Aquatics Feasibility Study 2020

Executive Summary

For several decades, the aquatic needs of Bellevue and the greater Eastside have been met through public facilities that are now reaching the end of their useful lifecycles and no new centers have be added to the current inventory to meet the needs of a growing population and expanding aquatic program use.

The current state of aquatic needs for the City and those identified by the Bellevue School District can easily support a new state of the art aquatic center of the scale described in the three options outlined in this study. The City will need to address the strategies and its role in the project, as capital costs for a new center may be in excess of $110 million as identified within this updated feasibility study. As the specific site is not determined, further design and site investigation is needed and will alter the estimated capital costs. Pending the degree of the City's participation, additional financial commitments may also be required for the ongoing operation and management of a new center.

A new state of the art aquatic center will add to the success of the existing Bellevue Park System, further the quality of life for all residents, and attract new people and business to the City. Any of the proposed program and facility options will serve the community for years to come. Therefore, the center should offer experiences for all ages and abilities and serve a wide variety of programs and users– including recreational, competitive, therapeutic, and leisure aquatic needs.

A highly functioning aquatic center should address all aspects of an individual's well-being, regardless of age or ability, and include:

- Physical Activities: swimming, walking/jogging, training, sports (both aquatic and land-based), and therapy programming
- Intellectual Stimulus: Games, educational classes (children to seniors), health-based learning, speakers, and interaction
- Social Activities: Place for clubs and social groups, recreational/competitive leagues and clubs, training groups, spaces for all abilities
- Emotional Support: Offer the support and encouragement for all community members to fully utilize the facility

This updated Feasibility Study makes no recommendations on program, site, partnerships, or operational models for a new aquatics complex. The purpose of this Study is to provide a detailed analysis that takes all of a project's relevant factors into account—including economic, technical, and

operational considerations—to discern how undertaking an aquatic center project may impact the City before the investment of considerable time and capital. A successful aquatic center will also be able to grow and change as the needs of the community develop and evolve over time.

The information provided within this update should be utilized by the City to mitigate risk, provide a better understanding of the operating and capital commitments of a facility, and assist in determining viable potential solutions that should be further analyzed in future project phases.

Refining this study, three different indoor aquatics facilities were developed, each with increasing program options but with a similar market focus. The options represent meeting the current recreational, therapeutic, and competitive aquatic uses. While they reflect a greater capacity of water use and sizes, they have been conceived to serve the Bellevue's "day to day" needs and competitive levels up to the largest regional meets, but not competing for the national or international meets with the existing King County Aquatics Center. The building concept plans are pictorial representations and do not reflect a final facility design and will require additional design phases.

Ultimately, the City of Bellevue will need to determine what role, if any, the City will have in the development and operation of a new aquatic center.

I. Introduction

Built in 1970, the existing Bellevue Aquatic Center (Odle) has served the City of Bellevue's residents for nearly 50 years, but it's age and capacity are inadequate to meet the current and future demand for aquatic programing in Bellevue.

In 2006, the City was approached by a local non-profit organization, Swimming Pools for Leisure, Active Sports, and Health (*SPLASH*), whose mission was to advocate for the development of aquatic facilities to meet the needs of the region. In response, the City completed a comprehensive feasibility study for a new aquatic facility. The 2009 Bellevue Aquatic Center Final Feasibility Study explored a range of facility options with estimated financial performance; analyzed the current aquatic market; conducted a preliminary site analysis; and explored a range of financing options.

The 2009 Study was presented to Council in March 2009. At that time, Council expressed support for a high profile, comprehensive aquatic facility and directed staff to explore regional partnerships with adjacent cities, school districts and King County.

Staff reported back to Council in early 2010 that, after a thorough review, these potential partners were not prepared to pursue a project at that time. Because of the general lack of partner interest coupled with the severe impacts of the recession, Bellevue ceased further exploration of aquatics alternatives.

Since that time, several aquatic facilities have opened in the broader region, though none directly serving Bellevue residents or the Eastside. The adjacent cities of Redmond and Kirkland have independently explored aquatics alternatives; the City of Redmond recently completed a comprehensive public recreation facilities study and a City of Kirkland aquatic center ballot measure failed in 2015. Further study of aquatics in the region include the recently completed King County Parks process to explore the viability of a regional approach for filling the aquatic facilities gap on the Eastside.

In 2017, Council directed the staff to continue evaluating aquatic center options for Bellevue, including public/private partnerships and potential locations. With this Council directive, the City has explored alternatives and partnerships for the development of a new, year-round aquatic facility that considers the full range of activity and demographic market segments associated with contemporary, state of the art aquatic facilities.

Early in this updated aquatic evaluation process, *SPLASHForward* emerged as a new stakeholder group with a renewed and broadened focus advocating for the aquatics needs of all Eastside residents.

SPLASH*Forward* has been working with staff on this study and has provided deep knowledge and experience in the aquatics landscape, plus direct contacts to many of the regional aquatic providers and users.

