

Appendix B

Letters of Support



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May 28, 2018

Victoria Mayor and Council
City of Crystal Pool
2275 Quadra Street
Victoria, BC V8T 4C4

Dear Victoria City Council:

We understand that a motion may be put forward by Mayor Helps with regards to a proposal for additional community facilities and housing on what is currently proposed as a surface parking in the redevelopment of Crystal Pool. BC Housing is supportive of pursuing the opportunity to provide additional affordable housing in the core area. We look forward to working with the City of Victoria should this motion be approved. BC Housing would be willing to partner directly with the City on this project to provide funding and financing.

Should you have any questions regarding the Expression of interest, please feel free to contact me at mmcnaughton@bchousing.org or phone 778-452-2744.

Yours truly,
Malcolm McNaughton
Director, Regional Development Vancouver Island

Letter to Mayor and Council:

I am very pleased that there will be a motion before Council for approval to direct staff to issue two Public Requests for Expressions of Interest, related to the provision of affordable housing, community spaces and facilities, as well as underground parking for the new Aquatic Centre, as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of Central Park. It is understood that this initiative is separate from the project for the Crystal Pool replacement **currently underway** at Central Park. The subject of this letter is for a companion project to take advantage of the opportunities that have emerged from the pool replacement project.

With this letter, I add my voice and encouragement to that of the community of citizens that, along with you, Mayor and Council, care about our city, and those who live in it. Those in our architectural practice take seriously the conscious act of city- building. For us the best result for any development design project, is it's potential contribution to the betterment and sustainability of our city, and the resilience, usefulness and beauty of its' built environment. We believe that the same energy, rigor and expertise that are applied to private sector development, should be employed in the public interest. This means borrowing a page from the private sector book.

In the private process, a prospective property owner/developer evaluates the best and highest use options that will deliver the greatest yield. For private sector developers, 'yield' generally refers to provision of corporate infrastructure and maximizing financial return.

For public assets, property or facilities that are slated for replacement, a similar evaluation is appropriate. In the case of public investment in infrastructure, the desired 'yield' to be maximized through the redevelopment of public assets and property, consists of resilient and robust public facilities. Through that, emerges strong support of public services and social infrastructure.

To that end, I encourage Mayor and Council, through available mechanisms, to undertake a comprehensive planning and urban design process, including the evaluation of the best use, and highest potential for this significantly public property. Given the short supply of public land in the Core Area, simply replacing the existing single use facility (the aquatic centre) in this location **adjacent to the downtown core**, falls far short of the civic potential for this valuable public property called Central Park.

DAU would be excited and pleased to be of service to this cause, and will eagerly respond to any REoI or RFP with a multi- disciplinary team of dedicated professionals to assist in making a better Victoria.

Sincerely,

Architect Franc D'Ambrosio
AIBC FRAIC

On May 30, 2018, at 3:10 PM, Kaye Melliship <kmelliship@greatervichousing.org> wrote:

Dear City of Victoria Councillors:

I am writing to ask that you reconsider the City's plans for redeveloping Crystal Pool. We own three buildings in the neighbourhood providing homes to 159 households and know that the pool is an important community resource. However, we feel that the site offers enormous potential to add other much needed community recreation facilities that meet the needs of the seniors and families we house.

In addition, given the shortage of land affordable and available for non-profit affordable rental housing I urge you to include housing on the site. We have assisted with some basic analysis of the site and can clearly see an opportunity to meet the recreation and parking goals of the project, will adding a significant amount of new affordable rental housing.

We would be delighted to work with the City to achieve a plan that results in a vibrant, multi-use development that is a real asset to the community and helps address the housing crisis.

Yours truly,

Kaye Melliship
Executive Director
<image003.jpg>
2326 Government Street
Victoria, BC, V8T 5G5
Tel: 250.384.3434 ex. 32
Fax: 250 386.3434
www.greatervichousing.org

May 31, 2018

Dear Mayor and Council,

It is with great pleasure and optimism that we write this letter in support of the emerging concept of a Central Park Community Centre complex, complete with childcare facilities, non-market housing and underground parking.

For many years, we have been wanting to see this exact concept emerge out of the redevelopment of the Central Park land, triggered by the Crystal Pool rebuild. For us, this direction is progressive and fills absolutely vital needs in our downtown core neighbourhood area.

Before this new idea began to take shape, we were extremely dismayed to learn about the plan to enlarge the surface parking lot on this remarkable City-owned land mass. This approach made no sense and seemed like a step backward, particularly in light of the strategic multi-modal investments currently being made by the City.

We applaud the partnership/collaborative funding and service delivery model being proposed and are thrilled that this project may be able to take advantage of significant non-marking housing and childcare funds.

Finally, we wish to reinforce how strongly we feel that now is the time to examine and imagine the potential for the entire city block that is Central Park. Currently the park land and pool/rec facility perform many remarkable functions on a day to day basis. At the same time, there is so much more this land can offer to our downtown neighbourhood area and the City, including filling gaps such as indoor gym and art space.

Taking the time now to envision the potential of the block of land as a whole is an important exercise that can happen concurrently so as not to delay the new Crystal Pool facility project. To this end, conversations about disruption of service during redevelopment must include all users, and we have confidence that this Central Park Community Centre complex concept represents a very positive shift in City Hall's planning approach for this incredible community land asset.

Sincerely,

Jenny Farkas, North Park resident
Sue Hallatt, North Park resident
Katie Fillion, North Park resident
The Ven Alastair McCollum, North Park resident
Janis La Cuvée, Hillside-Quadra resident
Breanna Merrigan, Downtown resident

June 1, 2018

Dear Mayor and Council,

Over the next few weeks, Victoria City Council will give final approval to the design and scope of the replacement for Crystal Pool. While the current facility has served us well since it opened in 1971, it's crucial that we seize this opportunity to launch a new vision for Crystal Pool, which provides modern aquatic and gym facilities, but also helps meet the social, economic and environmental needs of our city today.

The suggestions and encouragements contained in this letter derive from a group of supportive Victoria residents, predominantly living in North Park, and after a lengthy series of meetings with city staff and community leaders spanning 9 months. We work with or for government, and in the areas of housing, equity and social justice, and climate and sustainability. We have consulted with subject matter experts, community partners, and the ministries administering government funds; we have pulled from our collective experience and knowledge of best practices in community planning, equity, and sustainability. Fundamentally, we believe the Crystal Pool has the potential to be transformative in our community like no other municipal facility over the next 50 years. We think that this central piece of public land should be developed in a manner that serves a variety of our citizens' needs, and we're encouraged that Mayor and Council will be considering these recommendations on June 7th at COTW.

A [website](#) we have created contains additional background and detail for these recommendations also. This website will be updated to reflect the outcomes from the upcoming Committee of the Whole meeting on June 7th and the next iteration of designs to be publicly revealed on June 18th.

