

Our Community Pool is on Life Support By JeffCo Aquatic Coalition Board (JAC)

It's quite possible Jefferson County residents will soon lose an enjoyable, low-cost way to stay healthy and prevent drowning. The county's only public pool, located at the Mountain View Campus, has long exceeded its useful life. It was built in 1963 and keeping the facility open is a constant challenge due to its failing infrastructure. For years, the community has invested resources to keep it operational. Now, due to its age, those investments are increasingly costly. Repairs require the fabrication of custom pieces that take months to make. In addition, the roof continues to leak. Our aged pool is living on borrowed time.

With the demise of the only public pool in Jefferson County, we would lose a popular facility that promotes fitness, life-saving aquatic skills, and community bonds. A functioning public swimming pool is a resource that serves every age group in our community. It provides crucial support to young families, and the pool's popular free Saturday swims attest to this. The seniors who frequent its classes and lap swims are beneficiaries of increased health and longevity.

What Would the Loss of the Pool Mean for Our Community?

For families raising children, loss of the pool would reduce an already meager set of recreational options for youth in our area. A permanent pool closure would deprive our community of a critical public resource for healthy exercise and recreation, life-saving skill building, swim lessons and school competitions. Just as important, it's a place to meet and connect with others.

Water aerobics and lap swimming are medically safe, effective exercises for people of all ages and can be especially critical when land-based exercise is not feasible. Water-based therapy is often the only viable option. Our senior citizens especially benefit from water exercise – evidenced by the 40-50 folks who regularly participate in pool fitness classes.

Learning to swim is a critical skill for everyone. During the pandemic, free swim lessons for all Port Townsend elementary students were suspended for three years and are now gearing up again. Living in a community surrounded by water, it is critically important that our young people safely learn to swim.

Why Support a New Aquatic Center?

For 60 years, we've gotten more than our money's worth from our aging Mountain View Pool, but it's time to build a new one, or we could lose a public treasure. Like a library, a public pool is essential for a vital, healthy community. Let's make it happen!

The City of Port Townsend and its partners (Jefferson County, Port of Port Townsend, Jefferson Healthcare, Port Townsend School District, YMCA and JAC) are exploring multiple funding sources to make such a crucial public facility a reality. We encourage residents of East Jefferson County to voice their opinions.

To learn more, visit the city's website (cityofpt.us) and click on the Healthier Together tab and/or come to the final community meeting on July 12 (the virtual meeting) and July 13 (the in-person meeting at the Fort Worden Commons). Both begin at 6pm; child care provided at the Commons.

JeffCo Aquatic Coalition is a community-based nonprofit that advocates for accessible and affordable aquatic activities that enhance wellness, recreation, athletics, and safety for residents and visitors of all ages. JAC is proactive in efforts to sustain a thriving public aquatic recreation facility that serves the needs of East Jefferson County now and in the future. To keep up to date on the aquatic center progress and sign up as a supporter to advocate for a new aquatic facility join the JAC contact list at jeffcoaquaticcoalition.org.

JAC Board members:

Rich Childers, Janis Fisler, Rena Murman, Jane Armstrong, Katelyn Bosley, Phillipa Lance, Bill Mann, Diane McDade, Mary Janell Metzger