

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: INDOOR AQUATIC CENTER CONCEPT UPDATE

BACKGROUND:

Over the years, Ames residents have been asked to vote on two proposals that included an indoor aquatic center. The 2003 Rec Plex referendum was defeated and the Healthy Life Center (HLC) was voted down in 2019. Since Municipal Pool is scheduled to be demolished in the spring of 2022, providing a new indoor aquatic center is a priority for City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Therefore, on December 8, the City Council directed staff to proceed with preparing a conceptual design for an indoor aquatic center as part of the Iowa Reinvestment District Program (IRDP) application process. Through this program, it is hoped that it will be possible to finance construction of an aquatic center with a combination of State tax rebates from the reinvestment district and private donations.

The aquatic facility would be required to be located within the boundaries of the reinvestment district, which limits the potential locations. The proposed aquatic center would be located at 122 North Oak Avenue. This property is currently owned by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT), but DOT intends to vacate the buildings and consolidate operations on the south side of Lincoln Way in the future.

On February 9, City Council will receive a complete Reinvestment District application update before staff finalizes the application, including the indoor aquatic center concept. The deadline to submit a preliminary application for this program is February 22. **To prepare the information needed for the preliminary application, the City hired RDG Planning and Design to create a concept, using the aquatic portion of the Healthy Life Center as a base.**

Since there was plenty of public input related to aquatic features included in the HLC design, staff decided not to conduct public input related to the features. **However, staff did meet with the Oak to Riverside Neighborhood Association to share the indoor aquatic center concept and provided an opportunity for the general public to comment on the concept at the January 21 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.**

SITE ANALYSIS:

RDG completed a site analysis and provided the following information:

- The site is approximately 360' by 354' (2.91 acres)

- Two buildings are currently on the site with a footprint of 17,700 square feet
- Approximately 125 parking spaces
- Overhead wires run through the middle of the property from east to west

Taking this information and City requirements for greenspace, RDG estimated an aquatic center with a footprint of 30,000 square feet and 150 parking spaces could fit on this site.

Staff contacted the DOT to determine if the buildings had asbestos or if abatement had already taken place. The following information was received regarding asbestos and two other environmental items related to the site.

Asbestos – Per an email from Mike Harvey, Director of Support Services for DOT:

“As you are aware both buildings were extensively remodeled subsequent to acquisition by the DOT and by my understanding this involved gutting the interiors down to bare walls. Any asbestos issues prior to those remodels are not known by this office but various materials have been sampled since that time in relation to minor remodeling projects. No asbestos has been identified in those samples which included roofing, insulation, flooring, drywall and joint compound and ceiling materials. Although no comprehensive asbestos inspection has been performed since the original remodels, no asbestos-containing materials are known to be present.”

Ames College Park Former Manufactured Gas Plant – Alliant Energy and its consultant, GHD, have been investigating contamination associated with the former gas plant which had operated north of the DOT property. A number of monitoring wells have been installed including three located on the DOT’s property. These three wells have not had any detections of contamination in four sampling events performed in 2019 and 2020. In November 2020, GHD submitted an overall investigation summary report to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) with a request for approval to terminate all groundwater monitoring. Assuming the DNR provides approval, Alliant Energy/GHD will be required to properly close the monitoring wells.

Underground Tanks – In 1998, a previously unidentified 2000 gallon underground storage tank was discovered in the southwest corner of the DOT’s property. It was determined to have been used to store fuel oil for the former St. Cecilia school. The tank was removed and soil sampling did not identify any contamination.

