Position Statement:

The Bainbridge Island Swim Club (BISC) Boosters, Bainbridge Aquatic Masters (BAM), Bainbridge Island Water Polo Club and High School Swim, Dive and Water Polo as well as many individual lap and recreational swimmers support the development of a portion of the Sakai property to be used for aquatic sports. More specifically, we support construction of an indoor aquatic facility, including a 50-meter X 25 yard pool owned and operated by the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park and Recreation District’s (BIMPRD) with commitment to providing our community with safe access to water sports and competition, recreation, water safety and educational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

The aquatic interest of the island continues to grow but our facility is limited. We live in a community surrounded by water. Every baby, child, teen, adult and senior should have access to aquatic sports (recreational and/or competitive) and have the opportunity to learn to swim. Pools are open to ALL (regardless of age, ability/disability) unlike most other field sports or recreational space. Swimming and water recreation are lifelong activities!
Community Needs:

- Increased and safer access to swimming, and other aquatic sports, aquatic education and pool recreation.
- A 50-meter pool (by 25 yards) is needed to meet the increasing demands of the community of BISC, BAM, Water Polo. High School Swim, lap swimmers and other aquatic programs.
- A 50-meter pool will give teams the ability to hold more meets/games, higher levels of competition, and host multiple events simultaneously.
- A 50-meter pool will relieve pressure on current facilities that needs space and time for swim lessons, aqua aerobics, boating safety, first responder training, lifeguard training, special needs swimming, open swim time, family swim time, lap swimmers, etc.
- A 50-meter pool (by 25 yards) provides 20+ lanes for regular lap swimming or other uses as well as a 50-meter pool for long course practice and meets.
- An additional ADA certified therapy pool would provide warm/up and cool down space for meets as well as provide recovery and rehabilitation for those suffering from physical disabilities and/or injuries.
- An indoor aquatic center with multipurpose community rooms centrally located in town as a community hub to service a broad spectrum of needs for our community.

Background:

The Aquatic Center (AC) Pools operates year-round at capacity. The AC is used from 5AM till 9 PM.

Ray Williamson Pool (Ray Pool) was built in 1970 (roof added in ’77) and is a 6 lane, 25-yd, pool.

This is a 46-year old pool that has outlived its normal life span which is between 30 to 40 years. It has an older operating system and has failed numerous times in the past few years due to aging equipment, compromising user time and costing money. (Please see attached list of repairs needed.) There are concerns regarding the infrastructure of this facility. There is limited seating for spectators. Shower and locker rooms are outdated and require maintenance. This is the pool that needs to be replaced and the space repurposed.

Nakata Pool was built in 2001 as a recreational pool. This pool cannot be used as a competition pool and has limited uses for team or individual aquatic sports practices.

Both pools sit on Bainbridge Island School District property (does not belong to BIMPRD) and cannot be expanded
Summary of Issues with Current Aquatic Center:

- Limited practice/use times for teams and individuals.
- Practice times that are unreasonable for youth (water polo club has athletes as young as 4th grade in practice till 9:45 at night) because of oversubscription of pool.
- Limited space for teams and individual users is causing overcrowding and safety issues.
- Due to limited space in the Ray pool, some of BISC practice groups regularly use the Nakata pool, negatively affecting the time and space available for swim lessons, lap swimmers, particularly older citizens, families and other uses.
- The Nakata pool is not adequate practice pool for swim teams due to water temperature, lack of starting blocks, and lack of lane space.
- Limited ability in growing teams / Turning away potential athletes from teams
- Turning away individuals from swim lessons
- Individual lap swimmers who cannot access lane space due to competing uses.
- Turning away groups from renting facilities – loss of income
- Locker room is antiquated in Ray Pool and very limited in Nakata Pool. There are public complaints due to crowding in the Nakata locker room during peak hours.
- Limited ability to host meets/competitions due to scheduling conflicts, space/facility usage
- Limited spectator and athlete seating/inability to host larger or higher level competitions due to capacity issues.
- Teams having to travel 45 minutes + for practice time in a 50-meter pool

