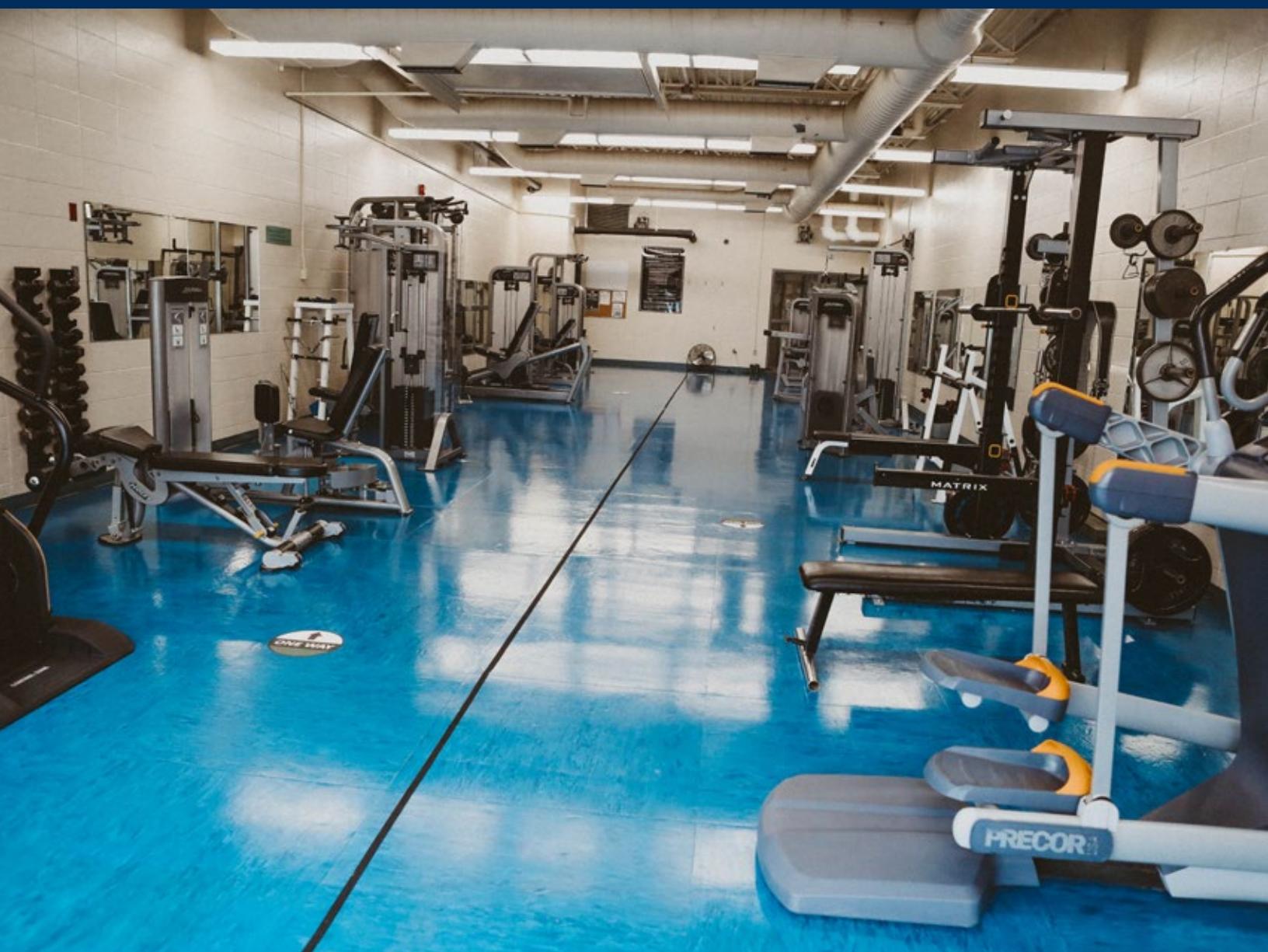
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SECTION 1.0

INTRODUCTION



The Castlegar & District Recreation Commission provides recreation services to residents in Electoral Areas I and J and the City of Castlegar. These services include regional facilities and amenities related to recreation, leisure, and cultural purposes. They encompass a variety of facilities and amenities including regional parks, athletic fields, and the Castlegar & District Community Complex.

