CITY OF JOPLIN MISSOURI

JOPLIN, MISSOURI
EWERT AQUATIC CENTER STUDY

January 2021



waters edge AQUATIC DESIGN

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Project Introduction

The City of Joplin currently offers three outdoor aquatic centers. The oldest of the three, Ewert Aquatic Center, is located at 615 S. Murphy Boulevard, and originally opened in 1925. Most recently, Ewert Aquatic Center received improvements and updates in 2003 that included the addition of a zero-depth

area with a play structure and sprays, in-water bench and shade, basketball goal, water walk, water slide, bathhouse improvements, and other enhancements.

Ewert Aquatic Center has seen a decline in attendance and participation over the years, particularly after the renovation of Schifferdecker Aquatic Center and Cunningham Aquatic Center and is operating at a significant subsidy. Ewert Aquatic Center offers some upgraded amenities, but those amenities and the facility is aging, the pool floor is failing in multiple areas, and improvements to the facility are needed. Additionally, the staffing resources needed to operate the three aquatic centers has become increasingly difficult and not enough lifeguards can be recruited, hired, and trained to continue to operate the three aquatic centers as they exist today.

The overall purpose of the study is to evaluate the life and use expectancy of Ewert Aquatic Center and possible future options and uses. The options presented can be considered for future development.

To respond to the current Ewert Aquatic Center's conditions, the Ewert Aquatic Center study included:

- Evaluating the physical conditions of Ewert Aquatic Center
- Studying the aquatics system and market
- Analysis of possible options and feasibility of those options
- Capital costs for each option (presented as a magnitude of cost)
- Revenue and expenditure projections for each option

Project Objectives

The project identified the following objectives to study, which were utilized to develop a final recommendation.

- Does the city of Joplin need three pools?
- What is the appropriate number of pools for a community of Joplin's size?
- Provide a current structural analysis of Ewert Aquatic Center
- Analyze possible future uses at the site of Ewert Aquatic Center, including:
    1. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into a splash pad
    2. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into a splash park with features
    3. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into park land
    4. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into expanded skate park area
    5. Renovate Ewert Aquatic Center
    6. Other options

During the kickoff meeting, City staff and project stakeholders met with Waters Edge Aquatic Design to establish the goals for the study. The following goals were identified as important to the study:

- Develop something Joplin has never seen and is new to the city
- Offer an interactive, fresh facility that is available to the most amount of people
- Create a facility that can serve nearby neighborhoods and be a destination location
- Ewert Park currently hosts annual special events, and the future use could support and enhance those events and future events
- Free or reduced cost offerings are ideal
- Be able to maintain and operate for the long term, with maintenance in mind and ongoing operational costs

- Staff resources and demands must be considered so additional lifeguards are not needed, and an effort to reduce staffing should be made

Executive Summary

The City of Joplin currently offers three outdoor aquatic centers, and Ewert Aquatic Center is the oldest of the three. Ewert Aquatic Center is aging and needs improvement.

Ewert Aquatic Center is experiencing increasing maintenance, a pool shell that is failing in areas, and offers aging features. Underground piping is older for the 1974 structure, and it is assumed that the larger header pipes and runs are a material-type that has potential remaining useful life, but smaller branches and inlet pipes are assumed to be near the end of useful life.

The buildings are in fair condition; however, the bathhouse has an outdated layout with a gender split entry and a men's restroom that is lacking privacy.

Operationally, Ewert Aquatic Center has experienced decreasing attendance and a decrease in cost recovery. From 2015 – 2019, cost recovery has steadily decreased from 25% to 14%. Ewert Aquatic Center receives the lowest percentage of the total attendance (12-14%), lowest total percent of the revenue (6-11%), and about the same total percent of expenditures as Cunningham Pool (24-25% versus 26-28% respectively) in comparison to the performance of the other two aquatics centers.

One of the ongoing and increasing challenges to the City has been the recruiting, hiring, and training of lifeguards. Due to a lifeguard shortage, Ewert Aquatic Center and Cunningham Aquatic Center have had to adjust operating hours and days to consolidate the staff in the recent years. This shortage is expected to continue in the future.

The City of Joplin currently offers more water surface area per capita than other like communities. The City could afford to reduce the amount of water surface available in the City and to eliminate Ewert Aquatic Center from its service as-is. However, if the City were to remove Ewert Aquatic Center as it is today, it is recommended that an aquatic amenity be relocated in its place.

Public engagement demonstrated that there is a strong desire for an aquatic facility in Ewert Park. Community members expressed support for a splash park and for a pool. Neighbors to the park expressed an interest in keeping a pool in the park and feel that maintaining the history and significance of the pool in the park is very important. Offering a facility that was free or reduced in price was of high interest to community members.

After completing public engagement and developing costs and considerations, of the 6 original ideas for future uses, 2 final Options were explored. Those two final Options were:

1. Splash Park
2. Pool Renovation and Splash Park

Given the conditions listed above, along with public support and meeting identified goals for the site and project, we believe the Splash Park Option best fits the needs of the community and the City. This Option allows for an extended season and hours. It is not expected to charge admission fees for use, which allows

for easy and accessible use to the community. Additionally, due to the character of the Splash Park, the facility would be a destination facility that would attract users from outside of Joplin and offers the option for special events and year-round activity. With a reduced staffing need, the number of needed staff is low, and it is expected that the City can accommodate the staffing requirements and the facility can remain open for the projected operating schedule.

Existing Ewert Aquatic Center Assessment

Introduction

To understand the existing conditions of Ewert Aquatic Center, a visual assessment and facility walk-through were conducted as a part of this study. The following sections summarize the findings of those assessments, focusing on a physical assessment of the pool, pool systems and buildings, along with an operational assessment.

Physical Assessment

Ewert Aquatic Center is located within Ewert Park, and originally opened in 1925. The original facility included just a portion of the pool that is currently in place today. Parking is located on the west side of the facility, west side of the creek. There have been several major milestones in facility improvement since the 1925 opening, including:

- 1974: Add wading pool, diving boards, bathhouse, and concession stand, and expand pool size to offer 50-meters
- 2003: Add zero-depth with shallow water features, deck sprays, shade, and a large water slide, removal of the wading pool, replace diving boards with drop-slides, and bathhouse improvements

The Ewert Aquatic Center as it is today has approximately 9,866 s.f. of water surface area, holding approximately 306,296 gallons of water. The facility currently offers a main pool with an in-water bench with shade, water play structure, 2 floatables, floatable walkway, basketball, 4 small drop-slides, a large stand-alone water slide, 2 large deck shades, bathhouse with men's and women's restrooms, admissions and lifeguard areas, and a concession building.

Waters Edge Aquatic Design performed a walk-through and visual assessment of the pool and pool systems at Ewert Aquatic Center on July 21, 2020. Main areas for review included:

- Pool basin structures
- Potential safety issues – trips, slips, cuts, etc.
- Filtration and plumbing
- Chemical and treatment systems
- Pool deck
- Condition of features/amenities
- Restrooms
- Parking and site

While portions of the facility are newer, we find most of the floors and portions of the walls in the pool basin are experiencing failure or are of an age in which that can be expected. Play features are dated and improvements in the bathhouse have been identified. A review of the facility is divided into categories as follows.

- Pool areas and systems
- Buildings
- Site

Pool and Pool Systems

The swimming pools and systems include two distinct areas, including the main pool and the large water slide, with support features and amenities on the site.

Main Pool: The main pool is comprised of a 1974 pool structure (the deeper part of the pool) and a 2003 structure (the zero-depth and shallow water part of the pool). The 1974 pool structure appears to be in fair structural condition. However, there are portions of the walls that are experiencing failure, particularly along the top of the wall structure, and near the transition down to diving. The 2003 structure is experiencing widespread failure in the floor and in select portions of the walls. The failure in the floors is generally following the construction joints or seams located in an approximate 20-foot grid.

A significant observation of the main pool is that it possesses an outdated "z" shape, with aging play features. In particular, the original ports of the swimming pool include an outdated perimeter gutter that is a stark contrast to the design of the newer portion, highlighting the distinction between the new and old pool structures.

Additionally, the recirculation piping for the swimming pool includes the following:

- Original Pool Area: A wall inlet piping system with a header pipe located below the pool deck, and laterals that connect to the inlets through the perimeter wall. It is believed that the perimeter header pipe and wall inlet laterals are original from its 1974 construction.

  Based upon knowledge of common materials in the 1970's, coupled with visual evidence on piping that extends into the filter area, we believe that the header pipe is cement-lined ductile iron material. While nearly 50 years old, cement-lined ductile iron piping has generally proven to be durable except for conditions in which it is installed in corrosive soils. We do not have reason to believe this piping would fail in the near future.

  The smaller diameter laterals for the wall inlets would not have been the same material. The material for the lateral inlet piping is unknown, nor is it known if this piping has been replaced since its original construction. We anticipate that the piping material would have been copper or red brass. These material types have a more inconsistent history regarding durability, so it is difficult to judge condition or expected remaining life.

- New Pool Area: The recirculation piping connected to the basin constructed in 2003 was replaced with newer piping materials. The exact piping materials used are not fully clear, but it appears that piping materials may have included a combination of schedule 80 PVC and 1 ½ inch polyethylene pipe for the wall inlet branches. As these piping materials are less than 20 years old, the assumption is that it is in fair condition.

- Gutters: The original pool structure includes a perimeter gutter with spot drains and a perimeter header pipe. Our current assumption is that it has not been replaced and is the original piping. The perimeter header pipe and run to the filter area is presumed to be cement-lined ductile iron. The material for the smaller diameter branch runs is unknown.

  The newer pool structure has a wide gutter trough with a pair of outlet pipes that are connect the gutter trough with the surge tank. Given the age, the piping system is presumed to be in fair condition.

  A significant portion of the perimeter gutter style has a dated appearance that makes the facility seem old and tired. Providing a modern look to the swimming pool would require reconstruction of the perimeter of the original pool structure.

- Main Drain: There is a main drain that runs from the deep end of the pool to the filter system. This pipe is a larger one, of which evidence suggests that it is a cement-lined ductile iron pipe. Given our assumption, we do not have concern with the age or condition of the pipe.

- Due to clearances in the diving well, both with the depth and the slopes, diving boards are not able to be utilized, and were removed from the facility in 2003.

While assuming the piping system to the 1974 structure is relatively old, the integrity of the piping system is unknown. Staff reports that they are unaware of any significant water loss, suggesting that the piping system is currently not breached causing leaks. Given an understanding that the pipe material is cement-lined ductile iron, it can experience a life of over 100 years. Pipes that are smaller than 3 inches in diameter are not likely cement-lined ductile iron, and its remaining life expectancy is in question.

The piping system to the 2003 structure is newer, and staff reports that they are unaware of any significant water loss, suggesting that the piping system is currently not breached causing leaks.

Prior to investing significant amounts of money to renovate the swimming pool we recommend that the piping systems be pressure-tested to confirm its integrity. By isolating swimming pool piping systems located beneath the deck, individual piping systems can be checked that they are currently intact and not losing water. In addition, during pressure testing running cameras down the piping can show the condition of the interior of the piping, which would be especially beneficial at the inlets to determine the type and condition of the smaller diameter pipes.

It is also recommended that core sample be taken of the pool basin, both in the older, deeper pool area and in the newer, zero-depth area, to verify structural integrity of the walls prior to renovation of the pool if the pool structure would be salvaged. This is not recommended for the pool basin floor in the newer portion as the pool is experiencing failure and is recommended for replacement.

