Appendix B: Market Assessment

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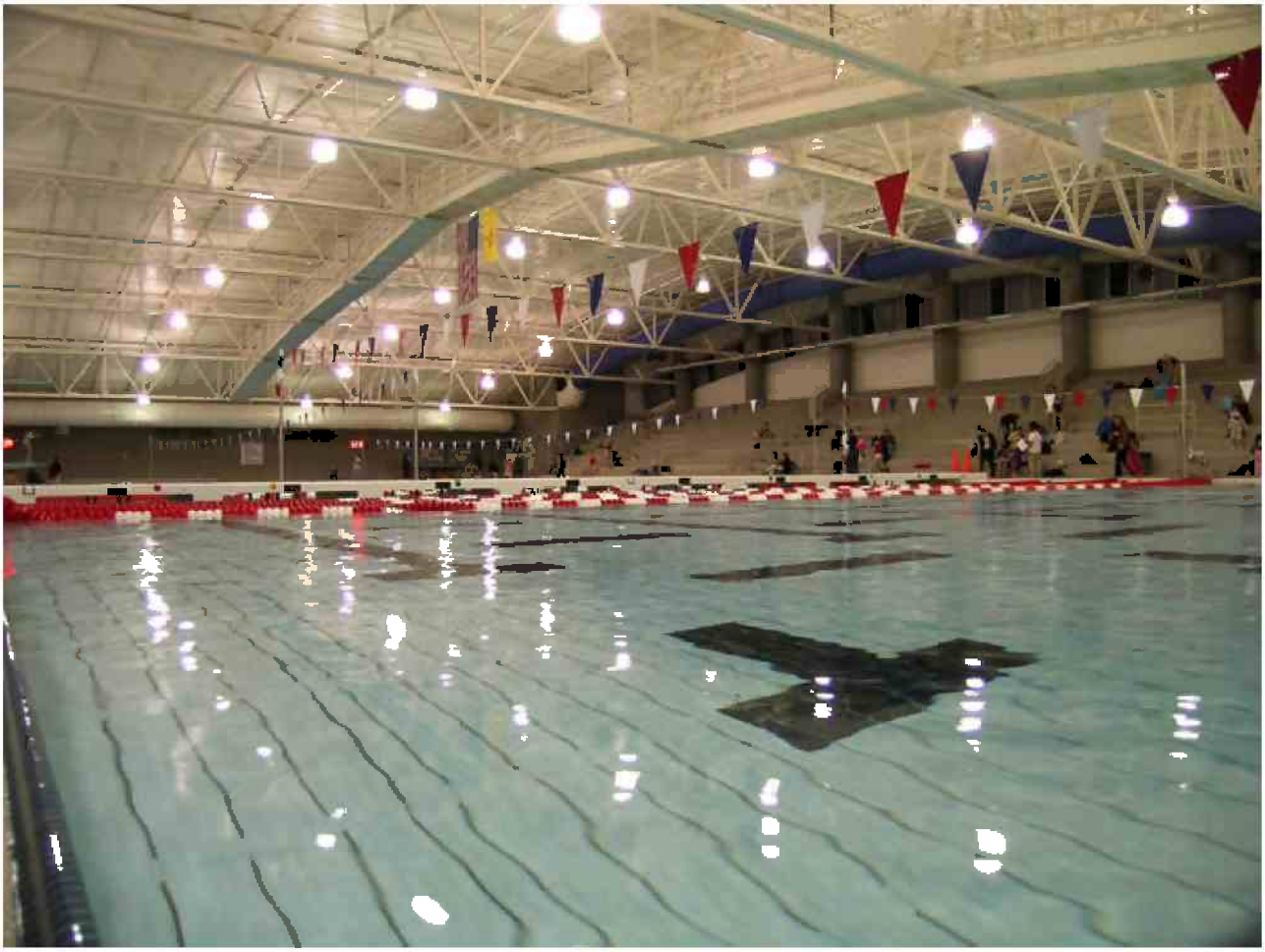


Appendix B: Market Assessment

1. The State of Aquatics in Bellevue and the Eastside

With the large geographic region on the eastside of the Seattle metro area and the high population base, there are a wide variety of aquatic facilities that are available.

Public Facilities – The City of Bellevue has the existing Bellevue Aquatic Center, which is an older facility that has been expanded and renovated. The conventional 6-lane pool has a diving L attached, as well as a separate therapy pool. The 6-lane pool no longer meets basic standards for swim meets, but is utilized by a variety of high school and age group swim teams for practice. The therapy pool is a great amenity and supports a number of therapy users and other functions.

However, this is the only public pool in Bellevue, and it has to support a significant number of aquatic needs for a population of over 100,000. It is also significant that there are no pools in any of Bellevue's four high schools. As a result, all high school swim meets are held outside of the city limits.

Bellevue Aquatic Center

Bellevue Aquatic Center

Only a couple of the communities on the Eastside actually own and operate their own pools. Back in the 1970's, King County built a number of Forward Thrust pools in the Eastside. These facilities are very similar and consist of a single tank that is approximately 35 meters long with a bulkhead and diving area. Most of these pools also have a raised seating area as well. Over the last 10 years or more, King County has been gradually divesting itself of these pools, and they have either been taken over by local governments or the non-profit sector. All of these Forward Thrust pools are nearing the end of their life span and will either need to be replaced or renovated. In addition, these pools are no longer state-of-the-art and do not include any leisure amenities. Issaquah is one of the few communities that still owns and operates a Forward Thrust pool (Julius Boehm), but the Renton pool is in the process of being taken over by the Renton School District and the City of Renton.

The largest and best known public aquatic facility is the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center. The KCAC is a highly competitive, aquatics oriented center that not only services the swimming needs of the greater Seattle area, but also for the Pacific Northwest. It also serves as a national venue for aquatic events. This is virtually the only indoor 50 meter pool in the greater Seattle area.

Mary Wayte Pool- Mercer Island

Henry Moses- Renton

There are also relatively few public outdoor aquatic facilities on the Eastside. The best known is the Henry Moses pool in Renton, which has a strong recreational orientation and a very strong market position. Beyond this facility, there are several smaller more conventional pools - but that is it. Additionally, it is significant that there is not an outdoor public pool in Bellevue itself.

There are plans currently underway to replace the existing Northshore pool in Bothell with a new aquatic center in the area that would be a partnership with Bothell, Kenmore and Woodinville through a PRSA. Sammamish and Issaquah are also considering starting feasibility studies for new facilities.

Non-Profits – Several of the non-profit agencies have a strong position in the Eastside market. The Northwest Center has taken over management and operations of three "Forward Thrust" pools, including: Northshore, Mary Wayte, and Hartman. All of these pools are nearing the end of their lifespan and will either need to be replaced or renovated in the near future. Unfortunately, both the St. Edwards and the Northshore pools in Bothell have been closed in the last 6 months. These pools are conventional pools with no strong appeal to recreational swimmers. Due to their age they also are not well configured to handle most swim meets.

