

Staff Report

To: MacPac – August 6, 2020 meeting

From: Parks and Rec Director: Susan Muir

Parks and Rec Managers: Anne Lane, Steve Ganzer, Katie Noyd & Rob Porter

Date: July 30, 2020

Subject: Space needs for Parks and Rec joint facility

Background:

This discussion is to review the type of amenities outlined in the recommendations on pages 55-59 from [Phase I](#) of this project.

On January 6, 2020 the City of McMinnville completed what is known as Phase I of the master planning project for city recreation facilities. The Council direction at that time broadened the scope to add the Library as well as municipal office space into phase II. As such, more work has been done on the 3 parks and rec facilities whereas the Library and other spaces will be brought into the process with the same type of analysis as part of the current phase.

The Phase I recommendation was developed by a national consulting group using public feedback, facility expertise, national trends and staff input. It was also considered a feasibility study with the expectation that additional refinement, input and guidance would be a part of future phases. Now is the opportunity for MacPac to review the recommendation and determine if any refinements or changes need to be made. It is important to note that there are many steps involved in a master planning process for municipal facilities. Each step provides an opportunity to adjust, receive input, make necessary changes and continue on a path ultimately towards construction. Moving from feasibility study to conceptual master planning are only the beginning of many steps. This part of the process is to continue to refine community wants and desires for amenities. Other factors, most notably public involvement and budget, should and will ultimately impact design and amenities at later phases of the process.

At the meeting on August 6, staff will present the amenity table below and walk through columns moving from left to right; the City's current conditions, the Phase I recommendation and then the staff recommendation if/where it differs from the Phase I recommendation from the consultant. The numbers found in the left column of the table below (items 1-17) correlate with the numbers found on pages 55-59 of the phase I report.

MacPac will need to weigh in and formulate their own recommendation that will go out for public comment and input and be used for further discussions related to space planning and site selection.

Because of the Covid-19 restrictions on travel, group sizes and facility shut downs, staff has attached descriptions and photos from McMinnville's as well as other facilities to give some visual ideas of spaces. In addition, staff has reached out to a few MacPac representatives that may have a particular interest (for example the Swim Club, School District and Pickleball Club) and additional materials are attached at the end of the packet from those groups if they submitted materials. Because the City has more formal relationships with these 3 groups, we have offered some time for them to speak briefly at the meeting on the 6th if they would like. We realize there are many other users of the spaces currently and those groups will be invited in during public involvement phases and in additional ways if MacPac requests that.

Staff has also set up a folder on the online message board (macpac.freeforums.net) for you to post any questions you have about the amenities before the meeting. Posting them ahead of time will give staff time to be prepared to answer them at the meeting. After the August 6th meeting, staff will follow up by sending MacPac members an online survey and open up another chat board for your discussion. As with the DEI chatboard, all comments will be visible to the public and will be considered a part of the public record. Here is the process for this discussion:

1. July 30 – staff report and information sent to MacPac and posted online. Chatboard set up for any comments or questions for the August 6th meeting.
2. August 6 – presentation on materials and information from this report and Q & A for MacPac
3. August 7 – New chatboard set up for any additional questions or discussion from MacPac.
4. August 7 – link sent to MacPac for online survey
5. The results of the online survey will be brought back to MacPac at a future date for discussion.

Page	Phase I Item	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
6	1	Competitive Pool / Lap pool* (Multi-Purpose)	75' x 56' (4,200 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, rope swing, seating for 380	25 yard x 25 meter (~6,150 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, small climbing wall, possibly a drop slide, seating for 400-500	Stretch 25 yard (~8,000 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, small climbing wall, possibly a drop slide, seating for 400-500
8	2	Warm Water / Leisure Pool	2,160 sq. ft. (60' x 36') 5 lanes, gradual multi-step entry	~4,000 sq. ft. includes 4 lap lanes, slides, interactive play, hot tub, therapeutic area, zero depth entry (gradual slope entry with increasing water depth into pool)	Same as Phase I Recommendation
15	3	Multi-Purpose Party Rooms	630 sq. ft.	2 rooms, 300 sq. ft. each	Same as Phase I Recommendation
16	4	Gymnasium*	8874 sq. ft. with one 45' x 64' basketball court, one volleyball court, three pickleball courts, seating for 200 on the floor and 103 fixed seats on track level	14,000 sq. ft. area divisible into 2 areas by a drop curtain, each with a 50' x 84' basketball court or volleyball court and tip and roll bleachers	16,500 sq. ft. area divisible into 2 areas by a drop curtain. 12 drop down basketball hoops allowing for up to 4 basketball courts, 4 volleyball courts, 6 pickleball courts, 2 futsal courts and tip and roll bleachers for 200
20	5	Walk / Jog Track	7'6" wide runs perimeter of the gym	8-9' wide runs perimeter of the gym	Same as Phase I Recommendation

21	6	Gymnastic s Room	2,738 sq. ft., 8'6" high ceiling	7,500 sq. ft., 20' high ceiling	Same as Phase I Recommendation
23	7	Weight / Cardio Space	1,250 sq. ft.	4,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.
25	8	Functional Training	0	1,500 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation
26	9	Group Exercise	2 rooms total 3,936 sq. ft.	2,000 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation
27	10	Fitness Studio	0	1,000 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.
28	11	Multi- Purpose Room	3 rooms total 4,207 sq. ft.	1,600 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation
29	12	Catering Kitchen*	750 sq. ft.	300 sq. ft.	May not need if co-located by the Senior Center, otherwise, same as Phase I Recommendation
30	13	Crafts / Classroom s	2 rooms total 2,132 sq. ft.	2 rooms at 1,000 sq. ft. each	Same as Phase I Recommendation
31	14	Communi ty Flex Space	0	1,000 sq. ft.	0
32	15	After School / Summer Youth Center*	0	1,800 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation
33	16	Drop In Child Watch Area	0	800 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation
34	17	Indoor Playgroun d	2 rooms total 2,625 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.	2,000 sq. ft.
35		Information provided by McMinnville Swim Club			

Staff would like to point out that some of the uses that currently exist at our centers were not included in the phase I recommendation and staff concurs with that recommendation at this time. MacPac may choose to request further discussion on any of these. Examples are:

- Public meeting and event spaces/rentals (other than recreation party rooms in #3 above)
- Auditorium (currently occurs in the Community Center gym)
- A racquetball court

	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Aquatics				
1.	Competitive Pool / Lap Pool (Multi-Purpose)	75' x 56' (4,200 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, rope swing, seating for 380	25 yard x 25 meter (~6,150 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, small climbing wall, possibly a drop slide, seating for 400-500	Stretch 25 yard (~8,000 sq. ft.), 1 meter diving board, small climbing wall, possibly a drop slide, seating for 400-500

Current Conditions

75' x 56' with eight 7' lanes (center to center). Surface area is 4,200 sq. ft. with a perimeter of 262' and 206,400 gallons of water. The pool is equipped with a 1-meter diving board, basketball hoop and a rope swing. Patron capacity if 175. The water temperature is 82-83 degrees.



Phase I Recommendation

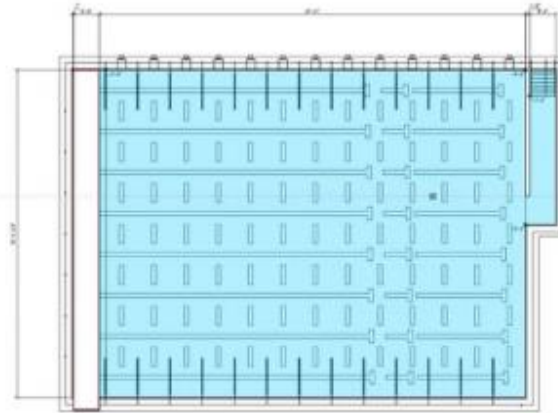
25 yard x 25 meter pool for competitive/lap swimming with one 1-meter diving board at one end, a small climbing wall, and possibly a drop slide (6,150 sq. ft. of water surface area). There would also need to be raised seating for 400-500 spectators. Approximate size 15,000 sq. ft. The pool space must include a storage area that opens to the deck (400 sq. ft.). It is anticipated that a pool mechanical space of approximately 1,000 sq. ft. will be needed.



