



**WESTBROOK CITY COUNCIL  
FACILITIES & STREETS COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA  
MONDAY MAY 11, 2020 AT 6:00 PM  
ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86369097220>**



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*This City Council Facilities & Streets Committee meeting will be conducted in accordance with 1 M.R.S.A. § 403-A, which permits public proceedings to be conducted through remote access during the declared State of Emergency due to COVID-19.*

- 1. Cornelia Warren Recreation Area Operational Cost Comparison: Outdoor Pool v. Splash Park**



**MAYOR'S OFFICE**



**Mayor Michael T. Foley**

2 York Street

Westbrook, Maine 04092

Phone: 207-591-8110

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To: Honorable City Council  
From: Jerre R. Bryant, City Administrator  
Date: May 8, 2020  
Subject: Position Paper for Facilities & Streets Committee – May 11, 2020

The City has received a grant from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to conduct repairs, renovations, and enhancements at the Cornelia Warren Outdoor Recreation Area. This area currently includes an outdoor swimming pool, basketball courts and a softball field. The scope and components of this work has previously been discussed with the City Council.

In the course of evaluating the repairs and improvements that were needed at the swimming pool, the Community Services Department also explored the feasibility of a splash pad to supplement or replace the existing swimming pool.

The City is now finalizing the specific work to be funded by this \$600,000 grant program and would like to present and discuss the enclosed information with the Facilities & Streets Committee on the splash pad options. Prior to moving forward with any plans to replace the existing swimming pool, an extensive public discussion would need to take place. Monday's committee meeting is intended to begin that public discussion and get some initial feedback from city councilors to see if there is interest in the splash pad concept.



WESTBROOK COMMUNITY CENTER



**Greg Post**  
*Director of Community Services*  
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Email: [gpost@westbrook.me.us](mailto:gpost@westbrook.me.us)

Request for Council Consideration  
**Cornelia Warren Recreation Area**  
Operational Cost Comparison

**TO:** Facilities + Streets Committee

**FROM:** Greg Post, Director of Community Services  
Robyn Saunders, Project Manager

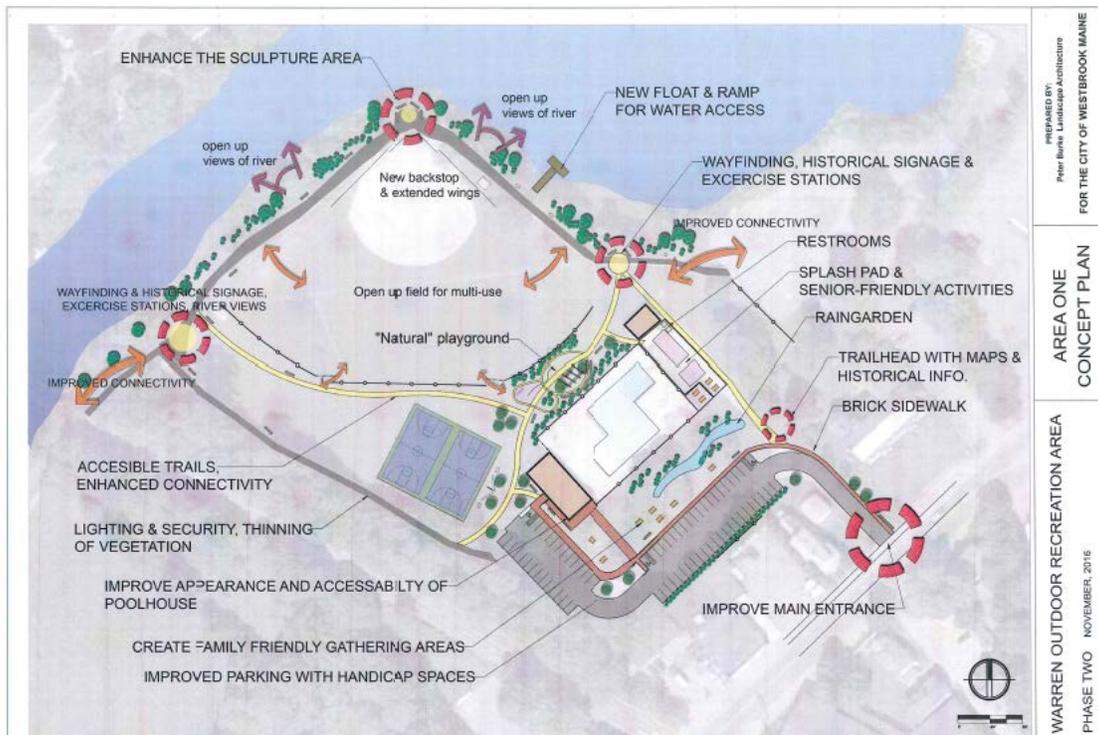
**CC:** Mike Foley, Mayor  
Jerre Bryant, City Administrator  
Eric Dudley, City Engineer/Director of Public Services  
Jennie Franceschi, Director of Planning + Code Enforcement