Main Pool Filter Equipment: The filter system includes 3 – 7′-0″ diameter pressure sand style filters to filter the 306,000-gallon volume. At a maximum filtration loading rate of 15 gallons per minute per square foot, the capacity of the filters is estimated at 1,700 gpm. The desired recirculation rate is estimated to be under 1,000 gpm; the filters are more than adequately sized for the pool facility. They are located outside the building in an uncovered area exposed to the elements. There has been maintenance conducted on the filters, but staff do not report significant operating challenges in relation to the filters.

Additionally, the sodium hypochlorite is stored in a large barrel that is in an uncovered area and exposed to the elements. The muriatic acid is housed in a separate room from the mechanical equipment, which is recommended. However, there are areas of corrosion throughout the room and the door hardware.

Water Slide: The water slide was added 17 years ago. The structure is showing surface rust and the shade canopy for the structure is no longer in service. The water slide is operable and should continue ongoing maintenance to prolong the life of the slide and slide structure. However, when the slide has outlived its useful life, it is recommended that this feature not be replaced and be taken out of service. A preferred option would be to replace it with a slide or other amenity that provides a new experience and interest in the facility, if replaced.

Pumps: The main pumps for the pool water recirculation and water slide are located in the room adjacent to the filters. The pumps are located above the water level in the swimming pool and are thus belt-driven self-priming pumps. The benefit of these pumps is that they do not require being located in a pump pit. The disadvantage is that they are more expensive and difficult to operate and maintain.

Pool Deck, Fence and Surrounding Areas:

- Pool Deck: The pool deck appears to be in fair condition overall. However, there are locations within the deck where it has settled and causes offsets that can become trip hazards. Additionally, the deck along the east side of the deeper part of the pool and north side of the deeper pool is believed to be original to the 1974 construction.
- Fencing: The perimeter fence includes chain-link fabric with a galvanized finish and is in fair condition. However, vinyl coated chain-link fencing is often preferred due to its appearance.
- Pool Area Lighting: It has been reported by staff that a majority of the existing lights are not working, and that there are potential issues with the integrity of the circuits to the poles

Deck Sprays: The deck sprays are 17 years old. Visual observation of the area does not indicate that there are significant issues with the features, and staff does not report significant issues with the operation.

Summary findings include:

- Pool
    - Significant portions of the pool basin structure are failing.
    - The perimeter gutter system is in fair condition, however the gutter along the deeper ends of the pool is original with original gutter return piping. Additionally, the original perimeter sections present an outdated appearance and function.
    - Underground piping is older for the 1974 structure. It is assumed that the larger header pipes and runs are a material-type that has potential remaining useful life, but smaller branches and inlet pipes are assumed to be near the end of useful life.
- Filtration equipment and sanitizer are effective but are uncovered and exposed to the elements. These elements need to be covered.
- The water slide has some useful remaining life left with some repair and recoating but is not expected to have more than another 15 to 20 years without substantial cost.
- Light poles are believed to be original to the 1974 renovation. Staff has reported that a majority of the lights do not work.

Buildings

The main bathhouse was added in 1974 and renovated in 2003, which included a family changing room. A separate concession building was also added. In general, the buildings appear to be in fair condition and provide reasonable support for the swimming activities.

The notable exceptions to this include dressing rooms/bathrooms. The primary issue with the dressing rooms/bathrooms is that the method of entry is gender split, meaning genders must select which restroom to pass through to enter and exit the pool area. Additionally, the floors do not have adequate drains to keep water from collecting and ponding on the floor. Staff has managed this condition by applying coatings in effort to keep the floor clean and non-slippery.

The women's restroom experiences pipe breaks behind the wall near the toilets, and the men's restroom lacks privacy both at the shower and urinal/toilet areas.

The family changing room offers a third option to utilize a shower and restroom, however, is placed in a location that has accessibility from two sides; both doors must be locked by the user to privately utilize the space.

The interior is in fair condition. However, the coating on the ceiling is showing rust coming through. The ceiling should be recoated throughout the building.

The concessions building is the newest of all the structures and appears to function in an acceptable manner. An improvement to this area could include adding shade in and around the eating area.

Summary findings include:

- Buildings on are in fair condition.
- Gender split entry/exit is an outdated layout.
- Privacy is lacking in the men's restroom.

Site

The site is an asset for the facility as it carries significant historical value to the area and is widely accepted as a pool location. The site provides plenty of parking and several complementary activities to the pool, such as the playground, skate park, and tennis courts.

The site is confined by the creek to the west, school avenue to the east, 7th St. to the south, and the Head Start building and skate park to the north. The pool sits to the north of the bathhouse, closest to the Head Start building and skate park. Just south of the existing bathhouse, near the entrance to the bathhouse, are 3 basketball hoops on a triangular concrete pad that sit on a piece of land that is also triangular shaped.

Summary findings include:

- The site is accepted by the community.
- There is ample parking.
- There are complementary park and recreational activities in the park.
- Infrastructure is in place.
- There are site constraints due to adjacent infrastructure.

Ewert Aquatic Center Study Boundary Map



Operational Assessment

Understanding where and why Ewert Aquatic Center is in its current operational condition, and taking inventory of current offerings and business practices, can be used to identify service strengths, gaps, and for making educated decisions. This operational assessment will review the following considerations:

- Programs
- Revenues and expenditures
- Attendance/participation
- Staffing needs

Programs

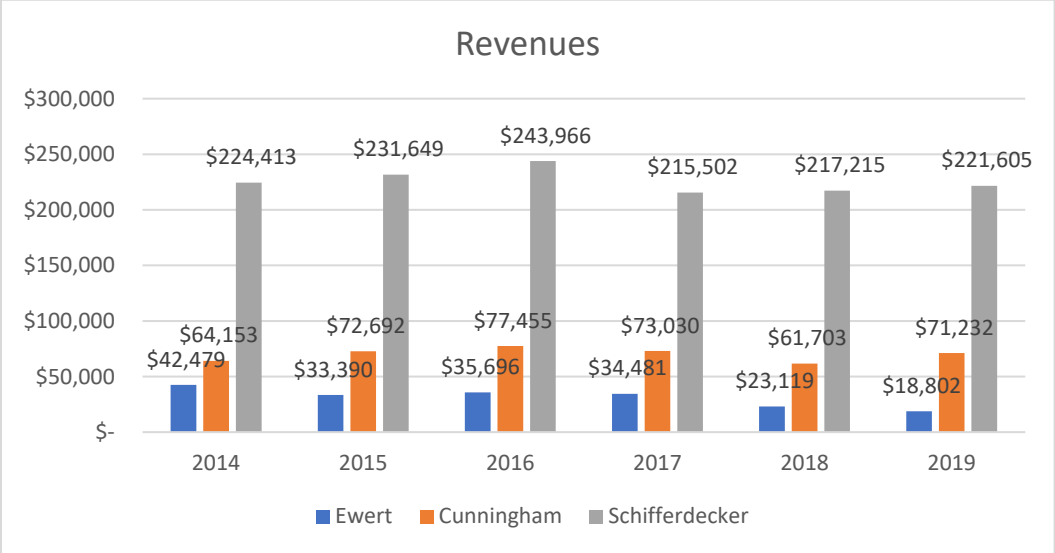
Activities and programs provide services for a variety of pool users, and contribute to the attendance, revenue, and expenditures at the facility. Ewert Aquatic Center currently offers the following programs:

- Open swim/general swim
- Swimming lessons
- Doggie swim (post season)

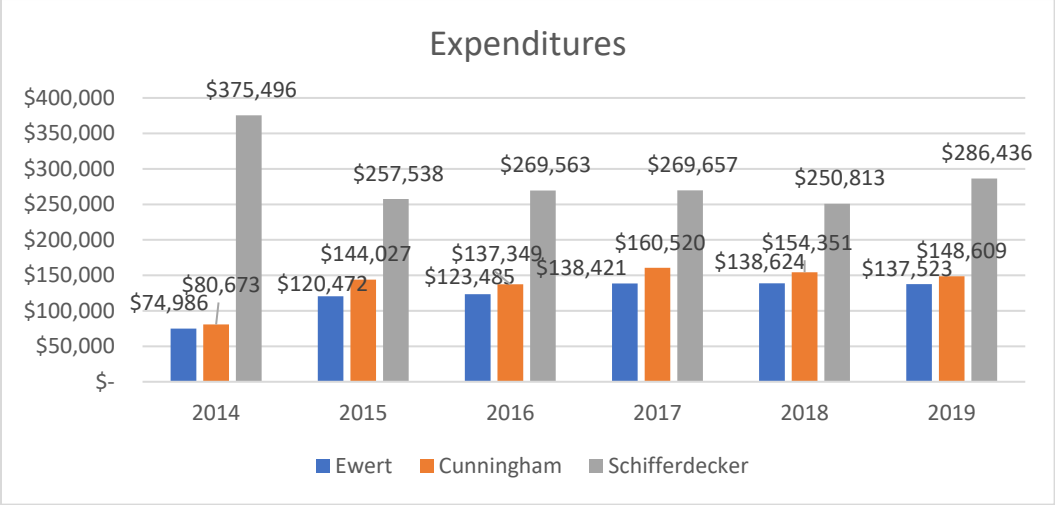
Revenues and Expenditures

From 2014 to 2019, Ewert Aquatic Center has taken in substantially lower revenues than the other two outdoor pools. It has also been taking in decreasing revenues in each subsequent year. In that time, Ewert Aquatic Center has seen an average decrease in revenue of about 14% per year, or a decrease of 56% total.

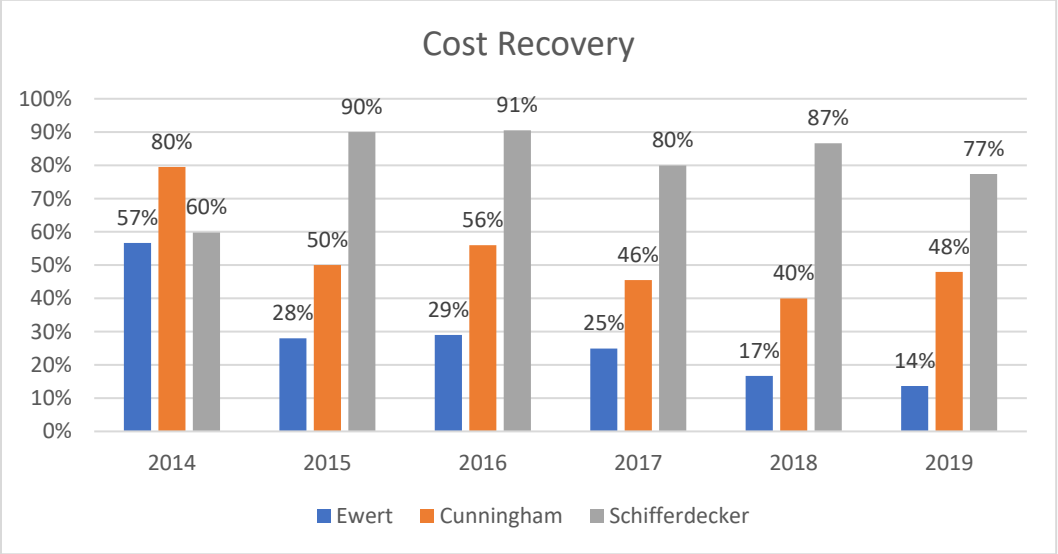
Comparatively, Cunningham Aquatic Center saw an average increase in revenue of 3% per year, and Schifferdecker Aquatic Center saw an average increase of less than 1% per year.



From 2017 - 2019, Ewert Aquatic Center has incurred about $138,000 in expenditures annually. These three years were isolated for review because the expenditures were very close between the 3 years. From 2014 to 2019 expenditures ranged from $74,986 to $138,624. While revenues have been going down, expenditures have not. Additionally, although Cunningham Aquatic Center takes in about 63% more revenue than Ewert Aquatic Center, Cunningham only sees around 8-15% higher expenditures.



