

CITY OF WEYBURN

AQUATICS FEASIBILITY STUDY

WHAT WE HEARD





A SPLASH OF ENGAGEMENT

RESIDENT SURVEY

Nearly all respondents (94%) reported recent public pool use with 74% using the indoor pool and 69% using the outdoor pool. Many residents also frequented pools outside of Weyburn in communities such as Estevan and Regina.

Recreational swimming, fitness, and social activities are the core reasons for pool visits. Respondents expressed some satisfaction with current programming (56% for the indoor pool and 53% for the outdoor pool), although concerns persist over facility availability, hours, and crowding.

Barriers include scheduling, cold water temperatures, maintenance issues, and insufficient program availability. Respondents offered recommendations such as expanding swim lessons (for both children and adults), adjusting operating hours, and improving facility layouts to better accommodate diverse uses.

The community recognizes broad benefits, from enhancing safety and promoting active living to boosting overall quality of life, emphasizing that every resident should have access to quality aquatic facilities.

GROUP MEETINGS

Participants underscored that the current facility lacks the depth, space, and modern design required for both recreational and competitive use. They stressed that the disruption caused by the indoor pool's closure has affected programming and athletic development.

Recommendations include designing a flexible facility with a 25- or 50-meter pool featuring a movable bulkhead to cater to different user groups, and clearly separating recreational zones from competitive areas. Enhanced accessibility measures, such as family washrooms, pool lifts, and improved spectator seating, were also highlighted.

Upgrading Weyburn's aquatic infrastructure is seen not only as a means to foster community well-being but also as a catalyst for economic benefits, attracting visitors, stimulating local businesses, and contributing to regional development. Collaborative funding models and long-term programming strategies will be critical in ensuring a financially sustainable project.

Both volunteer burnout and staffing inadequacies (especially related to specialized roles like lifeguarding) are concerns.



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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings gathered through community engagement as part of the Aquatics Feasibility Study. The purpose of the study is to assess the current and future need for aquatic facilities in the community and to explore the viability of developing new or enhanced aquatics infrastructure.

Public input has played a central role in this process, ensuring that the study reflects local values, priorities, and expectations. Engagement activities included a resident survey and community group meetings. We heard from residents, community groups, and facility users about their experiences, needs, and aspirations related to aquatic services in the City.

The feedback collected through this engagement process informs the overall feasibility study by providing a deeper understanding of community demand, preferences for facility features and programming, and perceived gaps in existing services. This report presents what we heard through the engagement process.

WHY NOW?

During the regular reopening process of the indoor pool in September 2024, significant damage to the pool basin was discovered, rendering the structure unsafe. As a result, the pool was closed, and a Feasibility Study was launched.

The Feasibility Study will explore options to repair, remodel, or replace the indoor pool.





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ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Two tactics were employed to gather an array of community input related to aquatics in the City. The tactics are presented in the following graphics along with the levels of participation.



2.1 RESIDENT SURVEY

A resident survey was fielded to gather feedback and insight from residents in Weyburn on the provision aquatic facilities and programs in the City. The survey was primarily fielded online, however; residents were provided with the opportunity to receive a paper copy of the survey. The survey was promoted through various methods including:

- The City's Social Media Channels
- Posters in Local Facilities and Businesses
- The City's Website / Engage Page
- Media Release

The findings from the survey are presented below. They follow the order that the questions were posed in the survey. Not all respondents answered each question, the percentages shown represent those who answered the question.

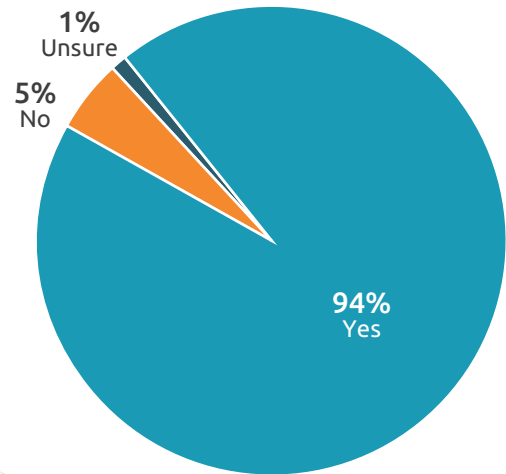
2.1.1 CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

To begin, respondents were asked if they had used a public pool in Weyburn or elsewhere in the past two years. As shown in the graph, nearly all (94%) indicated they had.

Those who had not visited a public pool were asked to explain why. Responses include:

- Lack of interest
- Health or age limitations
- Don't swim / don't know how
- Poor facility conditions
- Inconvenient hours or programs
- Too expensive
- Pool closures or limited access
- Busy schedules / other priorities
- Life changes (e.g., new to city, pregnancy, travel)

Graph 1 - Have you or anyone in your household used a public pool (either in the Weyburn or elsewhere) in the two years?



Respondents who had visited a public pool in the past two years were asked which pools they used. Approximately three-quarters visited the Harry Church Olympic-Sized Indoor Pool (74%) and the outdoor pool (69%). Over half (59%) visited pools outside of Weyburn.

What public pools have you been to in the last two years?