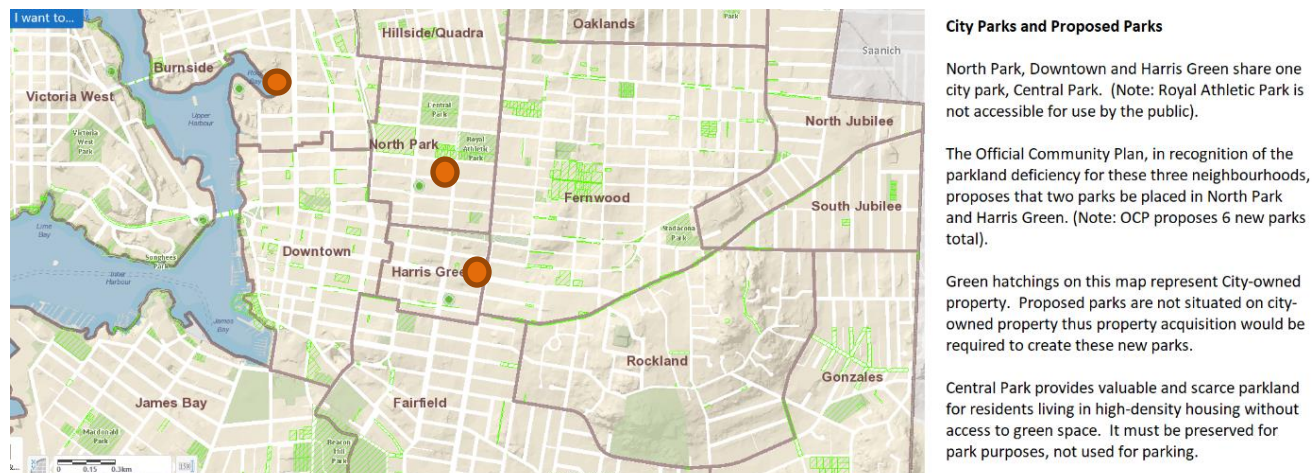
The Crystal Pool Fitness Centre, is the largest community facility owned and operated by the City of Victoria. In December 2016, the two options of either refurbishing or replacing the Crystal Pool were considered by City Council. Based on this [staff report](#), the decision was taken, to replace the 50 year old facility, at an estimated budget cost of \$68.4M. The outcome from this decision in late 2016, is the current [conceptual design](#) for a beautiful, replacement facility; however, the proposed facility excludes potentially more diverse recreation options, and needed complementary community infrastructure. The facility design also includes a surface parking lot next to the new facility which decreases an already limited availability of green space in the north end of Victoria's downtown and the neighbourhoods of Harris Green and North Park.

Affordable housing, facilities for childcare, youth recreation, and art programming, are all priorities identified by City Council through its recent task forces and strategic plan initiatives and resulting adopted strategies. Importantly, these priorities are also shared by the current provincial and federal governments with significant and dedicated funding in their 2017/18 budgets. There is unprecedented alignment between all 3 levels of government for funding for affordable housing, child care and public transit improvements – an opportunity the City of Victoria should not miss with the Crystal Pool project.

There is growing consensus that we need to prioritize alternatives to single-occupant vehicles as our dominant transportation mode, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and alleviate traffic congestion, as well as promoting healthier lifestyles. Crystal Pool is located on a major transit route on Quadra Street, and adjacent to the All Ages All Abilities AAA Cycling Network announced recently for Vancouver Street and the existing greenway on Pembroke Avenue.

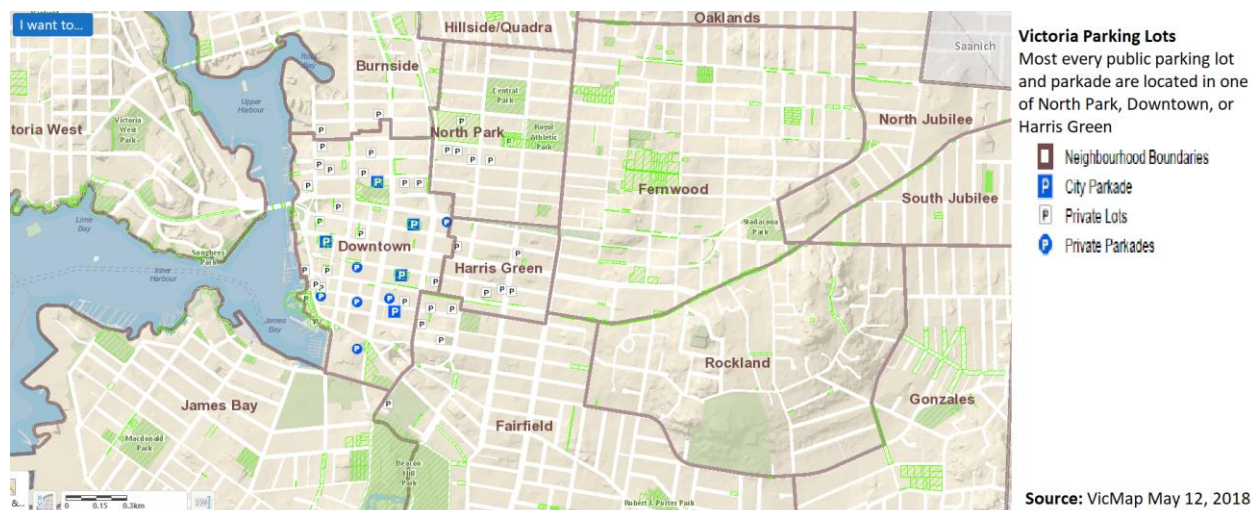
Central Park surrounds Crystal Pool and has provided playgrounds for kids and recreational opportunities for people of all ages for decades. More recently, the Steve Nash foundation funded the basketball courts in Central Park in 2006, and the courts are one of the most popular attractions in the park for players of all ages and skill levels. We have a critical need to protect our precious green space, especially in and around the downtown core. The Official Community Plan (map 9 shown below) identifies current parks, as well as the proposed location for acquisition of future parks to address areas deficient in park access (orange circles

represent proposed future park areas, there are 6 in total proposed for Victoria, three are located in the area encompassing the north end of downtown, North Park, and Harris Green).



But despite the OCP's policy directions for sustainable mobility and parks, the current proposal includes a surface parking lot with over 100 parking spaces, which will pave over the current footprint of Crystal Pool once the new facility is built where the current basketball courts are located.

Immediately surrounding Crystal Pool are more than 500 public parking spaces at Save-On Memorial Arena and Royal Athletic park; in fact, most every public parking lot and parkade in the city are located in, or along the border of, North Park, Downtown and Harris Green (see map below).



Surface parking is surely not the best use of the valuable and scarce park land in this area of Victoria. Likewise, another surface lot, is most certainly not bringing vitality or community benefit to the neighbourhood either.

The condition of the Crystal Pool facility has precipitated the current project and investment; however, our community's options are not limited to replacing it with a comparable, albeit modern, asset of that built in 1971. Our community's needs have changed and become more complex; our population has and will continue to increase, particularly in the downtown core and adjacent neighbourhoods.

The Crystal Pool Replacement Project has employed a risk management framework to ensure its budget and timelines are controlled and federal funding opportunities are realized. This risk framework is a direct response to Council and staff's experience and learnings from the Johnson Street Bridge project. It is commendable that regular updates to Council show this project as being on-time and within budget; however, retaining too much

rigidity to this scope, timeline, and budget is precluding potentially significant public value now available as a result of recent funding opportunities. By limiting the Central Park project to a legacy replacement of a spent asset, there is a real and avoidable risk of undervaluing the civic land, a scarce public resource, and coming up short on the long-term delivery of public services in our community.