The YMCA has facilities in Bellevue and Sammamish that both have small, older, 4-lane pools that have difficulty meeting the aquatic needs of their members. It is significant that the Bellevue Family YMCA has to rent pool time at other aquatic facilities in the area to meet competitive swim needs. The YMCA is preparing to begin construction on a new facility in Newcastle in 2008 that will have an indoor lap and leisure pool. They are in the planning phase for a possible new Sammamish YMCA in the future.

Additional aquatic space in the Eastside can be found at the Stroum Jewish Community Center in Mercer Island which has an indoor 25-yard pool. This pool not only serves its members, but is utilized by local swim teams as a practice site.

The other major non-profit aquatic facility in Bellevue, is the Samena Swim and Recreation Club that features both an indoor 6-lane pool and an outdoor 6-lane pool that is bubbled in the winter months. They support their own swim programs and activities, as well as a swim team. In addition, Samena also provides some pool time for teams looking to rent lane time.

School Districts – There are a limited number of high school pools on the Eastside. Most high school aquatics programs are forced to travel great distances, swim in unfavorable conditions, and are subject to limited space in the available pools.

Juanita High School in Kirkland has a 6-lane pool with a bulkhead. This pool serves a wide variety of aquatic programs from around the area, and is where most of the Bellevue School District teams hold their meets. The other high school pool is located at Hazen High School in Renton. This pool has a 6-lane indoor pool with a diving L.

The existing Renton Pool, which is currently owned and operated by King County, will be transferred to the school district in the near future. This will allow for additional school use, but will still not meet all the needs of the school district(s) competitive swimming needs.

With a significant amount of pool usage (time) in the area being used by high school swim teams and since school districts have virtually no pools of their own, other school district aquatic needs, such as water polo teams, are highly reliant on other public, non-profit and private pools to operate their programs.

Private Health Clubs – Most of the private health clubs (Bally's, 24 Hr. Fitness, etc.) have smaller lap pools in their facilities, but these mostly serve as fitness pools for their members. However, both the Pro Sports Club and Bellevue Club have several indoor 6-lane pools that help to support local swim and diving teams, as well as other aquatic activities. For example, The Pro Sports Club has a 240-member swim team, with a wait list of 75. However, none of these facilities are prepared to hold large swimming and aquatic events. They are generally limited to practice and instructional use.

Private Pools/Swim Clubs – There are a large number of private pools and swim clubs located on the Eastside, many of which have waiting lists to join. In addition to providing seasonal recreational swimming opportunities to their members, there is also a strong summer swim team program.

The Midlakes Swim League provides a setting for competitive aquatic opportunities for the Eastside and has grown to include 26 private clubs in the greater Seattle and Eastside, ranging from Renton to the south, Kirkland to the north, Seattle to the west and Issaquah to the east. Over 3,000 athletes compete from late May thru August in swimming, diving and water polo competitions.

Newport Hills Swim & Tennis, Edgebrook Club, Woodridge Swim Club, Mercer Island County Club, and the Mercerwood Shore Club are some of these private pools and clubs. The amount of these clubs and pools is a highly unusual situation that is generally not seen in other areas of the country. The majority of private pools and swim clubs have been in existence for a long time and as a result, the facilities are now aging. Many will need significant renovations in the coming years.

In addition, a number of these swim clubs have extended their seasons into the fall and winter or have bubbled over their outdoor pools so they can rent their facilities to local teams – which is due to the acute lack of pools to support competitive swimming, diving and water polo.

Collegiate Level – The University of Washington has been in the planning stages for a possible new aquatic facility to support its' varsity swim teams, but has no set plans for expansion or construction

of a new facility in the immediate future. Some of the UW's initial planning discussions include building an above-ground, 50-meter pool at Sand Point-Magnuson Park and/or a possible partnership with the City of Seattle for an outdoor facility to serve its' needs. At this point no clear direction has been determined, but it is highly probable that there will be a competitive 50-meter pool on the north side of Seattle to support University of Washington swimming in the coming years.

Other Aquatic Service Providers
Below is a list of pools that are known to be a part of the aquatic market on the Eastside:

Indoor Pools

Public (10)

Bellevue Aquatic Center (Bellevue)	Renton Pool (King County)
Julius Boehm (Issaquah)	Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center
Juanita High School (Kirkland)	Hazen High School (Renton)
Mary Wayte Pool (Mercer Island)*	Northshore Pool (Bothell)* ^
Hartman Pool (Redmond)*	St. Edwards Pool* (Bothell) ^

Non-Profits (4)

Bellevue Family YMCA	Samena Swim & Recreation Club (Bellevue)
Sammamish YMCA	Stroum Jewish Comm. Ctr. (Mercer Island)

Private (11)

Bally's Bellevue	Bellevue Club
Epicenter Fitness	24 Hr. Fitness
Columbia Athletic Club (2)	Gold Creek Tennis & Sports Club
Cascade Athletic Club	Sammamish Club
Pro Sports Club	Bally's Kirkland

Outdoor Pools

Public (3)

Henry Moses (Renton)	Cottage Lake Pool (Woodinville)
Peter Kirk Pool (Kirkland)	

Non-Profits (1)

Samena Club**

Private Pools/Swim Clubs (23)

Newport Hills Swim & Tennis**	Edgebrook Swim Club**
Newport Yacht Club	Norwood Comm. Swim Club

Private Pools/Swim Clubs Cont.

Overlake Country Club
Phantom Lake Bath & Tennis
Tam O-Shanter
Maple Hills
Rolling Hills Swim Team
Klahanie Swim Team
High Woodlands
Kingsgate Monarchs
Mercer Island Beach Club
Mercerwood Shore Club**
Woodridge Swim Club
Somerset Recreation Club
Triangle
Fairwood Golf & Country Club
Plateau Club
Strattonwood
Kingsgate Gators
Kingsgate Royals
Mercer Island Country Club**

* Public pools operated by Northwest Center, a private not-for-profit agency
** Outdoor pools that are bubbled over for year-round use
^ Pools that have been recently closed for use
Note: This is a representative listing of the pools on the Eastside and is not meant to be a total accounting of all facilities. There may be other pools located within the area that have an impact on the market as well.

Eastside Aquatic Facilities Summary

The following is a summary of the Eastside's aquatic facilities market.

- The City of Bellevue has one indoor public aquatic center to meet the vast variety of aquatic needs in the community. The City does not have an outdoor pool.
- Most school districts do not have their own pools for their programs and are highly reliant on other public, non-profit, and private facilities to serve this need. The four Bellevue high school teams must leave the community for all meets and many practices.
- Many of the existing indoor pools are reaching the end of their lifespan(s) - this is particularly true for the Forward Thrust pools in the area. Additionally, a number of the private swim clubs and pools are being faced with similar situations.
- Due to their age, most of the Eastside pools are no longer "state-of-the-art" and are not configured properly to adequately serve the competitive needs of the area.
- Most public and non-profit indoor aquatic centers (with the exception of Samena, YMCA and the Jewish Community Center) are stand alone aquatic facilities with very few other dry side amenities. This is highly unusual compared to other communities throughout the country.
- The King County Aquatic Center is the region's primary competitive venue for any meets or competitions on a regional, national, or international basis. In addition, this facility must support a wide range of more locally-based aquatic programs and activities.
- The key indoor pools that support the competitive aquatics market are the Bellevue Aquatic Center, Juanita High School pool, Julius Boehm pool, Mary Wayte pool, and the King County Aquatics Center.
- There are a surprisingly small number of public outdoor pools, even though the Henry Moses pool in Renton has proved to be immensely popular and financially viable.
- The recreational swim needs of the Eastside are not being well served by existing facilities, which are generally more conventional in nature with deeper and colder water.
- Private summer swim clubs have taken advantage of an unmet demand for competitive aquatic facilities and have extended their seasons or modified their facilities to serve this market.

