TOWNSHIP OF UPPER ST. CLAIR

Community & Recreation Center
Post COVID Facility Assessment

FINAL REPORT
JUNE 14, 2024







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Section I - Introduction

The Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center has been an excellent managed and operated public recreation center since it opened nearly 15 years ago. This study was completed to analyze the operations of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center, with particular attention to the impact that COVID 19 had on the center. More specifically the report identifies the reasons for the center's continued operations success as well as where changes could be considered to increase the operational efficiency, and performance of the facility in the future.

There was a previous assessment completed in 2018 and many of the recommendations from that report have been instituted.

This study is based on information gathered from a site visit to the Community & Recreation Center and interviews with Township and recreation staff as well as an on-line survey of the community.

In addition, there was also a review of operational, program, and administrative information, records, and material supplied by the Recreation and Leisure Services Department staff.

What follows is a summary of the operations and efficiency of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center, with recommendations for the future. Any recommendations being made are with the knowledge that it may be challenging to implement all the findings in this assessment with the current operational funding levels of the Department, the staffing levels for the center, and the necessary time/resource requirements for completion.

It is important to note that this is a general assessment and not every aspect of the center's operation has been analyzed in detail.

A. Review Background Information

1. Identify center operations parameters
    a. Market changes since the last assessment
    b. Site/location issues or changes
    c. Facility component additions or alterations since the last assessment
    d. Impacts on the center and operations from COVID

2. Review facility structure/resources/policies
    a. Marketing and promotion tools
    b. Operations policies and procedures
    c. Program plan/statistics (last 3-5 years)
    d. Maintenance plan
    e. Staffing plan

f. Fee schedule (facility and programs)
g. Operating budget (last 3-5 years)
    a. Expenditures
    b. Revenues
    c. Membership/use numbers

B. Public Reaction and Input Regarding Center Operations

1. On-line survey

C. Assessment of Center's Physical Condition and Functionality

1. Image and appeal

2. Supervision and security

3. Maintenance

4. Facility alterations/changes/additions

5. Equipment and operating systems

D. Review Existing Recreation Services and Programs

1. Participation numbers

2. Revenue figures

3. Fees and charges

4. Demand for services/facilities

E. Review Center Operating Budget

1. Expenditures

2. Revenues

3. Fees and charges

4. Review existing staffing levels
    a. Organizational flow chart

b. Job functions
c. Salary levels/hourly wage scales
d. Training

F. Review of Center/Programs Marketing Efforts

1. Marketing plan assessment

2. Promotional tools

3. Sponsorships/partnerships

4. Customer service efforts

G. Prepare Report with Recommendations and Implementation Plan

1. Program and service alterations or changes

2. Operations (budget, fees, staff) adjustments or enhancements

3. Marketing strategy, customer service

4. Facility alterations, etc.

5. Maintenance/safety/security changes or upgrades

6. Implementation priorities
   a. Timing
   b. Cost estimate
   c. Revenue implications

Section II – General Assessment Summary

The Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center since its opening has been one of the most operationally successful public recreation centers in Pennsylvania and the nation. It is often used as an example for other communities regarding best practices for recreation center operations.

Below is a **summary** of the overall strengths and challenges of the operation of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center. **For each of these points, a more detailed analysis is found in the body of the report.**

Strengths:

- The Community & Recreation Center is nearing 15 years of service, and it remains a dynamic, top-flite, recreation facility in the community and the surrounding area.

- The center has come out of COVID 19 in a strong operational position and has been able to utilize some of the challenges that occurred during COVID to improve operations and services.

- The center continues to serve the Township of Upper St. Clair's population as well as non-residents. While Upper St. Clair has a significant population base to support the center, drawing non-resident users remains critical to the financial viability of the center.

- There are a variety of amenities available in the center including indoor and outdoor aquatics, fitness, gym, walk/jog track, and community rooms. The center continues to be well run and maintained.