Potential Income and Economic Impact

- Per Mark Benishek, BIMPRD Recreational Superintendent, if Bainbridge Island had a 50-meter pool, he projects (based on current demand and requests) that they’d have “numerous teams from the Kitsap and Olympic peninsula wanting to rent lap space.”
- With a 50-meter pool, Parks would also be able to offer regular lessons to tribes.
- With a 50-meter Pool, our island teams would be able to hold more (and larger size/higher caliber) swim meets and polo competitions, accommodate larger training groups and community groups who request use.
- With a 50-meter pool, local teams in the area could rent the facility to host meets and competitions.
- Meets and competitions at a new facility will boost hotel, restaurant and other tourism business.
- This facility will provide jobs for community members.
- A new facility could have meeting rooms, office space, weight room, multipurpose rooms, etc. that can be rented out and used for the benefit of the greater community.
- The Aquatic Center bond is up at the end of 2016. If we can pass a new bond, that could help pay for a new facility without seeming to have increased taxes.
- Ray Pool could be converted for other use- one suggestion is a new gymnastics space. If a therapy pool is not possible at a new facility, part of Ray could be converted into a therapy pool. The repurposing of the Ray pool could be the solution to another need of the community.
Current Aquatic Center Use:

- 2015 pool use numbers: 210,256 users “tracked” in 2015. Mark Benishek, Aquatic Center Director, states this is a low number because other programs and groups cannot be tracked through their software such as high school sports (swim, dive, water polo, football, cross country), high school PE classes, high school science classes, all home sporting meets/competitions, birthday party rentals, after hour pool rentals, WA Fish & Wildlife rental, sailing courses, kayak courses, high school lifeguard & WSI class, American Red Cross classes (Lifeguarding, WSI, CPR), Washington State Ferry Trainings, sailing clubs rentals (multiple clubs), BI Rowing club, Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts water safety classes, etc.

- The Aquatic Center (AC) serves community members from infancy to people reaching their 90’s- potentially 100!

- The AC serves a diverse community of all abilities, including those with disabilities, with special needs, and those from rehabilitation centers as well as providing access to aquatic sports and recreation for low-income youth.

- In summer alone, the AC on average serves 5,000+ kids per month. See June 4, 2015, Bainbridge Review, “Island pools are packed all year long.” (http://www.bainbridgereview.com/news/306158121.html)

- The Pools are the home site for all island aquatics sports, including BISC, the community’s only regular swim team (a program of BIMPRD with 130 members), the Bainbridge Island Dive Team, BI Water Polo Club, the Bainbridge Aquatic Masters (“BAM” w/ 160 members) as well as the boys and girls High School swim, dive teams and water polo teams.

- Numerous other community programs and schools use the current Aquatic Center:
  - Aquatic aerobics programs
  - High School Robotics Club
  - Boating programs
  - Preschool programs
  - Private schools, including St. Cecilia, The Island School and Hyla Middle School
  - BI Sailing (safety training)
  - BI Rowing (safety training)
  - Washington State Ferries
  - Washington State Department of Fisheries (equipment testing)
  - Scuba
  - Back and Beyond
  - Suquamish Tribe
  - S’Klallam Tribe
  - Stephens House (Bainbridge Island Special Needs Foundation)
  - Boys and Girls Club (Bainbridge Island, Silverdale, and Bremerton)
  - Rehabilitation centers, individuals recovering from illnesses and injuries
  - Lifeguard Training
  - High School Classes

- Per Mark Benishek, BIMPRD Recreational Superintendent, there is a lot of demand for the pool and not enough space. Many of the above groups are turned away or turned down when requesting more time in pool. Priority is given to local groups.
User Group Information and More Detailed Issues with Current Facilities

Bainbridge Island Swim Club (BISC)
- BISC serves 130 swimmers ages 6-19.
  - There is consistent demand in community for more youth to participate on swim team, and BISC wants to meet this demand but cannot due to limited lane space/practice time.
- BISC runs 6 training groups, which require approximately 34 practices per week with practices ranging from 1-2 hours per practice session depending on level and lane space. More lane space can allow kids to develop better skills, progress faster, practice safer, and reach their potential.
- Lane space for swimming is limited. Injuries, such as concussions from hitting heads (or the wall), broken fingers and contusions, occur when too many kids are swimming in a lane.
- USA Swimming recommends a minimum of 5 second spacing per child at sendoff for safety, this is the reason why we cannot “cram” more kids in a lane.
- **BISC has operated at capacity with 120-130 kids for more than 6 years. For the past 6 years, BISC has had a waitlist ranging from 12-54 kids each month.**
- Kids on the waitlist are sent to other teams or encouraged to participate in other limited swim programs such as SPLASH. Kids on the waitlist are frustrated by the lack of options. Often families choose not to be on the waitlist and kids must abandon their dream to swim competitively. SPLASH is now full.
- BISC averages 3-5 inquiries per month from families requesting a spot on the team.
- BISC can no longer allow kids on the team who want to cross train for other sports. This is a frequent and reasonable request as it is healthy for kids to cross train and be involved in various sports.
- On average, BISC only can host two to three home swim competitions per year due to scheduling restraints. Space at those meets is extremely tight with limited deck seating for athletes and spectator seating. In fact, some spectators at meets have no place to sit and have to move to the lobby or outside.
- Currently, BISC swimmers attend long course practice in Port Orchard from April through August, the closest 50-meter pool. This pool is old and the school district, its owner, has simply not maintained it. Understandably, the district's focus has been on spending for basic education needs.
Bainbridge Water Polo Club + BHS High School Water Polo (Girls and Boys):

