



PARKS AND RECREATION



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Lowell and South Pools

Public Engagement Summary

Produced by Agnew::Beck Consulting



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Process Overview and Next Steps

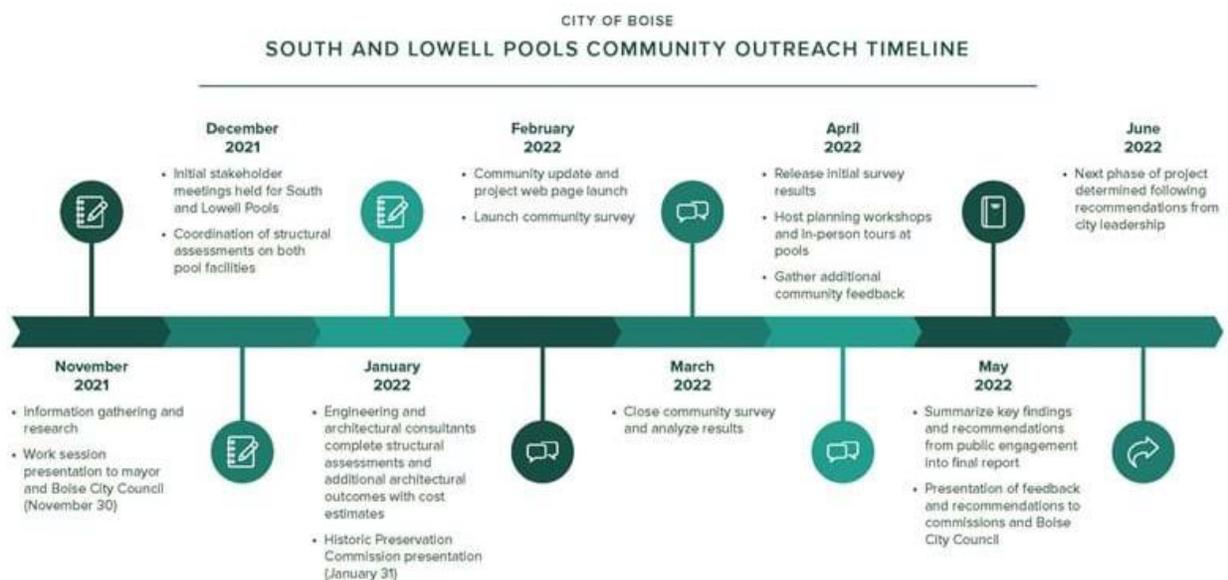
The City of Boise owns and operates the Lowell and South Pools, which originally opened in 1953 and continuously served Boise's neighborhoods until they had to close in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The pools remain closed following a series of condition and ADA assessments that revealed serious deficiencies and safety issues. In light of these assessments, the City of Boise, alongside Agnew::Beck Consulting, began a robust stakeholder engagement process in November of 2021 which was aimed at collecting the community's vision and aspirations for these two pool sites.

The broad goals of this engagement process were to:

1. Identify public priorities around the pool assets and identify possible facility alternatives.
2. Listen and learn from a variety of stakeholders and interests to gain a deeper understanding of the community's aspirations and vision for the pool sites.
3. Create recommendations for City of Boise leadership, including the mayor and Boise City Council, to consider when determining next steps for the facilities.

Engagement Process

The stakeholder engagement process took place from November 2021 to May 2022 which aligned with continued structural analysis of the two facilities that helped inform the possible scenarios presented at the final public open houses in 2022. Between the initial focus groups, public visioning survey, and community open houses, there were over 4,500 participants¹ represented in the engagement process. The below timeline details the full outreach and engagement process as outlined by the project team.



¹ Participation rates include some level of duplication. An individual who attended the open house and took the survey would have been counted twice.

Next Steps

The process to determine the future use of these two pools sites will continue into the future. The next steps in the process are as follows.

1. The Boise Parks and Recreation Department will host meetings with city leadership to share findings from this engagement process as well as initial concept designs and structural analysis findings.
2. The Boise City Council will review and discuss the feedback from this engagement process and provide feedback on a desired direction to move forward. This information will be provided to relevant city departments for further actions to move the process toward a final outcome for both sites.
3. After a direction has been identified and supported by city council, the city will continue to work on researching and implementing that direction(s).

Note that no decisions were made during the course of this public and stakeholder engagement process. All input collected will be presented to city leadership for review during their decision-making process.



Key Findings

Analysis of community survey responses, focus group results, and input collected at the two community open houses produced the following key themes.

Function and Site Preferences



1. The Lowell and South Pools have long provided an important function to neighbors and residents living in the areas surrounding the pools. These pools are viewed as a vital community destinations that help build neighborhood connections and community, offer a fun and safe destination for families and teens, provide accessible and affordable swimming skill development, and offer a refuge from the summer heat.

2. Having a functional pool that is accessible to all residents and neighbors in these areas of Boise is the most desired outcome of this process. While there were many ideas shared regarding the aesthetic, history, and culture associated with these pools, a majority of process participants wanted to see a functional pool above all else, regardless of whether that came from a renovation, larger remodeling, or complete reimagining of the pools on site.