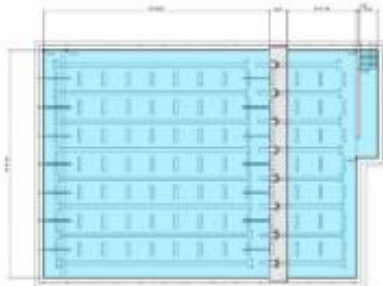
Staff Recommendation

Stretch 25-Yard Pool

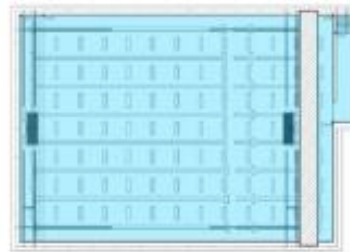
- 8,000 square foot pool @ 104' x 75'
- 5,500 square foot deck
- 3'6" – 9'6" water depth
- 12 - 13 cross course lanes
 - Quantity depends on lane width
- Water temperature: 80-82 degrees
- Spectator seating capacity: 300
- Bulkhead
- 1 competition water polo course
- 2 practice water polo courses
- Diving is an option



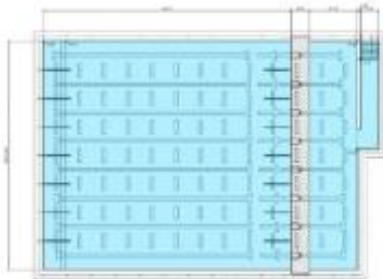
Stretch 25-Yard Pool – Fields of Play



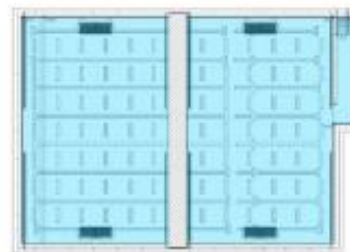
Swimming – 25Y competition course



Water Polo - NFHS championship course



Swimming - 25M competition course



Water Polo - simultaneous practice

	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Aquatics				
2.	Warm Water / Leisure Pool	2,160 sq. ft. (60' x 36'), 5 lanes, gradual multi-step entry	~4,000 sq. ft. includes 4 lap lanes, slides, interactive play, hot tub, therapeutic area, zero depth entry (gradual slope entry with increasing water depth into pool)	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

60' x 36' with five 6.5' lanes. Surface area is 2,160 sq. ft. with a perimeter of 188' and 66,875 gallons of water. The pool is equipped with an automatic pool lift, small water slide and a basketball hoop. Patron capacity is 90. The water temperature is 86-87 degrees.

Spa Pool – 13' x 9' and 4' of depth. Surface area is 117 sq. ft. 2,000 gallons of water with a patron capacity of 10. The spa is equipped with an automatic pool lift. The water temperature is 101-103 degrees.



Phase I Recommendation

A space of approximately 9,000 sq. ft. that includes a free form leisure pool (~4,000 sq. ft.) with 4 lap lanes, slides, interactive play features, current channel, a small on deck spa/hot tub and zero depth entry. A small portion of the leisure pool will also be designated for use as a therapy area. There should also be a co-ed sauna that is accessible from the pool deck. The pool space must include a storage area that opens to the deck (400 sq. ft.), offices for the pool manager and supervisor (120 sq. ft. each) and a space for a lifeguard/first-aid room (300 sq. ft., that will be shared with the competitive/lap pool as well). It is anticipated that a pool mechanical space of ~1,000 sq. ft. will be needed.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



Potential Leisure Pool Amenities

Current Channel and Vortex



Vortex close-up



Interactive Play Features



Climbing Walls



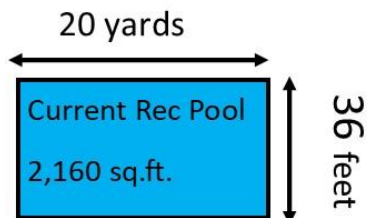
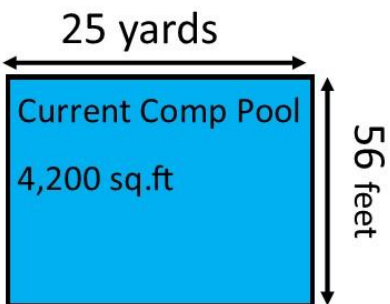
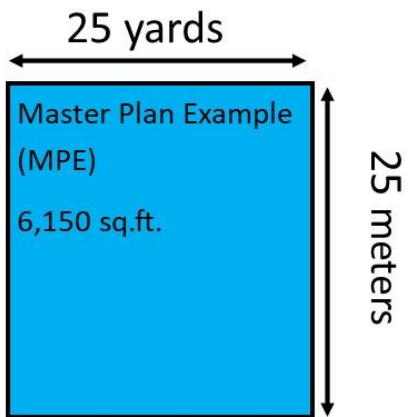
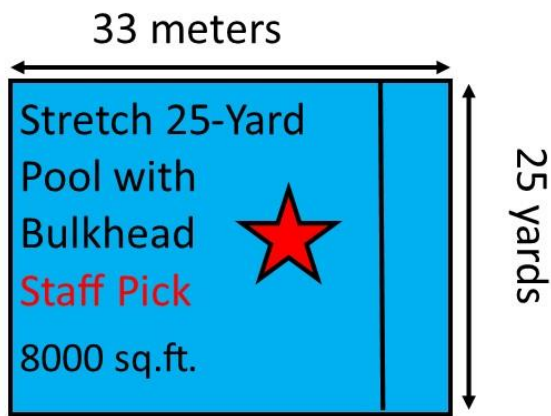
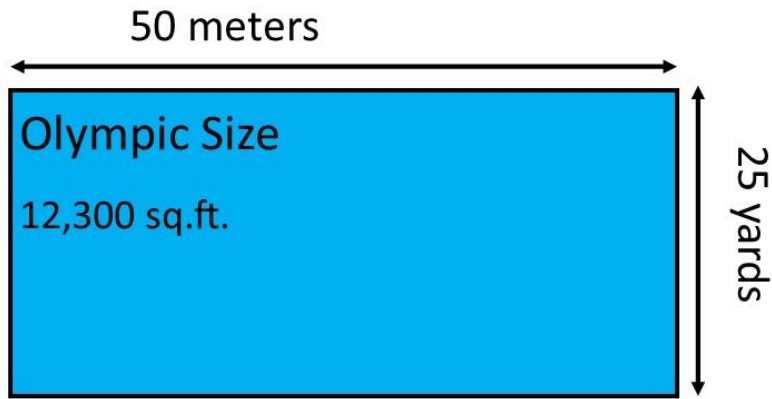
Water Slides

