

Sakai Park Multi-Generational Community Recreation Center

Task

Research for a multi-generational community center with a teen center, senior center, gymnastic gym and Park offices.

Goals

1. Consolidate many youth and adult classes and activities under “one roof” rather than at least 12 different locations on the island.
2. Provide a location for youth and seniors to work and play together.
3. Provide new, up-to-date, safe and clean offices for the Park District
4. Provide new, up-to-date, and safe gymnastics gym
5. Provide the Island with an up-to-date and safe multi-level facility that meets many other needs, including:
 - Teen Center
 - Senior Center/Area
 - Dividable Gymnasium
 - Meeting/Classrooms
 - Commercial Kitchen

What We Did

1. The workgroup reviewed the list activities developed at the January meeting and identified those activities that we believed could be included in a Community Recreation Center.
2. Focusing on the Goals, we explored how these specific activities or facilities are currently provided. This included tours of current park (and school, in the case of gymnastics) facilities and interviews of park staff familiar with the challenges of maintaining the facilities and/or providing the programs.
3. The group identified several facilities in the area that provide facilities and/or programs we were interested in looking at and took field trips. We visited the Mercer Island Event Center in Luther Burbank Park, the Silverdale YMCA, the Bremerton Teen Center, the Bremerton YMCA, and the Indoor Soccer facility at Pendergast Park in Bremerton.
4. Based on the field trips we revisited the previously developed list of possible activities and added a few to the list.
5. Using the data collected the group developed a priority list of those items that we believe should be included in a Community Recreation Center.

Priorities for a Multi-Generational Community Recreation Center

Based on the research we conducted (details below), we believe that, at a minimum, the following items should be included in a Community Recreation Center:

1. Teen Center - specifically because the current teen center will not be available to the Park District once the School District begins reconstruction of the 100 wing of the High School.
2. Senior Center - while not replacing the existing Senior Center at the Waterfront Community Center, space would be provided for Seniors to gather and interact with community members across generations either informally or through specific programs.
3. Meeting Rooms, both fixed sized rooms and a large room that can be divided. Certain rooms can be designed for other specific uses such as dance or exercise classes, etc. Demand for meeting and classroom space around the Island is outstripping availability, especially for large meeting areas.
4. Commercial Kitchen - adjunct to the large meeting space for catering and special events.
5. Gymnastics Gym. The Park District Gymnastics program shares space with the High School gymnastics team in a space ill-suited for either program. There are significant potential safety issues in the gymnastics area.
6. Multipurpose Gymnasium with size based on side by side basketball courts with a divider between. Gymnasium would be used for basketball, volleyball, badminton, Pickleball, etc. The Park District uses School District facilities for many of its indoor sports programs. Both the Park District and School District are seeing increased demand for athletic space particularly during specific time frames (late afternoon/early evenings).
7. District Offices. The current offices at Strawberry Hill are in an old and failing building (a former military structure). While the space is small for existing needs, there are much greater health and safety concerns with the building, including leaky roofs, mold, lack of insulation, air quality/ventilation, etc.

We believe the above list addresses specific health and safety issues, and program and community needs that are not currently being met. We recognize that there are many other potential activities and uses that could be included in a Community Recreation Center and encourage a community dialog that can help determine additional elements to be included in this facility.

Research

Below are the data collected in researching possible activities and uses for a Community Recreation Center:

Teen Center

1. The Teen Center location will not be available once the School District begins reconstruction of the 100 Building at the High School.
2. During a previous BHS remodel, the Teen Center was housed in the cramped lobby of the old Ray Williamson pool. This is not an appropriate long term solution.
3. Currently it is unknown where the Teen Center will be housed during the upcoming BHS remodel.
4. This is a double-wide modular home whose interior was designed by and for Bainbridge teens; currently used by about 50 teens on a regular basis.
5. The current Teen Center lacks any technology. No infrastructure or media provider; no connectivity, no High School support, no cable TV; intermittent Wi-Fi. Only one computer.
6. Would like to have some space specifically dedicated to teens: separate entrance, secure, unisex bathrooms; small kitchen to learn the basics. Would like Study room with computers and internet connections
7. Hangout room for talking and playing games, pool, etc.
8. Teens would like to be a part of designing their space; work with an architect who can work with and accept them.
9. Would like to use the concrete bays and bomb shelter as a skateboarding area, performance space, recording studio and art studio where they can be creative without worrying about being too messy.