New Funding and Partnerships Offer New Opportunities

With the fortuitous timeliness of new funding for housing and childcare, a group of community partners and citizens have developed a preliminary partnership proposal for a community centre complex accompanied by non-market housing above and parking below. This presents an opportunity to deliver far more community benefit at Central Park while also permitting the budget and timelines established for the Crystal Pool Replacement Project to carry on unaffected. We applaud the Mayor's willingness and enthusiasm to seize funding opportunities for housing and childcare that were not available two years ago when Council first determined the scope for the Crystal Pool Replacement Project.

There are major provincial funding programs available now to support the construction of new affordable rental housing at no cost to the City and its taxpayers; the primary obstacle for these housing providers, access to appropriate and affordable land. A new provincial child care initiative is also getting underway with \$153M in funding over three years to create new child care spaces across B.C.

Thus, with a bold vision, we can leverage the civic land at Central Park to access these funding sources and integrate these critical services into a new community centre next to the new Crystal Pool which would support and showcase cultural diversity through its community kitchen, welcome centre, childcare services, and a space for youth and seniors programming. This solution would maximize the community benefit of the Crystal Pool project and Central Park Redevelopment, without the need for additional capital borrowing.

This important housing partnership and funding will allay some to all of the incremental costs for reassigning the recreation centre's parking from park/street-level to underground, and for creating a community centre space for the residents of North Park, Downtown and Harris Green, and more broadly, new Canadians from across the region.

Letters of support from non-profit housing providers and BC Housing are evidence that housing experts, operators, and funders believe that Central Park is an optimal location for affordable rental housing and that they are ready to respond to housing development/partnership opportunities from the City. Early interest to support and collaborate on the planning, design, and operation of the community centre/welcome centre/childcare facility, have also been received from the Intercultural Association, United Way of Greater Victoria, and D'Ambrosio Architecture and Urbanism, evidence that these and other community partners see this proposed asset as valuable, and wish to contribute their skills and expertise for collective impact should and when the City issue its requests for expressions of interest.

Rationale for Pairing a Community Centre and Affordable Housing with Community Recreation

The significant list of individual and societal benefits from public recreation go well beyond physical health according to public health and recreation experts. And, those benefits can be exponential for traditionally underserved populations based on age, income, gender, immigrant status, and race, etc. as the findings from numerous studies show.

"Sport participation benefits individuals and society overall through improved physical, psychological and social well-being, increased civic pride, engagement and cohesion, and increased economic development and prosperity. However, some women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, persons with a disability, recent immigrants, new Canadians, socio-economically disadvantaged Canadians, older adults, members of the LGBTQ community, and Canadians living in rural, remote and

isolated regions do not participate at the same rates as their mainstream counterparts. Inclusive policies and programming benefit members of these groups and other Canadian residents who may feel excluded from sport”

“Sport is about more than training and performance, and participation is about more than just the number of participants who show up to a program. Sport participation includes experiential aspects related to inclusion and community integration including, belongingness, engagement, meaning, mastery and challenge.”

Source: [Policy and program considerations for increasing sport participation among members of underrepresented groups in Canada: A Literature Review](#), Cragg, S., C. Costas-Bradstreet, J. Arkell & K. Lofstrom. Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council, Ottawa, 2016

Listed below are other recent Canadian studies referencing the benefits of recreation to underserved groups, including seniors, immigrants, and indigenous peoples, in addition to the equalizing benefits of public recreation on households of low income.

[Active People, Active Places](#) - BC Physical Activity Strategy, Ministry of Health 2015
[2016 ParticipACTION Report Card](#)

[Creating Inclusion of Newcomers in Sport and Physical Activity](#), Sport for Life Canada, 2014

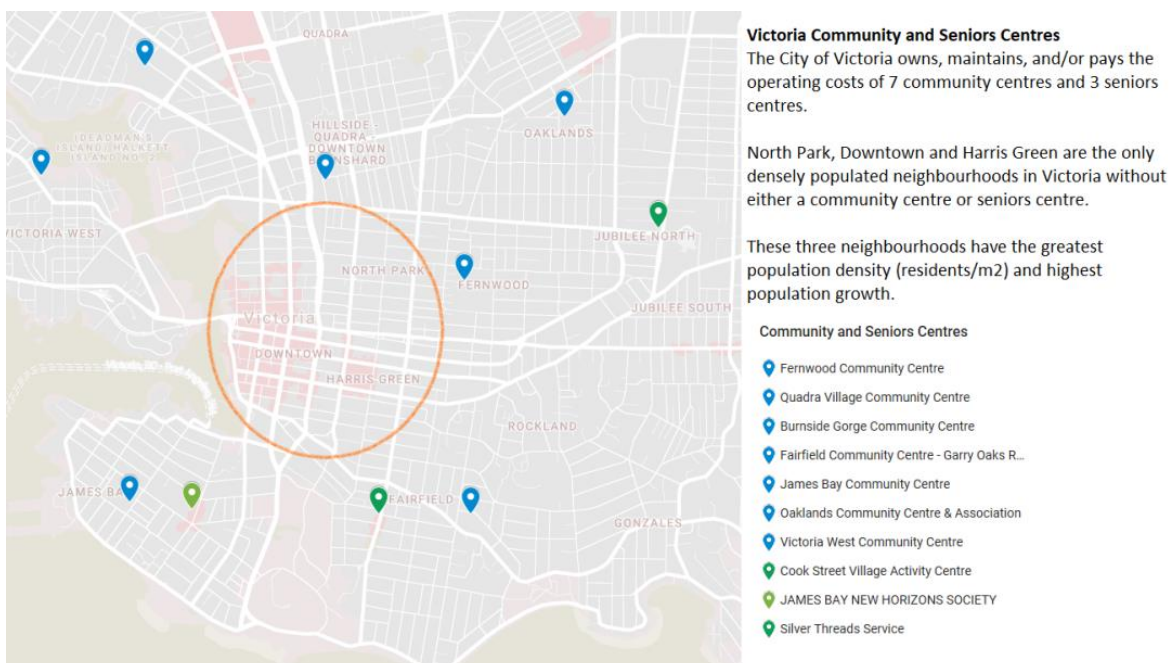
[Aboriginal Long-term Development Pathway](#), Sport for Life Canada, 2016

[Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls for Action](#) - Sports and Reconciliation actions 87-91, page 10

[Active for Life: Durable by Design](#), Sport for Life Canada, 2016

The City owns and funds the operations of 7 community centres and 3 seniors centres across Victoria. These 10 City-supported community and seniors centres provide critical social infrastructure with childcare, community kitchens, and other space and programming for seniors, youth, non-profit orgs and social enterprises. These centres provide valuable services to all of its neighbouring residents, but in particular those at highest risk of isolation in the community and those belonging to groups that are traditionally underserved resulting from structural barriers which deter their inclusion and access due to age, race, religion, language, gender, income, etc.

