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Qualitative Summary of Survey Comments from the JeffCo Aquatic Coalition County-wide Aquatic Recreation Survey

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Methods

All comments submitted by survey respondents were reviewed by the research team to develop main sentiment themes. Comments were then reviewed a second time and marked if the sentiments fell within one or more the defined themes. Percentages were calculated to determine the proportion of comments that fell in each of the primary themes. Examples are provided that represent archetypal comments from each theme. A total of 52% of respondents provided comments (1544). These percentages are meant only to be interpreted qualitatively to gauge the general views and opinions of survey respondents about the proposed pool project. Many of the comments were very long and detailed.

Primary Themes

New Aquatic Recreation Facility

Supportive (56.5%)

"I think it is imperative to build a new pool with fun amenities for kids that will prevent parents from continuing to take their children out of county to more exciting pools like Port Angeles or Bainbridge Island. This pool absolutely needs to compete with those fun pools to keep our business in this county. Spend money to make money. Include a lazy river and whirlpool. Put in slides, water play features, and make the pool zero entry for those with disabilities or emerging skills. Thanks for all your hard work!"

"Please build a new pool! This is an important community resource. Pools help with play and confidence for youth and provide connection and fitness for adults. As a swimmer, and a previous lifeguard, I see the positive impact pools can have for people who use them. Make it available, accessible and welcoming space for all. Please make a pool that is low cost for people to use, supports vulnerable community needs like showering, and is welcoming to lgbtq folks, and create a space that support people with disabilities- both young and old."

"I think it's great, keep going and make this happen yesterday - ha! Growth of a community is essential and we need more places to connect with each other. This can galvanize our county, bringing people together. We need to invest in the future and give kids of all ages a safe place to play and learn."

"Free swim lessons for kids. Important to learn how in this area with so many beaches, so much kayaking, boating, etc. Make available to schools who can bus kids in for classes. This is why I am willing to be taxed for it - not for all the fluffy stuff being considered part of it."

"I am excited to be able to swim again!"

Unsupportive (25.8%)

"We are already being taxed out of our homes. This is an unnecessary expenditure that will further burden our aging population."

"I already have access to a community pool in Port Ludlow."

"I think this proposed facility has value for our county, but do not support its funding through a regressive sales tax. This should be funded through private donations."

"The new Black Point pools coming to Brinnon radically alter the situation. Moving too quickly for a mid-county pool could result in both ventures failing. It would be wise to pause this planning to first see what the Brinnon pools actually provide and how they are utilized."

'All building, operating and maintenance costs should be paid by the actual users. Non users should not have to pay anything . I am tired of being forced to pay for someone else'.

Undecided (5.6%)

"I'm very concerned about long-term operational costs if we expand the scope of the project beyond aquatics. We need a funding solution that doesn't burden west county for an amenity they will never use."

'Explain more why the current swimming pool in Port Townsend is not adequate'

"How frequently will the bus from PT go to the new location? Will the new location be part of a Y membership? Would be nice for bus circuit to run every hour from PT"

"My concern is that there is not information, at least not easily accessible to the public that shows any thorough planning on the longevity of maintaining a new pool. I feel that applying more financial burden in a county that already has a relatively high sales tax will only make life harder for lower income residents. While I can understand the community benefit of a pool

space I do not believe these will outweigh the negative impact on our local economy. If the pool space generates income to the county, I do not believe it will flow back toward the lower income residents who will be sacrificing more intrinsically for the space. What is the point in adding a resource if it will put the highest burden on those who lack resources? It seems to cater to the wealthy, rather than the community. Ultimately, my decision to vote NO against the pool tax is a lack of information that will allow me to trust that the pool space will be properly maintained, managed, utilized or any assurance that in any unforeseen case of closure that the new space will continue to be utilized. I see very little forethought represented aside from how much it will cost, it seems like a silly idea to me without information that shows a plan beyond building. More information about how the space will be managed and taken care of needs to be provided to the public.”

“Just concerned about the cost. Our community needs sooo much and I don't know if an aquatic center is where the finances should go first. It's a dilemma for certain”

Port Hadlock Location

Pro (9.4%)

“Great location choice that makes facility accessible to ALL of Jefferson County. Jefferson Transit has said they will adjust their routes to meet the needs of the community. Our schools need a regulation sized pool for the swim teams.”