- Having the center located in Boyce Mayview Park with all the outdoor amenities that are available for use by patrons is a strong benefit and broadens the appeal of the facility.

- The center offers a broad range of programs and services to the community. These services are well organized and well run.

- Staff are a strong asset, and they continue to provide a great facility, programs, and services to the community.

- The center is still the premier public recreation center in the region and is well known nationally for its operation and emphasis on revenue generation.

Challenges:

- As the center continues to age, the need for further maintenance and physical improvements to the facility will remain a priority.
- The center has very strong use and high expectations from the community and this places a great deal of pressure on the facility and its staff.
- The high rate of utilization of the center by members has made it more difficult for non-members to access the center or even some more popular programs.
- There are still a considerable number of other providers in the market and South Fayette Township could have a new public recreation center in the coming years.
- The center is now operating close to capacity on memberships and programs. It will not be possible to continue the rate of growth that has been seen for the last several years as a result.
- There will need to be an even greater focus on operations and management in the coming years to continue to maximize the full potential for the center. This is due in part to more competition in the market, higher demands from the public, as well as an aging facility.
- Maintenance and capital replacement will need to be a major area of emphasis in the next 5 years.
- To continue the financial success of the center, the Township should not deviate from the basic operational model that is currently in place.

Section III – Market Analysis

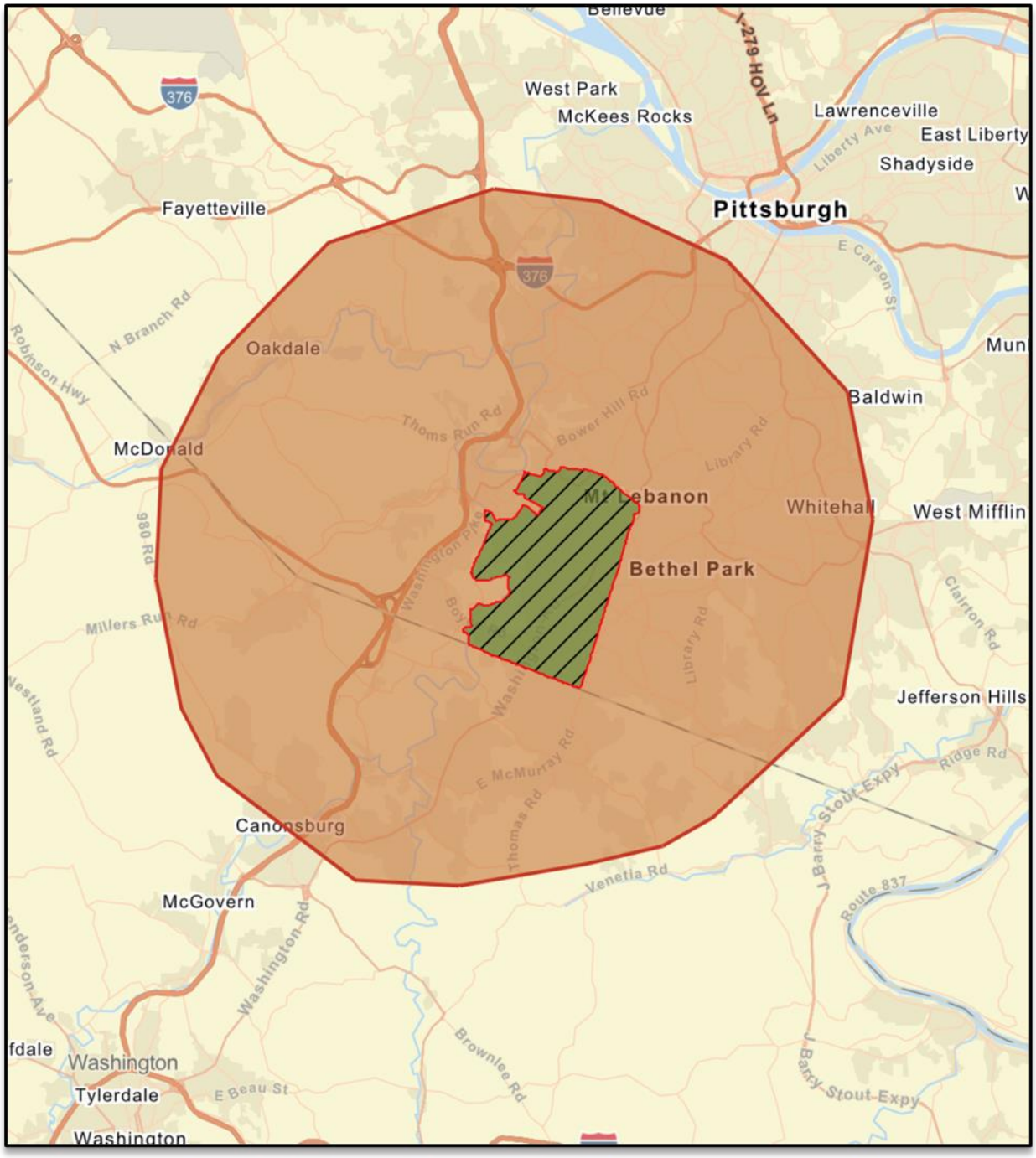
The Community & Recreation Center opened in June 2009, to serve the residents of the Township of Upper St. Clair. As the only comprehensive indoor public recreation center in the area, the center also serves a much larger market area.