None of the 10 centres owned and supported by the City of Victoria are located in the three densely populated and growing neighbourhoods of downtown, Harris Green and North Park. These neighbourhoods are home to a very significant proportion of Victoria’s immigrants and newcomers.



Profile of the Surrounding Community

One of the most prevalent areas in Victoria and the region for residents commonly referred to as marginalized or underserved based on income levels and ethnic origin live in the neighbourhoods immediately surrounding Central Park.

The proposed community centre presents an opportunity to bring a variety of new services to the neighbourhood and region alike. This centre will provide a place for gathering and connection among all of Victoria's residents, and can help to enhance a sense of belonging for new Canadians.

Community Profile Data and Maps (Source: 2016 census):

- **Victoria is a city of diverse cultures and people:**

New Canadians: There are 16,000 residents identifying as immigrants in the municipality of Victoria. Within the specific neighbourhoods of Downtown, NorthPark and Harris Green (Census Tract 9350010), 20% of the residents, or nearly 1,700 people are new Canadians. Another 800 immigrants live in the Quadra Village area (census tract 9350013.01 denoted roughly as being between Douglas/Cook and Bay/Hillside); representing 19.5% of this neighbourhood's population.

Map: [Population of Immigrants as % of Total Population](#):

Indigenous Peoples: 525 urban indigenous people live in the neighbourhoods of Downtown, North Park and Harris Green, representing more than 6% of the population in this area.

Map: [Residents of North American Aboriginal origin](#)

- **Victoria's core communities are experiencing high growth, in particular as the neighbourhoods of choice for newcomers:** One of the fastest growing areas with population growth of 15.5% from 2011- 2016 to more than 9,200 population. Moreover, 22% of the population identifying as immigrants in this area have arrived to Canada during that same short 5 year timeframe from 2011 to 2016

- **Low income levels exacerbate the experience of already vulnerable populations:** A very high proportion of the residents in these neighbourhoods are considered to be more vulnerable based on their household income level. Some maps by age and income quintile evidence this trend. Note: The statistics to the right of the links represent the specific prevalence of this demographic in the census tract pertaining to North Park, Harris Green and Downtown.

Map: [Prevalence of low income for children 0-17 yo](#) – 28%

Map: [Prevalence of low income seniors 65+](#) - 36.4%

Map: [Prevalence of low income](#) 18-64 – 22.6%

Other Acknowledgements and Suggestions

This letter is focused on expressing to City Council our support and encouragement for revisioning the space currently assigned for surface parking into a companion facility for the Crystal Pool Recreation and Wellness Centre. However, we wanted to acknowledge some of the City's other recent improvements to the Crystal Pool design and highlight a particular area of concern that remains.

Over the last two months, significant improvements have been made to the concept design of the pool area, transforming it from what many of us perceived as an aquatic training centre, into one that serves those fitness swimmers and competitive athletes, while also providing recreational and therapeutic swim options for children and families, seniors, and those recovering from injury or illness. These improvements required the design team to expand and change the shape of the natatorium area which was challenging to do while preserving trees in the park. We are grateful for the agility and creativity of staff and the design team in making these significant improvements to this 50+ year asset and Victoria's only public recreation centre.

We believe that the appeal of the new Crystal Pool Recreation and Wellness Centre would be enhanced even further through the inclusion of a full-sized gymnasium and dedicated art centre space for those seeking dry sport recreation and non-sport recreation. These two in-demand (and in short supply) amenities will bring a wider, more diverse set of users, and a higher number of visits per user annually.

A gymnasium would allow for popular sports opportunities such as year-round pick up basketball and volleyball as well as late-to-sport adult training opportunities and league play. Gymnasium rental, and the programming for classes and drop-in spaces for racquet and court sports which require a gymnasium, are in short supply around the core municipalities in the region (Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt). Situating an indoor public gymnasium at Crystal Pool is preferable to a school or community centre due to its long hours of operation (5:30am to 11pm, 362 days of the year), and access to showers and changerooms.

Currently, public recreation art classes and drop-in spaces for pottery and painting are only available through Cedar Hill Recreation which spaces and hours of operation cannot meet demand. An arts centre would allow for partnerships with community groups, such as the Vancouver Island School of Art (VISA). Art schools like VISA are facing increasing space challenges due to population growth and redevelopment pressures; both trends resulting in the loss of affordable institutional and Class C commercial rental spaces. Inclusion of an arts centre, in either the Crystal Pool or the newly proposed community centre complex, would provide long term stability for the provisioning of affordable art classes and drop-in spaces for those residents choosing non-sport recreation options and art therapy.

Finally, we trust that the City's exemplary leadership in climate action and sustainability, as evidenced by its 2050 targets which include commitments to 80% greenhouse gas reductions based on 2007 levels and 100% renewable energy, will carry over to this project. The existing Crystal Pool is the largest single greenhouse gas (GHG) generator from all municipal operations (facilities and fleet), accounting for approximately 20% of the GHGs. The energy costs of the facility approximate \$250,000 annually, this is the second highest operating cost for the recreation centre after staff wages; it also represents more than 10% of all City energy costs from facilities and fleet. The new facility is to be 35% larger than the existing facility. Not only is a commitment to net zero energy facilities consistent with the draft Climate Leadership Plan and recent approval by Council to the Energy Step Code, it is also the most economical choice over the lifetime of this most energy intensive facility owned and operated by the City.

Community Values and Directions re: Parks, Recreation, and Community Wellness (Source: OCP)

The suggestions and encouragements contained in this letter, which are further detailed at www.crystalpoolforall.com, come from a group of supportive Victoria residents, predominantly living in North Park. We work with or for government, and in the areas of housing, equity and social justice, and climate and sustainability. We have consulted with subject matter experts, community partners, and the ministries administering government funds; we have pulled from our collective experience and knowledge of best practices in community planning, equity, and sustainability.

We acknowledge that we can't speak for the entire community and that we don't have the time or resources to engage a statistically valid representation of the population in order to groundtruth these recommendations for Victoria. Luckily, the City conducted an award-winning and extensive engagement process in the development of the Official Community Plan (OCP) in 2013, and the results from it, are memorialized in this overarching bylaw for Victoria.

The OCP's engagement process, designed and overseen by a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), was thorough and exemplary, receiving a number of awards in recognition. Through more than 50 CAC meetings over 30 months, different community engagement methods were evaluated, selected and refined. Building on this thoughtfully developed process, the City identified youth, seniors, First Nations, people living on low incomes, families with children, businesses and special interest groups as integral to its success. To support these

discussions, 13 background research papers were developed by staff and subject matter experts across BC to provide analysis of complex plan topics. Additionally, short information sheets, provided on a topic by topic basis, summarized key trends, emerging issues and the role of local government.

A description of the OCP's citywide civic engagement process is available [here](#), but in short, more than 6,000 individuals weighed in to "Shape Your Future Victoria" through a range of broad and targeted engagement techniques:

- Community surveys, community forums and community circles;
- Meetings with more than 90 organizations;
- Citizen insight councils,
- More than 200 youth engaged through two local cafe events, a high school assembly led by the Mayor, in-class essays and community survey kiosks on location at the high school
- A First Nations hosted feast with 75 people in attendance,
- Presentations to over 700 people over two years
- Open houses and info booths
- Social and web-based tools,
- Two direct mailouts to over 34,000 households

We recognize that the OCP's budget for engagement is unequaled and we are not suggesting that its scope be replicated for master plans or infrastructure projects; however, the community's values and chosen directions are enshrined in this foundational document and so it can be used to inform the design process, project objectives, and resulting outcomes of master plans and infrastructure projects.