INDOOR AQUATIC CENTER CONCEPTUAL DESIGN:

Before starting the design, staff met with RDG to discuss several items to consider regarding the site and placement of the new aquatic center. Attachment A provides a graphical picture of these items which are summarized below:

Building location – it was determined the building should be situated on the south end of the property to provide prominent views for people moving along Lincoln Way

Parking – this should be located to the north

Traffic – the design should encourage people to use the controlled intersection at Lincoln Way and North Elm to minimize traffic on North Oak

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The following two options were given consideration:

Option 1 – Single-Level Aquatic Center

City Council directed staff to develop a concept for an indoor aquatic center and this is reflected in Option 1 which is shown in Attachment B. The building is 31,300 square feet located on the southwest portion of the property. It includes a six-lane lap pool, a zero-depth entry pool with a current channel, a wellness/therapy pool, a large enclosed slide that begins and ends inside the building but also goes outside, a smaller slide for younger children, locker rooms (men’s, women’s, and eight universal/family change rooms), two gender neutral restrooms, some office space, and support spaces (storage, equipment room, etc.). Parking for 140 vehicles with entrances/exits from North Elm and North 2nd Street is included. Approximately 30% of the site is green space. Opportunities for future expansion exist to the east of the building or by building over the parking lot to the north.

Option 2 – Two-Level Aquatic Center with Additional Features

Attachment C shows Option 2, which has 32,100 square feet on the first level and 11,600 square feet on the second level. **This option was considered to determine the cost of adding additional features to the facility.**

The first level has the same features as Option 1 with the addition of stairs and an elevator. The second level features a multi-purpose room, a walking area (9.5 laps per mile), a social area, storage, and two gender neutral restrooms. Approximately 30% of the site is green space and opportunities for expansion also exist to the east of the building or by building over the parking lot to the north.

COST:

The cost estimates in 2022 dollars for both options are shown in Attachment D are as follows:

Option 1	\$22,805,000
Option 2	\$27,494,000

These estimates include construction, storm water storage under the parking lot, land acquisition, demolition of buildings, and parking, FF&E, design fees, other costs (soils, survey, testing), and a 15% contingency. Also included are several alternates related to managing storm water, increased structural steel and footings to accommodate adding a second floor in the future (Option 1), and shortening the size of the walking area (Option 2).

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES AND REVENUES:

A comprehensive study of expenses and revenues has not been done for this concept due to time constraints. However, since this proposed aquatics facility uses largely the same indoor aquatics components as the Healthy Life Center concept, the aquatics portion of the Healthy Life Center cost estimates can be used as a guideline. The aquatics operational overview from the Healthy Life Center project was:

Expenses	\$1,213,566
Revenues	\$ 749,471
Subsidy	\$ 464,095*

*Estimated based on Healthy Life Study, will need to be refined.

The amount of subsidy needed for the aquatic center may be higher or lower. However, it is certain that a significant subsidy in some amount will be required. Additionally, a fee schedule, scholarship program, and hours of operation will need to be developed if this project moves forward.

OUTREACH:

Neighborhood Meeting

On January 20, 2021, a virtual meeting was held with the Oak to Riverside neighborhood. Staff worked with the neighborhood association representative to notify the neighborhood of the meeting. Approximately 500 letters were sent to this neighborhood to ensure everyone in the area received notification. Fifteen people attended. Staff gave an overview of the project and then asked participants for feedback. The comments received are summarized in Attachment E.

Overall, the sentiment was positive regarding the aquatic center. However, there were threads of concerns which are summarized below:

Traffic – concerns were voiced about the increased traffic related to the aquatic center and the impact it will have on the neighborhood streets, especially North 2nd Street. Safety for area residents and children was expressed.

Parking – since many houses along North 2nd Street do not have driveways, residents must park on the street. There was concern regarding aquatic center participants parking in the neighborhood and taking parking away from neighborhood residents.

Storm Water – some discussion was had regarding the safety and aesthetics of a detention pond versus underground storm water management.

Affordability – one participant spoke about the affordability of admission fees and passes for this facility.

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting

The indoor aquatic center concept was shared with the Commission at its January 21, 2021 virtual meeting and there was an opportunity for public comment. Although there were five who attended the meeting, only one asked questions:

- Will solar panels be considered for this facility?
- Was there discussion about reusing the existing larger building?
- Could there be an incentive (10% discount) for walking, biking, or using CyRide to get to the center?

Commissioners liked the options and provided the following comments:

- Might be good to add the 2nd level option to accommodate additional programming needs.
- What would be the cost of adding a 2nd level in ten years versus doing it now?
- Could DOT parking areas be used for overflow parking?
- Consider using the southeast corner of the property as a drop-off loop for people to use.
- Would there need to be a referendum for this project?

