Assessing Aquatic Space Solutions:

An Exploratory Study of Infrastructure Options in Amateur Swimming

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In memory of Randy Bennett who helped provide the inspiration for this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Island Swimming Club (ISC) is a large, non-profit age group swimming organization in the Greater Victoria Area in British Columbia, Canada. ISC provides a variety of programs including school swim programs, Learn to Swim programs, as well as development and competitive swimming programs. Demand for registration with ISC currently exceeds the organization's available pool time and space. ISC is therefore missing out on an opportunity for growth. In addition, ISC also faces infrastructure challenges related to: geographical distribution of facilities; access to the right type and configuration of pool spaces in the right amount; and ensuring the organization can be responsive to client demand in the long term.

ISC currently relies exclusively on municipal facilities for its infrastructure needs. It has been suggested that exploring other infrastructure solutions, such as a dedicated ISC swim facility, could allow ISC to eliminate its waitlist as well as provide ISC with additional opportunities to be more effective and efficient in achieving its mission. By looking to potential space solutions and their implications now, ISC also has the opportunity to optimize its infrastructure into the future**.**

Objectives

The overall purpose of this study was to help the ISC Board of Directors and club management better understand the potential benefits, barriers, consequences, and requirements of different options for expanding the club's infrastructure, thereby informing their future decision-making. The study focused on the following more specific research objectives:

1. to identify the infrastructure currently used by swim organizations, and what other solutions might exist;
2. to identify the implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships of adopting different infrastructure solutions; and
3. to analyze the feasibility and desirability of specific solutions for ISC in its current context.

This study was primarily exploratory in nature and was not intended to recommend a definitive course of action for ISC. It did, however, narrow down the range of options for future analysis, identify some of the key trade-offs, and provide recommendations on ISC's next steps in its pursuit of informed infrastructure decision-making.

Methods

Three separate but complementary lines of enquiry were undertaken in order to address the study's objectives: (1) a literature review related to amateur sport (particularly swimming), non-profit management, and infrastructure; (2) a review of club websites in Canada; and (3) in-depth interviews with key informants from Canadian swim clubs. The results of these lines of enquiry were synthesized to provide a comprehensive picture of current and potential infrastructure solutions, and both general and ISC-specific considerations in adopting any one of these solutions.

Key Findings

Infrastructure Solutions

This study identified two primary models by which swim clubs obtain facility infrastructure: an external model, and an internal model. The external model refers to clubs who procure space from another organizational entity such

as a recreation facility operated by the local government. The internal model refers to clubs which provide their own infrastructure and includes institution-run clubs (i.e. clubs run by the facility itself). Within each of these models there are different providers of facilities, including: municipal, school, university, YMCA/YWCA, other non-profit organizations, Department of National Defence, other federal government departments, private organizations, community centres, universities, and club-owned facilities.

These models and providers may or may not also involve some form of partnership. Governance-based partnerships include multi-sport clubs, in which multiple amateur sports are governed by a single organization. Facility-based partnerships are those in which multiple organizations collaborate on some aspect of developing, operating, or using a facility. Partnership arrangements can be also based on programming. Clubs may provide swimming lessons at local facilities or run school swimming programs. A club might also become the "primary tenant" of a facility, an arrangement by which the club organizes and provides its own programming and that of the facility itself.

Finally, space solutions might be internally generated and involve only the swim club itself. Specific strategies identified through this study included rearranging programming across existing facilities and using alternate space within an existing facility.

Solution-Specific Implications

Different space solutions each come with their own particular implications for club mission, finances, capacity, and relationships. In general, the external model is financially sound, although clubs may experience mission conflict with facility providers. Use of municipal facilities in particular may lead to competition with multiple other user groups, and potential challenges managing relationships due to staff turnover or lack of direct access to facility staff. However, municipal facilities also tend to offer preferential allocation and rental rates to non-profit sport clubs. Clubs may find it easier to secure pool time/space with private facilities; however, private facilities may also be less invested in maintaining a strong relationship with the club.

In terms of the internal model, clubs which develop and/or run their own facility may benefit from greater and more consistent access to pool time/space, thus providing security for club growth and potential opportunities to enhance swimmer performance and to create additional revenue streams. However, this solution also has major financial and capacity-related demands. It creates long-term implications for capital and operating funding. It also requires large amounts of reserve funding or credit to initiate, thus potentially necessitating the use of other external funding sources which may create additional risks and accountabilities for the club. This solution also typically requires a club to provide additional programming beyond its core mandate in order to support the facility financially. In addition, this solution requires significant expertise and manpower and may entail the need for structural changes to club governance and administration.

Partnership models create the potential to improve space allocation and usage, increase programming quality through shared learning, deliver innovative programs, maximize resources, enhance long-term viability for facilities, and share risk across multiple organizations. However, partnerships can also present challenges in terms of different organizational mandates and distributing funds across disparate groups.

Organizational Considerations

ISC's role as a non-profit organization and an amateur sports club, and features specific to ISC such as its programming and administrative partnerships, also create considerations for infrastructure decision-making.

These considerations can also be understood as stemming from four key areas of concern: mission, finances, capacity, and relationships.

Most importantly, ISC needs to consider the extent to which any infrastructure solution supports ISC's mission "to provide a balanced and sustainable competitive program to every swimmer at every level, to create a swimming community in Greater Victoria, where success is measured beyond our podium results" (Island Swimming, n.d.a., para 6). This includes assessing whether the solution prioritizes competitive versus other programming, and understanding the impacts or unintended consequences of this on club internal relations, financial stability, and long term performance and growth. For ISC, it is important to achieve balance due to the symbiotic nature of the different aspects of its programming. Non-competitive programming is fundamental to the financial stability of the organization, but competitive programs yield performance swimmers whose collective performance affect ISC's access to high performance facilities. ISC, which already provides a very wide range of programming, also needs to consider if a space solution will place additional non-core programming demands on the club, and jeopardize the quality of programs currently being delivered. Finally, ISC needs to consider whether environmental and technical aspects of a facility solution support the club's specific programming needs and performance goals, and whether the solution is ideally geographically located.

With respect to finances, important considerations for ISC in reviewing infrastructure options include diversity of revenues and preferred providers. ISC's primary source of revenues is membership fees. These fees can significantly influence member satisfaction and retention. ISC should therefore consider what additional cost pressures and/or revenue opportunities any infrastructure solutions might create for the club, particularly whether the solution will require a net increase in member fees. ISC's additional sources of revenue include government gaming revenue grants, meet hosting, sponsorships, administrative sub-contracts, and fundraising. A shift in infrastructure could potentially negate the viability of some of ISC's administrative sub-contracts and its eligibility for government grants or, in contrast, might provide a new sponsorship opportunity. Therefore ISC should consider how an infrastructure solution might impact each of its revenue streams and the overall diversity of its funding sources. A further consideration is that certain facility providers offer preferential rates to ISC, and ISC has the opportunity to renegotiate these contracts annually. ISC should consider whether other infrastructure solutions will increase net costs and/or the length of ISC's financial commitment to the facility.

Three key elements of capacity that are important for ISC to consider in infrastructure decision-making are governance and administration, coaching, and volunteer capacity. ISC is moving toward selecting board directors based on expertise; however, like other member-governed clubs, ISC's board is re-elected every several years. Going forward, ISC should consider whether it has the right structure and expertise to support facility decision-making and the oversight of any new facility solutions. For infrastructure solutions that result in major change or long-term implications, ISC may need to consider if its leadership structure provides sufficient stability and continuity. In addition, shifts in ISC infrastructure solutions which might risk its administrative contracts with other co-located organizations could impact ISC's overall administrative capacity. Administrative capacity could also be impacted by an increase or decrease in grant applications, funding accountability requirements, and the number of facility relationships to manage. Coaching capacity should also be considered as changes to facility location and distribution could impact the extent to which coaches can support the development of swimmers, as well as coach satisfaction. Finally, ISC's reliance on volunteer commitment and its concerns about volunteer burnout make it imperative that the club consider whether an infrastructure solution will create new demands (e.g. increased fundraising) for its members.

ISC should also consider the impact to its relationships with internal and external stakeholders in making decisions about infrastructure. The satisfaction of ISC's internal stakeholders (i.e. members) is important in and of itself, but

also to support retention and therefore club capacity and viability. Thus it is imperative that ISC consider to what extent members are aware of and understand any proposed infrastructure solution, and to what extent the solution is acceptable to them. In terms of external stakeholders, ISC generally has a strong relationship with its primary facility. In considering future space solutions, ISC should consider whether the solution provides greater or less consistency and predictability of infrastructure and to what extent the solution will allow ISC to maintain and/or enhance its existing partnerships. In looking at solutions beyond ISC's primary facility, ISC should also consider its relationships with other user groups. Closer collaboration with these groups could potentially improve access to facilities. Conversely, pursuing more pool time/space also has the potential to create conflicts or tensions between ISC and these external stakeholders.

Options and Recommendations

Based on the solutions identified through this study's research, three options were proposed for the future of ISC infrastructure:

1. **Maintain Current Trajectory** – This option would see ISC maintain its current complement of four municipal facilities, while continuing to pursue additional time and space with these providers. In addition, ISC could pursue partnerships with other user groups to influence allocation at its existing facilities. It could also consider internal strategies to reallocate its existing time and space.

2. **Pursue Additional External Facilities** – This option would see ISC pursue net new facility time/space with additional external sources, including other provider types.

3. **Develop ISC's Own Facility –** This option would see ISC establish its own dedicated facility. This might include partnering with other public or private entities on development and/or operation of the facility

Using both the organizational and solution-specific considerations derived through this study's research, each of these options was analyzed in terms of its potential implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships, while taking into account the specific context in which ISC operates. This analysis did not identify one option that was conclusively more desirable. Rather, each option had its own risks and rewards and each option would require ISC to accept certain trade-offs.

Ultimately, any decision about the future of ISC infrastructure will involve a value judgement about the priorities of the organization and how it defines success. In order to help ISC better position itself to make well-informed and objective infrastructure decisions into the future, the following recommendations are being made to ISC as important near-term steps:

- Clearly define what organizational success looks like by determining specific performance measures for the organization, and developing specific performance targets.
- Quantify the desired balance between competitive and non-competitive membership.
- Share and discuss the findings of this project within the organization.
- Establish an ISC committee or working group to focus on facilities and future infrastructure planning.
- Maximize the organization's networks and sphere of influence.
- Explore the potential strategic and financial benefits of other formal partnerships or alliances.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

Island Swimming Club (ISC) is a large, non-profit age group swimming organization in the Greater Victoria Area in British Columbia, Canada. Demand for registration with ISC currently exceeds the organization's available pool time and space. ISC currently relies on municipal facilities for its infrastructure needs. It has been suggested that exploring other infrastructure solutions, such as a dedicated ISC swim facility, could allow ISC to eliminate its waitlist as well as provide ISC with additional opportunities to be more effective and efficient in achieving its objectives.

The overall purpose of this study is to help the ISC Board of Directors and club management better understand the potential benefits, barriers, consequences, and requirements of different options for expanding the club's infrastructure, thereby informing their future decision-making. The researcher and ISC agreed upon the following more specific research objectives:

1. to identify the infrastructure currently used by swim organizations, and what other solutions might exist;
2. to identify the implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships of adopting different infrastructure solutions; and
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This study is primarily exploratory in nature and was not intended to recommend a definitive course of action for ISC. It does, however, narrow down the range of options for future analysis, identify some of the key tradeoffs, and provide recommendations on ISC's next steps in its pursuit of informed infrastructure decision-making.

1.2 Client Background

Island Swimming Club (ISC) is a non-profit age group swimming organization in the Greater Victoria Area in British Columbia, Canada. ISC's vision is "Swimming for excellence in life" and its mission is to "provide a balanced and sustainable competitive program to every swimmer at every level, to create a swimming community in Greater Victoria where success is measured beyond our podium results" (Island Swimming, n.d.a., para 6).

ISC was founded in 1913 as the Victoria Amateur Swim Club (VASC) and is the oldest non-profit swim club in Canada. Members swam outdoors until 1925. Over the years, ISC has undergone a number of shifts in terms of name and organization. Early in its history, it merged with the Victoria Ladies Swim Club and later briefly formed an alliance with two other local clubs as part of the Vancouver Island Swimming League. In 1940 Pacific Swim Club was amalgamated with VASC. In 1964, VASC adopted the name Victoria Olympians for its competitive team. Beginning in 1988, VASC and the Juan de Fuca Coho Swim Club began to swim together competitively at most senior level and non-regional swim meets off Vancouver Island as "Island Swimming." This later included the Tyee Aquatic Club for a number of years as well.

Today, ISC is one of the top swim clubs in Canada in terms of swim performances. ISC provides a variety of programs including school swim programs, Learn to Swim programs, as well as development and competitive swimming programs. ISC has over 150 competitive athletes and more than 200 swimmers in its development level programs (Island Swimming, n.d.b., para 1). Development and non-competitive programming is fundamental to support the viability of the club overall. The larger number of members in earlier levels and non-competitive streams increases the club's overall pool of resources which allows it to also support training for high performance

athletes. In turn, younger swimmers have the opportunity to train with highly experienced coaches and are exposed to elite level swimmers. However, the symbiotic nature of ISC's programs also has the potential to create internal conflict. Tensions can arise from decisions about prioritizing resources between different streams of programming, including pool time and space.

ISC currently operates out of four different local pools (Saanich Commonwealth Place, Panorama, Juan de Fuca, and SEAPARC) in order to offer development swimmers more convenient options (Island Swimming, n.d.a., para 3). ISC swimmers who reach Provincial levels (AAA) and above train together at Saanich Commonwealth Pool (SCP). Pool time and space is currently arranged through four different local municipal organizations: Panorama Recreation, Saanich Recreation, West Shore Parks & Recreation Society, and the Sooke and Electoral Area Parks and Recreation Commission (SEAPARC). The procedures by which pool time and space are allocated differ among the facilities. At SCP, there is a high performance user committee which employs a specially designed matrix to allocate space and time based on AAA performances by club athletes. Thus club performance determines access to pool time and space. There is significant competition at this facility with other aquatic sports groups (other swim clubs, water polo, triathlon, etc.) for primetime space between 4 and 7 p.m. Allocation is less complex at the three other facilities whereby ISC requests time and space with the facility manager.

ISC generates revenue in a number of ways. Its primary source (up to two-thirds) of revenue is membership fees. The next most significant source is gaming revenue grants from the provincial government. ISC also hosts a number of swim meets of varying sizes every year, including national and provincial meets, multi-day invitationals, and single day time trials. Hosting meets can be a good source of revenue for ISC, particularly provincial-level meets and the local school championships. It can, however, be quite competitive to obtain the former as ISC bids on these meets against other clubs. ISC may also generate a small amount of revenue through sponsorships that are typically focused around hosted meets, as well as from administrative sub-contracts and fundraising. Finally, it should also be noted that ISC is a society under BC's *Society Act* and is therefore subject to the financial accountability and reporting requirements of the Act.

ISC is governed by a Board of Directors elected from amongst the club's membership (i.e. parents). ISC has been recently evolving and adapting its governance and committee structures, e.g. they are moving towards selecting Directors based on expertise. Although ISC is Board-governed, it also has a dedicated Director of Swimming who is involved in the day-to-day operations of the club. All ISC coaches are paid professional staff, with the exception of some younger volunteers in training. ISC administration is supported by several other paid professionals, including a Club Manager and dedicated administrative staff. Like many member-governed clubs, ISC also relies significantly on the contributions of its volunteers, particularly in terms of supporting hosted meets. There have been concerns about the potential for volunteer burnout.

ISC is party to a number of arrangements related to athlete development, programming, facilities, finances, and administration. ISC has a partnership with the Victoria Academy of Swimming, a high performance organization focused on producing international-level swimmers. This partnership combines high performance with development programs, allowing international-level coaches and swimmers to guide up-and-coming swimmers. It also provides ISC with access to an integrated services team including physiotherapists, etc.

ISC also has partnership agreements with SCP to provide programming for very beginning level swimmers. This is the Wave Skills program which takes children as young as three years old. Through the high performance user committee at SCP, different user groups (including ISC) and the facility have also collaborated on the cost of infrastructure improvements.

Finally, ISC is party to a number of administrative sub-contracts. ISC has a contract with the Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence (PISE) to manage PISE's office space at SCP (where the ISC office is co-located). ISC is also sub-contracted to the Victoria Academy of Swimming to provide that organization with administrative support. These contracts generate modest revenue for ISC and better enable the club have its own dedicated administrative staff.

1.3 ISC's Infrastructure Challenge

The infrastructure-related challenges currently faced by ISC have multiple facets. First, ISC is an organization with growth potential, but this potential is limited by its current access to pool time and space. Demand for registration with ISC currently exceeds the organization's available pool time and space, with the largest backlog for entry-level competitive spots. ISC therefore has an opportunity to broaden its numbers in terms of younger swimmers.

Growth is important not simply for its own sake, but because it supports performance. It provides ISC with a greater cohort of swimmers, which increases its chances of developing future high performance athletes. Swimmer performance is a major part of ISC's organizational mission, but is also important because it affects ISC's space allocation at SCP, the only high performance facility available to the club. Having performance swimmers is also a draw for the organization and thus, in turn, might affect future membership numbers.

Geographically, ISC experiences its greatest challenges in meeting demand in the Westshore area of the Greater Victoria region. At the Juan da Fuca facility in this area, ISC has received the same amount of pool time and space for the past eight years. ISC has indicated that it could also use more time/space at SCP where it faces heavy competition with other user groups. In contrast, it has been easier for ISC to obtain additional space at Panorama and SEAPARC facilities. Thus ISC's infrastructure gap is not simply related to a certain level of swimmer, but is also about a mismatch between geographical areas of demand and ISC's available space. This mismatch is problematic because parents can be reluctant to drive longer distances. In addition, this mismatch could eventually impact ISC's registration levels if, as is expected, young families continue to become more prevalent in the Westshore and less common in other regions of Greater Victoria.

Currently, ISC hosts meets only at SCP. This facility is consistently updating its infrastructure to stay current with the requirements of competitive swimming. Although ISC could theoretically host smaller development meets at other facilities, it remains challenging to book the necessary time and space. For example, it can be difficult to book all lanes together at the same time. At non-SCP facilities it can also be difficult to obtain adequate space for dryland training, which is an important aspect of injury prevention and overall athlete development. In addition, ISC would ideally also be able to access more "warm" pool space (i.e. not a competition pool) for its younger swimmers. Thus a further component of the infrastructure challenge for ISC is a mismatch between the type or configuration of the space available to it, and what would be ideal for the club. This mismatch, in turn, can affect the types of programming and revenue generation activities (e.g. meets) offered by ISC.

In summary, ISC's primary infrastructure challenge is that it is currently missing out on an opportunity for growth and is not ideally positioned to be responsive to client demand in the long term. Subsumed within this are challenges related to geographical distribution of facilities, and access to the right type and configuration of pool spaces in the right amount. By looking to potential space solutions and their implications now, ISC has the opportunity to optimize its infrastructure into the future.

1.4 Report Organization and Key Terms

As noted in section 1.1, ISC and the researcher agreed to an exploratory study to support ISC's future infrastructure decision-making. This report represents the key deliverable agreed to between the researcher and

the client. The following sections of the report describe the research methods used and present the results for three separate but complementary lines of enquiry: (1) a review of the literature related to amateur sport (swimming in particular), non-profit management, and infrastructure; (2) a broad review of club websites in Canada; and (3) in-depth interviews with key informants from Canadian swim clubs.