The OCP has informed other recent and relevant plans and strategies, namely the, [Housing Strategy](#), [Youth Strategy](#), [Create Victoria Strategy](#), and [draft Climate Leadership Plan](#)

Included as an appendix to this letter, are the Parks and Recreation and Community Wellbeing chapters of the OCP which are most relevant in providing guidance for the redevelopment of Central Park and the Crystal Pool. We've highlighted the specific goals, broad objectives, and policy directions we think support your consideration of our request to:

- i) Enthusiastically support a Central Park community centre with affordable housing and underground parking to be co-created with the community and the chosen operator(s);
- ii) Consider the increased value to the community from the addition of a gymnasium within the Crystal Pool; and, an art centre space in either of the Crystal Pool or proposed new community centre;
- iii) Commit to net zero energy and 100% renewable energy facilities in Central Park, and the encouragement of sustainable mobility choices over the private vehicle, and;
- iv) Work with the community to develop a park improvement plan akin to the Topaz park planning underway currently, inclusive of disruption planning for current users over the next three years of construction.

Respectfully,

[Crystal Pool for All Steering Committee:](#)

Allison Ashcroft
Naomi Devine
Erik Kaye
Kelly Newhook
Stephen Portman

Appendix – OCP Passages Relevant to Crystal Pool and Central Park Redevelopment Opportunities

Chapter 9 Parks and Recreation

GOAL 9 (A) Victoria is an active community where everyone enjoys convenient access to community parks, open spaces, facilities, amenities and programs close to where they live.

Broad Objectives

The parks and recreation policies of this plan collectively address five broad objectives:

9 (a) That a network of parks and open spaces meets citywide and local area needs, including at least one park or open space within walking distance (400 metres) of 99% of households.

9 (b) That a well-connected, clearly identifiable, and multi-functional network of greenways is established across the city.

9 (c) That parks, open spaces and facilities contribute to the enhancement and restoration of ecological functions.

9 (d) That a diversity of facilities, services and programming enables broad community access and participation in an active lifestyle.

9 (e) That parks and recreational facilities are designed to achieve multiple benefits and accommodate a diversity of people and activities.

Policy Directions

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES

9.12 Seek to maintain partnerships, policies and fee structures for parks and recreational facilities that encourage the participation of people of all ages, incomes, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles

9.13 Work closely with community centres, senior centres, community organizations, the public library and residents to seek innovative opportunities to sustain and enhance community-based recreation services and programs.

9.14 Enhance child- and youth-friendly parks and recreational facilities, services, and programs in the City, to promote a healthy community and to help attract and retain households with children

FACILITIES PLANNING

9.15 Seek innovative options and mechanisms to upgrade and provide new sports and recreation, equipment, infrastructure and facilities, including for the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre and the Royal Athletic Park.

9.16 Encourage public and private sector partners to invest in civic park and recreational facilities and infrastructure through means such as capital funding and private donations.

9.17 Support joint use agreements with the school district, other institutions and the private sector to make effective and economic use of recreational and school facilities for community benefit.

9.18 Seek opportunities to integrate green infrastructure in park and recreational facilities during new construction and major upgrades

9.19 Develop a comprehensive strategy for the use, maintenance, improvement, addition to and funding of sports fields in Victoria, with the goal of facilitating field sports and physical activity, and meeting the needs of the community and sports tourism sector.

9.20 Seek opportunities to sustain and enhance recreational services and programs through the development of a Recreation Services and Facilities Delivery Strategy that identifies:

- 9.20.1 Recreational service needs and gaps and defines long-term approaches to service delivery;
- 9.20.2 Sports, recreation and other facilities needed to support service delivery, including in areas of population growth;

- 9.20.3 Innovative opportunities for the delivery and location of neighbourhood recreation and community services and programs in Town Centres and Urban Villages; and,
- 9.20.4 Opportunities to use existing City and other facilities as integrated centres for the delivery of City and non-City services.

MULTIPLE USES OF PARKS

9.21 Design and upgrade parks, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, community centres and other public spaces to serve multiple purposes and users, and to achieve the following objectives:

9.21.1 Continue and expand the use of City parks and open spaces for festivals, celebrations, concerts and other special events

9.21.2 Provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster respect for and enjoyment of the natural environment in City parks and open spaces;

9.21.3 Provide opportunities to enhance the value of play for all ages;

9.21.4 Consider ways to recognize and celebrate the value of history and place in parks design, interpretation and other initiatives;

9.21.5 Protect and steward cultural heritage landscapes on City land as consistent with the National Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada;

9.21.6 Integrate celebratory, contemplative and recreational spaces in parks and facilities planning and design;

9.21.7 Design outdoor park and recreational amenities to include features that accommodate public eating and social interaction, where appropriate.

Chapter 15 Community Wellbeing

GOALS

15 (A) All Victorians have income and access to public services to be able to flourish and live with dignity.

15 (B) High quality, affordable formal education is available and accessible for students of all ages.

15 (C) Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest and have diverse opportunities for social interaction.

15 (D) Victorians can support themselves and their neighbours in difficult times.

15 (E) Victoria is a place where people come to live, work and play, regardless of age, ethnicity, religion, culture, income, sexual orientation, ability and family status.

15 (F) Victorians are healthy and have a network of health-related amenities, facilities and programs to promote wellness and meet the needs of all levels of mental and physical care.

15 (G) Victoria is a safe city, where everyone feels secure in public, in their homes and workplaces.

A sustainable community provides both the physical and social infrastructure necessary to achieve community well-being. While physical features such as a walkable land use pattern, good quality housing and nearby recreational facilities can encourage people to make healthier choices, community well-being relies on more than just the city's physical form. Community well-being also relies on the city's "soft" infrastructure, such as the network of services, partnerships, resources, groups and other social relationships that collectively help people achieve their basic needs, support each other and reach their full potential.

The strength of a community relies on the well-being of all of its members. Collectively, the plan's policies work towards a healthy community, one that takes a holistic approach to improving not only social and health conditions, but also the community's economic and environmental assets. The plan strives to build community capacity and address the needs of Victoria's diverse citizens, particularly those who are most vulnerable or marginalized. The plan aims to enhance social inclusion for people of all socio-economic levels, cultural backgrounds and abilities; to strengthen the multi generational features of neighbourhoods; to provide opportunities for civic engagement; and, to enhance the sense of personal and public safety.

Broad Objectives

The community well-being policies of this plan address six broad objectives:

- 15 (a) That a mix of housing, services, facilities and programs encourage and support a socio-economically and culturally inclusive community.
- 15 (b) That facilities, services, places of employment and housing are physically accessible to users.
- 15 (c) That planning, services and programs foster multigenerational neighbourhoods.
- 15 (d) That strong partnerships build the capacity of individuals and the community.
- 15 (e) That all citizens have the opportunity to participate in civic affairs.
- 15 (f) That citizens have an enhanced sense of personal and public safety.