3. Alternative (non-pool) functions at these sites were generally not supported when compared to a future where a pool could be opened in this location. While a handful of open house attendees and survey respondents identified alternative uses at these sites (skate parks, soccer fields, dog park or community gardens, etc.) a functional pool was the most desired future (as expressed by approximately 95% of survey respondents).



Design Alternatives and Aesthetics

After conducting additional research and consulting with developers and designers, the City of Boise identified two feasible scenarios for the pool locations². These two scenarios were adapted from the most supported and ultimately feasible scenarios identified in the public visioning survey. These scenarios were presented to the public at the April 2022 public open houses. The two scenarios are shown and described below.

Scenario 1 Renovate – Scenario 1 features a renovation-based approach that would largely keep the structure intact but would be upgraded and repaired to address structural safety concerns and ensure greater accessibility and ADA compliance. This scenario features an expanded pool deck, wheelchair accessible lifts, and new locker rooms and bathrooms at the rear of the building.

Scenario 2 Rebuild – Scenario 2 would reimagine the pool at the existing location. This option would result in a subgrade pool with an adjacent locker room/bathroom facility. This scenario opens up the possibility for a wider array of amenities including zero depth entry into the pool, regulation lap lanes, slides, splash pads, shade structures, and other quality of life improvements. The City of Boise has identified that this scenario would likely retain the existing Art Deco style entryway in an attempt to preserve some of the historic character elements that are beloved by the community.

4. A renovations-based approach (scenario 1) was generally more supported than a complete rebuild and reimagining of the pool structure. 68% of Lowell open house attendees and 59% of South open house attendees favored scenario 1. Reasoning for this preference can generally be characterized in the following ways:

- a. The existing pool structure is unique and adds character to the neighborhood.
- b. The existing pool structure is important from a historic preservation perspective and attempts should be made to minimize changes to the design and aesthetic of the facility.
- c. The existing pools create a unique swimming experience that is different from modern pools.
- d. The current pool structures create spaces aimed at more experienced swimmers (due primarily to the lack of zero depth entry into the pool), but this environment is a safe place for neighborhood kids and teens to experience more freedom and independence.

² Scenarios presented here are not final designs and were used as discussion aids to help guide the next steps of the design and improvement process. All feedback related to these designs should be interpreted as aspirational and not representative of feedback on final designs and renderings that will need to be produced in subsequent planning and design efforts.

Pool History and Preservation

- 5. The Lowell and South Pools have a unique history that many survey respondents and open house participants believed should be preserved and celebrated.** While the most desired outcome of this process was to have a functional neighborhood level pool, a strong subtheme revealed in this process was that the historic value of these pools is important to our community.
- 6. The Historic Art Deco inspired entryway was the most important aspect of the pool façade, however other features including the above ground structure and glass block windows were also noted as defining and important characteristics of the existing structures.** Community voices were aligned that the pool entrances were the most defining and important aspects of the façade, however these perspectives were not as aligned on the remaining aspects of the pools. Some felt that the structure overall was critical to preserve, while others were more open to changes as long as the entrance largely remained unchanged.

Additional Feedback – New American and Refugee Community

The project team worked to involve members of the city's New American and refugee communities regarding the future of recreation at both Lowell and South Pools. Here is an overview of the information we heard from community members, including parents, teens, and refugee liaison workers:

- Overall, the ability to host swimming lessons and provide water safety information via neighborhood pools is a large priority.
- Boise School District officials shared that having these facilities located next to schools increases awareness and afterschool/summer break recreation opportunities for students of all backgrounds.
- Swimming at Lowell and South can be intimidating for new and inexperienced swimmers due to the three feet to 12-foot depth of the pool.
- More education, programming, and swim safety awareness opportunities should be made available to underserved communities regardless of what each pool looks like in the future.

Lowell and South Open House Highlights

Overview

The City of Boise, alongside Agnew::Beck Consulting, hosted two community workshop-style open houses (one at South Pool on April 26 and one at Lowell Pool on April 28) with the intent to hear additional community feedback related to the future of these two City of Boise owned assets. The open houses featured numerous ways to engage with the pool and the project team as well as give feedback on the facilities. Each event featured the following:

- Pool tours
- Discussion of the public survey results
- Opportunities to share additional aspirations and hopes for the pool
- A station to learn about and provide input on two possible futures for the pool
- A youth-oriented survey and activities for younger kids
- Conversations with Boise's Department of Arts and History to learn more about these sites and possible ways to help archive their history/personal memories

Over 250 participants attended each of the two open houses and provided feedback that will be used to help guide future decision making around these two pools.

Pool Scenarios

After conducting additional research and consulting with developers and designers, the City of Boise identified two likely feasible scenarios for the pool locations. These two scenarios were adapted from the most supported scenarios identified in the public visioning survey. At the open houses, participants could talk with an architect from Cushing Terrell and staff members from the Public Works Department to ask questions about the two scenarios. After reviewing the two possible options, open house participants were asked to vote for which scenario they would prefer the city continue to research and move forward in the decision-making process. This was meant to be a casual way to gather visual feedback on what potential outcomes residents would like the city to continue to research and pursue. Each scenario is described below with a visual representation of exactly what was presented at the open house – larger higher quality images of these scenarios are available online at <https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/lowell-and-south-pools-planning-public-outreach-and-engagement/#cost>.