“I'm very happy that you're considering a location in the Port hadlock area. I've been saying for 10 years or more that a location more central to East Jefferson County was more fair and accessible to all. Good job! I live in Port Townsend and have enjoyed having a pool in Port Townsend and would love to have one again but if this is going to be a county pool he in a place that everybody in East Jefferson County can use it.”

“Thanks for considering a more central location. Those of us in South County appreciate it!”

Con (7.0%)

“The facility would be a nice addition, but being so far from Port Townsend my family would likely not use it ... just too far to drive/bike (we try not to drive).”

“Not worth the time to drive to Hadlock. Current pool is walkable distance for most of Port Townsend. Proposed pool is not realistically reachable by walking or bicycle. Forcing everyone to drive is a time burden that essentially eliminates it as an option.”

“Move the location to Port Townsend where 10,000 people live so you reduce transportation needs , mileage, and transit costs.”

"My husband and I do not want a new pool in the county, regardless of where it will be. We do not want to pay for this, we do not want more traffic or congestion in Hadlock/Chimacum, and we feel strongly that we should not be required to pay for this facility."

Facility Design/Amenities

Aquatics (28.0%)

"Affordable access to swimming lessons offered at reasonable times for working parents are very important to the safety of the kids in our community. I hope the pool will be affordable or free to give access to everyone."

"We would use a Salt Water pool often, we will not use it much if it is chlorine."

"Yes! 1. Sliding scale or supportive programs for lower income families would be HUGE. Part of the reason we don't frequent the PT pool is distance from home and the cost. Shore aquatic center has an absolutely BRILLIANT setup with an indoor splash zone and lazy river. My kids are so in love with it. If a closer, similar venue with similar cost could happen, I would definitely bring them to swim more. Swim lessons too, please!!! I'm begging as a mama with two little folks who haven't had the opportunity for a swimming lesson. They swim in life jackets currently. I'm so looking forward to having a community center offering fitness and aquatic exercise, sports, leisure and recreation. Birthday swim parties like @ Shore in PA would be so super cool, and my family would be absolutely into that."

"We are a multi generational local family of 6 who uses MVP 3 times a week each. As boaters water safety is critical for this community and we use this pool to teach all our kids and their friends. We all use therapy pools for arthritis"

Non-Aquatics (10.6%)

"I see way too many unhealthy, unfit adults and seniors in this community. There is a definite need for a community center that focuses on health and fitness, movement and socialization. The water/pool component is off-putting and unnecessary. I would support a community center, not a pool."

"It would be great if this facility offered what the Y and the Rec center aren't equipped to offer here but do offer in many other communities - fitness/yoga/exercise classes, affordable weight room/gym access, community event space, aquatic classes, swim team and open/lap swim times, dance classes, rock climbing, childcare, locker rooms, hot tub/sauna, and job opportunities."

"A gym would be the most important thing to me. The gyms in jeffco are severely outdated. If the facility could be comparable to the silverdale ymca I would be there every day. A full gym with up to date state of the art equipment , indoor track, indoor climbing, indoor pool, steam sauna, dry sauna, hot tub, ice baths. Both me and my mom would be there every afternoon if these things were available. If it's just a pool my mom might come once a week and I'd come once every month or two. Please build a gym!"

"This is a cornerstone facility for our county. It would be important to our family to offer hours that are friendly to a working family and not just retirees. As for myself, I would fully train there several days a week if bouldering/gym facilities were offered as well."

Youth Friendly (17.2%)

"This is so exciting. Very much in favor. I'm a mom with many kids and this would change everything."

"My household makes the drive to Port Angeles' Shore Aquatic Center 2x a month from Port Townsend. That is a well-run facility and it is worth the drive. It would be incredible if East Jefferson County had something comparable to Shore. We would absolutely be coming weekly if not more than that. Would also like to add that family changing rooms would be a great addition, as well as a lazy river pool feature, which is fun for all. Thanks for considering."

"Partnering with the schools, they bus the kids to the new aquatic facility after school. They have time to eat a snack, do homework, have individual time to decompress, then begin swim practice. Parents or bus system can take them home at 6pm. Perfect daycare/after school child care while learning how to be on a swim team, which makes natural born leaders. Something our county desperately needs."