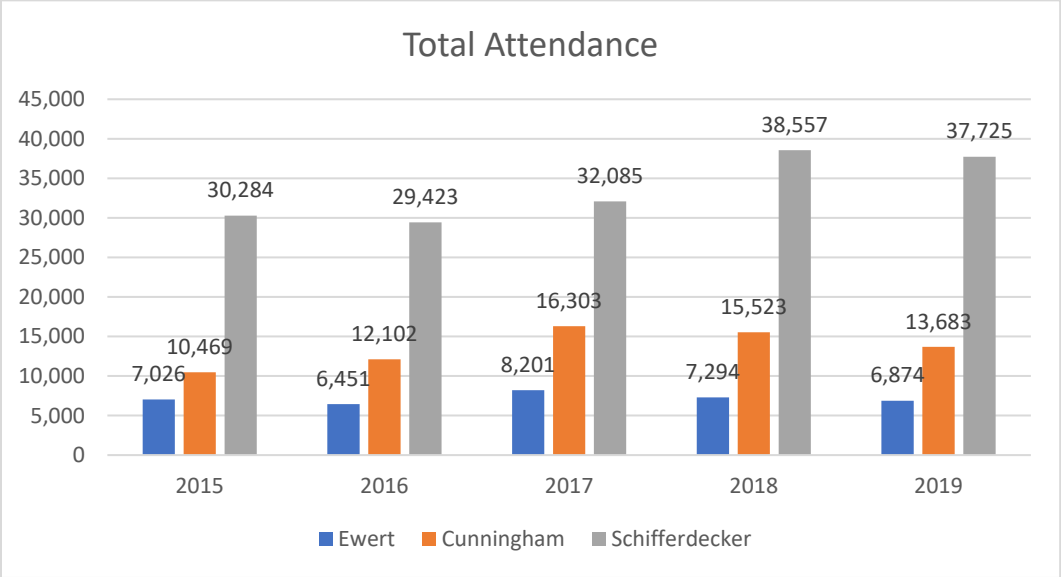
Since 2014, Ewert Aquatic Center has seen decreasing cost recovery, with an average decrease of 21% per year. Comparatively, Cunningham Aquatic Center has seen an average decrease of 7% per year, and Schifferdecker Aquatic Center has seen an average increase of 7% per year.



Attendance/participation

From 2015 - 2019, Ewert Aquatic Center has had the lowest participation between the 3 outdoor pools, with declining attendance. 2014 data on attendance is not available. Comparatively, Ewert Aquatic Center sees approximately 47% fewer attendees than Cunningham Aquatic Center and 78% less attendees than Schifferdecker Aquatic Center.

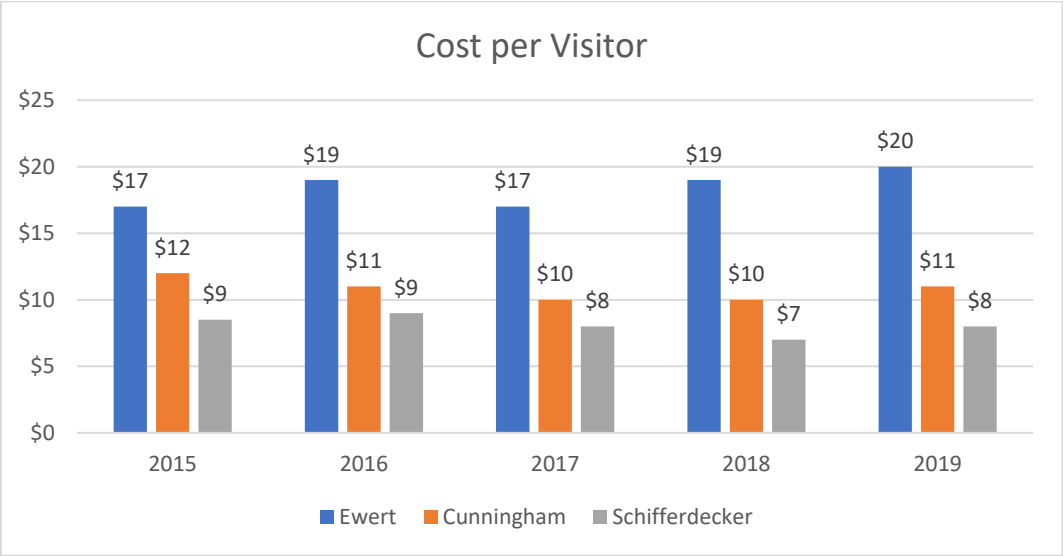
Of the total attendance between 2017 - 2019, the average percentage of those who attended on "free swim" days was 27%, or 1,250 – 2,040 visits. Free swim attendance is not available for 2015 – 2016.



In reviewing financial and attendance data from 2017 – 2019, Ewert has demonstrated to contribute the least in revenue, but produces similar expenditures as Cunningham with close to half the attendance of Cunningham.

2017 - 2019	% of Revenues	% of Expenditures	% of Total Attendance
Ewert	6 - 11%	24 - 25%	12 - 14%
Cunningham	20 - 23%	26 - 28%	23 - 29%
Schifferdecker	67 - 72%	46 - 50%	57 - 65%

When analyzing expenditures and attendance, Ewert Aquatic Center is over double the cost per visitor than at Schifferdecker, and just under double the cost per visitor at Cunningham. This indicates that Ewert Aquatic Center is the most expensive to operate in relation to cost per visitor.



In reviewing financial and attendance data from 2017 – 2019, expectedly the largest expenditure line items for all pools are those associated with personnel, including wages, holiday pay, worker's compensation, and FICA. A line-item breakdown per major expenditure category is listed below to understand what amount of expenditures are attributed to those categories and how the pools perform in relation to the others. As demonstrated below, Ewert Aquatic Center operates similarly to Cunningham in relation to how expenditures are attributed.

2017 - 2019	Personnel	Utilities	Chemicals	Other
Ewert	64 – 67%	15 – 24%	1 – 4%	10 – 15%
Cunningham	67 – 70%	12 – 19%	1 – 3%	10 – 19%
Schifferdecker	61 – 69%	8 – 14%	3 – 6%	19 – 20%

Staffing Needs

Ewert Aquatic Center utilizes a variety of staff positions to operate the facility and are listed below. Indirect positions, such as maintenance, administrative, human resources, legal, communications, and information technology are not included but offer services that are utilized in relation to the operation of the swimming pools.

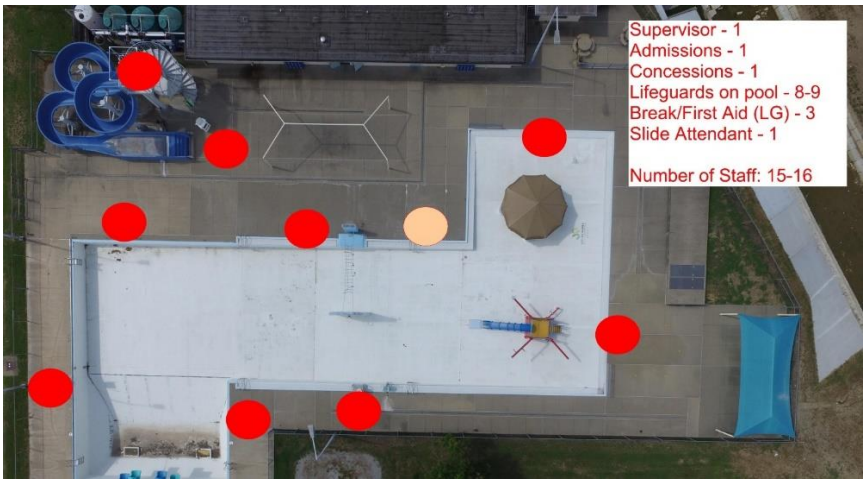
	Pay Plan (by Year) per Hour		
Position Title	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**
Aquatic Supervisor	$10.725	$11.155	$11.601
Pool Operator (and Swim Lesson Coordinator)	$9.915	$10.313	$10.725
Lifeguard (and Swim Lesson Instructor)	$8.668	$9.014	$9.375
Seasonal Cashier (Concessions, Admissions, Slide Attendant)	$8.668	$9.014	$9.375

Although the City of Joplin is not required to follow minimum wage requirements, minimum wage levels may impact staff hiring and retention. The minimum wage in the state of Missouri will increase over the next several years:

- 2020: $9.45/hour
- 2021: $10.30/hour
- 2022: $11.15/hour
- 2023: $12/hour
- After 2023: indexed according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

Ewert Aquatic Center currently requires 15-16 staff to operate the pool, with 11-12 of those being lifeguards needed on the pool to operate on a typical day at a given time. The image below demonstrates the needed placement of those lifeguards at the existing Ewert Aquatic Center. Operating conditions may impact the staff count on a particular day; however, this is the typical anticipated and budgeted number.

Ewert Aquatic Center Lifeguard Placement and Staff Count



Market Analysis

Introduction

The Market Analysis conducted for the Ewert Aquatic Center Study included a review of the demographics of Joplin to understand the service area demographics, along with the trends and make-up of the community for which the outdoor pools service. Understanding the demographic make-up allows for informed alternatives and areas of focus for the facility and the activities that are explored.

Additionally, an inventory of aquatic facilities within the service area was completed to understand those facilities that may impact the utilization of the outdoor pools in Joplin. This study also provides an understanding of the types and characters of facilities available to the Joplin community for use.

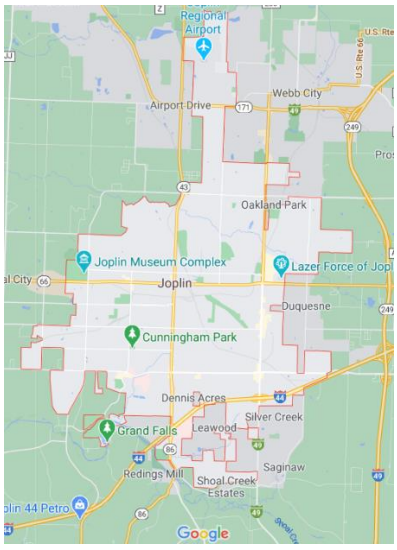
The information gathered was collected from the U.S. Census Bureau and online research.

Service Area

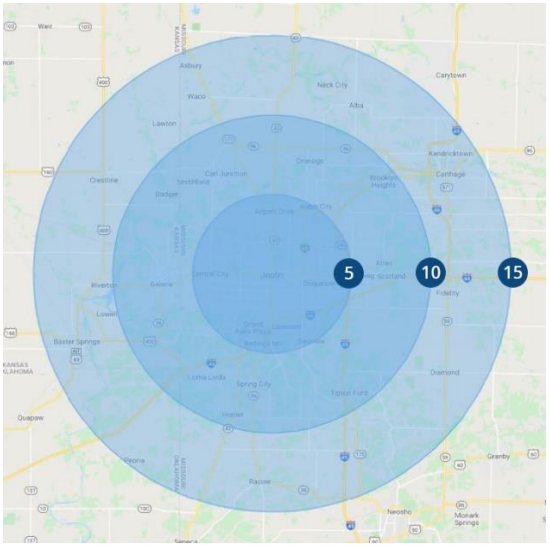
The City of Joplin is in Jasper County, Missouri. I-44/Route 66 runs east/west in the center of the city, and Route 43 runs north/south; both highway systems converge near the center of Joplin. Just to the west is the state line for Missouri and Kansas, and just to the southwest is the state line between Missouri and Oklahoma.

The service area for this study is identified as the area within a 15-mile radius from Joplin City Hall, not including drive-time or drive-mile radius.