FUNDING:

The indoor aquatic center capital cost is proposed to be funded through rebating the new state sales tax and hotel/motel tax generated in the Reinvestment District, plus donations. The Reinvestment District does not create new taxes; instead it redirects the state portion of tax revenues to the City to finance the repayment of bonds.

As of the writing of this CAF, there is not enough new information to report regarding the financial aspects of the project. It is staff's goal to provide this information at the February 9 City Council meeting.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Accept the update on the preparation of the Indoor Aquatic Center concept and direct staff to proceed with preparation of the final concept design and cost estimates **regarding Option 1 (a Single-Level Aquatic Center)** for City Council review on February 9.

2. Accept the update on the preparation of the Indoor Aquatic Center concept and direct staff to proceed with preparation of the final concept design and cost estimates **regarding Option 2 (a Two-Level Aquatic Center with Additional Features)** for City Council review on February 9.
3. Provide direction to staff and RDG on issues to address or desired changes prior to completing the final concept design for City Council approval on February 9.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

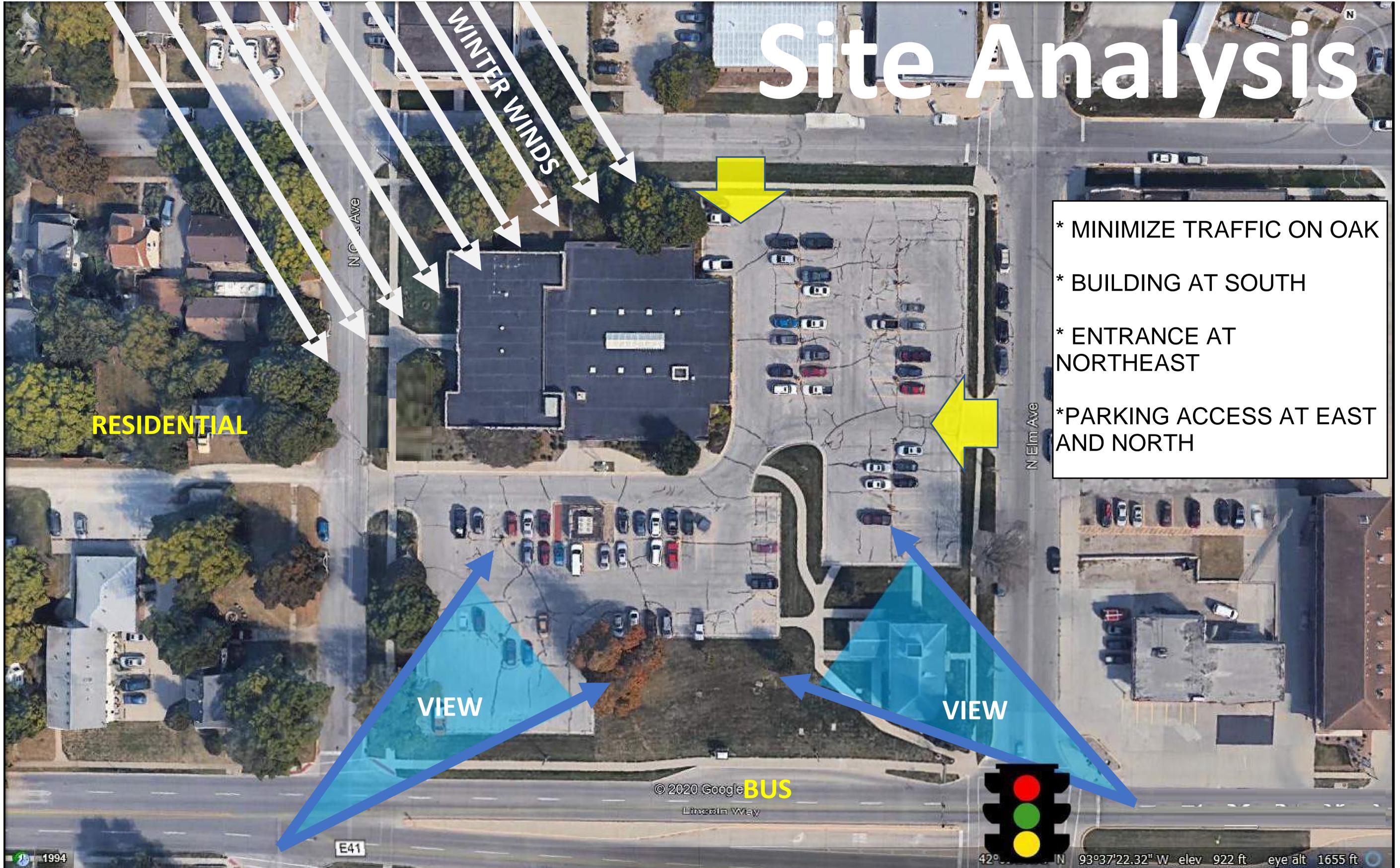
The concepts presented by RDG are based on the aquatic portion of the Healthy Life Centers design. A lot of public outreach had been done prior to finalizing the aquatic components included in the HLC. For this reason, staff feels the aquatic components reflect what is desired by residents.