Eastside Aquatic Team Assessment
The Eastside of the Seattle metro area has a significant number of aquatic organizations and clubs that focus on competitive swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming.

High School – The four high schools in Bellevue each have a swim team, and there is one common diving team. In addition, there are also three water polo clubs. With no school district pools, all practices and meets must occur at other facilities. Teams train at the Bellevue Aquatic Center, Newport Hills, Woodridge, Mercerwood, and Samena pools. Meets are held at either Juanita High School in Kirkland or Mary Wayte Pool in Mercer Island.

Other teams, such as Mercer Island and Issaquah/Liberty, utilize the public pools in their communities (Mary Wayte, Hazen High School, and Julius Boehm), as well as other private swim clubs for their team's practices and meets.

Swim Clubs – There are a significant number of age class swim teams on the Eastside that utilize a variety of facilities for their programs. Some of the larger clubs are noted below:

Chinook Aquatic Club – Has several hundred members who swim at Mary Wayte, Newport Hills, Bellevue Aquatic Center, Renton, Mercer Island Country Club, and the Stroum Jewish Community Center.

WAVE – Has 125 members, who swim at the Redmond, Northshore, and Juanita High School pools.

Issaquah Swim Club – Has 260 members who swim at Julius Boehm and Hazen High School.

King Aquatic Club – Is the largest swim team in the area with 350 swimmers. They swim at Mary Wayte pool, King County Aquatic Center, and other facilities.

BEST – Uses Samena and the Redmond pools for its program.

Bellevue Club – Has one of the larger swim teams with 300 kids who use the Bellevue Club's pools for their program.

Midlakes Swim League – Is made up of 26 primarily outdoor swim club teams on the Eastside. These teams swim at their respective club pools; however, their large summer's end meet has to be held at the King County Aquatic Center.

Specialty aquatic clubs who also use facilities on the Eastside for their programs include:

> *Pacific Northwest Diving* – Has 60 divers who practice and hold their meets at the King County Aquatic Center.
>
> *United Water Polo* – Has 70-80 team members that practice at the Edgebrook Club and at the King County Aquatic Center.
>
> *Seattle Synchronized Swimming* – This team has 50 members who train at the St. Edwards pool and hold competitions at Juanita High School or the King County Aquatic Center.

Eastside Aquatic Team Summary

The following is a summary of the Eastside's aquatic team situation:

- There are a significant number of swim teams on the Eastside and a smaller number of diving, water polo and synchronized swimming teams. Many of these organizations are capped on their growth due to the lack of pool time.
- Most teams are dependent on a number of aquatic facilities for their practices and meets. Often these facilities are some distance apart.
- Many of the teams utilize the King County Aquatic Center for certain practices or meets despite the time and distance from their market.
- Most teams are utilizing private swim club facilities for at least a portion of their training.

2. Participation Estimates

Possible Participation Estimates: The National Sporting Goods Association, a national trade organization representing the sporting goods industry, each year has a professional company survey Americans regarding participation in over 45 sports activities. This information provides useful data regarding possible rates of participation in swimming as well as other sports activities.

Utilizing information from the 2006 National Sporting Goods Association survey and comparing them with the demographics from the secondary service area, the following participation projections can be made (statistics were compared based on age, household income, regional population and national population).

Participation Estimates – Secondary service area from the National Sporting Goods Association (based on 2007 population estimates).

Table- D

	Income	Age (avg.)	Region	Nation	Average
Swimming	28.3%	21.4%	18.7%	21.5%	22.5%

Income- Participation based on the 2007 estimated median household income in the secondary service area.
Age (avg.)- Participation based on averaging participation by different age groups in the secondary service area.
Region- Participation based on regional statistics (Pacific US).
Nation- Participation based on national statistics.
Average- Average of the other four columns.

When looking at participation rates in various recreation activities, the National Sporting Goods Association uses four different determiners for their percentages. Utilizing the average of these four categories takes into consideration each of the factors that can influence participation rates.

Anticipated Swimming Participation Numbers

Utilizing the average percentage from Table- D above plus the 2000 census information and census estimates for 2007 and 2012 (over age 5).

Table- E

	Average	2000 Part.	2007 Part.	2012 Part.	Difference
Swimming	22.5%	88,058	96,770	102,733	+14,675

Note:
The estimated participation numbers indicated above do not necessarily translate into expected attendance figures at a new Bellevue aquatic center since many participants utilize other pools or natural bodies of water for their aquatic activities. However, it may be possible in the secondary service area for the center to capture between 10%-25% of the participants (depending on the type of facility) which would equate to 9,667 to 24,193 users (using 2007 population estimates). Within the City of Bellevue, a facility may be able to capture between 15%-30% of the participants (16,925 to 33,850); a facility may also draw some users from the tertiary service area, but it is more difficult to determine the percentage of draw from this area. However drawing even 1% of the total participants, could add another 1,942 potential users. It should be noted that these figures do not include use by organized swim teams or other groups that might come to an aquatic center for a meet or other activities.

Anticipated Number of Times Participating Per Year
Taking the number of annual participants from Table-E, times the average number of times swum per year (from 2006 NSGA standards), will equal the total number of estimated uses per year.

Table- F

	Average	2000 Uses	2007 Uses	2012 Uses	% Change
Swimming	41.1	3,619,184	3,977,247	4,222,326	+16.7%

Average - the average number of times (by region, income, sex and nation) a person will swim in a year.

This table indicates that there is a very high number of annual "swimmer days" from which to capture a sizable market share. It should be noted that many seasonal outdoor aquatic centers often have 60,000 to 90,000 swimmer days, while indoor aquatic facilities are usually in the 200,000 range for annual swimmer days. It also must be remembered that many of these "swimmer days" are being satisfied by existing aquatic facilities.

It is possible that a new Bellevue aquatic center could capture approximately 5% to 10% of the annual swimmer days in the secondary service area. This could translate into 198,862 to 397,725 swimmer days annually (based on the 2007 population numbers for the secondary service area). It should be expected that the percentage of swimmer days within the City of Bellevue itself, could be in the range of 10% to 15% and drawing users from the larger tertiary service area could add additional swimmer days to the facility. If only 1% of the tertiary service area swimmer days were captured, this would add approximately 79,819 swimmer days to the facility.

The exact number of swimmer days that would be captured from the existing market will vary substantially based on the type of facility that is developed, the site for the center and the fees that are charged for use.