**DATE:** May 7, 2020

**RE:** **Operational Cost Comparison: Outdoor Pool vs. Splash Park  
Cornelia Warren Outdoor Recreational Area (359 Main St.)**

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As you may recall, the City was awarded grants to fund the redevelopment of Cornelia Warren Recreational Area that includes an outdoor pool + bathhouse, new basketball courts, a softball field + abutting baseball field (not shown below), and a trail network with a gravel entrance + parking lot. The conceptual plan for the much-needed enhancements + improvements for this recreational complex was prepared in 2016, as shown below.



Grants + funding commitments have been secured from several sources, including (but not limited to):

- Land + Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) from the US Department of Interior – National Park Service, as administered through the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, as administered through Cumberland County’s CDBG Program
- Westbrook Environmental Improvement Corporation
- Westbrook Recreation + Conservation Commission
- Cornelia Warren Community Foundation
- The City’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Grant + purchase<sup>1</sup> agreements are in place to complete the following tasks:

1. Construct + Rehabilitate Existing Bathhouse
2. Reconstruct a Parking Area
3. Redevelop Ballfields
4. Enhance aquatic facilities, utilities, landscaping + signage

The next step in the redevelopment process is to draft a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Survey + Design Services to prepare a design with a construction cost estimate that will be used to solicit contractor bids later in 2020.

<sup>1</sup> The LWCF contract includes the Agreement to Purchase Services (No. OA 20190711-145) between the Maine DACF + the City of Westbrook (executed 7/15/2019). Council actions preceded the execution of this contract.

## REQUEST FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Before moving forward with the design + construction in 2020, the City is weighing all options to maximize this community investment, especially as it pertains to the outdoor aquatics facilities. Specifically, two options for the aquatics program at the recreational area are presented to you for consideration.

**OPTION #1: One option is to upgrade the existing outdoor pool.** Details in the grant agreement include replacing the gutter + pump house, in hopes of providing the pool with the necessary upgrades to function properly + prevent future leakage. Water usage at the pool is upwards of 650,000 gallons each year. Although grant funds are allotted to cover these capital + construction costs to upgrade the pool, LWCF program is open to alternatives, like OPTION #2 presented below.

**OPTION #2: A second option is to follow a growing national trend to remove outdoor pools and replace them with splash pads,** or splash parks, like the one depicted in the photos below in Manchester, NH.



*Above left: Director of Parks + Recreation, Don Pinard, in front of the splash pad at DuPont Park in Manchester, NH shortly after the grand opening in 2017.*



*Above right: Mr. + Mrs. Fradette who met when they were 13 years old at the former Manchester pool have been married for 70 years and still enjoy returning to Dupont Park.*

## OPERATIONAL COST COMPARISON

Because the capital + construction costs are covered by grant funding for either option, an “order of magnitude” comparison of annual operational costs for both options has been completed and included as **ATTACHMENT A**. By projecting out the operational costs for both options, **we hope to provide enough information to consider adopting OPTION #2 – replacing the outdoor pool with a splash pad.** As seen in **ATTACHMENT A**, the annual operational costs associated with OPTION #2 are lower than OPTION #1. **The estimated savings of over \$20,000 annually is largely due to the following considerations:**

- **Staffing requirements** are significantly higher to operate the outdoor pool. Lifeguards are required whenever there is standing water, which is eliminated with OPTION #2. In fact, the need for lifeguards at this location is eliminated altogether with a splash pad, leaving only seasonal staff (i.e., building attendants) to implement the rules with patrons and conduct daily cleaning routines.
- **Water usage** is drastically reduced with a splash pad (i.e., 3,000-gallon reservoir for recirculation tank) versus continually refilling the upgraded pool.