Scenario 1 Renovate – Scenario 1 features a renovations-based approach that would largely keep the structure intact but would be upgraded and repaired to address structural safety concerns and ensure greater accessibility and ADA compliance. This scenario features an expanded pool deck, wheelchair accessible lifts and new locker rooms and bathrooms at the rear of the building.

SOUTH POOL | SCENARIO 1*

Bring the pool up to code, meet accessibility standards and reopen.

COST ESTIMATE RANGE: \$4-6 MILLION (2022 estimate), order of magnitude estimate accuracy is -50%/+100%



- 1 Added pool amenities and stair access to pool deck level.
- 2 Stair access added at a distance from existing Art Deco entrance to preserve historical characteristic of the building.
- 3 Added extended pool deck and support columns. The deck build-out with columns will allow to maintain the original glass block at the perimeter wall. The extended pool deck will be differentiated from the original deck in terms of material.
- 4 Elevator access location added next to stair access at the back of the building.

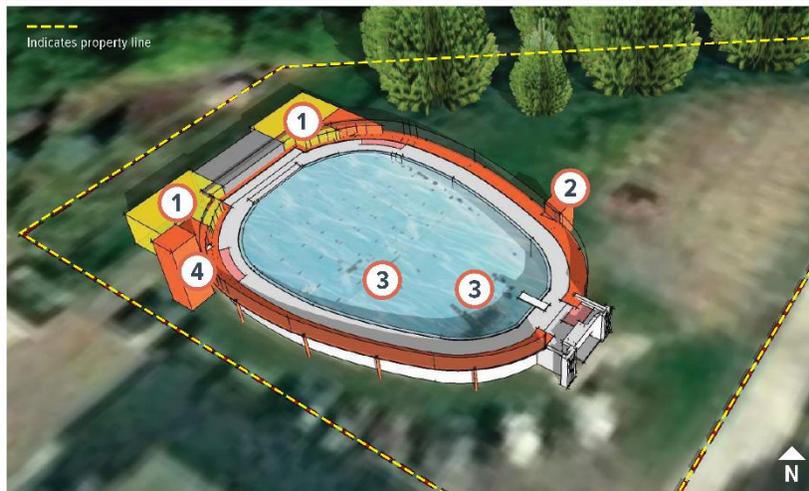
59% of South Pool Open House participants preferred this scenario.

**Please note, this scenario is dependent on a variety of factors and the rendering shown is not meant to represent a guaranteed outcome.*

LOWELL POOL | SCENARIO 1*

Bring the pool up to code, meet accessibility standards and reopen.

COST ESTIMATE RANGE: \$4-6 MILLION (2022 estimate), order of magnitude estimate accuracy is -50%/+100%



- 1 Added pool amenities and stair access to pool deck level.
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- 3 Added extended pool deck and support columns. The deck build-out with columns will allow to maintain the original glass block at the perimeter wall. The extended pool deck will be differentiated from the original deck in terms of material.
- 4 Elevator access location added next to stair access at the back of the building.

68% of Lowell Pool Open House participants preferred this scenario.

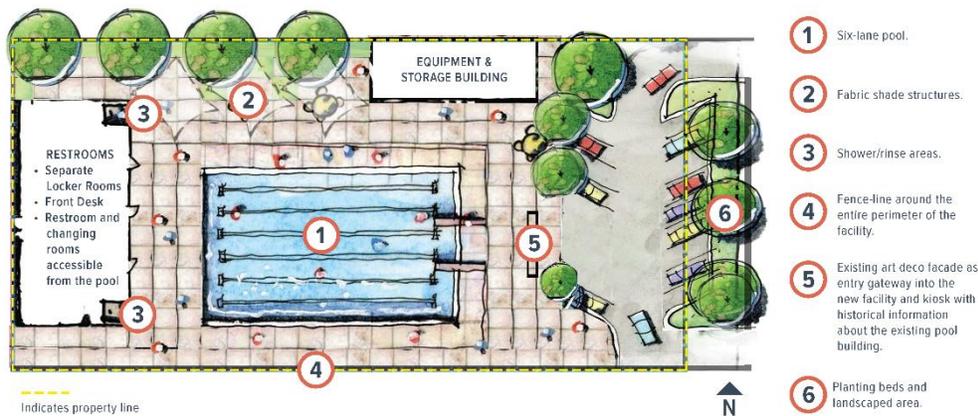
**Please note, this scenario is dependent on a variety of factors and the rendering shown is not meant to represent a guaranteed outcome.*

Scenario 2 Rebuild – Scenario 2 would reimagine the pool at the existing location. This option would result in a subgrade pool with an adjacent locker room/bathroom facility and opens up the possibility for a wider array of amenities including zero depth entry into the pool, slides, splash pads, shade structures and other quality of life improvements. The City of Boise has identified that this scenario would likely retain the existing Art Deco style entryway in an attempt to preserve some of the character elements that are beloved by the community.

