



BASSANO OUTDOOR POOL OPERATIONS PLAN - MANUAL



**COUNTY OF
NEWELL**

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Overview

A Recreation and Leisure Master Plan was adopted in 2021 by the Town of Bassano (Town) and endorsed by the County of Newell (County). The Master Plan requires that the Town completes a thorough review of all its recreation facilities to maximize operations, to increase the quality and quantity of programs, and to reduce, where possible operational costs to ensure “We meet the needs of ALL of a diverse community. We top all of the healthy living lists and are looked at as an example of “excellence” in recreation and leisure.”

First built in 1928, the Bassano Outdoor Pool (Pool) has served patrons for just under 100 years. Thanks to a combination of sponsorship, donations, and municipal funds, the facility was replaced in 1962 and again in 2009. Through continuous community investment, the pool has remained an asset contributing to the socialization, health, and wellbeing of our residents and patrons.

The facility operates annually from May to August (approx. 14 weeks). An average of 6,500 patrons visit the facility each season to access various programs such as:

- Swim lessons
- Aquafit
- Lane swim/adult fitness
- Public swim

The Pool is a municipally owned and subsidized recreation facility. In 2021, the season was limited to 8-weeks and the operational deficit, which is split equally by the Town and the County was \$100,000. Operational deficits challenge the viability of recreational facilities.

A multi-year operations plan, to begin in 2022 has been prepared that provides solutions to various operational constraints, to advance value through youth leadership and development, to maximize the use of daylight hours, and to provide ways to extend operating hours and increase programs where possible with the intent of, over time, reducing the facility deficit and improved service delivery.

The Mayor and Council acknowledge that investments in recreation and leisure contributes to community growth and well-being. The Town and the County are committed to the longevity of this facility.

This is a living document and shall be reviewed by October 1st annually and adjusted where required to achieve outcomes.

Definitions

- Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) – is the administrative head of the municipality. The CAO is responsible for guiding the actions of all municipal departments.
- Council – means the elected body of the Town.
- County – means County of Newell.
- Facility Operator – is a member of the Town’s Public Works Department responsible to oversee/manage mechanical and facility operations as it relates to water and public safety.
- Inservice – means inhouse training/practice facilitated by the Pool Manager that includes lifesaving skills, facility operations procedures, and water safety instructor skills.
- Level 1 Lifeguard – is a Pool employee responsible to complete janitorial duties, assist and communicate directly with patrons, enforcing Pool rules, and take emergency actions when required.
- Level 2 Lifeguards – is a Pool employee responsible to complete janitorial duties, assist and communicate directly with patrons, enforcing Pool rules, supervise Level 1 Lifeguards, and Pool Apprentices when the Pool Manager is not present, and take emergency actions when required.
- Pool – means the Bassano Outdoor Pool.
- Pool Apprentices – is a Pool employee responsible to complete janitorial duties, assist and communicate directly with patrons, and supporting lifeguarding staff in emergencies.
- Pool Manager – is a Pool employee responsible for managing pool staff, maintaining consistent communication with the public, managing facility operations, programming, and ensuring safety and cleanliness standards are met.
- Recreation and Community Services Liaison (Liaison) – Is the Town administrator responsible for the implementation of this plan.
- Red Cross – means Canadian Red Cross.
- Town - means Town of Bassano.
- Lifesaving Instructor (LI) – is an instructor trained in Lifesaving Society swim instruction standards and techniques.
- Swim for Life – is the Lifesaving Society swimming lesson program.

Youth Development and Succession Planning

Lifeguard staff is responsible for day-to-day operations of the Pool including monitoring patrons (both in and out of the water), instructing pool programs, the completion of water tests, and taking emergency actions when required. Lifeguard staff are hired each year and include secondary students, post-secondary students, and adults.

Challenges

Facility hours (especially due to pandemic response), the costs of obtaining and recertifying lifeguards, and the lack of mentorship impacts employee retention.

Solutions

Provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment that teaches skills to youth that helps them grow and develop, where they are challenged to learn, and a place where they can apply their new skills.

Provide onsite training for youth.

And, advertise early for employment positions – provide advancement options to support returning staff.

Lifeguard Roles and Responsibilities

On average, lifeguard staff will remain in each position for 2 years before advancing. This coincides with age requirements for lifeguard courses (e.g. you must be 16 years of age before you can take National Lifeguard - Pool), and increased responsibilities. Junior and Senior lifeguard positions have been renamed to align with the Town's employee policy; advancement within the organization is based on experience, training, and increased responsibility.

Pool Apprentice	Lifeguard Level 1	*Lifeguard Level 2	Pool Manager
14-16 years	16-18 years	18-20+ years	20+ years
Responsibilities include but are not limited to:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reception and concession Program registration Money handling Cleaning and sanitization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lifeguarding Teaching Lifesaving Society swimming lessons Water testing Cleaning and sanitization Apprentice mentorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day to day staff supervision Lifeguarding Teaching Lifesaving Society swimming lessons Water testing Cleaning and sanitization Apprentice and Level 1 mentorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pool planning and daily operations Manage all lifeguarding staff Teaching Lifesaving Society swimming lessons Water sampling Maintain and implement safety plans Apprentice, Level 1 and Level 2 mentorship

