

Date: October 23, 2020

To: Doug Shockey, Chair, Parks and Recreation Planning Board

From: Ron Smith, Director, Parks and Recreation

Subject: Oak Point Recreation Center Outdoor Pool

This memo is in response to the concerns posed by the Parks and Recreation Planning Board on the depth and wave height of the proposed double-ended wave pool at Oak Point Recreation Center.

Although concern was expressed regarding the depth of the wave pool and the wave height, neither can be adjusted without drastically affecting the project's original scope, budget and timeline. Pool size, depth, wave height and magnitude, are all connected and designed together as one cohesive system to provide a safe, family-friendly experience appropriate for a municipal aquatic facility. The following information will help explain why the design consultant and the Department feels the selected wave pool is the correct application for this project.

Background:

Plano Parks and Recreation's mission is to improve the quality of life in Plano through exceptional parks, trails and recreation facilities. The Plano Parks and Recreation Master Plan supports the following goals for recreation in Plano:

- Encourage healthy lifestyles by providing an appropriate mix of facilities and range of activities throughout the city.
- Refresh and modernize park infrastructure so that each park/facility offers similar elements across the city but are unique to the surrounding area.
- Provide for park and recreation opportunities that reflect the growing diversity of the city and allow for social interaction.

The Department offers a range of diverse facilities and activities in the manner similar to maintaining an investment portfolio. While some services are considered our 'bread and butter,' and are offered in as many distribution points as possible, we also try to avoid having duplication in other aspects. This approach provides Plano residents with the greatest range of choices for activities and programs. We strive to follow this philosophy as we renovate and develop properties within the Parks and Recreation system. With regard to Plano's aquatic facilities, each has something unique to offer in terms of user ability and experience:

- **Plano Aquatic Center:** Program focused (learn-to-swim, water aerobics) with lap swimming.
- **Muehlenbeck:** Family focused with both indoor and outdoor pools offering a variety of features with some programming and lap swimming.
- **Carpenter:** Indoor, warm-water pool focused on early learn-to-swim and mature patrons.
- **Jack Carter:** Stand-alone waterpark with multiple features designed for active preteen, teen and young adults.
- **Liberty:** Small, outdoor pool with some programs and open swim.
- **Williams Natatorium:** Lap swim (City of Plano Swimmers/PISD/open lap)

- **Oak Point (indoor):** Focused on programming and lap swimming
- **Oak Point (outdoor):** Proposed redesign to offer amenities not already offered in Plano, with a family-focused orientation.

History:

In preparation for the 2017 Bond election, the Parks and Recreation Planning Board discussed the renovation of the Oak Point Recreation Center outdoor pool on April 5, 2016; May 13, 2016; and July 12, 2016. On November 1, 2016, the Board recommended the \$10 million project be included on the 2017 Bond program list. The renovation was part of the 2017 Bond election (Proposition 3, Park Improvements). Plano voters approved the proposition in May 2017.

Following the passage of the bond program, Plano Parks and Recreation aquatics staff began working with department leadership to build a preliminary project scope, and establish some broad goals for the project. Staff's knowledge of aquatic facilities, their ongoing dialogue with aquatic patrons, and facility usage trends, helped steer these early discussions. During these discussions, staff remained mindful of aquatic amenities already existent in the Parks and Recreation system. It was determined that the Oak Point outdoor pool renovation should be family-focused, add new features to Plano's aquatic system, and not duplicate amenities already offered by the Department. The following goals were established for the project:

An outdoor family aquatic facility with unique and exciting elements that:

1. *Focuses on recreational amenities*
2. *Does not compete with existing City of Plano aquatic facilities*
3. *Utilizes the most efficient use of staff*
4. *Provides additional revenue sources*
5. *Attracts users of all ages*

In October 2018, Weston & Sampson was hired as the design consultant for the project. The Plano City Council agenda item recommending Weston & Sampson for hire is attached. The design scope of the project, as listed in the Summary of Item section of the agenda item, calls for *"a family friendly aquatic facility that is unique, does not compete with other city aquatic facilities, creates additional revenue, attracts users of all ages, and makes the most efficient use of staff."*

With the above goals in mind, master planning services began in November 2018.