SOUTH POOL | SCENARIO 2*

Reimagine the pool with opportunity to preserve historic Art Deco entrance.

COST ESTIMATE RANGE: \$4-6 MILLION (2022 estimate), order of magnitude estimate accuracy is -50%/+100%



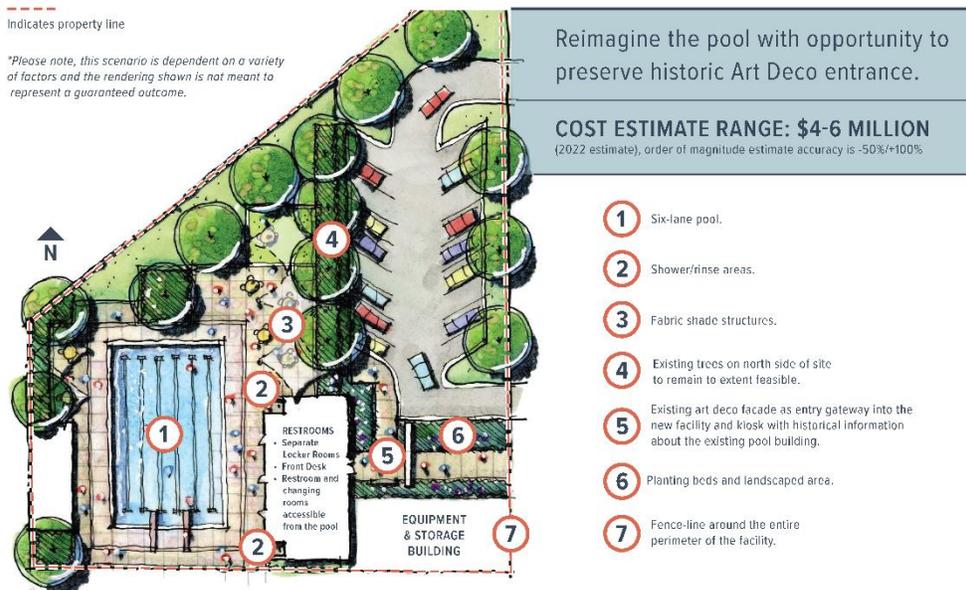
*Please note, this scenario is dependent on a variety of factors and the rendering shown is not meant to represent a guaranteed outcome.

41% of South Pool Open House participants preferred this scenario.

LOWELL POOL | SCENARIO 2*

Indicates property line

*Please note, this scenario is dependent on a variety of factors and the rendering shown is not meant to represent a guaranteed outcome.



Reimagine the pool with opportunity to preserve historic Art Deco entrance.

COST ESTIMATE RANGE: \$4-6 MILLION (2022 estimate), order of magnitude estimate accuracy is -50%/+100%

32% of Lowell Pool Open House participants preferred this scenario.

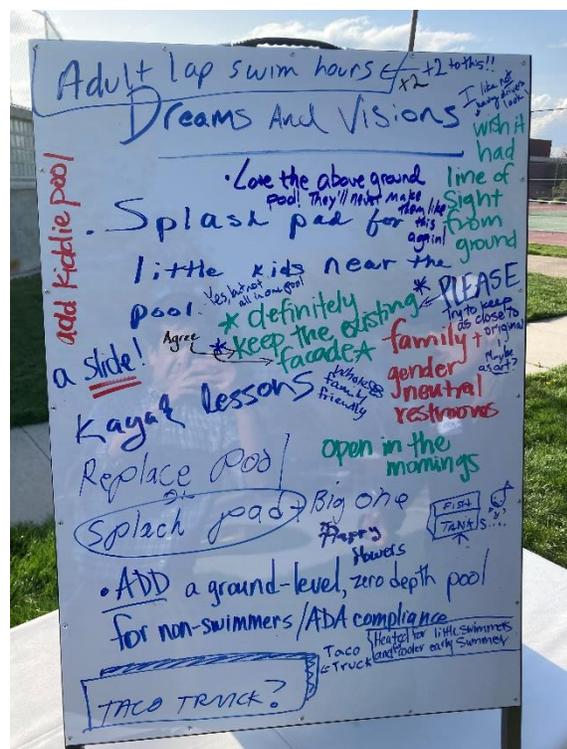
Vision and Dreams Board Results

Open house participants were given an opportunity to share additional hopes and aspirations for the future of the pool on a dream board. A wide array of ideas and hopes were shared but were generally focused on the following key-themes.

