



# MEMO

**To:** Mayor Haila and City Council Members

**From:** Keith Abraham, Parks and Recreation Director

**Date:** July 14, 2026

**Subject:** Staining of Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center Pre-cast Concrete Panels

At the October 28, 2025 City Council meeting, staff along with representatives from RDG and Story Construction, described the mottled appearance of the gray, sinus wave precast concrete panels on the exterior of the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center. Staff indicated this was not the look the City was expecting and that RDG and Story were investigating possible causes and potential resolutions to this problem.

RDG and Story investigated possible causes, which included:

1. Integral pigment/color admixture
2. Smooth cast panels may lead to mottling
3. Environmental factors such as sun exposure, airborne particulates, etc.
4. Detergent washing methods used onsite
5. Inconsistent concrete mixing
6. Form release agent could still be present on the wall panels
7. Efflorescence
8. Change in cement makeup in recent years.

Additionally, staff contracted with a concrete expert from the firm of Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger (SGH) to obtain a professional opinion from concrete engineers. RDG, Story, and SGH all agreed that no matter what the cause, there are two potential solutions:

1. Time - Do nothing and see if the issue improves over time. SGH indicated they would expect the mottling to reduce after one year, but that does not appear to be the case.
2. Stain - Applying a penetrating stain to cover the defects but will not take them away. The darker the stain, the more the defects are hidden. SGH

indicated stain is routinely used on precast concrete panels.

**RDG's opinion is that the mottling of the sinus wave precast panels is due to the contractor failing to include integral color in the panels as required in the specifications. Additionally, the contractor failed to submit a design mix for the panels, which does not allow for any additional reviews. For these reasons, RDG recommended staining the precast concrete panels at the contractor's cost.**

On Friday, March 6, 2026, staff received an email from Stephen D. Marso, Attorney for Whitfield & Eddy Law, regarding the staining of the precast concrete panels. Staff also received the same information included in the email in a certified letter on March 9, 2026. **The letter states that Core and the precast supplier disagree with the City's claim that the panels are non-conforming to the specifications. However, the letter does not provide any evidence to support that position.**

The letter further states that "Core will perform the demanded work, but it will do so under protest. Core hereby gives notice of claims for all time and money related to the Precast Appearance Issue and the demanded work. Core's rough estimate for its money claim is \$52,000 (plus markup); this is a rough estimate, and the actual costs could be lower or higher. At this time, Core does not have an estimate of its time claim."

#### **STAIN OR NO STAIN:**

On March 17, Core had representatives from Nawkaw apply three different colored stains to the mockup panel. The three colors included 1) Cement, 2) Silver Lining, and 3) Rushing River. The precast concrete panels were specified to have Rushing River as the integral color. **Of the three stain colors, staff prefers the Rushing River over the other two darker colors.** The Rushing River stain is the lightest of the colors and is what the original color was meant to be.

The proposed stain is NawTone-K manufactured by Nawkaw. Because NawTone-K chemically binds with concrete, it is an ideal choice for use on precast concrete. This stain is a penetrating, UV resistant, weather resistant, nonflammable, nontoxic, water-based, solvent-free, and non-film-forming product. It also comes with a 25-year material warranty.

Staff had requested the Contractor supply a 25-year labor warranty if City Council were to accept staining as an acceptable solution to the precast concrete panels not meeting specifications. The Contractor has stated they will not supply a labor warranty for the staining.

## **STAFF COMMENTS:**

**At its March 24 meeting, City Council approved staining of the precast concrete panels with the Rushing River color at the Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center at no cost to the City, contingent upon staff completing a test run with a satisfactory result.** Should the result be unsatisfactory to staff, the resolution shall be considered null and staff shall report back to the City Council with next steps. It was also suggested to do a test run of the stain on the north side of the natatorium so it will be inconspicuous if it is decided to not move forward with staining the entire building.

In late June, the Contractor stained an area, approximately 100' wide x 8' high, on the north side of the natatorium. A diagram of the location and photos of the stained area are attached. The lower portion of the wall is stained, and the top portion is not stained so you can see the difference.

**Staff is pleased with the results and, therefore, is recommending that we move forward with staining the rest of the sinus wave precast panels, regardless of Core's notice of a potential claim against the City.**

**If Council wishes to no longer proceed with staining at this time knowing Core has indicated they would do the work under protest and may pursue a notice of claims afterwards, it would be appropriate for Council to make a decision not to stain the panel walls.**

## **ATTACHMENT(S):**

[Staining Mockup Location.pdf](#)

[Staining Mock-up - Picture 1.pdf](#)

[Staining Mock-up - Picture 2.pdf](#)

[Staining Mock-up - Picture 3.pdf](#)