*Above: Dupont Park in Manchester, NH*

## PROS + CONS

In addition to the cost savings of over \$20,000 annually to the City for OPTION #2, there are some very specific advantages to replacing the outdoor pool with a splash pad, or splash park, like the rendering shown below.



*Above: Artist's rendering of Dupont Splash Park that was constructed in Manchester, NH circa 2016.*

Advantages of a splash pad are presented below (*with direct experiences in italics shared from the City of Manchester's Recreation + Enterprise Manager, Janet Horvath, during a call on 5/7/2020*).

1. **ADA accessibility will be maximized.** Although the outdoor pool has an ADA-compliant lift<sup>2</sup>, it is rarely used. A splash park removes any barriers for handicapped patrons + provides much needed recreational space + resources for underserved populations.
  - *Janet Horvath with the City of Manchester (pop: 110,000) recommended offering special hours for special needs groups, including elderly populations.*
2. **A wider audience can be served** with a splash pad. In addition to special needs concerns, a splash pad/park allows special opportunities for all ages: toddlers to seniors. The splash pad/park is especially helpful for those that have not been taught to swim (underserved + low-income communities, New Americans, etc.).
  - *Based on our conversation with Janet Horvath, the demographic of the population served at a splash park is much different than a pool. In her experience, attentive + interactive play is more plentiful at a splash park, and the City has had far less incidents of drug overdoses since converting their park to a splash pad.*
3. **A splash park expands the aquatic season** to almost 6 months (from 10-12 weeks as a pool) thus allowing more recreational opportunities for residents + non-residents alike. Motion-activated jets and sprayers are programmed on a preset timer/sequence for children + adults of all ages to enjoy throughout the extended aquatic season.
  - *The City of Manchester confirmed this assumption + provided information on the chemicals + maintenance that is performed, which is minimized with a splash pad.*
4. **Costs to residents + non-residents are minimized.** In addition to the annual savings to the general fund (i.e., reduced tax burden), free admission is anticipated for a splash park. Currently, admission to the pool is \$6 for adults and \$3 for children + seniors.
  - *Residents in the City of Manchester enjoy free admission + exclusive use during peak hours. Non-residents must pay a fee and are only allowed to enter the park during non-peak hours.*
5. **The space for recreation is maximized.** The required space for a bathhouse + mechanical room can be minimized allowing more of the space + grant funds to be directed toward modernized recreational areas + security lighting to reduce crime + improve the evening experience.
  - *Although a fence is not required for a splash pad, Janet Horvath strongly recommended that a fence be used to control access while implementing/enforcing the rules (i.e., no food or street clothes allowed within the fenced in area) to maximize the life of the equipment.*
6. **Out of service time is minimized.** A splash park does not have to close for the day if/when an afternoon storm rolls through, unlike the pool that currently closes + remains closed for the day regardless of the timing of the storm.
  - *Janet Horvath recounted an instance when the City of Manchester spent over \$7,000 just in chemicals to counteract a fecal incident at a pool, which resulted in days of down time and the pool eventually having to be drained. This level of response + downtime is eliminated with a splash pad.*

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<sup>2</sup> The ADA-compliant lift can be repurposed by installing it at the indoor pool in the Community Center.