"Although my kids are ready to leave for college, I think about what we would have loved when we were a young family. A large, state-of-the-art pool facility would have been a dream come true in Jefferson County and we would have used it all the time. I hope that we can bring this valuable resource to the families of Jefferson County, and not shortchange them in favor of louder, older voices."

"This would make a positively huge impact on families. We need a community pool/activity center, especially for the children and parents in this community. We would use this facility for swim lessons, play, swimming sports, birthday parties, scuba certification. And, if available, rock climbing and yoga. My kids would be thrilled. As their mom, I would be thrilled! We would be healthier and much happier, especially during the long and dreadful winter months. I wish so much that we can make this happen for our community."

Senior Health (5.7%)

"My wife and I take care of our 2-year-old granddaughter a few days a week. We would definitely bring her there for swimming lessons, rec.play, play groups, whatever is offered. My wife would swim and attend water aerobics classes, and we both would use a fitness room several times a week."

"I feel a new pool is needed in this area. I am 86 yrs old and my Doctor maintains that I am so much healthier now than I was before I started doing water aerobics some 7 years ago."

"I have been using the pool for almost 28 years since I retired to Port Townsend. I am 88 years old and proud to say that I am the oldest one in our aerobics class. That is what keeps me going."

"It is imperative that a maritime community like ours provides a resource like this for education, wellness and enrichment for all ages in our community. We strongly support the need for a new facility - thank you for your efforts. I hope that a new aquatic facility would partner with area schools to ensure that every child learns to swim at an early age, has opportunities to participate in water sports in middle and high school, and ensures that swimming and water sports are an accessible part of East Jefferson County residents throughout their lives. Similarly, I hope that such a facility would partner with Jefferson Healthcare and area health and social service agencies to ensure that adults and elders have access to activities that promote health, wellness and community interactions, including co-generation programs bringing youth and elders together."

"Although I am 75-years old and no young children, I would welcome an exercise pool program, physical therapy, and gym that offers exercise for older residents. I am beyond thrilled the new pool will be centrally located as I have no interest in driving 30-minutes one way to Pt Townsend. The proposed pool will be highly utilized by more Jefferson country residents who would finally have access to healthy recreation. Thank you for choosing Pt Hadlock location."

Accessibility and Affordability (8.1 %)

"Jefferson County does a poor job of making facilities accessible to disabled residents. It is imperative that the facility be barrier-free."

"I am unable to use the current pool due to mobility limitations and the mold in the facility that kicks up asthma. Would LOVE to have access to an indoor pool to stay fit."

"Valuable but expensive stay focused on priority swimming then build out other desirables as funding allows over time. If membership fee too expensive will not be able to participate as on fixed income. Consider option style memberships, senior and low income rates for optimal levy acceptance"

“There were no questions about disability friendly innovations or programs. I would like to see this in the options. Hot tubs yes, how about cold plunge or cold room facility? I would like to see this as a walkable facility to get too. Less cars. Please plan all of this with a walkable neighborhood vibe for those of us who already live in the area. I know there will be cars, but if you make it walkable to those who live here, then there will be less cars. Bike lanes too. The taxes. Times are hard. Get creative with those less fortunate on fixed incomes or disabled home owners. They are the ones who are going to hurt or be pushed out of their homes to fund stuff like this. They live in Hadlock because it is more affordable. What will you do for them to stay here while we improve our county offerings.? The taxes need to be less painful for those people who have been here a long time and are just trying to survive. How do they get to have access to an amazing space, but still afford to eat or pay for their house? Some can afford these taxes. Some cannot.”

“I'm very concerned about long-term operational costs if we expand the scope of the project beyond aquatics. We need a funding solution that doesn't burden west county for an amenity they will never use.”

“Please build a new pool! This is an important community resource. Pools help with play and confidence for youth and provide connection and fitness for adults. As a swimmer, and a previous lifeguard, I see the positive impact pools can have for people who use them. Make it available, accessible and welcoming space for all. Please make a pool that is low cost for people to use, supports vulnerable community needs like showering, and is welcoming to lgbtq folks, and create a space that support people with disabilities- both young and old.”

Changing Rooms (2.0 %)

“Locker and shower areas for women only. Men or transwomen should have these facilities separate from women. Women need privacy and safety. Thank you all for sticking with this process. It is so important that the county have a community pool. Please do not force any identity ideology on patrons. Everyone should have access to the community pool. A separate public bathhouse with shower facilities would be very civilized.”