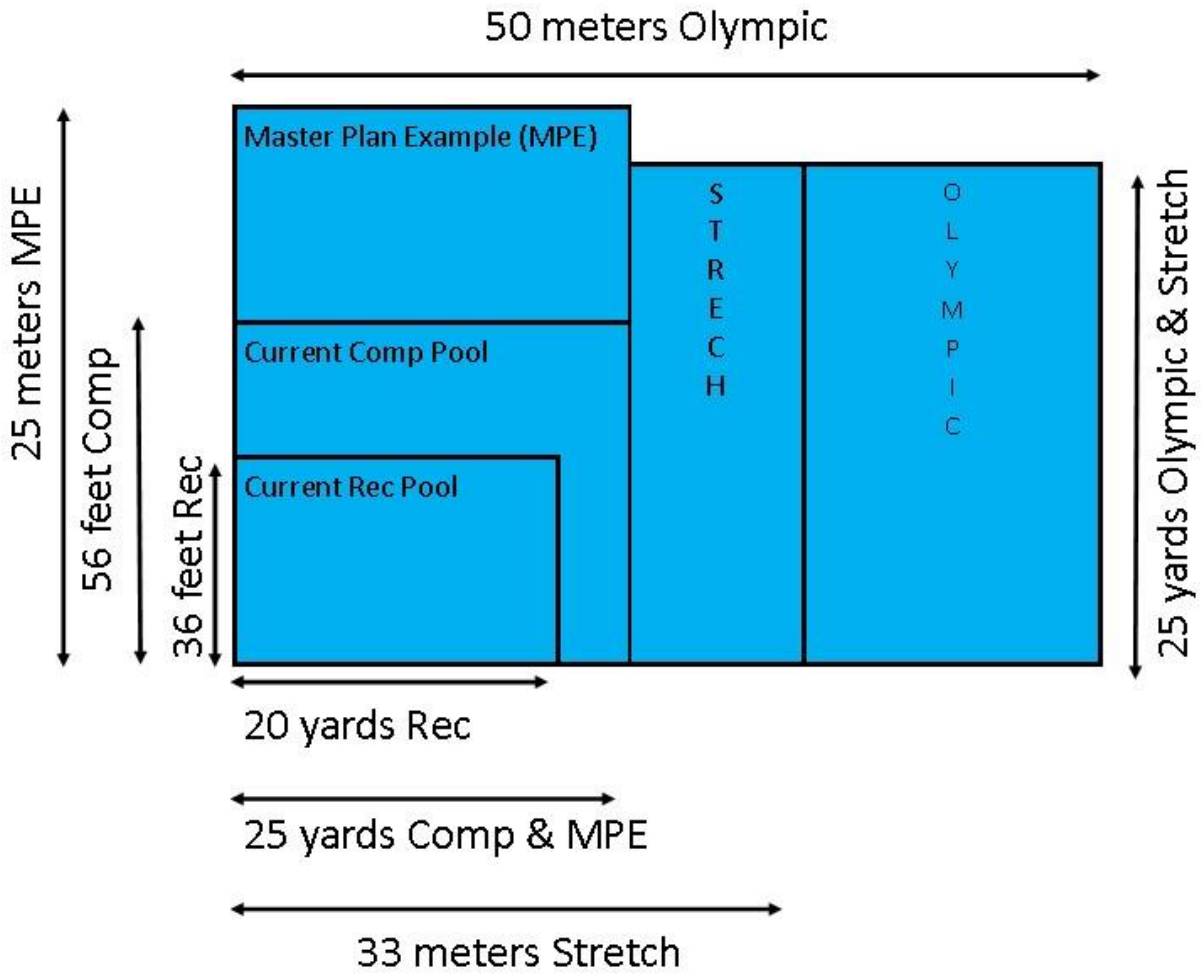


Cool Stuff



Multi-Purpose Pool Sizes





	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
<u>Aquatics</u>				
3.	Multi-Purpose Party Rooms	630 sq. ft.	2 rooms, 300 sq. ft. each	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

Main room is 630 sq. ft. of multi-purpose space with a small sink and refrigerator. The space has adjoining storage closets, restroom and staff changing rooms. Space is also used as a staff break room.



Phase I Recommendation

Two rooms ~300 sq. ft. each that can be combined into one larger space. These rooms will be utilized for small classes, meetings and birthday parties.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
4.	Gymnasium	8,874 sq. ft. with one 45' x 64' basketball court, one volleyball court, three pickleball courts, seating for 200 on the floor and 103 fixed seats on track level	14,000 sq. ft. area divisible into 2 areas by a drop curtain, each space with a 50' x 84' basketball court or volleyball court and tip and roll bleachers	16,500 sq. ft. area divisible into 2 areas by a drop curtain. 12 drop down basketball hoops allowing for up to 4 basketball courts, 4 volleyball courts, 6 pickleball courts, 2 futsal courts and tip and roll bleachers for 200

Current Conditions

One small basketball court (45' x 64', full floor is 8,874 sq. ft.). Floor space and versatility in the gym is hindered by the stage that is permanently set up in the north end of the gym. The only fixed seating (103 seats) is on the track level. There is limited space for floor level seating on the sidelines (~200 seats). 1 volleyball court can be set up if standards available. 3 pickleball courts can be set up with the stage in place. 1 small futsal court could be set up if goals available.

Note: Handball/racquetball court use: 158.5 hours (6 hours/week) from July-Dec 2019 by 28 unique parties. (Master Plan Document did not include this amenity in their recommendation)

Note: Through a reciprocal use agreement with the school district the following gymnasiums are available for Parks and Recreation indoor court sports:

- Patton MS – A Gym (8,624 sq. ft.) and B Gym (7,644 sq. ft.) total 16,268 sq. ft., used for drop-in basketball, baseball evaluations, and clinics. Available Sat/Sun only.
- Duniway MS – B Gym, used for adult drop-in volleyball, volleyball league, and basketball league. Available some weeknights (Sept-Nov, Mar-May) and Sat/Sun. A Gym has not been used, but has some limited availability on Sat/Sun.
- Buel & Memorial – Youth Basketball*
- Grandhaven – Youth Basketball*, Over 30 Basketball (Tue/Thu 6:30-8pm during the school year)
- Columbus – Youth Basketball*, baseball evaluations (2 sessions in April)
- Newby – Youth Basketball* (practices only), Special Olympics basketball and volleyball practices
- Wascher – Youth Basketball* (practices only, but could play games if needed)

*Youth Basketball uses gyms Mon-Thu evenings and Sat 8:30am-2pm Nov-Jan



Phase I Recommendation

A space that is ~14,000 sq. ft., and divisible into 2 gym areas (each with 50' x 84' basketball court or full-sized volleyball court) by a drop curtain. The gym should be able to be set up for a variety of uses including basketball, volleyball and pickleball, and seating should be by tip and roll bleachers. A large storage area (700 sq. ft.) would be attached to this space.

Staff Recommendation

16,500 sq. ft. space (110' x 150') with 12 backboards/baskets that can be independently raised to the ceiling by an electric motor, multiple in-floor volleyball standard/pole sleeves, and portable equipment would allow for multiple court sports:

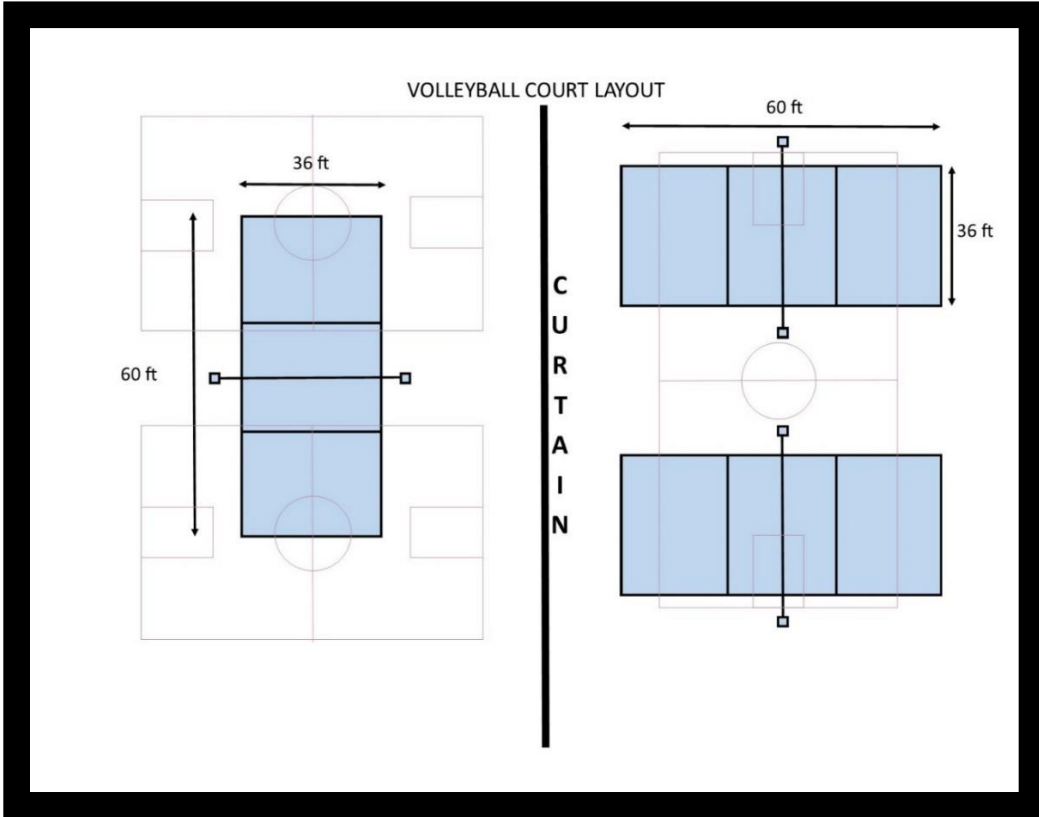
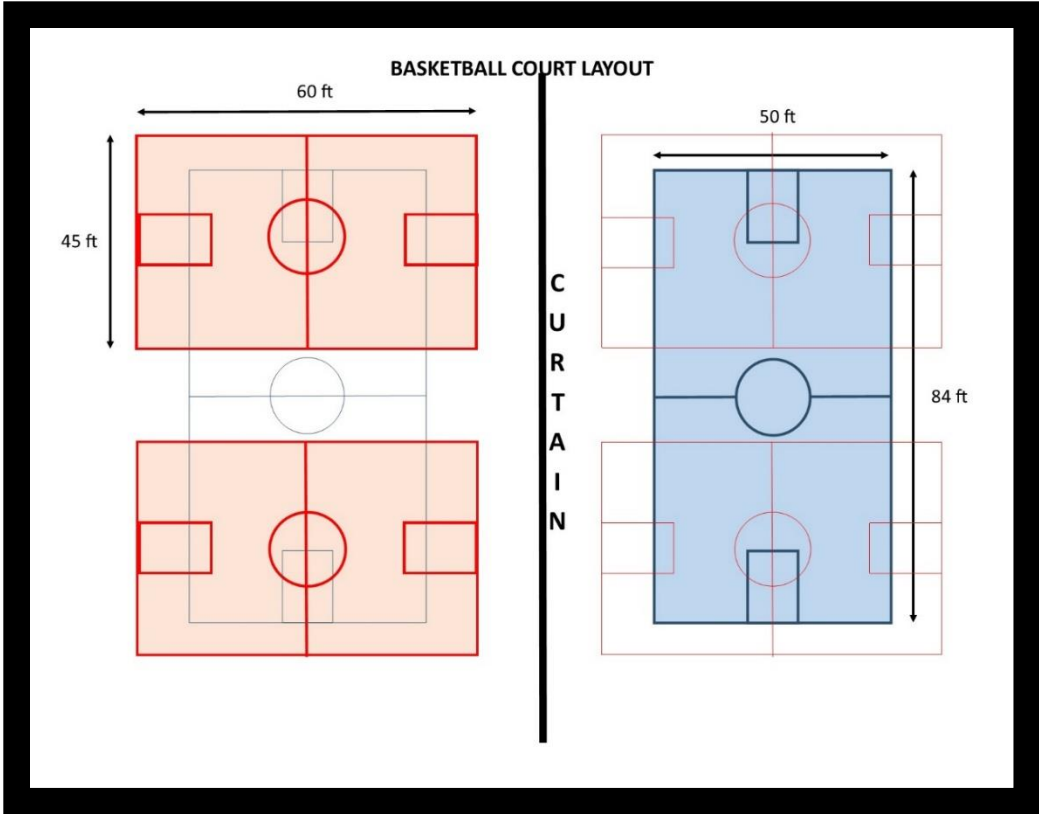
- 2 basketball courts (50' x 84'), 4 practice/youth courts (45' x 60')
- 4 volleyball courts (36' x 60')
- 6 pickleball courts (20' x 44')
- 2 futsal courts (50' x 84')
- Space could also be configured with a combination of activities using a drop curtain

Spectator/seating capacity – The focus of the gym space will be on providing multiple and varied athletic activities for members of the community. Seating for 200 spectators (4 basketball games) using tip and roll bleachers allows for the greatest versatility of the space.

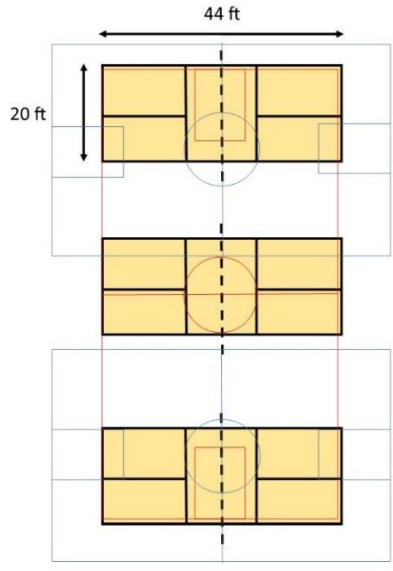


Note: the following diagrams are not scale

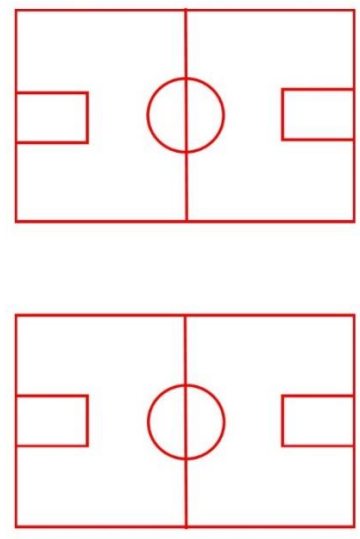
Note: futsal and regulation basketball courts are the same size



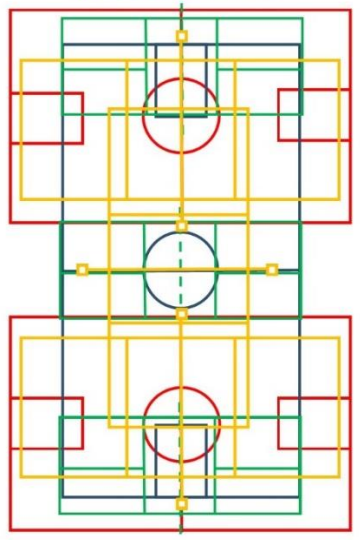
PICKLEBALL COURT LAYOUT



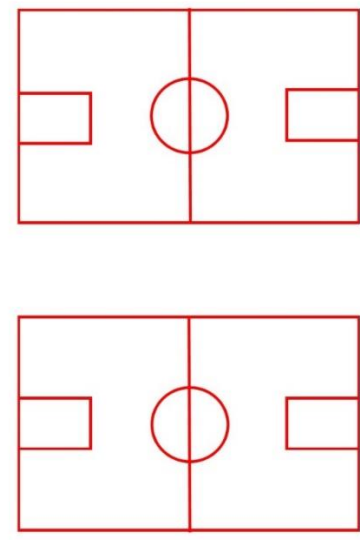
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REGULATION BASKETBALL/FUTSAL
PRACTICE BASKETBALL
VOLLEYBALL PICKLEBALL



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	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
5.	Walk / Jog Track	7'6" wide runs perimeter of the gym	8-9' wide runs perimeter of the gym	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

7'6" wide elevated track that runs the perimeter of the gym. Track is 1/13 of a mile.

