

The background image shows a scenic waterfront park. In the foreground, there's a grassy area with several wooden benches. A paved path runs along the water's edge, where a few people are cycling. The water is calm, and in the distance, a city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a clear sky. A large tree with green leaves is on the left side of the frame.

Harbour Swim Deck Project

Council Presentation

July 20, 2026

Infrastructure, Transportation & Parks



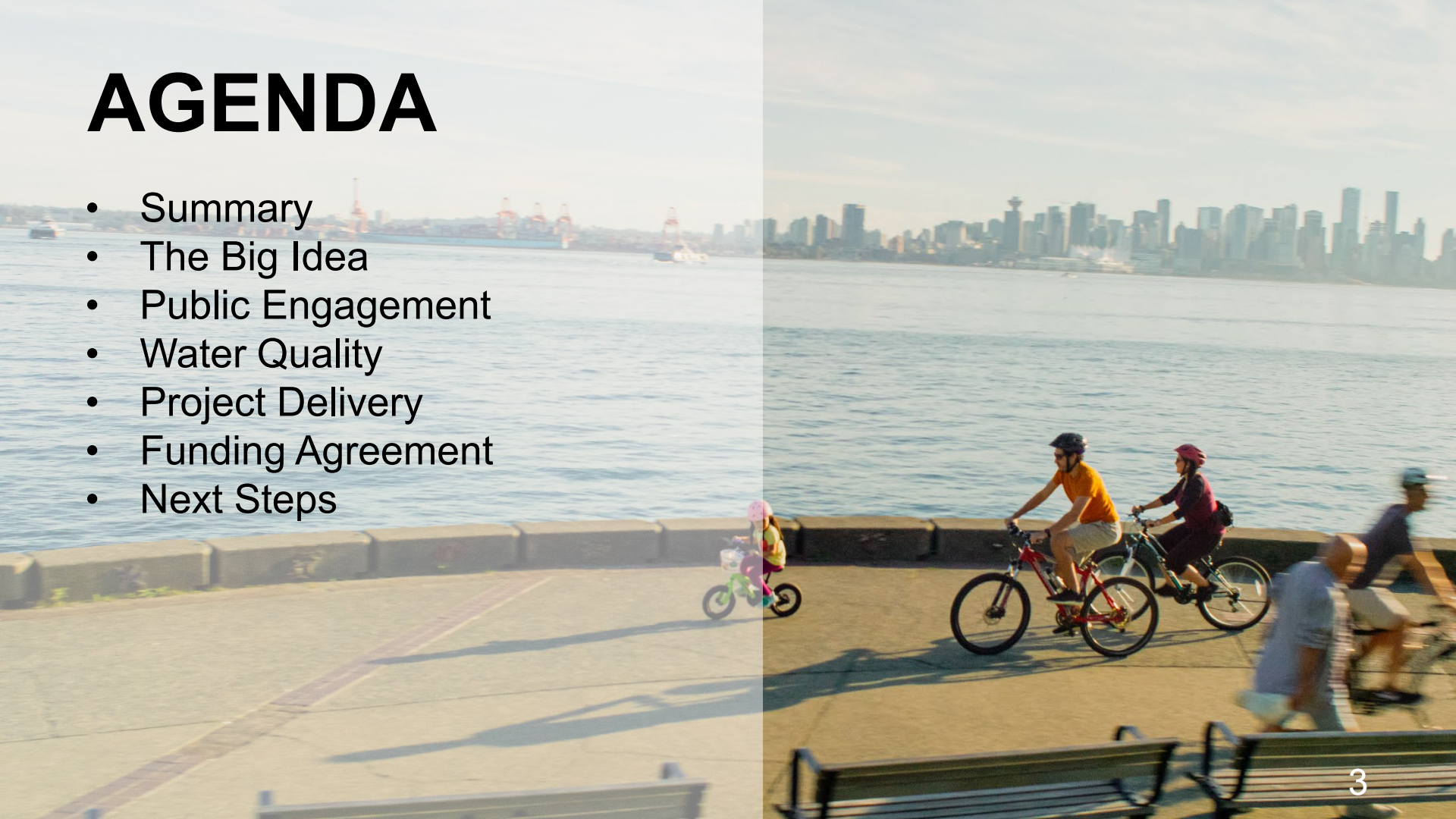
Purpose

To provide an overview and update of the Harbour Swimming Deck project, including early indications from on-going public engagement, an overview of water quality regulations and testing completed for the project, projected timeline and next steps.



AGENDA

- Summary
- The Big Idea
- Public Engagement
- Water Quality
- Project Delivery
- Funding Agreement
- Next Steps





BACKGROUND

- In late 2023 **Swim Drink Fish (SDF)**, national not-for-profit organization approached the City with the idea of harbour swimming deck in front of Waterfront Park
- The capital cost of the harbour deck is to be predominantly funded through the philanthropy of the **Weston family**
- A **feasibility study** for the project was undertaken to determine practicality and explore a preliminary concept design





Funding Agreement

Swim Drink Fish | Weston family foundations

\$16M funding the majority of the capital cost

The City of North Vancouver

City contribution of **\$5M from developer funds**, covering the remainder of the project capital cost

