Pool Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why are we still talking about a pool?

A: Lake Oswego School District (LOSD) and the City of Lake Oswego are considering a possible partnership to develop and operate a recreation center that would have aquatics and dryland components that would be significant improvements over LOSD’s and City’s current aquatic and dryland facilities. Based on assessments, without the City’s partnership, LOSD would need to forgo building a new pool and repair the existing pool on the Lake Oswego High School campus.

Q: How are you making decisions about the proposed concept?

A: Significant study and community conversations have occurred over the past several years. For the last year, LOSD has spent significant time on pool development working with a pool task force, a joint pool task force, pool architects and designers, and Lake Oswego Parks and Rec (on behalf of the City of Lake Oswego). Included in that work was a needs assessment study of all current pool users.

Dr. Mike Musick convened a superintendent's pool task force in the fall of 2018 comprised of certain staff members and representatives of various external and internal pool user groups, such as the LO Swim Club, the City of Lake Oswego, and district staff.

The pool task force was facilitated by Ken Ballard of Ballard King & Associates, a national consulting firm that assists municipal entities and others in feasibility and operating analysis of pools and other recreational facilities. The report synthesized Ballard King's analysis and the pool task force's work and input, including analysis of demand, feasibility and projected operating deficits under various scenarios.

Today, the ad hoc task force -- comprised of representatives from the LOSD School Board and City Council, and staff -- developed guiding principles to assist with the decision making process of a possible joint development. These guiding principles are as follows:

• 30+ year facility
• Accommodates identified needs of existing users, pool and dryland
• Creates efficiencies, capital and operational
• $30 million total capital investment (50/50 between City and LOSD)
• 70 percent operational cost recovery
• Adaptable for future opportunities

We are inviting input from all major user groups, neighborhood associations and unaffiliated citizens to help inform the proposal.

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Q: How is the pool being funded?

A: LOSD has $7 million earmarked for pool repair or replacement from its 2017 bond sale, plus $8 million to be allocated from its bond premium, for a total of $15 million to contribute to the development of a new pool. The City is considering allocating $15 million from its park bond funds to contribute to the development of a recreation center.

If LOSD and the City do not reach an agreement on a joint center, LOSD will need to forgo building a new pool as $15 million is insufficient for a stand-alone aquatic center. It will allocate $7 million towards repairing the existing pool facility on the Lake Oswego High School campus.

Q: How was the usage analysis determined?

A: The usage analysis of primetime pool hours conducted by Ken Ballard of Ballard King & Associates analyzed the needs of the district’s pool users. The district is committed to providing a safe and functional place for our student athletes to perform, but it cannot accommodate the expressed desires of all auxiliary users. It’s no different than our high school gyms. During volleyball season, our gyms are dedicated to high school volleyball teams, not club basketball. During basketball season, our gyms are dedicated to our high school basketball teams, not to club volleyball. Additionally, a pool is like no other athletic facility. When it’s not in full use, it still needs to be fully operational with circulation, chemicals, heat, etc. The larger the tank, the more water
to maintain even when it’s not in high demand. We are striving to build a pool that will support our seasonal athletes during their primetime and significantly enhance swim opportunities for our entire pool community.

While the Ballard-King found sufficient market demand for a new larger pool, depending on the pool size and amenities, annual operating deficits of over $300,000 to almost $600,000 were projected for a new pool. It has been noted that this range of operating deficits is consistent with other municipal pools, most of which are operated by either cities or parks and recreation districts with a dedicated operating tax levy. As Ballard-King is not an architectural or construction cost consulting firm, their report did not include data on estimated costs of construction.

**Q: Why not consider a 50-meter (50M) pool?**

**A:** Based on usage analysis, a 50M pool is not necessary to accommodate the needs of our existing users. LOSD nor the City have funds available to build a 50M pool, nor do they have the resources to commit the residents of Lake Oswego to indefinitely subsidizing the significant operational costs of a 50M pool. While a 50M pool can accommodate more users during primetime hours, the potential increase in users is not enough to offset increased operating and maintenance costs.

**Q: Why is a 50M pool not an option when the LOSD School Board voted to build one during the meeting on June 3, 2019?**

Soon after the June meeting, a pool architecture firm Opsis was hired, discussions of a partnership with the City resumed, ad hoc task force members visited other pool sites, and pool architects and consultants began developing concepts and costs.

This work determined -- and was shared and discussed at one City Council and two School Board meetings in December 2019 -- that a 50M pool at Lakeridge Middle School is not a viable option given the available funding and long-term responsibilities of our public school district and community. Alternative options to accommodate stakeholder needs were then presented. These viable alternatives are what’s being
considered for a final proposal that will be presented to the governing bodies of both LOSD and the City in March 2020.