The results of these lines of enquiry are then synthesized in the Discussion and Analysis section, providing a comprehensive picture of current and potential infrastructure solutions, and both general and ISC-specific considerations in adopting any one of these solutions. Finally, three infrastructure options are presented to address ISC's challenges and the specific implications of these options for ISC are analyzed in terms of their potential effect on mission, finances, capacity, and relationships. On the basis of this analysis, recommended next steps are developed for ISC.

There a number of key terms used throughout this report which, for the purposes of this study, have been defined as follows:

- **Solutions** is a generalized term used to refer to any method by which a club might seek to resolve an infrastructure challenge. As discussed further in this report, this may involve a shift in models and/or providers/sources, or through partnerships or internal strategies.
- **Infrastructure and facilities** are used interchangeably to refer to spaces used by swim clubs. This is predominantly pools, but might also include gym areas or deck space for dryland training, and office space.
- **Sources and providers** are used interchangeably to refer to entities from which a swim club might obtain facility time and space.
- **Facility/infrastructure models** refers to the overarching method of procuring space, in this case either from sources/providers internal or external to the club itself.
- **Governance models** refers to the ownership and management structure of a club. They have been divided into three main types: member-governed, institution-run, and coach-run. Member-governed clubs are parent-owned and structured as non-profit organizations. Institution-run clubs arise from swimming facilities that also own or operate a swim club. Coach-run clubs are usually structured as private organizations and owned by the coach (USA Swimming, 2007, pp. 34-35).

2.0 Methodology and Methods

The overall research methodology for this study was a non-experimental mixed methods design, including cross-sectional and comparative case study research designs. Three separate but complementary lines of enquiry were undertaken in order to meet the study's objectives. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed concurrently. Mixing of the data occurred post-analysis in the synthesis phase of this study, the results of which are presented later in the Discussion and Analysis section of this report.

The three lines of research for this study included: (1) a literature review related to amateur sport (swimming in particular), non-profit management, and infrastructure; (2) a review of club websites in Canada; and (3) in-depth interviews with key informants from Canadian swim clubs. These three distinct methods of research are described in further detail below.

2.1 Literature Review

There were two primary objectives to conducting a literature review for this study. The first was to understand the current state of research and knowledge in regards to the study's research objectives. Therefore the literature review included examination of: the infrastructure used by aquatic sport organizations; partnerships in sport and non-profit infrastructure; and the potential strengths, weaknesses, and implications of different infrastructure arrangements. The second objective of the literature review was to, where possible, identify potential recommended organizational practices and lessons learned that might be relevant to aquatic sport infrastructure decisions. Therefore, the literature review was broadened to consider non-profit decision-making (especially in terms of expansion initiatives or major capital projects), and the particular nature of aquatic sport organizations and the club system. It should be noted that this section of the literature review was not intended to be a comprehensive survey of existing research in this area, but rather to provide a brief flavour of some of the most recent and broad sources.

Formal and grey literature were searched using EbscoHost database searches, Google Scholar, and general Google searches. The primary keywords use for these searches included: aquatics, swim, club, amateur, pool, infrastructure, sport, performance, governance, non-profit, capital projects, and combinations thereof. Additional resources were also identified through the reference lists of initially retrieved articles, books, etc. In the end, relevant sources of information included peer-reviewed articles, published books, magazine editorials, and publications from sport governing bodies and governments. While the literature search was not limited to a particular country, most of the sources were from the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia.

There are several key limitations to the results of the literature review. In general, there was a lack of more rigorous, methods-driven studies, and there were no formal studies that centered on the specifics of aquatic infrastructure for swim clubs. A substantial number of sources stemmed from grey literature and it was often unclear upon what evidence these sources were basing their conclusions. More formal studies tended to use designs (e.g. single case study) that rendered them not widely generalizable, and were often on topics related more tangentially to the research questions at hand. Overall, the generalizability of the literature review results is limited, thus underscoring the importance of triangulating this information with additional data sources.

2.2 Review of Swim Club Websites

The purpose of this component of the study was to obtain actual data on the number and types of facilities used by swim clubs across Canada. More specifically, collecting and analyzing this information was undertaken to help

validate or disprove aspects of the findings of the literature review, to identify any patterns in terms of swim club facility infrastructure, and to uncover other types of facilities or space options not identified through the literature review. A review of swim club websites was selected as the method by which to obtain this data because of its convenience; the information was easy to locate and did not impose any burden on the clubs themselves.

Websites were reviewed for clubs in all Canadian provinces and territories, with the exception of Quebec which was excluded for language reasons. The review was limited to year round swim clubs, i.e. those clubs that typically swim from September to June, or longer. In other words, the review excluded clubs which swim during the summer only. This limitation was placed on the scope of the review based on the assumption that pool space requirements for winter swim clubs are very different from those of summer clubs, which can rely primarily on outdoor facilities.

Lists of winter swim clubs for each province/territory were obtained via the website of the applicable provincial sport organization (e.g., Swim Ontario). In total, 296 winter swim clubs were identified in Canada, excluding Quebec. Working from these lists, the researcher then reviewed each club's website, where available, and collected information on the following variables: club name; province; city; governance model; number of facilities used; name of each facility; and type of facility.

In order to determine the "type of facility" it was usually necessary to follow up with a web search (using Google) on the facility itself. For example, if a club website named each of its facilities but did not expressly note that they were run by the local government, a subsequent web search of the facility name might direct the investigator to the website of the city responsible for the facility.

Clubs were classified according to the governance typology suggested by USA Swimming (2007) and described in section 1.4 of this report. Over the course of the website review, clubs were classified as member-governed based on evidence of a board of directors. This information was typically found in published contact lists, a parent handbook, explicitly mentioned on the "about us" part of the website, or as part of an AGM announcement for election of board members. Clubs were classified as institution-run if they were varsity clubs (operated by a college/university), along with some clubs based out of YMCA/YWCA facilities, and private membership clubs. Coach-run clubs were generally identifiable from the absence of evidence of the other two club types. Often it was explicitly noted that the coach owned and operated the club.

All applicable club data was captured in an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using various descriptive statistics. Clubs which did not have a website or for which facility information was not available were not included in the analysis. In total, 261 of a potential 296 clubs were included in the analysis. Given that this is a very large sample of winter swim clubs in Canada, the analysis should be considered valid and generalizable.

However, there are some important limitations to the results of the club website review. The exclusion of clubs from Quebec may mean that additional facility types particular to this region were not captured. In terms of reliability, there is no guarantee that the information on a club's website is up to date. During the interview phase of this study, the investigator was able to validate facility information with several clubs. One club's website proved to have provided incorrect information, which was corrected in the data collection spreadsheet prior to analysis. The website review method was also very limited in terms of the level of detail it could provide. For example, a coach-run club might operate as a non-profit or for-profit organization, but the governance category does not distinguish between the two. Similarly, locating a facility's home page on a municipal website does not

provide any details of how the facility was built or who operates it. Day-to-day operations might be contracted out to a private company but this is impossible to determine from the website.

2.3 Interviews

The purpose of this component of the study was to explore in depth the functioning of swim clubs in Canada and the role of facilities in aquatic sport. By using interviews, this portion of the study sought to obtain more detailed qualitative information on the current strengths and challenges of Canadian swim clubs and the facilities they use, how facilities impact their organizations, methods of coping with infrastructure challenges, and much more.

This component of the study originally targeted two different groups of interview participants: (1) individuals in a leadership position with Canadian swim clubs (e.g. club managers, head coaches, presidents, etc.), and (2) experts in targeted fields of knowledge including local government staff, representatives of provincial/national sport organizations, private swim school operators, and aquatic facility managers.

Potential participants were identified primarily through the club website review and literature review. Elements of purposive and stratified sampling were used to identify potential swim club participants in order to obtain perspectives from individuals working in clubs with a variety of infrastructure and governance models and in different regions of Canada. Expert sampling was used to target other potential participants.

A total of 28 potential interviewees were contacted to request their participation in the study: 18 as representatives of a swim club in Canada, 10 as experts in various fields of relevance. Potential participants were invited to take part in the study by way of an email from the researcher. Follow-up emails were sent to those invitees who did not provide any response within 2 weeks.

In the end, 4 telephone interviews were completed in total for an overall response rate of approximately 14 percent. All of the interviews completed were with representatives of Canadian swim clubs; the researcher was unable to secure interviews with any of the targeted experts.

Interviews were approximately 45 minutes in length and were semi-structured. Participants were provided with an interview guide at least 24 hours in advance in order to support greater time for reflection on their responses. Interviews were recorded, later transcribed by the investigator, and finally analyzed using the protocol for thematic content analysis outlined by Anderson (2007).

In terms of limitations, the small number of interviewees limits the generalizability of interview findings. Despite this limitation, however, these findings remain invaluable to this study overall. In particular, the interviews contributed a much more nuanced understanding of the range of potential infrastructure solutions, as well as provided on-the-ground perspectives about the challenges and implications of different approaches to infrastructure in amateur swimming. Also, in synthesizing findings from the different lines of evidence for this report, the researcher emphasized those implications which were suggested not just in the interviews but also in another line of evidence as well, in order to bolster the study's overall credibility.

3.0 Results – Literature Review

As a first step in this study, a literature review was undertaken in order to understand the current state of research and knowledge in regards to the study's research objectives, as well as to identify potential recommended organizational practices and lessons learned that might be relevant to aquatic sport infrastructure decisions.

The results of the literature review highlight: current sources of infrastructure for sport clubs; the strengths and challenges of using this infrastructure (including its age and condition); partnership arrangements in sport and infrastructure, and their potential weaknesses and benefits; and the implications and recommendations for decision-making in non-profit contexts, and as related to sport infrastructure. These topics are each described in further depth in the following sections.

3.1 Current Sources of Infrastructure

Infrastructure Commonly Used by Sport Clubs

Research directly focused on the facilities used by swim or other aquatic sport clubs is limited. The review conducted for the study did not identify a single formal research study describing or analyzing different models of obtaining aquatic infrastructure for amateur sport. However, information was obtained from several other less formal sources, which begin to frame an understanding of models of facility provision. In an anecdotal commentary on collaboration between recreation and sport, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association [CPRA] (2013) identifies municipalities as one of the most significant providers of sport infrastructure for community sport groups in Canada, especially for aquatics (p. 10). Other facility providers include educational institutions, some private or commercial facilities, and facilities directly owned by sports groups (CPRA, 2013, p. 10). Green and Houlihan's (2005) comparative study of sport development issues provides a similar breakdown of sources of swim facilities for clubs in the United Kingdom: private operators, local authorities, and educational establishments. In their discussion of the evolution of amateur swimming associations in the UK, Collins and Sparkes (2010) suggest that swimming requires partnerships with local authorities and educational institutions because the cost is simply too much for the club to take on (p. 168). Further details are suggested by USA Swimming (2007) in an information brochure. In outlining the typical governance models for swim clubs, USA Swimming refers to "institutionally owned" clubs which may include universities and colleges, private schools or school districts, YMCAs or YWCAs, and parks and recreation departments (p. 34). It should be noted, however, that the information provided by these sources is anecdotal only. Although there is general agreement across the sources, it is unclear on what data the authors have based their observations or conclusions. Furthermore, there is little sense of the proportion of clubs using certain infrastructure sources, or why they use these sources.

Strengths and Challenges

In identifying common providers of facilities for sport clubs, most of these same authors also indicate some of the potential challenges with using certain providers, particularly municipal. The primary challenges noted by both CPRA (2013) and Green and Houlihan (2005) are the different mandates of municipal facilities and sport clubs, and the competing demands for municipal facility time. Green and Houlihan (2005) note that local government authorities have to "fulfil a broad range of sports-related social policy objectives" (p. 135) which are different from the goals of community sport clubs. This has led to concerns that the municipal focus on fun and leisure could displace facilities that are more appropriate for teaching and training (Collins and Sparkes, 2010, p. 169). Pools, in particular, also face heavy competition for the same timeslots between public uses (e.g., lap swimming for fitness) and use by sport groups (CPRA, 2013, p. 29). However, CPRA (2013) also suggests that municipal facilities favour community non-profit organizations (most sport clubs) over commercial user groups by giving them discounted pool rental rates and prioritizing their allocation over that of commercial groups (p. 12). Green and Houlihan

(2005) suggest that challenges with non-municipal facilities in the UK are also related to mandate, as private operators are focused on profit, and educational institutions have their own specific objectives (p. 135). USA Swimming (2007) suggests that institution-run models, while providing stability and low-cost access to facilities, make the sport club inherently tied to the facility both financially and philosophically (p. 35). As noted previously, most of this information is provided anecdotally without reference to specific data, and therefore may require further validation through new research.

With specific reference to pool space for swim clubs, USA Swimming (n.d.) provides anecdotal advice on the pros and cons of renting facility space, as compared to owning space. USA Swimming estimates that over 90 percent of its clubs rent pool space for practices, learn to swim programs, and meets (para 12). Owned pool space appears to be uncommon. In comparing the potential cost of operating a 6 to 8 lane 25 yard pool versus renting the same space, USA Swimming suggests that renting is a generally a good model purely in terms of cost, provided clubs can charge their members enough to pay the rental fees (para 12). USA Swimming also notes that ownership of pool space requires generating enough revenue to offset operating costs *and* pay down the debt of purchasing or construction, a cost it estimates at approximately $5 million for a 15,000 square foot facility. Ownership requires "total aquatic programming" (swim lessons, adult lane swim memberships, rehab rentals, etc.) as competitive swimming alone cannot support the costs of a facility (USA Swimming, n.d., para 11). However, ownership eliminates the need for clubs to negotiate with a facility each year for time and space, and club growth is easier and more secure (USA Swimming, n.d., para 13). It is not clear on what evidence USA Swimming made these claims.

State of Infrastructure

An additional consideration for sport clubs is the state of the infrastructure being used, particularly in terms of municipal facilities. Several Canadian studies have suggested that many municipal recreation facilities are nearing the end of their useful lifecycle (BCPRA, 2009; Parks and Recreation Ontario, 2007). For example, in 2009, 35 percent of indoor pools in BC were 25 to 34 years old and another 25 percent were 35 years or older, according to data obtained through surveys of facility operators (BCPRA, 2009, p. 11). A summary of a similar study for Parks and Recreation Ontario noted that its inventory of facilities was "critically old" and that improvements were needed beyond age-related requirements (Frittenburg, 2006, slide 23). However, according to a recent meta-study this information may now be outdated. The JF Group (2013) points out that there has been a significant injection of infrastructure funding (particularly federal) since the most recent recreation facility studies were done in most Canadian provinces (pp. 1-2). This is contradicted by the CPRA (2013) which asserts that municipal budgets have been shrinking, contributing to ongoing infrastructure deficits both in terms of needing new facilities to meet growing demand, and to upgrade existing facilities (p. 15).

The configuration of facilities is also of particular relevance to swim clubs. Competitive swimming at the elite level takes place in long course facilities, i.e. pools that are 50 metres in length. Green and Houlihan (2005) noted that as of the early 2000s, swimming groups in the UK were still concerned about a lack of competition standard 50m pools (p. 135). In comparison, they assert that elite swimming in Canada has benefitted from regular hosting of major events and the increasing number of Canadian Sport Centres (multi-sport centres) that offer "world class" training opportunities (Green and Houlihan, 2005, p. 109). This is corroborated by an Asbell Management Innovations (2007) study for the City of Halifax which noted that there were at least 52 50m pools operating in Canada (p. 7).

Together, the literature suggests that municipal infrastructure in Canada has faced some historical funding challenges but that there may have been recent improvements, although this has yet to be demonstrated by

firsthand data. Although none of the sources suggested there was a surplus or sufficiency of recreation infrastructure in Canada, there is some suggestion that Canada is doing relatively well in terms of its supply of elite-level (50m) swimming facilities. While some of the above-noted literature was more robust in terms of being based on actual data, its scope is limited to publicly provided infrastructure (i.e., supported by government funding). Therefore it does not provide a comprehensive picture of the state of all swim facilities potentially available for club purposes.

3.2 Partnership Arrangements

Multi-Sport Models

Several authors highlight the potential of both club and facility models which involve collaboration between multiple different sports. Watt (2003), in his handbook on managing and administrating sports, highlights the multi-sport club model as the direction of the future, especially in light of economic constraints (p. 18). Multi-sport clubs are able to combine resources (e.g., personnel, facilities) and fundraising efforts, thus making facility development potentially more feasible (p. 18). The resources available to larger, multi-sport clubs may also attract higher performers (p. 19). However, Watt points out that the multi-sport club model is currently rare in the United Kingdom, and most attempts at this model have generally been unsuccessful (p. 18). This is echoed by Collins and Sparkes (2010) who comment that the British tradition has been focused on small, single-sport clubs which are "socially strong but financially and numerically weak" (p. 167). In summarizing previous empirical studies, Watt notes that multi-sport clubs may face difficulties deciding how to disburse funding (p. 18), and that single sport clubs with clear values are typically more effective in their ability to generate income (p. 20).

Similar to the British experience with multi-sport clubs, the literature suggests a somewhat ambivalent experience with multi-sport training centres in Canada. As part of their comparative study of elite sport development, Green and Houlihan (2005) describe the development of Canadian Sport Centres in the 1990s. These centres were designed to integrate sports science and medicine into training programs and provide a centralized centre of excellence by which athletes in various sports could access this elite level of training. However, opinions about the success of multi-sport training centres are mixed within the Canadian swimming community (p. 106). Ongoing commitment to the concept is variable, possibly because the idea of a swimmer going to train at centre temporarily, while remaining with their home club, has not really come to fruition (p. 103).

Partnerships in Sport

Several authors agree on the escalating necessity for sport clubs to pursue partnerships (Watt, 2003, p. 83; Robson, 2007, p. 127). Watt (2003), in commenting on partnerships with local authorities, insists that "sport development work […] can no longer expect to be able to function and thrive in isolation" (p. 118). Partnerships can be advantageous in terms of maximizing resources and pooling influence (pp. 124-25). Robson (2007) asserts that partnerships in sport are particularly important when major funding needs to be obtained (p. 127). There are, however, challenges to developing such partnerships such as differences in organizational priorities and cultures (Watt, 2003, p. 129) and the fact that, at the elite level, sport development may be characterized by fragmentation, competing ideologies, and competition (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 26).

Private Partnerships / Devolution

In the UK, local authorities are beginning to explore private and non-profit partnership arrangements to address the needs of their ageing municipal facilities. In their discussion of the history of sport infrastructure in the UK, Jackson and Bramham (2007) highlight the emergence of Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs) and arm's length "trusts" (p. 208). PFIs engage private sector organizations to build or upgrade facilities and manage them over a long term

contract (p. 208). It has been suggested that this model should provide more long-term viability for a facility; however, the success of PFIs has yet to be evaluated (p. 210). To date, PFIs have been more common for schools than for standalone sports facilities (p. 210). With the development of a "trust," local authorities relinquish operations of a facility and instead rely on contractors to provide services. Profits are returned to the provision of services within the "trust" (p. 209). Trusts help provide local taxation relief and can help ensure strategic fit with other facilities in the region (p. 209). Jackson and Bramham (2007) do not provide any sense of what these two models might mean for local sport clubs.