Harry Church Junior Olympic Sized Indoor Pool



Junior Olympic Sized Outdoor Pool

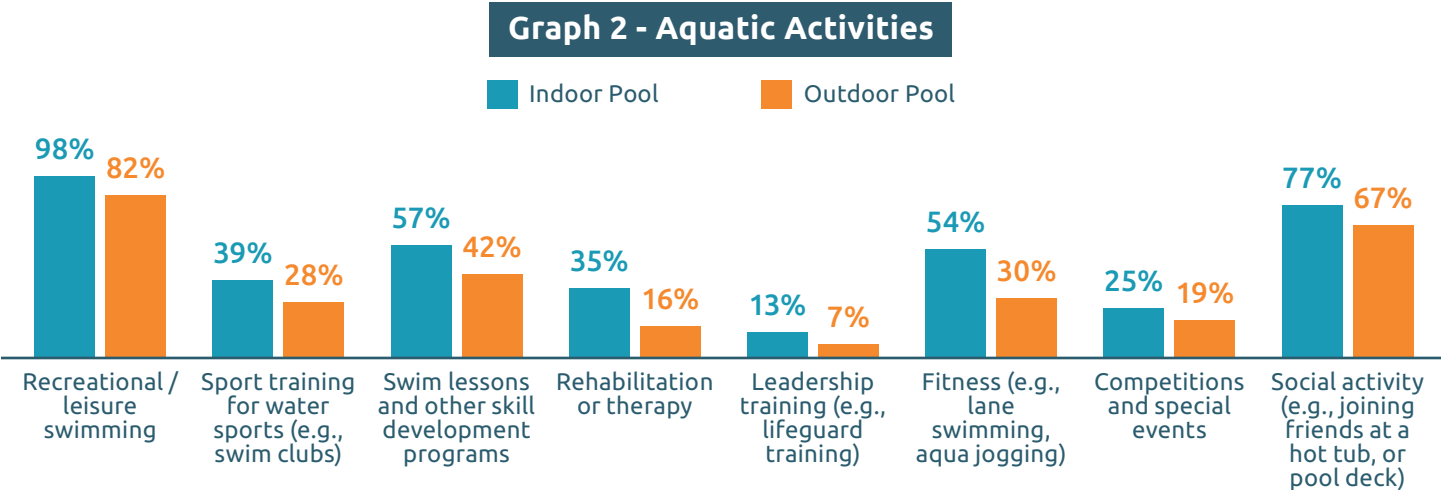


Other

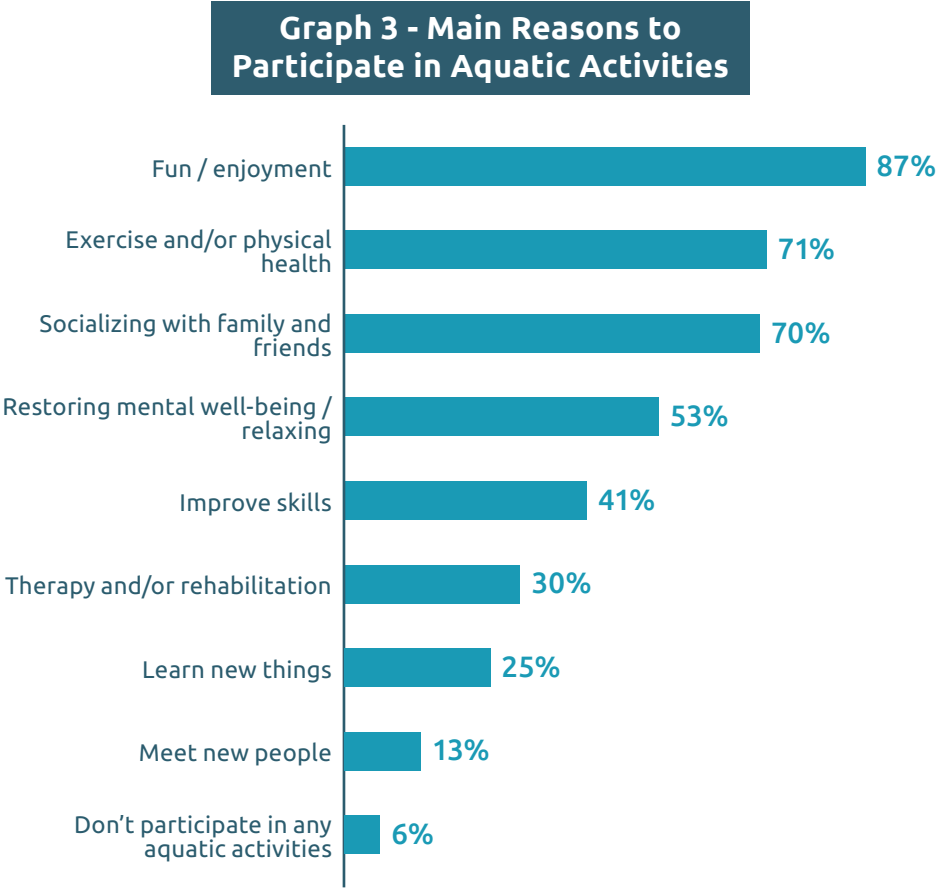
Other pools respondents visit include:

- Estevan Pools (Affinity Place, Leisure Centre, Aquatic Centre) – *90 mentions*
- Regina Pools (Lawson, Sandra Schmirler, Wascana, public pools) – *55 mentions*
- Don Mitchell Paddling Pool / Tot Lot / Splash Park – *25 mentions*
- Hotel Pools (various cities) – *30 mentions*
- Yorkton Pools (Gallagher Centre, Access Communications, wave pool) – *20 mentions*
- Radville Pool / Outdoor Pool / Laurier Regional Park – *10 mentions*
- Oungre Memorial Regional Park Pool – *10 mentions*
- Moose Jaw Pools (Kinsmen Sportsplex, Temple Gardens) – *10 mentions*
- Saskatoon Pools (Shaw Centre, Lakewood, etc.) – *8 mentions*
- Carlyle Pool – *5 mentions*
- Paddling Pools (general or unspecified) – *8 mentions*
- Medicine Hat Pools – *4 mentions*
- Private/Backyard/Condo Pools – *5 mentions*

As shown in the accompanying graph, respondents engage in a range of aquatic activities. For both pools, the most popular activities include recreational swimming, social activities, swimming lessons and fitness.