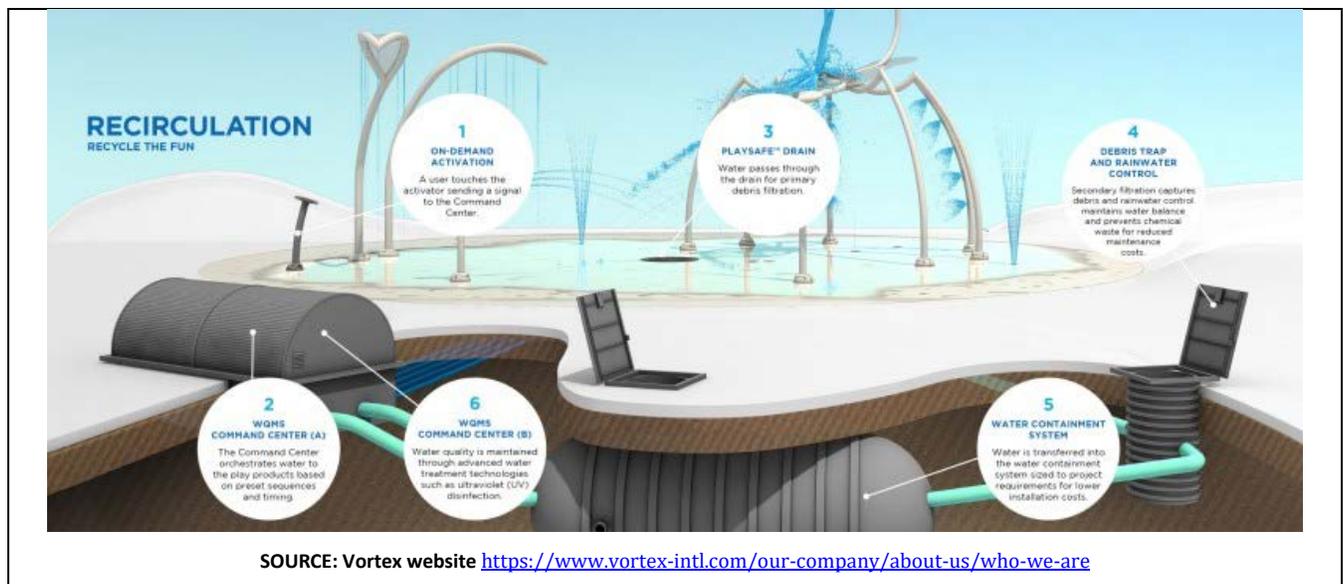
7. **Risk + costs to the City are minimized** by eliminating standing water, which translates into:
- **lower staffing costs** since no lifeguards are needed;
  - **minimized water throughput + reliance on pool chemicals** since less water is used + required to effectively disinfect<sup>3</sup> the water streams;
  - **reduced maintenance + repairs**; and
  - **minimized liability concerns** (i.e., mitigate risk of drowning) providing peace of mind for City staff and officials alike.
- *When asked what the most important benefit is of a splash pad, Janet Horvath quickly responded with “lowered stress + added peace of mind” since installing the splash pad. A second one will be installed soon in Manchester across town from Dupont Park.*

The advantages, summarized above, have been factored into the operational cost considerations included in **ATTACHMENT A**.

For example, an extended aquatics season (**Advantage #3**) with a splash pad that serves more people than an outdoor pool (**Advantage #2**) has been assumed in the cost considerations resulting in an annual cost savings of over \$20,000 for **OPTION #2** – replacing the pool with a splash pad.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

A schematic of a typical recirculation system for a splash pad is provided below.



For more information on the City of Manchester’s experience with splash pad conversion, here are several links to articles:

- <https://www.athleticbusiness.com/aquatic/splash-pad-replaces-unpopular-pool-becomes-hot-spot.html>
- <https://manchesterinklink.com/totally-kid-approved-dupont-splash-pad-inaugural-launch-hit/>
- <https://manchesterinklink.com/construction-continues-splash-pad-park-target-opening-aug-1/>

<sup>3</sup> UV disinfecting is alternative disinfection method that can be considered in a post-COVID19 setting.

Please keep in mind that the enhancement of the aquatics program is only one element of the overall project to redevelop the Warren recreational complex that is underway. As such, we hope that a decision to adopt either option can be made during the committee meeting on May 11, 2020.