The question for the Council is whether Option 1 or Option 2 is the preferred path to move forward. An indoor aquatic center is a priority for City Council and that is what is presented in Option 1 at an estimated cost of \$22,805,000. If \$10,000,000 in donations is secured, that leaves \$12,805,000 to be covered by the tax rebates. **Staff is not certain at this time if the level of tax rebate funding generated from the Reinvestment District projects and the amount of donations secured will cover the cost of either option.**

Option 2 comes at a cost of \$27,494,000. Although this option does include additional amenities which would cost less to build now rather than in the future, the potential funding shortfall is only increased compared to Option 1. Staff does not believe the additional \$4,689,000 required to gain the multi-purpose room and walking tract justifies the additional cost.

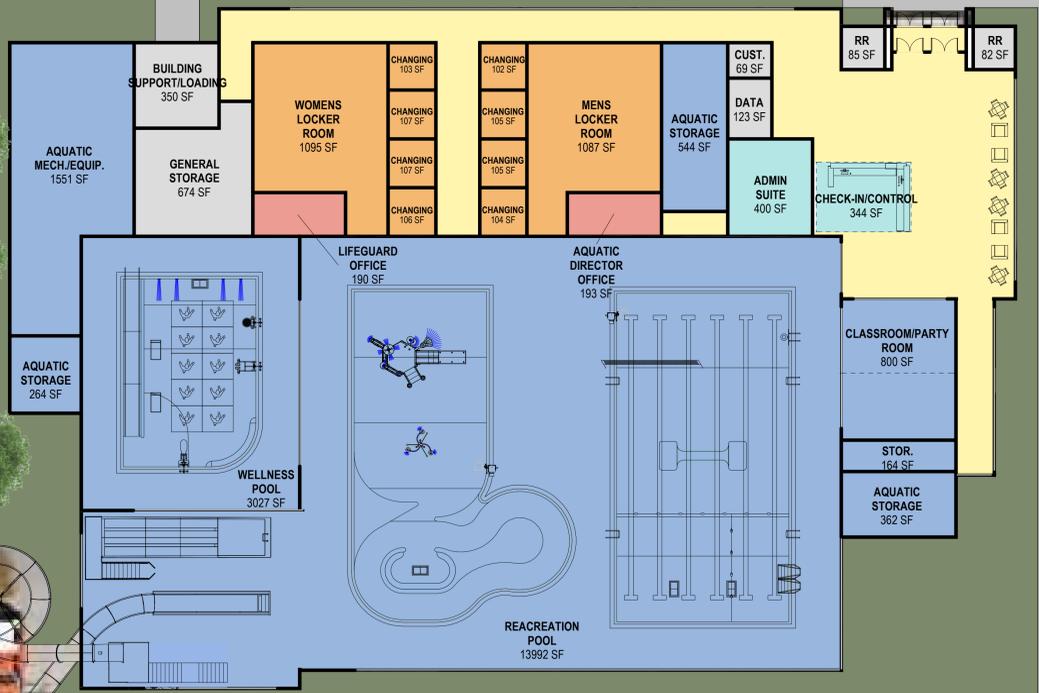
Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative #1, as described above.