Stemming from the 2016 Recreation and Culture Master Plan, various facility assessments, and several community engagement processes, the Recreation Commission decided, in 2023, to undertake further community engagement. This engagement program is intended to provide updated information to the Recreation Commission regarding the community's opinions and suggestions related to recreation services offered as well as potential enhancements to those services in Castlegar and Electoral Areas I & J. The recreation services for which Castlegar & District Area residents are being consulted is broad and considers a strengthening of the community hub position of the Castlegar & District Community Complex.



SECTION 2.0

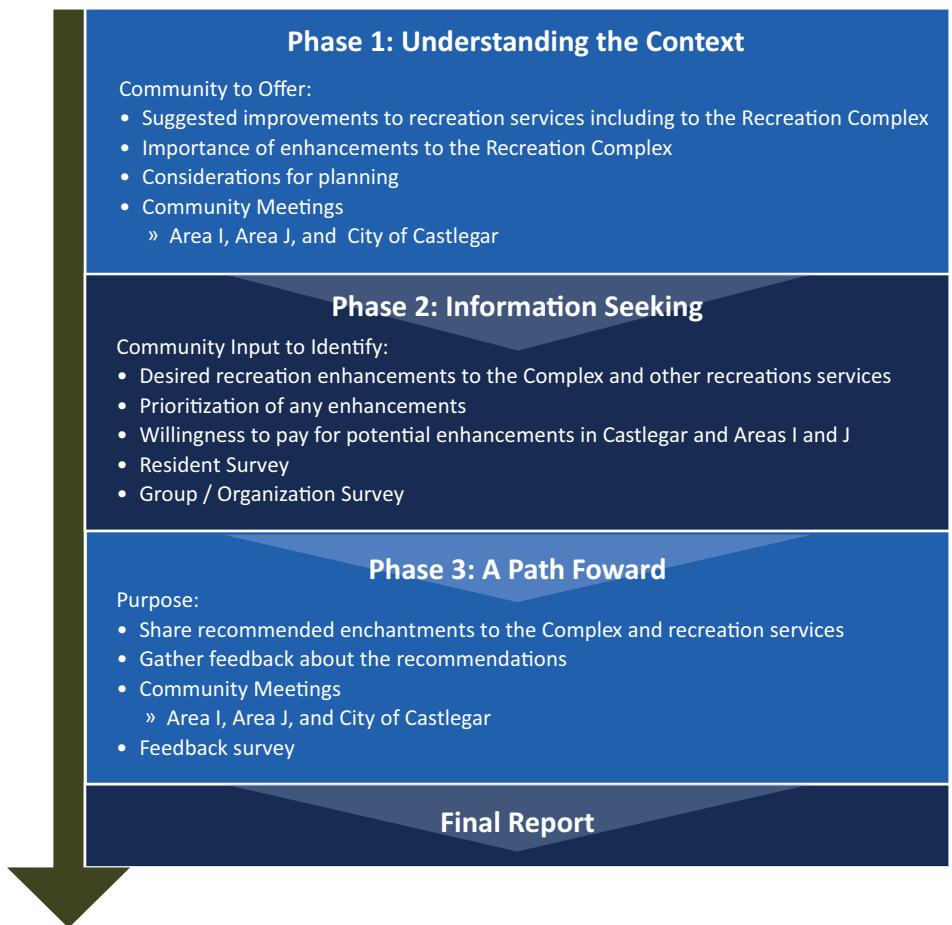
PROCESS



The engagement process encompasses three distinct phases each with their own engagement tactics. Phase 1: Understanding the Context sought to gain an understanding of district residents' opinions regarding current recreation service provision and suggestions for desired enhancements.

Phase 2: Information Seeking builds upon the information gathered in the previous phase. The tactics employed in Phase 2 include a resident survey and a survey of organized groups and organizations that provide recreation services or have a vested interest in their provision.

The final phase – Phase 3: A Path Forward – results in a recommended program of enhancement to recreation services (including at the Castlegar & District Community Complex) and then subsequent feedback from the community on those recommendations. The accompanying graphic illustrates this process.



SECTION 3.0

FINDINGS – PHASE 1



This report presents the findings gathered through the engagement activities implemented in Phase 1: Understanding the Context. This included the hosting of seven community meetings. At each meeting, a presentation was delivered explaining the Reimaging Recreation project, providing some history of recreation in the Castlegar & District Area, and explaining the two Services under which the Castlegar & District Recreation Commission delivers services. Attendees posed questions which were addressed by members of the project team. The members of the Recreation Commission attended each session. Refer to the Appendix to see the presentation material.