Joplin, Missouri City Map



Joplin, Missouri Radius Map



Demographics of Joplin and Service Area

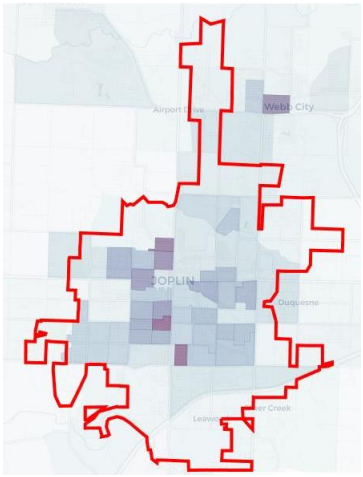
As of the 2010 U. S. Census, Joplin encompasses 35.56 square miles with a population density of 1,410 per square mile.

Population Density Map 1 below demonstrates the density of population in Joplin, and Population Density Map 2 demonstrates the pool locations in relation to the City's density. Maps are provided by city-data.com.

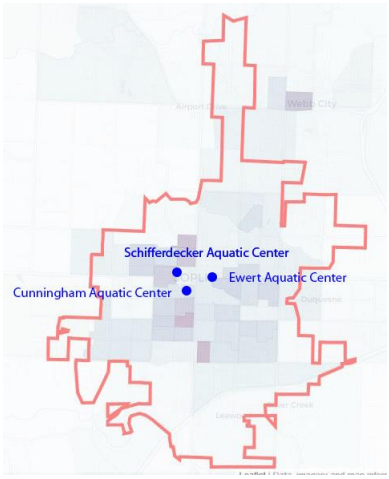
This is compared to the following cities in the area according to the 2019 U.S. Census Population Estimates at census.gov/quickfacts:

	Total Population	Square Miles	Population Density (per square mile)
Joplin, MO	50,925	35.56	1,410
Carl Junction, MO	8,274	5.48	1,359
Carthage, MO	14,746	11.65	1,234
Monett, MO	9,124	8.43	1,052
Neosho, MO	12,054	15.73	752
Pittsburg, KS	20,050	12.80	1,581
Springfield, MO	167,882	81.72	1,952
Webb City, MO	12,134	8.63	1,274

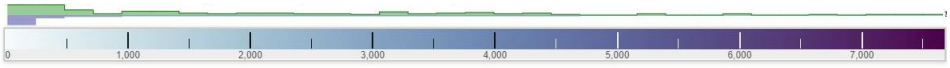
Population Density Map1 (per square mile)



Population Density Map 2 (with existing pool locations)

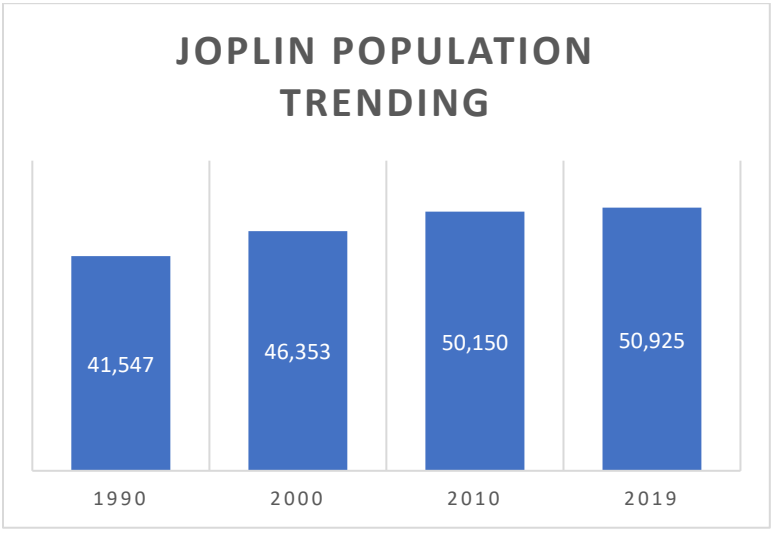


Density Map Key



According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population of Joplin was 50,150, up from 41,547 in 1990 and 46,353 in 2000. The estimated 2019 population is 50,925, showcasing a population increase of approximately 22.57% in 30 years, or on average about .75% per year.

U.S. Census Bureau – Total Population



The service area for Joplin is analyzed utilizing radii milestones at 5-mile, 10-mile and 15-mile increments. To understand the demographic breakdown for the service area, the population within each of those radii milestones were considered utilizing mcdc.missouri.edu Circular Area Profiles (CAPS) – ASC. CAPS utilizes 2014 – 2018 aggregates of the American Community Survey (ACS) data.

Age Breakdown - Circular Area Profiles (CAPS) ACS

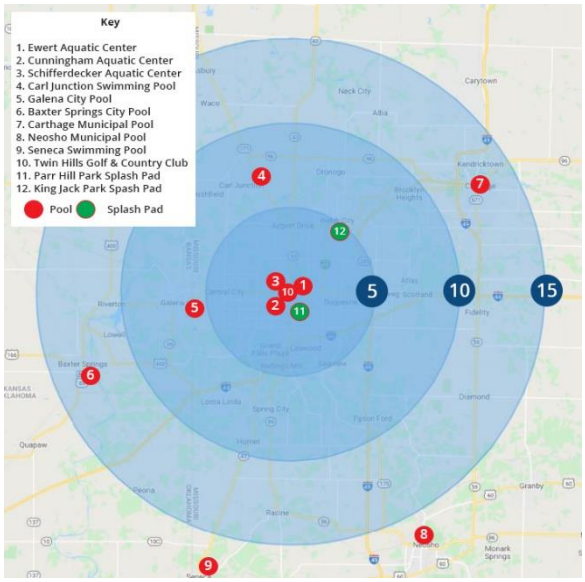
**2018 U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates – data.census.gov*

	Joplin*	5-Mile Radius	10-Mile Radius	15-Mile Radius
Total Population	50,925	72,381	109,847	148,414
Under 5 Years	6.6%	6.3%	6.5%	6.7%
5 – 9 Years	5.6%	5.8%	6.3%	6.5%
10 – 14 Years	6.6%	7%	7.3%	7.3%
15 – 19 Years	6.2%	6.4%	6.5%	6.6%
20 – 24 Years	7.9%	8.2%	7.1%	6.6%
25 – 34 Years	15.1%	14.2%	13.3%	13.2%
35 – 44 Years	12.4%	12%	12.3%	12.3%
45 – 54 Years	11%	11.6%	12.1%	12.4%
55 – 59 Years	6.8%	7.1%	7.2%	6.9%
60 – 64 Years	5.5%	5.9%	5.8%	5.8%
65 – 74 years	8.5%	8.3%	8.5%	8.7%
75 – 84 Years	5.5%	5.2%	5.1%	5.1%
85 Years and Over	2.2%	2.1%	2%	1.9%
Median Age	36.7	37.2	37.7	37.8
Median Household Income	$42,782	$46,706	$49,240	$48,511

Facility Inventory

Taking inventory of service area facilities and how they serve the community is an important element in understanding aquatic service gaps and duplications, facility and activity saturation, and market competition. Facilities include those that are outdoor and publicly or privately owned, recreation and competitively focused, waterparks, and splashpads. Of note, indoor pools, residential pools, and fitness gyms were not included in the detailed facility inventory.

Facility Inventory Map



Facility Inventory by the Numbers

Following the parameters of the service area and facility inventory, 11 facilities not including the Ewert Aquatic Center fall within the market area, logged at 5-mile, 10-mile, and 15-mile radius increments. An additional 2 facilities were included just outside of the 15-mile radius due to their applicability and known participation.

The service area extends to a 15-mile radius because Joplin is not in a metropolitan area, and throughout public engagement it was reported that users visit facilities throughout the 15-mile service area or even outside of that. Additionally, according to respondents in the online survey, 54.1% of respondents reported being willing to drive up to 15 minutes to participate in a swimming activity. Most facilities within the service area fall within the 15-minute drive time. Below is a breakdown of the number of facilities at the radius increments:

- 6 – within 5-mile radius
- 2 – within 10-mile radius
- 1 – within 15-mile radius
- 2 – outside of the 10-mile radius

Facilities owned by both private and public agencies were included in the inventory.

- 1 – privately owned
- 10 – publicly owned

Facility Inventory - Detailed

The following facilities were identified in the facility inventory.

Ewert Aquatic Center – Joplin, MO



Cunningham Aquatic Center – Joplin, MO



Schifferdecker Aquatic Center – Joplin, MO



Carl Junction Swimming Pool – Carl Junction, MO



Galena City Pool – Galena, KS



Baxter Springs City Pool – Baxter Springs, KS

OF note, as of 2020 Baxter Springs is under construction on a new swimming pool.



Carthage Municipal Pool – Carthage, MO



Neosho Municipal Pool – Neosho, MO



Seneca Swimming Pool – Seneca, MO



Twin Hills Golf & Country Club



Parr Hill Park Splash Pad



King Jack Park Splash Pad



Additional Facilities

facilities noted as being attended during the public engagement process, but are well outside the serve area, include:

- Pittsburg Aquatic Center – Pittsburg, KS
- Melvin Ford Aquatic Center, Bentonville, AR
- Republic Aquatic Center – Republic, MO
- Lamar Aquatic Park – Lamar, MO
- Nixa Community Center – Nixa, MO
- Splashpads in:

- Springdale, AR
- Miami, OK
- Grove, OK
- Wyandotte, OK

Sizing

Determining the amount of water surface, or number of pools, offered to the community is determined by considering and balancing the following:

- Studying other communities and developing benchmarks
- Community needs and feedback
- Operational goals
- Costs

In this section we will begin with understanding what other communities offer and developing benchmarks. To understand how much water square footage is appropriate for the City of Joplin, which relates also to the number of pools in the system, the total water square footage of each of the pools and in total was analyzed in comparison to communities of similar population and communities of similar make-up.

By comparing the water surface area to the population size, we can gauge how much water surface area is recommended for Joplin. There is no set answer for a typical pool size or amount of space on its own, but rather a recommendation can be created based off community needs, benchmarked facility data, and operational goals.

The existing three outdoor pools offer the following amount of water square footage:

Ewert Aquatic Center	9,866 s.f.
Cunningham Aquatic Center	8,756 s.f.
Schifferdecker Aquatic Center	16,383 s.f.
Total:	**35,005 s.f.**

The first level of evaluation looks at municipal population in relation to water surface area of facilities operated by the agency. Joplin falls into the category of populations between 50,000 and 99,000 for the purpose of this study. There were 10 case facilities evaluated, all located in the Midwest. To develop an understanding for sizing, the follow formula is used:

Water Surface Area / Population = Square Feet of Water per Capita

For those case facilities, the average square feet of water per capita is .44.

Joplin currently operates 35,005 square feet of water surface area for a population of 50,925; the square footage does not include the spray ground area at Parr Hill Park. This equates to .69 square feet of water per capita.