**ATTACHMENT A**  
**OPERATIONAL COST COMPARISON:**  
**Outdoor pool vs. Splash Park**

ANNUAL OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURES	OPTION #1: OUTDOOR POOL	OPTION #2: SPLASH PARK	ASSUMPTIONS for operational cost comparison:	
	Estimated Expenses from Aquatics Program for existing outdoor pool	Estimated Expenses based on assumptions listed	SplashPad/splash park replacing outdoor pool	
			<b>COMMENTS</b>	<b>SUGGESTED TASKS TO CONFIRM ASSUMPTIONS</b>
<b>WAGES*</b>				POOL requires a minimum of 3 people on staff from 11am to 7p SPLASH PARK allows season to be extended from 10 to 20 weeks/yr
Supervisory	\$ -	\$ -	*DOES NOT INCLUDE FICA, WC, ETC.	
Non-supervisory	\$ 13,646	\$ 13,646	John Hilton salary	Assumed no change in salary to Aquatics Program Supervisor
Lifeguards	\$ 26,205	\$ -	No lifeguards	Assumes no standing water
Building Attendant	\$ 5,200	\$ 10,800	Pool attendant	Assumes 1 staff person 2 days/wk from 11am to 7pm for 10 weeks (weekends) Assumes 1 staff person 7 days/wk from 11am to 7pm for 10 weeks
<b>SUPPLIES</b>				
Chemicals	\$ 4,560	\$ 2,280	Same chemicals	Assumes a reduction in pool chemicals due to a much smaller volume of water to treat
General Supplies	\$ 1,170	\$ 585	Equipment, supplies, etc.	Assumes a reduction in pool chemicals due to smaller volume
Other misc. supplies	\$ -	\$ 1,750	Food for concessions	Assumes 5 trips to store x \$250 trip to store + misc trips for week <b>1 Check with City to ensure concessions are allowed</b>
<b>PURCHASED PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL SERVICES</b>				
Emp Training	\$ 1,000	\$ -		Eliminates need for lifeguard training for outdoor pool
Uniforms	\$ 800	\$ -		Eliminates need for lifeguard uniforms at outdoor pool
Swim Lessons	\$ -	\$ -		
<b>PURCHASED PROPERTY SERVICES</b>				
Repairs + Maintenance	\$ 6,600	\$ 3,300	Contractors (pool service, concrete cleaning, etc.)	Assumes the cost of repairs + maintenance minimized (assume half cost of pool, considered conservative estimate)
Water Usage Fees	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,000	Portland Water District bill for both potable water + sewer fee	Assumes 1/4 the water usage throughout season (conservative, could be lower - especially if sewer fee reduced)
	<b>\$ 67,181</b>	<b>\$ 34,361</b>		
<b>OFFSETS OF ANNUAL EXPENSES (REVENUE)</b>	<b>POOL OPTION</b>	<b>SPLASH PARK OPTION</b>		
	Actual Revenue for 2019	Revenue from Concessions only		
<b>REVENUE</b>				
Swimming Pool Fees	\$ 15,227	\$ -	Daily rate of admission	Assumes free admission to SplashPad <b>2 Confirm with City officials that no fee will be charged for splash park</b>
Park + Rec Concessions	\$ -	\$ 3,500	Revenue = 2 x cost of food	Assumes concessions will be allowed + revenue = 2x food cost <b>3 Confirm with boosters, etc. that concessions revenue is 2x food cost</b>
Sale of municipal property	\$ -	\$ -	ADA pool lift	Assumes cannot (re)sell ADA lift per Christman, but repurposed to indoor pool
Rental + special interest	\$ -	\$ -	Drop-in fees (separate from daily rate)	Assumes rental rate of \$165 per 2-hr event (party, private group, etc.)
	<b>\$ 51,954</b>	<b>\$ 30,861</b>		
<b>DELTA (Difference between OPTION #1 + OPTION #2) --&gt;</b>			<b>\$ 21,093</b>	<b>RESULTS:</b> Based on the assumptions listed above in combination with the information sources consulted, the City's projected annual savings is on the order of \$21,000 each year.

**INFORMATION SOURCES CONSULTED**

- 1 PWD bills for 489 Main Street (2019 throughput)
- 2 Annual Expenses + Revenue from Greg Post for 2015
- 3 Call w/Janet Horvath in Manchester, NH on 5/7/2020 re: the City's experience converting to SplashPad by Vortex™
- 4 Visit Vortex website for routine + preventive maint (printed, downloaded, saved - available if needed)
- 5 Call to Jennifer Pratt + Suzanne Knight on 5/7 re: insurance premium + liability
- 6 Call to Cliff at Christman Pools on 5/6 re: repurposing ADA lift at outdoor pool