The following is a brief analysis of the Community & Recreation Center market.

Demographic Characteristics

The primary market for the center is the Township of Upper St. Clair, but there is a much larger market area as well (that is based on where the center is currently drawing its users). The following are the basic demographic characteristics of the market areas. (information from ESRI).

Service Area Map



- Green Boundary – Upper St. Clair Proper
- Red Boundary – Secondary Service Area

Demographic Summary

	Upper St. Clair, PA	Secondary Service Area
Population:		
2020 Census	21,160[1]	325,993[2]
2023 Estimate	21,326	326,372
2028 Estimate	21,243	324,250
Households:		
2020 Census	7,506	138,592
2023 Estimate	7,608	139,715
2028 Estimate	7,699	140,586
Families:		
2020 Census	6,090	84,839
2023 Estimate	6,042	85,463
2028 Estimate	6,111	85,463
Average Household Size:		
2020 Census	2.81	2.33
2023 Estimate	2.79	2.31
2028 Estimate	2.75	2.28
Ethnicity (2023 Estimate):		
Hispanic	3.0%	2.8%
White	82.4%	83.8%
Black	1.0%	3.6%
American Indian	0.1%	0.1%
Asian	10.1%	6.2%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.8%	1.1%
Multiple	5.5%	5.2%
Median Age:		
2020 Census	44.1	43.1
2023 Estimate	46.7	45.4
2028 Estimate	47.5	46.4
Median Income:		
2023 Estimate	$149,430	$87,368
2028 Estimate	$163,750	$102,102

[1] From the 2010-2020 Census, the Primary Service Area experienced a 0.96% increase in population.
[2] From the 2010-2020 Census, the Secondary Service Area experienced a 0.65% increase in population.

Demographic Summary

- The Township's population base is adequate to support the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center but is enhanced by the Secondary Service Area.
- The Secondary Service Area is very large with an additional 305,046 people.
- Both the Township's and the Secondary Service Area's population are expected to decline slightly during the next five years (based on ESRI projections).
- The median age is older than the national population and the Township is slightly older than the Secondary Service Area.
- Based on the household size numbers, there are fewer children in homes than the national number in the Secondary Service Area. However, in the Township there are a significant number of homes with children.
- The median household income levels in the Township are very high compared to the national numbers but the Secondary Service Area has a much lower level but still higher than national levels.
- There is a high rate of expenditure on recreational activities in the Township but a lower rate (but still above the national level) in the Secondary Service Area.