When comparing the averages of square feet of water per capita of the case facilities, Joplin falls above average on the amount of square foot of water per capita and offers more square footage than 80% of the

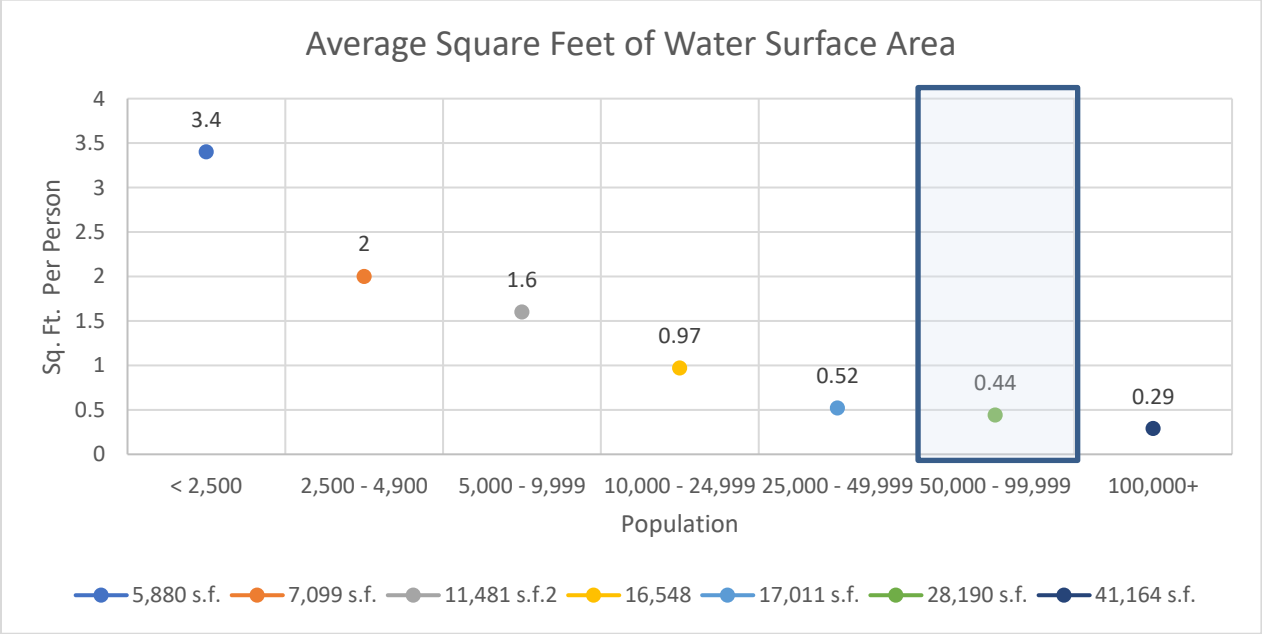
case facilities. This demonstrates that the amount of water surface trends towards large in comparison to the population size.

However, when the population size is adjusted to 40,000 – 60,000, the average square feet of water per capita increases to .56 square feet. In this case, Joplin still offers more water surface per capita than the average.

A second level of evaluation was completed to look at the average square feet of water surface area for seven population categories. This was conducted to understand where Joplin falls in relation to the amount of water surface offered to the size of the population.

It is of note that it is often the trend that the lower the population size, the higher the amount of square feet per capita. Conversely, the higher the population size, the lower the amount of water square feet per capita. This is demonstrated in differences between the average water square footage per capita of populations between 50,000-99,000 and 40,000 to 60,000.

Population Categories



Based off the analyses and looking just at the average of the square footage of water surface area of the case facilities, we would project a range of 22,500 s.f. – 39,000 s.f. of water surface area for Joplin between multiple pool locations. However, when taking community needs, operational goals, and costs into account, it is recommended that Joplin offers water surface area be between 22,500 s.f. to 30,500 s.f.

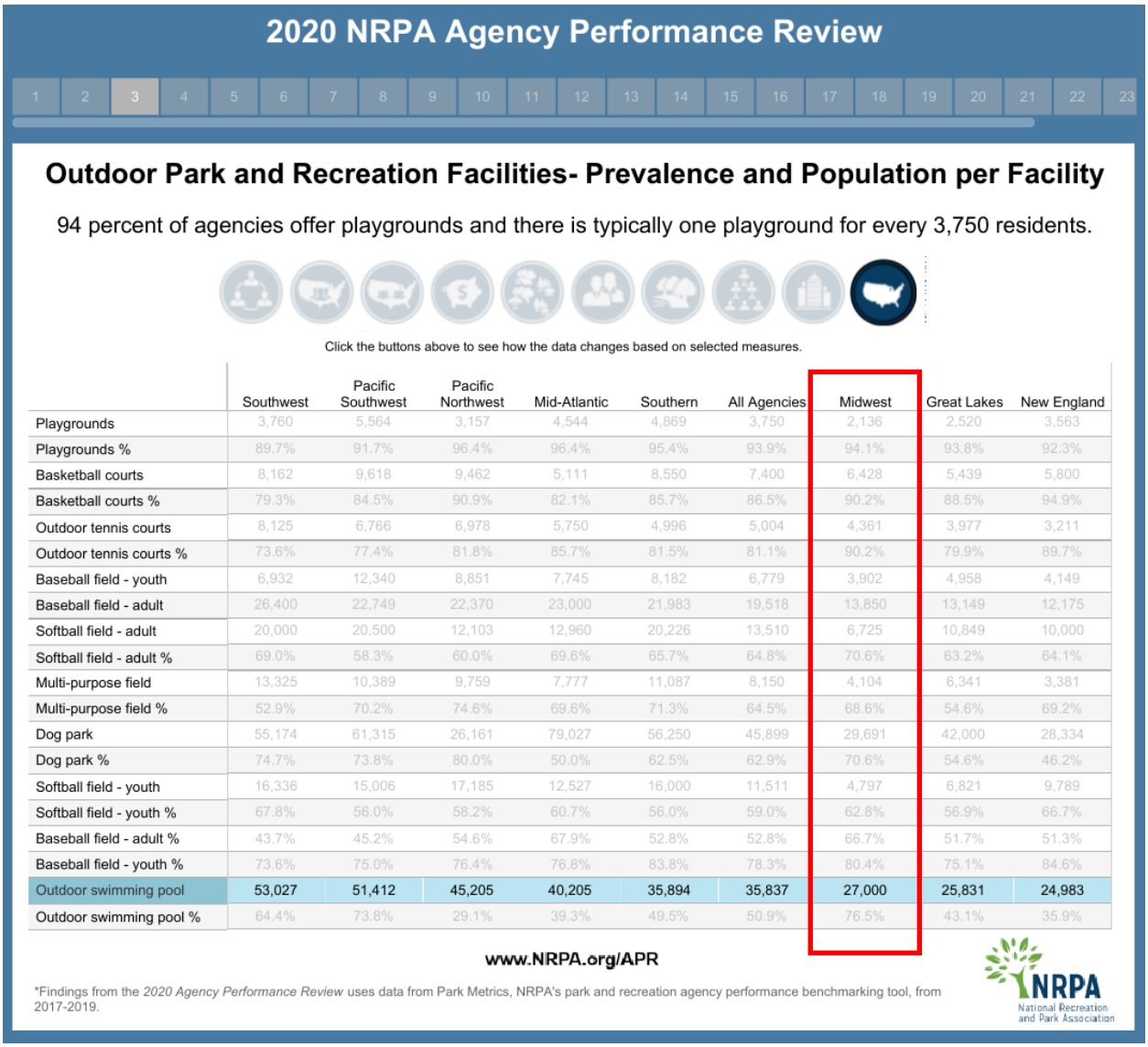
With a recommended pool sizing of 22,500 s.f. – 30,500 s.f., at this time Joplin could withstand decreasing the amount of water surface in the city by 4,500 s.f. or more. If Ewert Aquatic Center were removed from the aquatics system as a pool, the water square footage in the city would drop to 25,139 s.f., or .49 square feet of water per capita, which is still within the recommended range for pool sizing and above average in the population category.

National Recreation and Parks Association – Parks Metrics

The National Recreation and Parks Association collects and releases Parks Metrics data annually that provides insight into community trends. Included in this is an analysis of the number of outdoor swimming pools offered by agencies.

According to the 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review[1], which utilizes the Parks Metrics analysis, it is reported that communities in the Midwest offer 1 outdoor swimming pool per 27,000 people. If we utilize this ratio and apply that to Joplin's population, we expect Joplin would offer 2 outdoor swimming pools.

2020 NRPA Parks Metrics Report



2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities- Prevalence and Population per Facility

94 percent of agencies offer playgrounds and there is typically one playground for every 3,750 residents.

Click the buttons above to see how the data changes based on selected measures.

	Southwest	Pacific Southwest	Pacific Northwest	Mid-Atlantic	Southern	All Agencies	Midwest	Great Lakes	New England
Playgrounds	3,760	5,564	3,157	4,544	4,869	3,750	2,136	2,520	3,563
Playgrounds %	89.7%	91.7%	96.4%	96.4%	95.4%	93.9%	94.1%	93.8%	92.3%
Basketball courts	8,162	9,618	9,462	5,111	8,550	7,400	6,428	5,439	5,800
Basketball courts %	79.3%	84.5%	90.9%	82.1%	85.7%	86.5%	90.2%	88.5%	94.9%
Outdoor tennis courts	8,125	6,766	6,978	5,750	4,996	5,004	4,361	3,977	3,211
Outdoor tennis courts %	73.6%	77.4%	81.8%	85.7%	81.5%	81.1%	90.2%	79.9%	89.7%
Baseball field - youth	6,932	12,340	8,851	7,745	8,182	6,779	3,902	4,958	4,149
Baseball field - adult	26,400	22,749	22,370	23,000	21,983	19,518	13,850	13,149	12,175
Softball field - adult	20,000	20,500	12,103	12,960	20,226	13,510	6,725	10,849	10,000
Softball field - adult %	69.0%	58.3%	60.0%	69.6%	65.7%	64.8%	70.6%	63.2%	64.1%
Multi-purpose field	13,325	10,389	9,759	7,777	11,087	8,150	4,104	6,341	3,381
Multi-purpose field %	52.9%	70.2%	74.6%	69.6%	71.3%	64.5%	68.6%	54.6%	69.2%
Dog park	55,174	61,315	26,161	79,027	56,250	45,899	29,691	42,000	28,334
Dog park %	74.7%	73.8%	80.0%	50.0%	62.5%	62.9%	70.6%	54.6%	46.2%
Softball field - youth	16,336	15,006	17,185	12,527	16,000	11,511	4,797	6,821	9,789
Softball field - youth %	67.8%	56.0%	58.2%	60.7%	56.0%	59.0%	62.8%	56.9%	66.7%
Baseball field - adult %	43.7%	45.2%	54.6%	67.9%	52.8%	52.8%	66.7%	51.7%	51.3%
Baseball field - youth %	73.6%	75.0%	76.4%	76.8%	83.8%	78.3%	80.4%	75.1%	84.6%
Outdoor swimming pool	53,027	51,412	45,205	40,205	35,894	35,837	27,000	25,831	24,983
Outdoor swimming pool %	64.4%	73.8%	29.1%	39.3%	49.5%	50.9%	76.5%	43.1%	35.9%