The opinions of attendees were captured through a number of means. Notes were taken to capture the main points of those who spoke during the meetings. Static panels were set up at each community meeting on which attendees could post their thoughts. Finally, a workbook was developed that included the presentation material as well as the questions posed to attendees on the static panels. Completed workbooks could be left with project team members or returned by dropping it off at the Community Complex. (Note: completed workbooks were data entered into the online survey – their numbers are included in the survey findings presented below.) The accompanying table identifies the locations and dates for the seven meetings. It also identifies attendance at each.

Date	Location	Attendance
April 22, 2024	Glade Hall	8
April 24, 2024	Pass Creek Hall	12
April 25, 2024	Shoreacres Community Hall	34
April 29, 2024	Brilliant Cultural Centre	8
April 30, 2024	Castlegar & District Community Complex	71
May 1, 2024	Robson Community Hall	21
May 9, 2024	Tarrys and District Community Hall	7
7 Sessions	Total Attendance	161

An **online survey** was also available. This was primarily intended for those who did not attend the community meetings, however it was open for anyone to share their thoughts. The questions posed in the online survey were the same as those in the workbook and available on the static panels at the community meetings. From April 23 through to May 15, 270 responses¹ were collected.

¹ Not all respondents completed all questions. This figure includes the entry of completed workbooks.

3.1 COMMUNITY MEETINGS

The information gathered from the community meetings is presented below. To best capture the sentiments of the sessions, the information is separated according to the location of the meetings. Not every attendee shared their thoughts by posting comments on the panels, but the comments below reflect those that were shared. Attendees at the meetings overwhelmingly represented the location of the meetings. In other words, all or almost all attendees (who identified where they live) are from the community (or Electoral Area) in which the meeting was held. The responses have been coded to group / categorize the responses with the most commonly mentioned responses at the top of the lists.

Question	Responses
Are there improvements needed to recreation services in Castlegar and District that should be a priority for the Recreation Commission?	<p>Glade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Glade has a recreation committee that does good work for the community. Perhaps some grants for the committee• Another arena to replace the Pioneer Arena• Evening hours at the Aquatic Centre in the complex• More and better events <p>Pass Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be summer camps that include swimming lessons• Line dancing / dances would entice me back to the Complex <p>Shoreacres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No comments <p>Brilliant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Services for the elderly is an important focus• Field house / soccer bubble• Running track• Soccer fields• Another ice sheet• Youth is a priority
	<p>Castlegar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New arena / second ice sheet• Youth centre• Indoor skate park• Basketball courts / lacrosse box• Nature trails• Updated fitness centre
	<p>Robson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ad hoc program implementation is not effective• Develop programming based on user data
	<p>Tarrys Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service enhancements in Area I are needed, including parks and trails• Offer programming to people across the district. For example seniors groups can meet at halls across the district and not in their local spot. Bring people to all areas

Question	Responses
<p>How important that enhancements are made to the Castlegar & District Community Complex?</p>	<p>Glade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments <p>Pass Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments <p>Shoreacres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No enhancements • Maintain the existing facility • If anything new is developed it should be outside Castlegar • A fieldhouse with running track <p>Brilliant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comment <p>Castlegar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 of 15 said enhancements are important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Bringing the diverse community together fosters connectiveness » Important for all people and fosters community health and activity » Respite from adverse weather including heat, cold, smoke » Public facilities are more accessible to everyone » The community is currently underserved in recreation provision • 1 of 15 was neutral saying that more facilities are needed but not necessarily at the Complex <p>Robson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance is much more important than enhancement <p>Tarrys Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxes are high enough currently and increases are unaffordable. Cost of living is high enough

Question	Responses
	<p>Glade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add spa type amenities in the aquatic centre
	<p>Pass Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a bigger rink or second sheet of ice • Larger pool so public swim can be accommodated at the same time as programs • More variety in programming is needed at the Complex
	<p>Shoreacres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex is sufficient for the region
	<p>Brilliant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any improvements should be multipurpose • An arena to replace the Pioneer arena • Walking track with arena • Aquatic centre upgrades – separate tanks so different temperatures • Maintenance on outdoor fields
What enhancements, if any, are needed to the Complex?	<p>Castlegar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another / second ice sheet • Larger / updated fitness centre (gym) • Field house • Updated / expanded skate park • Improved / larger leisure pool • Walking track • Basketball courts • Tennis / pickleball resurfacing
	<p>Robson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of the Complex • Expansion of amenity areas • Need a day care or space for children to recreate • Enhance the accessibility of amenities for people including elevator access to upper level of arena • Repair and expand the skatepark at the Complex
	<p>Tarrys Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No enhancements needed. • No utilization of the Complex currently

