



# Communications Strategy for New Recreation Infrastructure in Haines Junction

October 19, 2023

Version 1 - DRAFT

## Summary

The Shakwak Valley Community Pool has not been used since it closed in August 2018. The building needs to be removed, the site rehabilitated and a new pool built. The pool played an important role in the community providing a place to learn critical safety skills, play,, be healthy and connect with the community. For the past several decades, there has been consistent advocacy from community members in the Haines Junction catchment to expand the recreation infrastructure in Haines Junction, while being mindful of operating costs and the impact to the Village of Haines Junction's budget.

Building a new recreation infrastructure project is anticipated to take at minimum 4 to 5 years. A clear communications strategy that is consistent, open and transparent will support building community cohesion over the lifespan of this project.

The *Communications Strategy for New Recreation Infrastructure in Haines Junction* will evolve over the duration of the project. As decisions are made, this strategy will be updated to reflect the ongoing history of this project to support consistent messaging.

## Background

### Site, Use and Meaning in the Community

The Shakwak Valley Community Pool is attached to the old Curling Rink and Community Hall. The rink and hall were reported to have been constructed in 1967 with the swimming pool added in 1970.

2018 was the last season the pool operated. That season, the number of uses was 740 in June, 1005 and 318 up until August 14. Since then there has been clear communication from the community in support of either rehabilitating the old facility or working towards a new recreation center.

Built by the community, the pool, curling rink and hall all played an important role in the health, wellbeing and





social life of the community. Since the closure of the curling rink, the curling program has been relocated to the Arena, operating every second Sunday, with one or two bonspiels hosted annually with curlers from around the territory. Events previously held in the old community hall have been moved to the St Elias Convention Center or Da Ku Cultural Center. In 2021, the Village of Haines Junction started to partially fund a youth summer camp to help offset the loss of recreation opportunities provided by the pool and part of the summer camp proposal is to continue to explore swimming lessons at Pine Lake.

## **Status of the Old Pool**

Motion #67-19 closed the Shakwak Valley Community Pool on March 27, 2019, due to concerns about the structural integrity of the building based on the findings of the Boge & Boge Ltd (2018/19), Associated Engineering (2017) and Stantec (2013) reports.

In January 2023 a report from ISL Engineering provided a detailed assessment of the existing facility and found significant deficiencies in the integrity of the structure. It was determined that renovations were not economically viable.

## **Designing a new pool**

Starting in 2017, a committee of Village staff and a representative from Champagne and Aishihik First Nations began working on the pool project. The Yukon Government provided funding to hire an architect to provide conceptual drawings.

In April 2018, Council received a feasibility study from Mary Ellen Read at North Front Studio on building a new recreation complex that included a curling rink and pool.

A presentation by Kobayashi+Zedda Architects was made to Council on November 27, 2019 at a public meeting that included a feasibility report, floor plans, energy modelling and operating costs. The operating costs of the year-round pool was more than the Village could afford.

In February 2020, Council met with CAFN Council and discussed recreational amenities including a new pool. The governments agreed to explore how they could work collaboratively on the project. Village staff drafted possible ownership and management configurations as well as a timeline for the pool project. Due to the overwhelming impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Village and CAFN resources progress on the project slowed.

On April 28, 2021 Motion #123-21 was passed, directing staff to “continue to work with the Yukon Government and keep Champagne and Aishihik First Nations Government informed of the progress that is being made on the pool project.”

On October 16, 2023, Councils for the Village and CAFN met to discuss shared priorities which included recreation infrastructure.

## **First funding proposal**

In July of 2021, an application was submitted to Canada’s Green and Inclusive Community Buildings (GICB) program by Village staff with an estimated capital budget of \$28M. Notification that the funding was not approved was received on June 13, 2022 because the “application did not sufficiently demonstrate that your project’s level of readiness and/or project risk and mitigation measures meets the requirements of the program.” The Village was encouraged to resubmit an application for a second



intake of the funding in 2022.