Table 1: Lifeguard Positions and Responsibilities

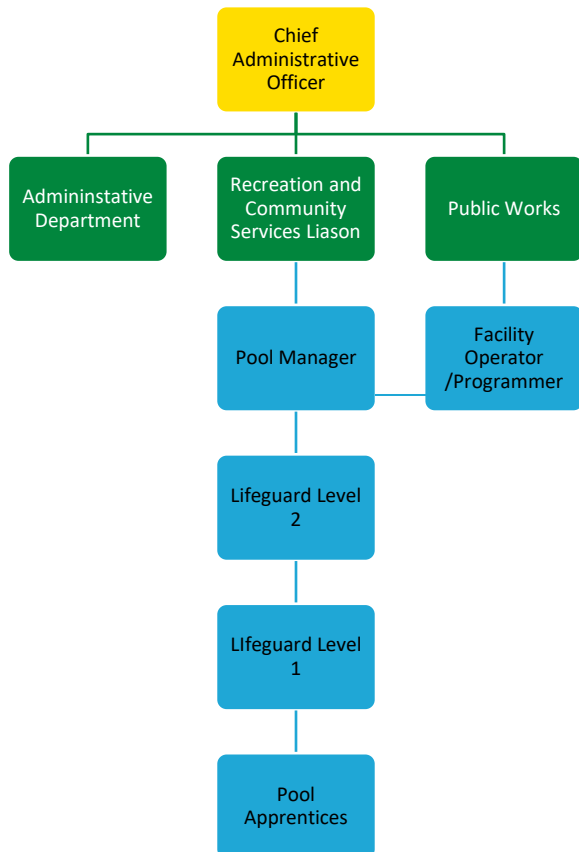
* Level 2 lifeguards will stay within their position longer unless they advance to a pool manager or pool operator position.

Training

To retain qualified staff, the Town will provide individuals with the necessary training and certifications to lifeguard at the Pool. Courses will be offered before the start of each season. All courses listed in the chart below are the minimum mandatory training requirements for each position. Each course develops specific skillsets in staff that contributes to the operational mandate. For example, Lifesaving Instructor (LI) enables staff to teach some advanced courses and develops public relation skills, leadership, and communication skills necessary to improve the patrons' experience.

Pool Apprentice	Lifeguard Level 1	Lifeguard Level 2	Pool Manager
LIFEGUARD STAFF			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bronze Medallion ▪ Bronze Cross ▪ Standard First Aid ▪ Inservices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Lifeguard – Pool ▪ Swim Instructor ▪ Standard First Aid ▪ Inservices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Lifeguard – Pool ▪ Swim and Lifesaving Instructor ▪ Standard First Aid ▪ Inservices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Lifeguard – Pool ▪ Swim and Lifesaving Instructor ▪ Standard First Aid ▪ Pool Operator Level 1 ▪ Inservices

Table 2: Lifeguarding Staff Training



Operational objectives, training, and mentorship are funneled down through the organizational hierarchy. Under the supervision of the CAO, the Liaison shall provide leadership and guidance to the Pool Manager to ensure they can operate the facility effectively.

To ensure lifeguard staff maintain their skills, the Pool Manager will hold a minimum of 3 in-services throughout the season. In-services will include a review of:

- Safety and sanitation procedures,
- Lifesaving techniques,
- Operational policies,
- Water testing, and
- Swimming lesson standards.

Beyond formal in-house training, all staff, and more specifically veteran staff are required to mentor other individuals to contribute to the team dynamics and culture required for public safety and fun at the Pool.

Image 1: Pool Organizational Hierarchy

The Facility Operator shall train lifeguard staff on basic water balancing and mechanical operations. Lifeguard staff will be given a more holistic view of facility operations to encourage them to take on additional responsibilities that are required to advance within the organization.

Employee Advancement Mapping

To encourage current staff to continue to grow within the organization and to attract new staff the Town will implement employee advancement techniques, a tool used to demonstrate progression from one position to the next. Individuals can visually see the responsibilities and opportunities of each position and steps required for advancement (see to Appendix A).



Image 2: Lifeguarding Staff Flow Chart

The promotion of lifeguard opportunities starts when an individual experiences a pool for their first time. The Town will utilize its local assets and relationships to promote lifeguard opportunities by engaging youth from within the school district. Where possible, the Liaison will seek an audience of youth in grades 8-12 to promote the advantages of being employed by the Town to work at the Pool.

Wages and Benefits

Each employee contributes directly to the Town's success. Fair and competitive compensation is required to motivate, retain, and attract staff. Prior to 2022, wages included a subsidy to help offset the costs of lifeguard certifications. Inflated wages did not accurately compensate staff for their training as differences in hours worked meant some staff were "compensated more" than others. This does not align with the Town's mandate of being a fair and equal employer.

A fee-for-service model was adopted in 2022, which means individuals were compensated for the service they provide. As an overall benefit to the staff member and the Town, inhouse training was provided thereby ensuring staff directly applied the skills they learned within the facility they operate.

To support inhouse training and personal growth, a \$1.00 per hour increase will be given to employees holding a National Lifeguard Instructor (NLI) or Lifesaving Instructor Trainer (LSIT) certification.

A returning bonus of \$0.25 per hour will be issued to all employees for consecutive seasons. The returning bonus compounds and is granted on top of the base salary and other benefits. Pride is developed when a person takes ownership in what they do. The Town sets a professional standard and provides staff members with an annual allowance to purchase "Bassano Outdoor Pool" branded clothing. Staff are required to wear branded clothing while on active duty; branded clothing may be worn when off duty to promote pride and comradery.

Youth Development and Succession Planning Outcomes

In summary, the Town believes in the value of youth development and succession planning. To reduce or eliminate challenges experienced in previous years, the Town will actively work to become a superior employer that provides skills to develop its staff (personally and professionally), to opportunities for advancement within an encouraging, fun, and safe environment.

Action Plan

1. Restructure lifeguard positions - *Complete*
2. Organize and facilitate formal in-house training - *Ongoing*
3. Mandate Lifesaving Instructor certification for the pool management and Level 2 lifeguards - *Amended*
4. Enhance and increase the frequency of in-service sessions- *Ongoing*
5. Formalize a staff mentorship program – *Implement in 2024*
6. Provide water testing and basic mechanical training for lifeguards - *Complete*
7. Present employment and youth development opportunities within the school division - *Complete*
8. Prepare a competitive wage schedule and benefits plan - *Complete*

Operating Hours

Operating on a shorter season, outdoor pools must maximize their daily operational time and programming. The Bassano Outdoor Pool operates for 3 months, June-August. Outdoor swimming pools offer a unique experience that can be extremely attractive to people looking to engage in open-air recreation.

