

DATE: June 5, 2020**FILE:** 8020-01**TO:** Chair and Members
Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission**FROM:** Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by James Warren
Acting Chief Administrative
Officer
J. Warren

RE: COVID 19 - Recreation Re-activation**Purpose**

To provide the information regarding the phased re-activation of Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Recreation Services.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT staff implement the five stage pandemic response re-activation plan for recreation services.

Executive Summary

The impacts of COVID-19 have resulted in a domino effect of closures of the majority of recreation facilities across the province (and beyond). The direction to close recreation facilities was never mandated by provincial health authorities, the decision to close was through an abundance of caution. This cautious approach has helped with flattening the curve of COVID-19; we are now challenged with how a re-activation will happen.

Highlights to formulate the five staged reactivation plan (Appendix A) considered the following:

- Formulation of plans in accordance with BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA), Sport BC, viaSport, Recreation Facilities Association of BC (RFABC), WorkSafeBC, Lifesaving Society, Municipal Insurance Association of BC (MIABC), BC Municipal Safety Association (BCMSA), and other sector stakeholders.
- A detailed framework considering communications plans, patron safety, staff training/safety, capacity limits, Provincial Health Officer (PHO) requirements such as physical distancing and cleaning/sanitizing frequency is being updated and reviewed throughout all stages.
- Continued work with community partners and provincial sport organizations to support a staged approach to normalcy.

Our plan was created through the lens of evaluating health and safety, risk review, service readiness and remains adaptable as we monitor and evaluate the outcomes of each stage.

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Background/Current Situation

March 16, 2020 – The CVRD Recreation Facilities closed until further notice. The CVRD is taking all precautionary measures in support of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the BC Ministry of Health and their efforts to contain COVID-19.

One of the primary responsibilities as a local government is to support and maintain community resilience. During this pandemic, this equals ensuring members of our community emerge from this crisis as physically, mentally and emotionally healthy as possible. Our success will be dependent on our ability to alleviate emotional and physical distress within our community. Never before has it been so clear that our recreation services and infrastructure are essential services that are most needed in times of stress and upheaval.

Impacts of Recreation: One of the major triggers signaling to our community that life is getting back to a new post pandemic normal will be the opening of public recreation facilities (recreation centres, fitness centres, pools, courts, fields, parks, etc.), the resumption of recreation programming and summer camps, kids going back to school, and daycare services resuming. These are key elements of ‘normalcy’ from which our daily lives are scheduled around. A primary example of this is our ability to offer summer camps this summer that the community is dependent on.

Reopening public recreation facilities and services will enable key user groups, such as sports, to gradually reactivate their programs. The reactivation/reopening of our sports fields and access to recreation and outdoor facilities will be one of the biggest good news stories we can use to reenergize and mobilize our community.

Response and support plan: Since April 3, 2020, CVRD Recreation Services staff have been participating in weekly video meetings with BCRPA and the senior-most staff person/s in each municipality and regional district. These senior management calls have kept, and continue to keep, local governments informed of decisions and actions consequent to the pandemic.

BCRPA created the recreation guidelines that have been endorsed through the province, however other sector leads are required to do the same; viaSport for instance creates the sport guideline.

In the formulation of our re-activation plan, collaboration, input and involvement from the following regulatory agencies is required: BCRPA, SportBC, viaSport, RFABC, WorksafeBC, Lifesaving Society, MIABC, BCMSA, and other sector stakeholders.

Our plan was created through the lens of evaluating health and safety, risk review, service readiness and remains adaptable as we monitor and evaluate the outcomes of each stage.

With the approved guidelines now ready we can move forwards with final preparation and initiation of the CVRD recreation services phased reactivation plan.

We will need to be open to new and creative ways of delivering all aspects of recreation services for the foreseeable future

Policy Analysis

On May 22, 2020 the board supported a policy statement that enables the CVRD facility re-openings that supports the safety, health and wellbeing of both the general public and CVRD employees and is aligned with provincial authorities.

The following COVID-19 response and renewal framework for the CVRD services are supported.

- Maintaining core services at an affordable cost- Careful management of recreation services and assets essential to providing affordable and reliable services to citizens in the CVRD.
- Adapting to changing community priorities – Assessing recreation services for updates and improvements.
- Realigning resources to support community renewal initiatives – COVID Action Teams, sustained by recreation staff, supporting community partners.
- Communicating clearly about actions – Informing the community via social media, online and web, media, connecting with stakeholders and more

The following Sports Commission Strategic Plan Goals are supported.

- Strategic Goal 3 – Partnerships outcome - Partnership between jurisdictions and all external stakeholders. Building on relationships to work with our user groups for a safe opening of our facilities.
- Strategic Goal 3 – Partnerships outcome - Work with stakeholders such as the BCRPA, the Province and the regional Medical Health Officer for guidance in the re-activation stages and to increase public awareness of programs on health, wellness and active living.
- Strategic Goal 4 – Accessibility to Recreational Services outcome Phased re-activation of recreation services in new and creative ways during this period of renewal.

Options

Re-activation of CVRD Recreation Services.

- 1) CVRD Recreation staff continue with final planning, preparation and initiation of the CVRD recreation services re-activation plan. This is the recommended option.
- 2) CVRD Recreation Staff do not move forwards with final planning, preparation and initiation of the CVRD recreation services reactivation plan as a cost savings measure and delay re-opening until after summer.
- 3) CVRD Recreation staff continue with final planning, preparation and initiation of only primarily outdoor programming until September.