Participation by Ethnicity and Race
Participation in sports activities is also tracked by ethnicity and race. The table below compares the overall rate of participation in swimming nationally with the rate for Hispanics and African Americans. Utilizing information provided by the National Sporting Goods Association's 2006 survey, the following comparisons are possible.

Table- G

	National Rate	Hispanic	Af Amer.
Swimming	21.5%	16.5%	12.4%

National Rate- The national percentage of individuals who participate in swimming.
Hispanic Rate- The percentage of Hispanics who participate in swimming.
African American Rate- The percentage of African Americans who participate in swimming.

It is important to note that, the rate of participation in swimming is lower for Hispanics and dramatically less for African Americans. However considering the relatively low percentage of Hispanics and African Americans in the service area, the overall rate of use of a new aquatic center in Bellevue should not be affected. Unfortunately, there are no swimming participation numbers available for Asians.

Participation Correlation

With indoor aquatic centers it is not unusual to include other dry activity areas in the facility. With this in mind, and utilizing information provided by the National Sporting Goods Association's 2006 survey, the following correlation between people who participate in swimming and other recreational activities is possible.

Table- H

	% of Swimmers	% of Activity Part.
Aerobics	20.3%	34.1%
Basketball	21.5%	45.4%
Exer. Walking	48.5%	31.3%
Exer/equip	32.7%	35.3%
Running/Jogging	21.5%	42.2%
Volleyball	11.3%	57.4%

Percent of Swimmers- The percentage of swimmers who would participate in the given activity.
Percent of Activity Participants- The percentage of the listed activity participants who would also participate in swimming.

These correlation statistics indicate the strong relationship between those people who participate in aquatics and other activities. These statistics also indicate the cross-marketing opportunities that are present in aquatic facilities that include other active use spaces.

To help understand the overall market strength in a number of sports, below are listed a variety of indoor recreation activities and the relative market strength and rate of participation.

Summary of Sports Participation

The following chart summarizes participation in various sports and leisure activities utilizing information from the 2006 National Sporting Goods Association survey. Participation information was utilized for the Pacific region of the country rather than the secondary service area due to the analysis of a wider variety of sports activities beyond just swimming.

Table- I

Sport	Rank	% Part.	Age Group
Exer. Walk	1	36.5%	25 - 34
Swimming	2	18.7%	7 – 11
Exer./equip	3	19.6%	25 - 34
Workout Club	7	14.0%	25 - 34
Aerobics	9	12.1%	25 – 34
Running/jog	14	14.2%	12 - 17
Basketball	15	8.4%	12 - 17
Volleyball	24	4.3%	12 – 17

Rank - Popularity of sport based on national survey.
% Part. - Percent of population that would participate in this sport based on the Pacific region of the US.
Age Group - The age group with the highest level of participation based on national survey.

It is significant that swimming is the second most popular sports activity in the United States (and third in the Pacific region of the country) with nearly 19% of the population in the Pacific area of the country participating in the activity. However it should be noted that the Pacific area has the lowest rate of participation in swimming of all nine regions of the country.

Comparison of State Statistics with National Statistics
Utilizing information from the National Sporting Goods Association, the following charts illustrate the participation numbers in selected sports for the state of Washington.

Washington participation numbers in selected indoor sports - As reported by the National Sporting Goods Association in 2006.

Table- J

Sport Participation		Age Group	Largest #
	(in thousands)		
Exer. Walking	2,150	25-44	45-54
Exer. w/Equipment	1,281	25-34	35-44
Workout at Club	1,230	25-34	25-34
Swimming	908	7-11	12-17
Aerobics	746	25-34	25-34
Running/Jogging	658	12-17	25-34
Basketball	386	12-17	12-17
Volleyball	165	12-17	12-17

Participation - The number of people (in thousands) in Washington who participated more than once in the activity in 2006 and were at least 7 years of age.
Age Group - The age group in which the sport is most popular. The age group where the highest percentage of the age span participates in the activity. Example: The highest percent of an age group that participates in exercise walking is 25-34. **This is a national statistic.**

Largest # - The age group with the highest number of participants. Example: The greatest number of exercise walkers is in the 45-54 age group. Note: This statistic is driven more by the sheer number of people in the age group than by the popularity of the sport in the age span. **This is a national statistic.**

When comparing these statistics to the national numbers in Table-I, there are a number of differences with exercising with equipment and working out at a club being higher while swimming is lower. Swimming is the number four most popular activity in Washington. There are only state statistics for a limited number of activities.

Another method to measure sports participation statistics compares the percentage of the national population from the state, with the percentage of national participation in a variety of sports.

Washington sports percentage of participation compared with the population percentage of the United States - Washington's population represents 2.2% of the population of the United States (based on 2000 census statistics).

Table- K

Sport Participation	Percentages
Workout at Club	3.3
Exer. Walking	2.5
Exer. w/Equipment	2.4
Running/Jogging	2.3
Aerobics	2.2
Swimming	1.6
Volleyball	1.5
Basketball	1.4

Note:
Sport participant percentages refer to the total percent of the national population that participates in a sport that comes from the state of Washington. It is significant that in five sports (workout at club, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, aerobics, and running/jogging), Washington's percentage of participation is at or above the percentage of the national population. The fact that swimming is not one of these sports indicates that the activity is not as popular in the state.

Market Potential Index (MPI)

Another method to measure possible participation in recreation and fitness activities is through the market potential index, where rates of participation by adults in the secondary service area are compared with national numbers through the index rating. Utilizing information provided by ESRI, the following comparisons are possible.

Table- L

	# of Adults	Percentage	MPI
Swimming	76,165	21.4%	126

# of Adults- The number of adults in the secondary service area participating in swimming.
Percentage- The percentage of adults in the secondary service area participating in swimming.

MPI- Market potential index as compared to the national number of 100.

The MPI index indicates that the rate of adult participation in swimming (in the secondary service area) is much higher than the national average. This shows a likely higher rate of usage of aquatic facilities.

Recreation Expenditures Index

In addition to participation in recreation activities, ESRI also measures recreation expenditures in a number of different areas and then indexes this against national numbers. The following comparisons are possible.

Table- M

	Avg. Spent	SPI
Fees for Participant Sports	$196.53	174
Fees for Recreational Lessons	$241.58	185
Social, Recreation, Club Membership	$280.85	177

Average Amount Spent- The average amount spent for the service or item in a year.
SPI- Spending potential index as compared to the national number of 100.

The SPI index indicates that in all areas the rate of spending (in the secondary service area) is substantially above the national average. This shows that there is most likely a very high rate of discretionary spending for the types of services that an aquatic center might provide.

3. Aquatic Trends

Without doubt the hottest trend in aquatics is the leisure pool concept. This idea of incorporating slides, lazy rivers (or current channels), fountains, zero depth entry, and other water features into a pool's design has proved to be extremely popular for the recreational user. The era of the conventional pool in most recreational settings is nearly dead. Leisure pools appeal to the younger kids (who are the largest segment of the population that swims) and to families. These types of facilities are able to attract and draw larger crowds, and people tend to come from a further distance and stay longer to utilize such pools.