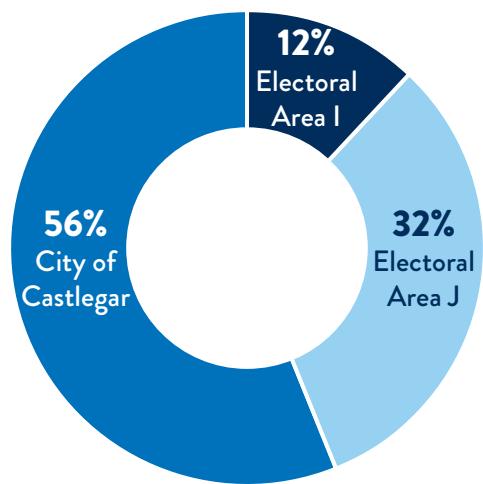
Question	Responses
	<p>Glade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community residents travel to Nelson and Castlegar to use the recreation complexes
	<p>Pass Creek</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking trails / system needed through the community A gathering area is needed in Pass Creek Upper Pass Creek park is a good location for development Desired amenities include: pump track, natural play structure, gazebo / picnic tables Complex programming doesn't meet needs School children should get swim lessons Boat launches need improvement
<p>Share any other comments about recreation in your community.</p>	<p>Shoreacres</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreation services in rural areas needs to be improved, particularly for youth and seniors. Not everyone can easily get to Castlegar nor should they have to Enhancements and investments are needed here and elsewhere rurally including at Shoreacres Beach, the community hall, boat launches / water access Maintain what exists and work within our means People recreate in Nelson Improvement is needed to better understand the perspectives of the community including previous referendum votes Generally need better programming / events in current spaces – particularly families and youth Greater emphasis on user pay
	<p>Brilliant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good work providing recreation services
	<p>Castlegar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus should not only be on the complex but elsewhere in the community. Promote, protect, and invest in trails Engage youth / provide for youth in recreation planning and provision Do not forget about the use and protection of natural assets
	<p>Robson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering lockers for rental to groups would be helpful Recreation areas where youth can recreate, particularly in colder months but at least covered – basketball, floor hockey, lacrosse
	<p>Tarrys Hall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance Area I including a trail system to connect places in rural areas and funding for rural amenities like Shoreacres beach Fees should be based on residency so less for those paying for the service Any increases in taxation should be used for funding for rural halls and support for volunteers

3.2 ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey accompanied the community meetings. The information that was presented at the community meetings was also available for review on the project webpage (engage.rdck.ca). Alongside that information was the survey. Asking the same questions as in a workbook and on the community meeting panels, the survey was active from April 23, 2024 through to May 15, 2024. In total 270 responses were received. The findings are presented² below according to the residency of respondents (Area I, Area J, City of Castlegar).

RESIDENCY

GRAPH 1: Where Do You Live?



² The numbers included in the write-up refers to the frequency of mentions.

PRIORITY IMPROVEMENTS TO RECREATION SERVICES IN THE CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT AREA

ELECTORAL AREA I

Respondents from Area I shared varying opinions on recreation improvements. Some prioritized additional recreation amenities such as additional ice sheets (8), basketball courts (3), and a new pool (3) at the Castlegar & District Community Complex. Some expressed concern about the cost and potential tax increases associated with these projects and offered some suggestion related to cost. These suggestions included maintaining existing infrastructure, distributing tax dollars equally throughout the Castlegar & District Area, and considering a balanced approach to enhancements. Other recreation improvements included more diverse programs (4) and the need for additional community parks (3). There is a common theme in many responses for maintaining current services with a focus on fiscal responsibility (9).

“Recreation improvements are great and my family would enjoy them, however our main concern is not increasing taxes at this time.”

ELECTORAL AREA J

Respondents from Area J shared varying opinions on improvements to the recreational facilities, primarily the addition of a second ice sheet (60) to replace the Pioneer Arena. Other suggestions included upgrading the pool area (23), the fitness centre (10), adding an indoor walking track (12), and providing more indoor and outdoor recreational spaces for various activities (11). Respondents emphasized the need for better facilities to cater to the growing demands and interests of the community, especially in youth sports and general wellness activities (25).