Bellevue Parks & Community Services (Parks) contracted with a team lead by ARC Architects, and included Ballard*King Associates, Aquatic Design Group, and other professionals to analyze market conditions, interview stakeholders, explore potential center program and site options, and provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential aquatic center options. Similar to the 2009 Study, this study does not make any recommendations for a new aquatics center – rather the purpose of this study is to provide factual information on the likely costs and benefits associated with developing a new state of the art aquatics center. While the City has not yet determined to what extent it supports the development of an aquatic center or where is should be located, there is a clear evidence that the City and region would benefit from additional aquatic opportunities.

The primary mission of improving the quality of life for all residents and building a healthy community have been long-standing goals for Bellevue's Parks & Community Services Department. As such, the City's 2016 Parks & Open Space Plan is the primary tool to guide the long-term growth and development of the City's parks and open space system. The following objectives were developed as part of the Park & Open Space plan, which support the development of a new aquatics center:

- Active Recreation Facilities: Siting geographically distributed community centers and active recreation facilities to provide needed indoor and outdoor recreation spaces and activities of interest to a wide spectrum of diverse users.
- Partnership Opportunities: Working with community partners in the public, private and non-profit sectors to provide recreation and community service needs for Bellevue residents. Additionally, connecting Bellevue residents to the abundant regional park and recreation facilities surrounding the city.

Should the City of Bellevue decide to further pursue any of the options described in this feasibility study, the City should select a site and further define the design and program options for a set of preferred facility components and features. Parks believes the information presented within this document provides a fair and realistic appraisal of the estimated fiscal and economic impacts of operating a new aquatic facility, and additional direction on the City's role and potential funding sources would also be helpful for future project phases.

II. Market Analysis & Public Input

A. Publicly Operated Aquatics in Bellevue and greater Eastside

Over fifty years ago, King County and Seattle voters approved the Forward Thrust bond propositions to fund construction of sixteen pools in King County. The population for which these pools were built has more than doubled since 1970. Many of these Forward Thrust pools have been closed or at the end of their typically lifespans. More importantly, it has been shown that there is a regional shortage of

available pool space for swimming and water safety lessons, aquatic recreation, water fitness programs, aquatic sports competition and training, and water therapy programs.

Aquatic recreation and activities remain very popular in the Pacific Northwest region. However, there is currently ten publicly operated indoor pools in the greater Eastside, with the Peter Kirk Pool (outdoor pool), Bellevue Aquatic Center (indoor), Redmond Pool (indoor), and Juanita High School Pool (indoor) all nearing the end of their useful lifecycles.

Similar to Bellevue and the Eastside, Seattle has limited pool space and has built only one pool in the last 30 years, despite the growing need for aquatic programming. Currently, there are eight indoor pools, two outdoor pools, and thirty wading pools in the Seattle Park system. However, many are operating beyond capacity (kids are being turned away from swim lessons) and most are only able to provide limited aquatic programming/activities at a time. Additionally, Seattle's two outdoor-public pools are often filled to capacity during the summer, though neither is centrally located (Colman is in West Seattle and Mounger in Magnolia).

For Bellevue, the only public, indoor aquatic facility is the existing Bellevue Aquatic Center (Odle). Odle attracts approximately 150,000 annual visits. Like the other Forward Thrust pools in the area, the Odle pool has required increasing annual major maintenance and may soon need significant renovation or refurbishment to better serve the aquatics needs of the community.

While Parks' staff has been creatively balancing the programs at Odle to serve Bellevue's needs, it cannot continue to adequately serve the current and growing competitive, recreational, and therapeutic aquatic demands. The key findings of the current state of the Eastside's aquatic facilities:

- Most public indoor pools are stand-alone facilities with few dry side amenities;
- Because of their age, most Eastside pools are not designed to adequately serve the area's competitive aquatic needs and there are no existing 50-meter lap lanes in the Eastside;
- Most schools do not have their own pools, relying on other public and private aquatic facilities to serve their aquatic program needs. This requires students to travel to other communities for all meets and many teams are forced to practice in outdoor pools, including during the winter months, as weather conditions allow;

- The primary indoor pools that support the local competitive aquatics market are the Bellevue Aquatic Center, Juanita High School pool in Kirkland, Julius Boehm pool in Issaquah, Mary Wayte pool in Mercer Island, Redmond Pool, Sammamish YMCA, and the King County Aquatic Center in Federal Way;
- The King County Aquatic Center is the primary competitive venue for state, regional, and national events, and also supports a range of local programs and activities. It is the only competitive indoor 50-meter public pool in the area;
- Though immensely popular and financially viable, the Henry Moses leisure pool in Renton is one of only three public outdoor pools in the area;
- A significant number of private, outdoor swim clubs have allowed use of their pools during the off-season to meet the demand for competitive aquatic programs;

- The recreational swim needs of the Eastside are not being well served by existing facilities, which are generally more conventional in nature with deeper and colder water. There are no public indoor aquatic leisure/recreational facilities in Bellevue or the Eastside.

B. Service Area

A service area in this study has been defined by the distance people will travel on a regular basis (a minimum of once a week) to utilize an aquatics facility or its programs. A 15-20 minute "drivable" service area is not uncommon for a significant aquatic facility.