Other Providers

There are still a significant number of other indoor recreation, sports, and fitness facilities in the greater Upper St. Clair market. Some of the key providers include:

Public

There are a variety of public recreation and aquatic centers located in the area.

- Bethel Park Community Center
- Peters Township Community Recreation Center
- Mount Lebanon Recreation Center & Outdoor Swim Center
- Collier Township Recreation Center
- North Fayette Recreation Center
- Upper St. Clair High School Pool

None of these centers have the diversity of amenities that the Community & Recreation Center offers but they do serve their local communities and impact the market somewhat as a result.

South Fayette Township is considering a new community center that might include a gymnasium, elevated track large fitness center, indoor playground, and a number of multipurpose rooms. If this center is built in the future, it could have an impact on the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center in terms of memberships and ultimately revenues.

Non-Profit

There are also several non-profit centers in the market area including:

- Jewish Community Center of South Hills
- Spencer Family YMCA

Both of these facilities experienced a decline in membership and programs due to COVID and have been slow to recover from this impact.

Private

Besides the public recreation, sports and fitness facilities that are available in the region there are also a significant number of private fitness centers.

- LA Fitness (2 locations)
- Planet Fitness (2 locations)
- Mecka Fitness
- Crossfit (3 locations)
- Fitness 19
- Push 40 Fitness
- Cool Springs

These facilities include large multi-faceted centers (LA Fitness), low-cost fitness only centers (Planet Fitness), smaller boutique fitness (cross-fit, personal training, etc.) studios in the area and private swim schools. It is important to note that St. Clair Fitness and Health Trax closed due to the pandemic.

This is not a strict accounting of all the other sports, fitness and recreation service providers in the Upper St. Clair market area but is a general assessment.

Market Conclusion: Since the Community & Recreation Center opened almost 15 years ago, there has been a steady increase in the number of other providers in the area. While the Community & Recreation Center continues to command a strong position in the market, the

growth in other options will make it essential that the center continues to actively support its position in the market.

While the center serves not only the Township, but the surrounding area, it is important to realize the changing demographics of the market including an aging population, fewer households with children and higher income levels.

The Township of Upper St. Clair is nearly built out so future growth in memberships will have to come from other communities in the area that are still experiencing growth.

Section IV – Public and Staff Input

To gain input from the general public and Community & Recreation Center users regarding how the facility is operated and maintained and the priorities for possible future improvements, an on-line survey was conducted. In addition, interviews were held with key administrative and supervisory staff of the Recreation and Leisure Services Department.

On-Line Survey

During September 2023, an on-line survey was available to both Township residents as well as non-residents. There were 1,481 total responses. The following represents a summary of the findings. The detailed survey results are available as a separate document.

- 73.2% of respondents identified themselves as residents of the Township of Upper St. Clair. (Question 1)

- Approximately 57.2% of respondents indicated that they had lived in the Township for more than 11 years. 20.9% of respondents indicated they had lived in the Township for less than 5 years. (Question 2)

- Of those that indicated they were not residents of the Township; South Fayette, Peters Township, and Bridgeville were most commonly identified. (Question 3)

- Usage:
    - 82.5% of respondents indicated that they or individuals in their household had used the Community & Recreation Center in the last year. (Question 6)
    - 73.9% used the Community & Recreation Center for INDOOR recreation & aquatic activities, followed by the next highest respondent group of 12.9% that use school facilities. (Question 4)
    - 56.0% use the Community & Recreation Center for OUTDOOR aquatic activities, followed by the next highest respondent group of 16.7% that use private clubs. 22.2% do not use aquatic facilities. (Question 5)

- 1,078 respondents indicated the top three areas used were (by count): (Question 7)
    - Fitness – 814
    - Indoor Pool – 804
    - Outdoor Pool – 673

- 68.3% of respondents classified themselves as frequent users of the Community & Recreation Center. (Question 9)

- 42.5% of respondents indicated they have used the Community & Recreation Center about the same since COVID; 23.1% indicated their usage has increased. (Question 10)

- 1,078 respondents indicated the top two reasons (representing 73.8%) they use the Community & Recreation Center are: (Question 11)
    - 38.5% - It has the amenities they desire.
    - 35.2% - It is in close proximity.