“Make the Complex more of a community hub. Put in a second sheet of ice, even if it’s a small kids rink and put in a walking track around the top of the bleachers.”

CITY OF CASTLEGAR

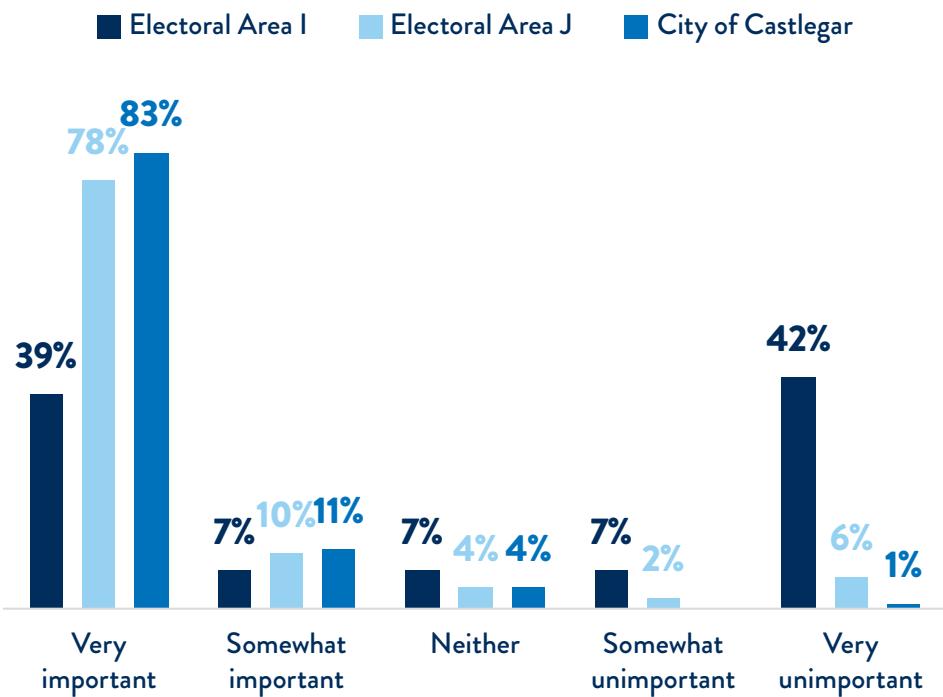
Respondents from Castlegar shared varying opinions regarding improvements to recreational services. The most common response was the need for an additional ice sheet (83) to support hockey participation (30) and activity for the growing community. Additionally, residents would like to see improvements to the pool area (56), fitness centre (24), activity areas for youth (16), and an indoor walking track (13). Residents also indicated support for outdoor amenities including expanding community parks (10) and trails (12).

“The facilities need to be modernized to match the needs of our community today.”

IMPORTANCE OF ENHANCEMENTS TO THE CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

As illustrated in the accompanying graph, there is a large majority of respondents from Electoral Area J (88% very or somewhat important) and the City of Castlegar (94% very or somewhat important) that believe it is important to make enhancements to the Castlegar & District Complex. Respondents from Electoral Area I are divided with 46% saying it is very or somewhat important and 49% saying it is unimportant to some degree.

GRAPH 2: How important is it that enhancements are made to the Castlegar & District Recreation Complex?



PLEASE EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ENHANCEMENTS TO THE CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT RECREATION COMPLEX

ELECTORAL AREA I

Respondents have mixed opinions on the need for enhancements and expansions to the Castlegar & District Community Complex, with some highlighting the importance of a functional and engaging community center (11). Others express concerns about tax increases and financial burdens (10). Many residents living in rural areas mention difficulties in accessing the facility due to distance and transportation issues (7).

"The complex is a great facility as it is and only needs proper maintenance. Bigger is not always better."

ELECTORAL AREA J

Respondents commented that Castlegar is in need of a second ice sheet / arena (53), to support the growing population (15), provide modern facilities (23), and offer diverse recreational opportunities (14). Adding new or enhanced amenities - including a pool (12), indoor walking area (8), fitness centre (6), or field house - is seen as crucial for catering to the needs of families and individuals. Overall, upkeep and expansion of the Recreation Complex are viewed as essential (28) for maintaining community health (12), economic vitality (12), and enhancing the quality of life in Castlegar (14).