## Recreation Needs Assessment

The 2013 “Village of Haines Junction Recreation in our Community Report” and the January 2015, 10-year “Haines Junction Community Recreation Plan” expressed desire from the community for new and improved recreation facilities.

In April 2023, the Village of Haines Junction started public engagement on a Recreation Needs Assessment. Adoption of the Recreation Needs Assessment will be considered by Council on October 25, 2023.

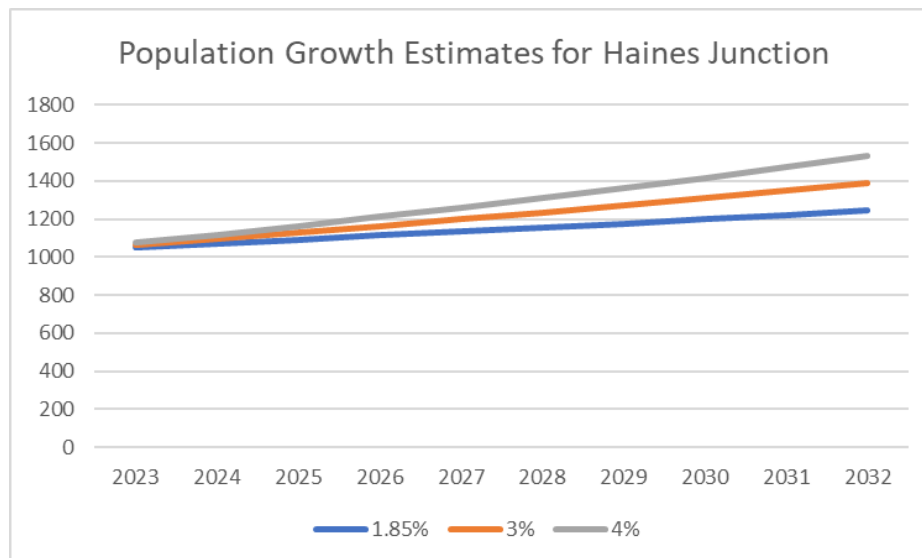
## Considerations

### Current population and growth projections

As of December 2022, there are 1035 residents living in the Haines Junction catchment.

Growth in the community has averaged 1.8% each year over the past 10 years. Future lot development and the recent connection of residential properties to fibre optic internet, along with consistent job vacancies in the community may increase Haines Junction’s growth rate. It is anticipated that the population will grow by 20% to 1,200+ residents, within the next five years.

The Village, in partnership with YG Land Development Branch, is adding 25+ Country Residential lots and 75+ serviced lots in the next 5 years with additional phases of lot development in the design phase. CAFN recently completed approximately 50 lots and will be developing them over the coming years to meet their acute housing needs.