SOCIAL EQUITY

15.1 Encourage a fair distribution of community services, social services and facilities across the city, to support all parts of the population.

15.2 Establish policies and fee structures to ensure that City programs and facilities are affordable and welcoming to people of all ages, incomes, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles

15.3 Support the efforts of senior government, business and community organizations to reduce poverty through:

- 15.3.1 Advocating to senior levels of government for fair income assistance rates;
- 15.3.2 Enabling stable housing with support services;
- 15.3.3 Encouraging jobs that provide a household-sustaining wage for employees; and,
- 15.3.4 Providing education and skills training programs to build individual capacity.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

15.4 Establish guidelines for full accessibility for people with mobility challenges in the design, construction and improvement of City property, including facilities, offices, street right-of-ways, and parks.

15.5 Encourage senior governments, and community and business partners to improve the physical accessibility of public and private property, including places of employment, housing, transportation facilities, and visitor-oriented sites

MULTIGENERATIONAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

15.6 Consider the needs of children, youth and older adults in planning initiatives related to land use, housing, transportation, parks, facilities and community services.

15.7 Work collaboratively with senior governments, the health authority, and other public and private sector partners to plan for the housing, health, employment, recreational, educational, cultural and other needs of Victoria's population as it ages.

15.8 Encourage the development of quality, accessible, affordable daycare, including preschool, out-of-school care and elder daycare spaces, to support families and employers by:

- 15.8.1 Considering the provision of non-profit daycare space as an amenity in new residential, mixed-use and commercial developments to be secured through agreement; and,
- 15.8.2 Encouraging new childcare and elder daycare spaces throughout the city.

15.9 Seek opportunities to promote social interaction between different generations through the design and programming of public spaces, parks and public facilities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

15.14 Incorporate community development objectives into citywide and local area planning processes.

15.15 Work closely with community centres, seniors centres, community organizations, the public library, citizens and other partners to seek innovative opportunities to sustain, enhance and deliver community-based recreational, educational, cultural and social programs.

15.16 Develop and maintain partnerships with senior governments, the health authority, neighbouring municipalities, community organizations, informal groups, the private sector and others to build community capacity, and to provide a range of facilities and community services to serve people throughout their lives, including:

- 15.16.1 Social services to support attainment of basic needs;
- 15.16.2 A range of local and regional health and wellness facilities and services;
- 15.16.3 A network of regional recreational facilities and services;
- 15.16.4 Regional public library facilities and services;
- 15.16.5 Opportunities and facilities for lifelong learning and skills training;
- 15.16.6 Places of worship and other spaces for contemplation; and,
- 15.16.7 Settlement services and cultural centres.

15.17 Encourage collaboration among community service providers and community organizations across the city and at the regional level.

15.18 Work with community partners to promote a culture of volunteerism, community service and neighbourliness.



June 5, 2018

Dear Mayor and Council:

This letter is being submitted by the Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) in support of a citizen-led effort to advocate for the highest and best use of Central Park and more inclusive, diverse, and in-demand indoor and outdoor recreation for our communities.

We understand that there may be an opportunity for the City to partner with local housing providers and community partner organizations to bring critical housing and childcare services, along with a community centre to the North Park/Downtown/Harris Green neighbourhoods at no additional capital cost to the City and taxpayers.

The Inter-Cultural Association of Victoria encourages mayor and council to pursue this timely opportunity and asks that they consider how to best involve and celebrate the cultural diversity among Victoria's residents when:

- a) finalizing the design of the Crystal Pool Fitness and Wellness Centre;
- b) initiating the park improvement plan and engagement process for Central Park; and
- c) assessing the needs and corresponding amenities for the newly proposed community centre to be located next to the new Crystal Pool.

The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) was founded in 1971 after mounting the inaugural FolkFest to celebrate the contributions of Victoria's multicultural communities and challenge racism. Since 1978, when ICA was approached by the federal government to do so, ICA has been providing services to newcomer immigrants and refugees at its ICA Immigrant Welcome Centre. The services ICA provides include: Settlement Orientation, Information, Support and Employment services, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada from literacy to advanced Canadian Language Benchmarks levels, Childcare for Newcomer Children, the Employment Program of BC, Mentoring, Settlement Services in Schools in all three local school districts, Youth, Women, and Seniors programming. We also bring refugees to our community through the Resettlement Assistance Program for government assisted refugees and the Private Sponsorship of Refugees for the privately sponsored refugees. ICA is the lead of the Local Immigration Partnership Planning table and the Community Partnership Network made up of over two hundred businesses, arts, cultural and not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, faith groups, local governments and police, and media organizations that are interested in being a part of making Victoria a more welcoming and inclusive community. We also work in community engaged arts which focus on sharing the experiences of immigrants in our community.

Every year we serve just under 3000 clients and everyday about 500 adult students take part in settlement language classes. We have a diverse staff of 100 including: teachers, employment case workers, settlement workers, community outreach and development workers. Every year roughly eight hundred community members volunteer their time and expertise to act as teachers' aides, host volunteers, sponsors and professional mentors.

Canada's multi-year Immigration Levels Plan adopted in 2017 calls for increased immigration levels each year through 2020, from 310,000 in 2018 to 340,000 in 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/notices/supplementary-immigration-levels-2018.html> The increased levels are called for by demographic changes in our population which have seen dependency rates change from 6.6



Canadians in the workforce to each retiree in 1971, to 4 to 1 in 2012, to a predicted 2 to 1 in 2036. Many experts suggest a more appropriate annual immigration target of 450,000 newcomer landings each year. (Immigration Summit, Conference Board of Canada, May 30, 2018. Plenary. Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.) This tells us that Victoria is likely to be welcoming more immigrants in coming years that we have in the past. Those new immigrants are likely to continue to come from more diverse cultural and language backgrounds and will include a wide range of educational, economic and age diversity. There will be more refugees in the mix who will need extra supports in their initial years in the community. Research has shown us that there are significant barriers to newcomers accessing helpful and healthful community and recreational services. (See attached Sport for Life report) A welcome centre adjacent to a recreation centre would provide many opportunities to bridge those barriers.

ICA has been housed for the last twenty years in the North Park neighbourhood at 930 Balmoral. As our landlord the First Metropolitan United Church contemplates its future configuration, ICA is being pushed to secure new space for our operations.

Crystal Pool and Central Park represent two of Victoria's core community assets. We support the growing list of citizens and community partner organizations asking that Mayor and Council:

- Pursue available partnership and funding opportunities for the establishment and delivery of critical community infrastructure such as affordable housing and a community centre with childcare services, a community kitchen, a space for youth and seniors, and a welcome centre that reflects the cultural diversity of Victoria's neighbourhoods.
- Include more diverse and inclusive recreation options (gymnasium and art space) alongside the swimming options currently conceived.
- Promptly begin work with the community to minimize the disruption to park users over the next four years and to undertake a master planning process akin to that underway for Topaz Park

Victoria's First Community Cultural Centre

ICA is particularly supportive and encouraged by the community's proposal that Mayor and Council seek to establish a community centre with welcome centre for new Canadians and culturally appropriate services and programming for youth, seniors, and families, including childcare.

