

Subject: Leisure Centre Pool Expansion Update and Build Communities Strong Fund Application

Staff Report No. CS-002-26

**Department/
Commission:** Community Services Commission

Date: May 6, 2026

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council receive the following report for information as it relates to the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion project.
- 2) That Council direct staff to apply for project funding to support the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion project through the Build Communities Strong Fund.

Report Highlights

- Updates are provided as it relates to the most recent schematic design of the Leisure Centre expansion project.
- Staff request Council approval to submit an application to support the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion project through Build Communities Strong Fund.

1. Purpose:

To provide an update on the status of the Leisure Centre pool expansion project and request Council direction to proceed with an application to the Build Communities Strong Fund.

2. Background:

Recognizing the growing constraints of the current pool amenities, limited options in terms of land acquisition, and anticipated future government funding opportunities, the 2025 Capital project envelope included a budget of \$1,000,000 for the design of the Leisure Centre Pool expansion. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued in May 2025, and the design portion of the project was awarded to Salter Pilon Architecture in July 2025.

Since the award of the project design, staff have been working with the consultant to design an expansion of the current Leisure Centre building to meet the Town's growing population needs and alleviate capacity constraints on the existing amenities. In addition to adding a second tank, staff are reviewing opportunities to maximize program space.

The existing pool at the Leisure Centre measures under the standard 25 metres, impeding the capacity to host swim meets. Additional Leisure Centre amenities include a slide, teaching/therapy pool, along with a fitness centre, community spaces, and gymnasium. At present, the pool operates at full capacity during prime-time periods and instructional programs fill quickly, resulting in many families required to be placed on waitlists. The most recent session in Spring 2026 had a total of 114 classes operating with a waitlist, and a total of 234 participants waitlisted.

3. Analysis:

The most recent schematic design outlines an expansion of approximately 2,300 to 2,800 square metres (25,000-30,000 sq. ft.) into the existing courtyard area, and will include an additional 6-lane, full competition-ready 25-metre pool, universal changeroom with twenty (20) individual stalls and two (2) accessible stalls, and a proposed second-floor area with a walking track and studio spaces. The building will include a new entrance adjacent to a new parking area with approximately 84 additional parking spaces. As part of the expansion, the current location of the reception desk will be re-located to be more centrally located within the facility, and a proposed concession/café area will be included. Existing administrative spaces may be relocated, allowing for existing space to be repurposed to further support facility programming.

3.1 Funding Opportunity: Build Communities Strong Fund

On April 7, 2026, Prime Minister Mark Carney and Minister Robertson announced the launch of the Build Communities Strong Fund, which will invest \$51 billion over 10 years, beginning in 2026. As part of the fund, staff have identified two (2) applicable streams where the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion project may be eligible for funding:

- **Stream 2 – Direct Delivery Stream:** Funding to deliver regionally significant projects and important local infrastructure, including large building retrofits, climate adaptation infrastructure, and community infrastructure such as new community and recreational spaces. Under this stream, projects must be shovel ready within the next twelve months which the Leisure Centre pool expansion would be eligible based on current timelines. The portal is now accepting expression of interest for current projects which staff will submit immediately upon council direction.
- **Stream 3 – Community Stream:** The stream is a stable and indexed source of funding provided up front to provinces and territories who, in turn, flow this funding

to their communities. The funding allows local communities to make strategic investments in essential infrastructure, including recreational facilities.

Staff will engage the services of BDO Canada who are experienced in government grant applications to ensure the Town's submissions are well aligned with program objectives.

4. Options:

4.1 Option A (Recommended)

Council receive report CS-002-26 for information and direct staff to take the necessary action to apply for the Build Communities Strong Fund to support the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion project.

5. Financial Implications:

Funding for the construction phase of the Leisure Centre Pool Expansion is currently identified in the 2026-2030 Long Range Capital Budget Forecast as a growth project, with construction scheduled for 2027 at an estimated cost of \$24,000,000. The existing Class D cost estimate based on the current design is approximately \$27,475,700 but it must be noted that some site servicing and final roof connections which may bring the total cost to approximately \$30,000,000. Exact funding details regarding cost sharing have not yet been released by the Federal Government. More detailed information on next steps and priority investment areas will be provided in the coming weeks. If the Town is successful in securing grant funding, the Town's share of construction costs is expected to be funded through a combination of Development Charges (40%) and other sources for the non-growth component (60%). Depending on the amount of grant funding received, the non-growth component would be financed through the Town reserves or debt financing. Should the Town's share be significant, debenture financing may be considered.

6. Broader Intergovernmental Impacts and/or Considerations:

N/A

7. Communication:

A Come Together project page will be published on May 7, 2026, where residents will have the ability to share feedback on the aesthetic components of the current design and stay up to date on project progress. In addition, project boards will be set up in the Leisure Centre to further inform our residents.

8. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities
2. A Healthy and Greener Town
Increase Offerings and Opportunities for Active Living

9. Attachments:

Attachment No. 1 – Leisure Centre Pool Expansion Schematic Design

10. Related Reports:

None.

Report Author: Rob Braid, Commissioner, Community Services

For further information on this report, please contact the Department Head: Rob Braid, Commissioner, Community Services at 905-640-1900 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2245 or via email at rob.braid@townofws.ca

Review Confirmation:

Reviewing Division	Review Required?				Reviewed By
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes	A.M.
Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	
Communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	
Clerks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	