Financial Factors

The first stages of re-activation require bringing back minimal staff and offering some programs outside with limited access to indoor facilities. Staff anticipate the limited use of the Comox Valley Sports Centre arena 1 ice towards the end of July.

Maintaining PHO recommendations will require a further imbalance of revenues covering operating costs. Furthermore, it is anticipated users volumes will decrease as a result of services and people making their own choices about timing to return to our facilities. The Comox Valley Sports Centre Commission will have further details to consider in the future as part of the corporate COVID 19 response and renewal framework.

Legal Factors

CVRD Recreation Services ensures the safety of our patrons and employees as priority at all times. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has closed aquatic, ice and fitness facilities across Canada, is a significant challenge to this goal.

By working with public health officials, BCRPA, RFABC, Lifesaving Society, Red Cross and our municipal recreation departments we are developing strategies to successfully protect the health and safety of our patrons and staff as provincial and local orders are lifted and reopening commences. MIABC has also provided advice on reducing liability with non-profit user groups and rentals.

The information provided in the CVRD recreation re-activation plan (Appendix A) is a general overview of programs/services that could be offered at each Level.

Much of this information is drawn from available public health guidelines and recreational industry partners/leaders. This public health crisis has been fast moving, with rapid changes in understanding of the virus, its effects and public health responses to it. CVRD recreation services need to be adaptable and remain up to date on information for COVID-19 to maintain an awareness of recent medical advances and work closely with the provincial and local public health officials while they develop their reopening plan.

The programs offered in the 5 Levels will be fluid and can be adapted and move up or down on the framework dependent on what is recommended at the provincial or local health Level.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

- i. Public health and safety: Support a high quality of life through the protection and enhancement of community health, safety and well-being:
 - Objective 7A-5: Support the promotion of healthy lifestyles and invigorating community spirit through physical activity

Intergovernmental Factors

The CVRD is working with the Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland and City of Courtenay to collaborate on response measures and best practices. The CVRD is standing by if support is requested at the federal or provincial level.

Interdepartmental Involvement

The Recreation services is working with the Finance, Communications and Human Resources to collaborate on response measures and best practices.

Citizens and Public Relations

We support and promote activities which are affordable and accessible. Together as a community, we can forge a healthier and more sustainable way of life in the Comox Valley. The public will slowly be entering into our facilities for different activities. At this time it is difficult to determine the demand for our services and adjustments will be made throughout the stages. Overall it remains essential PHO recommendations can be maintained and the public are confident we are doing this correctly.

No specific dates are outlined in this report. Communications to the public will be done through our Communications Department utilizing platforms such as social media and media releases.

Attachments: Appendix A - "CVRD Recreation Re-activation Plan for Pandemic Response"

CVRD Recreation Re-activation Plan Pandemic Response



Pandemic Response Plan High Level Considerations

Level 1: Home Based Activities (30 per cent of normal)

This Level focuses on staying at home. Facilities are closed and there is no in-person programming. No recreation programs are happening at the CVRD recreation facilities. We will take this time to promote other organizations programs and services such as Valley Families home activity idea pages, Red Cross safety videos and Active Comox Valley free and low cost activities. We will look to also develop some facility/educational videos or create some self-directed or online programs. Maintenance activities to facilities will be undertaken where possible.

Facility Based and/or Educational Videos

This is a great time to try to develop some safety messaging and garner more interest in our programs. The videos would be short – just a 1-3 minutes in length.

Free Registered Self-Directed Programs

Staff will develop these initiatives and create self-directed programs. This will assist with getting more traffic to the CVRD website and keep the community active in some of our other settings such as parks.

Level 2: Outdoor Based Activities and Individual Indoor Activities (40 per cent of normal)

This Level focuses on small group activities in the outdoors with minimal chance of contact between participants/staff. Participants will ideally bring their own equipment and/or the programs will require minimal equipment. In general, these are programs we have not typically offered previously. These new programs could include outdoor day camps, preschool/family nature programs, ball hockey and pickle ball activities, outdoor fitness programs/boot camps, outdoor swim lessons and other programs that typically are taught inside but could move to an outdoor classroom setting (i.e. Psychological First Aid Classes, Self-Care Workshops etc.).

Level 3: Small Group Indoor/Outdoor – Reduced Touchpoints (60 per cent of normal)

At this Level indoor and outdoor activities are permitted but still in smaller group settings. 50 square feet, or 7' x 7' feet, of personal space required per individual and staff. Some ice and pool programming can be considered. This will include reducing touchpoints to get into and out of spaces and having trained staff disinfect between programs.

Additional measures to the Level 1 and 2 Checklists

Level 4: Larger Group Indoor Activities (80 per cent of normal)

At this Level larger group activities are allowed and a greater chance of contact is permitted. We anticipate at this Level both the arenas and one swimming pool may open but that social distancing is still required.

Additional measures to the Level 1, 2 and 3 Checklists

Level 5: Resuming All Pre-Covid-19 Activities (100 per cent of normal)

This Level is our complete return to normal. No social distancing is in place and we can resume all of our normal ice, fitness and aquatic based programming. Industry standards would be followed and cleaning standards and staff/public safety will remain the priority.