



Ray Williamson Pool Renovation FAQ's

Source: Comments and Questions raised by way of a survey between 2/28-3/20

1. Why are you renovating the Ray Williamson Pool?

Built in 1970, the Ray Williamson Pool has been in continual operation for over 50 years. Beginning in 2016, several studies have investigated options for the pool's renovation or replacement. In September 2022, Stemper Architectural Collaborative was hired to do a comprehensive assessment of the existing facility. This included identifying critical projects to extend the life of the pool a minimum of 20 years.

2. What are the critical elements of the project?

The renovation project's key parts are HVAC replacement, new electrical system and panels, concrete and structural repairs, seismic upgrades, re-roofing of the low-slope roof, fire sprinkler pipes recoating, replacement of the pool deck slab and its linear drains, a new pool filtration and pool chemical treatment system, repurpose of support spaces, LED lighting upgrades, tile and fixture improvements, and a new pool tank liner.

3. What is the urgency for this project and decision making?

Answer: "The 3 C's: Closure, Code, and Cost"

The electrical and heating/cooling systems have reached the end of their lives. They pose real threats of failure and permanent pool closure.

The permits for the project, submitted in 2023, are close to issuance. A new building code went into effect in Spring 2024. If the project were delayed or resubmitted, the new code would require changes that would compromise the benefits of using the existing building. Staying in the existing building provides significant cost savings, forms the basis of the current improvement permits, and meets lease terms with the School District, the landowner.

Construction and aquatic repair costs continue to escalate. The Park District is pursuing the renovation as efficiently as possible. It is reaching beyond its capital funding and dipping into reserve funding to fix critical items in one expedient effort. The strategy includes the mobilization and management of diverse work under one general contractor per phase.

4. How long will this project expand the life of the pool?

This project will extend the life of the Ray Pool for a minimum of 20 years. The project includes various improvements with specific lifespans and various warranties. In total, this is a full rehabilitation project for the existing 50-year-old pool.

5. What is the proposed timeline for the project?

Due to site constraints and complexities within construction trades, the project must be done in two phases:

- Phase 1 is planned to begin in Summer 2024 and last through Spring 2025, with intermittent closures of the Ray Pool.
- The pool could re-open before Phase 2 commences.

Two options for Phase 2 are under consideration. Phase 2 A would rehabilitate a six-lane pool. Phase 2B would renovate and expand it to eight lanes.

- If Phase 2A is selected, work could begin in Summer 2025 and last up to 10 months.
- If Phase 2B is selected, work could begin in Summer 2025 and last up to 18 months.
- The Ray Pool will largely be closed during Phase 2.

6. What is the scope of work for Phase 2?

The scope of work for Phase 2 is now under discussion. There is a current opportunity to go beyond rehabilitation and to expand the existing pool tank during Phase 2, adding two additional swim lanes and introducing a consistent pool depth to increase safety and meet user needs.

7. What will be the depth of an expanded Ray Pool, per Phase 2B?

The depth of an expanded Ray Pool is under technical review. It could go from its current variable depth to a consistent depth across the pool, per user group needs. A study in December 2023 found that the existing building and pool systems can handle an expanded pool with a 6.5 foot depth.

8. How will two more lanes and an even pool depth help team sports and the community?

Two more lanes will increase pool space for reallocation for lap swim space between the Ray Williamson and the adjacent Don Nakata pools. This will have positive impacts for users across aquatic programming:

- Additional pool space available during peak hours.

- More space for swim lessons in the Nakata pool. It's possible we could expect 35% growth in lessons offered.
- Opportunity for daytime family swim and homeschool swim lessons.
- Increased membership capacity for the Bainbridge Island Swim Club and the Bainbridge Aquatic Masters.
- Greater accessibility for Water Exercise classes, currently almost at capacity. We could see as much as 50% growth in that area.
- Greater availability of water walking and injury treatment for community members who come to the pool for physical therapy.
- Possibility of accommodating private swim lessons.

A deeper and consistent pool depth improves safety and benefits competitive sports, especially water polo and swimming.