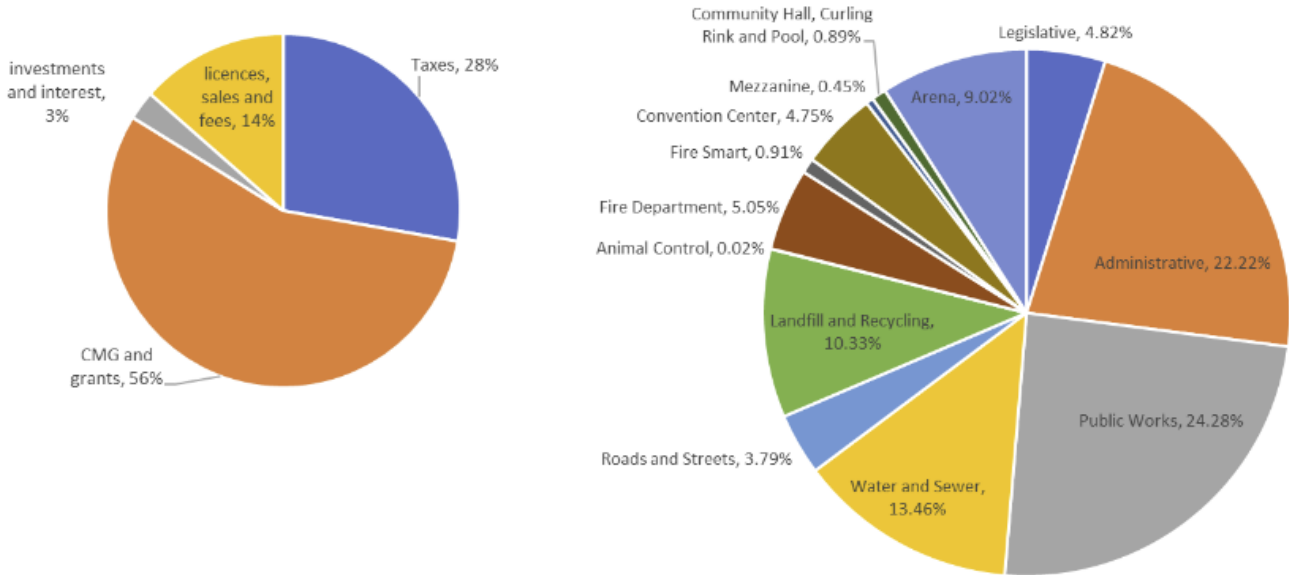


## Financial Outlook

The Village of Haines Junction has maintained a positive and stable financial position for decades.



## 2022 Village of Haines Junction O&M Revenues and Expenditures



### 2022 Village of Haines Junction Revenues and Expenditures

O&M Revenues:	\$3,646,643.28
O&M Expenditures:	<u>\$2,429,720.94</u>
Net O&M Surplus:	\$1,226,922.34*

2022 Capital Project Revenues:	\$ 1,619,638.31
2022 Capital Project Expenses:	<u>\$1,902,344.11</u>
Net 2022 Surplus:	\$ 944,216.54**

\*O&M Surplus is used for capital projects, this is why the O&M surplus is higher than the net.

### O&M, Reserves and Accumulated Surplus

In recent years, the Village has maintained an annual net budget surplus\*\*. In part, this is due to ongoing staffing shortages which reduce both funds spent on wages and the ability to fulfill planned capital and O&M projects.

The Village made two large contributions to the Recreation Facility Reserve in 2018 and 2019 of \$625,000 per year. These additions to the Recreation Facility Reserve were transfers from accumulated unrestricted surplus. The current rec facility reserve balance is \$1.35M.

The Village has been slowly accumulating its unrestricted surplus. As of January 1, 2023 the total in cash and cash equivalents balance was \$7,520,360. While these funds will be useful in leveraging other funding sources towards a recreation infrastructure, surplus funds are not a sustainable resource for ongoing operational expenses.



## Fiscal Restraint and Funding Sources

The COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation, climate change and global instability continue to generate uncertainty in Canada’s economy. The Village of Haines Junction’s 2021 \$28M request to the GICB fund required any new construction to meet the highest energy efficiency standards (net-zero-carbon). Development of any new recreation infrastructure planning should be aligned with the values and criteria of current federal infrastructure funds and, where available, predictive of what funding options might look like over the coming years being mindful that a federal election will occur before November 2025.

## Fiduciary Responsibility and Next Steps

Detailed analysis of available and ongoing municipal funding available for this project needs to be communicated clearly to residents. Prior to committing public funds for recreation, the Village must have a plan in place demonstrating viability, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility.

## Timing it right

Successful funding of large infrastructure builds like a new pool requires diligent planning, community cohesion on the project and strong political advocacy. Political advocacy should be timed with both fiscal and electoral cycles at the territorial and federal level.