In the planning of this proposed facility, ICA offers its support, experience, and connection to Victoria's community of new Canadians. ICA's Community Partner Network (CPN) provides an effective channel through which to involve these residents, the businesses they operate, and the organizations providing services to the region's culturally diverse resident groups.

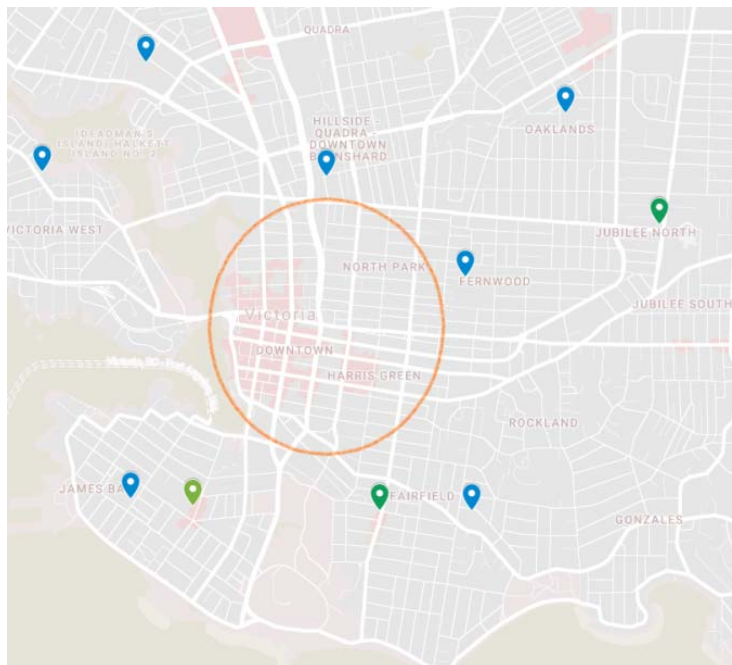
Should Mayor and Council issue a Request for Expressions of Interest to operate a community centre, welcome centre, and/or childcare in this proposed facility, ICA would respond to this request with a proposal to provide one or more of these services.

Rationale for a Community Centre in Central Park

The City owns and funds the operations of 7 community centres and 3 seniors centres across Victoria. These 10 City-supported community and seniors centres provide critical social infrastructure with childcare, community kitchens, and other space and programming for seniors, youth, non-profit orgs and social enterprises. These centres provide valuable services to all of its neighbouring residents, but in particular those at highest risk of isolation in the community and those belonging to groups that are traditionally underserved resulting from structural barriers which deter their inclusion and access due to age, race, religion, language, gender, income, etc..



None of the 10 centres owned and supported by the City of Victoria are located in the three densely populated and growing neighbourhoods of downtown, Harris Green and North Park. These neighbourhoods are home to a very significant proportion of Victoria's immigrants and newcomers.



Victoria Community and Seniors Centres

The City of Victoria owns, maintains, and/or pays the operating costs of 7 community centres and 3 seniors centres.

North Park, Downtown and Harris Green are the only densely populated neighbourhoods in Victoria without either a community centre or seniors centre.

These three neighbourhoods have the greatest population density (residents/m²) and highest population growth.

Community and Seniors Centres

- Fernwood Community Centre
- Quadra Village Community Centre
- Burnside Gorge Community Centre
- Fairfield Community Centre - Garry Oaks R...
- James Bay Community Centre
- Oaklands Community Centre & Association
- Victoria West Community Centre
- Cook Street Village Activity Centre
- JAMES BAY NEW HORIZONS SOCIETY
- Silver Threads Service

Profile of the Surrounding Community

One of the most prevalent areas in Victoria and the region for residents commonly referred to as marginalized or underserved based on income levels and ethnic origin live in the neighbourhoods immediately surrounding Central Park.

Specific to the community centre, and the opportunity for it to bring new services to the neighbourhood and region alike, in addition to, an enhanced sense of belonging to new Canadians, and a place for gathering and connection among all of Victoria's residents, I share the following census data and maps:

Community Profile Data and Maps (Source: 2016 census):

- **Victoria is a city of diverse cultures and people:**

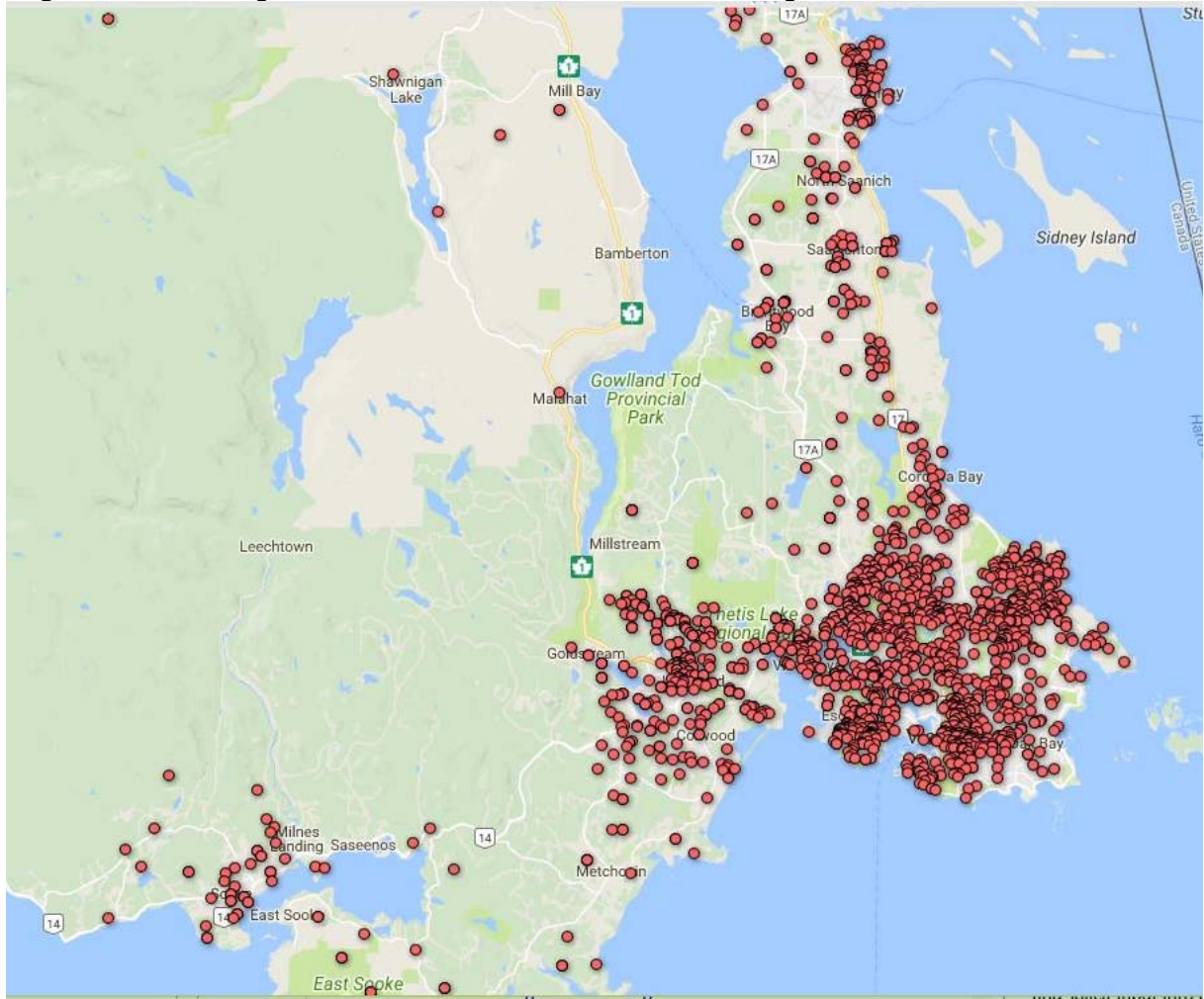
New Canadians: There are 16,000 residents identifying as immigrants in the municipality of Victoria. Within the specific neighbourhoods of Downtown, NorthPark and Harris Green (Census Tract 9350010), 20% of the residents, or nearly 1,700 people are new Canadians. Another 800 immigrants live in the Quadra Village area (census tract 9350013.01 denoted roughly as being