- Of 239 respondents who do not use the Community & Recreation Center, the top reason chosen (which equated to 112 responses) was that fees were too high. (Question 12)

- 1,023 respondents indicated they felt the top 3 areas that had a strong need for emphasis were: (Question 13)

Rank	# Respondents	Amenity
1	400	Outdoor Pool
2	191	Locker Rooms
3	169	Enhanced Weight Area

These same respondents indicated that the following top 6 areas were in either somewhat or strong (combined) need of emphasis:

Rank	# Respondents	Amenity
1	641	Outdoor Pool
2	500	Locker Rooms
3	449	Functional Fitness
4	374	Enhanced Group Exercise
5	369	Enhanced Cardio
6	366	Enhanced Weight Area

- 1,023 respondents when asked to rank which of the top three areas are most needed: (Question 14)

Rank	# Respondents	Amenity
1	404	Outdoor Pool
2	146	Locker Rooms
3	127	Enhanced Weight Area

These same respondents indicated that the following top 6 areas were in either most or second most (combined) need:

Rank	# Respondents	Amenity
1	548	Outdoor Pool
2	289	Locker Rooms
3	244	Enhance Weight Area
4	172	Enhanced Group Exercise
5	157	Enhanced Cardio
6	150	Functional Fitness

- Respondents answered that they would spend $100 towards enhancements as follows: (Question #17).
    - The top 4 answers by number of respondents:

Rank	# Respondents	Amenity
1	709	Outdoor Pool
2	541	Fitness Amenities
3	515	Locker Rooms
4	492	Indoor Pool

    - The top 4 answers by dollar amount allocated from $100 total:

Rank	$ Amount	Amenity
1	$46	Outdoor Pool
2	$31	Fitness Amenities
3	$28	Locker Rooms
4	$26	Indoor Pool

- 80.1% of respondents indicated they are current users of the Community & Recreation Center. 53.0% would use the facility 1-2 times more per week if the facility was enhanced or renovated with the features that they most desire. (Questions 19 & 20)

- Of 202 respondents that indicated they are NOT current users of the Community & Recreation Center, 41.1% would use the facility 1-2 times more per week if the facility is enhanced or renovated with the features that they most desire. (Question 21)

- Of 1,002 respondents, 24.9% felt it was a high priority to renovate the Community & Recreation Center, 39.4% answered medium priority, 20.5% answered low priority and 12.1% did not feel it was a priority. (Question 22)

- 42.5% of respondents felt the focus for the Community & Recreation Center in the future should be making physical improvements/additions to the center, followed by 24.5% who

felt the focus should be on adding additional recreation programs and services. Both improving the operations of the center and increasing maintenance were each rated under 9% for a focus. (Question 23)

- There were 486 open responses to the request for input on additional questions, concerns or helpful information that should be considered in assessing community needs for an expanded and/or renovated Community & Recreation Center. These responses are included in the actual survey report. (Question 24)

- 32.8% of respondents were 35-44 years of age and 22.7% of respondents were 45-54 years of age. (Question 25)

- The average household size was 2.3. (Question 26)

- 31.1% of respondents were male and 65.2% were female. (Question 28)

- In response to Question 29, which asked respondents if they had further comments, 728 responses were received, which are included in the actual survey report.

Staff Interviews

During the site visit to the Community & Recreation Center in mid-August of 2023, interviews with key supervisors were held which identified operations and program concerns including:

- Behavior management of center patrons is a big concern. This is placing a lot of pressure on staff to deal with the issues.

