

Strathcona Gardens Renovations Has Been “Approved” Feb 2023

After years of little action and hesitation from the previous board members the Strathcona Gardens Committee has approved the go ahead on the \$73 million upgrade to proceed.

This important project will have a 53 million dollar new pool complex built, and the remaining 20 million will be to update the exercise and skating rink complex. This new pool complex will be a tremendous value to the entire community as it will provide a modern facility that will be used for not only recreation, but will provide opportunities for enhanced wellness such as physiotherapy.

I would like to stress that the previous board members should have approved this project how many years ago when lending rates were at their lowest. Instead they chose to delay this project for the last how many years while they were looking for grants that never came. Now after a two year pandemic that has had a serious impact on important supply chains and has driven up the cost of new construction the “New Strathcona Gardens Committee” had no choice but to approve this project now.

For those that are not aware this facility is on life support and reports from support staff is that it is becoming very difficult to keep the day to day operations running so there was no options to delay this any further.

As some in the community may know, the cost of running the Strathcona Gardens is shared with the City of Campbell River and Area D. Like any recreation facility, revenue hardly meets the yearly operational costs, and that shortfall lands on taxpayers. While many might argue why is only Area D paying and not the other three Electoral Area’s, I have already echoed that same question to the other three Directors. Their response has been that in their view they do not view the Strathcona Gardens as a Regional Asset, nor do they believe that their communities see any benefit in having a vibrant recreational facility for the Strathcona Regional District.

As already mentioned these renovations and new construction will come at a cost to taxpayers. For this year there will be an increase of approx \$52 per household and moving forward in 2024 here will be a further increase of 50% or approx \$104 per household.

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