Public Partnership Facilities

The literature also identified the possibility for public organizations to collaborate on facility development and operation. The City of Saskatoon (2010) provides an informal case study of the recent development of major sport infrastructure by way of a partnership between public and catholic schools, the municipality, and the provincial Ministry of Education. This partnership resulted in the construction of a "world-class facility" with competitive and recreational swimming pools, a walk/jog track, a fitness room, and much more, all connected by pedestrian corridors to new school facilities (p. 12). The profile of this project suggests that the partnership provided an opportunity for new and innovative shared programming, e.g. school swim teams who could use the pool during the day. The City of Saskatoon (2010) asserts that the facilities are well-used during most hours because of the focus on sharing resources and encouraging public use (p. 14), and that having partners with complementary but different mandates was key to maximizing usage of the facilities (p. 18). The City of Saskatoon (2010) did caution, however, that the integrated facilities did not result in lower construction costs as compared to developing separate, standalone facilities (p. 14). It should also be pointed out that this was a single case study which was not conducted through formal research methods. Further study would be required to determine if the lessons learned from the City of Saskatoon experience can be generalized, and to understand the impact of such models on local sport clubs.

3.3 Non-profit Management and Decision-making

A brief brush with some of the literature on decision-making in a non-profit environment shows commonalities in terms of suggesting frameworks that go beyond mere evaluation of financial implications. Brinckerhoff's (2012) book on the subject focuses on mission as the "starting point and the end point for any non-profit" (p. 14). According to Brinckerhoff (2012), there are four aspects to mission: more mission, better mission, more effective mission, and more efficient mission (p. 14). All decisions and strategies need to focus on one or more of these aspects (p. 14). For any given activity or program, low returns on one aspect can be balanced by high returns on the other (p. 22). In designing and testing a model to evaluate programs within a non-profit organization, Krug and Weinberg (2004) created a framework based on the three dimensions of mission, money, and merit, a breakdown which is quite similar to Brinckerhoff's (2012) four aspects of mission. Krug and Weinberg (2004) suggest organizations can use their model to systematically assess and discuss programs to dispel myths, understand different viewpoints within the organization, and ultimately identify areas for improvement (p. 341). Brinckerhoff (2012) outlines a more specific decision-making framework in which the organization must systematically consider the following areas, in order of priority: mission, vision, strategy; capability; capacity; money; quality; analysis; and consultation (p. 35). Of note, Brinckerhoff suggests that organizational growth, i.e., providing more mission, requires a non-profit to first embrace profits on the balance sheet (p. 21).

Like Brinckerhoff (2012) and Krug and Weinberg's (2004) studies on decision-making, Graham and Kinmond's (2008) literature review of best practices in non-profit management also supports the central importance of mission, particularly in terms of giving direction to an organization and providing a clear sense of its mandate to

stakeholders (p. 19). Similarly, Graham and Kinmond's (2008) review found that existing literature stressed the fact that many non-profits fail because they "spread themselves too thin, running too many programs less effectively instead of focusing on a few programs where potential for impact is greatest" (p. 22). Graham and Kinmond's review (2008) also identified a wide range of additional considerations for effective non-profit management, including:

- the importance of investing in capital, people, and infrastructure (p. 4), as well as the need to diversify funding sources (p. 35) in order to promote sustainability;
- the importance of maintaining relationships with a variety of internal and external stakeholders (p. 19), particularly the organization's clients (p. 22); and,
- the benefits of building partnerships with other groups in the sector (p. 5).

Non-profits and Infrastructure / Capital Projects

The literature review also identified some research into the topic of infrastructure and major capital projects in non-profit environments. In 2013, Juniper Consulting published a study on non-profit sector participation in infrastructure planning and development based on interviews with representatives from a range of non-profit organizations in Canada. The study suggested mutual benefits were possible from non-profits participating in public infrastructure projects with government and the private sector, and that these kinds of partnerships would support a balance of financial and social return (p. 5). Non-profits are of particular value in these projects for their community ties and for their ability to mobilize volunteer support and other resources (p. 5). However, Juniper Consulting (2013) also identified quite a number of barriers facing non-profits who wish to engage in infrastructure planning and development. Many of these barriers are related to finances, accountability, and capacity and include considerations such as:

- limited capacity within non-profits to prepare applications and manage grants (p. 14);
- burdens imposed by having to show accountability to funders, particularly governments (p. 14);
- unreliable funding commitments, including short-term, cyclical grant programs (p. 15);
- competition within the non-profit sector itself, particularly for limited resources (p. 15);
- financial risks created by delays in being reimbursed by funders and the inability to obtain credit from a financial institution (p. 17);
- lack of reserve funding to invest in infrastructure (p. 19); and,
- taxation policies on non-profit income (p. 28).

Rosenthal's (2007) case study of a non-profit leading a major capital construction project builds on some of these considerations. The study highlights the fact that a major capital project is a "significant turning point in the life of a not-for-profit organization" (p. 930). It is typically linked to an expansion of programmatic offerings and may therefore involve new and unfamiliar roles for the organization (p. 934), and is likely to involve a larger flow of money than at any other time in history of organization (p. 930). These projects therefore require extra attention, involvement, and oversight from leadership, as well as strong internal controls and an expert management team (p. 936). In the case described by Rosenthal, this necessitated a redevelopment of the organization's governance structure (p. 941), including retaining board members with relevant expertise (e.g., planning, law, finance), creating new committee structures, and hiring additional consultants (pp. 940-941). Rosenthal (2007) also highlighted the legal, regulatory, financial, community relations, and risk management considerations which are particular to construction projects (p. 935).

3.4 Sport Organizations and Decision-making

Although literature on non-profit management can offer some general considerations for the purposes of this project, sports clubs (including those structured as non-profits) have their own organizational nuances. These nuances need to be considered to fully understand the context in which a swim club might make a decision about future facility infrastructure. The particular nature of sports clubs is discussed in the literature by both Watt (2003) and Green and Houlihan (2005). In reference to voluntary sport organizations (VSOs) in the UK, Watt (2003) asserts that VSOs are designed to serve the needs of their members, not the community at large, unlike many other non-profit agencies (p. 53). In this way the motivations of the VSO and its volunteers are very specific and self-focused (p. 53), and volunteers like parents have their own vested interests (p. 55). VSOs are also highly susceptible to internal conflict, as evidenced by previous research by Amis et al. (Watt, 2003, p. 52). In addition, VSOs rely heavily on volunteer commitment and may therefore be more vulnerable due to a possible lack of individual finances and the growing cost of living (p. 55). Watt (2003) also points out that youth sport, especially development, is particularly difficult to fund and it requires many members to support "the development of future excellence in a few" (p. 18). It is unclear, however, what evidence Watt uses to support these latter two claims (2003). Green and Houlihan (2005) identify challenges with the overall structure of swimming in Canada. The hierarchy of clubs, in which swimmers may progress from community-based clubs, to clubs more focused on high performance, and finally to one of Swimming/Natation Canada's seven regional swimming centres, creates tensions between clubs and coaches who are "reluctant to release talented swimmers" (p. 106). It also reinforces the tension between nurturing elite swimmers and supporting the interests of the general club membership (p. 104).

Sport Facilities and Decision-Making

The Government of Western Australia's Department of Sport and Recreation (2007a; 2007b; 2007c) provides a wealth of practical advice and tools specifically for those involved in the potential development and management of sport and recreation facilities. The Government of Western Australia has published, among other things, specific handbooks on needs assessments (2007c), a decision-making framework (2007a), and feasibility analyses (2007b). According to the Government of Western Australia, a needs assessment is an information-gathering process to determine whether a new facility is required or whether the need can be satisfied in some other way (p. 1). This process is crucial for separating facility needs from wants (2007c, p. 11). Key steps in a needs assessment include: identifying organizational values and philosophy (2007c, p. 7) to help identify the desired social, financial and environmental outcomes (2007b, p. 8); reviewing the existing availability of services in the area (2007c, p. 7); a trend analysis or environmental scan (2007c, p. 9); and community consultation (2007c, p. 11).

Once a need has been confirmed and justified, options need to be reviewed. Solutions to facility needs do not necessarily involve the development of a new building (Government of Western Australia, 2007a, p. 5). Other options can include retrofitting or expansion of an existing facility (2007a, p. 5), rearranging programming at existing facilities (2007b, p. 9), amalgamating groups or combining usage at an existing facility (2007b, p. 9), or maintaining the status quo (2007a, p. 5). If opting for a new facility, additional options for managing the facility can include direct management, contracted management, lease, or joint management (2007b, p. 10). In deciding between different options, the Government of Western Australia outlines a "sustainability matrix" with 52 criteria against which to assess the feasibility of facilities and programs (2007a, p. 1). Some of the considerations associated with these criteria include:

- local demographic, participation, and user data to understand socioeconomic conditions of potential participants and to help determine if demand will continue to grow (2007a, pp. 6-8);
- catchment area of the proposed solution, to determine whether it is distinct from other facilities and/or programs and to minimize overlap (2007s, p. 23);
- accessibility of the proposed location (2007a, p. 28);

- potential flexibility of the proposed solution to offer a range of programming and to promote shared use (2007a, p. 29 and 30); and,
- the extent to which operating costs can be offset by revenue and the ability to maximize use of the space (2007a, pp. 32-33).

The Government of Western Australia's advice on feasibility emphasizes that the development and management of a facility is a long term financial commitment and that organizations need to carefully consider both construction and ongoing operating costs (2007b, p. 10). Some suggested additional funding sources include corporate sponsorship, selling naming rights, community fundraising, and donations from trust and foundations (2007a, p. 18). Facility decision-makers should also engage stakeholders and the community in the process (2007a, p. 12).

Technical and Financial Considerations

Some of the literature reviewed also provided information on the link between technical features of facilities, such as size, age, and location, and their usage, as well as on cost considerations specific to swimming pools. Based on survey data regarding the use of recreational facilities in the UK, Collins and Sparkes (2010) assert there is a strong correlation between pool water area, i.e. the size of the pool, and participation rates for adults (p. 169). They also claimed that 50m pool facilities (which also included leisure water and a fitness suite) generated higher attendance rates, and yet had operating costs similar to that of a 6-lane 25m pool (p. 170). Collins and Sparkes (2010) conclude that, in a leisure context, new pools appear to attract new swimmers; however, the quality of the facility is more important for addressing latent demand with existing facilities (p. 174). In terms of costs, Collins and Sparkes (2010) point out that in cold, wet climates, swimming pools are more expensive to build and run than in warmer climates, due to heating costs (p. 168). On the contrary, costs associated with cleaning, maintenance, coaching and lifeguarding, and managing visitors are comparable no matter the location (p. 168). In a 2011 opinion piece on municipal pools in the US, Roberts suggests that labour is the main driver of a pool's operating budget (p. 56), and that heating and chemical costs are the second largest driver (p. 57). There is general agreement about the high capital and operating costs of pools (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 135; Roberts, 2011, p. 56). Roberts (2011) suggests that most municipal pools and aquatics facilities do not recover their full operating costs (p. 56) and that open recreational swim and swim lessons provide the best revenue potential for pool operators, rather than events like competitive swim meets (p. 59).

Sport Environment and Performance

Finally, of further relevance to this project is the potential impact of facilities on the performance of a club's athletes. The literature review identified one peer-reviewed study on the relationship between environment and athlete performance. Mills, Butt, Maynard and Harwood (2012) conducted a survey of youth football coaches to identify factors key to elite athlete development in football. Their research suggested that the quality of the environment is a key factor to elite sport organization success (p. 1601). However, ensuring an optimal environment was less about facilities, coaches, and sport science support, and more about "the culture or atmosphere" of the organization (p. 1602). It was noted, though, that having a challenging training environment was important and that this could be created by training with a senior team and having competitive practices (p. 1603). In contrast, Green and Houlihan's research (2005) in Australia suggests that the most successful swimmers worked with professional coaches in clubs that had built their own pools (p. 68). However, it was unclear whether the swimmers' success was linked to coaching, the facility, or a combination of environmental and other factors.

3.5 SUMMARY

In conclusion, the literature reviewed suggests the following:

- There is general agreement that major providers of aquatic infrastructure are municipalities/local governments, educational institutions, and private commercial facilities. Some sources refer to facilities owned directly by sports groups, but this appears to be uncommon.
- The most commonly cited strengths and challenges associated with different infrastructure solutions are related to mandate and cost. Competition, programming, and growth are also highlighted.
- There is disagreement regarding the current state and availability of municipal sport infrastructure in Canada. While some sources suggest it is badly outdated, other sources suggest there have been recent upgrades and investments.
- There may be benefits, particularly financial, to sport clubs pursuing partnerships. Multi-sport arrangements are highlighted as one option, but sources admit this model has not been vigorously pursued, and where it has been explored there is some ambivalence about the results.
- Public sport/recreation facility providers have been exploring partnership arrangements with both the private sector and other public organizations. Sources suggest that these partnerships might contribute to longer-term viability of the facility, innovative programming, and maximized usage of the facility; however, further evaluation of these claims is required.
- Clarity of mission is central to the effective management of non-profit organizations. Money, capacity, and relationships are also highlighted as key factors in non-profit decision-making.
- Non-profit participation in infrastructure/major capital projects, while potentially beneficial, may be hampered by financial risks and vulnerabilities. These kinds of projects also place demands on governance, internal expertise, and capacity.
- Sport clubs may be particularly vulnerable in terms of finances due to their reliance on volunteer commitment and the potential for internal tensions or conflict.
- There are comprehensive tools available for those involved in the potential development and management of sport and recreation facilities to assist with decision-making, performing a needs assessment, and determining feasibility. Like the literature on non-profit management, these tools also highlight the importance of having clear organizational values/philosophy, consulting with stakeholders, and considering financial ramifications.
- Pools have high capital and operating costs. Costs may depend primarily on labour and climate.
- Newer, higher-quality pools may attract more users, and swim lessons and recreational swim times may be the greatest revenue generators for pool operators.
- Environmental factors, particularly the culture of the club, may have an effect on athlete performance, but it is unclear whether the physical environment (i.e. facility) also plays a role in this.

As discussed in the Methodology and Methods section of this report, these statements should be viewed with caution due to the quality of the literature reviewed. There was a lack of more rigorous, methods-driven studies, and there were no formal studies that centered on the specifics of aquatic infrastructure for swim clubs. Thus, it would appear that this study represents an important and novel attempt to collect and synthesize empirical data, both quantitative and qualitative, on the subject.

4.0 Results - Club Website Review

The purpose of the review of club websites was to obtain actual data on the facilities used by swim clubs across Canada in order to identify the infrastructure currently used by swim organizations, and what other solutions might exist. While the literature review identified some general sources of pool facilities, the literature did not provide empirical evidence to support these claims. Nor did the literature provide concrete information on the extent of utilization of different facility providers, other than to suggest the dominance of municipal facilities.

The results of the website review therefore build on the results of the literature review by providing greater detail in terms of the range of different providers of pool infrastructure. Results of the club website review also provide empirical data on: the extent to which clubs make use of certain providers; the prevalence of different club governance models; and the number of facilities used by most clubs. In the sections which follow, these results are described in further depth along with some suggested implications of this data.

4.1 Sources of Infrastructure

The review of club websites identified 10 distinct categories of facilities, as shown and described in Table 1. These results add considerable detail to the more general categories identified through the literature review: municipal/local authority, private, educational, and other institutions. Based on website data, educational institutions in fact include schools, collegiate institutes, and universities. Private facilities may be external providers or facilities internal to the club themselves. In addition, the website review identifies several "new" categories: federal facilities, which may be provided by the Department of National Defence (DND) or another department; non-profit facilities, run by the YMCA/YWCA or other non-profit entities; and other non-municipal community centre facilities.

This additional level of detail is directly useful for ISC as it suggests potential additional providers that the organization might not have previously considered in order to expand its overall pool space/time.

Table 1. Facility providers identified through website review

Category	Description
Municipal	Facilities run by the local government (city, town, regional district, etc.)
School	Facilities located at secondary schools or collegiate institutes (term used for some secondary schools in Ontario)
University	Facilities run by a university
Non-profit (Y)	Facilities run by the YMCA/YWCA
Non-profit (other)	Facilities run by a non-profit organization which is not a YMCA/YWCA
Federal (DND)	Facilities run by a local military base (Department of National Defence)
Federal (other)	Facilities operated by another federal government department (e.g., Parks Canada)
Private (own)	Facilities owned and operated for the club itself, including private health clubs with swim teams
Private (other)	Facilities operated by another for-profit entity such as a hotel or a private aquatic facility
Other community centre	Non-municipally-run community centres such as those operated by a faith-based society

4.2 UTILIZATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

In terms of utilization of different infrastructure sources, the website review clearly indicates that it is common for most clubs to use municipal facilities (Table 2); almost 70 percent of clubs use at least one municipal facility. The website review therefore corroborates the suggestion in the literature that municipalities are the most significant provider of sport infrastructure to clubs. The next most common source of facilities according to the website review is educational institutions, most notably universities.

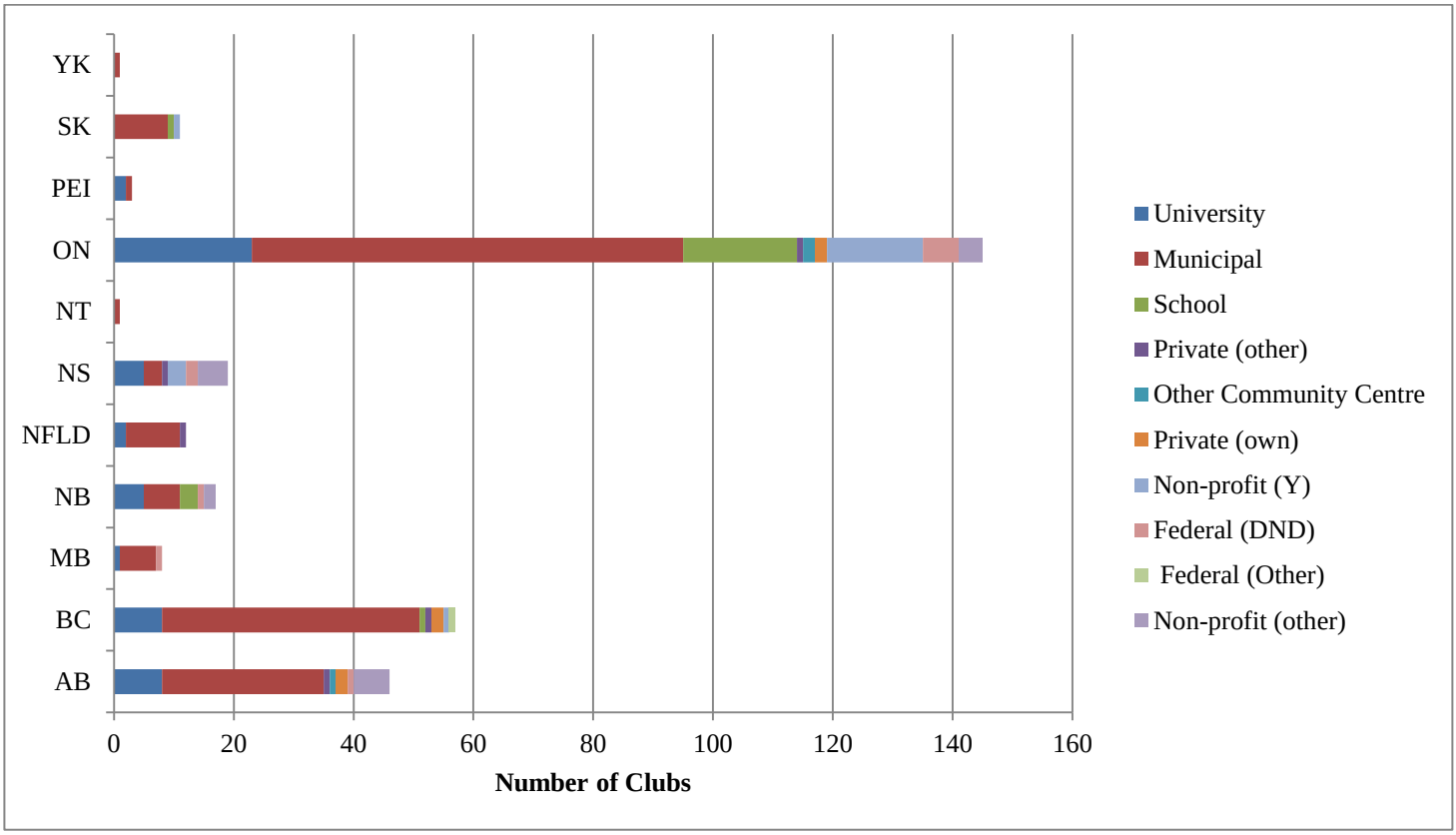
Table 2. Percentage of clubs using at least one facility of a provider type

Provider	% of clubs
Municipal	67.8
School	9
University	20.7
Non-profit (Y)	8
Non-profit (other)	6.5
Federal (DND)	4.2
Federal (other)	< 1
Private (own)	2
Private (other)	2
Other community centre	1

This pattern of utilization of different facility types might also suggest something about the availability of pools from different sources. Most clubs might make use of at least one municipal facility simply because that is what is available (most easily or exclusively) to them in the area. Conversely, this information might also suggest the relative difficulty or scarcity of finding non-municipal options for swim club infrastructure, and therefore may impact the feasibility of ISC pursuing such options.