- With limited pool space due to abundance of user groups, water polo athletes as young as 4th grade practice until 9:00 or 9:30 at night, getting these students home around 10:00pm on school nights. These late night practices lead to tired and unhealthy athletes, and the team is unable to provide morning swim times which are essential to the speed and conditioning needed for the sport.

- Water Polo practices get priority after High School swimming, Bainbridge Island Swim Club (BISC) practices, and public lap swim.

- During the Boys High School competitive season, the High School boys' team gets use of those late night practices, leaving the growing water polo club with little to no practice space available during the Fall.

- Water Polo age group ranges from 4th grade through 12th grade, and with limited pool space and practice time available, practices need to be split so that different levels of athlete can all have adequate space and time available to them. This means that each athlete gets fewer practices per week.

- With other user groups struggling for space and time in the pool, water polo gets fewer crossover athletes since other aquatic teams need their athletes to be committed if they are to take a coveted spot in the pool.

- The Ray Pool is not deep enough at one end for water polo.

- The Nakata Pool that was built 10 years ago is fairly useless to water polo. The only space that can be utilized by the team for a portion of practice is the dive tank, which can only safely accommodate 15 athletes. We consistently have 30+ athletes attend each practice.

- Water Polo can only use the dive tank after many other user groups are prioritized including Dive Team, Water Aerobics, and Open Swim. When water polo can utilize that space, it is usually during a public lap swim time and so passing and shooting has to be done sparingly to not disturb other patrons with deflected shots or uncaught passes.

- Water Polo teams have to travel to Tacoma for post-season competitive games.

- The two pools that are used for Leagues and State (because they are both all-deep with a warm-up area) are in Tacoma and Puyallup. This means that when water polo play a post-season game, there is 1.5-2 hours of driving to get to a game, which leaves the team sluggish upon arrival at the pool.

- Water Polo teams are limited in their ability to host games due to scheduling restraints.
Bainbridge Aquatic Masters (BAM)

- BAM practices exclusively in the Ray pool, and they must share time with BISC, high school swim, water polo (club and high school) and lap swimmers.

- Athlete numbers have more than doubled in the past six years (70 in 2010 to 160 current members) and is reaching capacity for swimmers due to 7-8 athletes per lane.

- Athletes range in age from 18-96, fostering health and lifelong fitness across adult age groups.

- BAM athletes compete successfully at statewide and national meets and need adequate access to training facilities.

- There is limited practice time and number of assigned lanes during practice.

Lap Swimmers

- Limited or no available lanes for lap swimming when other user groups have use of the Ray and Nakata pools. Lap swimmers who like to swim in Ray pool are given lane space during BAM practice time, but it is limited to 1-2 lanes and they must deal with the splashing and waves created by large numbers of swimmers.

- Many older swimmers prefer the Nakata pool due to temperature; lanes are frequently taken by swim lessons, water aerobics, and other uses, leaving these lap swimmers with no other option.

- *Loss of approximately 86 lane hours per week for independent lap swimmers from fall of 2008 to August 2014 due to expanding aquatic programs.*

THE CURRENT AQUATIC CENTER IS NOT MEETING OUR CURRENT NEEDS, AND THESE NEEDS ARE ONLY EXPECTED TO GROW IN THE FUTURE.
Miscellaneous Articles About Why Swimming Is Important

Source: Center for Disease Control and World Health Organization

For children under age 5, drowning is a leading cause of accidental death in the US and the CDC has shown formal swimming lessons reduces the risk of drowning among very young children. Drowning is among the top causes of accidental death worldwide, accounting for 7 percent of all injury-related deaths according to the World Health Organization.

Source: The United States Water Fitness Association

Why is exercise IN the water better than OUT of the water?