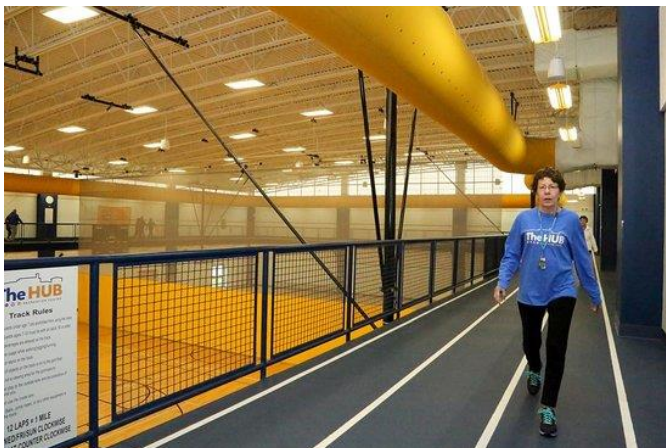


Phase I Recommendation

8-9' wide elevated track that runs around the perimeter of the gym or other spaces that can be used for walking or jogging. Approximately 5,250 sq. ft.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
6.	Gymnastics Room	2,738 sq. ft. with 8'6" high ceiling	7,500 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

2,739 sq. ft. with 8'6" high ceiling. Storage space is located in another location. All equipment belongs to instructors. Space is also used as a meeting room causing equipment to be set up and taken down and moved.



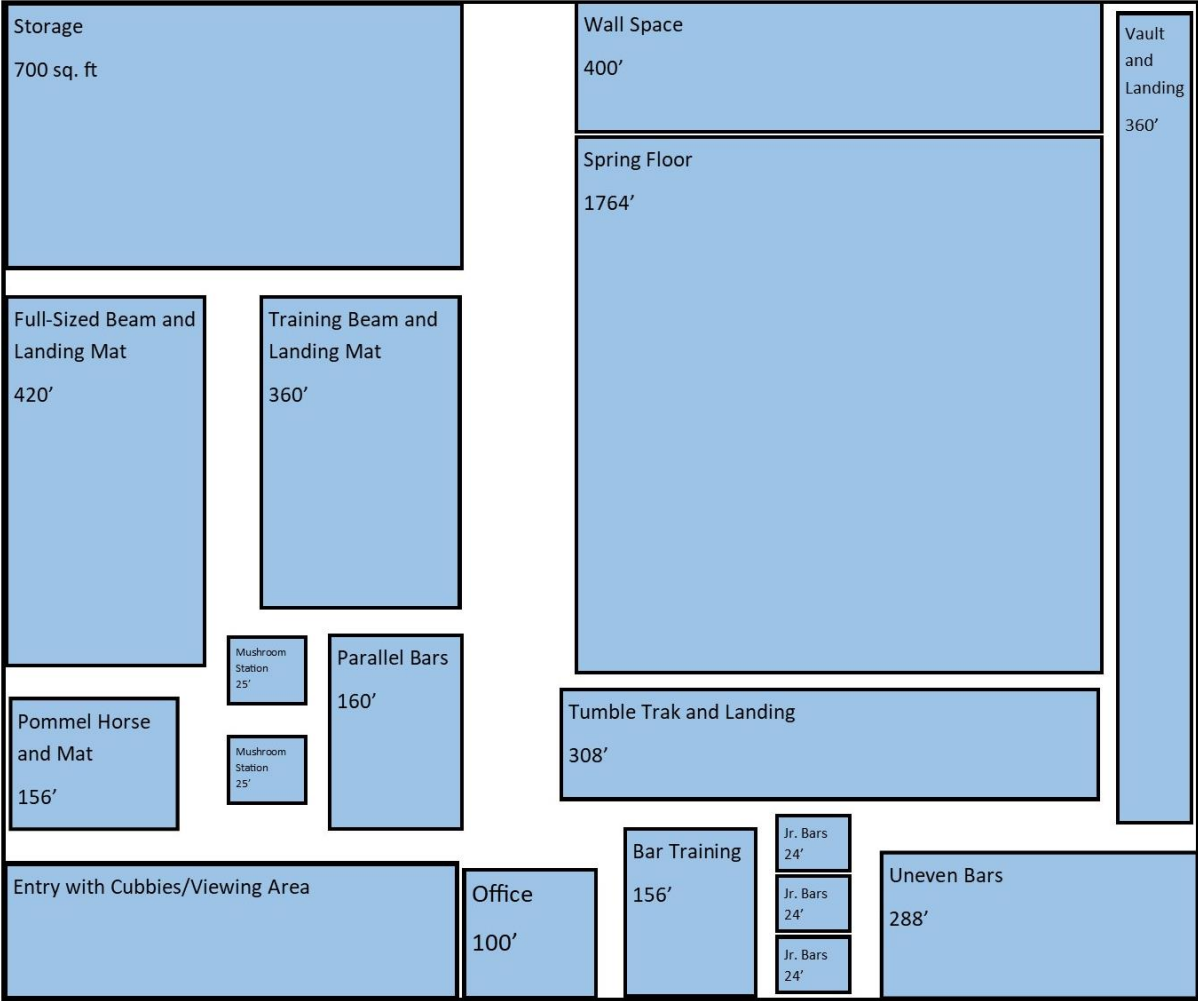
Phase I Recommendation

~7,500 sq. ft. with spring floor and foam pit area. Ceiling height should be at least 20'. There should also be an entry area with cubbies, a viewing area and a small office (100 sq. ft.).

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation





	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
7.	Weight / Cardio Space	1,250 sq. ft.	4,000 sq. ft.	5,000 sq. ft.

Current Conditions

1,250 sq. ft. space with 10 cardio machines, 13 weights stations and free weights area.



Phase I Recommendation

~4,000 sq. ft. with a stretching area, free weights, selectorized machines and cardiovascular equipment. A small storage (300 sq. ft.) should also be attached. A small station for a weight/cardio area supervisor will need to be included as well as an office for a full-time fitness manager (120 sq. ft.).

Staff Recommendation

~5,000 sq. ft. with a stretching area, free weights, selectorized machines, and cardiovascular equipment. A small storage (300 sq. ft.) should also be attached. A small station for a weight/cardio area supervisor will need to be included as well as an office for a full-time fitness manager (120 sq. ft.).





	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
8.	Functional Training	0	1,500 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

Does not currently exist

Phase I Recommendation

~1,500 sq. ft. for a variety of functional training purposes (TRX, Crossfit, etc.) and space designated for personal training.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
9.	Group Exercise	2 rooms total 3,936 sq. ft.	2,000 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

Gymnasium used for group exercise at 2,880 sq. ft. as well as a room in the basement at 1,056 sq. ft.



Note: additional group exercise space is located at the Senior Center at 570 sq. ft. and the dining room at 1,820 sq. ft.

Phase I Recommendation

~2,000 sq. ft. that can be used for fitness, martial arts, or other class instruction. The room must have its own sound system and a floating wood floor.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Active Space				
10.	Fitness Studio	0	1,000 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.

Current Conditions

Does not currently exist

Phase I Recommendation

1,000 sq. ft. for specialized classes such as yoga, Pilates, and other activities.

Staff Recommendation

1,500 sq. ft. for larger group sizes to participate in specialized classes such as yoga, Pilates, and other activities.



Pinckneyville Park Community Recreation Center:
Dance Studio

	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Community Space				
11.	Multi-Purpose Room	3 rooms total 4,207 sq. ft.	1,600 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

1 room on the main floor at 1,479 sq. ft. and 2 rooms on the second floor at 924 sq. ft. and 1,804 sq. ft.

Note: The Senior Center has a dining room at 1,820 sq. ft., and 6 other rooms ranging in size from 240 sq. ft. to 570 sq. ft.



Phase I Recommendation

~ 1,600 sq. ft. that can be divided into two smaller rooms for multiple functions. Connected to the community room would be an outdoor patio area.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
<u>Community Space</u>				
12.	Catering Kitchen	750 sq. ft.	300 sq. ft.	May not need if co-located by the Senior Center, otherwise, same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

750 sq. ft. kitchen

Note: The Senior Center has a commercial kitchen at 500 sq. ft.



Phase I Recommendation

A small catering kitchen that is attached to the multipurpose room and has outside access for caterers. Approximately 300 sq. ft.

Staff Recommendation

May not need if co-located by the Senior Center. Otherwise, same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Community Space				
13.	Crafts / Classrooms	2 rooms total 2,132 sq. ft.	2 rooms at 1,000 sq. ft. each	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

2 rooms, 1 at 1,006 sq. ft. and 1 at 1,306 sq.ft. 1 of the rooms is currently rented to McMinnville Playschool on an annual basis.

