

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 23, 2022

New usage-based funding model for Cowichan recreation facilities to be decided by Regional Referendum in conjunction with October 2022 General Local Elections

Duncan, BC – Cowichan residents will be voting on a usage-based funding model for nine regionally significant recreation facilities in a regional referendum in October 2022.

For decades, the CVRD and its municipal partners have been trying to develop an equitable funding model for taxpayers for recreation services in the Cowichan region. Currently, there are nine recreation facilities within the CVRD that have been identified as regionally significant that are owned and operated by different jurisdictions, and funded inequitably by different tax payers within the region.

The nine regionally significant recreation facilities being considered for this new usage-based funding model are:

- Cowichan Aquatic Centre
- Cowichan Community Centre
- Cowichan Lake Sports Arena
- Cowichan Performing Arts Centre
- Cowichan Sportsplex
- Frank Jameson Community Centre
- Fuller Lake Arena
- Kerry Park Recreation Centre
- Shawnigan Lake Community Centre

“It’s taken a long time and a great deal of work to arrive at this moment with a solution to ensure that these public facilities are funded fairly through tax dollars collected from the communities who benefit from them,” said Lori Iannidinardo, Board Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “We hope all residents in the region will take some time to review the project site and background materials so they understand how this new usage-based funding model will impact them personally, and be able to make a meaningful decision when going to the election polls in October.”

The CVRD and its municipal partners have spent the last seven years doing extensive research into potential funding models and how to improve regional recreation services in general. The CVRD Board has now adopted a preferred funding model (based on facility usage) to propose to the voting public during the 2022 General Local Elections in October 2022. For example, currently only a few jurisdictions pay for the Cowichan Community Centre, but residents from all jurisdictions in the region use the facility either a little or a lot; under the new model, each jurisdiction would pay an amount based on how much they use the facility.

The usage for this funding model is based on regular data collection survey cycles at each of the 9 regionally significant recreation facilities. The CVRD and its municipal partners conducted facility usage studies in 2017 and in 2021/2022 that, when combined, provides the average

percentage of usage of each facility, per jurisdiction. If this usage-based funding model is adopted at the polls in October, a facility usage study will be conducted every 5 years and form the baseline for an ongoing, rolling average based on the most recent 3 data collection cycles.

“After nearly 30 years of working with recreation facilities in the Cowichan region, it is heartening to see a funding model that resolves many long-standing issues and provides certainty for fair funding in the future,” said John Elzinga, General Manager of Community Services for the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “Given the long history of this issue and complexity of the funding formula, we’ve put a great deal of effort into communications for regional residents, and encourage everyone to check out the project site where they can learn more about it prior to participating in the Regional Referendum in October 2022.”

The new usage-based funding model for regional recreation services would be administered by the CVRD in partnership with our four member municipalities (City of Duncan, Municipality of North Cowichan, Town of Ladysmith, and Town of Lake Cowichan) and the Cowichan Sportsplex. The new usage-based funding model will affect every electoral area and member municipality differently, however the overall level of service and funding will remain the same if this new model is voted in.

The [Plan Your Cowichan](#) project site includes a wealth of background information, including the recreation usage studies, FAQs, and information about upcoming virtual public information meetings. Regional residents can also expect to see local government staff at farmers markets and other public events throughout the month of September, where they will be providing information and answering questions related to the CVRD Regional Referendum – Regional Recreation Funding Services.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Kris Schumacher
Manager, Communications & Engagement
250.701.2631
kris.schumacher@cvrd.bc.ca