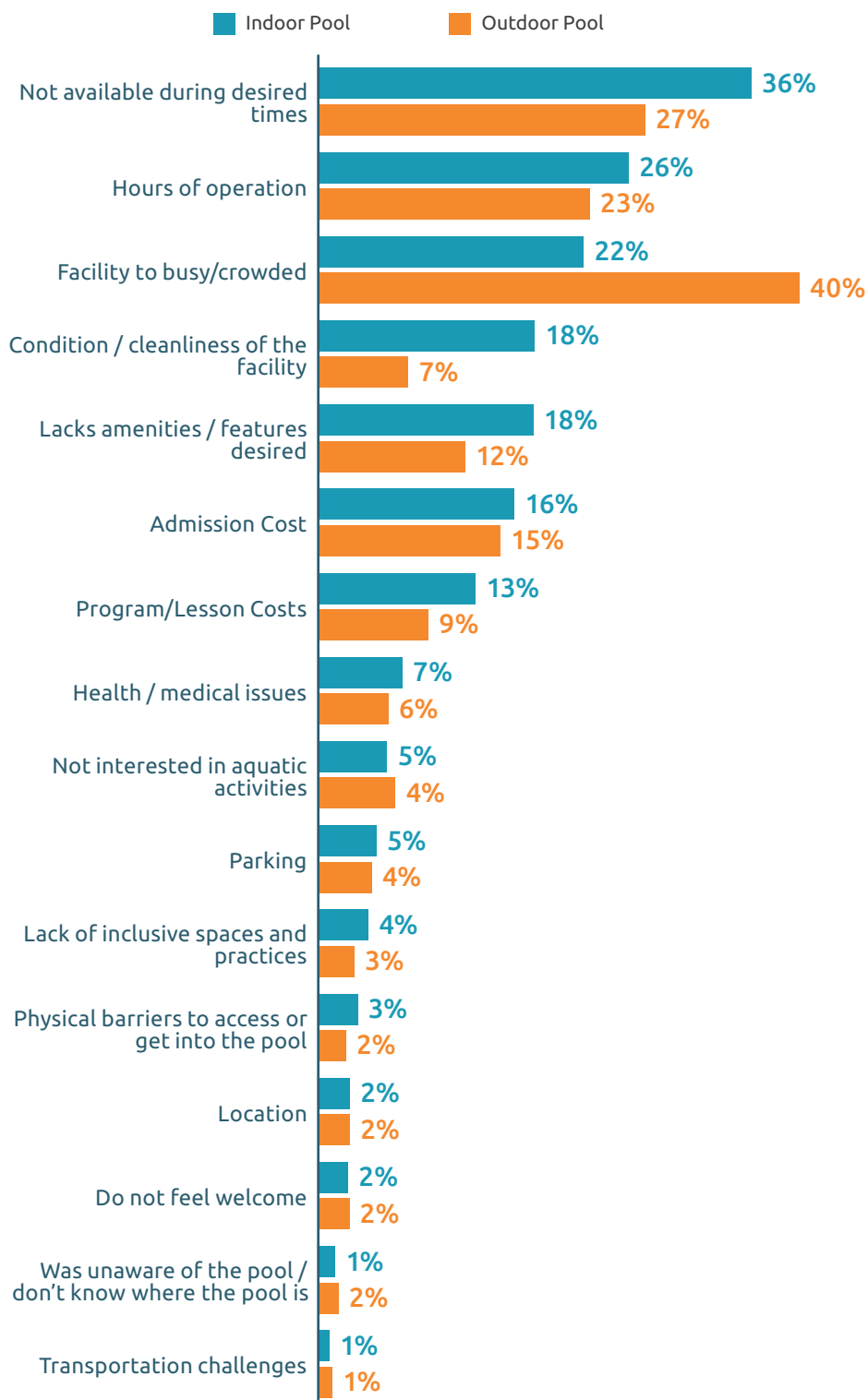
Fun and enjoyment (87%), exercise and or physical health (71%), socializing with family and friends (70%) were among the top reasons respondents participate in aquatic activities.



Top barriers for both pools (indoor and outdoor) included lack of availability, hours of operation, and crowding.

For the indoor pool, lack of availability (36%) was the top barrier, followed by hours of operation (26%) and crowding (22%). In contrast, the outdoor pool's main barrier was crowding (40%), with availability (27%) and hours of operation (23%) following.

Graph 4 - Barriers to Using Pools in Weyburn



Respondents shared other barriers they are face when trying to access pools in Weyburn, including:



INDOOR POOL

- **Cold Water Temperature** – Pool water often too cold, especially for young children and seniors.
- **Frequent Closures** – Ongoing mechanical issues and maintenance led to unreliable access.
- **Limited Program Availability** – Swim lessons and programs fill quickly with not enough spots offered.
- **Inadequate Facility Design** – Small or broken hot tub, poor layout, lack of sport-specific features.
- **Restricted Hours & Access** – Limited public swim and lane swim times; inconvenient scheduling.
- **Overly Strict Rules** – Some felt lifeguard policies were excessive, reducing enjoyment.
- **Busy Personal Schedules** – Conflicts with other activities limited pool use.



