

The Lima Community Aquatic Center

Updated 01/10/2023

1. What is an aquatic recreation center?

An aquatic recreation center means a facility that is designed for free-form aquatic play and recreation and shall include, but not be limited to: activity pools, body slides, interactive play attractions, and lap pools. Aquatic centers cater to the whole family with the leisure, fitness and entertainment attractions they provide. Additional uses including swim and water safety education, learn to swim programs, and swimming competitions.

2. Who are the main partners of the aquatic recreation center?

The proposed three main partners of the aquatic center are the City, Lima YMCA, and Lima City Schools.

3. Who will own the aquatic recreation center?

The City of Lima will own the majority of the facilities. The Lima City Schools will own the retractable enclosure. It is the desire of the city to form a partnership with the Lima YMCA to operate and manage the center. The land is already owned by the City of Lima.

4. Who has been responsible for and lead the project?

The planning and study portion of the project has been managed by the City of Lima Public Works Department with the Lima City Schools administration and the Lima YMCA providing valuable input. The administration of the preliminary and detailed design as well as the construction will be managed by the City of Lima.

5. Who will operate the aquatic recreation center?

The Lima YMCA has successfully owned and operated an indoor swimming pool in downtown Lima for the past 60 years. It is the City's desire to utilize the experience and expertise of the Lima YMCA to staff the aquatic center for day to day operations and routine maintenance.

6. Why build an aquatic recreation center?

The community currently has a shortage of recreational and swimming opportunities. In the 1990s, the Lima Community had 11 swimming pools. They were Schoonover, Orchard Hill, Shawnee Country Club, Westside, Sherwood, Lost Creek, Bradfield, Springbrook, YMCA - new, YMCA – annex, and the YWCA. As of 2022, the four pools that remain are YMCA – new, Westside, Sr. Center Services, and Shawnee Country Club and generally are not open to the public without a membership. Many children do not have the opportunity to learn to swim or learn common water safety practices. The Lima Community deserves improved swim options for the quality of life and the safety of its citizens.

7. Where will the aquatic recreation center be built and why?

The feasibility study prepared after the public involvement period identified the former Schoonover Pool site and the area between Lima Stadium Park and Lincoln Park as potential candidates. The City of Lima owns the property at both locations, both are adjacent to a park, and both have existing parking facilities. The Lima Stadium Park Site was chosen as the preferred alternative for the following reasons: centrally located to area schools, convenience of operational staff to existing facilities, surface transportation has been recently improved and will accommodate traffic impacts of a new facility, better pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to neighborhoods, located on a transit route that operates seven days a week, and proximity to other community sports venues.

8. How will the construction of the aquatic recreation center be financed?

Currently, the estimated construction cost of the aquatic recreational center (2024 dollars) is \$9.8 million for an activity pool with a family water slide and play elements, a tall stand-alone water slide, a multi-purpose pool with retractable enclosure, a pool house with locker rooms and party/event room, a separate building for concessions and auxiliary restrooms, shade structures, and perimeter fencing & landscaping.

An application for funding from the state biennium budget of \$2.4 million was submitted on March 18, 2022 and announcement of funding approval was recently received. Lima City Schools is allocating \$2.4 million of their funds for the multi-use pool enclosure. And last, the City of Lima has earmarked \$4 million from its General Fund.

9. How will programming for the aquatics recreation center be determined?

In general, the main partners, the City, YMCA, and City Schools will collaborate to establish programming and activities for the site. It is the intent to give the Lima Community including but not limited to the surrounding townships, villages, and high schools as much access to fun, fitness and competition as is feasible.

10. Who will benefit from the aquatic center?

The primary beneficiaries will be all citizens in Lima and Allen County that want the following:

- Summer fun**
- Outdoor recreation**
- Safe and convenient place to swim**
- Learn to Swim**
- Lap Swimming**
- Cross Training**
- Better Quality of Life**
- More lane time for area swim teams**

11. What activities & amenities are proposed for the aquatic center?

- **Recreational swimming**
- **Concessions area**
- **Interactive water play features**
- **Water slides (a tall slide and a family slide)**
- **Shade structures**
- **Swim lessons**
- **Water safety training**
- **Competitive swimming**
- **Competitive diving**
- **Party/Event Room in the Pool House**
- **Corporate & Neighborhood Gatherings**
- **Fitness Training**

12. Will swim competitions and other activities limit the time when the Aquatic Center is open to the general public?

The intent is to offer healthy activities that will provide opportunities for the Lima Community to come together.

During the summer, it is the intent of the City of Lima to participate in the Western Ohio Aquatic League. This league offers a competitive swimming experience to youth of ages 5-18. The League's season is from late May through early July. Swim practices are in the morning, when pools are typically not open for recreational swim. In addition, there are 2-4 home meets a year, which take place in the evenings. A yearly championship meet takes place on a Friday and Saturday in early July. This meet cycles amongst different host communities each year.

In winter, the multi-use pool will be used for learn to swim programs and swim competitions. The local high schools' swim season runs from early November to mid-February. It is expected that local high schools will use the facility for both swim practices and meets throughout their season.