- The demand for programs is way up and many are at capacity. It is difficult to serve all the people that want services.

- The refund policy is too liberal and results in people signing up for classes and then withdrawing at the last minute making it difficult to fill in with others.

- Limiting daily passes has reduced many of the operational issues in the center. This has also pushed more people to be members. Limiting day passes for the outdoor pool has largely solved the capacity issues that used to exist.

- There continues to be a major emphasis on memberships (both residents and non-resident). This has raised a concern about limiting opportunities for residents that are not members.

- It is difficult to manage the needs of members and programs at times with the demand for space being high for both.

- The expansion of fitness into the lobby area has provided more space for fitness equipment and helped to support the growth in memberships. However, the loss of a lobby has reduced the community feel of the center.

- Staffing is still an issue in many areas:
    - It is still difficult to hire part-time staff in some areas.
    - The center is still very reliant on part-time staff for most aspects of the operation and programming in the center.
    - Morale continues to be an issue due in part to behavior issues of patrons

- The costs for staffing as well as goods and services continue to rise, which puts more pressure on revenue generation.

- The marketing of center programs and services is limited as there is not enough time and space for growth available.

- There is the perception by some members that there are too many rules in the center.

Section V - Assessment of Physical Condition and Functionality

The following is an assessment of the physical condition and operating systems and equipment of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center.

Image and Appeal

- The center continues to have a very strong reputation and presence in the Township and the surrounding area. The center's location in Boyce Mayview Park provides a variety of opportunities for outdoor recreation and increases visibility and traffic for the center.

- Despite the fact that the center is nearly 15 years old, it is well maintained and remains in top condition. It is also clean and inviting.

Supervision and Security

- Supervision and security are generally strong, but behavior issues have become a larger issue over the last few years. This will require staff training in de-escalation, rule enforcement, and culture development.

- The center has comprehensive, well written, rules regarding use of the facility.

- The center continues to utilize one main entrance to the building which results in reasonably well controlled access. However, there has been discussion for some time that control would be improved if the front desk was moved closer to the front door. This should occur in the future.

- The outdoor pool entrance also had similar issues in the past with its control point location but with a reduction in the number of daily passes being sold, this is no longer as big of a concern.

- Despite the fact that each of the major areas of the center has its own operations manual, there should be a consolidated, comprehensive, operations manual for the center that is based on general operations requirements of the Township in general.

- While the Township has an overall emergency action plan, the center needs to have a plan that is specific to that facility. It is critical that the emergency action plan is updated on a yearly basis.

- The center has AEDs located throughout the facility.

- The outdoor aquatic center still does not utilize a lightning detection system (nor is there one for Boyce Mayview Park). This needs to be strongly considered to reinforce safety associated with electrical storms.

- The administrative area of the building continues to be open to the rest of the center and this needs to be a secure area with door access by key card or numeric code only. This will limit access and ensure that only authorized staff and visitors can enter this area.

- There are a number of surveillance cameras located in the center at key locations and there is digital recording of any activity.

- There should be a weekly safety walk-through of the center that inspects the basic areas of the building for any problems and issues. This should include a written inspection with follow-up actions that need to occur, the person in charge of making these happen, and the date that they should be completed. This is currently being done on a more informal basis.

- There needs to be a specific safety training plan instituted for staff. This plan should utilize the resources of police and fire personnel. General staff training does cover the basics of safety but having a more pointed program is recommended.

Maintenance

- The overall level of maintenance and cleanliness at the center continues to be strong and the facility has a comprehensive maintenance plan that deals not only with building and equipment maintenance tasks and frequency but also preventative maintenance practices.

- The center will want to continue its commitment to a well maintained and clean facility.

- In addition to full-time and part-time maintenance and custodial staff, the center also has contractual cleaning of the building on a seven day a week basis.

- Maintenance tasks and procedures are handled by Arcgis, a maintenance management software program. This program needs to continue to be utilized to its full capabilities to track and document all maintenance tasks.