This all translates into the potential to sell more admissions and increase revenues. It is estimated conservatively that a leisure pool can generate up to 30% more revenue than a comparable conventional pool. The cost of operation, while being higher, has been offset through increased revenues. Of note is the fact that patrons seem willing to pay a higher user fee with this type of pool than they would at a conventional aquatics facility. However, most all indoor leisure pools still cannot cover their cost of operation from user fees.

Despite the recent emphasis on recreational swimming, the more traditional aspects of aquatics (including competitive swimming, water polo, synchronized swimming, diving, lessons/instruction, and aqua fitness) remain as a part of most aquatic centers. The life safety issues associated with teaching children how to swim is a critical concern in most communities and competitive aquatic programs continue to be important.

Another trend that is growing more popular in the aquatics field is the development of a raised-temperature therapy pool for relaxation, socialization, and rehabilitation. This has been effective in bringing in swimmers who are looking for a different experience and non-swimmers who want the advantages of warm water in a different setting. The development of natural landscapes have enhanced this type of amenity and created a pleasant atmosphere for adult socialization.

The multi-function, indoor aquatic center concept of delivering aquatics services continues to grow in acceptance, with the idea of providing a variety of aquatics activities and programs in an open design setting that features a lot of natural light, interactive play features, and access to an outdoor sun deck. The placing of traditional instructional/competitive pools, with shallow depth/interactive leisure pools and therapy water, in the same facility has been well received in the market. This idea has proven to be financially successful by centralizing pool operations for recreation service providers and through increased generation of revenues from patrons willing to pay for an aquatics experience that is new and exciting. Indoor aquatic centers have been instrumental in developing a true family appeal for community-based facilities. The keys to success for this type of center, revolve around the concept of intergenerational use in a quality facility that has an exciting and vibrant feel in an outdoor-like atmosphere.

The family-oriented outdoor water park concept has also gained in popularity by providing for a variety of interactive aquatics activities and programs, in a park setting that features a lot of grass, shade structures, sand play areas, and natural landscapes. This idea has proven to be financially successful with most outdoor aquatic centers being able to cover their operating costs with revenues generated by the facility itself. This has occurred by increasing the generation of revenues from patrons willing to pay for an aquatics experience that is new and exciting.

This "family-oriented outdoor water park concept" has carried over to indoor aquatic facilities as well. While the concept has had to be modified to meet the demands and limitations of an indoor environment, the presence of a family aquatic center has proven to be very popular.

A new concept is the sprayground, where a number of water spray features are placed in a playground setting where there is no standing water, but the water is treated and recirculated much like a pool. This provides a fun, yet safe, environment where drowning is not a concern and lifeguards are not necessary.

Also changing is the trend of aquatic centers being developed as stand-alone facilities, that only have aquatic features, to functioning as more full-service recreation centers that have fitness, sports, and community-based amenities. This change has allowed for a better rate of cost recovery and stronger rates of use of the aquatic portion of the facility, as well as, the other “dry side” amenities.

Swimming is second behind exercise walking in popularity of sports and leisure activities nationally, meaning that there is a significant market for aquatic activities. Furthermore, approximately 18.7% of the population in the Pacific region of the country participates in aquatics activities.

The largest age group for participation in aquatics activities is in the younger age groups, with over 47% of all kids ages 7-11 participating in swimming. More than 32% of all swimmers are under the age of 18 years, and nearly half are under the age of 25. Individuals that swim do so on a regular basis with an average of 41 days a year. This indicates that there is not only a large segment of the

population that participates in aquatics activities, but they do so on a relatively consistent basis. Within the state of Washington, swimming is the number four most participated in sports activity.

Within the Pacific Northwest, and the State of Washington in particular, the newer trends of indoor leisure pools, therapy pools and the outdoor water park concept have been a little slower to catch on compared to other areas of the country. The area also has an unusually large number of stand-alone, single purpose indoor aquatics centers than what is found in other areas of the country. The multi-function, indoor aquatic center, especially in conjunction with other indoor recreation amenities, is still a relatively new phenomenon in the Pacific Northwest.

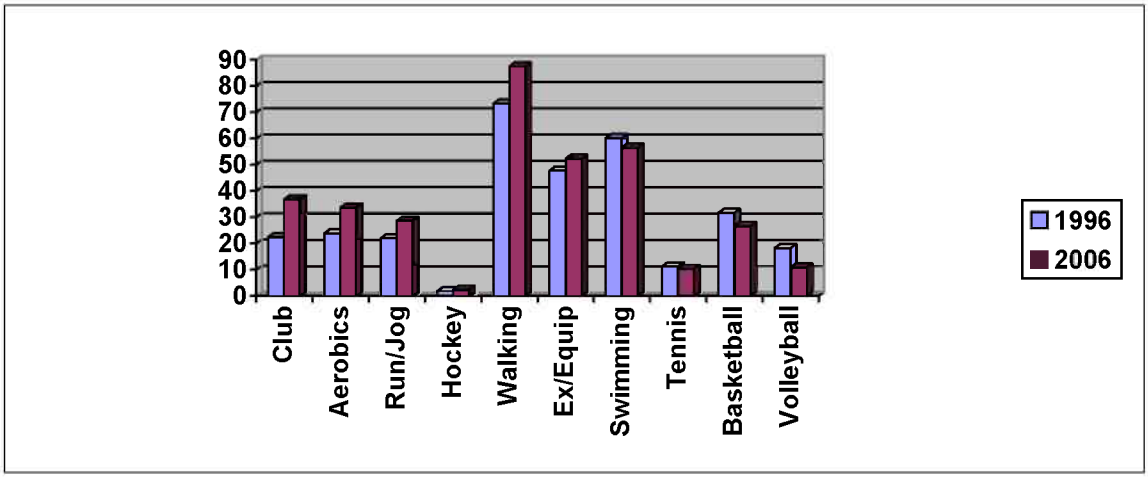
As a comparison, below are listed some of the most popular and traditional sports and the percentage of growth or decline that each has experienced nationally over the last 10 years (1996-2006):

Table- N

Sport/Activity	1996 Part.	2006 Part.	% Change
Workout at Club	22.5	36.9	+64%
Aerobic Exercising	24.1	33.7	+40%
Running/Jogging	22.2	28.8	+30%
Ice Hockey	2.1	2.6	+24%
Exercise Walking	73.3	87.5	+19%
Exercising w/Equip.	47.8	52.4	+10%
Swimming	60.2	56.5	-6%
Tennis	11.5	10.4	-10%
Basketball	31.8	26.7	-16%
Volleyball	18.5	11.1	-40%

1996 Participation - The number of participants per year in the activity (in millions) in the United States.
2006 Participation - The number of participants per year in the activity (in millions) in the United States.
Percent Change - The percent change in the level of participation from 1996 to 2006.

Chart- E



Despite the recent decline in swimming participation, the sport overall still remains immensely popular. However, the focus of swimming has changed from an activity that was oriented around competitive aquatics, with deeper and colder water, to a more recreational approach that emphasizes shallow, warm water, socialization, and interactive play. Consistent use of an aquatics facility by families and young children is dependent in large part on the leisure amenities. The sale of daily admissions and more importantly annual/season passes is also tied to the appeal of the leisure pool.