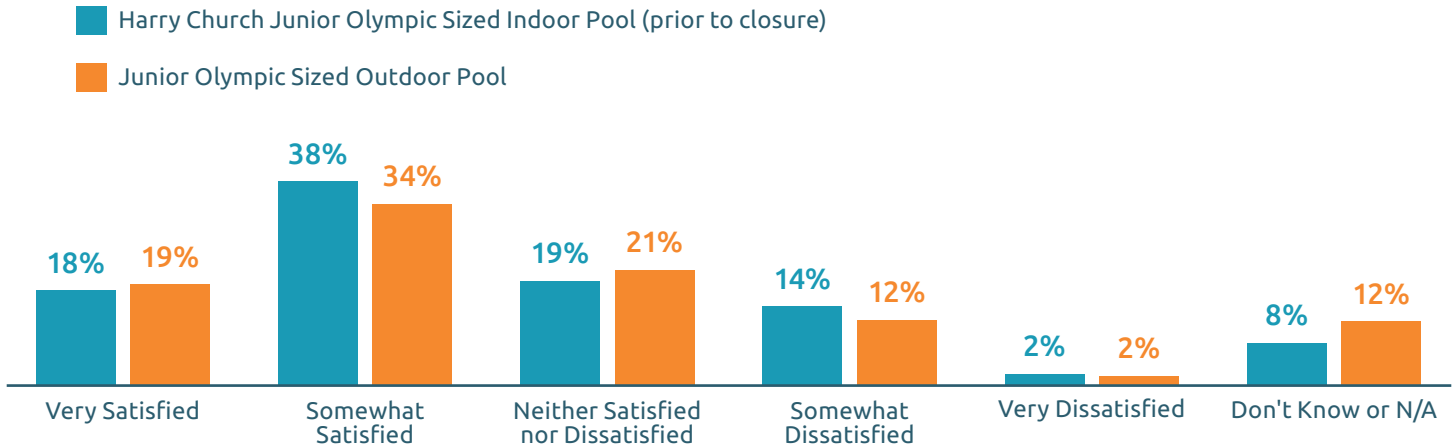
OUTDOOR POOL

- **Unfavourable Weather** – Cold days, storms, sun exposure, and wasps limited enjoyment.
- **Overcrowding** – Too many people, especially in kids' areas; not enough space to swim.
- **Limited Program Availability** – Swim lessons fill up almost instantly; not enough sessions.
- **Inconvenient Scheduling** – Poor timing for adult swims and lessons; not suited to working families.
- **Facility Design Issues** – Small size, lack of shade, no hot tub or sauna, poor layout for toddlers.
- **Preference for Alternatives** – Many used private pools, lakes, spray parks, or preferred the indoor pool.
- **Busy Personal Schedules** – Conflicts with other summer activities, travel, or time at the lake.
- **Dislike of Outdoor Pools** – Some simply prefer indoor pools or dislike being outside.

2.1.2 SATISFACTION

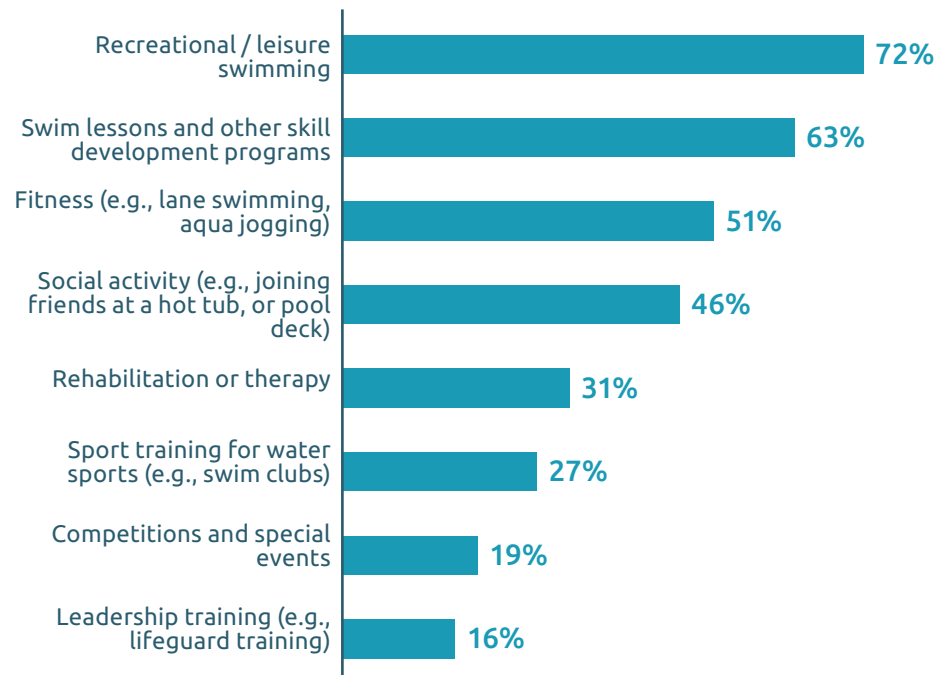
Shifting gears to programming, over half are satisfied (very satisfied and somewhat satisfied) with programming in both the indoor (56%) and outdoor pool (53%).

