



La Crosse Memorial Pool

Facility Evaluation, Programming, and Option Analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 14, 2016



Submitted by the Isaac Sports Group, LLC



The 78-year-old Memorial Pool in La Crosse has continued to deteriorate to the point that the facility was closed in the summer 2016 by the City Council. The City of La Crosse Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department hired Burbach Aquatics, Inc. (BAI) to provide a technical analysis of Memorial Pool and determine the needs and cost effectiveness of repair, renovation, or total replacement of an equivalent pool at the Memorial Pool site. The City also hired John Kovari, Ph.D. of the UW-Lacrosse Department of Political Science and Public Administration to conduct a Memorial Pool City-wide Public Opinion Survey.

Grandview-Emerson Neighborhood Association (GENA) is strongly and proactively supportive of the efforts to preserve an aquatic facility at the Memorial Pool site that will provide expanded aquatic and community activity and continue to provide and enhance the quality of activities for neighborhood's youth and family. An important part of GENA's support of Memorial Pool has included working with the City of La Crosse Historic Preservation Commission to secure Historic Landmark status for Memorial Pool. The engagement with the Historic Preservation Commission includes the discussion of the best and most practical ways to recognize the historic importance and impact of Memorial Pool in a newly designed modern and sustainable aquatic facility.

GENA has hired the Isaac Sports Group, LLC (ISG) to provide an independent analysis of the existing Memorial Pool and explore upgraded facility design and program options leading to design and amenity updates to Memorial Pool while preserving the historic nature and role of the original La Crosse Municipal Pool within the fabric of community life.

REVIEW OF BURBACH AQUATICS, INC. STUDY

The BAI Study accurately identified and analyzed the current condition and the renovation and code requirements needed to re-open Memorial Pool for safe use. The narrow scope of the BAI study did not include the exploration and analysis of reconfiguration, downsizing, or total new replacement of a redesigned Memorial Pool. These considerations can create more cost effective options that better meets the current and future aquatic and community needs of La Crosse residents.

HISTORIC REVIEW

Memorial Pool is one of hundreds of depression era PWA and WPA pools built in the country. The historic significance of Memorial Pool is largely its important social and recreational role in the City through many decades and its commitment to water safety and drowning prevention. There are no design or architectural features that are unique or of significant historic significance. Any renovation or replacement of Memorial Pool can preserve the historic importance and relevance through preservation of the bathhouse façade and use of portions of the old pool tank for historic display while maintaining the historic role as a modern pool providing great aquatic programs and serving as a central element of community life. Many of the other depression area pools in Wisconsin have been similarly renovated or replaced while preserving recognition of their history.

PROGRAMMING and USE

The results of the Public Opinion Survey on Memorial Pool indicate strong support for some type of pool at the current Memorial Pool site. Naturally, this support is higher among residents of the Memorial Pool neighborhood, but support across all City residents is also strong. The survey shows the importance of broad based aquatic programs and amenities that provide opportunity for all ages, including lap swimming, aquatic fitness, fun, recreation, and leisure. The most important element identified was swim lessons, which further supports the initial historic goals of Memorial Pool.

The design options suggested in this report support a full range of multi-generational programming, including swim lessons, summer swim team, lap swimming, Masters swim program, lifeguard and safety training, aquatic fitness and exercise, and easy accessibility and family friendly spaces with ramps, stairs, and zero/beach entries. Deep water is also included for diving boards as well as space for recreational and play features. The downsizing of the pool allows for expanded deck space which meets the expressed needs for shade and lounge spaces to provide a total environment for a fun and safe day at the pool.

The presence of a neighborhood pool easily accessed and utilized by neighborhood residents also can play a significant role in growing City wide aquatic participation and enhance the potential for a future year round aquatic center in La Crosse. The neighborhood pools provide the opportunity for feeder programs for area teams and aquatic programs and serve as the initial exposure to water based activities for a large number of City and neighborhood youth and adults.