District Office (DO)

1. Built in the late 1940's as part of a Nike Missile Base. Current size is about 2,520 sq.ft. for 20 people (many more in the summer when volunteers and interns are around).
2. The building has been remodeled three times to add rooms. District has tried very hard to maximize the use of the facility
3. Many physical problems with current office:
 - Air quality- animals die in walls; ozonator run on weekends to clean air; mold from leaking ceilings; windows had to be left open this past February due to smell from dead animals in the walls
 - Heat- poor heat in main office; can run on only certain circuits so fuses are not blown
 - Little to no insulation in walls
 - Electricity- outdated. Can't handle current technology
 - Roof leaks- onto electrical equipment in office; have to move equipment around to avoid leaks. Skylights leaking; probably means mold in ceiling.
 - Reception area small, not customer friendly

- Restrooms not in same building. Have to exit DO via covered walkway to access the restrooms
 - Storage-for records management, equipment, servers, files. Requirements are beyond current capacity. Stored in a number of areas: on floor, shelves, under desks, in corners of DO (fire hazard?) and several out buildings, including a cargo container (climate controlled) as well.
 - Water: No one drinks water out of tap. Shares water with PhilAm Hall.
 - Up to code on water? Power? Septic? Recently digging up water pipe to fix leak and hit power line next to water line. DO without power until fixed - up to code?
 - Office walls VERY thin; confidentiality problems
 - Kitchen area SMALL, mice poop around; can hear critters in ceiling throughout DO
 - Meeting Room: currently also serves as office space.
4. If a Community Center is built it would be appropriate to include the BIMPRD District Offices as part of the facility. This would include:
- Open, welcoming reception area for sign-up/sign-in
 - Would allow staff and community to better interact with each other
 - Provides on-site supervision and oversight for the facility

Senior Center

While users of the existing Senior Center at the Waterfront Park Community Center would like to keep many of their services and programs at their existing location, there is a demand for the Park District to offer additional classes/facilities to enhance the senior programs including:

1. Table Tennis area, specifically to host tournaments. This is a growing program among the seniors and there is lack of space for this program.
2. Additional space for active senior classes - it is estimated that an additional five (5) rooms (sizes to be determined) could be fully utilized for the following:
 - Senior to Teen program expansion,
 - A commercial kitchen
 - Exercise classes include fitness, tai chi chi'n lessons and practice classes, chair yoga, yoga, stay strong, line dancing, co-ed softball, walks on trails and walking routes (in particular, some of these exercise classes need more space now):
 - Spanish, French, German clubs, technology tutoring, liberation laughter (larger room needed), movie nights
 - Mah Jong, cribbage, bridge, pinochle, bingo
 - Hot lunch served m-f, meals on wheels delivered
 - Wellness services
 - Events, such as well as lectures, live music etc
3. A room to hold a Pool Table
4. Current location has limited parking.
5. Age appropriate exercise equipment

It is estimated that Seniors represent at least 25% of the population on Bainbridge and that the percentage of Seniors is growing.

Gymnastics Gym

1. Gymnastics Program (current)

- For all ages, starting from 6 months old and including adult classes.
- Offers a Recreational Companion for gymnasts with special needs.
- Offers P.E. programs for schools and daycares.
- The Gymnastics program is the 2nd largest Recreation program.
- Up to 35 staff at peak times
- In 2003, there were 2721 individual registrations. In 2015, there were approximately 5,000.

2. Lack of space

- The current gymnastics room at the high school is approximately 4,000 square feet and is shared with the high school gymnastics program.
- The Park District has a gymnastics room in the Transmitter Building at Battle Point. This gymnastics room is approximately 3,000 square feet, with ceilings too low for many typical gymnastic activities including bars, beam and tumble track.
- A typical gymnastics gym is approximately 14,000-15,000 square feet.
- In the high school gymnastics room conditions are such that:
 - Gymnasts have to stop vaulting to allow arriving and departing gymnasts and their parents to go in and out of the gym.
 - Gymnasts start outside the gym doors while vaulting because the vault runway is not long enough.
 - The only viewing area is from the balcony that is accessed by climbing two flights of stairs in an unheated stairwell, exiting the building and then re-entering via another door. The posted occupancy allowed for the balcony is 16 even though there may be up to 75 gymnasts in the gym at the same time.
 - For home meets, the Gymnastics program has to rent a different room from the school district, often at a different school, as well as a U-Haul truck to move the equipment to the new location. This requires Gymnastics staff and parents to dismantle all of the gymnastics equipment, move the equipment, and reassemble the equipment. After the meet, they again have to dismantle, move, and reassemble the equipment in the gymnastics room.
- At the Transmitter Building, there is no viewing space for spectators. Parents have to sit in the lobby and watch best they can. There is one toilet for up to 75+ gymnasts, their parents and the coaching staff to share.
- There is no storage area for mats and equipment. They are currently stored around the gym and on the spring floor reducing the regulation size of the spring floor to a much smaller usable area.

3. Shared facility

- The Gymnastics program has been sharing the high school gymnastics room since the program moved from Poulsbo to the Island in 1981, 35 years ago.
- For the months of November through February, during the high school gymnastics season, the recreation classes and competitive teams have to start later, after the high school team is done.
- The gym is cold in the winter and sweltering in the summer.

