Innisfail Aquatic Centre

Modernization Project - Universal Changerooms

As part of the Town of Innisfail's commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and modern facility design, we are transitioning to Universal Changerooms as part of the Aquatic Centre Modernization. We want everyone to feel welcome, safe, and respected — and universal changerooms are a big step in that direction.

What is a Universal Changeroom?

A Universal Changeroom is a space designed for everyone — regardless of gender, age, or ability. Instead of separate male and female changerooms, the universal changeroom includes:

- Private changing rooms
- Private shower and toilet rooms
- Fully accessible/family change rooms
- Common areas for lockers and handwashing

Why the Change?

Universal changerooms help create a more inclusive, safe, and flexible environment for:

- Families with young children
- People with disabilities and their caregivers
- Anyone needing assistance or privacy
- Reduced risk of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, and theft
- Gender-diverse and transgender individuals

This model reflects best practices already in place in many leading aquatic facilities across the country and provides for the required upgrades to our Aquatic Centre to meet building codes.

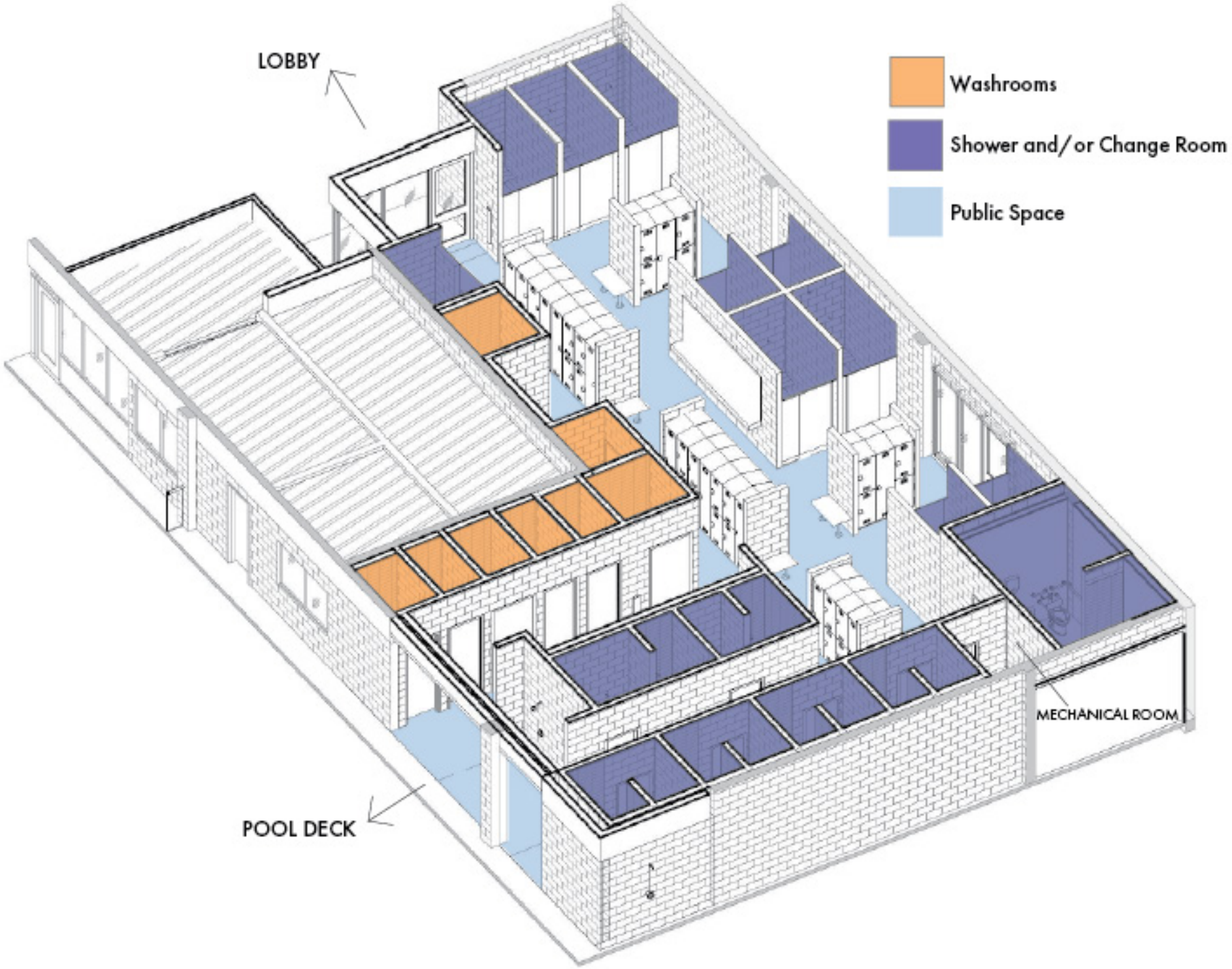
What About Privacy?