Meeting the aquatic needs of Bellevue will, first and foremost, be the main focus for any proposed aquatic center as part of this study. As a result, Bellevue's city limits have been identified as the primary service area for this study.

It would be naïve to suggest that a facility with significant competitive and recreation amenities would not be able to draw from a much larger area beyond the City's limits. As a result, a secondary service area has been identified that extends beyond Bellevue to the greater Eastside, and includes Sammamish, Issaquah, Newcastle, Renton, Kirkland, Redmond, and Mercer Island. It is expected that a significant percentage of potential daily aquatic center users will come from this geographic area.

In addition, a larger tertiary service area has been identified as part of this study that extends north into Lynnwood at the intersection of Interstate 5 and 405 and includes the City of Seattle. However, it will be difficult to draw from this service area on a regular basis, due to distance and the presence of other providers.

However, the study components that Ballard*King & Associates (B*K) completed as part of the market analysis of Bellevue and the surrounding service areas can be summarized by the characteristics of the service areas:

- All three of the service areas have very similar demographic characteristics;
- The population of the Secondary and Tertiary service areas are significant and could help support an aquatic center through patronage and membership;
- The median age is at or slightly higher than the state and national numbers, which points to a slightly older community, but the older generation is staying active, longer;
- Bellevue and the Tertiary service areas have a slightly lower number of households with children, while the Secondary service area is a higher number. This is noteworthy, as is the understanding that pool use spans the full life cycle of those living in all service areas;
- Income levels in all service areas are significantly higher than the state and national numbers;
- Household expenditures in all service areas are significantly higher than the state and national numbers;

- Recreation expenditures in all service areas are significantly higher than the state and national numbers;
- Income, household, and recreation expenditures point to a higher cost of living in the area and the ability to pay for programs and services;
- The population distribution in all service areas is slightly older than the state and national numbers;
- There will be strong growth in all age groups over the next five years in all service areas;
- The market segments in all service areas indicate a physically active lifestyle.

Some of the key factors for the service area(s) that exist for the development an aquatic facility includes:

- Bellevue, at nearly 150,000 people, is large enough to support a significant new aquatic center on its own. When the Secondary and Tertiary Service Area population is added in there is a very large regional market that could be served;
- The population of all service areas are expected to continue to grow at a fast pace, thus increasing the market for all types of aquatic services;
- The population in the three service areas is slightly older than the state and national numbers and in the coming years there is expected to be an increase in the youth age groups but more significant growth in the senior age categories;

- Despite the large regional population base, access and travel time to a new aquatic center in Bellevue could be an issue from the far reaches of the market area;

C. Aquatic Trends

As aquatic centers provide space for the competitive, social, and recreational programming, water safety education is even more critically important to any community, as drowning is a leading cause of death for children under 5 years of age and second leading cause for children under the age of 14 - especially for Bellevue, which has direct connections to the waterfront. Additionally, swimming lessons are associated with approximately eighty-eight percent reduction in the risk of drowning for children ages 1 to 4 years.

Nationally, though the popularity of swimming has declined slightly, it remains a very popular participation sport. However, the focus of swimming has changed from an activity oriented around competitive aquatics with deeper, colder water, to a more recreational approach that emphasizes shallow, warmer water, socialization, and interactive play.

Aquatic activities have been recorded as being some of the most popular sports and leisure markets in the nation. In terms of many aquatic programs, especially that of recreational swimming, close to 20% of the population participates in swimming programs throughout the Eastside. This equates to 23,000, 89,000, and 263,000 participants in the Bellevue, Secondary, and Tertiary Service areas respectively. Within the Tertiary Service Area there is a total of 11.5 million swimmer days, or pool visits. While those are not specific to a single facility, they are significant.

The concept of a leisure/recreational pool has been the most dominant trend in the aquatics industry over the last several decades. The idea of incorporating water slides, lazy rivers, fountains, zero-depth entry, and interactive water amenities has proven very popular, particularly among young children and families. Some of the closest examples of this are Renton's Henry Moses outdoor pool (2006), Lynnwood Recreation Center (2011), Sammamish YMCA (2016), Snohomish Aquatics Center (2014), and the aquatic center at the Federal Way Community Center (2008).

Despite the recent emphasis on recreational swimming, the more traditional aspects of aquatics remain popular, including competitive swimming, aqua fitness, and learn-to-swim programs. These programs remain an integral part of most aquatic centers. Though not as popular, competitive diving, water polo, and artistic swimming remain an important part of the aquatic community.

A growing trend is the importance of the raised-temperature therapy pool for relaxation, socialization, and rehabilitation. The existing Odle Pool was renovated to include a warm water pool, which is a major component of Odle's aquatic programming and continues to be very popular for various user groups.

Another national trend has been the advent of the multi-purpose ("full-service") center that provides an array of community use and amenities including, but not limited to court sports, fitness and wellness, other community-based programming, and various aquatic components. These centers have allowed for better operational cost recovery rates compared to the stand-alone aquatic facilities built from the 1950's through the 1970's.