Graph 5 - Aquatic Programming Satisfaction



When asked which aquatic programs should be expanded, respondents identified recreation and leisure swimming (72%), swim lessons and skill development (63%), and fitness programming (51%) as top program needs.

Graph 6 - Types of Aquatic Programs or Services to be Expanded



Programming

- Strong demand for increased access to children's swim lessons, which often fill up quickly.
- Requests for adult swim lessons.
- Interest in adult-only swim times, masters swim programs, and evening lap swims.
- Requests for dedicated family and toddler swim times.

Facility Improvements

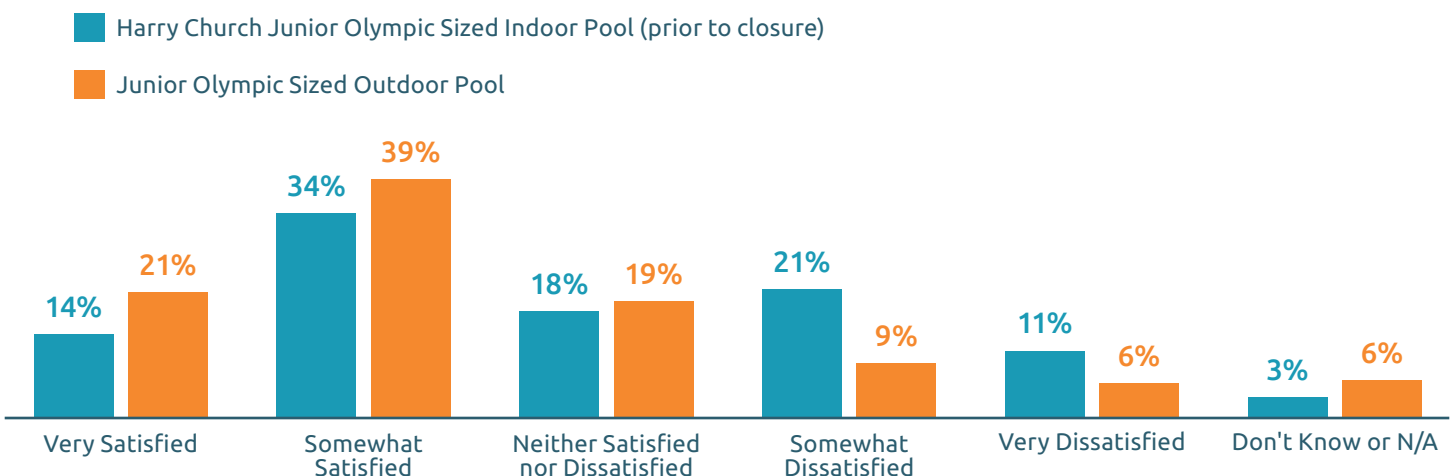
- Suggestions to enhance facilities with features such as better viewing areas, diving boards, a separate deep pool, and improved change room safety.
- Emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing amenities to support year-round use.
- Calls for improved accessibility features to support individuals with mobility challenges.
- Desire for wellness amenities such as hot tubs (year-round), saunas, steam rooms, and warmer water temperatures.
- Interest in adding a dive tank to support diving, artistic swimming, and water polo.
- Desire for a facility layout that allows for simultaneous sport training and public leisure use, and for hosting club events locally.

Scheduling & Access

- Suggestions for more flexible and consistent hours, including daytime lane swims and after-school access.
- Interest in extending the outdoor pool season and improving program timing to meet varied community needs.

When asked about satisfaction with the condition, accessibility, and features of Weyburn's pools, approximately two-thirds (60%) are satisfied with the outdoor pool, while approximately half (48%) are satisfied with the indoor pool.

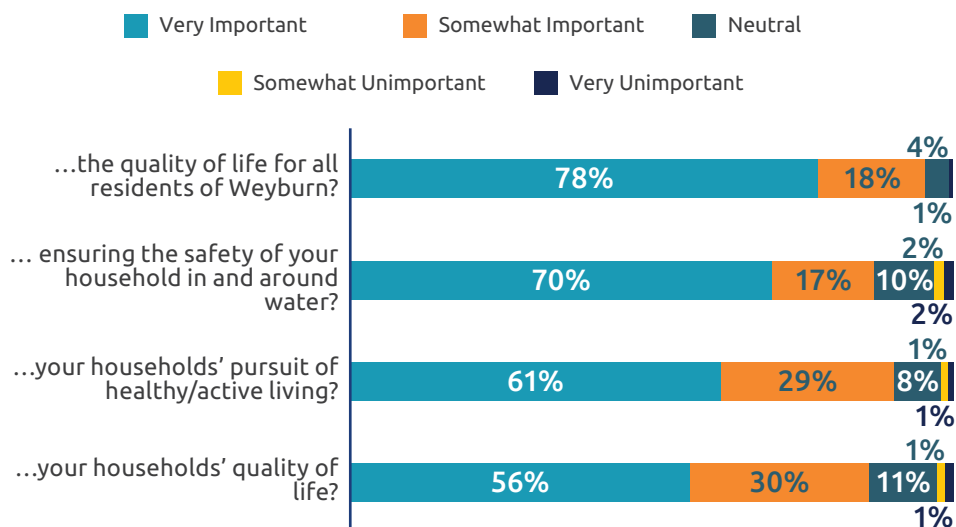
Graph 7 - Satisfaction with Condition, Accessibility and Features



