COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting on Policy and Strategic Priorities on December 2, 2026

2. Ending the Pools Reservation System

Submitted by: Councillor Klassen

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver's public swimming pools are an essential public recreation service, providing residents with affordable opportunities for swimming, exercise, recreation, cooling during periods of extreme heat, and family activity;

2. Public swimming is fundamentally a walk-in recreational service, and residents should not ordinarily be required to plan their attendance days in advance in order to access a public swimming pool;

3. The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation introduced advance reservations for outdoor public swimming during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of a broader system of timed access and capacity management;

4. Although the public-health circumstances that originally prompted the reservation system have changed substantially, advance reservations have continued to play a major role in determining access to Vancouver's seasonal outdoor pools;

5. At Kitsilano Pool, Vancouver's most heavily used outdoor pool, the Park Board's own operational data indicates that approximately 60 percent of visits in 2025 were made by patrons without reservations, notwithstanding that the majority of public-swim capacity was allocated to advance reservations;

6. The Park Board has reported substantial reservation no-show rates at Kitsilano Pool, meaning that a significant amount of capacity can be held by reservations that are not ultimately used;

7. The Park Board has also reported that drop-in patrons are regularly accommodated through the release of unused reservation capacity and that actual instances in which drop-in patrons were turned away because maximum pool capacity had been reached were extremely rare during the 2025 season;

8. The Park Board's public engagement research has identified significant public demand for open swimming, with residents identifying limited availability, difficulty obtaining preferred swim times, and limited flexibility associated with advance booking among the barriers to accessing outdoor pools;

9. The Park Board's public engagement research found that a majority of respondents preferred either a combination of reservations and open swimming or a model providing more open swimming, rather than a system based principally on advance reservations;

10. The Park Board has already reduced the proportion of public-swim capacity allocated to reservations and increased the proportion available for drop-in access, demonstrating that the existing reservation model can be modified without compromising the safe operation of the pools;

11. Public swimming facilities necessarily require appropriate maximum capacities, lifeguard supervision and other safety measures, and eliminating advance reservations does not eliminate or diminish those requirements;

12. A system in which residents can arrive at a public swimming pool and obtain admission on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to safe maximum capacity, is more consistent with the ordinary nature of public recreation than a system in which access is principally allocated through advance online reservations;

13. The proposed elimination of advance reservations would allow residents to access Vancouver's public outdoor pools without having to compete for limited advance reservation spaces or organize their recreational activities around the release of reservation capacity; and

14. The purpose of this motion is to restore public swimming as a genuinely accessible, spontaneous and first-come, first-served public recreation service while maintaining all applicable public-health, lifeguard and pool-safety requirements.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

A. THAT Council request that the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation immediately end advance reservations for ordinary public swimming at all Vancouver outdoor pools, including Kitsilano, Second Beach, New Brighton, Maple Grove and Hillcrest, and restore first-come, first-served access.

B. THAT Council request that admission continue on a first-come, first-served basis until the applicable safe maximum capacity is reached, with all required lifeguard, public-health and pool-safety standards maintained.

C. THAT Council request that advance registration continue only for lessons, instructional programs, organized activities, rentals and other programs for which advance registration is reasonably required, and not as a condition of access to ordinary public swimming.

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