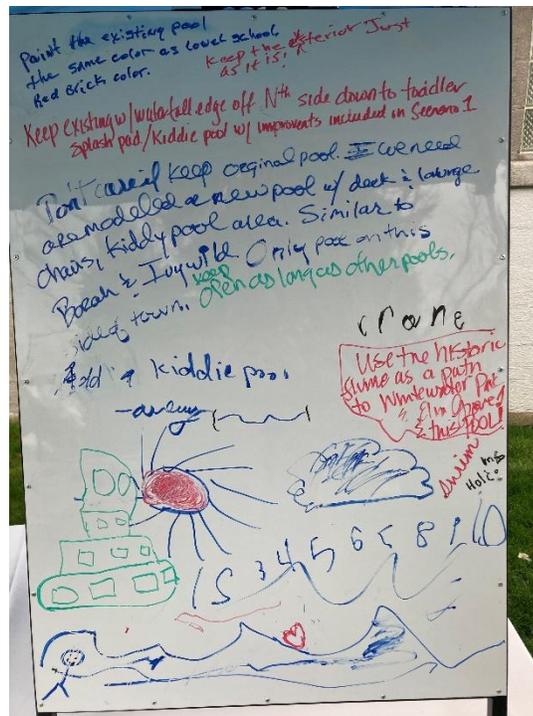
Images of the final dream boards are included below.

1. **Improved accessibility** – Participants left many comments about how they hoped the pool would reopen with more accessibility to all users including individuals using mobility assisted devices, younger children, and a more diverse population of users.
2. **Preserve the historic and unique aesthetic** – Similar to what was heard in the public visioning survey results, open house participants expressed their desire for the pool to (as much as possible) retain the historic art-deco façade with the pool entryway being the most important part of the original design to preserve.
3. **Additional pool amenities and improvements** – Participants expressed a desire for pool improvements and additional amenities ranging from improved pool heating, on-site splash pads, slides, zero-depth entry, and improvements to restrooms and locker facilities.
4. **Improved and additional programming** – Participants shared many ideas about how to improve the functionality of the pool with expanded hours, adult only swim times, and dedicated educational opportunities centered around swimming and other water-based activities like kayaking.

South Pool Dream Boards



Lowell Pool Dream Boards



Youth Survey Results

Our team developed a one-page youth survey that was distributed at both the Lowell and South Pool community open house events with the intent of capturing the voices of one of the largest user groups of community pools. This survey was handed out to open house participants under the age of 18 and was focused on collecting input about how they interface with and enjoy pools in our community.

In total, 88 youth participants filled out the survey (28 from the Lowell open house, and 60 from the South open house) with ages ranging from 3 to 18 years old. These surveys revealed the following findings about the pools.

- Pools (including Lowell and South) were very important to youth survey respondents. These locations offer space for them to have fun with friends and family and escape the heat.
- When asked what they liked most about South and Lowell Pools, most respondents expressed how close the pool was to their own home, indicating that these pools were serving many nearby neighbors and families.
- Additional amenities including a water slide and splash pad were desired at both locations. A number of youth survey respondents indicated that they liked other pool locations such as Ivywild, the Natatorium or the YMCA because they had slides and other features that were fun to use.
- Accessible (indoor) soccer fields were desired among a handful of older teen participants from the new American/refugee community.

Public Visioning Survey Summary

Overview

The concurrent and identical Lowell and South visioning surveys were online and open to the public from February 27 through March 28, 2022. The South Pool survey received 2,167 responses and the Lowell Pool survey received 1,869 responses. These surveys were designed to collect input regarding the public's desired future for each of these two community assets. The survey was distributed online at the City of Boise webpage and as a paper copy upon request.

Whenever possible, this analysis groups the results from the two surveys into one set of key findings.

Key Themes

Analysis of survey responses from both surveys resulted in the following key themes.

1. The Lowell and South Pools are beloved community assets that serve both a functional community need and celebrate a part of Boise's rich history.
2. Renovating and re-opening the pools was by far the most supported scenario amongst all survey respondents. The degree to which respondents would like to see additional amenities and improvements made during renovations was less clear-cut and highlights an opportunity for continued community conversations around this topic.
3. Ensuring that the Lowell and South Pools are accessible to everyone regardless of their demographics and/or ability was important to a wide range of survey respondents.
4. The community is eager for these pools to re-open. Many respondents indicated that the pool closure in 2020 was a major loss for their families and neighbors.
5. The unique architecture and history of these pools is an important part of Boise's character and should be preserved and celebrated if at all possible.

Respondent Information

Both the Lowell and South surveys received a diverse range of respondent participation. The following section highlights some important demographic information for each survey.

Lowell

- **Age** – All age groups are represented in the survey responses, however there was an over representation of individuals between the ages of 30-50 (52%) and an underrepresentation of youth 20 years of age or younger (2%).

- **Race** – Lowell survey respondents reflect a racial distribution similar to that of Boise's racial composition with a majority of respondents (86%) identifying as white.
- **Household income** – Lowell survey respondents have household incomes that skew slightly higher than Boise's median household income (\$63,778). 44% of Lowell respondents indicated a household income over \$100,000 annually, while only 6% of respondents indicated a household income under \$30,000 annually.
- **Homeownership** – A majority of respondents (82%) indicated that they own their home, compared to the citywide homeownership rate of 61%.
- **Respondents with no children at home** – 45% of respondents indicated that they did not have children living at home.
- **Geographic location** – Responses to the Lowell survey came in from all around Boise and the Treasure Valley. 47% of respondents lived in 83702 (North End, Highlands) and 27% lived in 83703 (Sunset, Collister, Quail Ridge).
- **Annual pool use** – When the pools were open, 25% of respondents indicated that they did not use the pool, 15% used the pool 1-2 times annually, and the remaining 60% indicated that they used the pool 3 or more times each year.