2.1.3 VALUE AND BENEFITS OF AQUATIC FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

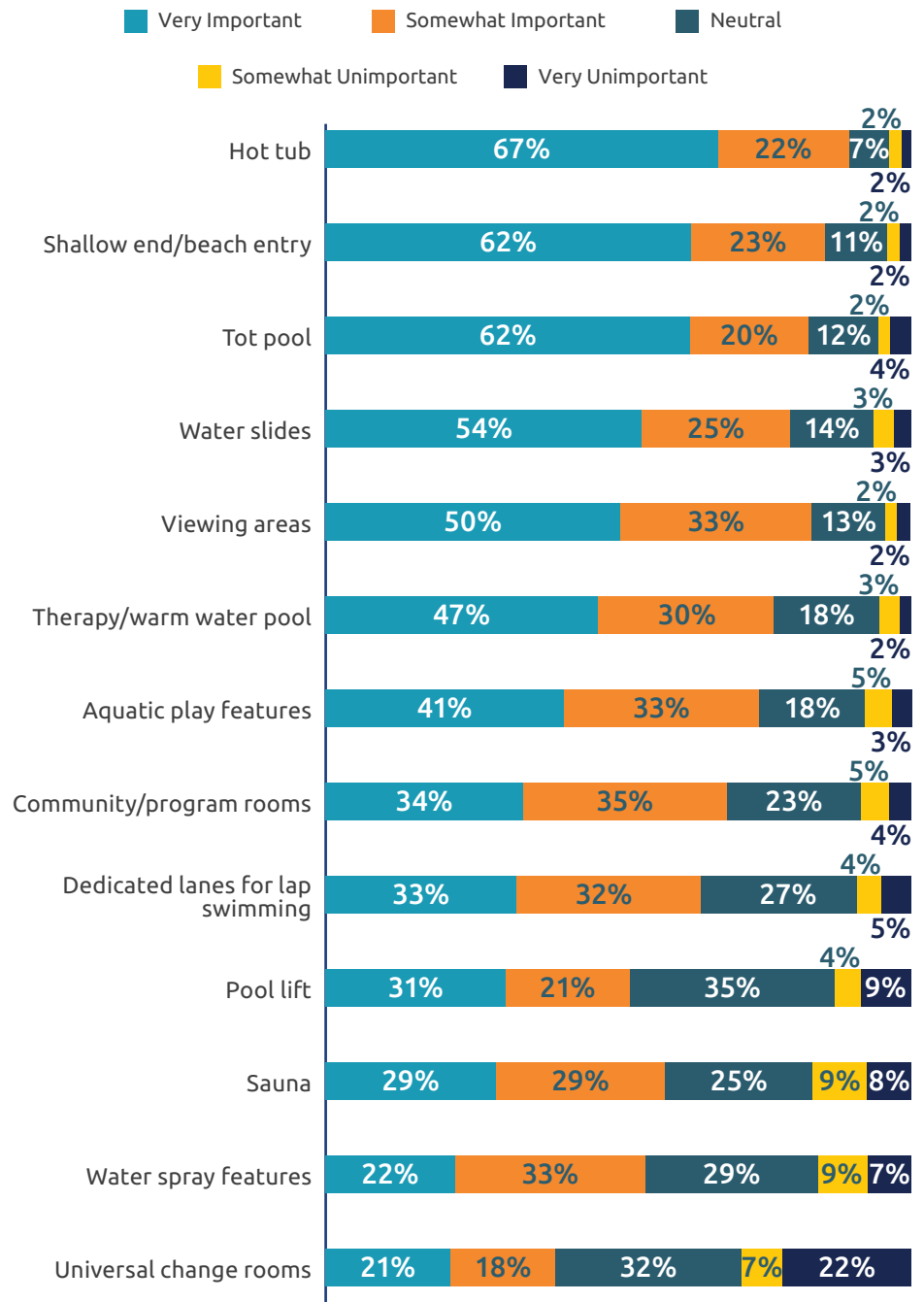
Respondents agreed that aquatic opportunities are important particularly for safety, active living, and overall quality of life. The highest rated value was the importance in enhancing quality of life for all residents in Weyburn.

Graph 8 - How Important Are Aquatic Opportunities to...



Respondents were next asked to rate the importance of amenities influencing their decision to visit an aquatic facility. Two-thirds (67%) of respondents identified a hot tub as very important, with features such as shallow/beach entry, tot pool, waterslides, and viewing areas ranked as the next most important amenities.