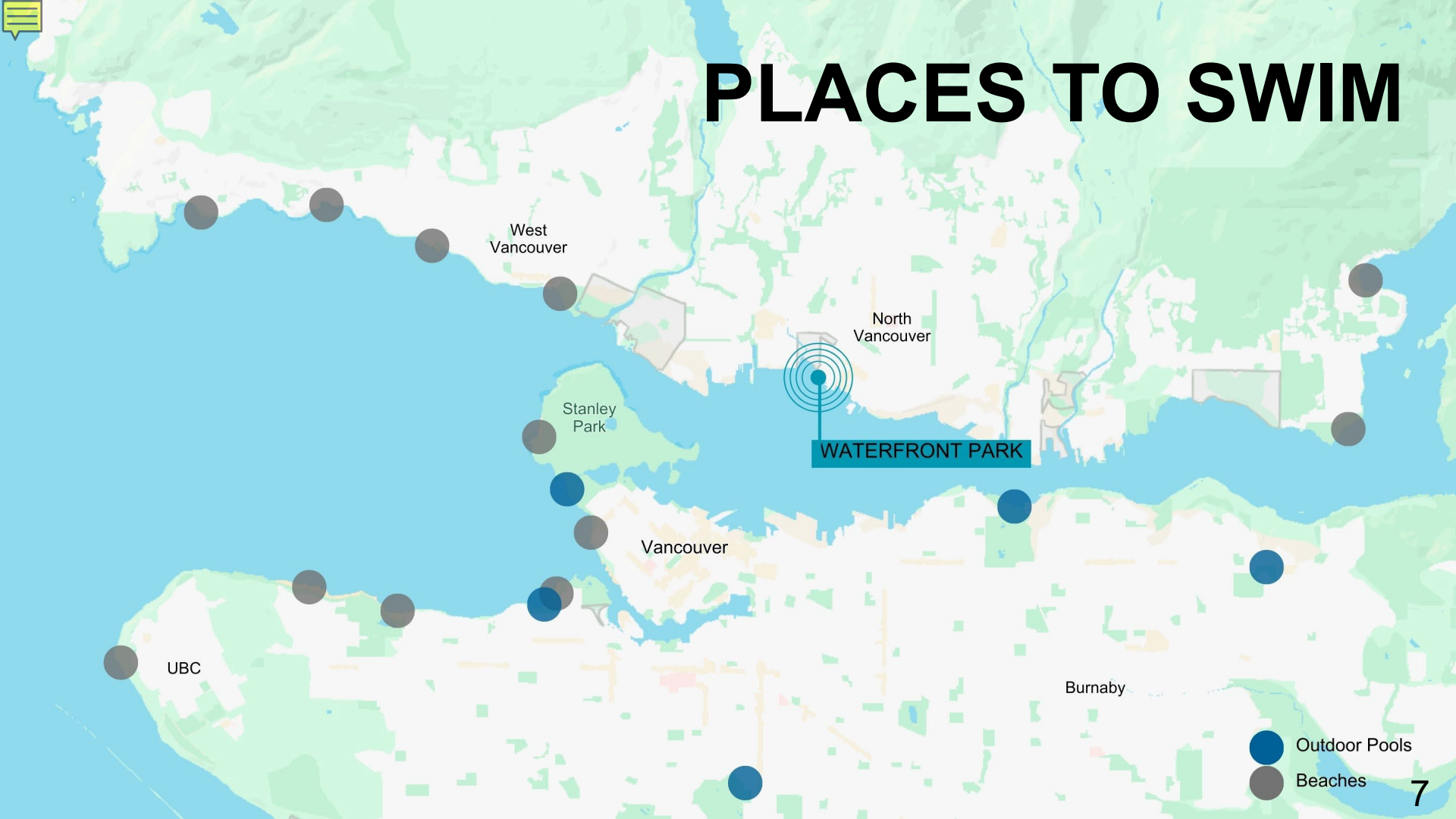
Total Project Budget

\$21M

THE BIG IDEA

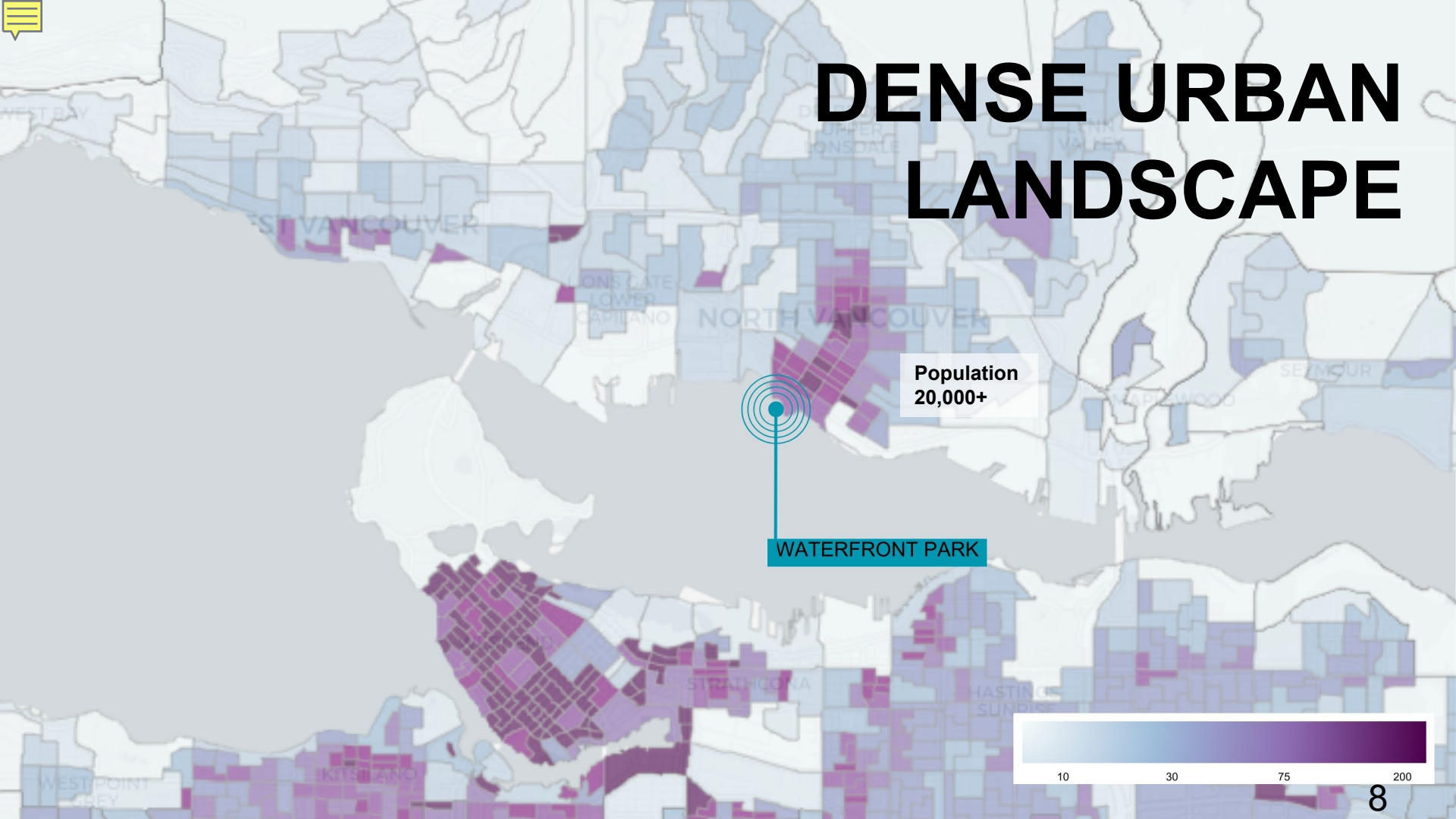


PLACES TO SWIM





DENSE URBAN LANDSCAPE



An aerial photograph of a city waterfront. The top half of the image is faded and contains the title text. The bottom half shows a detailed view of a harbor with numerous boats, a large green park area, and various buildings. A blue arrow points from the bottom left towards a specific area on the waterfront, indicating a site for expansion.

EXPANDING THE CITY'S FOOTPRINT

THE CITY'S WATERFRONT EXPERIENCE



KINGS MILL WALK
PARK

The map shows an aerial view of a city waterfront. A green path with white dots runs along the water's edge, labeled 'KINGS MILL WALK PARK'. A blue path is labeled 'HARBOUR DECK AT WATERFRONT PARK'. A red building complex is labeled 'THE SHIPYARDS'. A white line with a circular pattern of dots connects the waterfront to the city center. A yellow speech bubble is in the top left corner.

HARBOUR DECK AT
WATERFRONT PARK

THE
SHIPYARDS

THE CITY'S WATERFRONT EXPERIENCE



KINGS MILL WALK
PARK