Challenges

On average, the Pool is open from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. on weekends, weather permitting. There are fixed costs regardless of the facility's open status. Adequate time must be provided for proper water treatment and testing.

Some programs are underutilized and there are timeslots within the schedule that could be programmed or rented out to offset fixed expenses.

Each type of user has a different purpose and requires access to the Pool at varied times. This poses a challenge related to low usership.

As standards and water safety continues to increase, programs that were operated >15 years ago are no longer offered. Some frustrations have been expressed from patrons.

Finally, staff shortages impact operating hours as there is a minimum requirement for the number of lifeguards on deck. At all times, there must be a minimum of two Level 1 and one Level 2 lifeguards.

Solutions

Seasonal program schedules, departmental collaboration, partnerships, and inhouse training will improve facility offerings and ensure staff receive their hours during the season.

Increasing Shift Length

By extending lifeguard staff hours per shift and creating flexible timeslots to accommodate programs or facility rentals, it is possible to increase operating hours pending there is increased usership and revenue generated to offset costs.

Position	2019 Shift Length	Predicted shift length with increased operating hours.	Hours per week	Minimum # of staff required to operate for the season.
Pool Manager	8	8	40	1
Lifeguard Level 2	5-6	7-8	30-40	4
Lifeguard Level 1	5-6	7-8	25-35	5
Apprentice	5-6	5-6	15-25	5

Table 3: Lifeguarding Staff Shift Length

Flexible or dual-purpose timeslots will encourage facility rentals and community events such as

- Triathlons
- swim club training
- swim club events
- and private rentals

A *sample* program schedule has been created to help visualize the maximization of the facility.

Time	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.	Closed	Lane/Adult Swim	Cleaning	Lane/Adult Swim	Cleaning	Cleaning	Closed
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Closed	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Closed
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.	Closed Lane/Adult Swim	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Closed Parent and Tot Swim
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Closed Parent and Tot Swim	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Closed Lane/Adult Swim
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	Closed Program Rental	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Lessons	Closed Program Rental
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Closed Program Rental	Lessons Cleaning	Lessons Cleaning	Lessons Cleaning	Lessons Cleaning	Lessons Cleaning	Closed Program Rental
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim	Public Swim
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Public Swim Program Rental	Public Swim Adult Swim Lessons	Public Swim Program Rental	Public Swim Program Rental	Public Swim Program Rental	Public Swim
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Public Swim	Aquafit	Lane/Adult Swim	Aquafit	Lane/Adult Swim	Program Rental	Public Swim
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Closed	Program Rental	Program Rental	Program Rental	Program Rental	Program Rental	Closed

Table 4: Sample One Week Pool Schedule

Pool management will endeavor to create a season long schedule so patrons and their families can plan summer activities in advance. When rental slots are not filled and there are staff available, pool staff will announce additional public swimming times via social media, the website, and in-person.

Community Instructors

Secondary school students, representing approximately 75% of lifeguarding staff, are still in school during June and are only able to run programs during the week once they are finished classes. The remaining staff typically do not have the capacity or hours during the week to cover additional programs.

To overcome this challenge, adult members of our community can be trained to instruct programs between 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m., Monday - Friday. Over time, community instructors can be trained to deliver lifeguarding and advanced courses at our facility. A community instructor plan is provided below.

	2022-2023 (Year 1)	2023-2024 (Year 2)	2024-2025 (Year 3)
Community Instructors (max. of 3)	Obtain the following certifications before June <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bronze Medallion ▪ Bronze Cross ▪ Standard First Aid ▪ Lifesaving Instructor 	Obtain the following certifications before June, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Lifeguard - Pool. ▪ Lifesaving Instructor (can deliver Bronze Medallion and Cross courses) 	Obtain the following certifications before June <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lifesaving Instructor Trainer ▪ National Lifeguard Instructor
Lifeguarding Staff Requirements	Lifeguarding staff will guard swimming lessons as community instructors are not National Lifeguard Certified. Lifeguards will monitor lessons and provide support where required.	Lifeguarding staff will only be required if pool capacity exceeds 75 persons. The pool manager will always be present.	Lifeguarding staff will only be required if pool capacity exceeds 75 persons. The pool manager will always be present.
Programing Potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community instructors will teach school lessons with a maximum pool capacity of 40 swimmers. ▪ Limited capacity facility rentals between 9:00a.m.-3:00p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School lessons with a maximum pool capacity of 40 swimmers ▪ Larger facility rentals can be accommodated between 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School lessons with a maximum pool capacity of 40 swimmers ▪ Larger facility rentals can be accommodated between 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Table 5: Community Instructor Training Plan

Advanced courses will take place in late May or early June as a part of the in-house training plan. To avoid duplicate services, the Pool will schedule advanced courses around courses offered by the City of Brooks and other surrounding facilities where possible. Additional participants can be trained alongside hired guards, offsetting the cost of community instructors and course materials.

Operating Hour Outcomes

In summary, the Town will focus on facility maximization based on usership and budget capacity. Seasonal program schedules will enable users to plan their attendance and support for the facility. This will open up opportunities to bring in new and improved programs aimed at cost recovery.

Action Plan

1. Create a seasonal schedule.- *Complete*
2. Create flexible timeslots within the Pool schedule to encourage private rentals and events.- *Complete*
3. Engage community groups, swimming clubs, and recreation organizations and promote season long rentals or reoccurring rentals. – *Ongoing*
4. Monitor patron satisfaction and attendance for future program review. - *Ongoing*
5. Engage local schools to increase usage in June. Program opportunities include school lessons and fun day rentals. - *Ongoing*
6. Recruit and train community instructors to offer programs in June. - *Ongoing*

Programming

Four main programs are offered at the Pool annually. Swimming lessons, aquafit, lane swim/adult leisure, and public swimming. There is an opportunity to adapt these existing programs to focus on cost recovery and the needs of our ever-changing community.