South

- **Age** – All age groups are represented in the survey responses, however there was an over representation of individuals between the ages of 30-50 (50%) and an underrepresentation of youth 20 years of age or younger (3%).
- **Race** – South survey respondents reflect a racial distribution similar to that of Boise's racial composition with a majority of respondents (84%) identifying as white.
- **Household income** – Survey respondents indicated a fairly even distribution of household incomes with 41% of respondent indicating an annual household income of under \$75,000 and 46% over \$75,000, with 13% of respondents choosing to not answer this question.
- **Homeownership** – A majority of respondents (73%) indicated that they own their home, compared to the citywide homeownership rate of 61%.
- **Respondents with no children at home** – 47% of respondents indicated that they did not have children living at home.
- **Geographic location** – The largest group of respondents (42%) lived in 83705 (Vista, Hillcrest, Depot Bench) with the remaining respondents distributed in small amounts throughout the Treasure Valley.
- **Annual Pool Use** - When the pools were open, 33% of respondents indicated that they did not use the pool, 15% used the pool 1-2 times annually and the remaining 52% indicated that they used the pool 3 or more times each year.

Guiding Values

Respondents were asked to identify which value-based statements they believed should be considered when Boise Parks and Recreation makes decisions. The top identified guiding values between both surveys were:

1. **Accessibility** – Boise's neighborhood pools should be accessible to all members of the community regardless of their race, age, income, physical ability, or geographic location.
2. **Equity and Inclusion:** Boise's neighborhood pools should be programmed and designed so that any resident can easily participate.
3. **Maintenance and Upkeep:** Investments into ongoing maintenance of Boise's neighborhood pools are critical to their long-term value to our community.
4. **Health and Safety:** Public health and safety are of highest importance when making investments in public spaces and infrastructure.

Barriers to Pool Use

Respondents who indicated that they used the pools two or fewer times per year identified the following primary reasons and barriers to access.

Lowell Pool

1. Did not want to visit the pool (22%)
2. Did not live in Boise when the pool was open (21%)
3. Little or no shade at the pool (18%)
4. Pool was too small (14%)
5. Pool was not friendly to young children (14%)

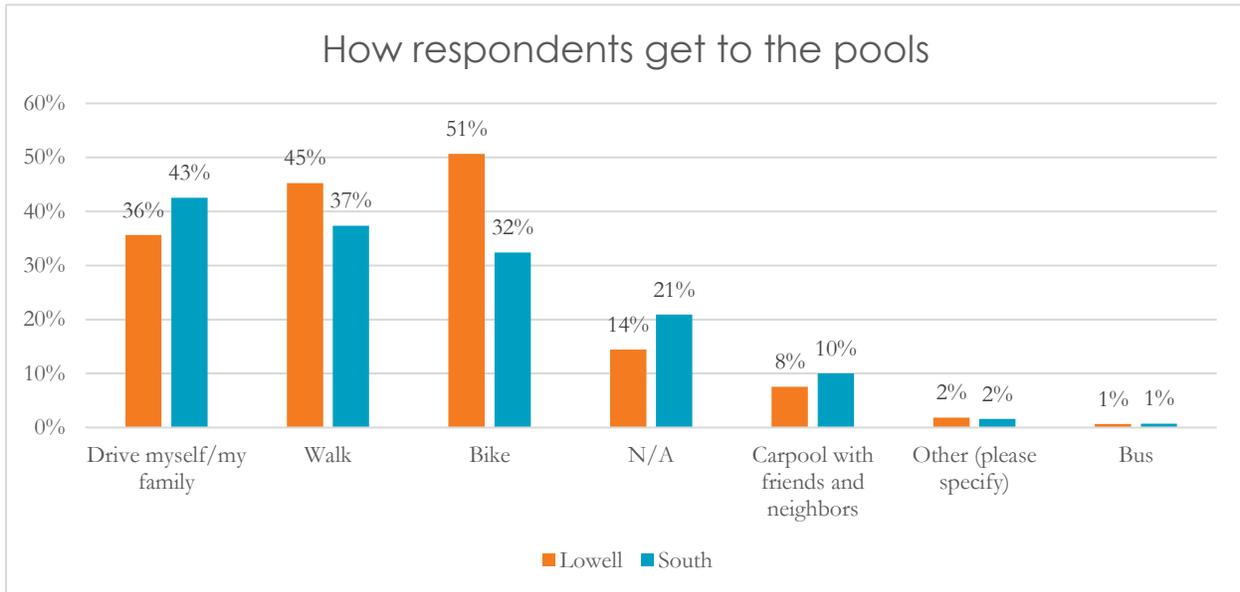
South Pool

1. There were other pools closer to my home (34%)
2. Did not want to visit the pool (24%)
3. Did not live in Boise when the pool was open (17%)
4. Little or no shade at the pool (15%)
5. Pool was too small (14%)

A number of respondents did not actively want to use or visit the pool but recognized the value of these important neighborhood assets. Respondents at South indicated a greater likelihood to utilize other pool resources outside of the neighborhood including larger regional destination pools including Ivywild and the Boise Aquatic Center. Additionally, some respondents chose not to utilize the pools because of safety concerns, particularly for young children due to the three-foot deep “shallow” end setup at both locations.

