

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

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Community presentations look at aquatics proposal in detail and answer questions

Q: Why is the city looking at this facility?

A: Two things came together: A pool replacement and a tourism goal. Several years ago, when we knew the Old Hampton Community Center pool had reached the end of its life, we planned for a replacement pool. About the same time, the city was seeking additional facilities to bring in visitors. Youth sports tourism is nearly recession-proof - parents will always stretch to help finance their children's interests and futures. We saw success from the Boo Williams facility and the convention center and asked a consultant what other kinds of youth tourism facilities would make sense. There are no aquatics facilities in the region that provide the combination of multiple pools, seating capacity and diving capability to host the largest regional and national competitions.

Q: How has it been researched?

A: The city hired Counsilman-Hunsaker to do a deeper study. Founded by Doc Counsilman, a collegiate and Olympic coach, the company has worked on more than 1,000 aquatic projects and is a top firm in the aquatics world. Their charge was to investigate the ability of an aquatics facility to both meet a local need and generate economic impact, while building the youth sports tourism market. Analysis included: marketing/competition; costs; and potential direct and indirect revenues.

Q: Were local people involved in the study?

A: A group that included staff from Community Development and Parks as well as several community members, mostly involved with swim organizations, reviewed the work. They also traveled to several aquatics facilities in the state and region to tour and talk with the operators.

Q: Why do we need a replacement pool?

A: Some of the need is high school swimmers. Several have spoken to City Council about how far they have to travel for swim practice and meets, losing time for both practice and studies. The city only has one pool that is 25 meters, and none that are 50 meters. For example, Kecoughtan has to rent space, and has to restrict the number of students who can be on the team. They equated it to what life for football or basketball players would be like without enough practice courts or a "home field" in the city. Many club teams in the region travel to multiple locations to rent practice space. Other needs are swim classes, water aerobics and recreation for adults and seniors.

Q: What did they conclude?

A: They presented a range of options, narrowed by the local group, to a community pool and a competition facility that includes a community pool.

Q: What would the replacement pool include and cost?

A: The proposed 25 meter x 25 meter pool would offer the kinds of amenities that some of our neighboring communities have, which would include waterslide. That cost estimate is \$15 million.

Q: What would the expanded facility include and cost?

A: The recommended larger facility would include a 50 meter competition pool, with 2 bulkheads (which can separate the larger pool into smaller sections) and seating for 1,500 people; a separate teaching pool; and outdoor leisure pool with slides; and additional rooms inside. It would cost an additional \$16.4 million, for a total of \$31.5 million. It would also accommodate diving and synchronized diving.

Q: Why would we need 2 pools?

A: Competitive pools need to be cooler (77-82 degrees) and deeper than recreation or teaching pools, where adults and children need to reach the bottom and have warmer temperatures (84-86 degrees). The second pool also becomes a warmup for large meets, or a community pool when teams are using the larger pool's lanes.

Q: How would we fund the either pool?

A: The city uses bonds, or very low-interest loans, to finance new construction and some maintenance/upgrades. Because those 20-year loans are in cycles, some are being paid off now. The city can take on new debt without paying more each year to make payments (debt service.) There are other ways to pay the debt than just out of general funds; for example, the convention center's bonds are being paid off by a portion of the hotel and meals taxes.

Q: What about the annual operating cost? Would it pay for itself?

A: Almost no city amenity pays for itself. The general fund helps pay for the community centers, ball fields, libraries, etc. Cost and revenue estimates that show that aquatics business part could help cover some of the costs of the community amenity.

Q: Show me.

A: The community pool will bring in some revenue from local teams renting space and some memberships and fees, but that's limited. There is a range of estimates for the larger facility, from low to a higher estimate based on local factors. The baseline community pool and lower estimates developed by the consultants. Parks Director Kevin Myers, who has operated other facilities previously, including Midtown in Newport New, offered customized levels for our market.

Facility	Annual Revenue	Annual operating	Net annual cost
Replacement pool	\$562,421	\$1,380,043	(\$817,622)

Facility	Annual Revenue	Annual operating	Net annual cost
Aquatics (consultant)	\$1,325,883	\$2,220,802	(\$894,919)
Aquatics (low)	\$1,587,714	\$2,189,595	(\$601,881)
Aquatics (mid)	\$1,868,255	\$2,189,595	(\$321,340)
Aquatics (high)	\$1,868,255	\$1,742,437	\$125,818

Q: Does that include paying off the building?