"As our area is growing it is important that the Complex also grows to accommodate our population. Our children need facilities that will allow them to improve skills that will allow them to be competitive with other areas near us"

CITY OF CASTLEGAR

Respondents typically expressed the need for enhancements and updates to the aging Castlegar Complex. Needed enhancements included a second ice sheet (37), an upgraded pool (27), and an expanded gym (22). The lack of recreational options is seen as a hindrance to community health and attracting new residents (63) and tourists (11). Many feel that the current facilities are outdated and do not meet the needs of the growing community (42). The closure of the Pioneer Arena has also raised concerns about the availability of ice time (37) for activities like hockey. An enhanced Community Complex is seen as a key factor in promoting community health (21), attracting and retaining residents (16) and providing necessary spaces for various activities and sports (16).

"It is important to have recreation facilities to keep the population healthy and happy, especially during the colder and wetter months of the year. All ages need exercise, not just aerobics and boring stuff, but programming and fun things to do to keep active."

ENHANCEMENTS NEEDED AT THE CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COMPLEX

ELECTORAL AREA I

Respondents feel that the focus should be on maintaining current services and infrastructure rather than investing in new facilities (12). Suggestions for enhancements include prioritizing maintenance (4), creating community event spaces (3), and addressing specific needs such as additional ice sheets (6) and an updated pool area (4). There are also comments related to the importance of consulting with the community before making any enhancements (6).

“I think maintaining the infrastructure we currently have is important. I don’t feel that we need to invest additional money into the Complex at this point in time except for upkeep and maintenance.”

ELECTORAL AREA J

Respondents indicated that facility improvements should include adding a second ice sheet (82), upgrading the pool area (33), expanding the fitness centre (25), adding a walking / running track (14), and improving the seating and atmosphere in the arena (9). Some also suggested community-focused spaces and amenities (14), family / universal change rooms (9) and inclusive activities for various age groups (5).

“More attractions within the swimming pool area, and keep the atmosphere modern, up to date and relevant - do not stagnate.”

CITY OF CASTLEGAR

City respondents are looking for a variety of upgrades and additions to the Community Complex including a second ice sheet / arena (103). Enhancements to the swimming pool area including an increase in size, more family-friendly amenities, and improvements to the pool temperature were suggested (57) as was an upgrade and expansion of the fitness centre facilities (33). Additional indoor spaces for various activities such as walking tracks (14), courts (9), turf (7), and playgrounds (6) were mentioned. Comments included the importance of continuous maintenance, timely repairs, and updates to ensure the complex remains a valuable community asset (10).

“A bigger/warmer pool, extended hours (there is hardly any public skating availability), a twin rink for more ice time, gymnasium for indoor sports.”

OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT RECREATION

ELECTORAL AREA I

Area I respondents indicated concerns about taxation (6), transparency (5), and the need to prioritize existing infrastructure (5). Some respondents feel that funds should be spent in a way that benefits the entire community (7) and that communication from the RDCK should be improved (6). There are calls for more local outdoor recreation options (9), improvements to existing community facilities (4), and considerations for the growing population and community needs (4). Overall, there are differing opinions on how best to approach enhancing recreational services in the local area.

“Against the backdrop of numerous financial challenges faced at all levels of government, the proposition of expanding services seems misguided. Simply maintaining the existing infrastructure poses significant challenges, let alone embarking on ambitious expansion projects. Moreover, the lack of transparency surrounding the meeting is disappointing.”

ELECTORAL AREA J

Residents in Area J are urging improvements in recreation facilities (17), particularly the need for enhancements to the Community Complex to attract and retain residents (9). They believe the current facilities are inadequate and not keeping up with the community's growth. There is a push for more support for youth in sports and recreation activities (11), and suggestions for outdoor amenities (8). The community is divided on whether to increase taxes for facility upgrades (8). Overall, there is a call for better facilities and programming to support a healthy and active community (24).

“I know most people are worried about their taxes going up but in a community located in the middle of 2 ski towns, you have to offer something different to attract people to help make your community a great place to live.”

CITY OF CASTLEGAR

Respondents from Castlegar believe that recreation is critical to the attraction and retention of residents in the region (22) and it needs to be invested in to support quality of life (41) and community health and wellness (11). A focus of investment should be to provide an additional ice sheet / arena (37), community parks and trails (20), enhanced pool area (9), sport fields (9), and enhanced fitness centre space (7). There were general comments that additional recreation opportunities (19) and organized sport (13) need to be provided.

“Our community is active, vibrant and young! We need spaces to promote sport and recreation. Recreation is vital to our community. When people consider moving to Castlegar, recreation is always on the list of considerations.”