Swimming Lessons

The Pool has offered swimming lessons for many years. Trained instructors deliver programs focused on age-appropriate fitness, swimming, and water safety skills giving students lifelong skills to safely enjoy aquatic activities. Bassano has created a competitive advantage by providing:

- lower student to instructor ratios,
- one and two-week programs,
- and engaged and knowledgeable instructors.

Challenges

Red Cross announced on January 11, 2022, that it has made the decision to wind down its involvement in all swim and lifeguard programming in order to direct more attention to surging humanitarian demands in other areas – such as disaster and pandemic response, opioid harm reduction, and caregiving for seniors. The Pool will no longer be able to offer swimming lessons from this provider.

Pool management transitioned instructors and participants to a new swimming lessons program in 2022.

Over the past couple of years, a lack of communication between instructors and parents/guardians has led to frustrations regarding consistent teaching methods, the importance of games and activities, and students' failure to complete lesson requirements. With the implementation of a new swimming lesson program, staff properly educated parents/guardians on the new swimming lesson structure and performance criteria while ensuring staff maintain a high quality of swim instruction. This encouraged parents/guardians to continue accessing our services.

Solution

The transition to a new swimming lesson program provides Pool staff with an opportunity to refresh their knowledge, learn new instruction techniques, and effectively communicate swimming lesson requirements and teaching methods to parents/guardians.

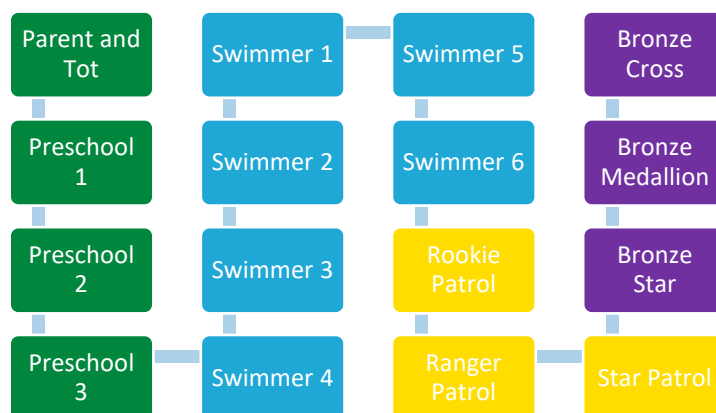
Transition to Lifesaving Society Programming

Red Cross encouraged water safety delivery partners to transition to the swimming and lifeguard training programs of the Lifesaving Society. The Lifesaving Society has been a leader and partner in delivering water safety education throughout Canada for over 100 years. Our facility has already recognized the quality of programs and training provided by the Lifesaving Society as the Town requires its pool staff to

complete Bronze Medallion, Bronze Cross, and National Lifeguard – Pool programs before working at the facility.

The Red Cross and Lifesaving Society had established a transition process for swimming instructors and facilities operating Red Cross programs. This must be completed before December 31, 2022. The Lifesaving Society recognizes the competencies earned in Red Cross Certifications and is offering a limited-time opportunity to attain Life Saving Society certifications through an online course. The Liaison will assist staff and provide guidance to the Pool Manager to facilitate the transition.

Lifesaving Society *Swim for Life* swimming lesson programs are comprised of fitness, swimming, and water safety skills very similar to the Red Cross. Unlike the Red Cross, Lifesaving Society programs focus more on drowning prevention and water safety which creates a natural transition for children to become lifeguards. This is a great opportunity for succession planning at the facility.



Swim for Life lessons typically run longer compared to Red Cross lessons due to a larger number of skills taught in each level. Although *Swim for Life* programs are intended to be flexible, it may not be practical to continue with the 1 hour or 30-minute lesson slots used in previous years. Pool management staff will tailor *Swim for Life* programs to meet the needs of the facility while providing participants with the best chance at success.

Education and Communication

Moving away from Red Cross swimming lesson programs is a big change. While *Swim for Life* programs teach many of the same skills, they are taught at a different pace and skill standard. *Swim for Life* programming focuses more on drowning prevention and safety rather than refining swimming strokes and swimmer's form. Management and lifeguarding staff will focus on educating parents/guardians on the new program requirement and teaching philosophy to ensure a smooth transition to new program.

The chart below shows a high-level comparison for Red Cross and Lifesaving Society programs.

	Red Cross Program	Lifesaving Society Equivalent
Parented	*Incomplete Parented	Parent and Tot 2-3
	Complete Parented	Parent and Tot 2-3
Getting Wet	Incomplete Getting Wet	Preschool 1
	Complete Getting Wet	Preschool 1
Sea Otter	Incomplete Sea Otter	Preschool 1
	Complete Sea Otter	Preschool 2
Salamander	Incomplete Salamander	Preschool 1
	Complete Salamander	Preschool 2
Swim Kids 1	Incomplete Swim Kids 1	Swimmer 1
	Complete Swim Kids 1	Swimmer 2
Swim Kids 2	Incomplete Swim Kids 2	Swimmer 2
	Complete Swim Kids 2	Swimmer 2
Swim Kids 3	Incomplete Swim Kids 3	Swimmer 2
	Complete Swim Kids 3	Swimmer 3
Swim Kids 4	Incomplete Swim Kids 4	Swimmer 3
	Complete Swim Kids 4	Swimmer 3
Swim Kids 5	Incomplete Swim Kids 5	Swimmer 3
	Complete Swim Kids 5	Swimmer 4
Swim Kids 6	Incomplete Swim Kids 6	Swimmer 4
	Complete Swim Kids 6	Swimmer 5
Swim Kids 7	Incomplete Swim Kids 7	Swimmer 5
	Complete Swim Kids 7	Swimmer 6
Swim Kids 8	Incomplete Swim Kids 8	Swimmer 6
	Complete Swim Kids 8	Rookie Patrol
Swim Kids 9	Incomplete Swim Kids 9	Rookie Patrol
	Complete Swim Kids 9	Rookie Patrol
Swim Kids 10	Incomplete Swim Kids 10	Ranger or Star Patrol
	Complete Swim Kids 10	Bronze Star

Table 6: Red Cross and Swim for Life Level Equivalents

* Incomplete means participants did not meet the minimum requirements for that level. Complete means the participant met or exceeded the minimum requirements for that level.