Site Analysis





SUMMARY:
 *APPROX 31,300 GSF ON ONE LEVEL
 *EXPANSION TO EAST OR NORTH ABOVE PARKING LOT
 *MAIN SITE ENTRANCE/EXITS OFF ELM & 2ND
 *140 PARKING SPACES
 *TOTAL PARCEL AREA = 126,741 SF.
 APPROX GREEN SPACE = 38,500 SF. 30% GREEN SPACE.





SUMMARY:
 *APPROX 43,700 GSF ON 2 FLOORS
 *EXPANSION TO EAST
 *MAIN SITE ENTRANCE/EXITS OFF ELM & 2ND
 *2ND LEVEL WALKING TRACK - APPROX. 9 1/2 LAPS/MILE
 *MULTIPURPOSE ROOM ON 2ND LEVEL
 *ROOM FOR ADDITIONAL ROOMS/FITNESS EQUIPMENT ON 2ND LEVEL
 *SOCIAL/GATHERING WITH OVERLOOK INTO AQUATICS ON 2ND LEVEL
 *140 PARKING SPACES
 *TOTAL PARCEL AREA = 126,741 SF. APPROX GREEN SPACE = 38,500 SF. 30% GREEN SPACE.

32,100 GSF



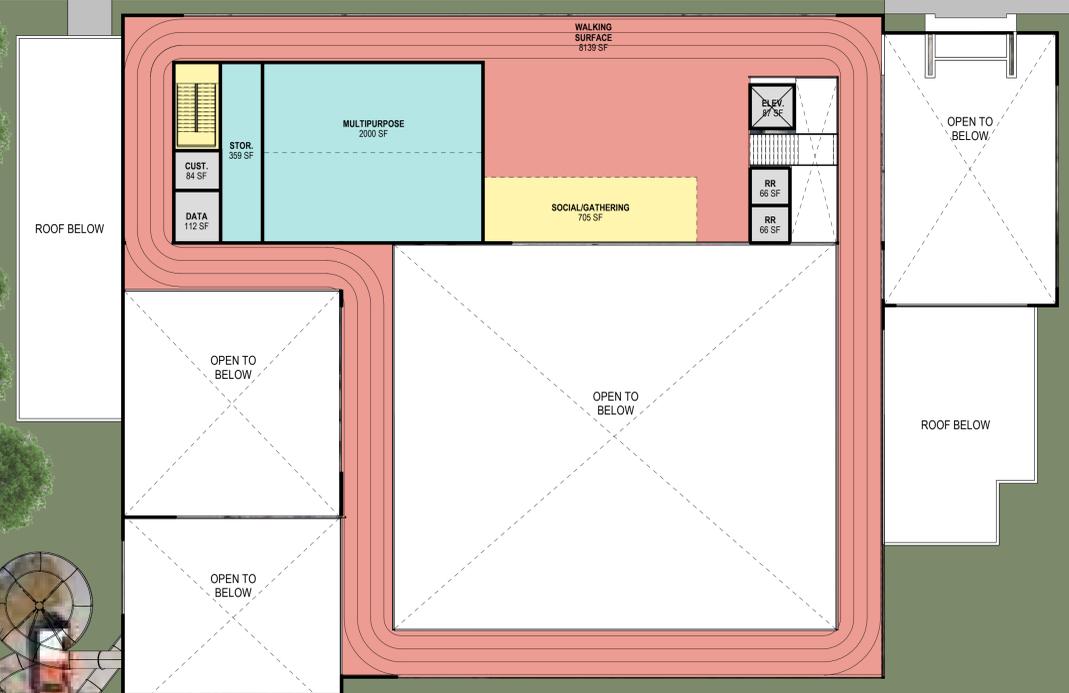
2ND STREET

N OAK AVE

N ELM AVE

140 PARKING SPACES

SUMMARY:
 *APPROX 43,700 GSF ON 2 FLOORS
 *EXPANSION TO EAST
 *MAIN SITE ENTRANCE/EXITS OFF ELM & 2ND
 *2ND LEVEL WALKING TRACK - APPROX. 9 1/2 LAPS/MILE
 *MULTIPURPOSE ROOM ON 2ND LEVEL
 *ROOM FOR ADDITIONAL ROOMS/FITNESS EQUIPMENT ON 2ND LEVEL
 *SOCIAL/GATHERING WITH OVERLOOK INTO AQUATICS ON 2ND LEVEL
 *140 PARKING SPACES
 *TOTAL PARCEL AREA = 126,741 SF.
 APPROX GREEN SPACE = 38,500 SF. 30% GREEN SPACE.



11,600 GSF

LINCOLN WAY



Ames Indoor Aquatics Estimate of Probable Costs
Indoor aquatics, One Level

Line	Item	Probable Cost Summary
1	Building (31,300 GSF)	\$ 13,900,000
2	Structure for future vertical expansion	\$ -
3	Site utilities, parking, grading, landscape, etc	\$ 1,120,000
4	Site stormwater under parking	\$ 516,000
5	Demolition of buildings and site	\$ 425,000
6	Asbestos abatement	\$ -
7	Land acquisition	\$ 2,000,000
8	FF&E	\$ 280,000
9	Design fees and expenses	\$ 1,200,000
10	Other soft costs (soils, survey, testing, etc.)	\$ 390,000
11	Contingency of 15%	\$ 2,974,000
PROBABLE TOTAL PROJECT COST 2022		\$ 22,805,000

Alternates:

1	Use above ground storm detention at SE corner of site.	Deduct	\$ 350,000
2	Oversize under parking detention to allow future 30,000 sf addition (15,000 per floor)	Add	\$ 150,000
3	Oversize under parking detention to allow future 40,000 sf addition over the parking area.	Add	\$ 20,000