Analysis of regional variations in the use of facility types (see Figure 1) provides further insight into different facility sources in different regions of Canada. Most of the clubs using at least one school facility, as well as most of the clubs using at least one non-profit (Y) facility, were in Ontario. This might suggest that school and non-profit (Y) pools may be more common and/or more accessible in Ontario than elsewhere in Canada, including BC. Clubs that use at least one non-profit (other) facility were found only in Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Community centres run by non-municipal groups were used by clubs only in Alberta and Ontario. Clubs that used their own private facility were identified only in Alberta, BC, and Ontario. Together, this information might suggest that clubs in BC, like ISC, may be more likely to be able to obtain space in a private facility than through a school, a non-profit facility (Y or other), or non-municipal community centre.

Figure 1. Number of clubs by province using at least one facility of a provider type



Further examination of the club website data also reveals certain patterns of facility dependency across swim clubs. Fifty-seven percent of clubs rely exclusively on facilities run by the municipal or federal government. When schools and universities, which are also likely to receive a significant amount of government financial support, are also factored in this percentage rises to 72.8 percent of clubs. Thus almost three-quarters of swim clubs in Canada rely exclusively on facilities that depend in whole or in part on government funding. In the literature review, it was suggested that a diversity of revenue sources is a smart organizational practice. The website review data, however, suggests that swim clubs are vulnerable to a shift in government funding availability or allocation, due to their reliance on government-supported infrastructure. ISC, which also relies exclusively on municipal facilities, is no exception to this potential vulnerability.

Conversely, website review data also demonstrate that at least 30 percent of clubs do not make use of any municipal facilities. Of these clubs, more than half are member-governed, meaning it is not simply institution-run clubs (which, by definition, have ready access to their own facility) that are able to function without the use of municipal infrastructure. However, it should also be noted that these non-municipal-reliant clubs were much more common in the Maritime provinces, and much less common in BC. Only 13 percent of BC clubs do not use any municipal facilities. This data might suggest that, while many clubs are able to operate without relying on municipal pools, this is potentially much more difficult to achieve for clubs in BC, including ISC.

Finally, website data show that only three percent of clubs rely exclusively on private facilities. These may be either the club's own facility (e.g. a private, members-only club with an associated swim team) and/or the facilities of another private for-profit enterprise (e.g. a hotel or a commercial aquatic facility). While purely speculative, this lack of private sector involvement may be indicative of the lack of availability of appropriate private facilities, and/or difficulties for clubs in procuring these spaces. On the other hand, this might also represent an untapped opportunity for clubs like ISC to partner more with the private sector or to develop additional facilities themselves.

4.3 Governance and Facilities

The issue of governance is often intertwined with that of facility source, e.g. institution-run clubs are defined by the fact that the facility and the club are indivisible. Moreover, a number of key considerations identified in the literature review were related to governance. Therefore, the website review did include an examination of the issue of governance specifically in order to look for commonalities across clubs, and potential patterns between club governance and types of facilities used. This analysis was also used to develop a targeted list of potential interviewee participants for a subsequent phase of this study.

While the literature review identified three distinct governance models, it did not suggest anything about the prevalence of these models. The website data clearly demonstrates that member-governed swim clubs are the overwhelming norm across Canada (see Figure 2); 72 percent of clubs are member-governed. This trend is generally consistent across Canadian provinces and territories, including BC where 65 percent of clubs are member-governed (see Figure 3). This data might suggest that the member-governed model is generally more acceptable, feasible, and/or desirable to swim clubs than other models of governance.

Figure 2. Percentage of governance models use by clubs

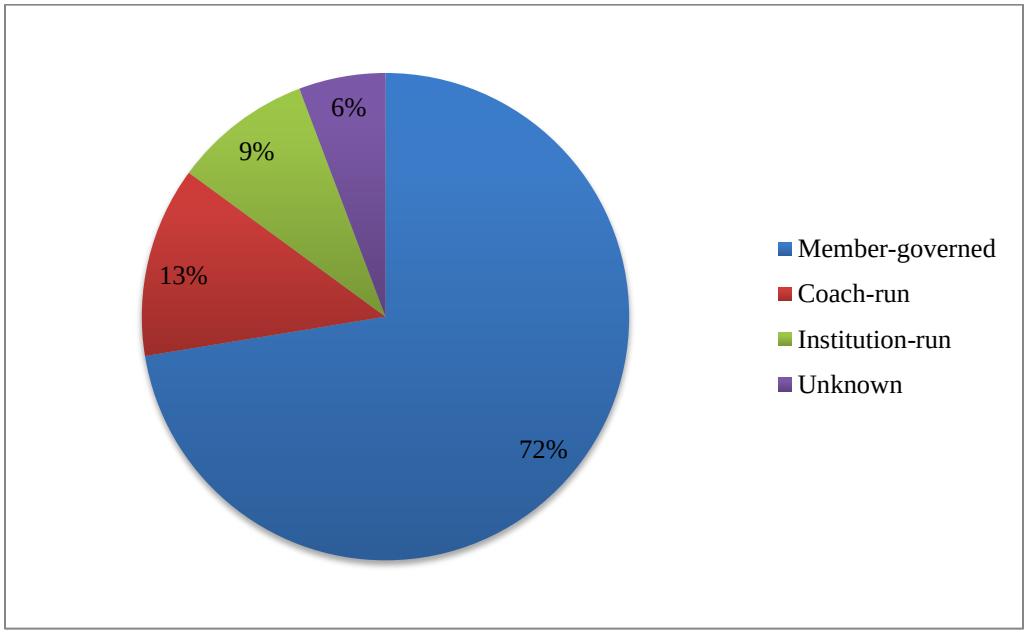
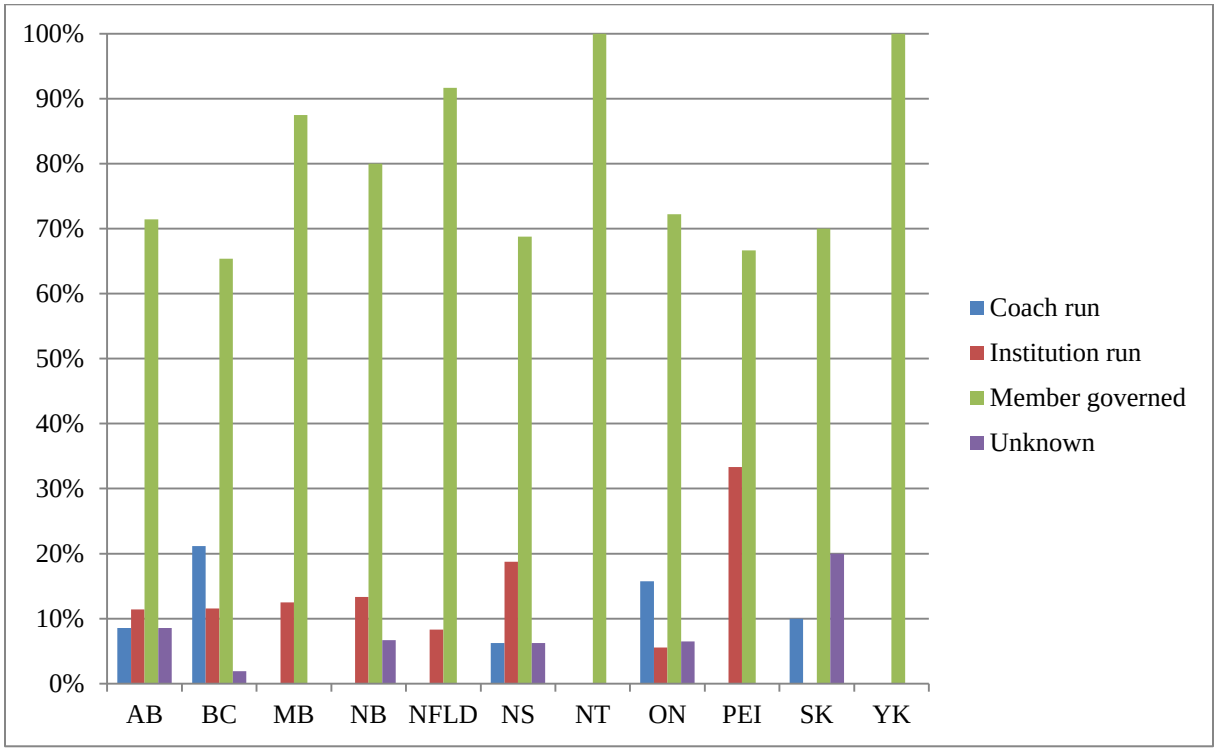


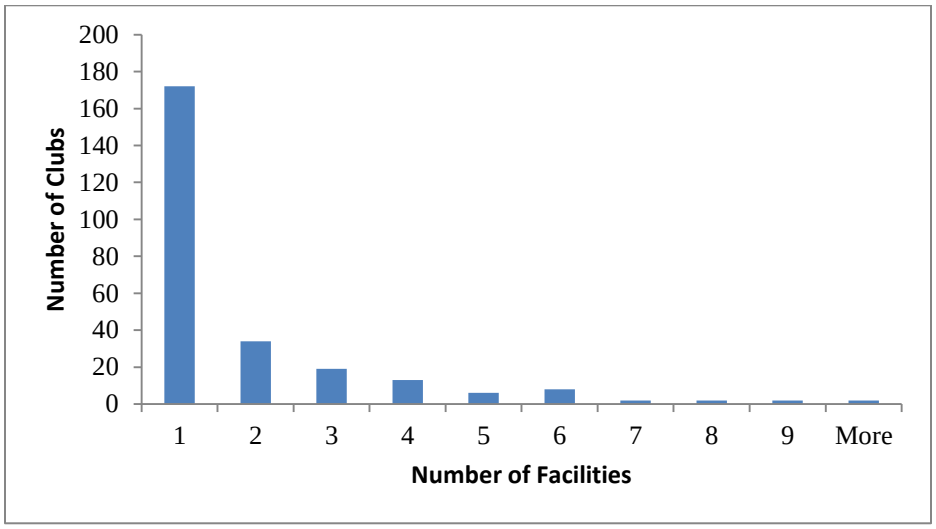
Figure 3. Percentage of clubs using a particular governance model by province/territory



Moreover, the trend for the majority of clubs to be member-governed does not appear to deviate when the number of facilities a club uses is taken into account. Of the clubs using only one facility, 70 percent are member-governed. Of the clubs using 2 or more facilities, 78 percent are member-governed. Thus this governance model appears unlikely to be detrimental to the management of space procurement with multiple facilities.

Finally, this analysis of facilities and governance was used, in part, to identify potential participants for the interview line of research for this study. The website data demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of Canadian swim clubs use only one facility (see Figure 4). The most common combination of governance and facilities was therefore a member-governed club with a single facility. This model accounted for 46 percent of all the clubs analyzed. The next most common combinations were a member-governed club with two facilities, and an institution run club with one facility. Member governed clubs with four or more facilities (such as ISC) accounted for only 8.8 percent of the clubs included in this analysis.

Figure 4. Histogram of number of facilities per club



These numbers suggest that ISC is generally an outlier in terms of the number of facilities it uses, when compared to the majority of other clubs in Canada. Furthermore, the data suggests that ISC has some, but not many, peer clubs which are both member-governed and deal with four facilities or more. Many of these peer clubs were invited to participate in interviews for this research.

4.4 Summary

The purpose of the website review was to obtain actual data on current Canadian swim clubs, relevant club characteristics, and current facility usage. This line of research corroborated and built upon the findings of the literature review by identifying a broader and more detailed range of facility providers for Canadian swim clubs. This more expansive and nuanced list may provide ISC with additional options it had not previously considered to expand its current complement of infrastructure.

The website review also revealed patterns of utilization of these types of facility providers which might suggest something about the feasibility and desirability of certain facility options. Specifically in BC, ISC may be more likely to be able to obtain space in a private facility than through a school, a non-profit facility (Y or other), or non-municipal community centre, or there may be a scarcity of non-municipal options altogether. Conversely, the data might also suggest that other facilities are available and merely remain relatively untapped in BC, waiting for ISC to explore these options.

The analysis of club governance provided new empirical information on the prevalence of club governance models identified in the literature review. The data suggests that member-based governance is extremely common, and does not appear to be a factor in the number of facilities a club accesses. For ISC, this might suggest that adding additional facilities to its complement of infrastructure is not precluded by its member-based governance structure, and that another governance model would not be necessary or desirable. Finally, the website review highlighted that ISC's current complement of four facilities make it an exception rather than the rule across Canada. It was therefore advisable to target some of ISC's "peer clubs" for subsequent interviews in order to learn from the experience of clubs with similar facility requirements and governance.

5.0 Results - Interviews

The purpose of the interview component of this study was to obtain more in-depth, qualitative information on the functioning of swim clubs in Canada and the role of facilities within the organization. This line of research was primarily focused on helping to identify the implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships of adopting specific infrastructure solutions. This included seeking information from interview participants on current strengths and challenges faced by Canadian swim clubs and the facilities they use, how facilities impact their organizations, and their methods of coping with infrastructure challenges.

Four interviews were completed, each with a representative of a different swim club. The roles of the interviewees included President, Club Manager, Team Administrator, and Owner/Head Coach. Each of the interviewees had at least five years of history with the organization, although not necessarily in their current role. All interviewees also had some history of personal participation in swimming. These experiences ranged from teaching swimming lessons and swimming for fitness, to up to 35 years of combined experience as a competitive swimmer, coach, and manager.

The clubs represented in these interviews were located in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. Three of the clubs were member-governed, while one was coach-run. All clubs used municipal facilities to some extent; some clubs also used YMCA/YWCA, other non-profit, university, and/or private facilities. Of the four clubs interviewed, two used four different facilities, one used six, and the other used a single facility.

Interviewees identified and discussed several key organizational goals for swim clubs related to mission, capacity, and finances which in turn might suggest criteria by which to examine the desirability and feasibility of infrastructure options for swim clubs. Interviewees also delved into more in-depth information on technical aspects of their current infrastructure and how these impact the organization and achievement of its goals. Finally, club interviewees described their past and prospective strategies for managing infrastructure challenges, including some of the anticipated benefits, challenges, and requirements of these approaches. The following sections describe these findings in more detail.

5.1 Mission – Performance, Balance, Growth

Most of the clubs interviewed cited swimmer performance as an important and observable measure of club success. Performance might be measured in terms of swimmers qualifying at the regional level, and/or making provincial and national teams, and in terms of individual improvements in times. For one club, this emphasis on performance manifests itself in the prioritization of their pool space time to their competitive program.

All clubs interviewed offered both pre-competitive and competitive programming, and included dryland training for their competitive groups. All clubs also expressed some variation on the theme that inclusion of pre-competitive programming is necessary for overall organizational success. One club stated that "you have to create the development program so that you have a sustainable club," indicating that competitive sport alone is unsustainable because of the high attrition rate. Similarly, several other clubs emphasized how pre-competitive groups support the rest of the club's programming financially. In addition, several clubs noted how being "the correct shape of a pyramid - really large at the bottom and small at the top" also creates a progression program to feed kids into the competitive side of the club to become the next generation of performance swimmers.

Not surprisingly, given this emphasis on the "pyramid," most clubs interviewed cited growth as an important organizational goal. Several clubs offered additional programming such as parent and tot classes and introductory

summer swimming camps for children. One interviewee suggested these camps can be a potential recruitment tool to bring new children into the club's regular programming. In terms of swimmer retention, one interviewee suggested that this can be enhanced through good communication, particularly in terms of keeping learn-to-swim parents informed of next steps into the competitive program.

In summary, interview participants identified swimmer performance as a key aspect of the organizational mission of swim clubs. However, competitive and high performance swimming programs alone are insufficient to sustain a club. Pre-competitive programming is required for additional needed revenue and to help recruit the next generation of competitive swimmers. Growth is also an important organizational goal and can be nurtured through specific recruitment and retention strategies. Swim clubs may therefore need to consider how any infrastructure decisions might impact swimmer performance, the necessary balance of pre-competitive/competitive programming, and future growth.

5.2 Capacity – Member Satisfaction, Volunteerism, Staffing

Most clubs cited member or client satisfaction as a key organizational goal and often associated satisfaction with having the appropriate club atmosphere. One club specified that having a happy club stemmed from their relaxed atmosphere and low key approach, while another club indicated that it prides itself on having a good atmosphere and providing a positive experience for its swimmers. Two of the clubs interviewed measured satisfaction in terms of their level of repeat clientele or kids who want to continue in the sport, i.e. retention.

Volunteer contributions and a volunteer ethos are very important specifically to member-governed clubs. All three member-governed clubs indicated that they rely on volunteers to populate their Board and to support the club's activities to some extent, including running swim meets, working at fundraising events, or even running dryland training. One interviewee even suggested that their club's coaches, while paid, have something of a volunteer mentality; they are not coaching as a career per se, but "kind of just doing it for fun." In contrast, the coach-run club interviewed had no mandatory volunteering or fundraising activities and believed this was a key contributor to greater parent/client satisfaction.

Coaching is a valued strength for most clubs, and is often linked to coach experience. Without exception, all four club interviewees indicated that their coaching staff is currently an organizational strength. In commenting on the positive aspects of coaching within their organizations, interviewees expressed appreciation for the stability, education level, and experience of their clubs' coaches. One interviewee noted concerns about the potential challenge of replacing its current coaching staff in the future. Another interviewee also commented that parent support for coaching staff is important.