Private lessons for participants needing extra assistance, adult swimming lessons, and fitness instruction will still be available under Lifesaving Society programming.

To mitigate concerns related to the transition and previous frustrations surrounding swimming lesson delivery standards and content, a communications plan was developed. The communications plan highlighted the following areas.

- How to transition your child from a Red Cross to a Swim for Life Level (e.g. Completing Red Cross Level 2 does not mean your child will enter Swim for Life Level 3).
- The philosophy and teaching standards set out by the Lifesaving Society.
- New lesson format and skill requirements. (e.g. Larger number of skills in each level means swimmers may need to repeat the same level more than once).
- Teaching techniques used to engage children during their lesson. (e.g. Games provide a fun way for students to practice submersion, weight transfer, breathing, and opening their eyes underwater).
- Develop video and print material to educate parents/guardians.

This transition will take time and it is expected that improvements to the program delivery will occur over the next few seasons. Pool staff will continue to practice their new teaching techniques during dedicated instructor practices.

In June, lessons are offered to schools within the Newell region as a part of their physical education programming. Although the Bassano Outdoor Pool has a history of hosting multiple schools for swimming lessons, the Bassano School has been the only one to utilize this service within the past 3 years. In 2024, a school-specific swimming lesson and rental rate was established to attract other schools, maximizing the use of the facility during the month of June.

Aquafit

The aquafit program consists of low impact, aerobic and cardio exercises done in both shallow and deep water. Classes are typically held in the evening to accommodate adult swimmers who wish to improve or maintain their fitness level.

Challenges

Currently, Aquafit lesson plans are designed by lifeguards and passed down from year to year. Attendance has remained at approximately 9 patrons per class. No formal training has been provided to lifeguards to support the enhancement of this program.

Solutions

With the proper support, Pool staff can enhance this existing program to better meet the need of existing and potential patrons through the consult, educate, and enhance platform.

Consult, Educate, and Enhance

Consultation, education, and enhancement are the 3-steps to creating a sustainable aquafit program. Over the next 3-years, staff will collect feedback, obtain fitness instructor training, and use that information to create fitness plans.

2022-2023	2023-2024	2024
Consult	Educate	Enhance
Lifeguarding staff will inventory all aquafit resources and create seasonal programs that cater to both adults and seniors. Programs will be broken down into series. A survey will be sent to all aquafit users asking for their feedback on the type of exercises they enjoy, what they would like to see less of, and new programs/techniques they would be interested in.	Using the information gathered, lifeguarding staff will be trained in 2023 in proper water fitness techniques and create a program using these new skills.	Trained staff will continue to review and improve lifeguard instructed programming. Additional fitness workshops can be offered during the timeslot including Aqua Zumba, swim stroke training, and more health and wellness training.

Table 7: 3 Year Plan to Enhance the Aquafit Program

Effective 2022, Aquafit and other instructor lead programs will not be included in general admission. This is done to create flexibility (special programs can be improved or retired without having to review admission fees) and to work toward cost recovery.

Lane Swim and Adult Fitness

Lane swim and adult fitness is a first come first serve program dedicated to improving adult and senior health and wellness. Participants are self-guided and given the freedom to exercise or complete rehabilitation activities at their leisure.

Challenges

Lane swim and adult fitness is an under-utilized program with on average one (1) patron in attendance each session.

Solution

By attracting new patrons and encouraging existing patrons to come more frequently, we can begin to move towards cost recovery.

Attract New Patrons

To maximize the use of the facility during these timeslots, the following action will be taken.

Advertisement	Shared Space
Advertisements will highlight that all lifeguards are certified swimming instructors and can provide instruction to improve swimming strokes and other swimming skills.	Additional fitness workshops can be offered during the lane swim and adult fitness timeslot to maximize the use of the facility. Aqua Zumba, swim stroke instruction, and specialty adult fitness programming can be introduced

Table 8: Lane Swim and Adult Fitness Patron Attraction Actions

Public Swimming

Unstructured play happens when children follow their instincts, ideas, and interests and explore their boundaries within natural and built environments. Public swimming programs allow children and their families to play and explore water safely as they see fit.

Challenge

In 2021 and 2022, 5-6 hours of public swimming was offered each day where patrons could remain at the facility for the duration of the program under a single admission fee. This is an actively used program and is an affordable form of recreation for the community.

Solution

Total cost recovery within public swimming programs is extremely challenging but by increasing attendance, staff can reduce the deficit experienced by the facility. The Town shall determine what percentage of drop-in programs lead to cost recovery, where applicable.

Balancing Cost Recovery with Facility Access

Staff-facilitated pool events are a great way to keep the facility competitive and to attract new patrons. A minimum of 2 public swimming fun days/events will be added each month to the public swimming schedule. These events will be included in general admission and are intended to be engaging and to improve the overall experience of patrons.

Dual-purpose timeslots for special programs or facility rentals can increase revenue. Other programs such as swimming lessons and Aquafit can be used to offset expenses from Public Swimming.

Community Programming

Community programs centered around popular recreation activities provide educational opportunities intended to improve the quality of life and safety in a fun engaging way.