RENOVATION and NEW REPLACEMENT DESIGN OPTIONS

Option #1-Renovation

- Shorten cross portion of pool from 110' to 75' to provide 5 x 25 yard lap lanes and recreational water space that does not interfere with shallow or deep water activities
- Add ramp and stairs to shallow end of pool to enhance accessibility for the youngest and oldest users and those with special needs
- Increase deck space
- Downsize overall pool footprint by 14% from 9,900 square feet to 8,500 square feet and the volume from 339,500 gallons to 290,000
- Reduce operating and long term maintenance costs
- Enhanced participation, use, and revenue projections
- Explore Myrtha Renovation option not considered in BAI report, reducing renovation costs and eliminating need for annual and regular tank painting and resurfacing
- Reduced renovation costs compared to BAI proposal
 - Projected renovation costs in 2017: \$3,053,700, including all competitive and recreational equipment
 - Can be reduced to \$2,582,000 with further downsizing and some phasing of equipment
 - BAI renovation projection for current design is \$3,924,000

Option #2-Replacement

- New replacement pool can provide a more long term cost effective option in a further downsized pool footprint with more modern aquatic amenities and features
- Pool size estimated at 6,500 to 7,000 square feet
- Key features
 - 6 x 25 yard lap lanes
 - Deep water area with diving and other amenities
 - Zero/beach entry shallow area
 - Additional shallow-mid depth area with ramp and stairs entry
 - Expanded deck space with shade and lounge elements
- Further reduced operating costs as well as enhanced participation and revenue projections
- Project Costs
 - \$3,000,000 to \$3,500,000 pending more detailed design development in next study phase
 - BAI total new facility replacement based on current size: \$4,435,000

Bathhouse and Mechanical Systems

- Downsizing pool can reduce code requirements for bathhouse fixtures
- Trends in locker room use suggest current bathhouse can be downsized
- Update of pool mechanical systems
 - Significant operational savings with new technology
 - Improved water quality and safety
 - Significant savings in water use
 - Creation of smaller stand alone pool mechanical building

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Both Options can result in reduced annual operating costs, reduced long term maintenance costs, and increase program and participation revenue.

Operating Costs:

- Areas of potential savings include: Electricity demand, water and sewer, chemicals, annual and long term maintenance
- Areas of increased costs include: Natural gas for addition of pool heater, increased staffing costs based on significantly increased usage and programming
- Annual operating cost savings projections over historic Memorial Pool expenses:
 - Option #1-Renovation \$32,000/year
 - Option #2-Replacement \$30,000/year

Revenue Projections:

- Revenue increases driven by increase in daily admissions and learn to swim as well as new programs including summer swim team, masters swim program, aquatic fitness, and special events
- Annual revenue increase projections over historic Memorial Pool revenue:
 - Option #1-Renovation \$24,690/year

- Option #2-Replacement \$38,190/year

Net Annual Financial Impact

- The net annual operating deficit for Memorial Pool is reduced by the following amounts annually
 - Option #1-Renovation \$56,690/year
 - Option #2-Replacement \$68,690/year

Long Term Financial Impact

- The long term maintenance savings over twenty-five years for each option is as follows
 - Option #1-Renovation \$400,000/year
 - Option #2-Replacement \$450,000/year
- Combined with annual operating deficit savings, the twenty-five year projection of overall annual and long term savings are as follows:
 - Option #1-Renovation \$1,817,250 over 25 years
 - Option #2-Replacement \$2,167,250 over 25 years

NEXT STEPS

Next steps in the ISG scope of services includes development of more specific design and amenity detail for both options with increased costing and operating. GENA will be closely involved with the deliberations of the Mayor's Pool Committee. It will be important in this next phase to begin to coordinate all of the stakeholders and input and incorporate these into a project timeline supported by the City budget commitments and increasing involvement of potential project partners and private support for the project.