

The Town of Cobourg and YMCA Northumberland share a commitment to providing programs, services and facilities that positively impact the health and well being of the people we serve. Additionally, the Town and the YMCA work in partnership to create safe and enriching recreational experiences and ultimately, build a healthy community. Through community consultation and professional needs assessments, the necessity to increase aquatic facilities in the Town of Cobourg has been demonstrated.

The population threshold for an aquatic facility is typically 20000 people. (*Guidelines for Developing Public Recreation Standards, Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation Sports and Fitness Division*) Currently, the residents of the Town of Cobourg are served by a single indoor pool operated by YMCA Northumberland for the majority of the year (constructed in 1980), and supplemented by a municipally owned outdoor (constructed 1967) pool operated by the YMCA during the months of July and August. With the population of Cobourg expected to reach 26000 by 2027, the need for expanded, year-round fully accessible state of the art aquatics facilities is evident.

As identified in the *Town of Cobourg Recreation Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016)*, residents identified a new aquatic facility as one of their top three recreational needs. Residents 50 plus years of age also identified a new swimming pool as one of the top three recreational assets that would promote increased physical activity levels. Residents surveyed through the *Cobourg Community Centre and YMCA Northumberland Joint Facility Needs Assessment (2017)* identified that the most common reason they leave Cobourg for recreation is to participate in aquatic programs in the neighbouring town of Port Hope, where the modern aquatic facility and therapy pool more closely meet their needs.

The median age of residents in Cobourg is 49.6 years of age, with a significant portion of the population aged 55 years or older. Aquatic programming is highly indicated for older adults and effective in improving balance and coordination, promoting improved aerobic fitness, muscular strength & endurance and flexibility. Use of a warm therapy pool is essential for exercise for many common chronic conditions including arthritis, osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease, and allows for rehabilitative programming for participants recovering from stroke, knee and hip surgery and back injury.

As a community surrounded by water, it is essential that residents have the opportunity to learn to swim. Each year, more than 3100 local children and youth participate in instructional swimming lessons at YMCA Northumberland, learning skills that could potentially save their lives. Additionally, over 700 grade three students participate in the Swim to Survive program at the YMCA free of charge, focused on drowning prevention and surviving aquatic emergencies. Many local youth and young adults participate in aquatics leadership courses and gain meaningful employment as lifeguards and swim instructors.

Evidence clearly indicates that accessible aquatic programs that target all age groups and socioeconomic populations play a critical role in promoting active, healthy and engaged communities, and that expanded aquatic facilities are required to meet the current and emerging health and recreational needs of the residents of the Town of Cobourg.