Through the evolution of the full service center concept and with the broader approach to developing a facility into a valuable community resource, the modern, state of the art aquatics center has become a greater marketing tool for potential private and/or public partnerships in all aspects of development including programming, operations, and facility construction.

D. Market Segments

As previously stated, there is a wide variety of aquatic trends and programming components, many with different facility and pool requirements. Some programs have very specific requirements that are incompatible with other uses, while other segments can share space and can adapt to many environments. The primary uses with associated facility requirements are listed below:

- Leisure/recreation –the widest array of facility options that include zero-depth entry, water slides, seating area, decks, and play apparatus. Often combined with amenities like concessions and group activity areas;
- Instructional and fitness – includes learn-to-swim and lifesaving programs, fitness classes and lap swimming. Requires deeper (4'-5') water and generous deck space for instruction. Large amounts of open water with lap lanes preferred. Easy pool access, a viewing area for parents, and deck space for instructors is also crucial to successful programming;
- Health, therapy, and rehabilitation - often offered by medical organizations, and requires warm, shallow water;
- Competitive swimming – requires specific length (25 yards to 50 meters), width (6 to 10 lanes) and depth (4'-7'). Spectator seating preferred. This market usually has strong demands for pool space and time during prime times of center use;

- Dual Meets – The typical high school season consists of a number of dual meets. Dual meets consist of two high school teams competing against each other. These meets typically consist of multiple relay events, individual events, and diving competitions.
- Conference/District Meets – Multiple club swim team/schools compete against each other, such as the KingCo District Championship events.
- Invitational Meets – An invitational meet is a meet with many more teams and swimmers than a dual or even conference meet. The term "Invitational" comes from the fact that for a team to attend this type of meet, a team had to be invited to attend from the host team. However, "invitational" is now a general catch-all term for this size of larger event (although there are still occasional invitation-only meets.). Meets of this variety generally have hundreds of swimmers, many teams, and hold many different events over a longer period of time.

- Competitive diving - 1- and 3-meter diving boards, with optional platform diving for national and international events. May require separate, deep water (min 12') tank;
- Team competitions – includes competitive water polo and artistic swimming. Requires a minimum 7' depth and large pool area;
- Special events/rentals – Separate areas or facilities used in conjunction with the aquatic facilities for birthday parties, corporate events and community gatherings. The development of this market will aid in the generation of additional revenues and these events/rentals can often be planned for after or before regular hours or during slow use times. It is important that special events or rentals not adversely affect daily operations or overall center use;

- Social/relaxation – can be picnic areas or landscaped areas but are generally non-aquatic spaces that serve to integrate social and aquatic activities. Most often associated with the leisure/recreation function above. This concept has been very effective in drawing non-swimmers to aquatic facilities and expanding the market beyond the traditional swimming boundaries. The use of natural landscapes and creative pool designs that integrate the social elements with swimming activities has been most effective in reaching this market segment.

Water temperature also is critical to the success of the various aquatic uses and varies widely. In general, the more active the use, the cooler the water: Competition pools, including lap swimming, generally maintain 80-83 degree water temperature; fitness and aquatic exercise programs require

warmer, 86-88 degree temperatures; learn-to-swim programs, particularly for the younger ages, prefer at least 89-degree water; and therapy pools generally maintain 90-92 degree water.

A successful aquatic facility understands the demographic market segments and targets specific segments to attract. The segments often have very different needs, including, but not limited to:

- Pre-school children – generally needs zero-depth, warm water designed for interactive play with parents;
- School-aged children – a wide range of needs from recreational swimming to competition and learn-to-swim programs. The recreational components such as slides, fountains, lazy rivers and zero depth will help to bring these users to the pool on a regular basis for drop-in recreation. The lap lanes provide the opportunity and space necessary for instructional programs and aquatic team use;
- Teens – similar to school-aged requirements, with greater emphasis on recreational elements and designated "teen" use;
- Families – facilities that encourage multiple ages to participate in fun, interactive activities;
- Seniors – requires an increasing range of services, including aqua exercise, lap swimming, therapeutic conditioning and selected learn-to-swim programs;

- Competitors – mainly school-aged through teen, but also including adult programs, with activities ranging from swim and dive teams to water sports. These groups represent one of the largest user populations for an aquatic center and large potential for revenue. However, a healthy balance with other user groups will allow for the ongoing success and promoting the overall mission of the facility;

Special needs population – require warm, shallow water features and amenities. This is an important market and the amenities should be present to develop programs for this population segment. Association with a hospital and other therapeutic and social service agencies may be necessary to fully serve this market.

E. Aquatic Demand

As previously stated, there has been no new aquatic centers built during the last several decades to serve the growing populations of Bellevue or the Eastside. With the population more than doubling over the last 50 years, it is reasonable to expect that the need for public aquatics facilities is currently unmet with the remaining pools on the Eastside.

Compounding the overall need, the Forward Thrust pools were typically built with deeper, single bodies of water that do not allow for varied water temperatures. These facilities no longer align with current standards, including responsiveness to a variety of programs, changing trends, and flexible uses that modern, state-of-the-art centers are able to provide.