“The complex is a hub for many in our community. Being able to adequately meet the needs of the community is of prime importance. An active, exercising community promotes improved health, and in these days of struggling health system, maintaining good health is imperative.”

APPENDICES

COMMUNITY MEETING PRESENTATION MATERIAL



Reimagine Recreation Services

Castlegar & District Complex

Welcome

- **Please...**
 - Mingle
 - Review the material on the panels.
- **Presentation will begin ~ 6:45 p.m.**



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Welcome

- Introductions
- Information sharing (review of panels)
- Q & A
- Informal conversations & sharing your thoughts
- Wrap-up

Vision of Recreation

Recreation & Culture Master Plan 2016

A region in which everyone is engaged in meaningful, accessible recreation experiences that foster:

- Individual wellbeing;
- Community wellbeing; and
- The wellbeing of our natural and built environments.

Benefits of Recreation

 Is essential to personal health and wellbeing

 Is a significant economic generator

 Provides a foundation for quality of life

 Reduces health care and social services costs

 Provides the key to balanced human development

 Builds strong and healthy communities

 Green spaces are essential to wellbeing

 Supports positive mental health and social connections

Reimagine Recreation Services – Castlegar & District Complex

Project Purpose:

Recreation Commission is...

... is seeking input about current services and potential enhancements to services.

... wants to further position the Castlegar & District Recreation Complex as a vibrant community hub.

Project Process



Phase 1: Understanding the Context

Community to Offer:

- Suggested improvements to recreation services including to the Recreation Complex
- Importance of enhancements to the Recreation Complex
- Considerations for planning
- Community Meetings
 - » Area I, Area J, and City of Castlegar

Phase 2: Information Seeking

Community Input to Identify:

- Desired recreation enhancements to the Complex and other recreation services
- Prioritization of any enhancements
- Willingness to pay for potential enhancements in Castlegar and Areas I and J
- Resident Survey
- Group / Organization Survey

Phase 3: A Path Forward

Purpose:

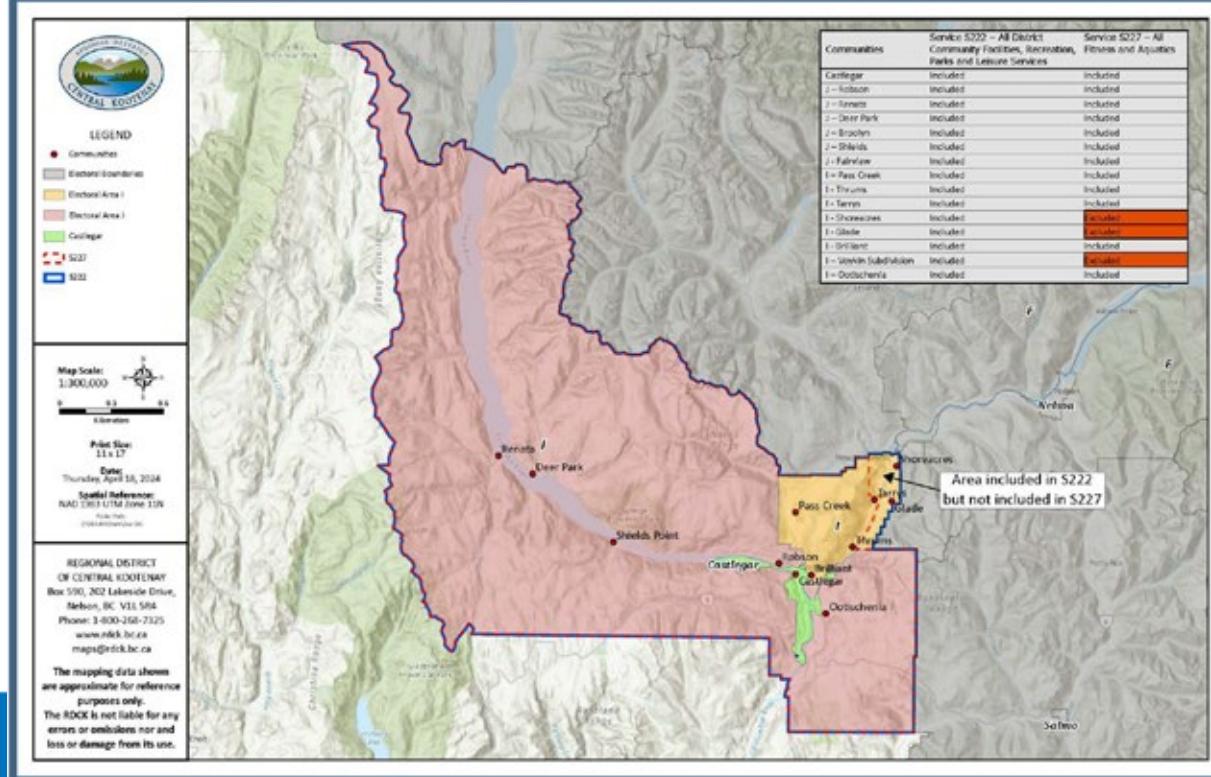
- Share recommended enhancements to the Complex and recreation services
- Gather feedback about the recommendations
- Community Meetings
 - » Area I, Area J, and City of Castlegar
- Feedback survey