Note: The Senior Center has 5 rooms for a total of 1,908 sq. ft. ranging in size from 240 sq. ft. to 468 sq. ft.

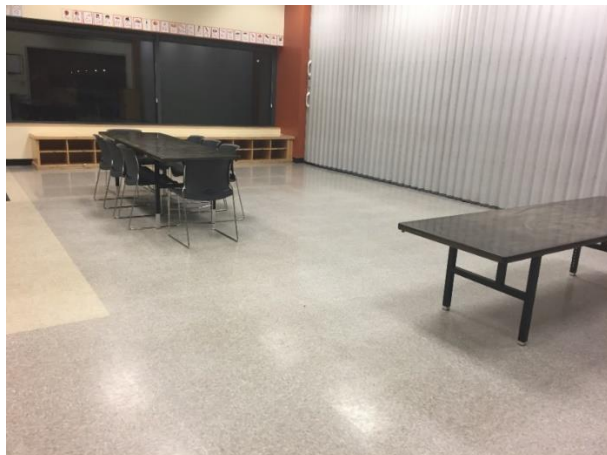


Phase I Recommendation

2 rooms of ~ 1,000 sq. ft. each to be used for a variety of arts and crafts or other programs.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
<u>Community Space</u>				
14.	Community Flex Space	0	1,000 sq. ft.	0

Current Conditions

Does not currently exist

Phase I Recommendation

~1,000 sq. ft. with a TV, lounge and computer area. Connected to this space could be the game room and an outdoor patio area. This area could be used by youth, families or seniors.

Staff Recommendation

No community flex space is recommended

	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Community Space				
15.	After School / Summer Youth Center	0	1,800 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

Does not currently exist

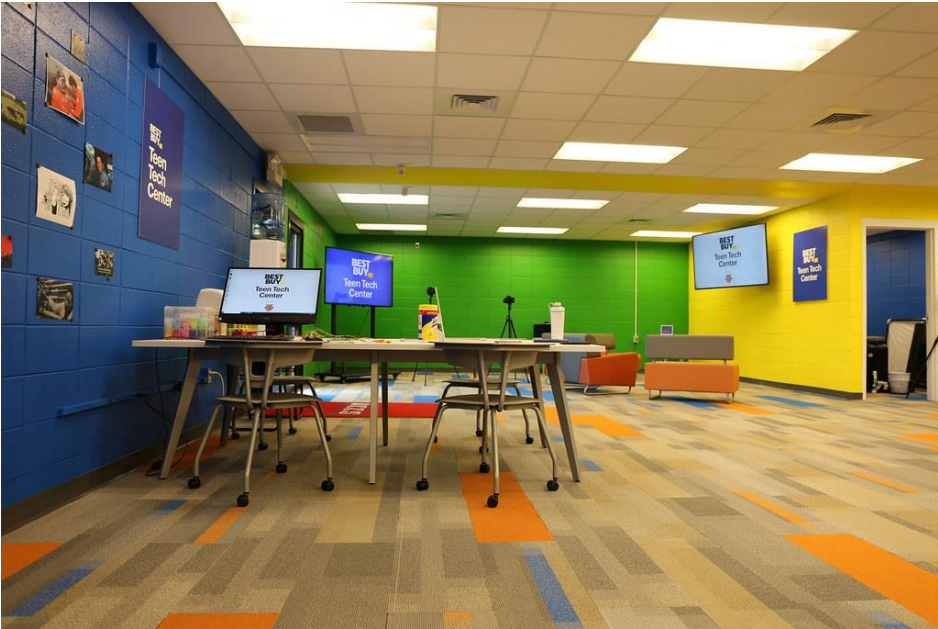
Phase I Recommendation

~1,800 sq. ft. utilized for youth programs, camps and other uses. This space should be divisible into two smaller rooms.

Staff Recommendation

~1,800 sq. ft. utilized for youth programs, camps and other uses. This space should be divisible into two smaller rooms. Need access to outdoor space.

Note: Use of space and space need are dependent upon location of facility.



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Community Space				
16.	Drop In Child Watch Area	0	800 sq. ft.	Same as Phase I Recommendation

Current Conditions

Does not currently exist

Phase I Recommendation

~800 sq. ft. designed for drop-in babysitting. A downsized unisex restroom (50 sq. ft.) must be included as well as access to an outdoor fenced-in play space.

Staff Recommendation

Same as Phase I Recommendation



	Amenity	Current Conditions	Phase I Recommendation	Staff Recommendation
Community Space				
17.	Indoor Playground	2 rooms total 2,625 sq. ft.	1,500 sq. ft.	2,000 sq. ft.

Current Conditions

Tiny Tots Indoor Playspace is 2,625 sq. ft. with pre-school play apparatus suitable for up to age 5 years and a cubbie area.

Phase I Recommendation

~1,500 sq. ft. with pre-school play apparatus and theme play space geared towards pre-school and early elementary youth. The space will need a cubbies area.

Staff Recommendation

~2,000 sq. ft. with pre-school play apparatus and theme play space geared towards pre-school and early elementary youth. The space will need a cubbies area and could be connected to a party room / classroom.



The following information was provided by
the McMinnville Swim Club



[Pay My Bill >](#)

HEART HEALTH	MIND & MOOD	PAIN	STAYING HEALTHY	CANCER	DISEASES & CONDITIONS	MEN'S HEALTH	WOMEN'S HEALTH	LICENSING
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Harvard Health Letter

A prescription for better health: go alfresco

Published: July, 2010

Spending time outside might have some health benefits — and the 'greening' of exercise might have some more.

Summer is the time when the outdoors beckons. We go to the beach in droves, have picnics and barbecues, paddle and fish and swim. Some hike, others bike, and a few do both — although not at the same time.

But these good times in the out of doors are really an exception to the rule, which is that most of us spend the vast majority of our time inside. According to one government estimate, the average American spends 90% of his or her life indoors, and as we get older we become even more inclined not to venture out.

When we do, there's a gantlet of precautions: slather on the sunscreen; take it easy — or head indoors — if air quality is bad; watch out for ticks, mosquitoes, and other creatures that might bite. It's all very well-meaning but it also reinforces indoor ways.

So it's back into the bunker — but that might not be good for you. The study results are ticking up: spending time outdoors seems to have discernible benefits for physical and mental health. Granted, some are merely by association and can be achieved by other means, perhaps while indoors, but often only with a good deal more trouble and expense. Here are five potential benefits of spending more time outdoors:

1. Your vitamin D levels will go up

Vitamin D is called the sunshine vitamin because sunlight hitting the skin begins the circuitous process — the liver and kidneys get involved — that eventually leads to the creation of the biologically active form of the vitamin. Over all, research is showing that many vitamins, while necessary, don't have such great disease-fighting powers, but vitamin D may prove to be the exception. Epidemiologic studies are suggesting it may have protective effects against everything from osteoporosis to cancer to depression to heart attacks and stroke. Even by conventional standards, many Americans don't have enough vitamin D circulating in their bodies. The good news is that you'll make all the vitamin D you need if you get outside a few times a week during these summer days and expose your arms and legs for 10 to 15 minutes. Of course, it has to be sunny out.

There are some snags. Vitamin D production is affected by age (people ages 65 and over generate about a fourth as much as people in their 20s) and skin color (African Americans have, on average, about half the levels of vitamin D in their blood as white Americans).

Another problem: sunscreens are most effective at blocking the ultraviolet B (UVB) light, the part of the spectrum that causes sunburn, but UVB also happens to be the kind of light that kick-starts the generation of vitamin D in the skin.

The either-or of sunscreen and sunshine vitamin has stirred up a lot of controversy and debate between pro-sunscreen dermatologists and the vitamin D camp. But there is plenty of middle ground here: some limited sun exposure on short walks and the like, supplemented with vitamin D pills if necessary, and liberal use of sunscreen when you are out for extended periods, particularly during the middle of the day.