The image is an aerial photograph of a city waterfront. A white dotted line traces a path along the water's edge. Along this path, there are green tree icons and yellow circular icons. A blue rectangular area is also marked on the path. The path leads from the left side of the image, through a residential area, and towards a waterfront area with industrial buildings. The water is dark blue, and there are some small boats or structures in the water. The city grid is visible in the background.

HARBOUR DECK AT
WATERFRONT PARK

THE
SHIPYARDS



Islands Brygge
Copenhagen, Denmark - 2002



Kastrup Harbour Bath
Kastrup, Denmark - 2005



Helgoland Sobadeanstalt
Helgoland, Denmark - 2008



Pirrama Park
Sydney, Australia - 2010



Coral Park
Copenhagen, Denmark - 2011



Sorenga Sjobad
Norway - 2015



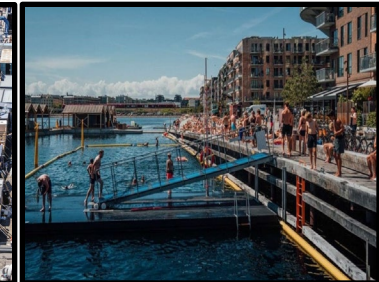
Vestre Fjord Park
Alborg, Denmark - 2017



Bassin de la Villette
Paris, France - 2017



Arhus Harbor Bath
Aarhus, Denmark - 2018



Sandkaj Harbour Bath
Copenhagen, Denmark - 2018



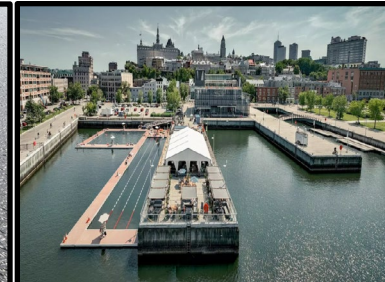
Gord Edgar Downie Pier
Kingston, Canada - 2018



