



Background/Context

Per Council direction in February 2018, the City of Covington completed a facility condition assessment for the aging Covington Aquatic Center. In the process, it was learned that the cost to renovate the 43-year old facility exceeds its value. Also acknowledged is that the demand upon this facility and needs of the community are much different from when it opened its doors in 1977; a replacement facility would be able to better meet present day (and anticipated future) demands and needs.

Recognizing the need to replace this regional facility and with support from local city councils and legislators, the Washington Department of Commerce provided a grant of \$1,050,000 to study the feasibility of a new aquatic and recreation center in the Covington and Maple Valley area and begin pre-construction design work. This will provide the Covington and Maple Valley communities necessary information to evaluate options and recommendations regarding a future aquatic and recreation center. The grant scope is rather general but does specify “a future aquatic and recreation center” so it is important to include both aquatic and recreation components.

An RFQ (or Request for Qualifications) process was completed in the fall of 2019 and ALSC Architects was determined to be the most highly qualified firm among 12 submittals. Working with city staff from Maple Valley and Covington, ALSC has assembled a robust consultant team and scope of work which will ultimately make recommendations based on a market analysis, business plan, and programming assessment that reflects public interests and leading industry standards. The study will evaluate land sites in the area, consider capital financing strategies, and assess sustainable operation models.

As part of this study, a public process will be led by a consensus-building Steering Committee.

A final report from the study will be presented to both city councils in 2021 to evaluate next steps.

Clarifying Approach; Setting Expectations

Acknowledge feature/amenity preference is one of multiple considerations for designing a facility. Other considerations (other than just the survey) will be market analysis (what is in demand/need), operation/business plan (some features, amenities and programs will have higher cost recovery rates than others), funding (what funding level will the public support?), etc.