Challenge

Water-related deaths continue to be a problem within the province. Even if life-threatening incidents do not occur at our facility, the impact on our communities is something that both the Town and County should prioritize. With proximity to the Bassano Dam, Lake Newell, irrigation canals, and other reservoirs, water safety is crucial to the success and survival of our residents.

Solution

The Pool is a very popular facility during the summer months, attracting residents and tourists from across Alberta. The Town has an opportunity to use this facility to educate patrons on water safety and drowning prevention which aims to decrease incident both within and outside the facility.

Bassano Water Safety Series

Municipalities have a responsibility to educate residents on safety within and around their communities.

The Bassano Water Safety Series is a three-year series focused on providing water and watercraft safety.

- 2023- Lifesaving Society Swim to Survive Program
 - This program focuses on developing the minimum skills needed to survive an unexpected fall into deep water. All ages can access this program. Invitations will go to neighboring communities and organizations.
- 2022 and 2023 - RCMP and Regional Fire Aquatic Patrol
 - The RCMP and the City of Brook/County of Newell Fire Services departments have patrol boats used in aquatic rescues, search and rescue, and patrols. Safe Communities will bring the patrol boats to the pool and discuss water safety with a focus on safe swimming in canals, local reservoirs, and the dangers of the Bassano Dam. This is targeting students ages 8-15. Invitations will go to the Bassano School, and residents.
 - This program can be put on at no cost.
- 2024 - Kayak and Canoe 101
 - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and facility shutdowns, there has been an increase in kayaking and canoeing in local reservoirs. Without the proper training, swimming ability, or education, recreational equipment can become a hazard. Kayaks and canoes will be rented and brought to the Bassano Pool

Funding for programs may be accessed through the ChooseWell- Health Community Grant, Safe Communities, or donors/sponsors.

Programming Outcomes

In summary, the Town provides accessible programming for all ages and fitness levels. To maximize attendance and to cater to the ever-changing needs of patrons, the Town will dedicate time to improving existing programs and introducing new programs aimed at improving quality of life and safety for all.

Action Plan

Swimming Lessons

1. Develop a certification and training transition plan for returning staff members. – *Complete*
2. Provide additional training to the Pool Manager to ensure they can support lifeguarding staff during the transition. – *Complete*
3. Restructure lessons to meet the needs of the facility ensuring participants have the best chance to succeed. – *Complete*
4. Create information sheets and send to parents/guardians preparing them for the transition. – *Complete*
5. Develop a public educational material about swimming lesson. Have in print and online. – *Complete*

Aquafit

1. Review current lesson plans and resources. – *Complete*
2. Consult existing membership to gather feedback. – *Ongoing*
3. Educate Pool staff on new techniques and fitness programs. – *Complete*
4. Enhance the existing program using new techniques and activities. – *For implementation in 2025.*

Public Swimming

1. Gather attendance and demographic information. - *Ongoing*
2. Plan and implement fun days to attract patrons. – *Ongoing*
3. Create dual purpose timeslots to increase the number of users accessing the facility. – *Complete*

Lane Swimming and Adult Fitness

1. Advertise the program. – *Complete.*
2. Combine the lane swim and adult fitness program with other activities such as Aqua Zumba, swim stroke instruction, and specialty adult fitness workshops. – *Administration shall investigate potential outside fitness contractor opportunities in 2024.*

Community Programming

1. Engage community organizations with ties to water and community safety. – *Complete.*
2. Develop a program and delivery plan. – *Complete.*
3. Apply for grant funding where applicable. – *Administration shall apply for funding to support the continuation of community programming in 2024.*

Concession

Currently, the facility concession is managed and operated by pool staff. Products include water, assorted beverages, prepackaged prepared snacks, and ice cream treats. The concession operates at a break-even point.

Challenge

The main role of lifeguarding staff is to monitor the health and safety of patrons and to react quickly in emergency situations. Prepackaged and prepared foods are the only products that can be served because staff cannot leave cooking food unattended to react to an emergency. The grill and cooking appliances remain unused throughout the summer season.

The concession is stocked by the Pool Manager who is responsible for monitoring inventory and sales as a part of their weekly duties. This takes them away from other pressing duties.

Solution

The kitchen is a unrealized opportunity to generate a new source of revenue and serve patrons better. Providing meals and healthier options may encourage families to stay at the facility during mealtimes.

Contracting Out the Concession

By contracting out concession services, the facility can offer a wide variety of hot and cold products to patrons. This could be marketed as a facility asset. Moving this responsibility from the Pool Manager would allow for more time to focus on management tasks and pool programming.

Concession Outcomes

In summary, the Pool concession is operating at a break-even point and is not being used as a tool to attract patrons to the facility. The Pool has an opportunity to rent out the kitchen to an independent contractor allowing lifeguarding staff to focus on facility operations and patron safety.

Action Plan

1. Town administration will send out a request for tender for concession services to determine if there is an interest to operate the concession – *Ongoing*.

Scheduling and Registration Software

Currently, all registration, facility bookings, and statistics tracking is done by hand, on paper. The Pool Manager spends on average 4-5 hours each week reviewing program registration, pool rentals, and responding to inquiries about rental availability. Due to human error and speed of response, lesson spots get double booked, becoming overloaded, and reduces the quality of instruction, and pool rental opportunities are lost. Manual statistic tracking creates inaccuracies. This makes it difficult to budget, review fees, or plan programs aimed at cost recovery.

In addition, prior to the start of the season, people try to register for programs at the Town Office. Both systems are independent and not integrated. This creates room for error. Considerable time is drawn away for administrative duties to deal with pre and post-pool programs.

Challenge

Recreation trends indicate that online registration/booking is preferred as patrons can review and register for programs, plan family outings, and view programs at their convenience. By provide an opportunity for patrons to register online, we can reduce administrative responsibilities and can allocate more time to facilitating and enhancing programs. Those who are unable to access the online system can complete registration in-person without administrative delays.