Privacy is our top priority. Here's how we've designed the space:

- Fully enclosed changing and shower rooms
- Lockable doors
- Private toilet rooms
- Increased ability for staff monitoring for safety and cleanliness

For more details about the Innisfail Aquatic Centre Modernization Project, scan the QR Code or visit involve.innisfail.ca




LOBBY
Washrooms
Shower and/or Change Room
Public Space
MECHANICAL ROOM
POOL DECK

Innisfail Aquatic Centre
Response to Public Feedback

In late June and early July of 2025, the Town received a substantial amount of feedback from the public regarding the universal changeroom planned as part of the Aquatic Centre Modernization project.

In response to this feedback, and with the understanding that the public's voice is important to us, the Town is working to address any concerns the public may have.

The majority of the feedback we received was in response to:

- Safety and Privacy
- Capacity and User Experience
- the Decision-making Process

With these themes in mind, we have compiled some of the more common concerns we've heard and have prepared the following selection of frequently asked questions complete with answers.

Innisfail Aquatic Centre - FAQs

What are the benefits of a universal change room?

Providing an open common space that is fully visible from the lobby and pool deck helps to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour, bullying, and theft, allowing staff to monitor the facility. This was not possible with gender-oriented changerooms that are completely out of view from public areas. Group leaders, such as teachers and coaches, will also be able to better monitor groups under their supervision.

Why can't the Town include three separate changerooms?

The universal changeroom as designed is the result of analysis by the project team - including professional architects - to make the most efficient use of the limited space within the existing building. There is not enough space to create three separate changerooms and meet requirements of the Alberta Building Code, particularly those related to barrier-free access. The current budget approved would not support an expansion of the facility.

Will there be enough room for people to change?

In total, there will be 25 enclosed spaces for individuals to use as change rooms. The current facility provides only 12 private spaces (3 in the male changeroom and 9 in the female changeroom).

The new floor plan provides:

- 10 Private Changerooms
- 8 Individual Washroom Rooms
- 5 Private Shower Rooms - with shower and bench
- 1 Accessibility-focused Shower Room - full washroom, shower and adult change table
- 1 Family Shower Room - larger changeroom with shower

Innisfail Aquatic Centre
Response to Public Feedback

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Will this new layout provide privacy for people to change?

The universal changeroom features individual rooms that have lockable doors and floor-to-ceiling walls, so they provide complete privacy. Patrons will not have the option to change in and out of bathing attire in common public areas, but rather will be required to use a room to change.

Do these kinds of facilities exist anywhere else?

Many new public facilities are being designed with universal changerooms, so this is becoming a more common configuration in Alberta. As an example of this, The City of Edmonton utilizes only universal changerooms in their new recreation facilities. The new layout also ensures that the facility will meet current building codes.

How did the Town inform people about this decision?

The decision to move ahead with the current plan was made in April of 2025. Shortly after, the Town released information about the universal changeroom through stories on the website, in the local media, and through social media. The Town also has a dedicated project page at involve.innisfail.ca, including a project page that features drawing of the new design.

Why wasn't the public consulted about the idea of the universal change room?

The Town did engage the public through a survey in 2021. The results of that survey indicated that people were in favour or accepting of a universal changeroom. At that time, there were hopes that the Town would proceed with building a new facility. Since then, costs have restricted the options available to the Town, so the decision was made to modernize the existing Innisfail Aquatic Centre rather than build a new facility.

How will high demand for changerooms be managed during busy times or when large groups are changing over (ie. Aquafit to school lessons)?