between Douglas/Cook and Bay/Hillside); representing 19.5% of this neighbourhood's population.

- **Map:** [Population of Immigrants as % of Total Population:](#)

The following shows the distribution of all current ICA clients by home postal code in the Capital Region. There is a significant concentration in the area surrounding Central Park:

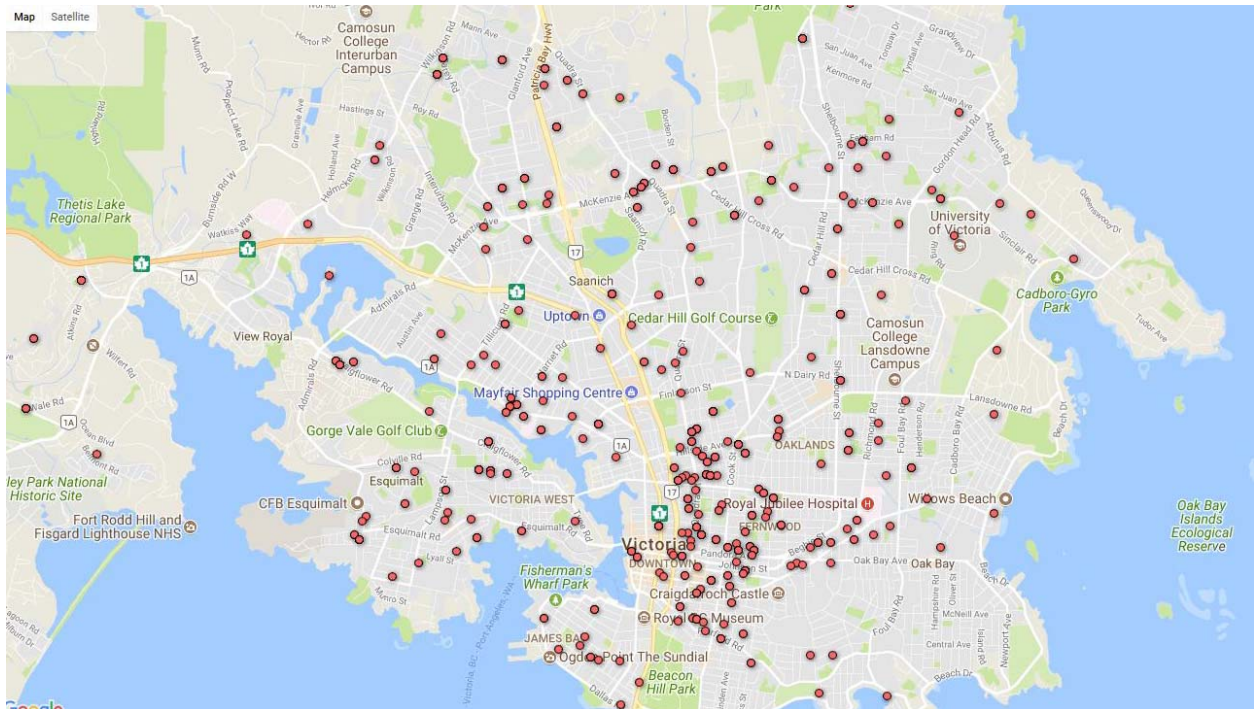


Refugees:

In the last few years Victoria has been receiving more refugees, both Government Assisted and Privately Sponsored. Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada's five-year levels plan indicates that we should expect those intake levels to continue and likely increase.



The following map shows the distribution of all classes of refugees accessing ICA services. Again, there is a concentration near Central Park.



Indigenous Peoples: 525 urban indigenous people call the neighbourhoods of downtown, North Park and Harris Green home, representing more than 6% of the population in this area.

- Map: [Residents of North American Aboriginal origin](#)

- **Victoria's core communities are experiencing high growth, in particular as the neighbourhoods of choice for newcomers:** One of the fastest growing areas with population growth of 15.5% from 2011- 2016. Moreover, 22% of the population identifying as immigrants in this area have arrived to Canada during that same short 5 year timeframe from 2011 to 2016
- **Low income levels exacerbate the experience of already vulnerable populations:** A very high proportion of the residents in these neighbourhoods are considered to be more vulnerable based on their household income level. Some maps by age and income quintile evidence this trend. Note: The statistics to the right of the links represent the specific prevalence of this demographic in the census tract pertaining to North Park, Harris Green and Downtown.
 - Map: [Prevalence of low income for children 0-17 yo](#) – 28%
 - Map: [Prevalence of low income seniors 65+](#) - 36.4%
 - Map: [Prevalence of low income 18-64](#) – 22.6%

*Other Census Maps are provided below the signature line for your interest.



In ICA's work of building cultural connections and supporting newcomers to reach their goals in their adopted home, we see the proposal for maximizing the use and capacity of Central Park to engage both the community and newcomers as an opportunity that should not be overlooked. This would mark a huge step forward for Victoria as a welcoming and inclusive community. We look forward to your decision.

If I can provide you with any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely

Jean McRae
Chief Executive Officer

Residents of Asian Origin

19% of population in 2016 is of Asian origin in Downtown, Harris Green, North Park (Census Tract CT9350010) = 1,580 people

Of Asian pop:

- 72.2% are East and Southeast Asian (53.5% Chinese, 21.9% Filipino, 10.5% Korean, 9.6% Japanese)
- 15.5% are South Asian (East Indian 91.8%, Punjabi 8.2%)
- 13% are West Central Asian and Middle Eastern (39% Iranian 12% Syrian, 10% Turk, 10% Saudi Arabian, and 7% each of Israel, Afghan and Arab n.o.s)

Languages

Residents speaking language other than or in addition to official languages of French and English for Downtown, Harris Green, North Park (CT9350010) = 2,110 pop, or 25.2%

Sport for Life for All Newcomers to Canada: Creating Inclusion of Newcomers in Sport and Physical Activity -



sport for life
Inclusion-for-New-Cit