- The center will need to continue to have a detailed five-year capital improvement plan for the facility. This will need to prioritize capital expenditure needs on a yearly basis, and the overall plan should be updated annually.

- The center's building elements, systems and equipment should continue to be evaluated and put on a capital lifecycle schedule. This becomes the basis for the five-year capital improvement budget.

- The center has a yearly one week shut down that should continue as a time to complete significant maintenance tasks.

- All chemical recording sheets, opening and closing checklists, and fitness equipment inspections, should be archived for a minimum of one year. Ideally these should be entered into a computer database for improved record keeping.

Facility Alterations/Changes/Additions

There are a number of possible facility changes and additions that should be considered. What is noted below takes into consideration the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of the center but also reflects the needs of the users and community based on the results of the on-line survey.

- As a result of COVID, the lobby area at the front of the building was converted to a cardio fitness area. This helped immensely with the required spacing of equipment and increased the useable space for weight/cardio equipment substantially. However, this continues to have the look of a temporary measure. This change should be permanent with a change in the floor surface to a rubberized product and a formal separation between the space and the entry area.

- The loss of the lobby area has changed the look and feel of the building and moved it perceptually away from a "community center". Providing some space for socialization and gathering should be available at the front of the building. This could take place in a number of ways:
    - Take back approximately 25% of the old lobby area and reformat it as a smaller more intimate lounge space. The existing cardio equipment can likely be reconfigured without having to reduce the current number of pieces that are present.

    - The current Lounge Room could be modified to serve as a true open lounge area.

    - Both of the above recommendations could occur to make a strong commitment to continuing a community feel in the center.

- The existing Lounge Room has served as a number of spaces since the center opened but has not ever been utilized effectively. The current use is primarily as an informal meeting space and a good portion of the space is simply storage. Finding a long-term use

for this room is essential. As noted above, the conversion of the space to an open lounge area should be considered.

- Despite the conversion of the lobby space to more fitness equipment space, the survey results indicated that the expansion of fitness space in the building is still a high priority. Options to consider include:
    - Add more functional training, stretching and personal training space. This would have a direct positive impact on revenue for the center and help to secure a long-term market position.

      This could be accomplished by rearranging equipment in the existing fitness area upstairs (and continuing to utilize the cardio equipment downstairs in the old lobby space), building new space onto the building, converting the large storage room upstairs, or extending the upstairs fitness area out over a portion of the gym.

    - Create an outdoor functional training area with a covered space and open "turf" area for classes and personal training. This would only allow for seasonal use but would provide more space in a cost-effective manner.

- One of the other more critical improvements needs to be made to the locker areas as well. There needs to be another 2-3 universal change rooms added to the center (one of these should have an adult changing table).
    - Ideally these should go where the inner most party room is located, and that space added where personal training is currently located.

    - Consideration could also be given to providing direct access from the main locker rooms to the pool deck itself. This will improve safety and reduce slip and fall issues. For this to occur it would require going through the existing pool staff offices and relocating the offices to the party room noted above, while the new universal change rooms could move to the old pool entry corridor.

- The front desk should be moved forward and closer to the actual front doors of the building. This will improve the ability to control access to all portions of the building and improve general security. Ideally the public desk in the administrative area should be incorporated into the new desk resulting in a single location for the public.

- The lack of a full-sized group exercise room (2,000 SF) that can accommodate 30-35 people in a class persists. This forces the use of a portion of the gym for some classes, limiting its use for more traditional gym activities. It would be most cost effective if the two existing group exercise rooms were combined to make one large space.

- The carpeted area in the existing upstairs cardio area should be replaced with rubber flooring similar to what is present in the free weight area. This conversion should be done when the carpet needs to be replaced.