BLÅ RUM
Herning, Denmark - 2021



Skanderborg City Baths
Denmark - 2021



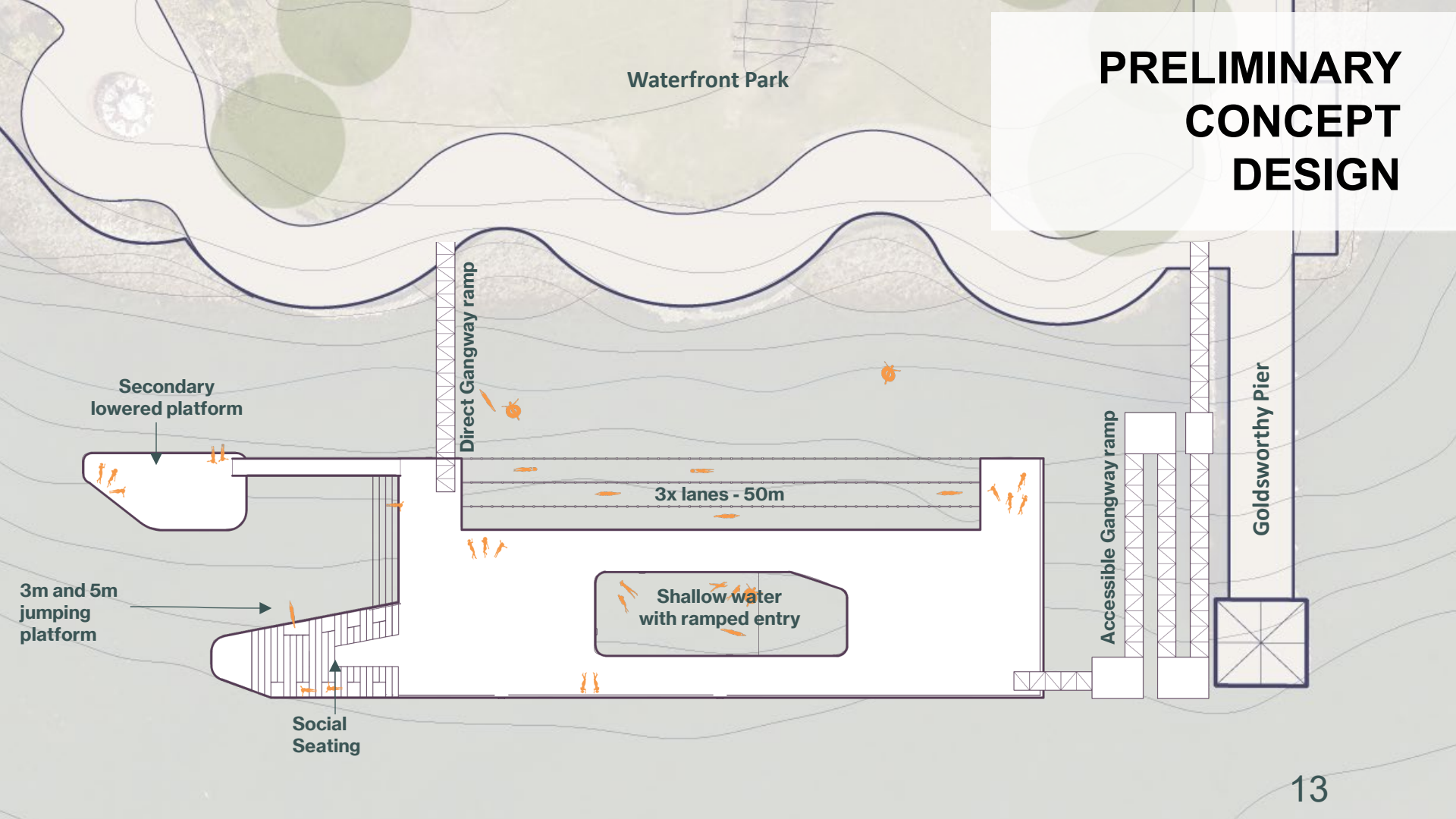
L'Oasis
Quebec City, Quebec - 2022



Waterfront Park Harbour Deck
North Vancouver, Canada - 2027

LEADING GLOBAL CITIES

PRELIMINARY CONCEPT DESIGN



Indicative concept design for illustrative purposes only

RECREATION FEATURES

- ✓ Generous, safe, protected swimming areas
- ✓ Shallow sea water pool with zero entry (accessible)
- ✓ Lane swimming - >50m x3 lanes
- ✓ Jumping - 3m & 5m
- ✓ Spacious lounging and seating



SAFETY FEATURES

- ✓ Life guarded in peak seasons
- ✓ First aid services
- ✓ Safety railings
- ✓ Two access ramps
- ✓ Gradual entry features e.g. ramps and stairs for acclimatization
- ✓ Surrounded by a buoy line to keep swimmers safe
- ✓ Security guarded overnight



AMENITIES



Changing stalls



Outdoor showers



Lounging/social
areas



Renewal of existing
washrooms

Site ambassadors and
activation elements
umbrellas, chairs,
planters.

Potential pop up bar,
concession in the future.



Indicative concept design for illustrative purposes only

INCLUSIVE FEATURES

- ✓ Access ramp to allow access by people using mobility devices, even at low tide
- ✓ Ramped entry, roll or walk in pool in the center of the deck





COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- ✓ Connection with water
- ✓ Social connection
- ✓ Health and wellness
- ✓ Low-barrier services
- ✓ Value for money
- ✓ Economic benefits



YOUTH

- ✓ Social gathering
- ✓ Casual physical activity
- ✓ A sense of fun, adventure and challenge/risk
- ✓ Transit accessible

Cold water immersion can boost dopamine levels of 530%

European Journal of Applied Physiology



FAMILIES

- ✓ Free, low barrier activity for young families
- ✓ Helps meet demand (and long waitlists) for swimming lessons

Kids who swim reach cognitive milestones 10 months earlier compared to the kids who don't

Griffith University of Australia

OLDER ADULTS

- ✓ Social
- ✓ Low impact physical activity
- ✓ Fully accessible for those with mobility challenges

Older adults who swim have better cognitive ability compared to non-swimmers thanks to the rhythmic movements and sensory feel of the water, especially in open water swimming

Journal of Aging Research





FITNESS AND TRAINING

- ✓ Helps meet the high demand for 50m lap swimming
- ✓ On the Spirit Trail - walking, running or cycling

Swimming for just 30 minutes a week can even help to guard against heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes – Diabetes UK



WELLNESS

- Growing outdoor swimming culture - wild swimming, open water swimming, year round “polar bear” swimming, cold plunge

“Swimmers who maintained their regular group wild swim sessions for six months or more reported their life satisfaction improved by 25%, their happiness increased by 20%, whilst their feeling of worthiness went up by 23%. Significantly, their anxiety levels decreased by 18%.” The Wild Swim Project (Surrey, UK)



SOCIAL CONNECTION

- ✓ A central venue for neighborhood events and casual gatherings
- ✓ A secure, positive environment for youth socializing
- ✓ Vibrant space for people-watching that combats social isolation
- ✓ Diverse seating and gathering areas on land and deck to encourage interaction