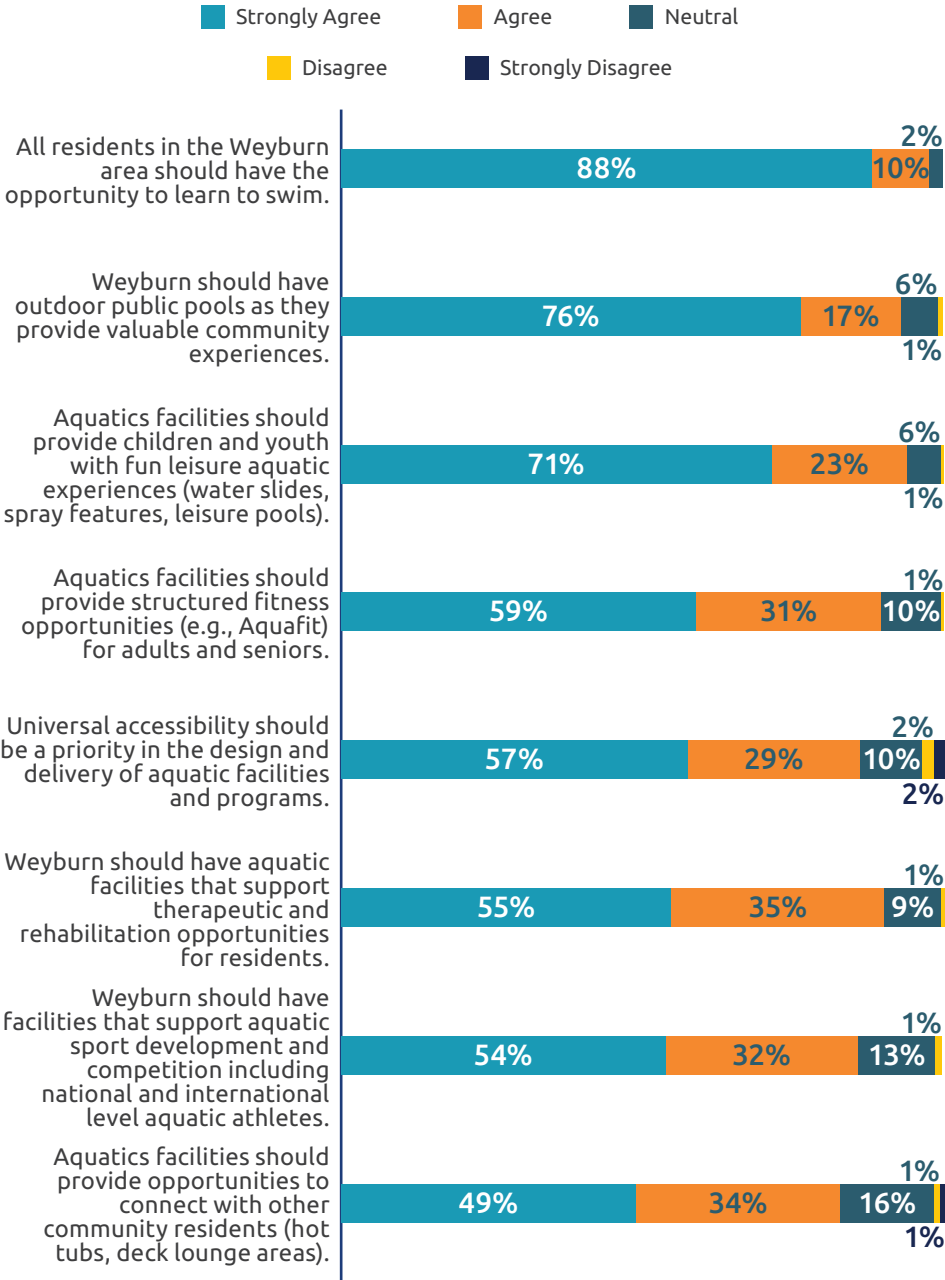
Graph 9 - Importance of Amenities when Deciding to Visit and Aquatic Centre



Community pools provide valuable benefits to residents and visitors. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with various statements about aquatics. Nearly all strongly agree that every Weyburn resident should have the opportunity to learn to swim, and at least 84% agree (strongly or somewhat) with all the statements presented.



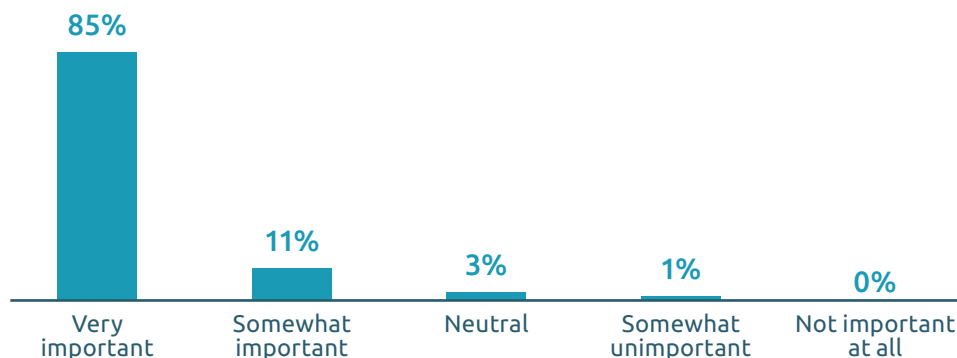
Graph 10 - Values and Considerations



2.1.4 PROVISION AND ACCESS TO AQUATIC AMENITIES

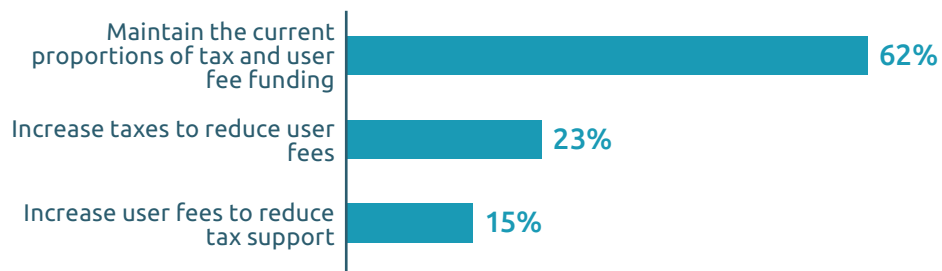
When asked how important new or improved aquatic amenities are to the community, over three-quarters (85%) indicated that they are very important.

