

LOCAL NEEDS and REGIONAL IMPACT

In an effort to establish a common understanding and interpretation of the scale and usage of a regional scale aquatics facility, *SPLASHForward* has carefully laid out how to define the term ‘Regional Scale’ (*See Regional Scale Definition Document included as Attachment #4*). The goal is to allow for informed decision making by stakeholders, decision makers and community members. SF/ISG defines what both ‘Regional’ and ‘Local’ mean as we propose design options to meet the aquatics needs of the stakeholders and community members of both Bellevue and our region. SF/ISG defines the terms geographically, then programmatically (e.g. target use) and in terms of facility and component scale.

SF/ISG defines The Greater Eastside as ‘the region’ within King County for our aquatics analysis and then break this into primary, secondary and tertiary service areas with Bellevue, Redmond and Kirkland within the primary service area. With the assumption of siting a regional scale aquatics facility in Bellevue, SF/ISG then analyzes the demographics and programming uses to better define the ‘right size’ of an aquatic facility and its aquatics components to best support the primary service area in terms of target usage, demand and potential for growth.

Usage at a regional aquatic center can be both ‘regional’ and ‘local’ in who it is serving. A regional scale facility programmatically supports the local community’s aquatics needs, yet it also provides programming that is broader or of higher quality attracting users from outside the immediate community. It becomes a destination for enhanced recreation, therapy and leisure activities, e.g. leisure amenities such as slides or wave rider or special needs programming such as medical wellness therapy or adaptive swim lessons, thereby serving local needs and having a regional impact.

The balance and blend of serving local and regional needs requires maintaining priority use for local residents with programming that includes the full range of Learn to Swim, adult, senior, special needs, leisure, aquatic and dryland therapeutic, rehabilitative and competitive aquatics sports. This includes discounted rates and memberships as well as supporting those needing financial assistance. Regional visitors bring in revenue that help to finance operational costs and reduce the funding burden on local taxpayers.

For a regional aquatics facility, events are a significant source of revenue. We define regional events for an aquatic center in Bellevue to be events with 500 - 1,000 participants and 750 – 900 spectators. This supports the local high school training and competitive needs as well as the Greater Eastside’s aquatics needs for youth club, Masters and Special Olympics events across swimming, water polo, artistic swimming and diving. It is important to highlight that the scaling of participants, spectators and support amenities to go from serving local high school conference/district and invitational meets to hosting regional meets is quite small. Cost recovery from accommodating and hosting the regional events and the incremental space and component needs is a good value proposition and a strong return on investment.

From SF/ISG user group research, we outline the specific scale of facility components that would best serve the local and regional needs for The Greater Eastside, i.e. the ‘right size’ facility. *We list the components and their usage in the Regional Scale Attachment #4 and Newer Eastside Aquatic Facilities Attachment #5*. We believe a regional scale aquatics center provides aquatic design

components and programming that best supports the aquatic recreation, fitness, health & wellness, training and competitive needs of the Greater Eastside. Local and regional facility use are not mutually exclusive. They are complimentary and necessary for sustaining a regional scale aquatics facility.

For the full discussion of ‘Regional Scale’, see *Attachment #4*.

User Groups

A new comprehensive Aquatics Center located in Bellevue would be serving the following user groups.

Note: Bellevue’s total population (2020) is 148,100 and projected to reach 160,400 by 2035.

User Group by Demographics	Age	% of Bellevue pop. (2017)	Approx. Bellevue Population (2019)
Seniors	Age 65+	14%	20,342
Youth & Teens	Under 20	21%	30,513
Adults	Age 20 - 44	38%	55,214
Older Adults	Age 45 - 64	27%	39,231
Disabled or Special Needs	All ages, abilities	NA ²	NA
Families	All ages	35%*	50,855

* **NOTE:** total of family types tracked; average household size 2.4 people per household (2017)

Note: All Baby Boomers will be older than 65 by 2035 significantly increasing the % of Seniors. This has been referred to as ‘The Silver Tsunami’.