4	Use above ground detention for phase 1 and assume future 30,000 sf (15,000 sf footprint) addition in SE corner. So demo 50% of parking to add under parking storage.	Add	\$ 850,000
5	Size building structural steel and footings to accommodate a future 11,600 SF upper level for multi-purpose room, gathering area, and 9.5 laps per mile walking track.	Add	\$500,000

Ames Indoor Aquatics Estimate of Probable Costs
Indoor aquatics, with second level multi-purpose room, and 9.5 laps per mile walking track.

Line	Item	Probable Cost Summary
1	Building (43,700 GSF)	\$ 17,678,000
2	Structure for future vertical expansion	\$ -
3	Site utilities, parking, grading, landscape, etc	\$ 1,120,000
4	Site stormwater under parking	\$ 516,000
5	Demolition of buildings and site	\$ 425,000
6	Asbestos abatement	\$ -
7	Land acquisition	\$ 2,000,000
8	FF&E	\$ 300,000
9	Design fees and expenses	\$ 1,480,000
10	Other soft costs (soils, survey, testing, etc.)	\$ 390,000
11	Contingency of 15%	\$ 3,585,000
PROBABLE TOTAL PROJECT COST 2022		\$ 27,494,000

Alternates:

1	Use above ground storm detention at SE corner of site.	Deduct	\$ 350,000
2	Oversize under parking detention to allow future 30,000 sf addition (15,000 per floor)	Add	\$ 150,000
3	Oversize under parking detention to allow future 40,000 sf addition over the parking area.	Add	\$ 20,000
4	Use above ground detention for phase 1 and assume future 30,000 sf (15,000 sf footprint) addition in SE corner. Demo and replace 50% of parking to add under parking storage.	Add	\$ 850,000
5	Shorten walking track at second level.	Deduct	\$ 1,500,000

ATTACHMENT E

Aquatic Center Neighborhood Meeting Notes

The meeting began at 6:32PM and concluded at 7:30 PM

Staff Present

Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director

Julie Gould, City Planner

Kellee Omlid, Recreation Superintendent

Jill Burt, Aquatics Manager

Susan Gwiasda, Public Relations Officer

Abraham stressed that this meeting is for the neighborhood not the public.

Abraham shared information regarding the planned demolition of Municipal Pool.