Graph 11 - How Important are New or Improved Aquatic Amenities to the Community



The City of Weyburn's aquatic facilities and services are paid for by a combination of tax support and fees paid by users. When asked about tax support, approximately two-thirds (62%) support maintaining the current proportions of tax and user fee funding.

Graph 12 - Which of the following options do you support in relation to tax support and user fees for aquatic facilities and services?



2.1.5 OTHER COMMENTS

Respondents were able to share any final comments. The responses are synthesized and presented according to themes:

Desire for a new or improved indoor pool

– 67 comments

Respondents emphasized the importance of an indoor pool for recreation and fitness. Additional comments include the inclusion of viewing areas, larger change rooms and accessible showers.

Concerns about taxes and funding

– 25 comments

Respondents expressed frustration over tax increases and question how funds have been allocated, particularly in relation to other infrastructure projects.

Swimming programming, lessons and accessibility

– 33 comments

Respondents highlighted difficulties in accessing swimming lessons and calls for more availability and better scheduling. Additionally, there is general concern of reduced recreational opportunities for the community.

Complaints about existing infrastructure

– 19 comments

Respondents expressed that the city should prioritize other infrastructure needs over constructing a new pool.

Pool temperature concerns

– 16 comments

Respondents note that the water in the previous pool was too cold, making swimming uncomfortable, especially for young children.

Requests for additional amenities

– 15 comments

Some suggest incorporating features such as a lazy river, improved hot tubs, sauna, and additional recreational components.

Concerns about mismanagement and maintenance issues

– 10 comments

Respondents expressed frustration over how the previous pool was managed and call for better upkeep to avoid similar issues in the future.

Suggestions for partnerships and alternative locations

– 7 comments

Some proposed collaborations with nearby parks or integrating new facilities with existing ones to reduce costs.

2.2 COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS

A series of discussion sessions was facilitated with an array of organizations, each offering unique perspectives on the provision of aquatics in the City. Virtual meetings were held from late May to early June, with 10 organizations participating. These organizations included aquatic organizations, social services, service clubs, governing bodies and more.

The discussions covered a broad spectrum of topics, but several key themes emerged across multiple sessions. The following themes provide a summary of the key insights shared during the meetings.

Current Facility Limitations and Challenges

Groups emphasized that the current pool in Weyburn is inadequate for their needs. They pointed to issues like insufficient depth for programming, cramped deck space, and limited storage as key barriers. There were repeated concerns about the aging condition of the indoor pool, with some organizations describing it as unsafe and unfit for modern programming. Participants also noted that strict and overlapping scheduling prevents many user groups from accessing consistent training slots.

Impact on Local Organizations

Local clubs reported significant setbacks following the pool's closure ranging from canceled seasons to athletes withdrawing from programs. There were concerns about athletes leaving Weyburn for training in larger communities. Groups also flagged the toll on volunteers, many of whom are stretched thin and burned out. It was mentioned that one-on-one support roles, especially for athletes with disabilities, are difficult to maintain without paid assistance.

Features Requested for a New Facility

There were calls for a 25-metre or 50-metre pool equipped with a movable bulkhead, at least six lanes, and appropriate diving depth. Groups requested separate tanks for competitive and recreational use to allow for temperature control and simultaneous programming. Accessibility was highlighted as a priority with requests for zero-depth entry, adult-sized change tables, family change rooms, and pool lifts. Organizations also proposed amenities such as elevated spectator seating, digital display boards, sufficient deck space, and classrooms to support training and event hosting.

Benefits of Local Aquatics

User groups stressed the value of year-round aquatic access in Weyburn, not just for sport, but also as a hub for community wellness. There were affirmations that a modern pool would support healthy lifestyles, draw new residents, and provide a social anchor during long winters. Some participants noted that regional collaboration with surrounding municipalities could enhance funding and increase usage. Hosting meets and tournaments was viewed as a potential economic boon for local tourism.

Barriers to Program Growth

Organizations mentioned that their ability to grow has been stifled by lack of pool access and overly rigid coaching certification requirements. National-level standards for officials were cited as a major hurdle in recruiting local coaches and volunteers. The warm water temperature in the current facility and absence of features like starting blocks were said to impact training quality and athlete readiness.

Inclusivity and Special Needs Considerations

Groups shared compelling stories about youth with intellectual and physical disabilities who benefit from being in the water. There were calls for design elements like gradual entry, sensory-friendly layouts, and calm spaces for self-regulation. Organizations voiced a desire to welcome more children with disabilities into programming but cited limited space, specialized staffing needs, and volunteer shortages as major roadblocks. Groups emphasized that thoughtful design could go a long way toward inclusion.

Operational Sustainability and Funding

Groups expressed interest in financially supporting an indoor pool in Weyburn. However, they also stressed the need for a straightforward, practical facility that prioritizes essential features. It was suggested that amenities like multipurpose rooms, physiotherapy services, and food vendors with healthier options could serve dual purposes, support users and generate revenue for sustainability. Volunteer-driven fundraising was identified as feasible but increasingly challenging given economic conditions.

Governance, Planning, and Consultation

There were concerns raised that the general public sentiment might overshadow the technical needs of active aquatic user groups. Some participants pushed for stronger assurance that their expertise and feedback would be incorporated into concept planning. There were repeated references to successful aquatic designs in Calgary, Fort McMurray, and Grand Prairie, with several organizations urging the city to study those models closely. Groups welcomed the opportunity for continued engagement as the study moves toward final recommendations.