The new facility will provide double the number of private changerooms than the current facility, with 25 private spaces available. As changing in the open locker area is no longer an option, this may lead to increased demand on rooms. In preparation for the facility re-opening, staff will analyze the schedule to minimize large groups overlapping, and may utilize any or all of the following:

- staggered start times for registered programs (a current practice already in place) ensuring patrons entering the pool deck are doing so at a different time from those leaving;
- tracking of usage data to predict the busiest times;
- ensuring enough staff are present during transition times to manage flow and assist users;
- clear signage and audible reminders encouraging users to be quick and efficient in their use of rooms, especially during busy times;
- offer discounts for less popular swim or program times;
- ensure cleanliness and maintenance so all rooms are available for use.

Are the Universal Changerooms a requirement of the Green and Inclusive Community Bulidings Program?

The Town has submitted applications to numerous grant programs to help offset costs of the project. At this time none of these submissions have been approved. The Green and Inclusive Community Building Program has been applied to and supports retrofits and upgrades to existing community buildings. The program does not require universal changerooms, but is intended to fund green retrofit measures that achieve a 25% improvement in building energy efficiency and improves overall accessibility of the facility.

Innisfail Aquatic Centre
Response to Public Feedback

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How private are change and washroom spaces?

Spaces with showers and/or toilets:

- Fully enclosed with full-height block walls that extend floor to ceiling with a drywall ceiling
- Solid, full frame doors with a 50 mm (2") space at the bottom for ventilation and visibility of occupancy in emergencies
- Doors are equipped with keyed privacy locks that allow for emergency access from the exterior using a key. The locks ensure privacy while maintaining emergency override capability.
- Toilet spaces have doors which swing inward. These doors include rescue hardware that allows the doors to swing out in the event of an incident such as someone experiencing a fall. In addition doors are designed to be lifted off their hinges in emergency situations.

Changerooms:

- Block walls to a height of 2.6m (8.5") with an open ceiling for airflow and acoustic control.
- Doors are gap-free interlocking panels with a no sight line design with a 115mm (4.5") space at the bottom.

How is hygiene being maintained in thefacility?

We recognize the importance of meeting hygiene needs with dignity, safety, and comfort, especially for individuals requiring medical or personal care. The facility's design intentionally addresses this concern by incorporating dedicated, purpose-built spaces. To address these needs, the facility includes the following:

- **Universal Shower Changeroom:** Designed in accordance with the *National Building Code – Alberta Edition*, this space integrates a toilet, shower, sink, and adult change table within a single accessible room. This configuration ensures that individuals with medical or personal care needs have a private, sanitary, and fully equipped environment to manage their hygiene with dignity.
- **Dedicated Universal Washrooms:** In addition to the changeroom, the facility includes universal washrooms that offer enhanced privacy and accessibility features exceeding minimum code requirements. These may accommodate support persons and are suitable for a range of physical and care needs. Located of the lobby for individuals not using the pool facilities.
- **Separation of Functions:** The layout ensures that personal care activities are not conducted adjacent to standard toilet stalls. Dedicated spaces help protect user privacy, improve hygiene, and promote a higher standard of care.
- **Facility Hygiene and Maintenance Standards:** The facility strives to maintain a clean, safe, and well-managed environment in accordance with all generally accepted design and operational best practices. Ongoing maintenance protocols, including regular cleaning schedules and inspection routines, support this goal and contribute to a high standard of hygiene for all users.

Does the facility offer sufficient showers during high traffic times?

We understand the importance of adequate shower facilities to support peak usage periods, including swim lessons, public swims, and club programming.

Here's a breakdown of what the new design offers:

- Private Showers:
  - 5 individual standard shower rooms
  - 1 family shower room
  - 1 universal changeroom (includes a shower, toilet, sink, and change table)

- Rinse-Off Showers:
  - 2 open rinse-off showers accessible from the pool deck for quick use before and after swims
  - 1 deck shower, adjacent to the hot tub

Compared to the current facility, which has one deck shower and three showers per changeroom (six in total), the new layout increases the total number of available showers and introduces greater variety in type and location. This mix of private and open showers is intended to manage demand efficiently during peak periods and better accommodate diverse user preferences and needs.

How is the open locker area being monitored?

The locker area is designed to maximize sightlines through the locker area. This includes a full glass wall to the lobby and reception desk, exterior windows and open spaces facing the pool deck. This will increase the ability for staff to monitor the space for behaviour and cleanliness. In addition, the open concept will allow for increased supervision by teachers or coaches who currently cannot monitor some of their participants due to gender.

Furthermore, extensive signage and audible reminders will promote appropriate use of the space.

For answers to any questions not addressed here,
please email *ask@innisfail.ca* or visit *involve.innisfail.ca*