

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Update on the Aquatic Center Feasibility Study

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Parks & Community Services

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

Staff will update Council on the Aquatic Center Feasibility Study, including preliminary program options, capital and operating cost estimates, and site analysis. Staff seeks feedback on the information presented.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The existing Bellevue Aquatic Center (aka Odle Pool) has served Bellevue's 140,000 residents for nearly 50 years, but no longer meets current or future demand for aquatics in Bellevue. The City is currently evaluating alternatives and partnership opportunities to develop a new, year-round aquatic facility that considers the full-range of activities associated with contemporary, state-of-the-art aquatic facilities.

In March 2009, Council was presented an Aquatics Feasibility Study, expressed support for a comprehensive aquatic facility, (Attachment A) and directed staff to explore regional funding partners. In early 2010, staff reported back to Council that, after a thorough review, any potential partners were not prepared to pursue a project at that time. Because of the lack of partner interest coupled with the impacts of the recession, Bellevue ceased further exploration of aquatics alternatives.

Since 2010, the cities of Redmond and Kirkland have been independently exploring aquatics alternatives. In 2015, the City of Kirkland placed an aquatic center ballot measure before voters that ultimately failed.

In 2017, King County Parks convened a process to explore the viability of a regional approach to fill the aquatics gap on the Eastside. King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci secured an appropriation of \$2M to work toward a regional solution. This process is not complete and all parties continue to meet.

On May 21, 2018, the Council approved a Resolution authorizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between King County and the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond to continue exploring the feasibility of a regional approach to developing aquatics facilities and to coordinate on a public aquatics assessment.

On November 19, 2018, the Council approved a Resolution authorizing a professional services agreement with ARC Architects to update the 2009 Aquatics Feasibility Study. The study will provide

updated technical information to assist the City in determining whether, and to what extent, the City wishes to proceed with a new aquatic center, including project scale and scope, estimated capital and operating costs, site analysis, financing, and operational options. Staff last updated Council on the current Feasibility Study on April 21, 2019.

Bellevue Partnership Interests

Partnerships to build and operate an aquatic facility have been encouraged with both private and public agencies who share common interests. Staff have explored potential partnerships with the following groups and additional work in this area remains necessary:

- The Bellevue School District (BSD) previously submitted a letter to the City expressing interest in meeting the needs of their competitive aquatics programs and is exploring capital funding options. However, they do not expect to proceed with a facility on their own.
- Bellevue College has expressed interest in siting an aquatic facility on their campus for potential student-centered applications. Bellevue College administration is conducting due diligence and exploring partnership options.
- SPLASHForward is committed to building private partnerships and leading a private funding campaign for a new aquatics center. SPLASHForward is a community advocacy group and stakeholder that provides deep knowledge and experience of the aquatics landscape.
- The City remains open and interested in pursuing partnerships and corporate sponsors to advance the goal of an Aquatic Center. Several area health care providers have suggested the need for more specificity about the scale, scope, timing, and location of a facility before discussing potential partnerships or contributions.
- The cities of Kirkland, Redmond, Bellevue, and King County have continued to share respective interests and explore regional partnership opportunities. The King County report is expected to be complete before the end of 2019.
- Depending on the scope of the facility, strong interest is possible from competitive aquatics organizations. This project advocacy might generate additional partnership opportunities and contributions beyond those described above.

Bellevue Feasibility Study Update

The City of Bellevue is exploring the feasibility of developing a contemporary, state-of-the-art facility that meets the aquatics needs of the community and potential partner groups, and a place that promotes community health and wellness. The facility would be operationally sustainable and serve the full range of fitness, recreation, health and wellness, as well as competitive aquatics programs for all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Key program elements include a 50-meter pool with movable bulkheads, deep water, therapy/wellness options, a lesson/program pool and leisure pool. Seating capacity options will also be explored to accommodate a range of competitive events. This is essentially the regional model described in 2009, updated to reflect the contemporary needs of aquatics stakeholder groups and potential partners and the best practice recommendations of the consultants. The extent of dry-side features and specific partner needs were not fully developed in the 2009 study.

The overall goal is to develop an optimal mix of features that meets program needs while balancing operating and capital investments.

Staff will provide preliminary information on the key program elements of a new facility, including estimated capital and operating costs. Information will be presented to give Council a range of options for each element as well as the aggregate costs for three facility options.

Site Needs/Preferred Locations

Based on the 2009 Bellevue study, approximately four to seven acres are needed to develop a comprehensive aquatic facility depending on whether the parking is at-grade or structured. The scope of the Update includes site feasibility analysis for the following four sites:

- Bellevue College Campus—the Bellevue College updated master plan reserved space for a community partnership and college officials have indicated a willingness to explore this idea further.
- Lincoln Center—the City-owned 4-acre property along the Grand Connection and part of the Wilburton commercial area redevelopment.
- Marymoor Park—the 20-acre Bellevue Utilities-owned site that is part of King County’s regional park and which contains three ballfields. Use of the Bellevue Utilities site may require fair market value compensation.
- Airfield Park—a City-owned 27-acre park and former landfill. Park development was included in the 2008 Parks Levy. The City is currently working toward developing phase 1 of the adopted master plan that includes athletic fields and general outdoor recreation facilities.

Staff will provide preliminary information on each of the above sites, including ability to fit, pros/cons, and potential costs. Staff remain open to considering additional sites identified over the next several months, including sites identified by the City or one of the partner groups.

Future Decisions/Next Steps

This study will develop the information necessary to assist Council in determining whether, and under what circumstances, to proceed with an Aquatic Center, and includes the following tasks:

- Finalize the scale and scope of the program elements and prepare a schematic drawing and architectural rendering.
- Finalize the estimated capital costs by program element and identify potential cost recovery strategies.
- Update the estimated operating cost performance by program element.
- Complete the site feasibility analysis.
- Develop a financing and operational plan that could include public/private/nonprofit partnerships.
- Report on how existing area aquatic facilities may be impacted by a new aquatics center.

Next Steps

- Review Final Study (Spring 2020)
- Additional work on Partnership Agreements, Governance Structure, and Funding Mix (to be determined based on specific interests and timelines of partner groups)

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

- PA-3. Equitably distribute a variety of parks, community centers and other indoor and outdoor recreation facilities throughout the City.
- PA-8. Develop partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector to provide parks, open space, and cultural and recreation facilities in the City.
- PA-15. Encourage the development of facilities for special purpose recreation.
- PA-25. Promote partnerships with public and private service providers to meet cultural, recreational, and social needs of the community.

An aquatics facility addresses several strategic target areas of Council's adopted vision: great places where you want to be, economic development, regional leadership, and high quality built and natural environment. City Council Vision Priority 2018-2020 also identifies determining "whether to explore the possibility of a regional aquatic center in Bellevue" as Priority #13 on the list of 3-Year Priorities.

Fiscal Impact

Funding for the Bellevue Aquatics Center Feasibility Study Update and the King County Regional MOU is included in CIP Plan No. G-114, Regional Aquatic Center Study, in the adopted 2019-2025 CIP Plan.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. 2009 Aquatics Feasibility Study Option D
- B. CIP Project Description (CIP Plan No. G-114)

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

2009 Bellevue Aquatic Center Feasibility Study