Transportation to Pools

The table below highlights the transportation methods respondents were using to access the pools. Both pools were often accessed by individuals biking and walking, however South had a larger percentage of respondents who were driving to the pools compared to other means.



What do respondents love most about the Lowell and South Pool?

Survey respondents loved numerous attributes and qualities of the Lowell and South Pools. The following list represents commonly heard themes from amongst open-ended survey responses related to things that respondents loved most.

- **Location** – These pools are conveniently located for neighborhood resident use. Kids were able to walk and bike safely to these pools and they serve as important community gathering locations.
- **Unique history and architectural style** – Respondents from both surveys indicated that these pools contributed to the character of the neighborhood and that the history and architectural style made the neighborhood feel more unique and identifiable. Additionally, many respondents highlighted how these pools were important to the history of the neighborhood and many respondents requested that the city preserve these as historical sites if at all possible. The Art Deco entrance and the two-story above ground pool design were generally well-liked by survey participants.
- **Neighborhood stories and memories** – These pools were foundational for many in creating positive summertime memories for themselves and their families. Dozens of respondents shared fond memories and stories of these pools, which was

often accompanied by a hope that future generations would be able to have this same kind experience at the pool.

- **Community gathering space** – These pools offer an important place for the community to get to know each other and for neighbors to build personal connections.
- **Simplicity in form and function** – Many respondents indicated that they loved these pools for their simplicity. These pools do not have many of the flashy amenities of more modern pool facilities, but that the simple function provides an important and unique experience for kids and families.
- **Skill development** – Many respondents indicated that these pools serve a vital educational role to neighborhood children who would possibly not have other opportunities to learn to swim and practice water safety.

Opportunities for improvement

While survey respondents widely considered these pools to be highly regarded community assets, they also identified a number of improvements that would enhance the form and function of these pools. The most commonly cited areas for improvement included:

- Structural updates to meet ADA requirements and code
- Improved accessibility for all users regardless of age and ability
- Safety improvements including ways to make the pool more accessible to very young children (zero depth pool entry)
- Expanded deck and shade structures that would make it easier and more comfortable for parents to be at the pool while their kids were swimming
- A pool heater that would allow the pool to be more functional outside of the warmest months
- Improvements to the restroom and locker room facilities
- Additional programming for kids and adults – including designated adult swim times and expanded operational hours
- Additional parking for cars and bicycles
- Landscaping improvements to make the area feel more welcoming
- More affordable swimming passes

Priority Scenarios

Survey respondents were presented with 8 possible site scenarios and were asked to select their top preference for the future of the pool. The final preferred site scenarios were nearly identical in ranking between the two pools and are reflected in the list below (shown in descending order with the highest priority at the top of the list).

Proposed Site Scenario	Percent Lowell	Percent South
Renovate the pool to address deficiencies and add additional amenities like a larger back deck, zero depth entry and more accessible entrances, potentially at the rear of the structure. This scenario would require substantial alterations to the facility, but the historic front of the pool could possibly be retained.	34.92%	32.53%
Renovate the pool to address deficiencies and reopen the pool with minimal structural changes – this scenario would retain as much of the historic structure as possible while still allowing for the pool to reopen. ADA (access for people with disabilities) updates would still be required which could alter the structure.	29.03%	29.74%
Take down the existing pool and build a new neighborhood pool at the current location. This scenario would create an updated pool at the existing site, which would be constrained by the size of the property.	10.77%	10.73%
Renovate and re-open the pool by any means within the city's budget. This option indicates a preference for opening the pool regardless of what changes need to happen to the existing structure.	10.17%	8.89%
Take down the existing pool and build a new neighborhood pool at a new location that would potentially allow for a larger pool with more amenities.	7.32%	6.71%
Take down the existing pool and completely reimagine the space. The reimagined site could be anything from a park, a community garden or other public place.	2.32%	4.75%
I need more information to decide.	4.22%	4.42%
Retain the pool exactly as it is today as a historic structure and make no changes – the pool could not reopen in this scenario.	1.25%	2.24%

Funding Priorities

Recognizing that the City of Boise does not have an unlimited budget to spend on these pool projects, the survey asked respondents to weigh the importance of various expenditures that could be related to the renovation or redevelopment of these pool sites. The following list shows the top 6 funding priorities as identified by the survey respondents from both the Lowell and South Pool Survey.

1. Updates that make the pool easily accessible for all residents
2. Preservation of the Art Deco facility entrance and lettering
3. Family friendly improvements for all ages and swimming abilities
4. Preservation of the historic structure and exterior
5. Improvements to the locker rooms and restrooms
6. Expansion of the pool deck to allow for additional uses/users

Stakeholder Focus Group Summary

Overview

To kick-off the stakeholder engagement process for Lowell and South Pools, the City of Boise, alongside Agnew::Beck Consulting, hosted two focus group meetings (one for each pool) to gain initial insight into how the public and specific stakeholder groups were thinking about the desired future of the pools. The hour and a half long focus groups were held on December 7 (South Pool) and December 9, 2021 (Lowell Pool) at the Dick Eardley Senior Center and included an intentional and targeted representation of community voices including nearby neighborhood residents, pool users, transportation advocates, the Boise School District, historic preservationists, and members of the city's cross-disability taskforce. The South Pool focus group had eight participants and the Lowell Pool focus group had 12 participants.