“I would like to see public showers available for walkins with a reasonable price (Less than \$10), - no membership required - for those living in 'compromised' situations who just need to get clean. Being able to get clean is healthy for mind, body and necesary for holding down a job.”

Transportation (2.4 %)

“Public transport links could be extended, especially in the early evening. There is a 3 hour gap before the last #6 bus scheduled to return to Port Townsend.”

“Operate twice-daily shuttles between the Aquatic Center and locations of large user groups, e.g., Port Townsend, maybe Port Ludlow; or help self-organizing shuttle groups from locations like Cape George, Quilcene, etc., the goal being to minimize new traffic generation and to assist non-driver groupings such as older seniors, students, etc.”

“How frequently will the bus from PT go to the new location? Will the new location be part of a Y membership? Would be nice for bus circuit to run every hour from PT”

“.... the location must be accessible for all users. That means open evenings and weekends. Prior to moving to PT we were avid swimmers both recreationally and competitively. Due to the lack of hours available for a working fault we have used the pool twice in two years. Very disappointing the level of service. There should also be a shuttle from PT to the new location so teens and other non drivers without transport can use the facility”

Construction/Environmental (1.10 %)

“Please incorporate a UX team in the process and know what that means. Please make sure that the designers/architects involved have families that swim and understand that families who live here are all working class for the most part and will likely be underrepresented in the feedback process, though we exist in large numbers and want to see a pool designed for families and kids.”

“Hope you find the right balance between function, beauty, and efficiency. Green and sustainable. Serving young, prime adult, and older community members would be great. Healthy environmental impact with minimal [no?] use of toxic substances. Renewable energy, too. Would love outdoor fitness stations on the pool/center grounds and a running path around it. Asking a lot, but that's the dream.Thanks.”

“Building a Sprung type structure is less costly. Landscaping can soften the appearance. Adult Daycare might be nice considering the age of community members.”

YMCA (4.1%)

“I would highly object to building a pool with public funds then having it run by the YMCA. I believe that would be a misuse of public funds for a private organizations gain. The Y took over the Sequim Aquatic center and raised the rates, which are significantly higher than at the Port Angeles pool. If the pool is built with public funds, it should be run by the county.”

“Once again, the south and east end of the county is being neglected. We contribute the most property tax money to the county and get nothing in return. This aquatic center should be privately funded like, getting the YMCA to build and run it.”

"If you built something like the Haselwood Y in Silverdale, with weightlifting, bicycling and weight training equipment, then a pool makes sense. A pool by itself has little or no value and serves just a tiny sliver of the community's needs. Why not collaborate with the Y in order to build something? We all know the Y in Port Townsend should be demolished."

"Please get it done. I'm so tired of driving to Sequim to access a decent facility. Also there is very little to offer for children to do when visiting this area during inclement weather, which makes for a long winter when grandkids come. I very much encourage a new facility to be a YMCA facility. One can be a member and access any YMCA facilities."

"Do not go small. The demand will grow exponentially over time. We use Shore pool in Port Angeles which is a fabulous lap/ swimmers/ activities pool and it can get easily overcrowded. The pool becomes such a center of community for those who live in Port Angeles, west end, and Sequim. Such a healthy outlet for the young folks as well. The pool operates in the black \$\$ and they are able to keep it affordable. Conversely, the YMCA in Sequim is expensive and caters more to older folks who are not lap swimmers. Lots of water aerobics and group activities that take over the lap lanes limiting lap swim. So important to have a separate activities pool / area so that the lap lanes are available all day. The pool and sauna are such important therapy spots for veterans who suffer from an assortment of mental health and physical health issues. I am one of those veterans and fully understand the benefits. Make sure the sauna is large enough. The Shore pool sauna is shoulder to shoulder in the evenings when folks are off of work. The sauna gets busy in the mornings as well after early morning lap swim and the aerobics sessions are finished. Spend some time and talk with Steve, the board president, or Mike, the daily pool maintenance guy about what improvements they would make. Think big and think of the future growth of our community and its future needs. The people will definitely come to use the facility especially once they experience its benefits and view it as one of the centers of community. Thanks."