Other activities such as fitness programs, movie nights, pool parties, adult-only lap swim have been suggested and will typically be scheduled during off peak hours.

13. Is the size and scope of the center right for our needs?

The feasibility study took a very close look at the community and appropriately sized the facilities based on the population while taking into account manageable operation and maintenance costs.

14. What about security at the Aquatics Center?

Best practices for security will be used in managing risks such as an injury to a guest, damage to property, crowd control, troublesome guests, or unexpected situations. Pool management will be properly trained to handle these various risks and, in addition, the City has well trained and capable Park Rangers to make sure everyone has enjoyable time.

15. Why are there two pools? Why isn't it one large pool like at Schoonover Park?

The design and operation of aquatic centers have evolved significantly, since the construction of Schoonover Pool. The needs and wants of communities have changed as well.

From a maintenance perspective, two smaller pools require smaller equipment to operate and are more cost effective.

The two pools will serve different age groups as well. The activity pool will vary in depth from a zero entry to ~3 ft. It will have interactive play elements and a family slide. It is intended to serve younger children and their families.

The multi-purpose pool will be a more traditional pool. It will be separated into two areas by a movable bulkhead. The smaller area will have step-in access and varies in depth from 3 ft to 4 ft to facilitate swim lessons. The larger area will vary from 4.5 feet deep in the shallow end to 11.5 ft deep in the deep end and include a 1 meter diving board. This pool will serve older children, their families and adults.

16. Why build a retractable enclosure around the multi-purpose pool?

The retractable enclosure will allow the multi-purpose pool to be used year around. During the feasibility study, feedback was received that included a desire within the community to offer activities not only during the summer months, but throughout the year. The Lima City Schools plans to offer educational developmental opportunities like a learn-to-swim programs to their 3rd graders during the school year. Other local school districts expressed similar interests. Local area high school swim teams, college teams, the Allen Economic Development Group, Lima/Allen County Regional Planning Commission, Greater Lima Region, Lima Memorial Health System, Mercy Health – Lima, Activate Allen County, Allen County Public Health, and Health Partners of Western Ohio all conveyed a need for enhancing safe and fun fitness opportunities that a year round facility can provide.

Based on this support and feedback, the City of Lima applied for and was awarded \$2.4 million in a grant from the State of Ohio and the Lima City Schools is allocating \$2.4 million of their funds. The additional \$4.8 million in capital investment has allowed the design of the aquatic recreational center to proceed with the inclusion of the retractable enclosure.

17. Why wasn't a 50 meter by 25 yard "Olympic" size pool proposed?

During the feasibility study, all options were considered for the center. The 50 meter by 25 yard sized pool was cost prohibitive. The current design includes a movable bulkhead allowing for 25 yards or 25 meters and a shallow area for water safety education.

18. What will it cost to operate?

Current estimated costs to operate the facility on an annual basis will be \$650,000. The City of Lima annually spent \$60,000 to operate Schoonover Pool before it was closed. The funds needed to operate the facility will be from revenue generated by the facility (est. between \$180,000 to \$400,000) and the current subsidized amount of \$60,000 by the City of Lima. In addition, the development of an endowment fund is being explored by the non-profit organizations of Allen Co. to contribute to annual operating and maintenance costs for long term sustainability.

19. What about parking?

Currently there are 138 parking spaces in the existing parking lot east of Lima Stadium. An additional parking area could be created between Grove Ave. and the IORY railroad of up to 150 spaces on city owned land. This additional area formerly contained a dairy which was razed, however, the existing stone parking remains. Schoonover Pool had 120 parking spaces.

20. What will happen with the Schoonover Pool Site?

Schoonover Pool served thousands if not hundreds of thousands of youth since its construction in 1939. Components such as art deco architecture of the pool house call the city to find alternative uses for the site. Some ideas that have been proposed by those in the community or staff include: a skateboard park, midget football field, dog park, a splash pad, a playground, rope course, bouldering area and pickle ball courts to name a few. The complex could include several uses mentioned above.

21. Could the City of Lima funds be put to better use?

Mayor Smith and her staff conducted the ultimate public engagement "Better Together Plan" through the first quarter of 2022 to find out how the community wanted to spend the federal funds. That effort included many meetings and community walks where one on one discussion could take place and input could be received. That input was analyzed by the Mayor and staff to determine priorities and how much could be accomplished with the allocated funds. A new aquatics center made the list and therefore efforts to continue moving the project forward ensued.

22. Could the Lima City Schools funds be put to better use?

The Lima City Schools has been blessed to have received several million dollars in rescue funds from the federal government. All funds have been directed to the mitigation of COVID, closure of the academic gap, reduced chronic absenteeism and health and wellness of students. The cost of items such as books, computer tablets, lunches... are all covered through other school funding sources. The Lima City Schools has lost several young children to drowning incidents over the last several years. We feel it is important to teach our children, at a young age, how to swim while instilling water safety into their lives. Having an opportunity to grow our aquatic programs lends itself to both physical and mental health growth in children. By contributing to the retractable enclosure, the district will save a significant amount of money by not having to construct a pool, will be able to offer more opportunities to children and athletic programs and will overall strengthen its commitment to the Lima community.