These focus groups provided essential information about the various perspectives and aspirations for the future of these pools and laid the framework for the ideas and questions that were distributed to the public in the visioning survey and community open houses. The focus groups were designed to:

- Gauge initial public perceptions of the pool assets.
- Identify questions that stakeholder groups had about the pools.
- Introduce the public engagement process to a targeted group of community stakeholder and leaders.
- Identify aspects of the pools that participants loved and what elements had room for improvement.
- Gauge initial opinions about the desired future scenario for the pool on a spectrum ranging from “retain the pool exactly as it is today” to “completely reimagine the pool site”.



Visual Notes from the South Pool Focus Group

Focus Group Key Themes

1. Focus group participants were generally very happy that the city was thinking about the future of these pool assets, however there was some skepticism about the city's intention to keep and retain the South and Lowell Pools.
2. Participants broadly agreed that it was important to have a functional pool serving the surrounding areas. Most participants recognized that some compromises about the structure may need to be made in order to maintain a functional, safe, and accessible pool.
3. Participants generally felt that the city should attempt to preserve the unique pool structures and historic architecture at both Lowell and South. Participants also indicated that renovations to the existing structure were preferable to a complete rebuilding of the pool as these existing structures provided unique character and history that participants did not want to lose.
4. These pools represent happy memories for many people in our community and participants expressed that they hope their kids and other young people in Boise will have the opportunity to create their own memories at these pools moving forward.
5. Focus group participants from both Lowell and South indicated a desire for the pools to re-open as quickly as possible.

Initial perceptions and questions

Focus group participants came into these conversations with a wide range of perspectives, interests and hopes for the pool sites. Initial ideas and questions were focused on the following topics:

- **Pool functionality and closure** – Focus group participants expressed that the pool closures in 2020 have had a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhoods. Many questions posed by participants were focused on why the pool closed and what it would take to get the pools reopened as soon as possible.
- **Historic preservation** – Many focus group participants indicated a desire to see the pool's historic structure preserved and were worried that this process could lead to a removal of these unique structures. Many questions were posed regarding the process to get these sites added to the National Register of Historic Places.
- **Identifying community needs** – Participants recognized that as the city continues to grow additional pressure will be placed on existing facilities. Participants were interested in discussing the existing and future level of service and wanted to understand what plans were in place to maintain and program Boise's pool inventory.

- **Site possibilities** – Participants were very interested in learning about what was possible at each location, and if other locations were being considered for additional neighborhood pools.
- **Project cost and funding** – Participants wanted to know about the total costs associated with re-opening and possibly rebuilding the pools. Questions were posed around what additional funding sources would be needed to implement the updated designs and how this integrates with funds allocated in the City of Boise’s Capital Improvements Plan.
- **Accessibility** – Many participants joined this conversation wanting to discuss the inaccessibility of the pools, particularly for individuals who have younger children and use mobility assistance devices.

Aspects of the pool that focus group participants loved

Focus group participants shared that there was a lot to like about these pools, including:

- The unique façade, historic design, and architecture.
- The history of the pools and the many fond memories that were made at the pools.
- Neighborhood serving locations that were walkable and bikeable.
- The affordability of pool admission.
- Unique destinations that provided opportunities for kids to gain independence and provided jobs for area teenagers.
- These pools provided important opportunities for youth to learn how to swim in a safe environment.

Aspects of the pool that focus group participants felt could be improved

Focus group participants offered up the following areas of improvement for the two pool locations:

- Increase accessibility by updating the pools to meet ADA compliance and identifying other ways to increase access to a wider range of user demographics and swimmer levels.
- Add a zero-depth entry to increase the experience for younger swimmers.
- Larger and improved locker rooms and restroom facilities.
- Add amenities and quality of life improvements including pool heaters, splash pads, slides, shade structures, and expanded seating areas.
- Expand operational hours and create new programming (such as adult swimming hours) to improve utilization of these assets.

Scenario Spectrum South

The responses were fairly evenly spaced across the spectrum, with four falling on the “retain” side and four on the “reimagine” side.

Retain Feedback:

Comments on the “retain” side ranged from the site is constrained and needs better interior amenities (locker rooms, improved functionality, ADA access). One participant asked if we could add amenities at the school or build a splash pad out in front of the pool while keeping the main structure largely the same.

Reimagine Feedback:

Comments on the “reimagine” side ranged from “pools are in decline and we need to keep them practical” to the desire for a new opportunity for a pool in the neighborhood that could be open year-round. Another participant noted they are open to all possibilities for the pool as long as there is a focus on getting kids in the pool (safe swimming). Finally, one participant noted the city’s special needs population and the desire to work better at the site to accommodate them.