Some clubs have dedicated administration resources but the effectiveness of these is variable and may depend on the strength of the club's overall governance. Only half of the clubs interviewed had paid staff dedicated exclusively to club management and administration duties. One club indicated that they believed they were fairly strong in terms of administration as a result of good stability, a strong board, and effective governance policies. In contrast, another club suggested that their Board was relatively inexperienced and therefore expectations were unclear and administrative staff were not yet being employed to their full potential. The coach-run club indicated that, as a private organization, its administrative demands were relatively low.

In summary, the major capacity-related factor for most swim clubs is member/client satisfaction. Interviewees suggested that satisfaction affects retention, and that satisfaction itself may be influenced by the organizational

environment or ambience, and the demands of volunteer commitments (for member-governed clubs). An additional key element of the capacity of swim clubs is the coaching staff, particularly in terms of the stability and experience they might provide. However, coaching may also be somewhat dependent on parent/client satisfaction. Finally, good administration within the swim club context was linked to governance and was associated with stability, clarity of expectations, and effective policy.

5.3 Finances – Revenues and Expenses

Most clubs interviewed explicitly identified financial health as an important part of overall organizational performance. Some of the criteria by which financial health was measured included having a year's worth of operating expenses set aside in reserve, and generating a profit from non-competitive programming.

Membership fees are a major source of revenue for all clubs, and may therefore be an area of particular concern or vulnerability. Of the clubs interviewed, membership-based (or client) fees ranged from being approximately 50 to 100 percent of total revenues. All interviewees expressed variations on the idea that their members/clients are very sensitive to the amount of fees they are charged. One club indicated it wanted to provide the best quality programming for the least amount of money and not overcharge members. Another interviewee expressed a specific desire to decrease or at least maintain its current fee levels by bringing in additional revenue through other sources.

Clubs interviewed employed a range of additional revenue generation strategies, but with varying levels of success. Three of the four clubs hosted swim meets, although the number, size, and importance of these meets were variable. One club indicated that meets were not a very significant revenue generator for them. For the member-governed clubs interviewed, fundraising and/or gaming activities contributed anywhere from 50 percent to very little of club revenues. One club indicated that it is a "bingo club" and generates up to 50 percent of its revenues through bingos and casino nights. Another club indicated that, while it still generates revenue through gaming, this has been declining in recent years due to changes in government gaming policies. Most clubs are only in the very early stages of developing sponsorships. The one club with active sponsors indicated that sponsorship comprises a very small portion of its revenues.

Finally, clubs indicated that pool fees may form a large portion of club expenses. For one club in particular, pool fees made up almost 100 percent of its organization's expenses.

In summary, as with any organization, financial health is a necessary and important goal for swim clubs. In general, interview participants identified one major source each for expenditures and revenues. The key driver of expenses for clubs may be fees related to infrastructure, while membership/client fees are the major contributors to the financial viability of swim clubs. However, these fees may also be a determinant of member/client satisfaction and therefore restraint was advised in terms of increasing fees. While most clubs have pursued additional funding sources to diversify their revenue streams, the success of these strategies is not guaranteed and may depend on external stakeholders such as government and potential sponsors.

5.4 Facilities - Technical and Provider Considerations

In discussing features of their current infrastructure, clubs highlighted some of the technical considerations in obtaining pool space. In terms of the specific configuration of pool spaces used, three of the four clubs had some access to 50m pool space, but generally the clubs use pools with 25m lanes. Clubs also reported using less standard facilities out of necessity, such as dive tanks, and lanes created in the deeper areas of leisure pools. One

club also mentioned the impact of the quality of space at some of its pools, such as the lack of diving blocks which make it a challenge to run programs for competitive swimmers. The availability of dryland training space was also variable across club facilities. In terms of day/time usage, club programming is usually 5 to 6 days per week, and generally takes place during late afternoon/early evening with some clubs also using morning swim times. One interviewee referred to their club's lack of weekend and morning timeslots as "nice primetime pool time" and expressed some concern that adding weekend swimming might be a detractor for swimmers and parents.

Another technical consideration was the issue of facility number and location. More specifically, clubs discussed how the extent to which they centralize their operations out of one primary facility has a number of potential advantages and disadvantages. According to multiple interviewees, more centralization may be more appealing to parents and swimmers due to the ability to remain at a single facility throughout a swimmer's progression, and the potential to minimize travel time. One interviewee also commented that more centralization makes it easier for coaches to observe the development of swimmers. Conversely, it was suggested that more decentralization might give a club access to a broader membership base, as well as facilitate stronger relationships with satellite pools. All three clubs that commented on centralization expressed knowledge of both the pros and cons, and seemed to acknowledge that a compromise between full decentralization and full centralization was necessary. For example, one club described its ideal future programming arrangement as based on having a central hub with also a series of satellite pools for more localized programming.

As discussed by one interviewee specifically, club management of aquatic infrastructure may also require considerations of lateral versus vertical programming. With lateral, the club's programming is spread out over more lanes for less time, while with vertical programming the club uses fewer lanes but for a longer amount of time. The suggested benefits of a lateral approach were that everything is done relatively quickly and it leaves time for coaches to work with kids after the program, and to speak to parents. On the other hand, vertical programming was suggested to be more effective in terms of finding enough work to maintain staff. The interviewee suggested that this approach also allows the coaches to work directly with more swimmers and with a wider spectrum of swimmers. Overall, the interviewee suggested that there are more benefits to running a program vertically than one that is spread out laterally.

Procurement of space was also a topic of interest. All four clubs indicated that they obtain all their pool facilities through a contract-type agreement with the facility operator, and that these agreements need to be renewed annually. However, the allocation procedures used by different facilities can vary greatly and can cause difficulty predicting space from year to year. Interviewees described how the allocation of facility space could be based on the previous year's allocation, the residency of club members, a first-come first-served policy, or the status (non-profit vs. for-profit) of the organization. Multiple clubs indicated that consistency of pool space from year to year is one of their biggest challenges. One club noted that the procurement process is different with just about every facility it uses, thus highlighting how the number of facilities used by a club can create additional administrative demands. The one coach-run club interviewed indicated that, as a "commercial" or for-profit organization, their club would be the first to lose its space if a major conflict arose over pool space with a non-profit entity. Finally, multiple clubs suggested that fewer user groups at a facility is associated with being able to obtain space more easily, and the lack of necessity for any kind of conflict resolution process.

Clubs also described several factors that they believed were enablers to successfully obtaining and maintaining space with external providers. First, it was suggested that similarities in club and facility goals might help foster more of a partnership relationship. One club indicated that both it and its primary facility are "striving to be better and more world class." A second factor was having connections and direct influence. One club described its goal

of getting representation on bodies/groups that have an influence on the club and its organization, including the board of one of the facilities it uses. Finally, multiple clubs emphasized the importance of building and maintaining positive relationships with facility staff. According to one club, "relationships are the most important thing when it comes to working inside of an existing aquatic structure."

Finally, many clubs commented specifically on some of the strengths and challenges associated with using municipal facility providers. In general, pools run by municipalities were perceived as being rigid and narrow in their approach to allocation. One club mentioned that municipal programming typically trumps the needs of any other user groups and cited a lack of opportunity to question these decisions. Where conflict resolution processes do exist with municipal providers, they were described by one club as "terrible," "frustrating" and "onerous." Multiple clubs suggested the municipalities need to think outside the box or "bigger picture" in terms of ways to better accommodate user groups. A further challenge for one particular club was difficulty in maintaining facility relationships due to the inability to negotiate directly with facility staff and a high rate of facility staff turnover. In terms of advantages, one club highlighted the fact that it receives a preferential rate at the municipal facilities it uses.

In summary, club interviews highlighted several key features of swim club infrastructure which may have a broader impact on core aspects of the club as an organization, including programming, member/client satisfaction, athlete development, and administrative capacity. These features included:

- day and time of space allocation, which might influence client satisfaction;
- space configuration and quality, which can impact the level of training provided;
- location and extent of centralization, which might impact member/client satisfaction, as well as relationships with facilities and oversight of overall athlete development;
- lateral versus vertical programming, which might impact coaching capacity and therefore member/client satisfaction; and,
- procurement/allocation processes, which not only directly determine access to facilities, but might also create administrative demands for the club.

Additionally, interviewees identified similarity of mandates, positive relationships, and influence as important enablers of obtaining and maintaining pool space. Finally, interviewees also highlighted a number of difficulties particular to the use of municipal facilities.

5.5 Space Solutions - Current and Emerging

Most of the clubs interviewed were currently exploring possibilities for additional or different pool space. Historically, the clubs interviewed seem to have focused on finding internal solutions to infrastructure issues, and there has not been much emphasis placed on partnerships, facility-based or otherwise. In the face of past pool capacity challenges, the clubs interviewed have coped primarily by making internal adjustments to their programming and scheduling. These adjustments have included: reallocating pool space/time across groups; changing the dryland training schedule; changing the days that groups swim; extending its programming vertically (i.e. running later into the evening); and adding more swimmers per lane. None of the clubs interviewed were currently partnering with schools or with local facilities on programming. Only one of the clubs indicated it collaborated with the facility on infrastructure issues, such as partnering on joint grant applications for minor improvements to the pool.

Nevertheless, there seemed to be recognition of the potential value of partnerships in general. Several clubs suggested that partnerships with other organizations might provide an opportunity for learning, collaboration, and

improvement. One club discussed an initiative underway in its community called a "sport alliance." According to the interviewee, this "alliance" involves the bringing together of sport, recreation, and other interested groups in a community to share information and learn from each other. The alliance is about having the groups help rather than compete with each other. For example, the groups might be able to get better deals on equipment, etc. if they work together. The perceived value of partnerships was also recognized with respect to facilities specifically. In the context of pool space allocation, one club suggested that swim clubs, and even other user groups, should work with each other in lobbying the municipality to improve allocation.

One club described another specific strategy for achieving more pool time/space. This was the concept of becoming a "primary tenant," whereby the club would provide not only its own programs, but also the programs of the facility itself. The club in question had yet to achieve this goal, but the interviewee felt that this strategy would give the club a greater amount of influence on the allocation of space, while also providing additional revenue generation opportunities. The interviewee suggested that the club itself would be able to make better efficiencies with the space, unlike situations where the facility dictates the allocation of space to the club.

Establishing the club's own facility was another distinct space solution described by one of the interviewees. The club in question was, at the time of the interview, in the process of developing its own facility. It was suggested that having one's own facility could contribute to the club's overall success by enabling greater flexibility, consistency, and efficiency. The interviewee indicated the facility will give the club access to more time, which in turn will mean better trained athletes who perform better and help bring in more members to the club. Having its own facility will also make it easier for the club to advertise, and will allow the club to ensure it can maintain its programming consistently from year to year. The interviewee acknowledged, however, that the new facility will require a large amount of members to keep it running. The interviewee plans to sell memberships for adult lane swim, but only for certain times to ensure the pool does not sit empty. This is unlike municipal facilities which run at a loss because of, according to the interviewee, their pre-programming and the amount of time they allow for public swim. The interviewee expressed a desire to change the view on how an aquatic facility operates and to become a multi-sport organization.

In summary, the club interviews suggested that internal solutions to space issues are historically more common and are more reactive strategies. Partnerships, facility-based or otherwise, were generally uncommon and untested across the clubs interviewed, despite recognition of their potential value. However, some clubs did seem to be moving towards consideration of partnerships or strategies that involve external organizations more extensively, such as becoming involved in "sport alliances" or looking to become the "primary tenant" of a facility. Conversely, one club was pursuing the development of its own facility. These strategies seem to represent more proactive approaches for increasing club influence or control over allocation and usage of pool space, thereby promoting potential growth and success for the clubs.

5.6 SUMMARY

The themes identified in the interviews for this study provided more in-depth, qualitative information on the functioning of swim clubs in Canada and the potential implications for these clubs of adopting different infrastructure solutions. In terms of solutions, the interviews again corroborated the range of providers identified through the literature review and club website review. The interviews also provided an additional level of nuance to the overall understanding of infrastructure solutions by highlighting both internal (e.g. space reallocation) and external strategies (e.g. partnerships) by which clubs have attempted to mitigate their infrastructure challenges. In turn, this provides ISC with yet further examples of how it might approach its own particular situation.

The interviews also provided new information on technical aspects of aquatic infrastructure, such as pool configuration and facility centralization, and how these might impact an amateur swim organization and the achievement of its goals, especially swimmer performance and member satisfaction. While the generalizability of these interviews is limited, they nevertheless help to underscore the complexity of ISC's infrastructure challenges, and to corroborate some of the impacts ISC might have anticipated from making changes to its pool arrangements.

Finally, the interviews provided in-depth information on important considerations related to mission, finances, and capacity specific to the amateur swim club context. When synthesized with more generalized considerations identified during the literature review, this new information begins to shape a more comprehensive and swim-club-specific picture of the many organizational aspects ISC will need to consider with any future infrastructure solutions.

6.0 Discussion and Analysis

In exploring the topic of potential space solutions in amateur swimming, this study has presented the results of three different lines of research of varying levels of breadth and depth. The purpose of this section is to triangulate and synthesize those results in a way that is meaningful for the client organization, ISC. To this end, the following discussion and analysis:

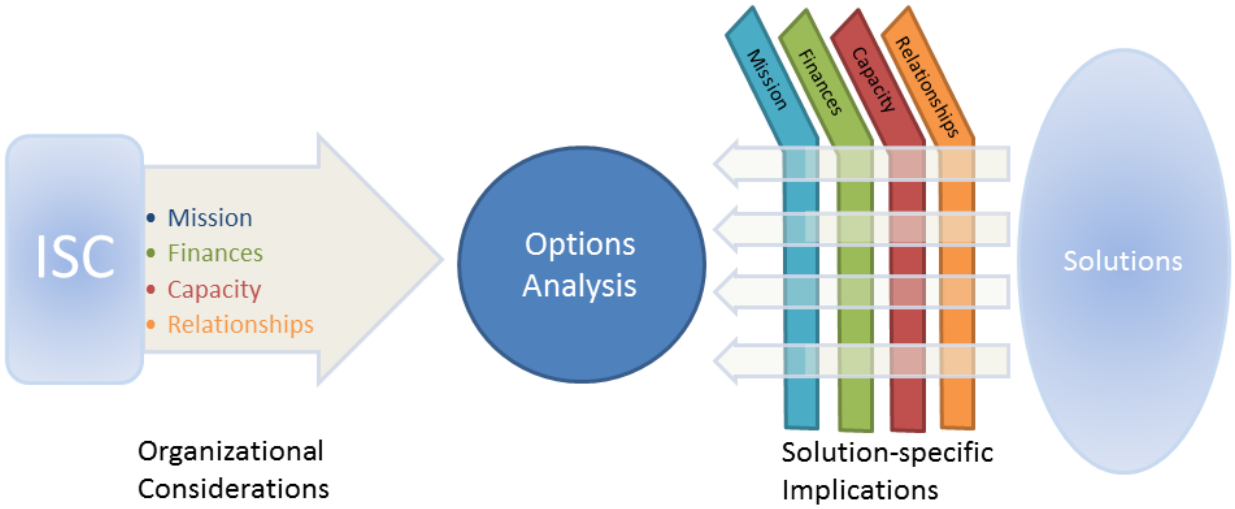
- briefly proposes an analytical framework by which to organize and understand the combined results of this study;
- synthesizes data from all three lines of research to present a comprehensive summary of potential space solutions for amateur swim clubs;
- identifies and discusses general implications of some of these potential space solutions; and,
- identifies and discusses key organizational considerations to assist ISC in examining potential future space solutions.

In short, this section identifies a range of potential infrastructure solutions for ISC to contemplate as well a broad spectrum of considerations and implications of pursuing any of these solutions. In doing so, this section provides the foundation for the specific options selected and analyzed in section 7.0.

6.1 Analytical Framework

The purpose of the analytical framework is to provide a simple structure by which to organize and understand the results of this study. As depicted in Figure 5, there are two different sources of implications and considerations which can be brought to bear on the analysis of potential space options for ISC.

Figure 5. Analytical framework for considering infrastructure solutions



ISC has its own organizational considerations which can be understood as stemming from four key areas of concern: mission, finances, capacity, and relationships. These organizational considerations arise more generally from ISC's role as a non-profit organization and an amateur sports club, and from features specific to ISC such as its programming and administrative partnerships. These considerations are generally static, i.e. they do not shift according to the potential solution being analyzed.

In addition, different space solutions each come with their own specific implications. These implications can also be viewed through the lenses of mission, finances, capacity, and relationships. Unlike organizational considerations, however, these implications can change depending on the solution that is selected. For example, infrastructure provided by a municipality could be more vulnerable to overall government financial health, and might have specific policies preferring some user groups to others. Other solutions would have different financial and relationship implications.

In summary, the analytical framework depicts how identifying and considering both organizational considerations and solution-specific implications are necessary for informed analysis and decision-making. Potential solutions, implications, and organizational considerations are described in further detail in the sections which follow.

6.2 Infrastructure Solutions

One of the primary objectives of this study was to identify the infrastructure solutions used by swim clubs, as well as any alternative or emerging options. This section synthesizes the information gathered through the literature review, club website review, and interviews in order to provide the most comprehensive picture possible of potential space solutions for ISC.

Together, the three lines of evidence suggest that there are two primary models for club infrastructure, supported by a broad range of potential facility providers. These models and providers may or may not also involve some form or degree of various types of partnerships. Finally, space solutions might be internally generated and involve only the swim club itself. These models, providers, partnerships, and strategies, which collectively represent the space solutions that ISC might wish to consider, are outlined in further detail below.

Models and Providers

In general, the literature and website review highlighted two primary models by which swim clubs obtain facility infrastructure: an external model, and an internal model. The external model refers to clubs who procure space from another organizational entity such as recreation facility operated by the local government. The internal model refers to clubs which provide their own infrastructure and includes institution-run clubs.

Within each of these models, it is possible for a club to obtain space from multiple different providers of facilities, the complete list of which is outlined in the website review findings (see Table 1). Certain providers are exclusive to one model or the other, but other providers may be used in either internal or external infrastructure models. Potential combinations of models and providers are as follows:

Model	Identified Providers
External	Municipal, school, university, non-profit (Y), non-profit (other), federal (DND), federal (other), private (other), other community centre
Internal	University, non-profit (Y), federal (DND), private (own)

Specific implications of using these models and some of these providers are described in depth in section 6.3 of this report.

Partnerships

A further research objective of this study was to identify creative or alternative solutions applicable to aquatic sport infrastructure. To this end, the literature review identified a number of different kinds of partnership arrangements related to both overall governance and facilities. Governance-based partnerships include multi-sport clubs, in which multiple amateur sports are governed by a single organization. Facility-based partnerships are those in which multiple organizations collaborate on some aspect of developing, operating, or using a facility. This collaboration might occur between a non-profit club and other private or public entities, and/or between multiple different sport organizations (e.g. multi-sport training centres).

Finally, interviews also suggested that partnership arrangements can be based on programming. Clubs may provide swimming lessons at local facilities or run school swimming programs. A club might also become the "primary tenant" of a facility, an arrangement by which the club organizes and provides its own programming and that of the facility itself. In general, however, partnership arrangements were not yet widely implemented by the clubs interviewed. Nevertheless, ISC may wish to consider certain of these partnership arrangements to support or complement the model and providers of infrastructure it elects to pursue.