A: No. Here’s what the charts look like for the first 20 years, including the cost of debt. Essentially, the larger aquatics facility would cost between \$269,000 and \$1.3 million more per year until the debt is paid.

Facility	Annual Revenue	Annual operating	Debt payment	Annual cost including debt
Replacement pool	\$562,421	\$1,380,043	\$1,109,392	(\$1,927,014)

Facility	Annual Revenue	Annual operating	Debt payment	Annual cost including debt	Additional cost beyond replacement pool
Aquatics	\$1,325,883	\$2,220,802	\$2,321,725	(\$3,216,644)	(\$1,289,630)
Aquatics (low)	\$1,587,714	\$2,189,595	\$2,321,725	(\$2,923,606)	(\$996,592)
Aquatics (mid)	\$1,868,255	\$2,189,595	\$2,321,725	(\$2,643,065)	(\$716,051)
Aquatics (high)	\$1,868,255	\$1,742,437	\$2,321,725	(\$2,195,907)	(\$268,893)

Q: What about the economic benefits of the pool? Do they help offset the costs?

A: Based on the experience in Christiansburg, the larger facility could create benefits in excess of \$3 million. While some of that would be taxes and help the city with the cost, some of it will be spending in the community on hotels, food, shopping, museums, etc. Estimated indirect spending would include things like hiring additional servers at restaurants, buying more goods to sell, etc.

Facility	Annual direct impact	Annual indirect impact
Replacement pool	\$50,000	\$100,000
Aquatics competition	\$3,324,540	\$6,649,080

Q: Are there other ways to fund this or partners?

A: Yes. For example, Virginia Tech is a partner in the facility in Christiansburg. City officials have had preliminary talks with neighboring localities, educational institutions and military installations to see if they are interested. We expect to continue those discussions.

Q: When will you know?

A: We’re honestly not sure. Until we know if we are going forward, we can’t really get commitments. There could also be a dedicate hotel tax or fee that covers annual expenses or bond payments.

Q: What’s the time frame?

A: It will take up to 4 years to build and open the pool once a decision is made. City Council has not scheduled a vote and is studying the potential and gathering input.

Q: What is the bottom-line cost? Is it worth the tax dollars?

A: There isn’t a guarantee of costs. These are the range of estimates developed so far. Some of the benefits are of the replacement pool. Other amenities will benefit the public as well. Many speakers suggested a learn-to-swim for all young children in partnership with the city schools, to acquaint children with water and reduce accidental drownings. The current pools don’t have enough space to accommodate that. One speaker highlighted a study that showed children to learn to swim at a

young age (3-5 years old) reach physical, social and oral developmental milestones at a younger age than their peers. (Two such sources include Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Griffith University noted in Science Daily.)

Q: Where would the pool go?

A: Current thinking is that it should be in Coliseum Central, close to the coliseum and convention center. That would allow shared parking, use of the other facilities for related activities and provide convenience for hotels and restaurants.

Q: Doesn't that spot take up the coliseum parking?

A: That spot, and another currently used for parking, have always been slated for future development. The city has been acquiring land nearby and can shift surface parking lots. If both sites are developed, it likely would require a parking garage.

Q: Who will manage the center if we build it?

A: That's not decided. Some cities manage their facilities and others contract with private operators.

Q: Who else is looking at doing this in our region?

A: Williamsburg-James City and Chesapeake have both discussed concepts, but neither is moving forward as far as we know. We believe the market will only allow one to succeed.

Q: What will it look like?

A: We won't commission a design until/unless we make a decision to go forward, but a consultant showed some models of what it might look like.



Also, see this video for a 3-D view: <https://youtu.be/Qki0pMJC2zI>

Q: Will this be a “green” building?

A: We haven't gotten to that level of detail yet, but we do build all of our buildings as environmentally-friendly as possible.

View the city's full presentation at: <http://www.hampton.gov/Archive.aspx?ADID=2836>

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