A 50-meter competitive pool allows for a variety of aquatic activities to take place simultaneously, such as aqua exercise classes, learn to swim programs, and, competitive swim training and meets (short course and long course). In communities where there are a number of competitive swim programs, utilizing a 50-meter pool in a yard configuration will allow up to 20 lanes to be available for training. A 50-meter pool that is designed for hosting meets will allow a community to build a more regional or even national identity as a site for competitive swimming. However, it should be realized that regional and national swim meets are difficult to obtain on a regular basis; take a considerable amount of time, effort and money to run; can be disruptive to the regular user groups; and can be financial losers for the facility itself. On the other side, such events can provide a strong economic stimulus to the overall community.

Competitive diving is an activity that is often found in connection with competitive swimming. Most high school and regional diving competition focuses on the 1 meter board with some 3 meter events (non-high school). The competitive diving market, unlike swimming, is usually very small (usually 10% to 20% the size of the competitive swim market), and has been decreasing steadily over the last ten years or more. As a result, many states have, or are considering, the elimination of diving as a part of high school swimming. Diving programs have been more viable in markets with larger populations and where there are coaches with strong diving reputations. Moving from springboard diving to platform (5 meter and 10 meter, and sometimes 3 and 7.5 meters), the market for divers drops even more, while the cost of construction with deeper pool depths and higher ceilings, becomes significantly higher. Platform diving is usually only a competitive event in regional and national diving competitions. As a result, the need for inclusion of diving platforms in a competitive aquatic facility needs to be carefully studied to determine the true economic feasibility of such an amenity.

There are a couple of other aquatic sports that are often competing for pool time at aquatic centers. However, their competition base and number of participants is relatively small. Water polo is a sport that continues to be reasonably popular on the West Coast and uses a space of 25 yards or meters by 45-66 feet wide (the basic size of an 8 lane, 25 yard pool). However, a minimum depth or 6 foot 6 inches is required, which is often difficult to find in community based facilities. Synchronized swimming also utilizes aquatic facilities and requires deeper water of 7-8 feet. This sport also makes the use of some community pools difficult.

4. Market Segments

Based on the market information, the existing pools, and typical aquatic needs within a community, there are specific market areas that need to be addressed with a new aquatic facility. These include:

1. Leisure/recreation aquatic activities - This includes a variety of activities found at leisure pools with zero depth entry, warm water, play apparatus, slides, seating areas, and deck space. These are

often combined with other non-aquatic areas, such as concessions and birthday party, or other group event areas.

2. Instructional programming - The primary emphasis is on teaching swimming and life saving skills to many different age groups. These activities have traditionally taken place in more conventional pool configurations, but should not be confined to just these spaces. Reasonably warm water, shallow depth with deeper water (4 ft. or more), and open expanses of water are necessary for instructional activities. Easy pool access, a viewing area for parents, and deck space for instructors is also crucial.

3. Fitness programming - These types of activities continue to grow in popularity among a large segment of the population. From aqua exercise classes, to lap swimming times, these programs take place in more traditional settings that have lap lanes and large open expanses of water available at a 3 1/2 to 5 ft. depth.

4. Therapy – A growing market segment for many aquatic centers is the use of warm, shallow water for therapy and rehabilitation purposes. Many of these services are offered by medically based organizations that partner with the center for this purpose.

5. Competitive swimming/diving - Swim team competition and training for youth, adults, and seniors requires a traditional 6 to 10 lane pool at a length of 25-yards or 50- meters with a 1 and/or 3 meter diving boards. Ideally, the pool depth should be no less than 4 ft. deep (7 is preferred). Spectator seating and deck space for staging meets is necessary. This market usually has strong demands for competitive pool space and time during prime times of center use.

6. Specialized uses – Activities such as water polo and synchronized swimming can also take place in competitive pool areas, as long as the pool is deep enough (7 ft. minimum), and the pool area is large enough. However these are activities that have small participant numbers and require relatively large pool areas. As a result, it may be difficult to meet the needs of specialized uses on a regular basis without larger amounts of pool space.

7. Social/relaxation - The appeal of using an aquatics area for relaxation has become a focus of many aquatic facilities. This concept has been very effective in drawing non-swimmers to aquatic facilities and expanding the market beyond the traditional swimming boundaries. The use of natural landscapes and creative pool designs that integrate the social elements with swimming activities has been most effective in reaching this market segment.

8. Special events/rentals - There is a market for special events including kids birthday parties, corporate events, community organization functions, and general rentals to outside groups. The development of this market will aid in the generation of additional revenues, and these events/rentals can often be planned for after or before regular hours or during slow use times. It is important that special events or rentals not adversely affect daily operations or overall center use.

Based on additional information of the typical aquatic needs within a community, there are specific market segments to address, which include:

1. Families - Within this market, an orientation towards family activities is essential. The ability to have family members of different ages participate in a fun and vibrant facility is critical for the success of the center.

2. Pre-school children - The needs of pre-school age children need to be met with very shallow or zero depth water which is warm and has play apparatus designed for their use. Interactive programming involving parents and toddlers, can also be conducted in more traditional aquatic areas as well.

3. School age youth - A major focus of this project should be to meet the needs of this age group from recreational swimming to competitive aquatics. The leisure components such as slides, fountains, lazy rivers, and zero depth will help to bring these individuals to the pool on a regular basis for drop-in recreational swimming. The lap lanes provide the opportunity and space necessary for instructional programs and aquatic team use.

4. Teens - Another aspect of this project should be meeting the needs of the teenage population. Serving the needs of this age group will require leisure pool amenities that will keep their interest (slides), as well as the designation of certain "teen" times of use.

5. Seniors - As the population of the United States and the Bellevue area continues to age, meeting the needs of an older senior population will be essential. As has been noted, more active and physically oriented senior are now demanding services to ensure their continued health. Aqua exercise, lap swimming, therapeutic conditioning, and even learn to swim classes have proven to be popular with this segment of the population.

6. Special needs population - This is a secondary market, but with the A..D.A. requirements and the probable existence of shallow warm water and other components, the amenities are present to develop programs for this population segment. Forging an a partnership with a local hospital(s) and other therapeutic and social service agency(-ies) can be a asset in order to reach this market.

7. Special interest groups - This is a market that needs to be explored to determine the use potential from a variety of groups. These could include swim teams (and other aquatic teams), school district teams, day care centers, and social service organizations. While the needs of these groups can be great, their demands on an aquatics center can often be incompatible with the overall mission of the facility. Care must be taken to ensure that special interest groups are not allowed to dictate use patterns for the center.

With the proper utilization of the aquatics area, it is possible to meet all of the varied market orientations as outlined above. However, it is critical that a balance be struck between the different market segments and no one area or market segment should dominate the facility.