Strategies

Finally, club interviews identified two potential solutions to infrastructure challenges that did not contemplate changing the model or provider, or pursuing a partnership. These strategies were:

- Rearranging programming across existing facilities. This might involve internal reallocation of pool space/time across different levels or programs, and/or adaptation of programs (e.g. vertical programming, more kids per lane) to fit the space available.
- Use of alternate space within the facility. Some clubs indicated they made use of not only teach or competition pools, but also separate dive tanks and leisure pools to increase their overall capacity.

6.3 Solution-Specific Implications

The research for this study also identified and suggested a number of implications related to mission, finances, capacity, and relationships that are specific to certain space solutions. These implications are not necessarily specific to ISC itself. Rather, these implications would likely be applicable to most swim clubs making infrastructure-related decisions.

Implications were identified for the following specific solutions only: external model, including municipal, educational, and private providers; internal model, specifically one's own private facility; and partnership arrangements. These implications are discussed below and summarized in Table 3.

External Model

Literature suggested that renting pool space/time from external providers (e.g. municipalities, educational institutions, private providers) is a financially sound model, provided club members can be charged enough to cover rental fees (USA Swimming, n.d., para 12). Data from the website review demonstrated that very few clubs were involved in owning or operating a facility. This might suggest that renting is indeed more cost effective for them. Additionally, municipal providers of pool infrastructure have some specific implications for swim club finances. Both the literature and interviews suggested that clubs with non-profit status might receive discounted

pool rates and preferential allocation. However, municipal facilities are also heavily tied to government's financial state of affairs. Therefore clubs who rely on municipal pools might see fee increases or a lack of facility upgrades during times of restrained municipal budgets. Conversely, these facilities might also see injections of infrastructure funding from governments, particularly federal (JF Group, 2013, p. 1).

Capacity and the use of external facilities did not arise during the course of club interviews. This lack of discussion could be due to the fact that using external providers is simply the status quo and its impact on club capacity has therefore never actively been considered. The results of the club website review indicate that it is vastly more common for a facility/institution to run a club, than for a club to run its own facility. In addition to the financial implications of running a facility, this data might suggest that the use of external providers is easier and has fewer capacity demands for clubs. One might speculate that, beyond the administrative responsibilities of negotiating contracts, there are few implications for club capacity to using external providers. Given that the vast majority of clubs are member-governed and therefore typically rely on a lot of volunteer commitment, minimizing capacity demands would be important.

The literature and club interviews highlighted several potential implications for club mission stemming from the use of municipal facilities. It was pointed out in the literature that municipal organizations have different mandates from those of sports clubs, and might perhaps be more focused on financial concerns (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 135). Interviewees suggested that municipal programming (e.g. swim lessons, public swim times), as opposed to outside user group programming, is the priority of municipal facilities. Multiple sources also commented on the high number of user groups competing for time and space at municipal facilities (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 135; CPRA, 2013, p. 29). According to some interviewees, this can be exacerbated by how the municipality approaches allocation of pool time and space. Several critiques included the lack of flexibility of these approaches, and a seeming need to try to appease every kind of user group at every facility. This competition and allocation might make it particularly challenging for a swim club to procure and maintain space within municipal facilities, and could potentially create tensions between the club and other user groups. In short, due to differences in the mission/mandate of municipal facilities and clubs, swim clubs using municipal facilities may be challenged to deliver the amount of mission they want in the way they want.

Interview discussions highlighted multiple challenges to fostering positive relationships with municipal facility providers in particular. Negotiations with municipal facilities can be challenging due to turnover in staff, and a requirement to negotiate with a designated allocation manager rather than directly with pool staff. Municipal providers might also be more concerned with appeasing a wide range of user groups. Municipal processes for resolving space/time conflicts between user groups might be less than effective and clubs might have little opportunity to question or appeal allocation decisions. Municipal providers were characterized as being "rigid" and relatively inflexible, which precludes them from considering alternative strategies such as a more regional approach to allocation.

The literature also suggested the potential for mission conflict with educational institutions and private facilities. Green and Houlihan (2005) noted that educational institutions have their own distinct objectives and limitations (p. 135). For example, private school facilities might need to focus exclusively on individuals from within the school (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 67). This would be seem to be incompatible with the mission of a member-governed, community-based swim club. Private facilities, on the other hand, are motivated by profit (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 135). This may also prove to be inconsistent with a non-profit swim club's mission-driven existence. However, it might also mean that as long as a club can pay, the private facility will provide the time and space necessary for the club to deliver its mission.

Given that use of private facilities is less common, it is not surprising that interviews yielded little information on relationships with these providers. One interviewee did comment how the first-come, first served allocation policy of its private provider is challenging. This kind of policy suggests that the private facility is not invested in maintaining a strong relationship with club. As was suggested by the literature, the private provider may be primarily concerned with its clients' ability to pay.

Internal Model

The literature and club interview data suggested that having one's own facility can both challenge and enable club mission. The case of developing a new facility (i.e. undertaking a major capital project) was described as a "turning point" for a non-profit (Rosenthal, 2007, p. 930), requiring the organization to take on new and unfamiliar roles (Rosenthal, 2007, p. 934). It might require the organization to reconsider, modify, or expand its mission. That being said, multiple lines of evidence suggested that having one's own facility can also support the delivery of club mission. First, this infrastructure model eliminates the need to negotiate with other facilities (USA Swimming, n.d., para 13), thus supporting greater consistency and easier access to more pool time and space according to one interviewee. Second, interviews and literature also suggested that having one's own facility means that club growth is better supported and more secure (USA Swimming, n.d., para 13). Both of these potential benefits support the delivery of more mission. In addition, one's own facility might also support the delivery of more effective mission (i.e. performance). One interviewee speculated that having more pool time would lead to better trained athletes who would, in turn, perform at a higher level. There has also been some suggestion that higher performing swimmers come from clubs that built their own pools (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 68) and that, in a leisure context, new facilities attract new swimmers (Collins & Sparkes, 2010, p. 174).

Developing a new, owned facility for a swim club has major financial implications. For other non-profits, a capital project of this nature has involved a larger flow of money than at any other time in the organization's history (Rosenthal, 2007, p. 930). The literature on non-profit organizations suggests that many of the barriers to engaging in infrastructure projects are financial. First, capital projects require a large amount of reserve funding which the organization may lack (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. 19), and it may be difficult for a non-profit to obtain credit from a financial institution (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. 18). Many non-profits may also rely, in part, on government funding. This creates burdens for the organization in terms of showing accountability to funders (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. 15). It also creates risks as short-term, cyclical grants can be problematic, and there may be delays in being reimbursed by funders (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. 15). In turn, the organization may need to vigorously pursue alternative sources of funding such as corporate sponsorships, selling naming rights, community fundraising, and donations (Government of Western Australia, 2007a, p. 18)

The development of a new facility ties an organization to that facility financially for the long term (USA Swimming, 2007, p. 35; Government of Western Australia, 2007a, p. 18) and creates significant new risks. Not only does the club need to generate enough revenue to offset operating costs, it also needs to pay down the debt of purchasing or construction (USA Swimming, n.d., para 10; Government of Western Australia, 2007a, p. 10). This may create financial strain given the suggestion that most municipal pools and aquatic facilities do not recover their full operating costs (Roberts, 2011, p. 56). One source suggests that for a club to run its own facility it must take on "total aquatic programming" as competitive programs alone cannot support a facility financially (USA Swimming, n.d., para 10). Having a facility also makes the organization responsible for the risk associated with variable costs like heating (Collins & Sparkes, 2010, p. 168), as well as labour which is the main driver of pool expenditures (Collins & Sparkes, 2010, p. 168). Nevertheless, one swim club interviewed for this study was in the process of developing its own facility. While acknowledging that such a venture will require a very large number of members to keep it running, the interviewee also suggested that the new facility would present additional revenue

generation opportunities for the club, such as selling limited adult swim memberships. So while much of the literature focuses on the financial challenges and risks associated with developing one's own facility, interview data suggests it is not impossible and may present financial opportunities as well.

There are also likely to be major capacity implications to obtaining or developing a new facility. In particular, major capital projects require additional expertise and manpower. One case study described the additional capacity required as extra attention, involvement, and oversight from leadership, along with strong internal controls and an expert management team (Rosenthal, 2007, p. 930). It is worth noting that the interviewee who was in the process of developing a facility for their club also had contractor experience. Additional capacity may also be necessary because of the financial implications of such a project. As noted in the literature, non-profits typically have limited capacity to prepare applications and manage grants (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. iii) which may become a financial necessity in order to take on a major construction project or capital acquisition. Although neither the literature reviewed nor the interviews addressed this explicitly, it stands to reason that not only the development but also the operation and maintenance of a facility have capacity implications. If a club were to take on these responsibilities directly, they would need to ensure they had sufficient expertise in pool facility management and operations.

One case study of a major capital project in a non-profit context also suggested it was necessary to redevelop the organization's governance structure to better support facility development (Rosenthal, 2007, pp. 940-941). However, the club website review revealed that, with the exception of institution-run clubs, there is no obvious link between governance types and clubs with their own facilities. Clubs with their own facilities were a mix of coach-run and member-run. This suggests that, while some structural changes might be necessary, the overall governance model does not necessarily need to change should a club look to run its own facility. The website review also identified a handful of facilities operated by non-profit societies but ultimately owned by the municipality. This might suggest that there are some benefits to modifying the organization's governance structure in order to devolve the day-to-day operations of a facility.

Few relationship implications for new/owned infrastructure arose from this study's research. One literature source on facility development recommended engaging the community in the proposed facility's catchment area as a best practice (Government of Western Australia, 2007b, p. 6).

Partnerships

Partnership models, both general and specific, also have potential implications for club mission. First, mission can enable or hinder the partnerships themselves. The literature recognized that partnerships can be challenging in terms of there being differences in organizational culture and priorities (Watt, 2003, p. 18). However, sources disagree on whether partnerships are better served by organizations with similar or different mandates. One interviewee attributed its successful partnership relationship with one of its pools to the two organizations having similar mandates. On the other hand, one case study suggested that it was key to have partners with different but complementary mandates (City of Saskatoon, 2010, p. 18). Together, these sources might suggest that it is important to share a mission with your facility, but to have separate, complementary missions from other facility user groups with which a club might partner.

Sources generally seem to agree that partnerships have the potential to enable successful delivery of club mission. For example, one club interviewed suggested that partnerships could be formed across clubs in order to lobby the municipality to improve allocation. Allocation policies directly affect the time and space clubs use to deliver their mission; therefore, improved allocation could support the delivery of more mission and/or better mission. Another club interviewed highlighted the potential for partnerships across sport, recreation, and other community

groups. These kinds of partnerships foster cooperation and collaboration rather than competition, and encourage groups to share information and lessons learned. In turn, clubs might benefit from these relationships and learnings and be able to deliver higher-quality mission. In terms of multi-sport clubs, specifically, one source in the literature suggested that these kinds of clubs might attract higher performing athletes (Watt, 2003, p. 19), thus enhancing the effectiveness of the club's mission. Finally, partnering with other user groups on facilities might encourage better use of facilities and provide an opportunity for new and creative shared programming (City of Saskatoon, 2010, p. 13). In other words, facility partnerships might positively affect the amount, quality, and efficiency of an organization's mission.

The literature suggests that partnership models can often be beneficial to organizational finances, particularly where facilities are concerned. Partnerships enable organizations to maximize resources, a strategy which is particularly important in times of economic constraint (Watt, 2003, p. 18). Partnerships with the private sector and/or partnerships which involve the devolution of services to another party may better support long-term viability for facilities and provide some measure of tax relief (Jackson & Bramham, 2008, p. 209). Such arrangements could also serve to transfer some of the financial risk to another partner. Partnerships can also be particularly important when major funding needs to be obtained (Robson, 2008, p. 127), thus potentially making new facility development more feasible (Watt, 2003, p. 18). However, partnerships do not necessarily mean that facility construction costs are lower (City of Saskatoon, 2010, p. 14). In addition, it has been suggested that multi-sport partnerships in particular may have difficulties allocating funding (Watt, 2003, p. 18) and be less effective at generating income than single sport clubs (Watt, 2003, p. 20).

Table 3. Summary of implications by solution

Model	Provider	Mission	Finances	Capacity	Relationships
External	**Municipal**	• Potential for mission conflict with club • Competition with multiple user groups • Facility's programming is prioritized	• Generally a financially sound model • Potential for discounted rental rates and preferential allocation • Quality and cost of facilities potentially tied to state of government finances	*No specific information available*	• Potentially challenging due to staff turnover or lack of direct contact with facility staff • Conflicts may arise due to multiple user groups
	Educational institutions	• Potential for mission conflict with club • May be available only/primarily to students of that institution	• Generally a financially sound model	*No specific information available*	*No specific information available*
	Private	• Potential for mission conflict with club • Profit motivation of facility may make it easier for club to secure time and space	• Generally a financially sound model	*No specific information available*	• May be less invested in maintaining a strong relationship with club
Internal	**New/own facility**	• Might require changes to and/or clarification of club mission • Greater access to and consistency of pool time and space • Security for club growth • Potential opportunity to enhance swimmer performance to some degree	• Major, long-term capital and operating implications • Requires large amount of reserve funding or credit which may be difficult to obtain • Necessity for other external funding sources may create additional risks and accountabilities • May require additional programming beyond club mandate to support facility financially • Potential for new streams of revenue	• Major capacity implications in terms of expertise and manpower • Potential need for structural changes to governance and administration	• May require engaging and consulting with broader community
Partnerships	**N/A**	• Can enable or hinder mission delivery • Different organizational mandates can present challenges or opportunities • Potential to improve space allocation and usage, increase programming quality through shared learning, and deliver innovative programs	• Opportunity to maximize resources • Potential to enhance long-term viability for facilities and provide some tax relief • Risks shared across multiple organizations • Challenges raising and distributing funding across disparate groups	*No specific information available*	*No specific information available*

6.4 Organizational Considerations

When making a major infrastructure decision, it is important to consider the implications that specific infrastructure solutions entail. However, there is also a wide range of organization-specific considerations that must be taken into account in order to ensure a solution is right for a particular club. Drawing on the results of the literature review and club interviews, as well as the background on ISC, this section identifies and discusses organizational considerations related to mission, finances, capacity, and relationships as they apply specifically to ISC and infrastructure-related decisions.

In addition, a series of key guiding questions are proposed to assist in the examination and analysis of specific options for ISC. These key questions are summarized in Table 4 at the end of this section.

Mission – Finding Balance, Knowing the Trade-offs

Mission is an organization's reason for being. According to the non-profit management literature, mission is also the most important asset of non-profit organizations (Brinckerhoff, 2012, p. 14), including member-governed swim clubs like ISC. Mission gives direction to the organization and provides a clear sense of mandate to those involved (Brinckerhoff, 2012, p. 14). For any proposed infrastructure solution, therefore, ISC should consider first and foremost whether the solution supports the club's mission.

Ensuring this alignment between infrastructure and mission, however, is not straightforward. The "pyramid requirement" was a theme that arose in the literature and interviews for this study. Clubs need a large number of members to "support the development of future excellence in a few" (Watt, 2003, p. 18). Interviewees emphasized the importance of their pre-competitive programming to club sustainability, yet also described swimmer performance as a key organizational goal, even going so far as to prioritize their pool time for competitive programs. Not surprisingly, this multi-pronged mission has the potential to create organizational tension when decisions need to be made between nurturing elite swimmers and supporting the interests of the more general club membership (Green & Houlihan, 2005, p. 107) even though, in the long-term, club success may depend on nurturing both.

ISC's mission statement exemplifies the potential tension and necessary symbiotic relationship between different aspects of mission: "to provide a balanced and sustainable competitive program to every swimmer at every level, to create a swimming community in Greater Victoria, where success is measured beyond our podium results" (Island Swimming, n.d.a., para 6). This desire to balance its programming is further exacerbated by the fact that ISC's access to pool space at one of its primary facilities is determined by club performance. Thus any infrastructure decisions on ISC's part which could jeopardize future swimmer performance may lead to loss of pool time/space. If ISC were to focus exclusively on the facility needs of its current elite swimmers, it might risk capturing and developing the elite swimmers of the future, in turn potentially losing out on high performance training space/time in the years to come. Therefore, ISC needs to carefully consider which aspects of club mission any infrastructure solution is intended to support, and what, if any, the unintended consequences might be to other aspects of the club's mission.

This study also identified the potential for tensions between growth and programming demands. The programming by which swim clubs deliver their mission extends beyond pre-competitive and competitive. Interviewees identified a broad range of possible programming and activities for swim clubs. ISC itself is already involved in delivering learn to swim, development, and competitive programs, along with swim lessons (facility partnership), school swim programs, and hosting meets. The non-profit literature suggests that many non-profits fail because they run too many programs less effectively, instead of focusing on a few programs where the potential for impact

is greatest (Graham & Kinmond, 2008, p. 22). Keeping in mind this need to ensure the organization is not spread too thin, ISC should consider whether any infrastructure solution will place additional (non-core) programming demands on the club. That being said these demands may be acceptable and, in fact, beneficial. This study identified the fact that growth is a goal for most swim clubs, and that growth is often linked to new programmatic offerings. New programs and additional facility locations (decentralization) were associated with the potential for a broader membership base. Thus, ISC should also consider if a given infrastructure solution will enable future growth, e.g. by enhancing the catchment area.

Finally, both the literature and interviews identified the potential for facility configuration to have an impact on club programming and performance. The facility may or may not contribute to a competitive atmosphere in support of swimmer performance, and technical features (e.g. length of lanes, lack of blocks) directly affect what type of programming and activities can be offered by a club. Thus a further consideration for ISC is whether environmental and technical aspects of a facility solution support the club's specific programming needs and performance goals.

Finances – Diversity of Revenues, Funding Policies, Preferred Providers

For a non-profit, finances are the means by which to deliver the organization's mission. Financial health may be particularly challenging for amateur sports clubs. Not only is there competition for limited resources across the non-profit sector (Juniper Consulting, 2013, p. 15), but it has also been suggested that voluntary sport organizations are more vulnerable financially (Watt, 2003, p. 55). This vulnerability may arise from a high dependency on certain streams of revenue, as well as having little control over the primary source of expenditures.

Recommended practice in non-profit management suggests that organizations have a diversity of funding sources (Graham & Kinmond, 2008, p. 35). Swim clubs, however, rely heavily on membership-based fees which might comprise anywhere from 50 to 100 percent of club revenues. Up to two-thirds of ISC's revenues stem from member fees. The club's finances are therefore inherently tied to the ability of members to pay, and thus to the economic conditions of the community. In addition, there is significant potential for fee increases to negatively impact member satisfaction and therefore retention. ISC should therefore consider what additional cost pressures and/or revenue opportunities any infrastructure solutions might create for the club, particularly whether the solution will require a net increase in member fees.

Swim clubs interviewed were pursuing opportunities to diversify their sources of revenue, although some noted limited success to date. These additional revenue sources might include meets, gaming/fundraising, grants, and sponsorships. All of these depend somewhat on external partners/agencies, and are therefore somewhat beyond the club's direct control. ISC's additional sources of revenue include government gaming revenue grants, meet hosting, sponsorships, administrative sub-contracts, and fundraising. A shift in infrastructure could potentially negate the viability of some of ISC's administrative sub-contracts or, in contrast, might provide a new sponsorship opportunity. Therefore ISC should consider how an infrastructure solution might impact each of its revenue streams, the diversity of its funding sources, and in turn its overall financial health.