Solution

Online registration and booking software can be used to streamline business processes, reduce the number of calls to recreation and leisure centers, and provide more accurate statistics needed for program analysis. Senior Pool staff can spend more time mentoring junior staff, tending to public relations issues, patron engagement, planning, and implementing policies and programs.

Online Booking System

Town administration will investigate online booking systems that meet the need of our facility and programs.

Scheduling and Registration Software Outcomes

In summary, the Town has identified missed opportunities and administrative inefficiencies related to facility bookings, registration, and statistics tracking. Coinciding with current recreation trends, the Town will consider implementing online schedule and booking software.

Action Plan

1. To support regional recreation, increase facility visibility, and streamline administrative processes, the Bassano Outdoor Pool will be participating in the County of Newell's recCONNECT online facility booking and program registration software set to launch in March 2024.

Facility Accessibility

The Bassano Outdoor Pool can cater to differently able people who wish to access the facility.

Accessibility features include:

- automatic doors with buttons
- beach/ramp entry into the pool
- individual/family changerooms
- washroom grab bars
- an aquatic wheelchair that can be taken in the change rooms, on the pool deck, and in the water.

Challenges

These accessibility features help make the pool more attractive to patrons and programs serving a segment of the population commonly overlooked at physical recreation centers. The Pool has not advertised its accessibility offerings.

Solution

Communication of facility accessibility options can increase users and improve the image of the Pool. The Town is committed to creating partnerships that can help increase access to facilities and programs funded by taxation.

Partner with Community Groups

Organizations within our communities can support facility operations and increase accessibility for individuals who are physically or financially unable to participate in regular pool programming. Accessible programming partnerships and soliciting sponsorship will help our facility cater to those with differing abilities.

- a. Partnership with Alberta Health Services and the Playfair Lodge will enable seniors to access the facility with the support of trained medical staff.
 - i. E.g., Seniors Week Event – Senior’s Swim
 - ii. E.g. AHS occupational therapy rehabilitation programs ran by AHS staff.
- b. Support low-income families and youth by subsidizing drop-in fees. Grants and business sponsorship may help to offset some of the loss in revenue.
 - i. Tuesday Toonie Swims – Monthly.
- c. Collaborate with the daycares to encourage swim instruction for children whose parents/guardians may not be able to bring them to facility themselves.

Facility Accessibility Outcomes

In summary, community partners will enable our facility to become more accessible to more of a diverse population. Accessible programs will be advertised to attract differently-abled users.

Action Plan

1. Connect with Alberta Health Services and the Playfair Lodge in order to develop programs or book rental space. – *Administration shall contact organizations to determine interest annually - Ongoing.*
2. Research and apply for grant programs to support subsidized programs – *Implement in 2024.*
3. Reach out to local business interested in subsidizing admission fees for low income families. – *Implement in annually.*
4. Advertise new programs. – *Ongoing.*

Facility Maintenance

It takes on average 4 weeks to set up the pool for operations each season. The Public Works Department completes this work between April and May. Tasks include but are not limited to:

- Cleaning the pool and the filters,
- Filling and heating the pool,
- Setting the chlorination,
- Ordering supplies and inventory (chemicals),
- Circulating and balancing pumps, and
- Obtaining approval from the Public Health Inspector to operate.

Once the facility is open, ongoing maintenance is required to keep the facility compliant with health and safety standards and to keep patrons comfortable. The Facility Operator is responsible for completing daily tasks and tending to emergency mechanical issues. Tasks include but are not limited to:

- Water testing
- Chemical added and water balancing
- Filter backwashing (cleaning)
- Boiler and pump maintenance

The Facility Operator must be certified in Pool Operators Level 1 and 2. This will provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to operate the facility, and tend to chemical and mechanical issues. This training is provided by the Town. In conjunction with lifeguarding staff, the facility operator ensures the facility adheres to health and safety standards and remains operational.

The facility uses a chlorine sanitization system. Chlorine is added directly to the water and breaks down into various chemicals that react with organic materials like sweat, skin oil, saliva, and urine. These two materials together create chloramines. With the help of filters, chloramines are removed, and additional chemicals are used to keep pool water pH, calcium, and alkalinity balanced. Other additives are used to stabilize chlorine levels and keep organisms such as algae from growing.

Challenges

Chlorine systems require daily to weekly adjustments depending on bather load (number of people in the water), temperature, and mechanical issues. Due to its size, the hot tub requires constant monitoring and is a challenge to keep balanced. The Facility Operator must monitor the water closely to ensure it is safe for patrons to enter.

Solutions

To increase the longevity and reduce stress on the Pool's sanitation system, responsible personnel shall ensure trained staff complete regular maintenance and enforce facility rules.

Water Testing by Lifeguards

Water tests are completed every 3 hours and are used to guide the Facility Operator when adding the additional chemical. To assist the Facility Operator, lifeguarding staff will be trained to take water tests at the beginning of the season. Lifeguards will monitor the water balance for the pool and hot tub and notify the Facility Operator of any changes.

Delayed Start to Programming

A balance must be struck between operating hours and maintenance. On average, a minimum of 1 hour is needed for water balancing each morning, and 3 hours are needed for drastic changes to water balance. Programming will not begin until 7:00 a.m. to ensure adequate time for maintenance. If the water balance is off, program participants can be notified of cancelation before the program begins.

Patron Showering Enforcement

Introducing increased levels of organic materials such as like sweat, skin oil, saliva, and urine into the water puts greater stress on our facility's chlorination system. Having patrons shower before they enter the pool will reduce the number of impurities entering the water. Pool staff shall enforce this rule to ensure we are not introducing unnecessary contaminants into the water. This will be reinforced through signage.