5. Aquatic Event Analysis

Major aquatic facilities can provide an economic impact to the community through the hosting of aquatic events in swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, and water polo. But, as the level of event increases from local to national, the likelihood of attracting events decreases. This is largely due to the number of facilities competing for the events, plus, the rotation schedule used by the

aquatic National Governing Bodies (NGB) has been designed to distribute national and regional events out over different portions of the country. The number of actual events held at the local and regional level, while more prevalent, are also limited.

Nationally, over 20 facilities (see chart below) are all competing for the same events with more facilities coming on-line each year. These state of the art facilities are labeled "tier one" and are capable of handling any of the aquatic events in the country scheduled by the NGB. Bellevue will be competing with all the other tier one facilities in the country when attempting to secure a national event.

The reality of a tier one aquatic center in Bellevue to attract a national event is likely to be only one per year, if all water sports are considered. Bellevue's main competition for these events will come mainly from the King County Aquatic Center, in Federal Way.

Additionally in a recent move, the USA Swimming Olympic Trials and World Championships in swimming have changed their scheduling direction, and these events are now being held in large stadiums, with temporary pools. The tier one facilities are unable to host these events due to the 10,000-15,000 seat requirements.

Each sport varies slightly regarding regional competitions, and the competition between aquatic centers increases with the inclusion of "tier two" facilities such as smaller universities, community colleges, and parks and recreation departments. Tier two facilities tend to concentrate on more regional events and competitions, rather than the national events. However, they must often compete with the tier one facilities for these events as well.

Planning and scheduling regional competitions vary from sport to sport, and the actual region breakdown differs. Regions could include two states or several states, depending on how the NGB chooses to establish the regions/zones. Some sports do not have as much participation as others, so that can be factored into how the country is divided into regions. The size of the region will increase or decrease the number of tier one and tier two facilities competing for the same events.

Even for regional events, an aquatics center in Bellevue will be in competition with King County Aquatics Center, which may limit the market for both facilities.

For many tier two and below aquatic facilities, local competitions are the bread and butter of the scheduled events, including state competitions at the high school to the senior age group levels. In addition, individual clubs will want to host invitational meets at all age group levels and high school dual meets, in order to provide revenue-generating opportunities.

State and local events provide the majority of opportunities for the new center, including year-round senior/age group meets, summer recreation leagues (both city and county), and high school competitions. These types of events should not be competing with the King County Aquatics Center, but may have a slight impact of the local swim clubs and pools.

The financial reality of hosting major events is that the host facility often absorbs a financial loss in addition to closing the aquatic center over an extended period of time. This will potentially interrupt normal programs and revenue sources. However, the upside of hosting major aquatic

events is found in tourism and the economic benefits to the community. Aquatic events will generate a significant amount of economic benefit to the host community.

A study conducted by William Beyers of the University of Washington for the King County Aquatic Center in 2002 found that users of the facility spent almost $4.4 million annually. Using the multiplier effect the total benefit to the Washington economy was estimated at $7.5 million in 2001.

Tier One Aquatic Facilities

Facility	Location	Owner
U of Minnesota Aquatic Center	Minneapolis, MN	University of Minnesota
Weyerhaeuser Aquatic Center	Federal Way, WA	King County Parks and Rec
Indiana University Natatorium	Indianapolis, IN	IUPUI
Palo Alto Aquatic Center	San Antonio, TX	Pal Alto College
Avery Aquatic Center	Stanford, CA	Stanford University
Campus Rec Center Natatorium	College Park, MD	University of Maryland
James E Martin Aquatic Center	Auburn, AL	Auburn University
Texas A&M Aquatic Center	College Station, TX	Texas A&M University
Rose Bowl Aquatic Center	Pasadena, CA	Not For Profit Organization
Mona Plummer Aquatic Complex	Tempe, AZ	Arizona State University
Goodwill Games Aquatic Center	East Meadow, NY	
Sonny Werblin Rec Center	Piscataway, NJ	Rutgers University
Gabrielson Natatorium	Athens, GA	University of Georgia
Miami University Aquatic Center	Oxford, OH	Miami University
Indiana University Aquatic Center	Bloomington, IN	Indiana University
Georgia Tech Aquatic Center	Atlanta, GA	Georgia Tech
Ohio State Aquatic Center	Columbus, OH	Ohio State University
Orlando YMCA Aquatic Center	Orlando, FL	YMCA

Securing an Event

The basic steps for attracting aquatic events differ with the level of the event. The national events have a bidding process that takes place through the NGB, and there is usually a different approach to the selection of a site for each event. Some selections are made through a site selection committee; others are selected through direct negotiations with the administrative group charged with the selection by the NGB. This process can change from year to year and with each NGB.

Generally, the bid packets are very common from sport to sport. Other than the different technical needs of each sport, the packets consist of questions and information regarding a number of different areas:

1. Bid process
2. Facility specifications
3. Host organization

4. Accommodations
5. Transportation
6. Specialized services
7. Special events (socials\receptions)
8. Sponsorships (local opportunities, national obligations)
9. Merchandising (local opportunities, national obligations)
10. Actual event program
11. Financial/Budget (local provides, local pays, local retains, national provides, national pays, national retains, other financial obligations)

Bids are awarded for national events anywhere from 1-4 years out depending on the event and the NGB. Typically, Sports Councils/Convention and Visitor Bureaus submit bids, in conjunction with a local organizing committee. Bids are submitted in advance, and in many cases, presentations are made at the National Convention or to a designated group. It must be realized that this is a very time-consuming process and requires a substantial amount of funding for promotions and entertainment, and often requires an upfront payment to the NGB.

Regional events are bid in a similar fashion depending on the NGB, but may have lesser requirements attached to the bidding process. Many times the bid process for a regional competition is to the administrative committee of that region during the National Convention. However, even this level of event can require both a considerable amount of time and money to secure. Securing a partnership with a college or university is required to host NCAA Division II, Division III, or NAIA Championships.

At the local level, securing the events will most likely be determined by cost, availability, and demand. Since the number of local events generally is far greater than the regional and national schedule, a city may find itself turning away local events depending on the utilization of its facility and program schedule. The easiest way to host a local event is to first identify what events are held each year in the community, county, and state. Then work with the local organizing groups to relocate the event.

Financial Responsibilities

Aquatic events can provide an economic impact to the community in entertainment, restaurant, and hotel receipts. This depends specifically on the duration and size of the event. However, these events are also time-consuming endeavors from start to finish, not to mention that these benefits do not show up on the facility's bottom line.

Additionally, the financial realities of hosting aquatic events vary from sport to sport. Some will generate a small ($200-$40,000) profit, some will break even, some will struggle to break even, and some will take a loss. This will depend on, but is not limited to, several factors - the size of the event, interest in the sport, commitment from the community for events of this kind, dedication of the management team to producing a profit, number of participants, contractual obligations to the NGB, NGB restrictions on sponsorships, and budget relief from the value of in-kind donations.

NGB's do provide seed or advanced administrative money ranging from $500 for a US Collegiate Synchronized Swimming event to $20,000 (or more) for USA Swimming National Championship.

For larger events, such as the NCAA aquatic championships, many of the host facilities typically break even at best. Contract and sponsorship restrictions make these very difficult events to generate a profit.