Potential financial tensions can also arise from an organizational focus on growth. According to some of the literature, organizational growth requires a non-profit to "embrace profits on balance sheet" (Brinckerhoff, 2012, p. 21). One club interviewed had the specific financial goal of having a year of operating funds in reserve. However, embracing profits and maintaining a large reserve fund might also have negative financial implications. For ISC, government grants are the second most significant source of revenue; however, these grants are also vulnerable to not only changes in government policy or financial health, but also ISC's financial position. According

to BC's Community Gaming Grant funding guidelines, an organization becomes ineligible for grants if it "[h]as more than 50 per cent of its previous fiscal year's operating expenses on hand in the form of unrestricted cash and investments" (Government of British Columbia, 2014, p. 6). ISC could internally restrict funds destined to support facility development but, according to the guidelines, these funds become considered unrestricted after having been reserved for more than 5 years (p. 6). Thus facility solutions which require ISC to carry a balance or have a large amount of funding in reserve over multiple years may negatively impact its eligibility for government funding. Therefore ISC should also consider if the club is, or can ever be, in a financial position to support a particular infrastructure solution.

The primary cost driver for swim clubs might also create financial vulnerabilities. According to interviews, pool fees are generally the major expense for most clubs, and ISC is no exception. Given the evidence provided by this study that most clubs rely on external sources of infrastructure, this places most clubs at the mercy of the facility provider. If an operator chooses to raise its fees, the club would need to adjust its finances accordingly. Clubs that rely on a single facility (close to 66 percent of clubs in Canada), or a single provider (e.g. municipal) may be even more vulnerable in terms of experiencing cost increases. Thus, where possible, ISC might wish to consider a diversity of providers to potentially minimize the impact of pool fee increases. On the other hand, certain facilities, particularly municipal, provide lower cost access for non-profit clubs. ISC receives a preferred rate at its primary municipal facility and has noted that purchasing time at a local YMCA/YWCA facility would cost approximately three times what ISC currently pays. Moreover, external sources of infrastructure are negotiated annually and therefore only impose a one-year financial commitment on the club. Therefore ISC should consider the cost implications of any particular facility solution, as well as how long these cost implications persist.

Capacity - Coaching, Governance and Administration, Volunteers

Capacity refers to the organization's human resources and their ability to deliver the organization's mission. According to the non-profit management literature, human capacity is just as important to invest in as infrastructure (Graham & Kinmond, 2008, p. 4) and should be a key consideration in any non-profit decision-making (Brinckerhoff, 2012, p. 39). This study identified three key elements of capacity that are important for swim clubs, in particular, to consider in infrastructure decision-making: coaching, governance and administration, and volunteer capacity.

According to the interviews conducted for this study, the level and quality of swim club capacity in governance and administration can be variable. The literature highlighted the importance of board expertise, governance and committee structures, and the level of attention, involvement, and oversight from leadership. For interviewees, good administration and governance were associated with stability of staff, having a strong and experienced board, clarity of expectations, and solid club policies. ISC is moving towards selecting board directors based on expertise; however, like other member-governed clubs, ISC's board is re-elected every several years. Going forward, ISC should consider whether it has the right structure and expertise to support facility decision-making and the oversight of any new facility solutions. For infrastructure solutions that result in major change or long-term implications, ISC may need to consider if its leadership structure provides sufficient stability and continuity.

Unlike some of the clubs interviewed, ISC has a dedicated club manager and other administrative staff. The ability to maintain a dedicated administrative team is enabled, in part, by the administrative sub-contracts ISC has in place with other co-located organizations. Shifts in ISC infrastructure solutions which might risk this co-location and the associated administrative contracts could therefore impact ISC's overall administrative capacity. In addition, new facility solutions might necessitate additional administrative activities such as preparing grant

applications, meeting accountability requirements to funders or partners, etc. Study results also suggested that potentially having fewer facilities or fewer facility types, and thus fewer relationships to manage, might create fewer administrative demands for a club. In short, ISC should consider what demands and/or other impacts an infrastructure solution might have on its administrative capacity.

All clubs interviewed described their coaching staff, and the experience, education, and stability they bring, as an important organizational strength. Interviews suggested that facility location and distribution can impact coaching capacity. It was suggested that centralization enables coaches to better observe the overall development of club swimmers, and that vertical programming allows coaches to work directly with more kids. Thus infrastructure solutions which support some level of centralization and vertical programming may help maximize coaching capacity. In addition, clubs may need to canvas the acceptability of any infrastructure solution with the coaching staff as they represent a valued part of the organization and may be difficult to replace. For these reasons, ISC should consider how any infrastructure solution will impact coaching capacity.

It was also noted in the literature that sport clubs are heavily reliant on volunteer commitment (Watt, 2003, p. 54) and interviews with member-governed clubs corroborated this. Clubs, including ISC, rely on volunteers to populate Boards and committees, and to support club activities such as meet hosting and fundraising. Thus some aspects of club programming (mission) and some sources of revenue (finances) are dependent on volunteer capacity. While this is a free source of capacity for the club, these volunteers are also the families who pay club membership fees. Moving to new facility solutions has the potential to create additional pressures on this free capacity, e.g. through the need for increased fundraising activities. ISC itself has noted concerns about the potential for volunteer burnout and therefore it should be particularly concerned about whether infrastructure decisions place additional demands on its volunteer capacity and, by extension, member satisfaction. Specific linkages to member satisfaction will be discussed further in the following section on relationships.

Relationships – Member Satisfaction, Partnerships

Successful non-profit organizations maintain positive relationships with both internal and external stakeholders (Graham & Kinmond, 2008, p. 19). For swim clubs, the satisfaction of their internal stakeholders (i.e. members) is important in and of itself, but also to support retention and therefore club capacity and viability. Member satisfaction was linked to a number of factors in the literature and in club interviews, including: club atmosphere, fees, the extent of decentralization, swimming timeslots, and the level of communication between the club and parents. The fact that voluntary sports organizations are highly susceptible to internal conflict (Watt, 2003, p. 52) would also suggest that a proactive approach to supporting member satisfaction is advisable. Taking all this into account, when reviewing infrastructure solutions ISC should consider to what extent members are aware of and understand the proposed solution, and to what extent the solution is acceptable.

Relationships with external stakeholders, particularly external facility providers, are also important for swim clubs. All clubs interviewed for this study stressed the importance of regularly nurturing their relationships with facility staff, presumably because of the influence these staff have on space allocation and the overall operation of the facility. Relationships are also important because of the need to regularly negotiate with these staff for time and space, and thus might help enhance the consistency and predictability of facility space. This may be particularly relevant in the three ISC facilities where space allocation is not based on performance. The results of this study suggested that facility relationships might be enhanced by: the facility and club having similar or complementary mandates; through a decentralized model which provides more club “face time” at each pool; and being in a position of influence with the facility (e.g. on its board). ISC generally has a strong relationship with its primary facility, which also focuses in part on high performance sport. In seeking future infrastructure solutions, ISC should

consider to what extent a facility's and the club's mandates are complementary, what relationships might already be in place to support this solution, and whether the solution provides greater or less consistency and predictability of infrastructure.

This study also suggested that building partnerships with other groups in an organization's sector is a smart practice for non-profits (Graham & Kinmond, 2008, p. 5). This theme was reflected by club interviewees who discussed the benefits of building community and sector partnerships. In particular, swim clubs should consider their relationship with other user groups at the same facilities. Relationships with other user groups are important because a greater number of user groups is associated with more difficulties and conflicts in obtaining facility time and space. This may be somewhat less relevant at ISC's primary facility where, although there is significant competition with other aquatic sports clubs, allocation is determined objectively based on performance. In other facilities, however, developing closer, cooperative relationships across user groups could potentially improve access to facilities. ISC also currently maintains important partnerships with the Victoria Academy of Swimming and PISE. ISC should therefore consider if a particular infrastructure solution will allow the club to maintain and/or enhance its existing partnerships, whether collaboration with other user groups could make the solution more viable, and whether the solution has the potential to create unacceptable conflicts or tensions with external stakeholders.

Table 4. Key organizational questions in considering infrastructure solutions

Mission	*Does the solution support ISC's mission?* *Which aspects of ISC's mission is the solution intended to support?* *What, if any, unintended consequences might there be to other aspects of ISC's mission?* *Will the solution place additional (non-core) programming demands on ISC?* *Will the solution enable future growth, e.g. by enhancing the catchment area?* *Do environmental and technical aspects of the solution support the club's specific programming needs and performance goals?*
Finances	*What additional cost pressures and/or revenue opportunities might the solution create for ISC?* *Will the solution require a net increase in member fees?* *How might the solution impact each of ISC's revenue streams, the diversity of its funding sources, and in turn its overall financial health?* *Is ISC, or can it ever be, in a financial position to support a particular infrastructure solution?* *What are the cost implications of the solution? How long will these cost implications persist?*
Capacity	*Does ISC have the right structure and expertise to support facility decision-making and the oversight of any new facility solutions?* *Does ISC's leadership structure provide sufficient stability and continuity for solutions that result in major change or have long-term implications?* W*hat demands and/or other impacts will the solution have on ISC's administrative capacity?* *How will the solution impact ISC's coaching capacity?* *Will the solution place additional demands on ISC's volunteer capacity and, by extension, impact member satisfaction*?
Relationships	*To what extent are ISC members aware of and understand the proposed solution? To what extent is the solution acceptable to them?* *To what extent are the solution's and ISC's mandates complementary? What relationships might ISC already have in place to support this solution?* *Will the solution provide greater or less consistency and predictability of infrastructure?* *Will the solution allow ISC to maintain and/or enhance its existing partnerships?* *Could collaboration with other user groups make the solution more viable for ISC?* *Does the solution have the potential to create unacceptable conflicts or tensions between ISC and external stakeholders?*

7.0 Options and Recommendations

The final objective for this project was to examine, in brief, the feasibility and desirability of potential options to expand ISC's facility infrastructure in order to support its growing client base. Using both the organizational and solution-specific considerations derived from the Discussion and Analysis, this section of the report considers three options and their potential implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships, while taking into account the specific context in which ISC operates.

In brief, the options to be analyzed are:

1. **Maintain Current Trajectory** – This option would see ISC maintain its current complement of four municipal facilities, while continuing to pursuing additional time and space with these providers. In addition, ISC could pursue partnerships with other user groups to influence allocation at its existing facilities. It could also consider internal strategies to reallocate its existing time and space.

2. **Pursue Additional External Facilities** – This option would see ISC pursue net new facility time/space with additional external sources, including other provider types.

3. **Develop ISC's Own Facility –** This option would see ISC establish its own dedicated facility. This might include partnering with other public or private entities on development and/or operation of the facility.

Each of these options is now described in further depth, followed by a review of the potential implications and considerations for ISC in terms of mission, finances, capacity, and relationships. A summary table of these options and implications is also provided. While this report does not endorse one option over the other, this section does conclude with a series of recommendations to assist ISC in making well-informed infrastructure decisions into the future.

7.1 Option 1 – Maintain Current Trajectory

ISC has previously attempted to expand its infrastructure through requesting additional time/space with its current facilities. While this appears to be a continuing possibility at the Panorama and SEAPARC sites, it is a less feasible option at SCP (where allocation is determined by performance) and at Juan de Fuca where ISC has received virtually the same amount of time/space for almost a decade. Thus simply requesting additional time/space at existing facilities would appear to limit ISC's growth potential to the areas served by Panorama and SEAPARC pools, namely Central Saanich/Sidney and Sooke. This strategy does not therefore support the potential need for additional infrastructure capacity in Victoria or the Westshore.

Continuing to pursue possibilities with existing facilities could also involve exploring internal reallocation strategies and alternative time/space arrangements. These might include: placing more swimmers per lane; using additional spaces like the dive tank; and shifts between horizontal and vertical programming. The feasibility of these other strategies would still depend to some degree upon availability of pool time/space and the willingness of facilities to consider rearranging allocations for ISC and other user groups. In addition, ISC has anecdotally noted it can often already have more swimmers per lane than other clubs.

Finally, ISC could consider pursing strategies to affect the allocation or control of water space at existing facilities. These kinds of strategies might include becoming the primary tenant, or pursuing partnerships with other user groups to lobby across pools for a more coordinated approach to allocation. It should be noted that these

strategies are, as of yet, unproven in practice. In ISC's case, its primary facility is a designated high performance facility. Therefore the facility is mandated to provide space/time to a range of organizations (including other swim clubs) with high performance athletes. ISC already has a partnership with the facility to provide the Wave Skills program. However, the facility's mandate would seem to preclude ISC pursuing a more comprehensive partnership which would give it control over the water space. Thus, the most feasible opportunity for ISC to improve its time/space allocation with existing facilities might be to collaborate with other swim clubs and user groups and approach the municipalities responsible for the various aquatic facilities in the Greater Victoria region.

Implications and Considerations

Mission – Alternative time/space arrangements are typically short-term solutions which might not enhance ISC's opportunity to deliver more mission in the long-term. Nor does it help to address concerns that there are some potential future gaps in the number of up and coming high performance swimmers, something that might be ameliorated by expanding membership at the base of the "pyramid." Rearranging programming also might require shifting swimmers between pools which is likely to have a significant negative effect on member satisfaction. Similarly, trying to be more efficient with space (e.g. fitting in more swimmers per lane) could also diminish swimmer satisfaction and performance. Focusing exclusively on existing facilities might also mean missing out on an opportunity to potentially improve the availability of dryland training space, an important programming component.

That being said, Option 1 allows ISC to continue to focus on its current mission. Pursuing Option 1 does not demand consideration of any new programming or supporting activities. While it might limit growth, this Option presents an opportunity to focus on continued excellence at current programming/service levels.

Finances – Option 1 is unlikely to have any major negative or positive financial implications for ISC. There might be modest increases in total facility costs if any additional time/space can be obtained, but presumably these would be offset by modest increases in membership numbers. Pursuing Option 1 is unlikely to result in any opportunities for new or expanded revenue streams (e.g. hosting additional meets) which could decrease club dependence on membership fees.

Capacity – Option 1 is the most conservative option presented in this report and most closely resembles the status quo in terms of ISC's mission delivery. Therefore no noteworthy changes to ISC's capacity are predicted in pursuing this option.

Relationships – Should ISC pursue this option, it will continue to come up against other swim clubs/user groups in competition for facility time/space. If ISC applies significant pressure for more time/space it could potentially increase tensions between the club and other user groups, and between the club and the facility itself. Conversely, this Option also presents an opportunity for ISC to consider greater collaboration or alliances across amateur aquatic sport organizations in the region.

For ISC's internal stakeholders, i.e. its current members and staff, Option 1 involves the least amount of change is therefore unlikely to be contentious or to cause internal conflicts.

7.2 Option 2 – Pursue Additional External Facilities

ISC currently obtains its infrastructure from municipal providers only. Option 2 would see ISC pursue net new facility time/space with additional external sources, including other provider types. Determining the feasibility of this option, however, first requires a general understanding of other facilities in ISC's area. A cursory review of other pool facilities in the Greater Victoria region reveals that:

- There are no public or private school-based pools
- The local university (which has its own pool) is affiliated with another swim club (Pacific Coast Swimming, n.d., para 1)
- There are a number of other municipally-run pools in the region, one of which is scheduled for major repairs or replacement (Cleverley, 2015).
- There are a number of hotels with swimming pools but these tend to be smaller leisure pools (see for example: Inn at Laurel Point, n.d.; Royal Scot Hotel and Suites, n.d.)
- There is one hotel with a private health club (Victoria Athletic Club) which includes a 25m lap pool. However, it operates adult-only swim times between 5 and 7 p.m. on most weekdays (Hotel Grand Pacific, n.d., para 2)
- Work is underway on a new aquatics facility in the Westshore area for which the lease is guaranteed to the YMCA/YWCA (Cleverley & Lavoie, 2013)
- Another YMCA/YWCA pool facility exists in downtown Victoria
- There is a local pool operated by the Department of National Defence
- There are no private, commercial standalone pool facilities

In general, then, it appears that ISC's options for additional facilities are limited to other municipal facilities, a federal facility, and facilities operated by the YMCA/YWCA. There is perhaps some limited potential to explore the unconventional route of using hotel pools. It should be noted that it was beyond the scope of this report to verify time/space availability directly with these facilities. Further investigation would be required in order to determine if a given facility might be available, and if its technical configuration would support ISC's facility needs.

Implications and Considerations

Mission - Similar to Option 1, the use of new/additional external provider facilities is unlikely to require any major mission shifts for ISC. If successful in obtaining additional space, ISC would be able to deliver more of its mission. However, the quality of that mission might vary depending upon the quality of the facilities themselves as well as their location and the ease of access for parents. The ability to deliver additional mission would also be affected by the size and specifications of additional pool facilities. There are currently no other 50m facilities and some of the 25m facilities might have few lanes. These factors limit ISC's potential ability to deliver additional competitive meets or high performance training outside of SCP.

As with any external provider, there is also the potential for mission conflict between the club and the facility. For example, YMCA/YWCA has a guaranteed lease for the new aquatic facility under development in the Westshore. As identified through this study's research, many YMCA/YWCA facilities run their own competitive swim programs. Should the YMCA/YWCA choose to do this out at Westshore, it would potentially make it more difficult for ISC to secure additional space at that facility.

Finances - The use of non-municipal facility providers is likely to be more expensive than would be obtaining more time/space at ISC's current facilities given the preferential rate ISC receives, particularly at SCP. For example, previous experience with the downtown YMCA/YWCA suggested that its space would cost approximately three

times what ISC currently pays. Pools operated by private enterprise (e.g. health club facilities and hotel pools) could also be expected to be more costly than municipal options given the profit motivation of these commercial organizations.

That being said, access to additional facility time and space would also provide opportunities for ISC to increase its revenues through additional club memberships and expansion of other activities such as Learn to Swim programs. The use of additional facilities would also help to diversify ISC's sources of infrastructure which could help decrease future risk if another of its pools needs to close.

Relationships - ISC currently maintains relationships with four different organizations for pool time/space. Adding net new facilities to ISC's infrastructure will require fostering new relationships with new facility managers/operators, while also maintaining its relationships with its current facilities, particularly SCP as it will continue to be the only high performance facility available to ISC. Depending on the facility, ISC might also encounter new and additional conflicts with other user groups.

In terms of internal stakeholders, the use of additional facilities is unlikely to be a contentious option, provided ISC maintains its presence at all current facilities and members are not forced to change locations.

Capacity – This option is likely to have minimal implications for volunteer and administrative capacity. There may be some additional time and effort required of professional staff in terms of developing and managing relationships with the new facilities. Option 2 might also require additional or reorganization of coach time due to new locations and expansion of activities.

7.3 Option 3 – Develop ISC's Own Facility

A third option for ISC to consider is the establishment of its own dedicated facility. For the purposes of the discussion that follows, it is assumed that any ISC facility would not be a 50m configuration. The facility would be 25m, have 8+ lanes, and a viewing area of some kind. Thus the facility would be capable of meeting minimum standards for hosting some meets (Swimming Natation Canada, 2013, p. 29). It is also assumed that the facility would include space for dryland training and an office area as well.

