



SUMMARY



SUMMARY

The City of St. Marys, Pennsylvania, engaged Counsilman-Hunsaker (CH) to conduct a feasibility study for the St. Marys Outdoor Community Swimming Pool in Memorial Park. The study assessed the need for a renovated or replaced pool complex, developed options to meet community aquatic needs, and provided associated costs. The goal was to inform the City's decision regarding the future of aquatic amenities in Memorial Park. The study included an evaluation of the existing pool, market research, financial analysis, and community feedback.

Project Overview and Process

The study commenced in January 2025 with a site visit and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Board and community members. Key project phases included:

Stakeholder/Community Engagement: Gathering input through meetings and an online survey.

Initial Findings/Concept Review: Presenting preliminary findings and conceptual plans.

Concept Refinement and Operational Planning: Refining plans and developing operational projections.

Final Documentation/Presentation: Submitting the final report in May 2025.

Community engagement was a priority, with input gathered from various stakeholders, including residents, the Parks and Recreation Board, and the City Council.

Existing Facility Assessment

The St. Marys Community Swimming Pool, originally opened in 1964 and renovated in 2006, faces significant challenges:

Structural Issues: The 11,000-square-foot pool experiences substantial water loss (over two inches daily), and has rust and corrosion on its copper metal walls. Reuse of the existing pool is not recommended.

Functional Deficiencies: The perimeter and trough-style gutter systems do not effectively skim the water surface. The pool has shifted, causing uneven water levels, and the heater struggles to maintain adequate temperatures.

Safety and Compliance: The pool backwash location does not meet current codes, pool chemicals are stored in the mechanical room, and the high-rate sand filters are exposed to the elements.

Infrastructure Needs: The mechanical system building requires a new roof, the entry building and locker rooms need remodeling, and the lifeguard area is inadequate.



SUMMARY

A market analysis researching city demographics inclusive of population density, drive time populations, age distribution and income levels was completed to inform the design and operations of several studied new swimming pool concepts.

Demographic Overview

St. Marys has a relatively stable but aging population. Key demographic trends include:

- Population: A slight decrease from 13,070 in 2010 to 12,738 in 2020, with a small increase to 12,835 (estimated 2023).
- Median Age: Increasing from 45.6 years in 2010 to 49.3 years in 2023, indicating an aging population.
- Age Distribution: A declining youth population (0-14 years), stable young adult population (15-24 years), and a growing older adult population (55+ years).

These demographics suggest a need for recreational facilities that cater to a wide range of ages, with a growing emphasis on options for older adults. The analysis of area aquatic facilities shows a range of options and price points in neighboring communities.

Community Input

A community meeting and an online survey were conducted to gather input. Key findings include:

- Pool Usage: Most respondents (90%) visited the pool in recent summers, primarily for recreation, exercise, and family activities.
- Preferred Programs: Swimming lessons were the most preferred aquatic program.
- Desired Amenities: Children's areas and water slides were highly desired.
- Facility Evaluation: Support amenities were rated as needing improvement.
- Willingness to Pay: A majority of respondents were willing to pay higher fees for improved facilities.
- Key Themes from Open-Ended Comments:
 - The pool is a valued community resource.
 - There are concerns about current operations (hours, staffing, costs).
 - Residents desire improvements and renovations, including an indoor pool, modernized facilities, and enhanced amenities.
 - Strong support for maintaining a community pool.



SUMMARY

The feasibility study for the City of St. Marys Community Swimming Pool studied three unique concepts for consideration.

Concept 1: This concept features a new 4,639 square foot leisure pool with zero-depth entry, a family waterslide, a floatable crossing activity, and a dual waterslide tower. New shade structures and a shade pavilion are also included, along with renovation or new construction of a support building.

Concept 2: This concept focuses on creating a larger and more versatile aquatic facility. Both options include a zero-depth entry and a children's play feature, along with new shade structures and a shade pavilion, and support building renovation or new construction.

Concept 3: This concept balances leisure and recreational activities, providing a wide range of aquatic experiences. It features a new 6,700 square foot leisure pool with a zero-depth entry, a children's play structure, and a waterslide tower. A lazy river and a 6-lane, 25-yard lap pool are also included, along with new shade structures and a shade pavilion, and support building renovation or new construction. Concept 3 is designed to accommodate a larger capacity of 400 patrons and requires a staff of 12-13 lifeguards.

Financial Analysis

Operational costs for the various options range from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Revenue potential comes primarily from daily admissions and seasonal memberships, with additional revenue from swimming lessons and pool rentals. The swimming pool is projected to be a subsidized facility for seasonal operations with an estimated annual subsidy range of \$115,000 and \$144,000.

Summary and Next Steps

The study confirms that the St. Marys Community Pool is a valued resource, but the existing facility has exceeded its useful lifespan and does not meet current needs. The community desires an updated pool with modern amenities. The feasibility study provides the City of St. Marys with the information needed to make an informed decision about the future options for a swimming pool in Memorial Park. Given the current construction and economic climate, close attention should be paid to the fluctuating cost of construction for recreational aquatics projects. Councilman Hunsaker's estimate has included a 5.0% escalation allowance in anticipation of the future construction of the facility. A project of this scale typically has a design phase that lasts 6 months, so the earliest this project could break ground would be late mid-to-late 2026, if funding becomes available.

