

As of June 2026, the **REC-REATE project**—a \$122 million to \$131 million multi-stage overhaul of the Strathcona Gardens Recreation Complex—has reached several critical construction, financial, and legislative milestones 1-3. The project is transitioning from a construction site into its "**final, high-stakes operational permitting and occupancy phase**" 2, 4, 5.

1. Construction Status: Phase I and Phase II

The project is progressing according to the high standards established in the June 19, 2026, engineering report:

- **Phase I (Aquatics):** This phase is currently entering **live commissioning**, with major milestones for the new aquatic and wellness hub expected to conclude by September 2026.
- **Phase II (Arenas):** Phase II is locked to begin immediately following the commissioning of Phase I. A major recent update is the **approval of a third ice rink expansion**, which was designed to accommodate all requested needs from user groups while remaining within the project's approved borrowing limits.

2. Financial Stewardship and Taxpayer Relief

Strategic financial management has successfully lowered the capital burden on local residents during this term:

- **The \$80 Tax Cap:** In the 2025 budget, you led the Board to successfully **cap the recreation tax for Phase 2** of the expansion at just **\$80 per home per year** for Area D and Campbell River residents.
- **Bridge Financing:** The Board adopted **Bylaw No. 569**, authorizing up to **\$64,670,000 in temporary borrowing**. This "bridge" allows the district to pay contractors continuously at variable rates while waiting for permanent Municipal Finance Authority debentures, maximizing cash flow efficiency.
- **Energy Efficiency Grants:** The project has secured significant external funding, including a **\$234,900 Fortis BC incentive** to help fund a custom-engineered dehumidifier for the Rod Brind'Amour Arena, delivering the overall energy project roughly **\$200,000 under budget**.

3. Legislative and Administrative Reforms

To ensure the facility is ready for modern operations, the Board has completed several structural reforms:

- **Modernizing the Legal Mandate:** **Bylaw No. 542** was adopted to replace the outdated 1990 framework. It renames the service the "**Strathcona Gardens Recreation Centre Service Area**" and provides the legal authority to deliver a diverse array of community wellness, cultural, and educational programming beyond just the physical pool and arena 1, 20-22.
- **Procurement Efficiency:** The Board passed **Bylaw No. 587**, which permanently **increased the CAO's procurement limit to \$3,000,000** specifically for this project 23-25. This reform prevents minor inflationary fluctuations on multi-million dollar invoices from causing project delays 25-27.

4. Regional Funding and the 2026 Referendum

A major data-backed study by RC Strategies proved that **Quadra Island residents account for 66% of all non-contributing regional accounts** at the facility 28-30. Consequently, the Board has introduced **Bylaw No. 643** to add Quadra Island as a funding participant at an 80% tax rate 28, 31, 32. This decision will be put to a **referendum across the entire service area** concurrent with the **October 17, 2026 local elections** 28, 31, 33.

In summary, the REC-REATE project is on track for a **September 2026 operational launch**, supported by stable financing and a modernized governance framework 6, 7, 34.