www.NRPA.org/APR

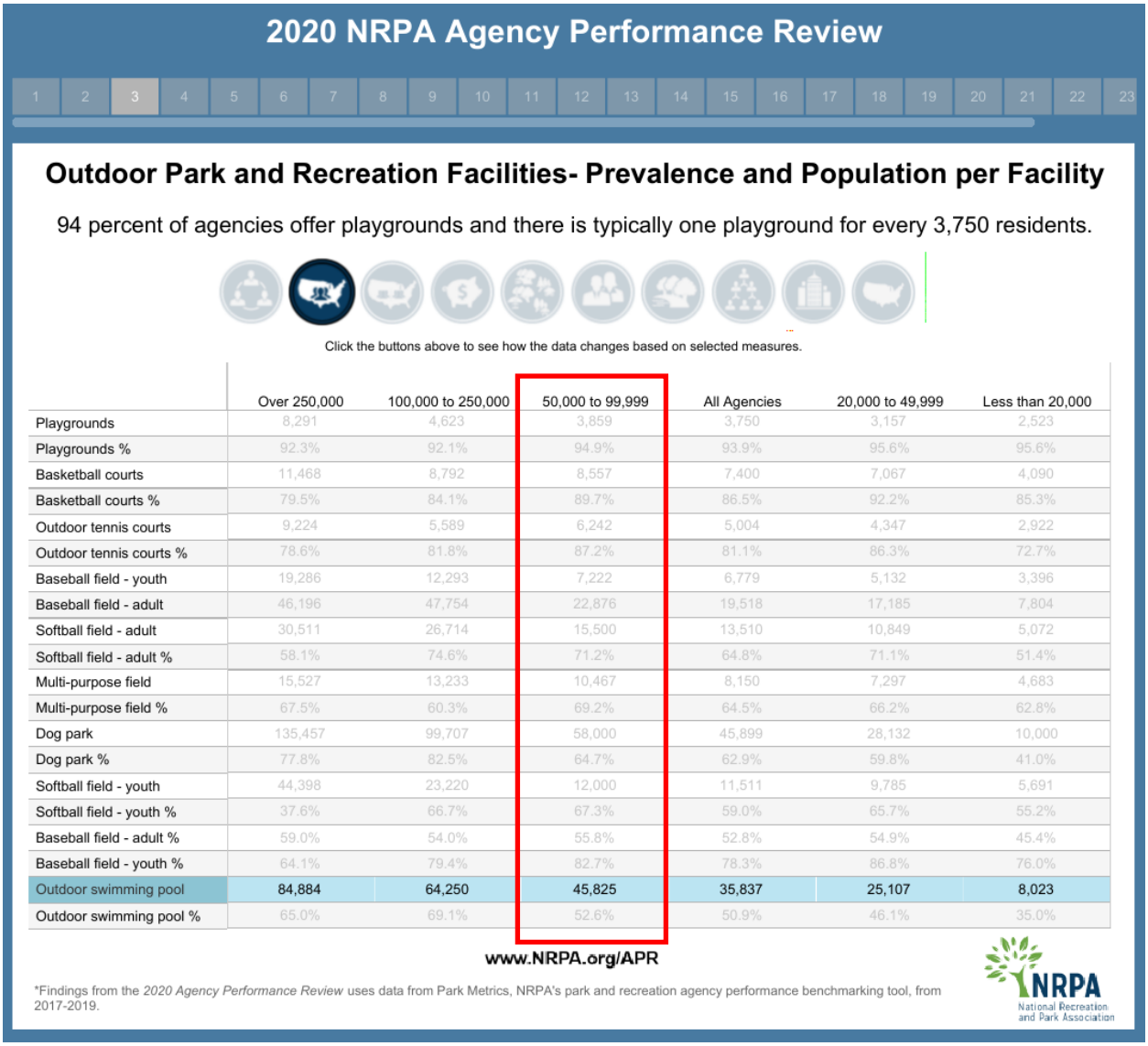
*Findings from the *2020 Agency Performance Review* uses data from Park Metrics, NRPA's park and recreation agency performance benchmarking tool, from 2017-2019.

NRPA National Recreation and Park Association

[1] Nrpa.org, 2020, NRPA Agency Performance Review, https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/

Additionally, the 2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review[2] reports that communities with populations between 50,000 – 99,999 offer 1 outdoor swimming pool per 45,825 people. If we utilize this ratio and apply that to Joplin's population, we expect Joplin to offer 2 outdoor swimming pools.

2020 NRPA Parks Metrics Report



2020 NRPA Agency Performance Review

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities- Prevalence and Population per Facility

94 percent of agencies offer playgrounds and there is typically one playground for every 3,750 residents.

Click the buttons above to see how the data changes based on selected measures.

	Over 250,000	100,000 to 250,000	50,000 to 99,999	All Agencies	20,000 to 49,999	Less than 20,000
Playgrounds	8,291	4,623	3,859	3,750	3,157	2,523
Playgrounds %	92.3%	92.1%	94.9%	93.9%	95.6%	95.6%
Basketball courts	11,468	8,792	8,557	7,400	7,067	4,090
Basketball courts %	79.5%	84.1%	89.7%	86.5%	92.2%	85.3%
Outdoor tennis courts	9,224	5,589	6,242	5,004	4,347	2,922
Outdoor tennis courts %	78.6%	81.8%	87.2%	81.1%	86.3%	72.7%
Baseball field - youth	19,286	12,293	7,222	6,779	5,132	3,396
Baseball field - adult	46,196	47,754	22,876	19,518	17,185	7,804
Softball field - adult	30,511	26,714	15,500	13,510	10,849	5,072
Softball field - adult %	58.1%	74.6%	71.2%	64.8%	71.1%	51.4%
Multi-purpose field	15,527	13,233	10,467	8,150	7,297	4,683
Multi-purpose field %	67.5%	60.3%	69.2%	64.5%	66.2%	62.8%
Dog park	135,457	99,707	58,000	45,899	28,132	10,000
Dog park %	77.8%	82.5%	64.7%	62.9%	59.8%	41.0%
Softball field - youth	44,398	23,220	12,000	11,511	9,785	5,691
Softball field - youth %	37.6%	66.7%	67.3%	59.0%	65.7%	55.2%
Baseball field - adult %	59.0%	54.0%	55.8%	52.8%	54.9%	45.4%
Baseball field - youth %	64.1%	79.4%	82.7%	78.3%	86.8%	76.0%
Outdoor swimming pool	84,884	64,250	45,825	35,837	25,107	8,023
Outdoor swimming pool %	65.0%	69.1%	52.6%	50.9%	46.1%	35.0%

www.NRPA.org/APR

*Findings from the *2020 Agency Performance Review* uses data from Park Metrics, NRPA's park and recreation agency performance benchmarking tool, from 2017-2019.

NRPA National Recreation and Park Association

At an average annual population growth rate of .75%, the City of Joplin would not need more water surface area, or pools, for the next 20 years. Until the City reaches a population of about 60,000, the City is projected to need at least 2 pools, with the opportunity for a third.

[2] Nrpa.org, 2020, NRPA Agency Performance Review, https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/

Public Engagement

Introduction

The Ewert Aquatic Center Study placed importance on hearing feedback from the community and users of Ewert Aquatic Center. Solicitation and execution of public input was conducted to understand how the community currently utilizes the pool, how they would like to use the pool, and collect general household and program information.

Several methods of collecting public input were conducted, including:

- **Meeting with City staff and Aquatics Committee** – July 21, 2020 @ City Hall, 1 – 3 p.m.
- **Online survey** – Open and available August 5 through August 27, 2020
- **Open house meeting for public** – August 20, 2020 @ Ewert Park, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.
- **East Town meeting** – September 1, 2020 @ McKinley Elementary School, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- **Townhall open meeting for the public** – October 20, 2020 @ McKinley Elementary School @ 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
- **East Town Stakeholder meeting** – December 1, 2020 @ Joplin City Hall, noon – 2 p.m.
- **Stakeholder phone calls**: Chalise Cooper and Melodee Colbert Keen

Communication of each of the public meetings and the online survey was released via several different platforms, including social media posts on Facebook and the City's website. The Joplin Globe wrote an article on 8/19/20 advertising the project and public meeting on 8/20/20.

Public Meeting Poster Example



Open House Meeting (Public Meeting #1)

An open house meeting was conducted to meet and talk with users from the public, with a focus on presenting information about the existing facility, discussing their aquatic needs and ideas about Ewert Aquatic Center and park, and answer questions.

The open house meeting was conducted on August 20, 2020 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Ewert Park. 50 people signed-in, 92% noted being a resident of Joplin. Waters Edge Aquatic Design staff and City staff were present.

Comment cards are in the Appendix.

On-site meeting materials included:

- Information about the condition of facility
- Interactive posters (see photos below)
- Comment cards
- Paper survey

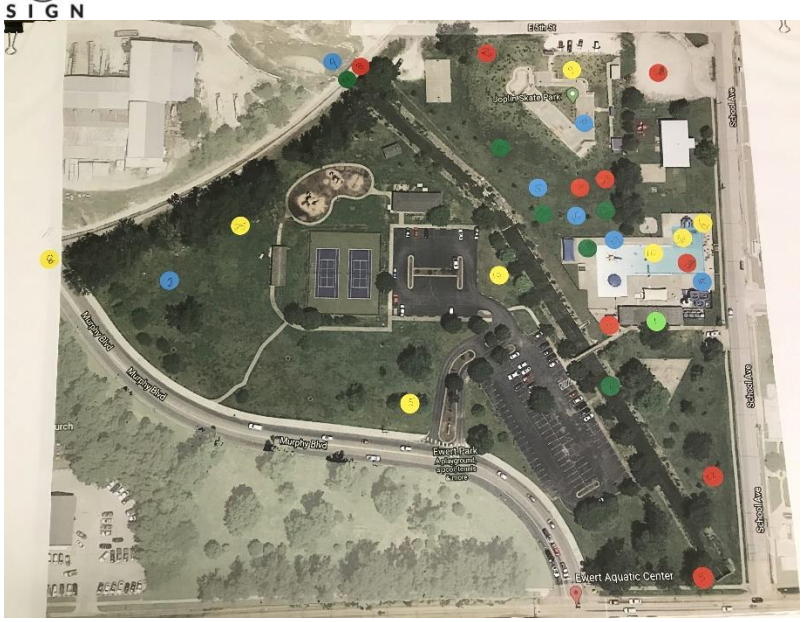
The following are key takeaways from the open house meeting:

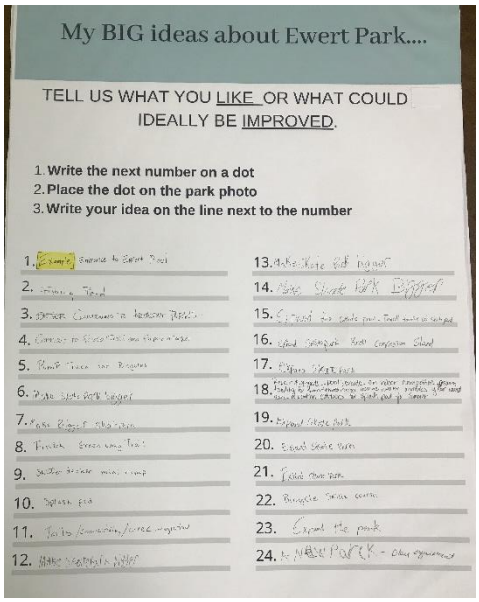
- Support for the pool to remain a pool
- Support for a large splash pad with amenities, with a possible smaller pool
- Support for expanding the skate park
- Concern over removing the pool from the park and the city
- Desire to improve and enhance the park

Open House – Interactive Posters





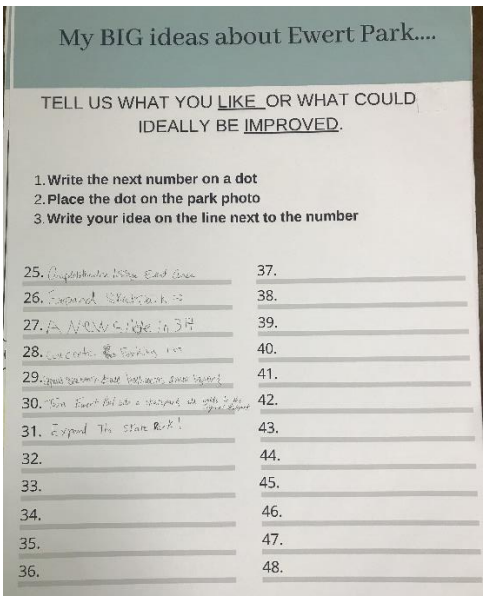




My BIG ideas about Ewert Park....

TELL US WHAT YOU LIKE OR WHAT COULD IDEALLY BE IMPROVED.