**Q: Why consider a 25-yard stretch pool?**

Because a 25-yard stretch pool (with 12 lanes) more than meets the needs of our existing users. We can build a 25-yard stretch competitive pool and an accompanying warm water pool in a state-of-the-art aquatic facility that can be enjoyed by students and residents of Lake Oswego for generations.

**Q: Why build a competitive pool and a warm water pool, when you could simply build one big pool?**

Competitive lap swimmers and water polo players require cooler water temperatures and deeper pools to host matches and meets. An accompanying warm water pool allows for more appealing water temperatures and shallower depth for novice and many recreation swimmers and water exercise enthusiasts. Also, offering the warm water pool option opens up more space in the competitive pool.

**Q: Why not explore fundraising for a pool?**

A: Philanthropic capital campaigns require many years of planning and execution and significant resources and personnel dedicated solely to fundraising to raise the millions required to support a new pool.

**Q: Why not partner with the City of West Linn?**

A: The City of West Linn has indicated that they are not interested in pursuing a partnership for a pool. That stance is most likely supported by its community’s overwhelming lack of interest evidenced by the low 23 percent support for funding a community pool (failed Measure 3-432 in 2013) [https://pamplinmedia.com/wlt/95-news/200076-pool-measure-sinks-by-large-margin](https://pamplinmedia.com/wlt/95-news/200076-pool-measure-sinks-by-large-margin).
Q: Why not partner with the West Linn-Wilsonville School District?

A: We discussed a potential partnership with West Linn-Wilsonville School District prior to the passage of its 2019 bond and confirmed following the passage of its bond. Current funding is not available from the district for a pool facility. A pool is not part of its improvement plan.

Q: Why not construct a Sprung Structure to reduce costs?

A: We are not considering a tension fabric structure because of its limited lifespan and replacement costs, compromised durability, limited thermal control, compromised air quality and no in-house repair. Additionally, based on LOSD’s experience with permitting the temporary gym at Lakeridge Middle School, we believe such a structure would be difficult to approve for a permanent aquatic center enclosure. But that concern is secondary to the other reasons listed above. Our pool architecture firm recently constructed a tension fabric structure for Portland’s Harbor of Hope. That structure was approved by Portland’s DRC as a temporary structure to provide shelter for people who are homeless. That has incomparable requirements to an aquatic operation.

Q: Why not a Modular Myrtha tank?

A: Myrtha pools may be a cost effective solution if a used unit is available, however these systems are prone to damage and costly to repair. Repairs of the liner would not be able to be performed in-house.

Q: Why not consider building an outdoor pool?

A: An outdoor facility does not support the student athletes who are our primary users. Outdoor pools have limited appeal and hours of operation in our Oregon climate. Also, they pose increased operation and maintenance costs to keep clean and safe in our open-air environment.
Q: Why not a new pool at Lake Oswego High School?

A: LOSD cannot afford to build and operate a new pool without partnership from the City, and the school campuses do not provide enough space to accommodate the recreation requirements of the City for such a partnership. Any available space at Lake Oswego High School has been earmarked for future academic facility expansion, supports and parking.

Q: Why not at the City’s Rassekh property?

A: The City has completed a master planning exercise for the property and the athletic fields have been determined as a much more efficient use of the site.

Q: Why don’t we charge more to use the pool to lower operating costs?

A: Fees for recreation and aquatic usage will be priced competitive for the market. Specifics will be evaluated as design and operating agreements develop.

Q: Why aren’t you accounting for greater revenue potential?

A: Revenue potential of accommodating all the needs of club programs has been considered and determined too great a risk with public funds. Especially since such a program would be unprecedented for a public school district and a community of our size. Note: we believe we are one of only a couple school districts in the state of Oregon that is still owning and operating a pool. All others have relinquished such a responsibility because it is not in line with the objectives nor abilities of a resource constrained public entity. It is the norm across the country for schools and clubs to lease pools, often at multiple spaces to accommodate their needs.
Q: What is the urgency to make a decision?

A: The window of opportunity is closing to have access to required funding to build a new pool. Voters expect construction of existing LOSD bond projects to be concluded/underway by the end of 2021. The City of Lake Oswego is currently earmarking funds from its 2019 park bond. Therefore, both LOSD and the City have agreed to decide on a possible partnership -- including concept for design, site and funding -- by spring 2020.

Q: Are you listening to the pool users?

A: Yes, especially in relation to our highest priority, which is our school facilities. Leading up to and since the community engagement meeting in November, board and staff have disproportionately dedicated time to fielding questions, holding meetings, and researching and developing the information required to make an unbiased and informed decision. This work is being done while balancing progress on other initiatives that have significant impact on the entire school population.

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