Utilizing the data and reports by the Trust for Public Land (2014 City Park Facts Report) and through the National/Regional Parks & Recreation Association guidelines, the number of aquatic centers in Bellevue falls well below the national median average of one pool facility per fifty thousand residents. Applying this average to Bellevue with a population of approximately 150,000, the City could currently support three public facilities, yet there is only one. Applying this same metric to the greater Eastside of Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond with a combined population greater than 300,000, there would need to be 6 public facilities, yet there is only 3 serving this portion of the Eastside.

F. Public Input

Building on the public input process in the 2009 Study and through the experience of this study's professional team, the public input for the potential programming and needs for a new Bellevue Aquatic Center was conducted through a series of stakeholder meetings. These meetings conducted by members of B*K and ARC, included discussions with the City's aquatic staff, Bellevue School District (BSD), and representatives from Bellevue College. Additional meetings were conducted with representatives of the local competitive swimming clubs, the Olympic Cascade Aquatics (OCA) organization, King County Aquatic Center (KCAC), deep water tank user groups - including water polo and diving members, swim lesson instructors, physical therapist providers, and owners of local private pools including the Samena Swim and Rec Club and others. A full summary of the Public Input process and stakeholder comments are included in Attachment B.

While the majority of the groups interviewed were largely focused on competitive needs, the interviews did span a cross section of typical aquatic facility users. The following are highlights and consistent themes from the meetings:

- There continues to be a growing need for significant additional aquatic facilities in Bellevue, the Eastside, and even greater Puget Sound region;
- Bellevue and the Eastside is a strong area for competitive aquatic programs that is constrained due to a lack of pool space and scheduling flexibility:
- The degree to which the private clubs in Bellevue serve aquatics, specifically high school swimming and club swimming, is a phenomenon that is not typical to other parts of the country;
- There was concern about the maintenance and operational costs of an aquatic facility of this size(s) and magnitude(s) being studied;

- While KCAC did express concern if the new facility pursues some of the same national and/or international events, they stated that there was a definite need for more capacity to host mid-level/Invitational events that would not decrease their usage or directly compete with their operations;
- Since many pools have closed in the area, user groups are afraid to see any elimination of facilities – including the complete removal of Odle;
- There is still a high demand and unmet need for additional therapy pool time than Odle's warm water pool is able to meet;
- Two organizations had concerns about a new facility impacting their business:
    - Olympic Cascade Aquatics - They currently operate the Mary Wayte Pool. A new facility could negatively impact their revenue by decreased income from Bellevue School District rental and decreased learn to swim lesson program income.
    - Samena Swim and Rec Club - A private community pool. If the facility were located in the southern area of Bellevue, there is a concern about the impact on their operation, including revenue from learn to swim programming.
- The leisure/recreational pool was seen as a critical component for extending the reach of "swimming" and/or aquatic participation.
- There is a need for a wide variety of programming opportunities, with multiple bodies of water, at multiple water temperatures.

III. Facility Options & Costs

Based on the market assessment, stakeholder input, and professional aquatics experience, three facility program options were developed for this study. Each option is summarized in the following pages, and includes various aquatic spaces, appropriate support spaces, and dry-side amenities to meet the range of programming needs:

- Dual high school/Club meets
- Conference/District level meets
- Larger Invitational Competition events

The project costs are planning level estimates and do not include land acquisition or unusual site conditions. The components of each facility provide the basis to estimate the annual attendance, operational revenue and expenses. Many factors including organizational policies, marketing efforts,

facility location and access will greatly influence these estimates. Details of the assumptions for attendance, events, fees, facility hours and staffing levels are identified in Appendix D.

The following building concept plans are pictorial representations of general spaces and adjacencies required to meet the program needs identified for this update. They are not actual facility designs and will require additional design phases.

Option 1 – Dual High School/Club Meets:

Target Audience: Accommodates the year-round Bellevue aquatic programs, including, but not limited to: recreational swimming, learn to swim and other lesson programs, fitness, and water play; also provides the year-round competitive aquatic sports programs, including the ability to host high school and club level practices and dual meets, as well as, some conference/district meets. Accommodates simultaneous competitions along with general community use including fitness swimming or lessons.

Facility Size and Components: Approximately 94,000 square foot facility, including separated spaces for flexible competition and community use at the same time. The center will include a concessions area, locker rooms, meet management room, party rooms, meeting rooms, and other support spaces. The aquatic therapy/wellness remains at the existing Odle pool, which would be remodeled for better use.

Aquatics:

- Competition Pool - 50m x 25yd
  - Deep-water area at one end
  - Movable Bulkhead
  - Twenty-three 25-yd lap lanes
  - Springboard diving area at deep end (up to 3-meter)
- Seating - Accommodate High School Dual Meets
  - 400 in stands
  - 150 on deck
- Program Pool - 6-lane x 25yd
- Leisure Pool - 6,000 sf
  - Water slides, current channel, and interactive play features
  - Zero-depth entry
  - Adult whirlpool
- Wellness/Therapy Pool - remains at Odle

Dry Side:

- Cardio / Fitness - 5,000 sf

OPTION 1 - 1ST FLOOR PLAN

OPTION 1 - 2ND FLOOR PLAN

Site Required: 8 acres
Parking Required: 370 spaces
Capital Costs: $70 M with surface parking
(not including Odle remodel)
$85 M with structured parking
Annual Operating Surplus/Deficit: -$1.4M
Annual Visits: 479,000
Daily Admission + Membership, approximately 329,000 visits
Programs + Special Events, approximately 150,000 visits

Option 2 - Conference/District Level Meets:

Target Audience: Similar to Option 1, but increased capacity for recreational and leisure programs, competitive aquatic sports programs, including the increased capacity to host larger high school conference/district meets and adds therapy/wellness components. The addition of the "stretch" 50-meter pool allows easier coordination of diving and swimming events and additional practice lanes.