2. You'll get more exercise (especially if you're a child)

You don't need to be outside to be active: millions of people exercise indoors in gyms or at home on treadmills and elliptical trainers. Nor is being outside a guarantee of activity. At the beach on a summer day most people are in various angles of repose.

Still, there's no question that indoor living is associated with being sedentary, particularly for children, while being outdoors is associated with activity. According to some surveys, American children spend an average of 6 hours a day with electronic media (video games, television, and so on), time that is spent mainly indoors and sitting down. British researchers used Global Positioning System devices and accelerometers, which

sense movement, to track the activity of 1,000 children. They found that the children were more than doubly active when they were outside.

Adults can go to the gym. Many prefer the controlled environment there. But if you make getting outside a goal, that should mean less time in front of the television and computer and more time walking, biking, gardening, cleaning up the yard, and doing other things that put the body in motion.

3. You'll be happier (especially if your exercise is 'green')

Light tends to elevate people's mood, and unless you live in a glass house or are using a light box to treat seasonal affective disorder, there's usually more light available outside than in. Physical activity has been shown to relax and cheer people up, so if being outside replaces inactive pursuits with active ones, it might also mean more smiles and laughter.

Researchers at the University of Essex in England are advancing the notion that exercising in the presence of nature has added benefit, particularly for mental health. Their investigations into "green exercise," as they are calling it, dovetails with research showing benefits from living in proximity to green, open spaces.

In 2010 the English scientists reported results from a meta-analysis of their own studies that showed just five minutes of green exercise resulted in improvements in self-esteem and mood.

Mind you, none of the studies were randomized controlled trials. The intuitive appeal of green exercise is its strength, not the methodological rigor of the research supporting it. It's hard to imagine how a stroll in a pretty park wouldn't make us feel better than a walk in a drab setting.


4. Your concentration will improve

Richard Louv coined the term "nature-deficit disorder" in his 2008 book *Last Child in the Woods*. It's a play on attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Researchers have, in fact, reported that children with ADHD seem to focus better after being outdoors. A study published in 2008 found that children with ADHD scored higher on a test of concentration after a walk through a park than after a walk through a residential neighborhood or downtown area. Other ADHD studies have also suggested that outdoor exercise could have positive effects on the condition. Truth be told, this research has been done in children, so it's a stretch to say it applies to adults, even those who have an ADHD diagnosis. But if you have trouble concentrating — as many do — you might see if some outdoor activity, the greener the better, helps.

5. You may heal faster

University of Pittsburgh researchers reported in 2005 that spinal surgery patients experienced less pain and stress and took fewer pain medications during their recoveries if they were exposed to natural light. An older study showed that the view out the window (trees vs. a brick wall) had an effect on patient recovery. Of course, windows and views are different than actually being outside, but we're betting that adding a little fresh air to the equation couldn't hurt and might help.

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Recreation MANAGEMENT

IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS FOR RECREATION, SPORTS AND FITNESS FACILITIES

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Parks

Planning, Programming and Staffing to Better Serve All Residents

By Chris Gelbach

As park managers strive to better serve their communities, the need for planning, programming and staffing that engages all constituencies equitably and inclusively has never been clearer.

For park districts, effectively achieving these goals often involves applying a broad definition of diversity that includes considerations such as race and ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, language, culture, national origin, religious and political beliefs, age and disability status.

Ava Holliday is a founding partner of the Avarna Group, which helps park districts, outdoors organizations and other clients develop and implement equity, inclusion, diversity and relevancy efforts. She often sees organizations, state parks and municipal parks start with this focus on diversity because they desire to both diversify their staff and appeal to a broader swath of the local populace.

"That's all well and good, except that it often comes from a place where they're not compelled to think about why historically—and today—there haven't been as many people of color or queer folks or disabled folks in their parks," Holliday said. "Leading with diversity isn't very effective, and we ask folks instead to lead with equity."

While recreation managers should certainly work to understand and welcome the diverse audiences they serve, understanding and dismantling the barriers preventing people from accessing and using their parks and programming is even more critical. "And then, once they get into the parks and start working for the parks, how can they feel included?" Holliday said. "And then diversity often follows."

Bringing Equity to Park Planning

Achieving equity in parks is impossible without effectively collecting and considering the input of traditionally underrepresented communities during the park-planning process. In many cases, this may require park districts to conduct dedicated outreach to learn the views of groups that may be less likely to respond to a general survey.

For instance, Houston conducted a Master Parks Plan Survey in 2014 that produced results indicating that most respondents wanted their neighborhoods and parks linked to biking and walking paths. The city has since embarked on an ambitious Bayou Greenways 2020 project that will ultimately create a 150-mile network of continuous hiking trails, bike paths and green space running throughout the city.

The 2014 survey received criticism, however, since Houston is a highly diverse and segregated city, yet roughly two-thirds of respondents were white and had household incomes of at least \$75,000. In response, the parks and rec department funded a study by researchers at Rice University that surveyed African-American and Latino neighborhoods on their priorities for the city's parks. The results found that park users in majority-minority neighborhoods were most interested in better maintained, safer local parks with more and better infrastructure, and less concerned about the improved connections between parks and neighborhoods that the greenways project will ultimately accomplish.

According to Holliday, because gathering community information for park planning is a long process, there are many steps along the way at which people can either be shut out or invited into the conversation. To make sure that all voices are represented during the public comment period, Holliday recommends that you:

1. Make sure that you truly know the community you serve and the demographics and history of the community. This will help you craft an engagement process that makes sense for those community members.
2. Understand the other barriers different populations in the community are facing, as well as the diverse ways in which different communities have historically wanted to be outside.
3. Create engagement tools that are culturally relevant by making sure the public comment period is clear and gives people multiple ways to engage in the process.
4. Disseminate the information about the project in a culturally relevant way.

"You want the information to be available not just online, not just through words, but if you can talk about it through pictures, different people talking about it, through the mail, through community meetings, that can be really helpful," Holliday said. "To whatever extent different languages are spoken in the community, make sure you can translate the materials. All of that is really important."

To make the public meetings themselves more accessible, Holliday recommends:

- Making sure they're not during business hours so people who work 9 to 5 can attend.
- Allowing families and children to attend.
- Providing a meal if budget allows in return for asking people to give up their dinner and family time.
- Being clear about next steps and how everyone's feedback from the meeting will be used.
- Giving attendees a way to stay informed as the process moves forward.

Holliday noted that her organization is currently working with The Wilderness Society on a community and stakeholder engagement toolkit that will be free and publicly available soon, and is specifically focused on ways to successfully get a broader range of people engaged in these public comment periods.

Engaging Underserved Communities

To effectively engage underserved populations in their communities, many park districts and related organizations are realizing the need for proactive outreach.

"What we found in the past sometimes with our community engagement was that we'd tend to get the same people who tend to have disposable time and money to attend our meetings and get their voices heard," said Lisa Goorjian, parks planning and operations program director for Metro, which oversees



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALI GOOLEY, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONA KOH, EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

17,000 acres of parks, trails and natural areas across the Portland metropolitan region.

As part of an effort to better reach underserved communities, Metro sometimes engages leaders of culturally specific organizations as contractors to provide knowledge and input about their communities. "We're definitely getting some perspectives we hadn't heard before and different community groups we hadn't heard from before," Goorjian said.

In building new relationships with these community groups, Goorjian suggests that parks organizations understand that building awareness, trust and rapport takes time—and therefore to schedule accordingly. To build these relationships more successfully, she also places a premium on providing consistent communication to these contacts from your organization.

"Community members value consistent stable relationships, and sometimes in government, we tend to work in technical areas," Goorjian said. "We're learning that our staff has to be flexible working with other staff across the different work teams, so we're not just passing off different community contacts from one team to the next."

To gain broader perspectives from the diverse communities it serves, East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), a system of public parks and trails in California's Alameda and Contra Costa counties, holds an annual Multicultural Community Leaders Roundtable. The event gathers dozens of community leaders from the Asian, Latino and African-American communities, who represent senior centers, health clinics, faith-based groups, media, chambers of commerce and other organizations from the region.