9. What is the amount of deck space with the eight-lane option? How will spectator needs be met?

The eight-lane layout reduces the east and west sides of the deck, where the spectator stairs are now. It would result in the minimum code-required perimeter deck width in these areas. The preliminary layout shows a varying 4' – 6' deck width up to the building support beams. This width only allows for circulation, refereeing, and coaching.

Spectator needs can be addressed through a range of options, depending on need. Deck space for spectators and for team assembly would be mostly limited to the north deck that adjoins the Nakata Pool. It's possible to expand deck space here by reducing storage areas on the northeast and northwest corners. Portable bleachers can be used in this area for spectators to circulate from the adjacent Don Nakata Pool for desired events.

Bleachers can also be placed outdoors on existing concrete pads, under a roof overhang, extended canopy, or within heated tents. The new east-side doors and windows would be selected to minimize spectator obstructions. Garage, accordion and sliding options are under design considerations for this purpose. Accommodations learned during COVID safety practices may be implemented, such as creative space management and live-streaming in climate-controlled meeting rooms offered onsite.

10. What are the impacts to ongoing programs and to the Don Nakata Pool during this project?

The Park District will work to accommodate all ongoing established programs, working with user groups. We will optimize the mix of creative and expanded scheduling of our pool space (Ray, Nakata, and the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center (BIRC)). We will also coordinate use of offsite locations. During the Ray's closure, we will fit many participants into the Nakata and BIRC spaces while being respectful of current uses.

11. What are the potential funding sources that the Park District envisions to cover the cost?

The Park District is addressing the costs of the project now. A funding discussion is ongoing at the regular business meetings of the Park Board meetings. The Board has asked staff to look at options that go beyond existing capital funds, expecting combination proposals. Staff is looking into a combination of capital and reserve funds, grants, loans, private fundraising, and public bond funds.

12. Will this project increase operational costs, future capital costs, or user fees?

This project addresses all critical capital needs for the Ray Pool. It does so without increases to the existing management and operation requirements, including staff, utilities, and revenues. The aquatic fee structure will continue to be based on a “per hour in the water” analysis. There is no plan to change fees after the renovation. The only change anticipated is the normal yearly increase.

13. How much money is needed now?

The project costs depend on the evolving design status and input from industries and contractor bids. This is especially true due to the required public construction bidding process. The cost estimates must also account for risk, contingency, and inflation.

The cost estimate for Phase 1 is most specific at \$3.5 million. Phase 2 work faces a rough order of magnitude estimate of \$2-7 million, dependent on the scope of the work, now under discussion. Total costs then are currently estimated between \$5.5 million and \$10.5 million.

Pursuing the base project, the Park District has committed \$5.5 million. This allows the project to move forward with Phase 2A as well as the opportunity for the community to consider and fundraise for Phase 2B.

The Phase 2B option would likely double the total cost to approximately \$11 million. Therefore, the gap in funding to expand the Ray is a minimum of \$5.5 million.

14. What did the Park Board decide at the March 7, 2024 meeting?

At the March 7th Board Meeting, the Park Board committed the funding for the base rehabilitation project (6-lane renovation) while remaining open to community fundraising for pool expansion (8-lane renovation.) Specifically, the Board authorized the use of \$2.5 million from Park District reserve funds for the Ray Pool project. The remainder of the project would be funded by a loan to the Park District, reduced by grants or other fundraising.

15. What happened at the March 21st Board meeting?

Recognizing the current opportunity, the Park Board initiated a public bond process that would, if passed by voters, fund pool expansion, through Phase 2B. The Board authorized a bond amount to range between eight- and ten-million-dollars, acknowledging its use towards the funding gap for Phase 2B as well as the loan amounts required for the Park District to advance the base project.

16. What are the next steps?

Next, the bond proposal must take formal shape, in line with County election requirements and deadlines. Based on project needs and Board direction, this ballot initiative would be for August 2024.

The Park District needs to form a committee to draft arguments 'for' and 'against' a ballot measure. The community must form a bond campaign committee. Both committees need to be formed in time for the board to consider a formal resolution that would authorize the bond measure at their regular board meeting on May 2, 2024, 6pm, at the Bainbridge Island Recreation Center.