Facility Size and Components: Approximately 126,000 square foot facility, including separated spaces for flexible competition and community use at the same time. Increased spaces in both aquatics and dry side to increase revenue and more opportunity and flexibility.

Aquatics:

- Competition Pool – "Stretch 50m" 66m x 25yd
  - Deep-water area added to one end
  - Movable Bulkheads
  - Twenty-eight 25-yd lap lanes
  - Springboard diving area at deep end (up to 3-meter)
- Seating - Accommodate High School Conference/District Meets
  - 700 in stands
  - 400 on deck
- Program Pool - 8-lane x 25yd
- Leisure Pool - 8,000 sf
  - Water slides, current channel, and play features
  - Zero-depth entry
  - Adult whirlpool
- Wellness/Therapy Pool – 3,000 sf

Dry Side:

- Cardio / Fitness - 10,000 sf

OPTION 2 - 1ST FLOOR PLAN

OPTION 2 - 2ND FLOOR PLAN

Site Required: 10 acres
Parking Required: 485 spaces
Capital Costs: $89 M with surface parking
$109M with structured parking
Annual Operating Surplus/Deficit: -$1.0M
Annual Visits: 559,000
Daily Admission + Membership, approximately 389,000 visits
Programs + Special Events, approximately 170,000 visits

Option 3 – Larger Invitational Competition events:

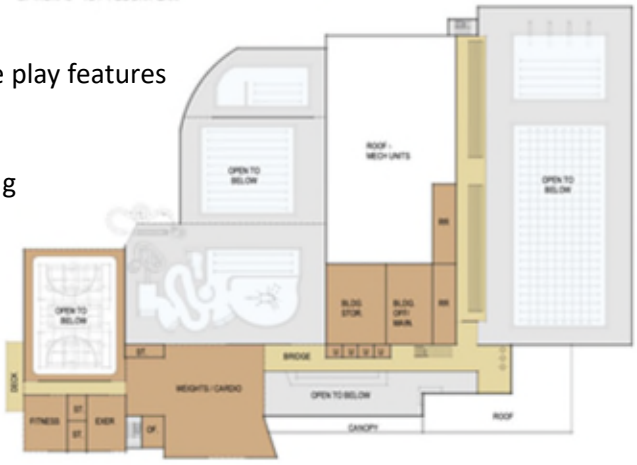
Target Audience: Building from Option 2, further increased capacity for recreational and leisure programs, competitive aquatic sports programs, including the increased capacity to host high school invitational meets and includes therapy/wellness components at both new center and Odle. Also accommodates collegiate student recreational use as developed with Bellevue College. The separate deep-water tank allows for the maximum flexibility for swimming and deep-water events to occur simultaneously.

Facility Size and Components: Approximately 162,000 square foot facility, including separated spaces for flexible competition and community use at the same time. Increased spaces in both aquatics and dry side to increase revenue and more opportunity and flexibility. Additional increased dry side spaces to accommodate a student activity center concept.

Aquatics:

- Competition Pool – 50m x 25yd
  - Movable Bulkheads
  - Twenty-five 25-yd lap lanes
- Deep-Water Tank – 13m x 25yd
  - Springboard diving up to 3m
  - Potential Diving Platform up to 10m
  - Eight 25-yd lap lanes (7' wide lanes)
- Seating - Accommodate High School Invitational Meets
  - 900 in stands
  - 720 on deck
- Program Pool - 10-lane x 25yd
- Leisure Pool - 8,000 sf
  - Water slides, lazy river, and interactive play features
  - Zero-depth entry
  - Adult whirlpool
- Wellness/Therapy Pool – split programming
  - 2,000 sf new
  - Retain/Remodel Odle for additional wellness/therapy

OPTION 3 - 1ST FLOOR PLAN



OPTION 3 - 2ND FLOOR PLAN

Dry Side:

- Cardio / Fitness – 13,500 sf
- Gymnasium with running track – 9,000 sf
- E-Sports room

Site Required: 11 acres
Parking Required: 500 spaces (not included any Partner parking needs)
Capital Costs: $110 M with surface parking (not including Odle remodel)
Annual Operating Surplus/Deficit: -$1.4M
Annual Visits: 614,000