A cohesive management team with a clearly defined mission, objectives, strategies, and tactics must be established at the facility before bidding on and conducting national events. This team must be experienced in aquatic event management, and have the ability to establish partnerships and relationships with various groups, locally and nationally. The management team's mission and objectives should include providing an economic impact to the community.

Persistence is a key element to the big picture; it takes time to establish a facility, management team and city partnership. It is rare that a facility gets national events on the first attempt when bidding. There is a learning process that takes place, plus the NGB wants each facility to host local and regional competitions first to validate the facility for a higher level of competition. Understanding the National Governing Bodies' wants and needs, the competition (cities and facilities), and the bidding process can take time.

Regional events are less restrictive in contractual obligations. As a result, they can pay for more of their direct costs and generate rental fees or other revenue. It should also be realized that in some instances, revenues from general aquatic operations (lessons, recreation swimming, ongoing rentals, etc.) can be greater that the revenues generated from special aquatic events.

Local meets are the most profitable events over the long haul for a facility. Profits come from rentals and fees for equipment use, and direct costs are recovered. A steady calendar of local events can produce significant revenue; however, pool rental fees vary across the country depending on the market value. Facilities in the event business, such as the University of Minnesota, charge $2,700 per day plus direct costs (any meet organizer must hire U of M technicians, custodial, etc.). Georgia Tech charges $1,200-$1,500 per day plus direct costs.

The revenue for a typical 2½ day swim meet ranges from $3,750 to $6,750 (in each case rental fees were ramped up over time to avoid sticker shock). Many local meets are used as fundraising events for the community organizations that are regular users of the facility, and as a result, they expect discounted fees for meets and expect to keep a very large percentage of the revenue generated by the event. It is not uncommon for a local swim club to generate between $4,000 and $6,000 profit per swim event. This can often result in little revenue being generated for the facility itself.

A New Aquatic Center and Aquatic Events

The proponents of a new aquatic center will need to determine the role that they expect competitive aquatic events to hold in the new facility. This role must be balanced with the other desired markets of being an aquatics training facility for a variety of athletes, as well as, a community-based fitness and recreation facility. It is difficult to serve all of these different market areas adequately as each has very different needs and expectations. As a result, a prioritization of use will need to be developed that indicates the relative hierarchy of the different activities.

Careful consideration must be given to the realities of the competitive aquatic event market before deciding on the role that this aspect will have in an aquatic facility's operation. Besides the obvious requirement regarding the facility's physical layout and equipment, the center will need to have a

philosophical commitment to these types of events, the staff will need to have the background and time to chase such activities, and the financial implications will need to be clearly understood.

The competitive pool, by virtue of water depth and temperature, will serve primarily the competitive swimming and lap swimming markets, but will be of relatively little interest to the general public for recreational swimming. With this in mind, the various levels of aquatic competition need to be examined.

It will be difficult and expensive for a new aquatic center to adequately meet the obligations of a tier one facility and adequately support other identified functions of a facility (recreational swimming, therapy, fitness and instructional). The facility will have to include several bodies of water and specialized support spaces for events, as well as, day to day operations.

Events at this level are difficult to obtain, require extensive marketing dollars and an extended amount of time to secure, need a broad level of support from a variety of organizations, and the events themselves often result in an operating loss. With the King County Aquatic Center in close proximity, attracting one national/international event a year at best is all that should be expected.

To attract national level competitions, the facility must be state of the art, it must be equal to, or better than, the top aquatic facilities in the country. This means first and foremost, the pool must be fast. Fast water means fast swimming and fast swimming means records will fall. What makes a fast pool? Engineering. Simply put - water depth, water return, gutter system, lane lines, these all have a great deal to do with the speed of the pool.

The design of a state of the art facility is important to allow for maximum flexibility; creating the ability to host short course events (25-yd., 25-meter), long course events (50-meters) and other aquatic sports events (diving, synchronized swimming, and water polo). A pool that meets this criteria will be at least an eight lane (9 feet wide), 50-meter pool with two movable bulkheads, a separate diving pool with a complete springboard and tower system (two one meter and two three meter spring boards, and a 1,3,5,7.5,10 meter tower system) plus a warm up pool. The facility must have a minimum of 2000 spectator seats and deck space of 20 ft around the entire pool. Currently IUPUI Natatorium has spectator seating for 4,700 and 20 ft of available deck space. Georgia Tech seats 2,000 spectators, with 24 ft of deck space. There also need to be state of the art timing systems and scoreboards as well as accommodations for the media.

Attracting regional and state events as a tier two facility is more realistic, but will still be difficult. While there are more events at this level, there is still a great deal of competition for these activities (King County Aquatic Center) and there needs to be strong support from local organizing committees and other organizations. Hosting 2 to 3 such events a year is probably the limit, and securing this number of activities will require marketing dollars and considerable time. These events should have a strong economic impact on the Bellevue area, but will only result in a relatively small profit margin for the center itself. The more these types of events are scheduled the more disruptive it will be to the everyday operation of the facility and the revenue stream that is the lifeblood of the center.

Local events, while not having the glamour and excitement of the other levels of competition, should really be the mainstay of the competitive event calendar of a future aquatic center. The demand for these types of events is usually very high and the number of competitors is often greater

than at the more elite events. However, as was stated earlier, most of the organizations are utilizing these activities as fundraisers and are often not willing to pay a high rate of rental. They also expect to run the event themselves in an effort to keep the vast majority of the revenue that is generated. As a result, while a new aquatic center should be able to generate a reasonable revenue stream from local events, this will not be a primary source of overall revenue for the facility. The number of activities of this nature should not be so extensive that it negatively impacts use and revenue from other more critical sources such as community memberships, program and services, and long term facility rentals.

6. Demographic and Market Conclusions

There is a large population base in Bellevue and the Eastside area that could support a large regionally-based aquatic center. The secondary service area that basically covers the geographic Eastside has nearly a half million residents. The population is expected to increase steadily over the next five years; while the median age is significantly older than the national numbers, the median household income level is much higher.

While there are seemingly a large number of aquatic facilities on the Eastside, the reality is that there are very few public facilities or even non-profit centers. Many of these existing facilities are older buildings that will need to be replaced in the coming 5 to 10 year period and are no longer able to meet the demand and industry standards for such amenities.

Bellevue high schools swim teams must leave the city for their meets and even at times for practices. There are a large number of private summer swim clubs that have been modified to help meet the demand for competitive swim time. Many aquatic teams on the Eastside can no longer grow in size with the lack of adequate pool time and space, and most organizations have to utilize a variety of pools to meet their needs.

Determining the focus for the type and level of aquatic events that a new center should expect to pursue will be critical. It is very difficult to try and secure large national and regional events. With the King County Aquatic Center a short distance away, it will be even more arduous. A new aquatic center will need to concentrate on more local events and activities and also realize that it is the ongoing everyday programs, that provide the greatest financial base for the facility and will serve the greatest need.

Overall, there are a number of market opportunities for a new aquatic center in Bellevue. Specific facility options that are developed as part of the next phase of the project study will outline the financial requirements from both a capital and operations standpoint to make the project a reality.