Abraham went over the Iowa Reinvestment District Program and what the City's next steps are in creating the district. He also informed neighborhood participants the goal is for the tax rebate, private fundraising, and existing estate gift to fund an aquatic center without the need for a bond.

Abraham went over the site analysis and layout options of the aquatic center.

Q & A

Public Question/Comment: Traffic has denied zoning for this area in the past because there is no access from the east and limited access from the north. This will be an increase in traffic.

Gould: The adopted Lincoln Corridor Plan does call for a similar type of construction in this area.

Public Question/Comment: It is my understanding that this (aquatic center) will have a private owner. Is there already an owner?

Abraham: This facility would be owned and managed by the City.

Public Question/Comment: Will Oak be closed at Lincoln Way?

Abraham: No, Oak will not be closed. The design is planned to keep people off of Oak, not to close Oak.

Public Question/Comment: This project will change the traffic on North 2nd between Oak and North Hazel as Hazel is a controlled intersection. That will make a lot of traffic on N Hazel and Oak. Participant is not against the aquatic center but is anxious the City is not taking traffic into consideration.

Abraham: The City will have the traffic engineer investigate this. Abraham explained that this is a pre-application. If the application is moved forward there would be many things that need to happen before the final plans would be approved

Public Question/Comment: What is the timeframe that the DOT expects to sell?

Abraham: The DOT's timeline would be up to four years to finish renovations before the programs and activities could be moved. The DOT will work with the City and the Chamber if necessary so it could be within a year or two. Another option is that construction could start on the south side while the north building remains.

Public Question/Comment: Will the aesthetic character of the neighborhood be considered in the design of the building?

Abraham: No outside designs have been drawn yet. To the south there is the DOT, to the east there is the former gas station that is now a glass installer and the bank, Heuss Printing to the north as well as some residential on Oak. If you have specific thoughts, please contact me.

Public Question/Comment: What is the timeframe for the project?

Abraham: If the City were awarded the grant, the funding is there, and Council says yes to move forward, the end of 2021. With all of that in place we would be looking at June or July of 2022 to get design and specs ready to bid. Best case scenario would be to break ground at the end of 2022. Maybe completed by the end of 2023 or the beginning of 2024. Abraham stressed that this would be the best case scenario.

Public Question/Comment: Johnathan who lives on S Maple stated he feels building the one-story facility is short sighted. If you add on later, you will have to close part of the center or the parking lot. It will also add additional construction in the neighborhood. His opinion is that we should do the bigger facility.

Abraham: The City just lost a bond for the Healthy Life Center. If we do go larger there would probably be a bond referendum to offset any shortcomings in the funding.

Public Question/Comment: How many people can the facility hold at one time?

Abraham: The peak attendance would be during swimming lessons as there are several classes held at the same time. If every class had the maximum participants enrolled, we could have 164 students at one time. This would not mean 164 cars as there are siblings, families who carpool and people who walk or bike. Planning felt 140 cars would be sufficient for those peak times. The City can't guarantee that no one would park in the neighborhood and is trying to do what we can to keep parking out of the neighborhood.

Public Question/Comment: Adib lives on N 2nd St. His family would definitely love to have this pool and supports construction of this pool. He does agree about the increased traffic on North 2nd St. and wants the neighborhood to be safe. He also commented that the houses on the north side don't have driveways and want to be able to continue to park on the street in front of their homes.

He also commented that a retention pool would need a fence and may not look very nice.

From his perspective his family would like to have such a facility. He would also like the City to investigate the possibility of acquiring some of the neighboring industrial property as this is a prime area to have services.

He also wanted to stress that affordability is a question. He would like to see a yearly membership so families could go whenever they want. He asked the City to look at Reiman Gardens and other institutions like the Blank Park Zoo as those institutions are affordable for families. Abraham inquired how often his family used those passes. He answered that they go every couple of weeks to Reiman and to the Zoo when they have appointments in Des Moines.

Abraham: There would be annual passes available.

Public Question/Comment: We think this would be an awesome addition, especially if we can control the traffic.

Abraham: No additional comments or hands up.