1. Write the next number on a dot
2. Place the dot on the park photo
3. Write your idea on the line next to the number



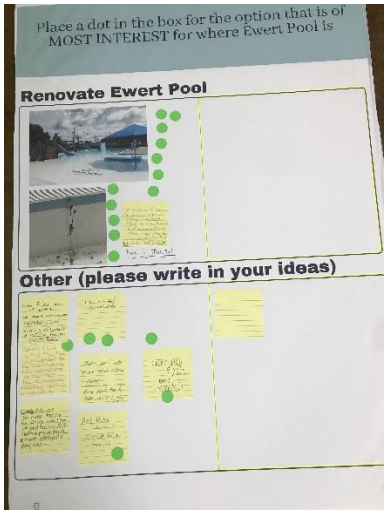
My BIG ideas about Ewert Park....

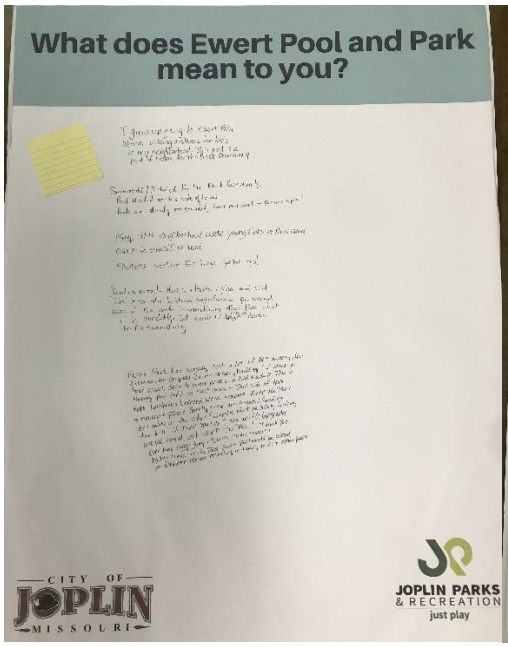
TELL US WHAT YOU LIKE OR WHAT COULD IDEALLY BE IMPROVED.

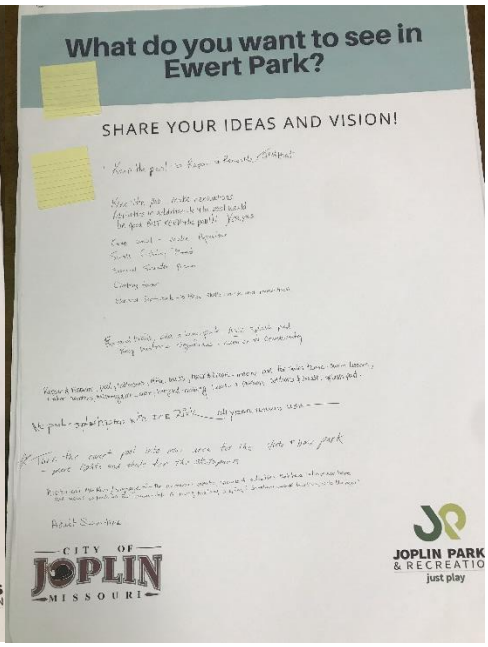
1. Write the next number on a dot
2. Place the dot on the park photo
3. Write your idea on the line next to the number


Place a dot in the box for the option that is of MOST INTEREST for where Ewert Pool is
Convert pool to splash pad WITH additional play features
Expand the existing skate park


Place a dot in the box for the option that is of MOST INTEREST for where Ewert Pool is
Open Park Space
Convert pool to splash pad


Place a dot in the box for the option that is of MOST INTEREST for where Ewert Pool is
Renovate Ewert Pool
Other (please write in your ideas)


What does Ewert Pool and Park mean to you?
CITY OF JOPLIN MISSOURI
JOPLIN PARKS & RECREATION
just play


What do you want to see in Ewert Park?
SHARE YOUR IDEAS AND VISION!
CITY OF JOPLIN MISSOURI
JOPLIN PARK & RECREATIO
just play

East Town Open Meeting

A meeting was conducted with residents of East Town to meet and talk about the pool, pool needs, and historical significance of Ewert Aquatic Center.

The meeting was conducted on September 1, 2020 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. at McKinley Elementary School. 7 people signed-in, 100% noted being a resident of Joplin. Waters Edge Aquatic Design staff and City staff were present.

Comment cards are in the Appendix.

On-site meeting materials included:

- Examples of large splashpads with amenities
- Comment cards
- Paper survey

The following are key takeaways from the East Town meeting:

- Support for the pool to remain a pool
- A simple pool option and possibly a large splash pad and pool option could be considered
- Concern over removing the pool from the park and the city
- Concern over removing an amenity from the park
- Desire to improve and enhance the park

Townhall Meeting (Public Meeting #2)

A Townhall meeting and presentation was conducted to review project findings, present concept options, and collect feedback on those options.

The townhall meeting was conducted on October 20, 2020 from 6 – 8 p.m. at McKinley Elementary school. 19 people signed-in, 89% noted being a resident of Joplin. Waters Edge staff and City staff were present.

Comment cards are in the Appendix.

On-site meeting materials included:

- Presentation
- Concept options
- Comment cards

The following are key takeaways from the East Town meeting:

- The concept option (Option 4 at the time) that includes the pool and the splashpad is of interest
- The ice rink is of interest for any of the concept options moving forward

East Town Stakeholder Meeting

A meeting was conducted with residents of East Town to meet and talk about the final two Options, considerations for those options, and to provide feedback.

The meeting was conducted on December 1, 2020 from noon to 2p.m. at Joplin City Hall. 5 people attended. Waters Edge Aquatic Design staff and City staff were present.

On-site meeting materials included:

- Presentation with final concept renderings (2 concepts), magnitude of costs, operational considerations

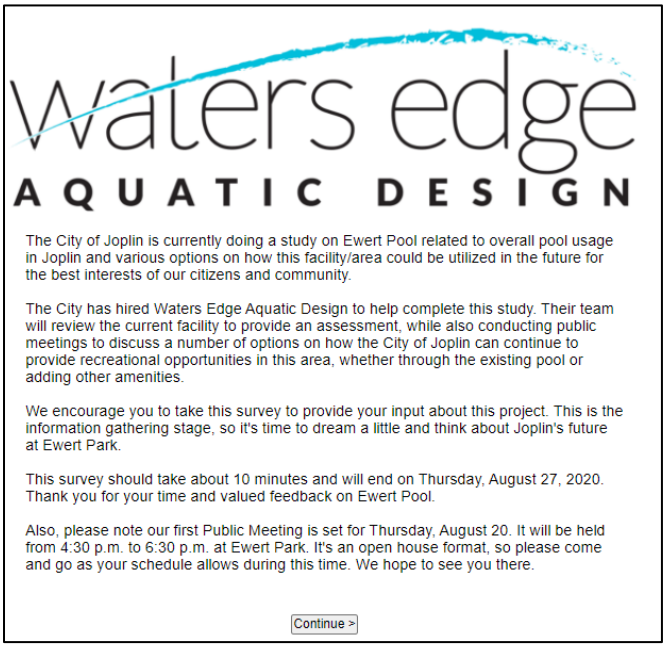
The following are key takeaways from the East Town meeting:

- A pool is a desired amenity by East Town residents
- A free and available/accessible amenity would allow for more use by East Town residents
- Having a facility that is new but cannot open due to staffing shortages is not ideal
- If it were free, a splash park would be utilized
- An ice rink is an interesting amenity to have activity in the park year-round
- History needs to be incorporated into the project

Online Survey

1,928 online surveys were completed. Full survey results are in the Appendix. An overview of survey results can be found below.

Welcome Page – Online Survey



Respondent Demographic Information:

- 65.8% report living in city limits
- 53.7% are between 25-44 years of age (21.1% are 45-59 years and 11.2% are 60+ years)
- 28% have 4 people living in the household (20.9% have 3 and 20.2% have 2)
- 84.3% have an adult residing in the household
- 32.3% have young children residing in the household (4-8 years)
- 31.9% have teenagers residing in the household (13-17 years)
- 16.8% have toddlers residing in the household (1-3 years) and 5.6% have infants (under 1 year)

Respondent Use Information:

- 66.5% have used one of the outdoor pools or splash pad in the last 3 years
- 60.5% marked Schifferdecker as a pool most important to the household and 48.9% marked Ewert Aquatic Center as most important (42.7% marked Cunningham)
- 8% use Ewert Aquatic Center several times a week, whereas 21% use it several times and month and 34% do not use it
- 6% use Cunningham Aquatic Center several times a week, whereas 15% use it several times a month and 36% do not use it
- 55% do not use Parr Hill Park Splash Pad
- Overall level satisfaction for the aquatic facilities is ranked in order highest to lowest:
    1. Schifferdecker Aquatic Center
    2. Cunningham Aquatic Center
    3. Ewert Aquatic Center
    4. Parr Hill Park Splash Pad
- The top four reasons respondents do not use Ewert Aquatic Center are (in order of highest percentage reporting the reason to lowest):
    1. Use other outdoor pool facilities in Joplin (24.9%)
    2. Facility lacks amenities (18.3%)
    3. Facility is not well maintained (14%)
    4. Safety concerns (12.5%)
- 88.4% travel to the outdoor pools/splash pads via personal vehicle most often
- 67.4% are willing to drive up to 10 minutes to participate in a swimming/splash pad activity and 54.1% are willing to drive up to 15 minutes

Future Use of Ewert Aquatic Center:

- 33.7% said the City should continue to offer the same number of pools, invest in necessary repairs and improvements of Ewert Aquatic Center, and should supplement operating costs not covered by revenue
- 29.7% said the City should offer fewer outdoor pools, with Ewert Aquatic Center being repurposed to offer different amenities and features that will be used by more people to better serve our community.
- Uses at the Ewert Aquatic Center and pool site are ranked in order highest to lowest according to their weighted score:
    1. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into a splash pad with additional play features
    2. Renovate Ewert Aquatic Center
    3. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into a splash pad
    4. Expand the existing skate park
    5. Other (comments submitted)

6. Convert Ewert Aquatic Center into park land
    - Of note: 48% were Very Interested in converting Ewert Aquatic Center into a splash pad with additional play features, and 45% were Very interested in renovating Ewert Aquatic Center

- The top four additional features of interest to go at the Ewert Aquatic Center site are (in order of highest percentage reporting the reason to lowest):
    1. Ice skating rink (56.5%)
    2. Outdoor fitness area/challenge course (33.1%)
    3. Climbing wall/tower (33%)
    4. Mini-golf (31.1%)
- The following are areas of importance when thinking about possible future uses of Ewert Aquatic Center (ranked in order highest to lowest):
    1. Easily accessible and available for use
    2. Access for the community as a whole
    3. Enhances community development in the surrounding area
    4. Offer a new amenity or features for Joplin
    5. Amenity is financially sustainable
    6. Fees/cost to use the facility or amenity
    7. Continued pool use
    8. Continued water related use (not pool use)
    9. Other (comments submitted)
    - Of note: 47% are Very Interested that the future use is easily accessible and available for use, and 46% are Very Interested that the future use has access for the community as a whole.

Emerging Themes

To understand the user perspective and how that will influence the success of the future use at Ewert Aquatic Center, feedback has been broken down into themes; those themes will be used to inform options and study recommendations. For each of the themes, quotes were pulled from submissions from the online survey; substantive edits were not made to the quotes.

General Support

Throughout the study, there was expressed support for Ewert Park the historical significance of the pool within the park.

"Although Ewert isn't the biggest & best pool it offers a large area to swim in & the most 0 depth play area for young children. I would support enhancing Ewert or making a large splash pad/play area"

"There is history in Ewert Park that needs to be shared with all. It was gifted to one people because of racism and now it needs to be upgraded & improved to include & bring together all people."

"It is very important for every future plan to consider the history of EWERT's Park. It is a place for people of color and minorities and should be Joplin's DIVERSITY PLAZA as per City of Joplin's Diversity Proclamation of June 15th 2020. COLORFULL ART AND DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MESSAGES SHOULD BE PART OF THE LANDSCAPE"

Pool Support

There is overall support for a pool to be in Ewert Park, and for Ewert Aquatic Center to remain.