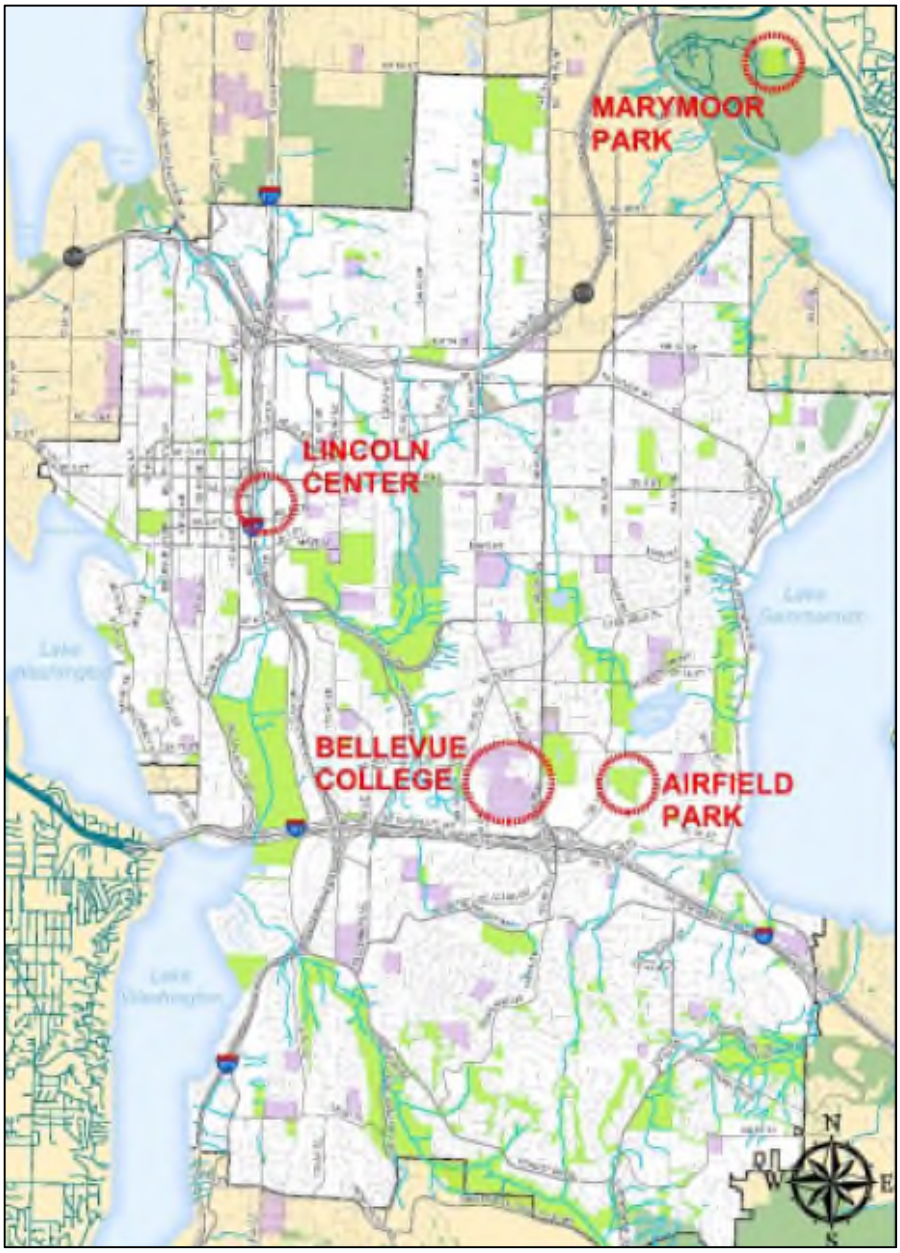
Daily Admission + Membership - approximately 414,000 visits
Programs / Special Events - approximately 200,000 visits

IV. Site Analysis

Four locations were identified to be studied as potential sites for a new aquatics center. These sites represent a range of physical location (proximity), developability (size and requirements), and potential partnership opportunities.

- Lincoln Center Site – a 4.2-acre City-owned site located near the Bellevue downtown subarea.
- Marymoor Park Site – a 19.9-acre City-owned site located within King County's Marymoor Park.
- Airfield Park Site – a 27.5-acre City-owned site that is a former landfill.
- Bellevue College site – a 16.7-acre site located on the Bellevue College campus. This is not City owned property and should be considered a low probability site for the purposes of this study and any future aquatics center planning efforts as no agreement exists on the use of this site for an aquatic center.

The analysis does not recommend a specific site for an aquatic center; rather, it compares the merits of each location based on a set of criteria deemed important to the success of an aquatic facility. The analysis considers the different facility options and whether they are appropriate for a given site. It aims to illustrate the potential site-related impacts of a large facility. Detailed site evaluations and diagrams are included in Appendix E.



V. Economic Impact

The development of a new aquatic facility is likely to bring more people to the area around the facility and increase spending at local businesses. There are multiple factors that would impact the ability of the facility to generate economic impact including final site location, design, and the number and types of events held at the facility. Based on estimates of typical swimming events, event days and meet attendance, the total potential economic impact per year is only slightly different for the three options. The overall spending increase in the area is estimated to range from $6.4-$8.4 million depending on the facility option, and the incremental tax revenue impact is estimated to be approximately $84,000 per year.