User Group by Activity	Ages Served
Learn to Swim	All ages & abilities
Leisure	All ages & abilities
Fitness	All ages & abilities
Wellness & Therapy	All ages & abilities
Competitive Aquatics	Youth, High School, Masters, Special Olympics

NOTE: Leisure, Fitness, Wellness & Therapy are served by aquatics (wet) and dry side components of a facility. See Facility section for elaboration on how each component serves various user groups.

Program Definition

For an aquatics facility, it is important to define its scale in terms of program and use. We believe that the size of an aquatic facility and its aquatic components should directly relate to its target usage, demand and

² The disabled and special needs population data for Bellevue is captured differently. National population trends through the American Community Survey of the US Census Bureau give us some data (2017). 1 in 5 adults have some disability. Approx. 24,533 King County residents have a developmental disability. About 1/3rd of older adults have one or more disabilities; they represent the largest share of individuals with disabilities (extrapolating from above, 9% of Bellevue’s Older Adults have one or more disability, approx. 1830 residents). Through the State Department of Social and Health Services and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DSHS/DDA), we learn that Bellevue has 852 individuals enrolled. 12,532 in King County. Anecdotally, the local autistic community is the largest growth population for aquatics therapy and adaptive swimming.

potential for growth. This usage may in some cases be ‘regional’ and in other cases be ‘local’ in who it serves.

A **local** facility provides programming that meets a set of local community aquatics needs. A local pool can range from a small neighborhood pool serving the local neighborhood to a larger facility that aims to support the entire community but does not provide programming with the intent to attract a significant number of users from outside the immediate community.

An aquatic center offering **regional programming** offers a wider range and higher quality of programming. This can include schedules (e.g. more options) of programs and use that are not offered by other facilities in the region.

A comprehensive **regional scale aquatic center** located in **Bellevue** would offer programs that do the following:

- Attracts users and program participants from outside Bellevue, drawing from the Greater Eastside.
- Offers programs that are not offered at other Greater Eastside facilities.
- Provides additional recreation, leisure, and family aquatic features and amenities not offered elsewhere in the region.
 - A **destination** for enhanced recreation and leisure activities.
- Provides a greater offering of times and schedules for programs and use that are not provided at local pools.
- Key program elements of a regional facility can include the following:
 - Enhanced special needs programming
 - Wider and more diverse aquatic fitness programming
 - Enhanced water safety training for all ages and abilities
 - Medical wellness offerings not found elsewhere in region
 - More frequent time slots for lap swimming
 - More options for Masters Swimming and Triathlon training

The balance and blend of serving local and regional needs requires maintaining **priority use** for local residents (e.g. Bellevue or any neighboring cities that contribute to capital or operating costs of the aquatics facility). This can include:

- Priority advance registration for local residents
- Discount rates for residents
- Priority time scheduling for local schools and user groups servicing Bellevue residents

When considering a **‘Regional Scale’** facility located on the Greater Eastside, SF/ISG envision a facility that will serve the Greater Eastside in the following ways:

PROGRAMMING AND USE	LOCAL/REGIONAL
Community Programming (Learn to Swim, Adult, Senior, Special Needs)	Locally serving
Leisure Aquatics	Locally & Greater Eastside serving
Aquatic & Dryland Therapeutic, Rehabilitation Services and Special Needs	Locally & Greater Eastside Primary (see above) serving
Competitive aquatic sports training (swimming, water polo, synchro, diving, masters)	Locally serving High School and club aquatics (includes special needs) & Greater Eastside Primary serving secondarily
Competitive Events	Local High School, Greater Eastside aquatics clubs, PNS Regional, PNA Masters, Special Olympics Regional (<i>See Event section below for details on events</i>)

A regional scale facility helps finance operational costs by increasing revenue from regional visitors and thereby reducing the amount of subsidy funding the local taxpayer (e.g. Bellevue or other participating cities) would have to bear.

What about Seattle? We envision a regional scale aquatics facility serving Seattle aquatics clubs through regional scale training and events based on space and time available after local needs are met.

What do you mean by ‘Locally’? We envision the City (or Cities) that build a regional scale facility will be the primary local beneficiary for programming with discounted rates and memberships. We also envision special rates for those with financial needs.