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

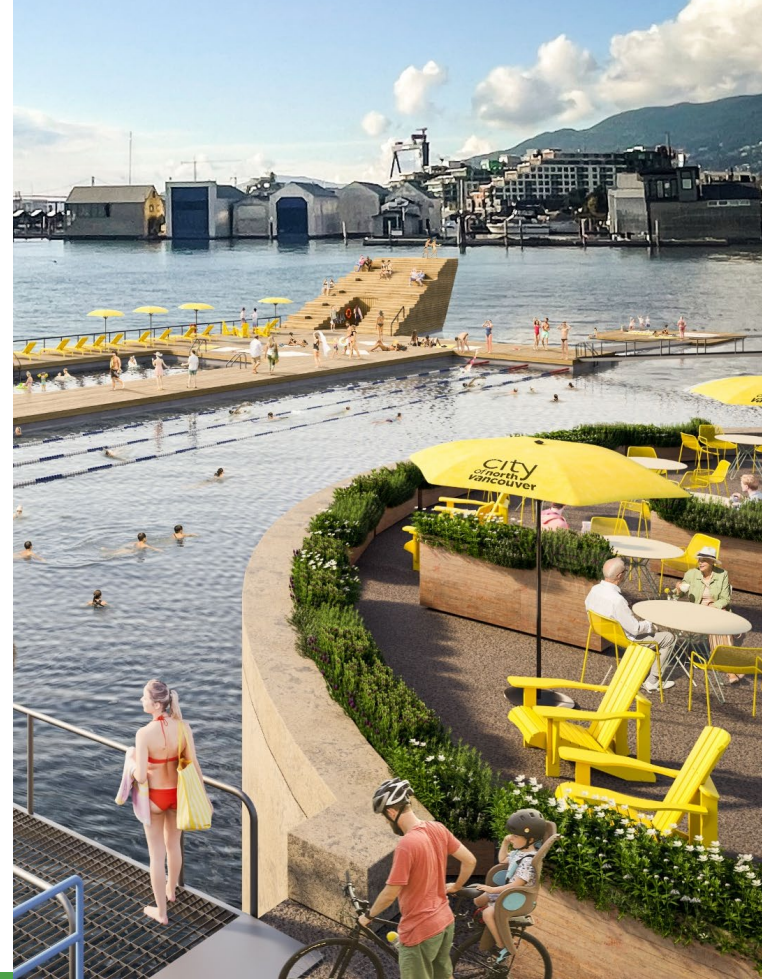
The project is anticipated to have minimal environmental impact

- ✓ The deck would create a **climate change resilient** waterfront recreation space, adaptive to sea level rise and offering a space for **cooling off in extreme hot weather**
- ✓ Sense of **connection with the water** fosters environmental stewardship and responsibility for water quality



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- ✓ New visitors to the City's waterfront and The Shipyards
- ✓ Increase local spending (e.g. food and beverage)
- ✓ Enhanced overall positive sentiment
- ✓ Known as a vibrant destination
- ✓ Showing bold, innovative, leadership





ECONOMIC BENEFITS

While accessing the Harbour Deck is free,
visitors are likely to visit nearby local
business

Potentially spending
~\$10M
per year in Lower
Lonsdale





Cost Overview

The feasibility analysis cites the following rough order of magnitude (ROM) costs:

Capital Costs* est. \$21M¹

*incl. soft + hard costs

Operating Costs est. \$7-800k/yr²

City of North Vancouver responsibility (City maintains ownership of asset)

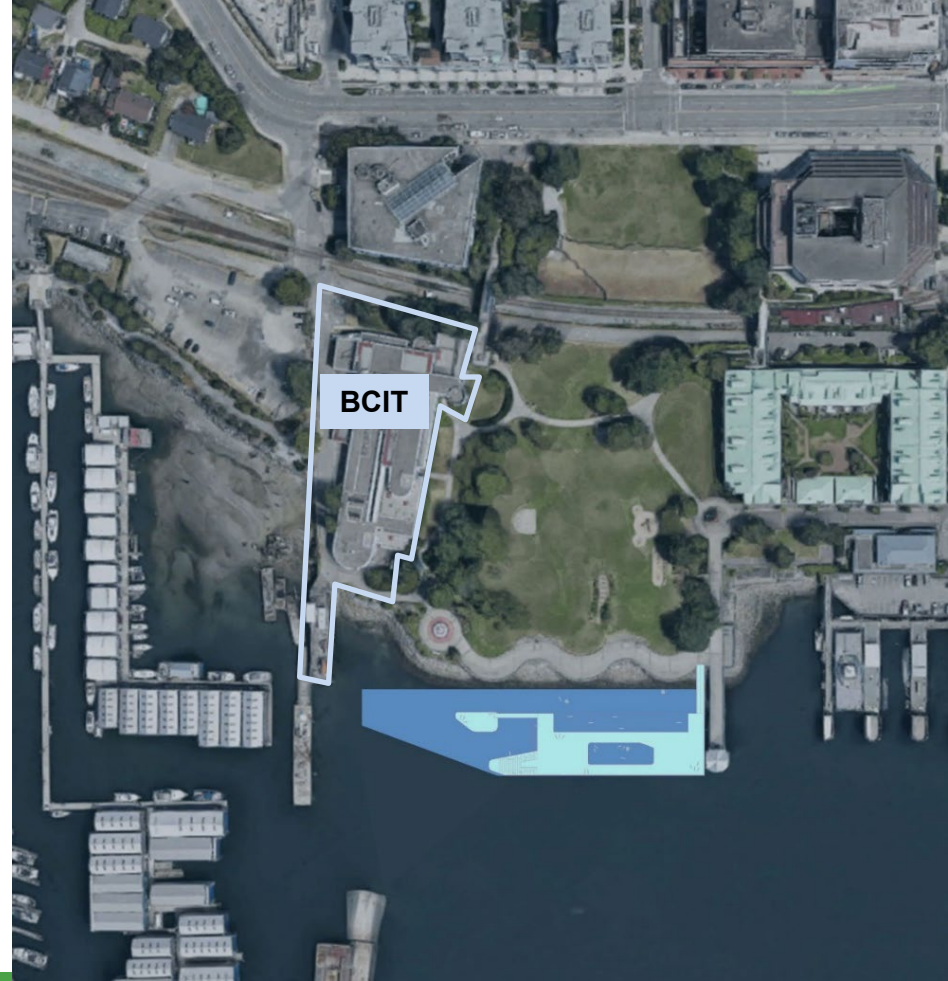
¹ Capital costs developed by professional quantity surveyor based on schematic design and VFPA PPR received