This economic impact is not specific to Bellevue, it is specific to the facility. It is quite possible that the facility could generate this type of economic impact, but it is unrealistic to assume that all dollars will be spent in the City proper. There is a strong possibility that a significant portion of this economic impact would take place in nearby communities. See Appendix F for more detailed information on the potential economic impact.

VI. Partnership Assessment

An initial partnership assessment was done for the four sites evaluated and the three facility options that could be accommodated on each site. Three different levels of partnerships were identified for a proposed Bellevue Aquatic Center as further described in Attachment F:

Primary or Equity Project Partners

These would be the main partners in the project who have the most interest, ability to fund, and willingness to be a part of the development and operation of the facility. Potential primary partners include, but are not limited to, Bellevue School District, Bellevue College, Greater Seattle YMCA, Neighboring Communities, and SPLASH*Forward*.

Secondary Project Partners

These organizations have a direct interest in the project, but not to the same level as the primary partners. Capital funding for the project is unlikely, but there can be some assistance with program and service delivery. Potential secondary partners include, but are not limited to, Neighboring School Districts, Club Teams, and Medical Groups.

Support Partners

These organizations support the concept of the aquatics center project but would see limited to no direct involvement in the development or operation of the center. Potential support partners include, but are not limited to, USA Swimming and the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce.

Foundation

Under this format, the partners would place the responsibility for operations and management of the center under the control of a non-profit foundation established for the center. The center would operate as a public facility and would be under the direct control of the partners through an executive board made up of representatives of each organization. Board membership numbers for each partner should be determined based on the level of contribution to the project, ensuring that each of the partners' interests are represented. This option does complicate operations and requires the establishment of an additional organization.

VII. Financing Options

Several different funding sources will likely be needed for the Aquatic Center to become a reality. While a funding recommendation is beyond the scope of this study, Appendix H provides a high-level overview of some of the more likely funding sources, including voter initiatives, City tax options, grants, and alternative funding approaches such as partnership contributions, fundraising, and naming rights. Ultimately, each program option is likely to require different funding strategies based on size, program, and location, including proximity to potential partners, other cities, businesses, and schools based on access to transportation and highways.

Option 1 – With a definite Bellevue focus, Option 1 has fewer opportunities for equity partners in comparison to Options 2 and 3. While there is the possibility of fundraising dollars, it should be expected that the City of Bellevue will be the primary funding agent for the project.

Option 2 – With additional competition pool area, tower diving and expanded dry-side recreation, Option 2 has increased opportunity to bring in equity partners, fundraising, and grants. A project of this scale also increases the potential for sponsorships and component naming rights revenue. Despite a broader base of capital funding, Bellevue will still be a primary funding agent for this project in addition to one or more significant partners.

Option 3 – With a much more regional focus to the aquatic center, it will be essential that significant revenue sources beyond the City of Bellevue be tapped. Much stronger revenues from equity partners and naming rights/sponsorships should be expected as well.

VIII: King County 2019 Regional Aquatics Report

In 2018, King County and the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Redmond signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a Regional Aquatics Report. The group's scope included identifying public aquatics needs, creating a site evaluation framework, estimating capital costs, and exploring partnership opportunities and funding options. The final report was completed in October 2019 and is included in Attachment I. Key findings include:

- Population and demand for swimming have increased significantly over the past 50 years, yet existing facilities are aging, and no new public aquatics facilities have been built in recent history in Bellevue, Kirkland, and Redmond.
- Based on national statistics, the number of Eastside aquatics facilities falls below the national average of one pool per 50,000 residents. If the Eastside cities met the national average, there would be approximately six facilities serving the local population (versus three facilities currently).
- Over the past 20 years, each of the cities have conducted a variety of citizen surveys and studies related to the aquatics needs of the community and have continued to invest in renovating existing aquatics facilities.
- Eastside aquatics needs include water safety and lessons, family recreation, aquatics sports and competition, and complementary dry side amenities. Drowning is a leading cause of death for children under five and is a critical public safety issue for eastside communities with adjoining bodies of water.
- A review of other regional and "best in class" aquatics facilities finds that contemporary facilities include 50-meter lanes for local and regional competition, a separate deep water diving well, spectator seating for 1,500 to 2,000, and enhanced dry side amenities. Contemporary facilities balance a combination of community programming, wellness, and competition capabilities, and facility design and features support concurrent use and diverse programming, especially allowing ongoing community programs during aquatics competition and events. The June 2019 SPLASH*Forward* "Best in Class" Report summarizes regional scale facilities which demonstrate "best in class criteria" through their formation, operation, partnerships, funding, and breadth of programming. The "Best in Class" report is also included in Attachment J.
- If the cities and King County decide to continue to work toward a regional approach to meeting aquatics needs, recommended next steps could include increased public engagement and outreach, further exploring possible partnership opportunities, evaluating taxing options and potential governance structures, and conducting more detailed site, facility, and cost analysis. The cities of Redmond and Kirkland supported the need for regional aquatic facilities and indicated a willingness to continue working on this regional effort during council presentations earlier this year.