Mission – Having a club facility would give ISC significantly more control over the amount and the quality of the mission it delivers, while supporting overall club performance levels. The added pool time and space could support retention and new growth. With additional infrastructure, ISC might not be obliged to have a policy of moving swimmers up through the levels. Instead, it would have the flexibility in time and space to allow swimmers to remain at the level with which they are comfortable. This could support greater client satisfaction and minimize the loss of members who, while not on a high performance trajectory, are nevertheless valuable to the club. Having control over additional pool time and space would also support bringing in new members for which there is currently no space available. In addition, a new facility also has the potential to attract new swimmers. In the long term, this broader membership base gives ISC a greater chance of developing the next cohort of high performance swimmers.

However, Option 3 also creates new mission demands for ISC. First, the club may need to take on the role of facility operator and/or manager. It is also likely that ISC may need to expand and/or explore additional non-core programming (e.g. swim lessons, lane swims) to support the viability of the facility.

Finances – The option of a dedicated ISC facility has far greater financial implications than the other two options presented in this report. Purchasing a facility or having a facility constructed is a major capital investment and

would require a significant amount of reserve funding or credit. However, if ISC were to undertake a major push to save money towards its own facility, it would need to be cognizant of not jeopardizing its government gaming revenues.

An additional caution for ISC in pursuing this option is the potential effect on existing ISC subcontracts and partnerships. ISC might decide to centralize some of its programming and administration into its own dedicated facility. However, complete centralization is not feasible due to the need for continued access to the competition pools at SCP. This might diminish somewhat any potential financial efficiencies from creating a dedicated facility. Similarly, if ISC administration were shifted out of SCP it could potentially jeopardize ISC's administrative subcontracts. This in turn would lead to a small loss of revenue and might make it more difficult for ISC to afford its current level of dedicated administrative staffing.

Despite the financial risks and demands, a dedicated ISC facility also presents several key financial opportunities or potential benefits for the club. First, the additional time and space will enable ISC to grow its membership, thus increasing its revenue. Second, having control of its water space may also enable ISC to pursue new revenue generation opportunities (e.g. adult lap swim memberships during non-peak hours). Third, while a new facility will likely involve the need for ISC to pursue additional/alternate funding sources more vigorously, the facility itself presents a significant new opportunity for visible sponsorship.

Finally, having the club's own facility will diversify its current infrastructure which has the potential to both increase and decrease risk to the club. The facility will provide ISC with significant new flexibility if another of its facilities needs to close or undergo repairs. However, it might also limit ISC's flexibility in future as it means ISC is tied to the new facility for the long-term, unlike the annual contracts it holds with external facility providers.

There is potential, however, for ISC to mitigate some of the risks and demands of developing and operating its own facility by considering partnerships with private or public entities. For example, another entity could build the facility while guaranteeing lease and management of the facility to ISC. Conversely, ISC could be responsible for the construction of the facility but contract another organization for operation and maintenance while ISC remains the primary tenant.

Capacity – This option is also likely to have significant capacity implications for ISC. Additional staff will likely be required to operate and maintain the facility itself on a day-to-day basis. During the planning and development phase, there may also be significant fundraising demands placed on the current volunteer capacity. ISC may also require additional expertise during this phase, particularly in the areas of business development and finance/accounting.

Governance arrangements will also need to be given careful consideration to enable the success of Option 3. Given the long-term implications of a dedicated facility, ISC may need to ensure that its leadership and management are stable throughout the entire planning and development process. This may require reconsideration of the current policy around Board member terms, and thus potential amendments to the ISC constitution. In addition, ISC should consider the possibility of creating a separate organizational entity focused on the development and operation of a dedicated facility.

Relationships - Option 3 does not create any additional burden for ISC in terms of developing and nurturing relationships with another external facility manager, nor does it entail the possibility of competition or conflict with additional user groups for pool time/space. There may, however, be other relationships to develop and

manage, such as those with municipal permitting offices, contractors, etc. Consultation and communication with external groups, including the local community, will be necessary throughout the process. A dedicated facility also presents the opportunity for ISC to develop or expand partnerships in the community, such as working with schools to allow them daytime (non-peak hours) use of the facility.

A dedicated ISC facility might create strain internal to the organization. Given the level of commitment required, the potential risks involved, and the likely necessity of expanding ISC's mission, this option may be contentious among ISC membership. Should the implementation of Option 3 involve reorganizing the location of existing ISC programming, there may be negative impacts to member satisfaction and retention.

Table 5. Summary of options

	Opportunities or Advantages	**Demands or Disadvantages**
Option 1 – Maintain Current Trajectory	• Focuses on excellence at current programming levels • No new programming or supporting activities required, therefore no additional demands on club capacity • Any net new costs offset by additional memberships • Unlikely to cause internal conflict	• Limits growth and future performance • May diminish member satisfaction if major reallocation of programming across existing space • Limits opportunity to enhance dryland space • No opportunities for new/expanded revenue streams • Could exacerbate tensions with other user groups competing for space
Option 2 – Pursue Additional External Facilities	• Opportunity to deliver additional mission • Increased revenue potential • Diversification of infrastructure; decreased risk • Unlikely to cause significant internal conflict	• Technical configuration of additional space may not fully address ISC's complex infrastructure needs • Potential mission conflict with facilities • More expensive than existing space providers • Additional facility provider relationships to manage • Minor additional demands on club capacity
Option 3 – Develop ISC's Own Facility	• Increased control over amount/quality of mission being delivered • Supports future growth and performance • Potential increase in member retention, particularly non-competitive • Significant increase in revenue potential, including new revenue generation streams • Opportunity to partner with other public or private organizations	• Club must take on new, unfamiliar roles • Additional non-core programming required • Major capital investment requiring reserve funding and/or credit • Could jeopardize government funding sources, administrative sub-contracts • Significant new demands on capacity and expertise • May require changes to governance structures, length of terms, etc. • Potentially contentious among membership

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Each of the three options presented in this report has its own risks and rewards, and selecting any of these options will require ISC to accept certain trade-offs. For example, Option 1 places very few additional demands on ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships, but it also has the least potential to enhance club growth, revenue, and performance. In contrast, Option 3 will place enormous demands on ISC as an organization, yet it also has huge potential in terms of expanding growth, programming, and revenue, while providing greater long-term stability in terms of infrastructure.

Ultimately, any decision about the future of ISC infrastructure will involve a value judgement about the priorities of the organization and how it defines success. In order to help ISC better position itself to make well-informed and objective infrastructure decisions into the future, this report recommends the following to ISC as important near-term steps:

- **Clearly define what organizational success looks like for ISC by determining specific performance measures for the organization, and developing specific performance targets**. Having specific, measurable, and agreed-upon goals will position ISC to further consider the concrete impacts of infrastructure decisions, and should assist ISC to prioritize any trade-offs.

- **Quantify the desired balance between competitive and non-competitive membership**. Having an objective, ideal state of balance will help ISC to clearly identify its infrastructure priorities, and may help to minimize the potential for unnecessary tensions between these different aspects of ISC's mission.

- **Share and discuss the findings of this project within the organization** in order to open up further internal dialogue about ISC's future growth and infrastructure planning, and to maintain regular, open communication with organization members on these matters. Going forward, this should also help to promote understanding and acceptability of future decisions.

- **Establish an ISC committee or working group to focus on facilities and future infrastructure planning.** Recruit members for this committee/group based on relevant expertise, targeting members with finance, business, and community relations backgrounds. Recognizing that facilities planning could be a longer-term endeavor, give the committee/group a fixed term of longer than two years to ensure stability.

- **Maximize the organization's networks and sphere of influence** within the Greater Victoria region by having club members attend and participate, where possible, in municipal council meetings and planning activities (e.g. consultations regarding Crystal Pool; development of Saanich Recreation Strategic Plan; etc.). Also consider having previous club members serve on the Boards of other organizations which might influence club operations and growth (e.g. provincial sport organizations).

- **Explore the potential strategic and financial benefits of other formal partnerships or alliances** within the sport of swimming, and more broadly. For example, a regional coalition on swimming, aquatics, or even amateur sport, could enhance the voice of clubs in government infrastructure planning, while also providing a venue to share information and strategies between organizations.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to help ISC, a community-based non-profit swim organization, better understand the potential benefits, barriers, consequences, and requirements of different options for expanding the club's infrastructure, in support of future ISC decision-making. This included: identifying the infrastructure currently used by swim organizations and what other solutions might exist; identifying the implications for ISC's mission, finances, capacity, and relationships of adopting specific infrastructure solutions; and analyzing the feasibility and desirability of specific solutions for ISC in its current context.

A review of the research to date revealed that no previous studies had been completed which would directly address these specific objectives. Therefore this project's results represent an important and novel foray into research on aquatic infrastructure in amateur swimming. The study presents new quantitative evidence of the various infrastructure solutions currently being used by swim clubs across Canada, as well as new qualitative evidence related to swim club management and facility challenges and strategies in Canada.

Going forward, these results could be expanded and improved upon in several key ways. First, the qualitative results of this study were based on only four key informant interviews. Further interviews in this area would likely identify additional ideas and themes of interest. Second, none of the solutions identified in this study can be linked with any certainty to specific organizational outcomes. Future research could use quasi-experimental designs to examine correlation and potentially causality in order to provide more rigor to some of the assertions in this study.

Nevertheless, this report provides a broad foundation of knowledge for ISC to learn from and from which ISC, and perhaps other swim clubs, can make better-informed decisions about the future of their infrastructure. Given the ubiquity of infrastructure concerns among amateur swim clubs, it is the hope of this researcher that this report may even encourage more collaboration and sharing of new ideas and lessons learned between partners in this sector.

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APPENDIX A – LIST OF CLUBS INCLUDED IN WEBSITE REVIEW

Abbotsford Olympian Swim Club
Arie Swimming Club
Bulkley Valley Otters Swim Club
Canadian Dolphins Swim Club
Chena North Shore Swim Team
Chetwynd Electric Eels
Chinook Swim Club
Kootenay Swim Club
Fort St. John Inconnu
Campbell River Killer Whales
Cranbrook Tritons Swim Club
Comox Valley Aquatic Club
Columbia Valley Swim Club
Delta Sungod Swim Club
Dynamo Swim Club
Killarney Gators Swim Club
Greater Trail Swim Club
Hollyburn Swim Team
Hyack Swim Club
Island Swimming Club
Kelowna Aqua Jets
Kamloops Classic Swimming
KISU Swim Club
Liquid Lightning Swim Club
Langley Olympians Swim Club
Nanaimo Riptides Swim Team
Orca Swim Club
Pacific Coast Swimming
Prince George Barracudas
Prince Rupert Amateur Swim Club
Ravensong Aquatic Club
Richmond Rapids Swim Club
Simon Fraser Aquatics
Simon Fraser University
Swim Faster Swim Club
Shuswap Swimming
Surrey Knights Swim Club
Spartan Swim Club
Terrace Blue Back Swim Club
Port Alberni Tsunami
Tyee Aquatic Club
UBC Dolphins
University of British Columbia
University of Victoria Swim Team
Vernon Kokanee Swim Club
Vancouver Pacific Swim Club
Winskill Dolphins Swim Club
Whitehorse Glacier Bears
Williams Lake Blue Fins
Waveriders Swim Club
Wayland Swim Club
West Vancouver Otters Swim Club
Whistler SeaWolves Swim Club
Alberta Marlin Aquatic Club
Athabasca Rapids Swim Club
Bow Valley Riptides Swim Club
Calgary Patriots Swim Club
Calgary Winter Club Sea Lions
Canadian Badlands Aquatic Club
Cascade Swim Club
Cochrane Comets Swim Club
Cold Lake Marlins Swim Club
Edmonton Keyano Swim Club
Foothills Stingrays Swim Club
Fort McMurray Mantas Swim Club
Glencoe Gators Swim Club
Grande Prairie Piranhas Swim Club
Killarney Swim Club
LA Swim Club
Lloydminster Riptide Swim Club
Medicine Hat Waves Swim Club
Nose Creek Swim Association
Olympian Swim Club
Parkland Pirates Swim Club
Penguin Swimming
Ponoka Pool Sharks Swim Club
Red Deer Catalina Swim Club
St. Paul Barracudas Swim Club
Sherwood Park Swim Club
Silver Tide Swim Club
Spartans Aquatic Club
Strathmore Silver Sharks Swim Club
Sylvan Lake Nauticals Swim Club
Tigers Swim Club
Triton Swimming
University of Alberta Swim Club

University of Calgary Swim Club
Yellowknife Polar Bears Swim Club
Young Aquatic Club
Battlefords Kinsmen Swim Club
Flatland Swimming
Manta Ray Swim Club
Moose Jaw Kinsmen Flying Fins
Prince Albert Sharks Swim Club
Regina Optimist Dolphin Swim Club
Saskatoon Goldfins Swim Club
Saskatoon Lasers Swim Club
Swift Current Barracuda Swim Club
Yorkton Storm Swimming Club
7 Wing Flying Tigers Swim Club
Manitoba Marlins
Manta Swim Club
Manitoba Cerebral Palsy Sport Association
Sherbrook Sharks
St James Seals Swim Club
University of Manitoba Swimming (Bisons)
Winnipeg Wave Swim Club
Acton Aqua Ducks
Ajax Aquatic Club
Ancaster Alligators
Arnprior Bluefish Swim Club
Middlesex Swimming
Barrie Trojan Swim Club
Base Borden Barracudas
Belleville Youth Swim Team
Blenheim Blast Swim Team
Blue Waves Swim Club
Brantford Aquatic Club
Breakers Swim Team
Brock Niagara Aquatics
Brock University Badgers
Burlington Aquatic Devilrays
C and C Aquatic Club Swim School
Cambridge Aquajets
Carleton Place Water Dragons
Chatham Y Pool Sharks
Club Warriors
Cobra Swim Club
Cochrane Great White Swim Club
Collingwood Clippers Swim Club
Cornwall Sea Lions
CREST Swiming
North Bay CT-33 Thunder Birds
Cyclone Swim Club
Deep River Candu Swim Club
Dryden Dolphins
Ducks Swimming
Elliot Lake Aquatic Club
Ernestown Barracuda Swim Club
Etobicoke Swim Club
Fort Frances Aquanaut Swim Team
Garden City Aquatic Club
Golden Horseshoe Aquatic Club
Goulbourn Sea Hawks
Granite Gators Swim Team
Greater Ottawa Kingfish Swim Club
Guelph Marlin Aquatic Club
Halton Hills Blue Fins
Hamilton Aquatic Club
Hawkesbury Orca Swim Team
Huron Hurricanes Aquatic Club
Ingersoll Speed Sharks
J-Dolphins Swim School
Kenora Swimming Sharks
Killer Whale Swim Team
Kingston Blue Marlins
Kingston Sharks
Kingston Y Penguins Aquatic Club
Kirkland Lake Aquatic Club
Lakeshore Swim Club
Lindsay Lightningbolts Swim Club
London Aquatic Club
Mallards Swim Team
Markham Aquatic Club
Markov Aquatics Swimming Club
Mighty Tritons Aquatic Club
Milton Marlin SwimTeam
Mississauga Aquatic Club
Nepean Kanata Barracudas
Newmarket Stingrays Swim Club
Nickel City Aquatics
NiKi Swim School
Norfolk Hammerheads Aquatic Club
North Bay Y Titans
North York Aquatic Club
Northern Storm Aquatic Club
Northumberland Aquatic Club
Oakville Aquatic Club

Orangeville Otters
Orillia Channel Cats Swim Club
Oshawa Aquatic Club
Ottawa Swim Club
Ottawa Youth Olympians
Petawawa Predators Swim Club
Pickering Swim Club
Quinte Dolphins swim club
RAMAC Aquatic Club
Region of Waterloo Swim Club
Richmond Hill Aquatic Club
Rocky Island Swim Club
Sarnia Swimming
Sault Ste. Marie Aquatic Club
Scarborough Swim Club
South Western Aquatics
St Thomas Jumbo Jets
Sudbury Laurentian Swim Club
Superior Sea Lions Swim Club
Swim Ottawa
Swimming Dragons
The Dorado Stars Swim Club
Thunder Bay Thunderbolts
Thunderbirds Swim Club
Timmins Marlins Swim Club
Olympian Swimming
Toronto Swim Club
Trent Swim Club
University of Ottawa Gee-Gees
University of Waterloo
Upper Canada Swim Club
Uxbridge Swim Club
Valley East Waves
Variety Village Flames
Vaughan Aquatic Club
W Ross MacDonald Swimming
York Swim Club
Acadia Varsity Swim Team
Cape Breton Dorados
Cumberland Spartans Swim Club
Dalhousie Tigers Varsity Swim Team
Dartmouth Crusaders Swim Club
Dartmouth Mantarays Swim Club
Greenwood Dolphins Swim Club
Halifax Trojan Aquatic Club
Halifax Wavecutters Aquatic Club
Pictou County Mariners
Port Hawkesbury Antigonish Swim Team
Sackville Waves
Shearwater Bluefins Swim Club
Truro Centurions Swim Club
Wolfville Tritons Swim Club
Yarmouth Y Whitecaps
Club Campbellton Aquatika Club
Bathurst Piranhas
Club Natation Bleu et Or
Codiac Vikings Aquatic Club
Fredericton Aquanauts Swimming Team
Gagetown-Oromocto Titans
Les Espadons-Tracadie
Miramichi Whitecaps
Natation Edmundston Swimming
Sackville Swim Club
Sussex Swordfish
Saint John Fundy Aquatic Club
Western Valley Swim Team
Mount Allison Mounties
UNB
Charlottetown Bluefins
Summerside Dolphins
UPEI Panthers
Aqua Aces
Conception Bay South Bluefins
Cornerbrook Rapids
Deer Lake Dolphins Swim Club
Gander Lakers Swim Club
Melville Mantas Swim Club
Memorial University Seahawks
Mount Pearl Marlins
Northern Lights Swim Club
Poseidon Swim Club
Port aux Basques Piranhas Swim Club
St John's Legends Swim Club

APPENDIX B – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Organization - general

How is your organization governed?

Describe the programming or other activities that your organization is involved in.
- -type: competitive programs; "learn to" programs; para-programs; hosting meets; etc
- -frequency
- -scale: # of participants

Which of these programs or activities are most important for your organization? Why?

How is your organization staffed (e.g. employees vs. volunteers)?

How is your organization funded? Which of these sources is most important? Why?

Organizational Performance

How does your organization define success? or What are your organization's goals or objectives?

How would you say your organization is performing with respect to these goals?

What are your organization's current strengths? Weaknesses?

Infrastructure

Please describe your organization's physical infrastructure (facilities).
- -number of facilities
- -type of facility: pool, dryland, office space
- -size: length, # of lanes, etc

How does your organization obtain this infrastructure?
- -type of arrangement: contract, owned facility, etc
- -owner of facility: local government, private company, other

Describe the features of these infrastructure arrangements.
- -allocation of time
- -agency responsibilities (e.g. maintenance)

What are the weaknesses of your organization's current infrastructure arrangements? What are the strengths of your organization's current infrastructure arrangements?

To what extent is your current infrastructure meeting your organization's needs?

Has your organization ever faced capacity challenges with its infrastructure?

-If yes, please describe these challenges. How were these challenges addressed? What did that require (decisions, resources, etc.)?
-If no, how might your organization address capacity issues in the future? Why? What would that require (decisions, resources, etc.)?

Is there any other advice you might have for other organizations with respect to aquatic infrastructure?

Demographic Information

How long have you been with this organization?

What does your role involve?

How long have you been involved in aquatic sports? Please describe your history of involvement.