² Operating costs developed by internal CNV consultation based on schematic design and identified assumptions including maintenance and renewal costs over the life of the deck - costs would not be incurred until Harbour Deck is operational (estimated from Spring 2027)

VALUE FOR MONEY

+ ~7000 sqm of public space to the City
without purchase of additional land

Land value estimate - \$38.3M
(*BCIT Land value - BC Assessment*)





VALUE FOR MONEY

An open water swimming experience is far cheaper to build and operate than an outdoor pool

Recent 25m outdoor pools in MetroVan

- Construction - \$20-32M
- 4 month operating season
- Operating Costs - \$77k-\$225k/month

The proposed Harbour Swimming Deck:

- Project Costs - ~\$21M
- Year-round operation potential
- Operation - \$58 - \$66k/month (based on an estimated \$700k - \$800k/yr operating budget)



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Public Engagement

An initial public engagement period ran from June 1 to June 30, drawing over 3,000 online and in-person interactions.

- Engagement focused on:
 - Process to-date, including partnership, schematic design and on land improvements
 - Preliminary Operations Plan
 - Water quality

Engagement activities included:

- Online survey on CNV's Let's Talk page
- On-site pop-up events at Waterfront Park and Shipyards
- Youth engagement – SD#44 (targeted email with link to survey) and North Vancouver Library Teen Space (pop-up event at Library)

Engagement was promoted through:

- City-wide postcards, targeted mailout for nearby neighbours
- Digital social media and traditional media
- On-site signage and local posterage (physical and digital)
- Targeted community outreach and digital mail outs via Let's Talk database



Public Engagement

The process drew 2,695 survey respondents and over 400 participants across three on-site events at Waterfront Park and The Shipyards.

Early Indications

- 1) Two-thirds of participants said they'd use the swimming deck
- 2) Key concerns include: water quality, municipal spending, increased noise at park, and parking access
- 3) Participants are most excited about: access to water, lane swimming, and sunbathing

Targeted engagement will continue in the fall with youth and businesses. A full **What We Heard Report** will be available this fall.



WATER QUALITY



SWIM
DRINK
FISH

Overview

The following slides provide a snapshot of the multi-year water quality monitoring program undertaken by Swim Drink Fish to assess Waterfront Park's suitability for recreational swimming.





Engaging in any natural water activity inherently involves some baseline level of risk.

Public health decisions are fundamentally about keeping that risk within an acceptable limit.

Regulatory Framework



In Canada, recreational water management is a collaborative, multi-jurisdictional effort that seeks to protect public health and safety through a preventive risk management approach.

Federal

- Health Canada is responsible for establishing the scientific foundation for safe recreational waters by publishing the Guidelines for Canadian Recreational Water Quality.
- Health Canada establishes guideline values for physical, aesthetic, chemical, and microbiological parameters.

Provincial

- In B.C., the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV), alongside the Ministry of Health (HLTH) and the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS), translates federal science into provincial policy.

Local

- The day-to-day oversight, monitoring, and direct public health management of recreational waters are handled by local authorities.
- In Metro Vancouver, this is a collaborative effort between municipalities, Metro Vancouver, and Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH).

Managing Risk

Type of Risk	Description	Substances	Risk Management	Oversight
Acute Health Risk	Sudden, intense, and short-lived, usually tied to short-term exposure	Bacteria (e.g., E. coli or Enterococci), and blue-green algae	Routine recreational water monitoring programs, making public advisories when bacteria exceed guideline values	Local public health authorities
Chronic Health Risk	Long-term, ongoing exposure that lasts over time, often compounding slowly, usually tied to drinking water or eating fish or shellfish	Heavy metals (e.g., Cadmium, Zinc, Copper, Mercury), organic chemicals (solvents, pesticides, hydrocarbons), and PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances)	Developing drinking water quality and fish and shellfish consumption guidelines	Provincial and Territorial governments informed by Federal science
Incident-based Health Risk	An environmental incident or spill is a sudden, accidental release of hazardous chemicals, or pollutants into a water body that causes immediate localized contamination and health or safety risks	Petrochemical and oil spills, high-concentration acid or alkali leaks, pesticide/fertilizer runoff surges, and urban/industrial wastewater overflows	Developing a Marine Spill Response Plan for early detection and management of location throughout the period of risk	Municipal beach or swim-site managers



Key Takeaways for Swimmers

Acute risks are the primary concern:

- When it comes to determining if water is suitable for swimming, local health authorities primarily focus on indicator bacteria like E. coli.

Chronic risks apply more to diet than to swimming:

- Other contaminants may be present in water, however to pose a risk to people, one would need to regularly drink large amounts of the water or consume fish and shellfish over a long period of time.



