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HEALTHIER TOGETHER STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS STAND AS THE CITY RECEIVES COST ESTIMATES TO REHABILITATE THE CURRENT MOUNTAIN VIEW POOL
Year-long, multi-agency process in place to determine best path forward

PORT TOWNSEND – The Healthier Together Steering Committee met on Friday, December 8 to discuss the current plan for the proposed aquatics and wellness facility at the Mountain View Campus in Port Townsend, evaluating and checking their work over the past year to ensure the current recommendation is the best path forward. The seven agencies represented by the Steering Committee include Jefferson County, the Port of Port Townsend, Jefferson Healthcare, Jefferson Aquatics Coalition, Port Townsend School District, the YMCA of Jefferson County, and the City of Port Townsend. The Steering Committee has met regularly since early 2023, guided by a diverse community engagement process and multiple financial feasibility studies.

The latest in the suite of feasibility studies around the project was shared with the Steering Committee by Director of Parks and Recreation Strategy, Carrie Hite. The City of Port Townsend hired a cost estimator to calculate the cost to rehabilitate the existing pool and to assess the cost to create a competition-size pool from the old footprint. Early projections are approximately \$21M. The estimate is based on what is visible and given the age and unknowns around the current structure, as well as the rising costs for construction, this number is likely a conservative estimate. According to the cost estimator, a rehabilitation project of this type would be considered high risk and would demand higher annual operating expenses over time as parts break, systems fail, finishes deteriorate, and structures weaken. There are also efficiencies lost when operating aging systems and equipment. One major aspect to the cost estimator's report and to the unviability of a rehabilitation path, is that the condition underneath the current pool structure is unknown. There is substantial risk that the pool is more extensively deteriorated than currently assumed or visible and there may be soil conditions that don't support the rebuilding of the current pool.

The cost estimate for a rehabilitated pool is one additional piece of information being gathered and shared as the Steering Committee partners and community weigh their options for ensuring East Jefferson County continues to have an aquatics facility that can serve a growing and diverse population. The Steering Committee has continually examined the project's financials and variables over the past year. As new information and ideas come to light, there is agreement that through the due diligence of the process to date, the recommendation to site a new facility at the Mountain View campus is the best path forward.



It is unknown how long the current pool will be operable given any number of points of failure. Numerous deficiencies were observed on the pool deck, pool liner, HVAC system, in the locker room, building structure, support areas, and other building mechanical systems. Any one of these points of failure could close the pool, and they are stacked upon each other at this point in the pool's lifespan. Additionally, as part of the facility assessment, it was determined that the current pool facility is not in compliance with ADA standards, which are especially important for a community with increasing accessibility needs.

The next step in the evaluative process was discussed at the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting on Monday, December 11. The BOCC voted to commission an independent feasibility study through the State's Department of Commerce. This additional financial review is necessary in order for a Public Facilities District (PFD) to form. The City and County will split the \$15,000 cost to commission the study, which takes approximately three months to perform. A PFD would ensure that wider county representation is at the table and would continue the work of the Steering Committee, effectively ensuring there is continued momentum for the initiative.

As a community we have spent a considerable amount of time and resources on the process to evaluate our needs for aquatics in East Jefferson County, decades when we look back on past efforts. At every point in the effort there is agreement that we all desire aquatics as part of our vital social, health, and safety infrastructure. With this in mind, and with the Steering Committee's standing recommendations, the Jefferson Aquatic Coalition (JAC) has plans to move forward with advocacy efforts in the County, galvanizing support for the power of aquatics in the community. Rich Childers, President of JAC, stated, "It's been truly a pleasure to work with all the partners that were at the table over the past year working on this project. I believe we developed the best and most equitable option for building an aquatic facility that will serve our county for many years into the future."

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For more information visit the Healthier Together webpage:
<https://cityofpt.us/engagept/page/healthier-together>

The final report can be found here:
https://cityofpt.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/engage_pt/page/20561/091823_healthier_together_final_report_and_appendices.pdf