Service 222

- City of Castlegar, Electoral Areas I & J
- Combined 3 services into 1
- Authority
 - Provide and operation regional facilities and amenities ... including the acquisition, construction, renovation, or expansion of properties and facilities.
 - Provide programming and association planning services.
- This service would allow the addition of new recreational, cultural, and park facilities and services.
- Taxation is \$3,138,218 in 2024.
 - Assessment of \$500,000 would pay \$335.46.

Service 227

- City of Castlegar, Electoral Area J and Defined Area I
 - A portion of Area I not in the service area.
- Authority
 - To construct, operate, and maintain an Indoor Aquatic Centre within City of Castlegar.
(specific that the indoor aquatic centre be within Castlegar)
- Taxation is \$1,202,928 in 2024.
 - Assessment of \$500,000 would pay \$137.31.



How Did We Get Here?

- 1956 Pioneer Arena constructed
- 1976 Castlegar and District Recreation Complex constructed
- 1980s-1990s renovations to the Pioneer Arena
- 2006 Facility Review recommended a plan to identify improvements and facility additions
- 2009 Structural Assessment of the Pioneer Arena concluded the facility is “largely exhausted”.
- 2010 Recreation Complex Expansion Referendum defeated.
- 2016 Recreation and Culture Master Plan completed

The Recreation & Culture Master Plan 2016

- Recommended that the RDCK and CDRC proceed with enhancements and expansion at the Castlegar and District Community Centre including:
 - Fitness / wellness upgrades
 - Aquatic upgrades
 - Arena and walking track / jogging track
 - Multipurpose / seniors addition / arts
 - Field house and walking / jogging track

Community Engagement

- Household survey
- Community group survey
- Community stakeholder / contributor discussion sessions

How Did We Get Here?

- 2017 Feasibility Analysis and Concept Design for enhancements to the Recreation Complex.
- 2018 a referendum was convened for enhancements to the Complex and defeated
- 2023 Castlegar and District Recreation Commission directed this engagement project to be initiated
- 2023 City of Castlegar announced the planned closure of the Pioneer Arena

Understanding POTENTIAL Costs and Funding

- Taxation – property taxes could fund the majority of the capital and operating costs of enhancements.
- S222 – Castlegar and District Community Facilities, Recreation, Parks and Leisure
 - a taxation increase of \$71.20 per \$500,000 of assessed property value would fund \$10 million of capital borrowing amortized over 25 years (in 2024).
- S227 - Castlegar and Area Indoor Aquatic Centre
 - a taxation increase of \$82.40 per \$500,000 of assessed property value would fund \$10 million of capital borrowing amortized over 25 years (in 2024).
- Borrowing – borrowing for any term longer than 5 years requires voter approval.

What do you think?

Questions for us?

Questions for you

1. What, if any, improvements are needed to recreation services in Castlegar and District?
2. What, if any, enhancements are needed to the Castlegar & District Recreation Complex?

Thank you!

- Share your comments:
 - On the panels
 - Using the workbook
 - Online (visit engage.rdck.ca)
- Encourage others to go online or attend a meeting



Date / Time	Location
April 22 Monday (6:30-8:00 p.m.)	Glade Hall
April 24 Wednesday (6:30-8:00 p.m.)	Pass Creek Hall
April 25 Thursday (6:30-8:00 p.m.)	Shoreacres Community Hall
April 29 Monday (6:30-8:00 p.m.)	Brilliant Cultural Centre
April 30 Tuesday (6:00-7:30 p.m.)	Castlegar Complex
May 1 Wednesday (6:00-7:30 p.m.)	Robson Hall
May 9 Thursday (6:30-8:00 p.m.)	Tarry's Hall





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