## Project Roles and Responsibilities

Person/Position	Role	Responsibilities
Mayor and Council, Village of Haines Junction	Representatives of the citizens of Haines Junction	Responsible for making all major decisions and direction
David Fairbank, Village of Haines Junction	Chief Administrative Officer	Provides direction to all staff and project contractors Provide direction on budget, scope and schedule Main point of contact Allocates internal resources as required
Government of Yukon, Community Services	Infrastructure Development Branch	Planning and funding support
Potential, External Project Management	TBD	(OPTIONAL) Project Management through feasibility, concept, detailed design, tendering, construction mgmt. phases.
Partners and Stakeholders	TBD	TBD



## Project Timeline

Large infrastructure projects take a minimum of 4.5 years from start to completion.

Task	Timeline
<p><b>Needs Assessment:</b> Conduct a recreation needs assessment</p>	April to October 2023
<p><b>Pre-Feasibility:</b> Present the recreation needs assessment to Council and to the community to obtain feedback.</p> <p>Refine the vision and values statements for the project because they will guide key messaging for all communications on the recreation infrastructure project.</p> <p>Engage with and identify potential stakeholders and project partners.</p> <p>Evaluate how much O&amp;M the Village of Haines Junction can afford, with and without grants and stakeholder contributions. This will require the development of multiple models as partnership and funding availability and criteria are determined.</p> <p>Prioritize components to be included in the new recreation infrastructure (ie/ pool, multi-purpose space, weight room,...) at various capital funding and O&amp;M allowances.</p>	3 to 4 months
RFP for feasibility study funded through gas tax and/or Community Services	2 months
<p><b>Feasibility:</b> Conduct feasibility study to provide functional options for review that includes O&amp;M projections, and recommendations for appropriate structural, mechanical, electrical, civil, and communications designs. Perform an energy analysis on the viable options to create energy models based on community values and funding criteria.</p>	2 to 4 months
Present the feasibility report to Council and to the community to obtain feedback. Decide on the best value option.	1 to 2 months
Tender RFP for design.	2 to 3 months
<p><b>Detail Design:</b> Design work begins with check-ins at 30%, 60% and 90% with the project team. Review updated O&amp;M and capital cost projections.</p>	1 year
<b>Funding Approvals and Applications:</b>	3 to 12+ months



Submit project funding application, building permits and notice of project	
<b>Tendering:</b> Tendering and tender period, analysis, and contract award	3 to 6+ months
<b>Construction</b>	2 to 3 years

## Communications Approach

### Vision and Values

Building new recreation infrastructure is an important initiative for the Village of Haines Junction to complete in a timely and responsible manner.

The construction of a new recreation complex will provides the following benefits:

- Lifesaving: a pool will give people an opportunity to learn how to swim
- Community Health: a recreation complex will contribute to improving community health
- Population Growth: a recreation complex will likely encourage people to move to Haines Junction
- Increased Sense of Community: a recreation complex will serve as a place where people gather and interact, thus increasing community cohesiveness; and,
- Workforce Attraction: a recreation complex will likely assist in attracting a skilled workforce.

### Current Key Messages

- Developing new recreation infrastructure is a priority for the Village of Haines Junction
- Community member advocacy has been consistent and clear for many years, indicating desire for a new multi-use recreation facility.
- Planning new recreation infrastructure requires a lot of planning including design, staffing and program/service delivery.
- The Village must be mindful of capital and operational budget limitations of the Village of Haines Junction when building new recreation infrastructure.
- The community must be part of the planning process and the Village is developing (1) new ways to communicate the status of the recreation infrastructure project with the community; and (2) a more inclusive approach to community engagement on the project.
- Council is scheduled to review and adopt the Recreation Needs Assessment report on October 25th, 2023.

### Communications: recommended next steps

1. Create a dedicated page at hainesjunction.ca that includes important project files and communications.
2. Produce a quarterly status report that is distributed to the community by bulk mailer, on social media and online.



3. Maintain and enhance the *Communications Strategy for New Recreation Infrastructure* with regular updates as the project develops.
4. Develop and implement a political advocacy strategy to meet the projected timeline that reflects the electoral and fiscal cycles of the municipal, territorial and federal governments and emphasizes a clear community desire, need and cohesion for the project.
5. Develop and implement an administrative resource strategy for the Village to meet the projected timeline for the project.