The Town may consider installing an outdoor shower to help with enforcement and to maintain a happy and healthy pool.

Facility Maintenance Outcomes

In summary, the Town is responsible for the upkeep and monitoring of the facility. To reduce the stress on our sanitation system and Facility Operator changes to roles and responsibilities, later operating hours, and stricter rule enforcement will be implemented.

Action Plan

1. Train lifeguard staff to take water tests. Shift this responsibility to lifeguarding staff for the season.- *Complete*
2. Do not schedule programming before 7:00 a.m. - *Complete*
3. Enforce the pre-showering rule at the facility for all patrons and staff entering the water. - *Complete*

Capital Upgrades

The current facility is 14-years old and requires preventative maintenance and upgrades to meet pool standards. Pool filter upgrades were completed in 2020 and will not be required to be replaced for another 8-10 years. The pool liner was replaced in 2023. The pool liner is a rubberized, water-resistant material that lies on top of the concrete structure. This upgrade increases the longevity of our facility for an additional 12-15 years pending proper maintenance and care.

The Pool's automated water quality control devices used to monitor the chemicalization of the water, may be replaced in 2025. The Pool's boiler may be replaced in 2024 as it is reaching the end of its life cycle.

Communication, Feedback, and Advertising

By increasing communication, activating feedback loops, and advertising facility access, programs, and employment opportunities, we can engage existing patrons and attract new ones.

Challenges

The average citizen may not understand the complexities and opportunities that come with operating an outdoor pool. The Town has not engaged in community education tactics to showcase the pool.

Solution

To avoid misinformation, the Town has an opportunity to share day-to-day tasks required to keep our facility operating and reasons for operational interruptions. Outgoing communication ensures patrons understand the limitations and advantages of the facility even before they enter its doors. Feedback helps the organization stay competitive and meet the needs of our patrons. Community engagement keeps the municipality accountable to ratepayers.

Advertising facility accessibility, facility programming, and pool employment opportunities are crucial to the continued viability of our facility. Increased tourism not only increases revenue within our facility, but patrons may access other services and businesses while in Town.

Community Surveys

There is a wealth of knowledge in our community that can be used to enhance new and existing programs. Surveys will be instituted to ensure that programs meet the needs of the community. Collected feedback will be used to continually improve the policies and services.

Multimedia Education and Advertising

Along with written content and posters, staff will create informative videos aimed at education. Video content may include:

- Startup and shut down procedures
- Water balancing and chlorination
- Operational disruptions (chemical imbalance, biohazards in the pool, pump failures)
- Facility rules and why they exist.

Social media, tourism websites, and municipal websites, will be used to share information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ public schedules ▪ program overviews and improvements ▪ events/special day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Get to know your lifeguard” bulletins ▪ lifeguarding employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ facility accessibility (aquatic wheelchair and barrier-free entry)
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Tourism websites within the region such as Travel Alberta and Brooks Region Tourism will be updated with current programs and fees annually. Advertisement will be posted in well used recreation areas such as the Crawling Valley Campground, where possible.

Communication, Feedback, and Advertising Outcomes

In summary, the Town is not actively promoting or advertising the Pool outside local channels. Specific program advertising could encourage an increase in users and corresponding revenue. To avoid confusion or frustration, Pool staff can create informative video and media content to help patrons understand the operations, limitations, and advantages of the facility.

Action Plan

1. Develop and implement a survey created to identify programming need in the community. Amend policies and services as required. – *Implement in 2024.*
2. Create videos and posters aimed at educating the public on pool operations and programs - *Ongoing*

Pandemic Planning and Risk Management

Aquatic facilities have faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic due to facility shutdowns, capacity, and programming limitations. To prepare for the ever-changing landscape of recreation, four main areas must be addressed.

Staff retention and reallocation	Adapting programming and facility operating hours.
To avoid loss of staff during facility shutdown, Town administration will ensure that alternative projects are prepared for implementation by student staff. In 2021, the Blade Sign project was completed by a summer student originally hired to work as a lifeguard. Reallocating student staff sends a positive message to both the employees and the community showing that we value their service and dedication to our facility.	Programming needs to be flexible enough to handle lower capacity limits, physical distancing, patron monitoring, etc. In 2022, all lifeguarding staff were be trained in water safety instruction enabling the facility to add more structured programs if needed to align with COVID-19 restrictions. Staff who are not needed due to lower capacity can be moved to previously unused timeslots such as Saturday and Sunday mornings.
Increased cleaning and sanitization.	Balancing lifeguarding and monitoring compliance with public health orders.
Increased cleaning and sanitization. In 2021, additional cleaning procedures were implemented to ensure the health and safety of staff and patrons. This new standard will be maintained in future years because the cleanliness of Town facilities directly impacts how residents perceive the quality of our services. Town administration will ensure that facilities are equipped with effective cleaning supplies for the duration of the season.	Balancing lifeguarding and monitoring compliance with public health orders. Level 1 and level 2 lifeguards are responsible for water safety-related monitoring and enforcement. Pool apprentices will act as COVID-19 monitors to ensure lifeguards are not overwhelmed and unable to focus on first aid and water safety-related incidents. Pool apprentices will receive valuable experience from being on deck engaging with the public.

Although we cannot plan or predict the direction or duration of the pandemic, creating opportunities to pivot our operations will ensure we can sustain our facility and workforce into the future.

Conclusion

The operations plan provides a framework for the Town to maximize the use of the facility and to improve the user experience. It is our goal to decrease operating expenses where possible, to contribute to the long-term viability of the facility and our community. This can be achieved by supporting youth development, engaging the public, the maximization the facility usage during daylight hours, furthering partnerships, and working together. Implementation of this plan will take time. It is a working document and is developed with best practices to meet our overall needs.

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- This document was amended on November 14, 2022, February 13, 2023, and February 5, 2024.