- **Buoyancy:** This water property allows people to do exercises that are difficult on land. 90% of your body is buoyant when in the water up to your neck, so you are not hitting the floor as hard as you would on land. No pounding or jarring!
- **Resistance:** There is continual resistance to every move you make. The water offers 12% - 14% more resistance than when you exercise on land. Resistance does not allow for sudden body movements.
- **Cooling Effects:** Water disperses heat more efficiently, so there is less chance of overheating. The water continuously cools the body. Exercise in the water is cooler and more comfortable than it is on land.

Why do people exercise in the water?

- **Fitness:** Getting or keeping in shape. Remember that you cannot just waddle back and expect great results. Improving your fitness depends on how much energy you use.
- **Therapeutic:** Helping people recover from accidents and sickness. Combating the aging process.
- **Social:** Meeting and being with other people. You can talk to others as you water exercise. Workout facing your partner or side-by-side. Meet new people, too!
- **Stress Release:** Gives you a chance to just relax and forget about work, problems, and other things.
- **Fun:** Enjoying the diversion. Water exercise in a playful way and don't worry about being serious! Laugh and enjoy it! Water exercise is fun!

How can water exercise help the participants?

**Physical Benefits**
- Improved flexibility and strength
- Builds up endurance
- Increases muscular flexibility
- Muscular balance
- Heart muscle becomes stronger

- Improves the physique
- Increases circulation
- Rehabilitates muscles
- Improved ability to control and maintain healthy weight
Social Benefits
Have fun
Fellowship with other people
Enjoyable - even when working hard
It is a safe program

Psychological Benefits
Helps develop a positive attitude
Contributes to a feeling of well-being
Teaches patience
Releases stress and tension
Renews energy

What exercise options are there in the water?

Water Walking: Moving forward, backward, and sideward, using regular, short, quick, or long steps, in waist-deep or chest-deep water

Water Aerobics: Full body rhythmic exercises conducted in shallow and/or deep water for 20 minutes or more, designed to provide cardiovascular benefits

Water Toning/Strength Toning: Upper and lower body moves designed to strengthen, firm, and sculpt the muscles by using the resistance of the water and/or water exercise equipment.

Flexibility Training: Large movements using each body part's full range of motion, along with full body stretches.

Water Therapy & Rehabilitation: Procedures in the water designed and implemented for special clinical purposes.

Water Yoga & Relaxation: Gentle, easy-flowing moves using the water as a relaxation medium.

Deep Water Running: Simulating land running in the water depth where the feet do not touch the bottom of the pool. Flotation devices are used. Various running styles, drills, and methods can be used.

Wall Exercise (Deep or Shallow): Using the pool wall for support to isolate various body parts.

Water Fitness Products: Professional products designed and manufactured specifically for water fitness activities - for toning, strengthening, and endurance work. Such products add variety to the class, motivate students, and create additional resistance and support.

Lap Swimming: If the individual is a proficient swimmer, swimming back and forth using various swimming strokes is a possibility. However, we suggest that lap swimmers also consider other forms of water exercise in addition to lap swimming.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

Health Benefits of Water-based Exercise
Swimming is the fourth most popular sports activity in the United States and a good way to get regular aerobic physical activity 1. Just two and a half hours per week of aerobic physical activity, such as swimming, bicycling, or running, can decrease the risk of chronic illnesses 2, 3. This can also lead to improved health for people with diabetes and heart disease 2. Swimmers have about half the risk of death compared with inactive people 3. People report enjoying water-based exercise more than exercising on land 4. They can also exercise longer in water than on land without increased effort or joint or muscle pain 5, 6.
Water-based Exercise and Chronic Illness
Water-based exercise can help people with chronic diseases. For people with arthritis, it improves use of affected joints without worsening symptoms. People with rheumatoid arthritis have more health improvements after participating in hydrotherapy than with other activities. Water-based exercise also improves the use of affected joints and decreases pain from osteoarthritis.

Water-based Exercise and Mental Health
Water-based exercise improves mental health. Swimming can improve mood in both men and women. For people with fibromyalgia, it can decrease anxiety and exercise therapy in warm water can decrease depression and improve mood. Water-based exercise can improve the health of mothers and their unborn children and has a positive effect on the mothers’ mental health. Parents of children with developmental disabilities find that recreational activities, such as swimming, improve family connections.

Water-based Exercise and Older Adults
Water-based exercise can benefit older adults by improving the quality of life and decreasing disability. It also improves or maintains the bone health of post-menopausal women.

A Good Choice
Exercising in water offers many physical and mental health benefits and is a good choice for people who want to be more active. When in the water, remember to protect yourself and others from illness and injury by practicing healthy and safe swimming behaviors.

References