Waterfront Park Assessment

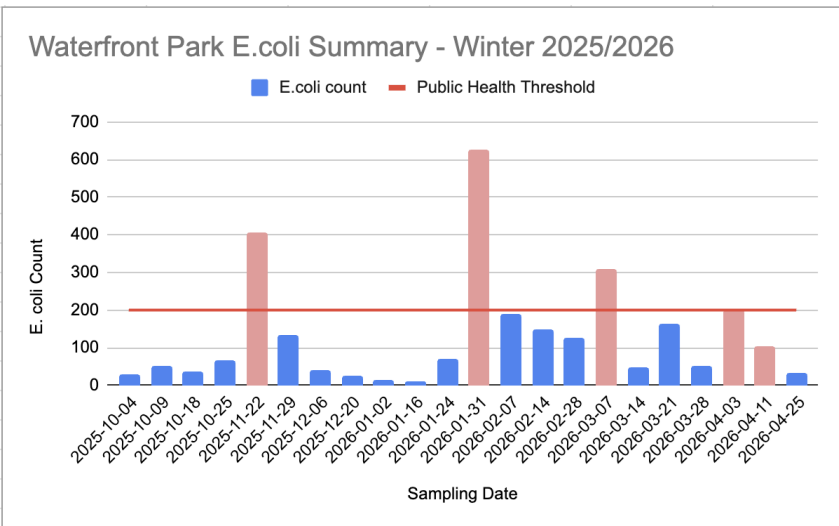
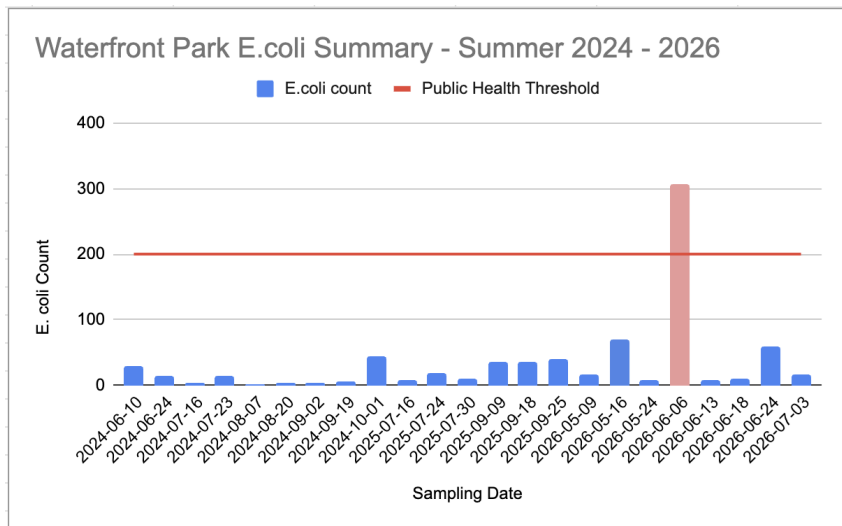
To assess Waterfront Park's recreational suitability, SDF conducted:

1. **Biological Water Quality Monitoring** in the water lot during the 2024, 2025, and 2026 summer swimming seasons and during the off-season in 2025 and 2026 following the same E.coli testing guidelines that Metro Vancouver uses at other local beaches.
2. **2024 Non-Bacterial Contaminant Review** of existing studies to assess the presence of contaminants (including heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and contaminants of emerging concern) in Burrard Inlet and determine whether their concentrations pose a risk to recreational activities in the area.
3. **2026 Water Column Chemical Sampling** at Waterfront Park to support the City of North Vancouver's operational safety plan and spill response protocols.



1. Biological Water Quality Monitoring

The biological water quality testing results from Waterfront Park show the water meets or exceeds health standards for swimming because **E. coli bacteria levels are consistently below levels set by local authorities.**



Environmental conditions like rain and temperature can all influence levels of bacteria. Rainfall and stormwater runoff can carry bacteria from urban parks and other land surfaces into the water. This is the reason Vancouver Coastal Health recommends avoiding swimming in any open waters for 48 hours after heavy rains.

2. 2024 Non-bacterial Contaminant Review

The review concluded that:

- Through the consumption of fish and shellfish these contaminants may have possible adverse effects to human health
- The low concentration of the contaminants in the water column **do not pose an acute risk to swimmers.**

Full report is available for review [here](#).



3. 2026 Water Column Chemical Sampling

Chemical sampling results from the Waterfront Park water column indicate that:

- The concentration of non-bacterial contaminants in the water column is **too low to pose an acute risk to human health for recreational swimming.**



3. 2026 Water Column Chemical Sampling

Test Group	Summary	BC RWQG <i>BC Recreational Water Quality Guideline</i>
General Water Quality	All within acceptable range for recreation	✓
Metals	Concentrations within recreational guidelines and general low or below detectable laboratory limit	✓
Organic Contaminants	PAHs, VOCs, chlorophenols and other organics were present at trace concentrations within applicable guidelines	✓
Nutrients	All concentrations within applicable recreational or marine water quality guidelines	✓

Ongoing Water Quality Monitoring

While two years of monitoring have demonstrated that the site is suitable for swimming, continuing to collect data will build the long-term dataset and support informed management decisions.

- Swim Drink Fish will continue to monitor E. coli levels.
- Once the Harbour Swimming Deck opens to the public, Metro Vancouver, in partnership with VCH, will test Waterfront Park as part of its recreational water quality monitoring program.
- Results will be available on Metro Vancouver and VCH's websites.