"Please keep the pool. You can do away with all the slides and stuff but please keep the pool for the kids."

"I think the city should hands down keep every pool up and running."

"I say keep the pool simple and easy to maintain to keep it affordable for families."

"Do whatever needs be done to make it an available resource to this part of Joplin. All the junk is not important. It was great as a pool!"

"Make it into a regular swimming pool requiring less staff to run it and for a more affordable price for kids especially."

"Let's go back to providing amenities to our city like our ancestors. We need more of smaller Neighborhood Swimming Pools. We don't need Water Parks. We need simple Neighborhood Amenities."

Several comments submitted indicated that adult and senior users, along with younger users, are demographics that could be served at Ewert Aquatic Center.

"I would like to see one pool dedicated for older people and much younger as well maybe an area to sit under with misting for older people and babies"

"please don't waste our time with this only to go your own direction...the kids have several places for water fun as an older person im not a member of a country club or the ymca too far away offer more for more people besides the kids. There are adults and seniors in the community. Aqua aerobic(s) would be great"

Additionally, comments were submitted that showed support for a splash pad and pool combination at Ewert Aquatic Center.

"Renovate the pool AND add a splash pad."

"With additional features includes a pool of some sort.. I would suggest having a smaller pool or something in addition to the enhanced splash pad amenities."

"Maybe do a splash pad and additional features and include a decent size wading pool for younger kids and parents."

"Not necessarily opposed to a pool/splash pad…"

"Challenge engineers to develop a splashpad & pool; this pool (Ewert) is extremely significant to the black community in Joplin: "Please don't take it away now"!!"

"Splash pad with pool. Have early morning time that the splash pad could be open for free before pool hours. Like 9am to 11. There is a place is ST.Louis that does this and it is great for parents with young kids. Or maybe someone with low income that can take the kids to have some family fun still. I'm a mom of 4 summer activities can add up I'm always keep a(n) eye out for free water play things to do. Yes we to pay to get in place too."

"... I believe an enhanced interactive amenity (p)ark is possible with a smaller pool amenity available also. Anything that's done needs to incorporate the history of the area and the park, as well as theming it with Route 66."

Splash Pad Support

There is support for a splash pad, particularly a splash pad that is larger with fun amenities.

"splash pad is often more convenient than going to the pool."

"I believe we need more splash pads at the parks not just pool areas"

"A really amazing top of the line splash pad would be great and better play areas for kids"

"There should be some type of water feature there, I believe with the area that it's in if it was a splash pad with extra amenities and people weren't charged it would probably be used more"

"I like the splash pad with extras option that sounds fun"

"Yes something for younger and older community people and people with special needs like the pad and other areas geared towards this"

Financial Impact

Comments were submitted indicating that the costs associated with a future use at Ewert Aquatic Center is important. Both the costs to operate and the costs to utilize a future facility/amenity should be considered.

"I don't think option 1 makes good financial sense."
(In response to Q12 in the online survey, which was "the City should continue to offer the same number of pools, invest in necessary repairs and improvement of Ewert Pool, and should supplement operating costs not covered by revenue.)

"We have to tighten our belts. If it is costing money, cut our losses and convert into greenspace or turf that has much less upkeep over time and can generate income year round."

"I truly believe that the splash pad with the additional play features would be less costly for the city and used the most out of options listed."

"It's important to keep development in the city balanced. If Ewert is lost then all pools will be on the west side of Main street. With Empire market nearby a family friendly area will help those neighborhoods become more desirable. If losing the pool means a splash pad without fees - I would support it."

"Being free/no cost to use is important to my family."

"Using Ewert park for activities that do not require attendants or substantial maintenance would reduce city expenditures and would make the park more useful to the public for many months of the year."

"Joplin has too many pools and nothing the children can afford"

Future Options

Introduction

The Options developed for this study are intended to explore future uses at Ewert Aquatic Center, which were developed based off the needs and interests identified throughout this study. The Options are intended to demonstrate projected capital and operating costs, revenues, and implications to guide future improvements.

The following primary goals are appropriate when considering changes to the aquatics system and Ewert Aquatic Center:

- Improve Ewert Aquatic Center and the pool site by providing more modern amenities
- Maintain either a pool and/or splash park in Ewert Park
- Increase participation and accessibility to community members
- Decrease the demand and quantity of staff to operate

The original Options at the beginning of the study included both aquatic options and non-aquatic Options (e.g., park land and expanded skate park) as noted in the Project Objectives earlier in this report. After completing the public engagement process, including meetings and the online survey, and after establishing and narrowing down the City's goals for the facility, two final Options were developed.

The Final Options include:

1. Option 1: Convert the pool to a splash park (at existing pool location)
2. Option 2: Renovate the pool and include a splash park

Other Options were studied as a part of the process, which included renovating the pool and developing a splash park to the south of the bathhouse and fill in the existing pool. During the study, these Options were eliminated due to costs and operational necessities, and space constraints, respectively. Options 1 and 2 noted above became the final Options to consider for further study and recommendation. *Imagery of these Options are provided in the Appendix.*

Option 1 – Splash Park

Option 1 - Aerial



Option 1 includes removal of the existing swimming pool and replacing it with a splash park with a variety of features and amenities. Integrated into the splash park is an ice rink that can operate in the winter months.

Due to the need for fewer staff, operating conditions, and function of the space, it is expected that the operating season runs from approximately May – September, for about 115 +/- days.

It is anticipated that the Splash Park would be available for use free of charge for 10 hours a day for the duration of the season. Patrons would enter through a gate located between the bathhouse and the concession stand buildings. Although the entrance would not be through the bathhouse, the restrooms would be fully available for use. During the ice ribbon season, the bathhouse would be open, and admission would be through the bathhouse.

In this option, the current activities conducted at Ewert Aquatic Center, including open/general swim, swimming lessons, and the doggie swim can all be accommodated at one of the other existing outdoor aquatic centers.

Of note, as reported in the online survey, current participation of Ewert Aquatic Center is often by families and those who wish to utilize the zero-depth entry and associated play features. These are typically families with younger children. It is expected that those same users will be served by the Splash Park features offered by Option 1.

Option 1 – Detail



The splash park includes the following features:

- Colored concrete and artificial turf, playground surfacing under dry play structure
- Additional shade structures (5), existing shade structure at the bathhouse will remain
- Ground sprays (33)
- Tall and larger sprays (8)
- Water table (1)
- Spray arches (1)
- Wet boulder sprays (2)
- Wet play structure (1)
- Dry play structure (1)
- Dry boulder play unit (1)
- Ice rink (12' width, 4,920 s.f.)
- Landscaping
- Bathhouse & buildings:
    - Reconfigure entry/admission area
    - Relocate men's shower tree
    - Add 2 family changing rooms
    - Condition the bathhouse to utilize in the winter months (for ice skating)
    - Basic interior and exterior aesthetic improvements
    - Recoat roof
    - Improvements to the entrance between the bathhouse and concession building

The table below demonstrates the opinion of magnitude of costs for development of the project, and projections for expenditures, revenues, and cost recovery levels are provided for each of the Options. These projections include revenues and expenditures for both the splash park and ice rink operations, along with personnel, utilities, and commodities. *A breakdown of the opinion of magnitude of cost, revenues, and expenditures can be found in subsequent pages can be found in the Appendix.*

Option 1 – Splash Park	
Opinion of Magnitude of Cost	$4.8 - $4.9 Million
Operating Budget	
Expenditures	$120,200
Revenues	$52,400
Subsidy/Deficit	-$67,800
Attendance	27,400*
Staff Required (Total)	**9 - 10**
Lifeguards (Total)	7
Lifeguards at 1 time	2

**The attendance number is nearly a 282% increase in participation from the current average annual attendance of 7,169.*

Benefits

- Fits the needs identified by community during public engagement.
- The splash park is considered a new and dynamic and is anticipated to be a destination facility.
- Ice ribbon for ice skating during the off season.
- The complex requires far fewer staff than the existing Ewert Aquatic Center.
- It is anticipated that this is a free amenity when it is in operation.
- There is space to host events in and around the area and supports current event offerings.
- Longer operating season than a traditional pool.

Challenges

- A pool will be removed from the park.
- Exiting programs will be relocated to other existing outdoor aquatic centers.

Additional Considerations

The pool has been an integral part of Ewert Park for nearly a century, and the history behind how and why the park and pool were developed are of importance to the community. Strategies and methods for educating on and incorporating that history are recommended to be included in this Option. A budget has been allocated for this and is included in the Magnitude of Cost.

The imagery in this report reflects a "nature" theme, as that was one theme explored and showcased. However, after public, City, and committee input, a theme of Route 66 is more desired for the final design. The Magnitude of Cost includes the features shown; however, the Magnitude of Cost can be expected to apply to the Route 66 theme as well, with some variance on pricing for custom pieces.

Option 2 –Pool Renovation and Splash Park

Option 2 was the second final Option explored and studied. This Option includes renovation of the existing swimming pool and addition of a splash park with play features.

It was determined that this Option was not the recommended Option for following reasons:

- The magnitude of cost for this Option is approximately $1 million more than Option 1.
- Fees would be assessed for use of the pool and splash park.
- Does not offer amenities that would draw high participation and carry interest far into the future.
- Due to its size and schedule for being open for operation, it does not offer the same opportunity to be a destination facility.
- Staff requirement is higher than Option 1, which brings the concern of not being able to provide adequate staff for opening the pool for all scheduled hours.

A breakdown of the opinion of magnitude of cost, revenues, and expenditures can be found in the Appendix.

Option 2 – Aerial



Option 2 – Details



waters edge
AQUATIC DESIGN

Recommendation

Introduction

We believe there are specific goals that are primary considerations when selecting the final Option for the future of Ewert Aquatic Center, which include:

- The facility should be readily available and accessible to the community as a whole.
- More modern features and amenities should be provided for citizens.
- The facility should serve the neighborhood, the city, and encourage users from outside of the city as a destination facility.
- A facility should be offered that can operate with minimal, if any, fees for use.
- A reduction in staff is important for the short-term and long-term viability of the facility.
- A splash park with features should be included.

The final recommendation takes these goals into account and meets these goals.

Final Recommendation

After receiving community feedback, assessing operational needs and goals, and developing Options for the future use of Ewert Aquatic Center, we recommend Option 1 – Splash Park.

Several key factors contribute to this recommendation, including:

- Modern Amenities & Community Acceptance
    - Community feedback supports a Splash Park, particularly because of the features and amenities provided within Option 1.
    - There is no facility like it nearby, will serve as a new and interactive facility for Joplin, and because of the size, character, and schedule of operation, it can be expected to serve as a destination facility.
    - No fees assessed for general users of the Splash Park (with the exception for rentals and other special events, like birthday parties, ice ribbon use, and other special events).
    - A longer operating season is possible.

- Long Term Sustainability
    - Events can occur throughout the year, both within the facility and in adjacent park space, due to its size, deck space, and periphery amenities and access.
    - The number of staff needed to operate the Splash Park is minimal, and therefore less susceptible to closure due to lack of staff. Additionally, by reducing the staff requirement for this facility, staffing focus can shift to the City's more utilized aquatic centers.
    - The operating costs of the Splash Park are lower than other Options, as are the capital costs for development.

When comparing Option 1 against the goals identified for the new facility during the kickoff meeting as referenced earlier in the report, Option 1 meets the goals:

New and never seen before	Yes
Interactive, fresh, and available to the community	Yes
Serve neighborhood and be a destination	Yes
Enhance and support special events	Yes
Free or reduced cost	Yes
Maintain and operate for the long term	Yes
Reduce staff resources and demand	Yes

Option 1 – Detail