4. Waste of Staff time and gas

- Staff work in three different locations, often having to drive between the office at Strawberry Hill, the High School, and the Transmitter Building, located at Battle Point Park, in between classes and team practices

5. No room for additional participants
 - The Gymnastics program has to turn kids away due to lack of space available in the program.
 - Different citizens committees over the years have said that a new gymnastics gym is greatly needed.
6. A new gymnastics gym is in the Park District Comprehensive Plan.
7. Parking
 - There are only two parking spots at the high school for staff during the day,.
 - Parents of young gymnasts have to park in the Eagle Harbor parking lot or pool parking lot and walk to the high school during the day for classes.
8. Desired facilities/equipment for a gymnastics room:
 - 40' in-ground tumble track.
 - Pits for the bars, vault and floor.
 - Adequate storage for mats and equipment.
 - Height needed: 30'
 - Size needed: a minimum of 10,000 square feet is needed, but 15,000 square feet is desired.
 - Should be located next to gymnasium so the gym could be used for meets.
 - Viewing area

Dividable Gymnasium

Currently the Park District runs many of its indoor sports programs in school district gyms. Due to increasing demand for gym space by both the schools and the Park District, the Park District is not able to adequately address the demand for programs (as the school programs have priority). There is clearly a need for another gym on the Island similar to the Lower HS Gym. It should include:

1. Two smaller (e.g, HS sized) basketball courts in one direction, with a full size court (e.g., college sized court over-laid in the opposite direction. (College courts are 94'x50'; HS courts are 84'x50')
2. Courts for other sports can be overlaid on the basketball courts and used for volleyball/badminton/Pickleball/Zumba/indoor tot play time. (court sizes are: V 60'x30' B 44'x20' P 44'x20')
3. Movable partition to separate gym in half to support different activities at the same time. Men's and Women's locker rooms. Best located next to gym.
4. Standard gymnasium height is 2 stories tall.

Meeting/classrooms

There is a chronic lack of meeting space and room for classes and other events on the Island. This is particularly acute for large meetings and events. As part of a Community Center we would propose that the following be added:

1. Several multi-purpose, fixed size meeting rooms for classes and events
2. A Large meeting room with dividers to create several smaller meeting rooms

Commercial Kitchen

A commercial kitchen is an oft-requested amenity for holding events. This would be particularly beneficial with a large room hosting a catered event. It could be integrated into the Community Center adjacent to the large meeting room to support:

1. Large events such as weddings, the annual meeting potlucks that BI is famous for, birthday parties, and large family events such as reunions.
2. Cooking classes

Other Ideas

The following lists are other elements that could be included in a Community Center. Other than the priorities listed above, the work group did not pass judgment whether or not these elements should be included in the facility. Each would represent a positive addition to the facility. However, we did not believe any of the elements solved a glaring need such as the items prioritized.

What else was on the list of 76 “wants” that might fit in a community center?

1. Racquetball/Handball court: (40'x20'x20' height) - both YMCAs we visited had courts
2. Squash court: (32' x 21' x 18.5"(h))
3. Coffee/lunch Cafe
4. Disaster/emergency Shelter (building could be used for this purpose if needed).
 - Location is in close proximity to the fire station and urgent care
 - Disaster Preparedness Building
 - Universal Pet Warming Station
5. Space to hold Rotary Auction
6. Outside plaza for special events
7. Multi Sport Gym with synthetic turf or other surface (180' x 90')
 - Indoor Soccer/Lacrosse/Baseball/Softball/Football
 - Ice or Roller Hockey Rink
 - Event Center
8. Pool Hall/Billiards Room: 14'x18' room for a 4.5x9' table with 58" cue
9. Bowling Alley: 2 lane 100'x17'6" room
10. Indoor Auditorium
11. Indoor Play Area
12. Learning Center For Environmental Education
13. Museum honoring Sakai Family
14. 50 Meter Pool
15. Mini Golf
16. Boys/Girls Club

Seen in other Community Centers and Recreation Facilities

We visited a number of facilities including the Mercer Island Event Center, the Silverdale Y, the Bremerton Y, and the Indoor Soccer facility at Pendergast Park in Bremerton. In addition we did some research on Community Recreation Centers online. Specific ideas that we found interesting included:

1. Indoor track circling gymnasium. This is of additional interest now that BHS is a closed campus during school days and school activities. The track would be:
 - 2-3 lanes, possible suspended above the gym floor.
 - It would be particularly popular for running/walking during bad weather
2. Exercise/Dance Room.
 - Built in sound system.
 - 35'x56'=20 dancers
3. Living Room with "Little Free Library" (take 1 leave 1).
4. Indoor cafe with tables.
 - With a Vendor or Vending machines?
 - Microwave.
 - Outside patio sitting area
5. Computer room.
 - Wi-Fi
 - Great for youth and teens at Teen Center for doing homework
 - Teens could mentor Seniors in use of computers
 - Genealogy work
6. Billiards/Pool Room (could be used by seniors during the day; teens after school and adults in the evening)
 - One to four tables, possibly including other games (foosball?)
7. Rollaway table tennis tables that can be rolled into meeting rooms or class rooms
8. Tot play areas in unique locations such as under a staircase
9. Senior "Playground"
 - Fixed equipment outside for exercising

How much would such a Community Recreation Center Cost?

We did not do any research on costs. The costs could vary significantly based on what the Board of Commissioners decides to do in regard to building such a building and what might be included in such a building. Part of the decision making process should include costs to operate the facility.

How would such a Community Center be paid for?

In all likelihood the community would have to approve a bond measure to build any sort of Community Recreation Center. While Grants and Donations could help defray some costs, it would be highly unlikely that such sources of funds could cover the full costs of building and maintaining the facility.