Master Planning:

As part of the master planning process, in 2019, Weston & Sampson hosted two public meetings to solicit citizen input on May 28 and June 13. Staff announced the dates of these meetings to the Park Board on May 7. The June 13 public meeting was placed on the Park Board calendar. Eleven citizens attended the two public meetings. Simultaneous to the public meetings, the consultant initiated an online survey as an additional means of soliciting public comment. The consultant received 156 responses to the survey. Based on information provided by the public, and in consultation with aquatics staff, the following features were identified as top priorities for the renovation:

- Dual-entry wave pool
- Splash pad
- Elevated play structure
- Family leisure pool
- Ample shade structures
- Rentable cabanas
- Concessions area

Wave Pool Details:

To ensure the Oak Point dual-entry wave pool was modeled after a successful prototype, its design matches the very popular wave pool installed at H2OBX in the Outer Banks, NC. The maximum depth of the pool is 3.5 feet, the typical wave height is 24 inches, and the maximum wave height 36 inches. The pool is designed to provide a family-friendly wave system in shallower water. The diamond-shaped waves cascade in two different directions, breaking into the zero-depth entries. Combining the depth of the pool and the maximum wave height, an adult six-foot tall could potentially experience a water depth of five feet. A four-foot child would find the wave over their head.

[HERE](#) is a video of the OBX pool in North Carolina. (8:34 – 9:19 minute mark)

The lower intensity, dual-entry wave pool was chosen over a wave pool capable of generating larger, more intense waves, for several reasons, all of which helped the project meet its stated goals and stay within budget:

- **Cost:** selected design is approximately \$1.5 million below a traditional wave pool, maximizing the project's impact while keeping it within budget.
- **Usage Patterns:** selected wave pool design will attract a larger segment of our patron population. At Jack Carter Pool, an aquatic facility built to attract teens, youth ages 13-15 account for 8-percent of our youth attendance; ages 6-12 account for 70-percent youth attendance.
- **Safety:** selected design ensures safer conditions appropriate for a municipal aquatic facility.
- **Staffing:** selected design requires 50-percent fewer employees during operation, including lifeguards, compared to a traditional wave pool, thus minimizing operating costs.
- **Size:** selected design is approximately 10,000 sf smaller than a traditional wave pool, allowing more space for support features, like deck chairs, shade structures, and private cabanas.
- **Configuration:** selected design fits within the available space, allowing for complementary amenities, like the activity pool and splash pad, broadening the appeal of the overall facility.
- **Capacity:** selected design allows more swimmers compared to traditional wave pool that would fit within the project's footprint.
- **Inclusiveness:** selected design allows for more bathers of varying abilities to enjoy the pool compared to a traditional wave pool, making it more family friendly.
- **Noise:** selected design's wave producing mechanisms are less noisy than a traditional wave pool, improving guest experience.

Conclusion:

The lower intensity, dual-entry wave pool provides the general experience of a traditional wave pool with a higher degree of safety, lower costs, and broad "family" appeal. Reconfiguring the wave pool to increase depth and to produce larger, more intense waves is not possible without rejecting the completed plan set and starting over. This option would cause substantial cost overages and significant delay in the project's completion. Design fees totaling \$1million would be forfeit and the project delayed 18-24 months, creating a loss of service to residents. Due to site and financial constraints, introducing a more traditional wave pool would limit the site's ability to support other features requested by residents, such as the activity pool and splash pad; pool deck seating and cabanas would be reduced or removed, eliminating revenue potential. The goals of the renovation: to build a family friendly aquatic facility that is unique, does not compete with other city aquatic facilities, creates additional revenue, attracts users of all ages, and makes the most efficient use of staff, would likely remain unfulfilled.

Thank you for allowing the Department an opportunity to provide a response to questions about the project. Staff is eager to answer any further questions.