Incident Response Plan

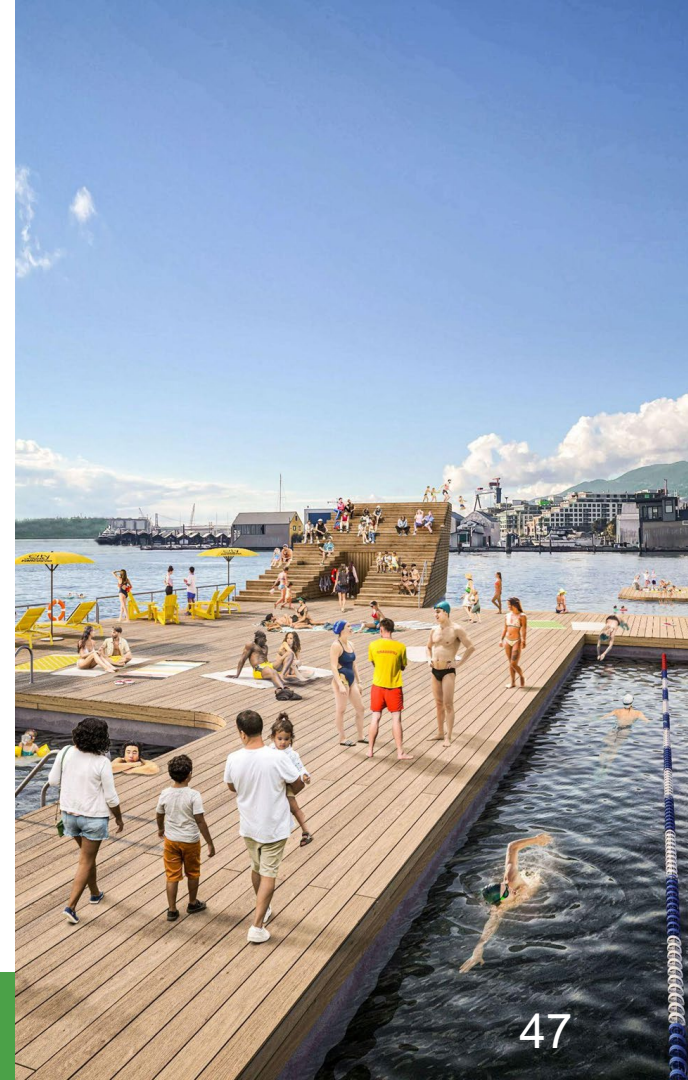
- The City of North Vancouver will be developing a robust Incident Response Plan that details protocols for detection, reporting, and advising the public during events such as isolated industrial discharges, oil spills, or other incidents that result in the release of contaminants into nearby waters.



Summary

The Harbour Swimming Deck project is supported by two years of water quality testing by Swim Drink Fish. The **results show it has been consistently suitable for swimming, meeting or exceeding health standards.**

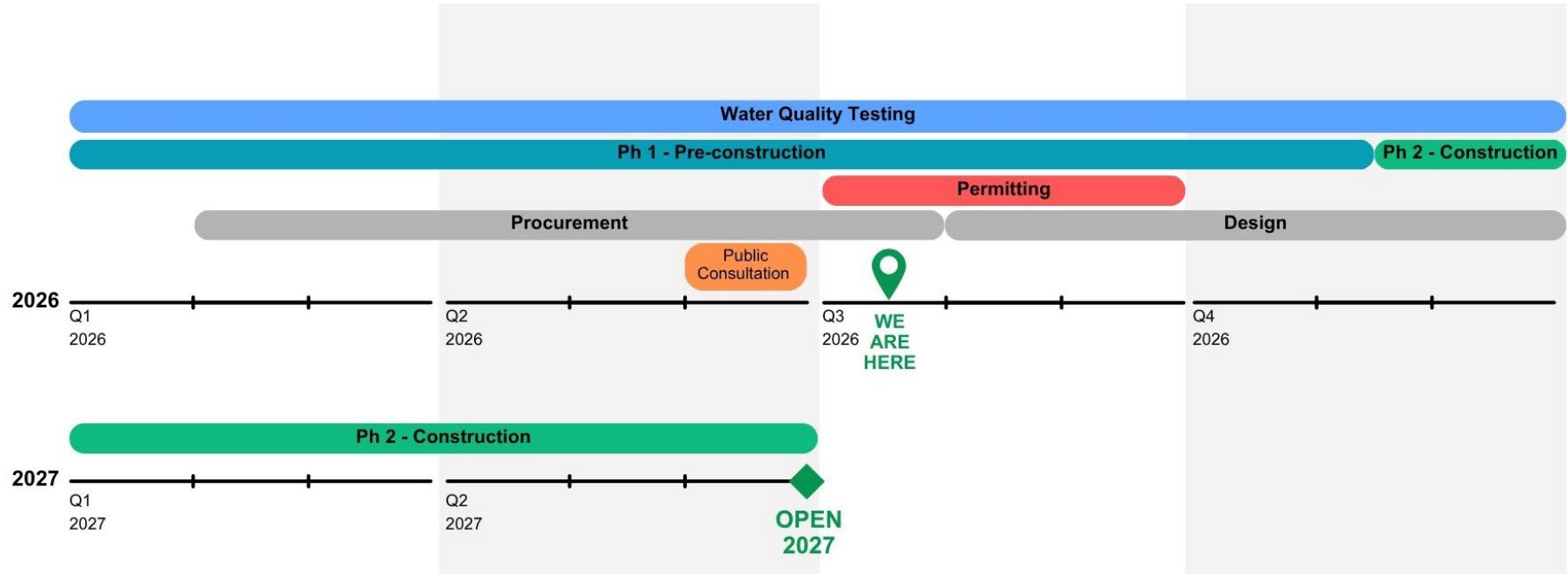
- E. coli bacteria levels in the water are consistently below levels set by local authorities.
- Low concentration of contaminants in the water column do not pose any acute risk to human health for the purposes of recreational swimming.
- A response plan is in development by CNV to detect and manage incident-based health risks.
- Once the deck opens, ongoing E. coli monitoring will be conducted by Metro Vancouver in partnership with Vancouver Coastal Health.



NEXT STEPS



Project Delivery



N.B. Timelines are subject to external and internal factors and are subject to change.

Next Steps

- Complete What We Heard Report – Fall 2026
- Develop materials for Port Permit
- Submit Port Permit
- Detailed Design
- Tender
- Construction
- Operating Plan for Council Decision
- Opening



Thank you.