Building from this outreach, EBRPD started regular outings in 2014 called Multicultural Wellness Walks, working with some of these community leaders to plan the walks. The walks serve to introduce these varied communities, many of which are most familiar with city parks, to the district's larger, more faraway parks in natural settings that include shoreline, redwoods, and lake and hill environments.

"We are reaching out to groups that are not familiar with the parks, and may have some nervousness regarding going far out into big woods like the redwoods," said Mona Koh, community relations manager for EBRPD. "So as part of it, we very intentionally create a safe, fun and interconnected experience in nature for the diverse folks we bring in. We really emphasize safety, so our walks are always accompanied by our volunteer trail safety patrol that are trained in trails and first aid. The walks are always led by a naturalist and a health practitioner."

Some of the leaders from the roundtable events help to bring members from their communities to the walks, which happen five or six times a year. Koh estimates that each walk has average representation from four or five ethnic and religious groups, with roughly 60 percent of participants being Latino and then the other 40 percent comprising Asian (Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese), African-American and Middle Eastern (Indian, Pakistani and Iranian) groups.

To effectively engage underserved populations in their communities, many park districts and related organizations are realizing the need for proactive outreach.

After saying "good morning" in different languages, the groups head out for the walk, stopping along the way to make bird calls and engage in other activities like chi gong or Zumba. The groups also eat together at the end. Koh estimates that the first walks attracted 35 to 40 people, and they have grown increasingly popular, with the most recent outing attracting 150 people. The program is effective in exposing different groups to the EBRPD's regional parks that they might be unfamiliar with, while also helping to build bridges between communities.

When it comes to building stronger relationships between a parks department and a specific community for more detailed programming, an individualized approach is often preferred. Metro, for example, has partnered with individual culturally specific organizations to provide opportunities for communities of color and low-income residents to experience nature through its Partners in Nature program.

"The unique part of this program is that we work together with each organization to co-create programming that meets the needs of each specific community," said Goorjian. "We recognize that these organizations that best serve each community's needs." The program is funded by a parks and natural areas levy that was approved by the region's voters in 2013.

By working with single-identity groups in this manner, parks organizations can give traditionally marginalized communities the opportunity to enjoy deeper, more culturally relevant experiences with nature by giving them the ability to gather in spaces for them and by them.

"Engaging these single-identity groups can also be really positive in that you then have a constituency that you have built some trust with," Holliday said. "And then when it comes to your next planning process, for example, those folks are already bought into your park and may have connections that you may not have had previously, and you can engage a broader swath of people."



PHOTO COURTESY OF USA SWIMMING

Finding community leaders who are themselves passionate about parks and the outdoors is particularly beneficial. "If there's somebody the community already trusts in place, whether it's a priest or physician or a business owner who believe in the mission and vision of the recreation department, now you've got a conduit," said Juan Caraveo, diversity and inclusion consultant for USA Swimming. "Now you've got an advocate in that community who's going to be a voice to promote your programming."

When engaging underserved communities through programming, it's also important to focus on offering high-quality, high-value programs. Caraveo sees a few common barriers preventing underserved communities from learning to swim, for instance. "What our business development department found is that lack of access to the physical pool is not as prevalent as the expense of the programming—maybe they're priced out of those communities," Caraveo said.

In fact, while USA Swimming research has shown that 64 percent of African-American, 45 percent of Hispanic/Latino and 40 percent of Caucasian children have little to no swimming ability, 79 percent of children overall who live in households with incomes less than \$50,000 have little to no swimming ability. But providing affordable swimming instruction is not enough.

Over the past two years of travel at the grassroots level as part of his job, Caraveo has also learned through speaking to many families that the quality of the programming is also a barrier. "I've had multiple conversations with families in the park, and I've asked them, 'Do you take your kids to swim?' And they say, 'Yeah, I took them to the city swim lessons. We stopped because we had 10 kids in the class and there was a 16-year-old who had no idea what they were doing teaching the lessons.'"

According to Caraveo, these families say that money is tight, but that they're willing to pay if the programming is good. "I think it would be in the interest of rec departments to really do an inventory of their programs," he said. He recommends evaluating both the pre-hiring and ongoing professional development of staff, whether the department even looks at swim teachers as a professional position, and at student-teacher ratios to make sure they're acceptable. "And ask perhaps the biggest question: If I had a child, would I want my kid to be in that lesson?" Caraveo said.

Single-Identity Outdoors and Environmental Organizations

Below are some examples of organizations that offer single-identity programming or that focus on specific communities and their relationships to the outdoors, conservation or environmentalism, as identified on a recent Avarna Group blog entry:

Single-Identity Programs

Conservation Legacy's Ancestral Lands Conservation Crews: 17 different programs operating nationally and at the local level to engage Native youth and young adults in meaningful conservation projects on Native lands. www.conservationlegacy.org/ancestrallands

Northwest Youth Corps Queer Inclusion Crew: Gives queer youth and young adults work opportunities in the great outdoors in a fun team-based learning environment that emphasizes personal growth and stewardship.

Idaho Conservation Corps' Women's Crew: An innovative AmeriCorps program that provides hands-on training and experience to women interested in pursuing employment with conservation corps, land and water resource management agencies, and other outdoor careers. www.idahocc.org/OurPrograms/WomensCrew

Sierra Club's Military Family and Veteran's Programs: A variety of programs help foster development of a new generation of Sierra Club leaders and give service members, veterans and families the skills, exposure, knowledge and confidence to access the great outdoors. <http://content.sierraclub.org/outings/military/military-families-and-veterans>

Outdoor Organizations Focused on Specific Communities

Outdoor Afro: A network that celebrates African-American connections and leadership in nature, with more than 60 leaders in 28 states www.outdoorafro.com

Green Latinos: A national nonprofit that convenes Latino leaders to address environmental and conservation issues that significantly affect the health and welfare of the U.S. Latino community www.greenlatinos.org

Green Muslims: A source in the Muslim community for spiritually inspired environmental education, reflection and action that engages locally while serving as a national resource. www.greenmuslims.org

Black Freedom Outfitters: An organization that curates unique outdoor adventures that provide one-of-a-kind experiences for black people to explore and lead in the great outdoors www.blackfreedomoutfitters.com

Latino Outdoors: A Latino-led organization that connects Latino communities and leadership with nature and outdoor experiences as part of an effort to create a national community of leaders in conservation and outdoor education. www.latinoutdoors.org

Venture Out Project: An organization that brings the queer community together to experience the beauty and fun of the wilderness through a variety of trips run by queer people for queer people

OUT There Adventures: An adventure education organization committed to fostering positive identity development, individual empowerment and improved quality of life for queer young people through professionally facilitated experiential education activities www.outthereadventures.org

Women's Wilderness: An organization that strengthens the courage, confidence and leadership qualities of girls and women through the challenge and support of group wilderness and community-based experiences www.womenswilderness.org

Fostering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Staffing

Park districts seeking to be more equitable and inclusive in their hiring and in attracting a more diverse mix of park-goers can have more success with the latter by addressing the former. "If a community can see that the staff is representative and looks like them, it does increase the odds of participation from that particular community," Caraveo said.

In fact, Caraveo often leads with the employment-related benefits of learning to swim in speaking to communities that traditionally under-participate in swim programs. "I don't necessarily speak to them about swimming as a sport, but swimming as a skill that can help develop a workforce for you," Caraveo said.

In lower-income communities where teens will often seek out minimum-wage jobs at age 15 or 16, he emphasizes how learning to swim and joining a swim team can then lead to a young person getting their Water Safety Instructor and Lifeguarding certification. They can then be prepared for a job in park districts that often have a desperate need for additional guards. "Now, you're getting a job that can pay \$2 or \$3 more per hour than your minimum-wage job. And if that can be in your community where you can walk, even better."

USA Swimming has several programs that can help park districts build this talent pipeline. By becoming a Make a Splash local partner of the USA Swimming Foundation, rec departments can become eligible for grant money for swim lessons and are subject to reporting to ensure lesson quality.