- Despite the fact that many of the overcrowding issues at the outdoor pool have subsided, high use remains and survey results from the community and center users indicated that the outdoor aquatics area still needs to be expanded. The locker rooms need to be updated and at least 2 universal change rooms added as well.

  The existing pool tank needs to be replastered in the next year or so.

- Improvements to the indoor pool also need to be made. This includes:
  - Determine a final solution to the problem with the concrete deck spalling.
  - The need to replace the indoor play structure in the next 3-4 years.
  - The possible addition of new amenities such as a climbing wall.

Equipment and Operating Systems

- The center needs to continue with a formal budget plan to replace its cardio equipment on a 4-year staggered schedule. It will be important that this plan continues to be followed to keep equipment current and in good working condition.

- Center (and Department) staff should continue to utilize the Active Net software system for pass management, program registration, and point of sale software system. Many agencies review the effectiveness and financial viability of their software systems every ten years or so. However, it can be difficult to change systems, and this can have a negative impact on customer service as well.

Key Recommendations:

The following is a summary listing of the key recommendations from the information in this section with a designation of a high or low priority.

High Priority

- Complete a study to determine possible improvements and/or expansions to the center. This should include:
  - Expansion of the outdoor aquatic area.
  - Move the front desk closer to the entrance area.
  - Renovation of the locker rooms to include the addition of universal change rooms.
  - Formalize the cardio equipment area in the old lobby space.
  - Convert more of the upstairs cardio equipment area to functional training.

  - Determine if an outdoor functional training area can be added.
  - Determine how a large group exercise room can be added to the center.
  - Find a new location for a lounge area including possible use of the Lounge Room or reclaiming some use of the large lobby area at the front of the building.
  - Determine long-term use for the existing Lounge Room.

  Determine the capital and operational budget implications of any expansion or renovation.

- Continue to focus on the safety and security procedures for the center. Designate a supervisory staff member as the Safety Director for the center/department.

- Place the center's building elements, systems and equipment on a capital lifecycle schedule and continue to have an updated, detailed five-year capital improvement plan for the facility.

Lower Priority

- Complete other small improvements to the center.
  - Determine a final solution to replacing the existing indoor pool deck.
  - Plan for the replacement of the indoor pool's play structure.
  - Replace the carpet in the upstairs cardio area with a rubberized floor.
  - Replace the outdoor slide.
  - Replaster the outdoor pool.

  Some of these improvements may be impacted by the larger projects noted in the high priority category above.

- Continue to leverage the outdoor park amenities as part of the overall Community & Recreation Center's overall market appeal.

Section VI – Recreation Services and Programs

This section summarizes Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center recreation programs and services.

Program Offerings Summary

- Currently the center provides recreation programs in the following general program categories. The level of programs is designated by a high level of programming, a medium level or a low level based on program information provided by center staff and benchmarking against other similar facilities in the United States.

Programs	High	Medium	Low
Youth Sports		√	
Adult Sports		√	
Fitness/Wellness	√		
Cultural Arts		√	
Education		√	
Aquatics	√		
Youth (includes camps)	√		
General Interest		√	
Special Needs		√	
Special Events		√	
Outdoor Education			√
Seniors		√	
Teens			√

- The following table summarizes participation figures in general program areas in the last two years that are offered by Recreation.

Program Area	2022	2023
Adult Sports (volleyball, basketball, pickleball, softball)	527	1,044
Aquatics Group Lessons	2,050	1,751
Boy/Girl Scout Water Safety	45	40
Camp St. Clair	555	1,359
Counselor in Training (CIT's)	14	19
Creature Crawl	115	160
Dog Training	22	23
Indoor/Outdoor Tennis and Paddle Tennis	273	119
Lifeguarding Classes/Water Safety Instructor	273	351
Monster Hunt	296	500
New Year, New Me! Fitness Challenge	59	68
Older Adult Trips	38	97
Specialty Camps	631	830
Youth Sports, Fitness, Enrichment	1,705	1,648
Total	**6,603**	**8,009**

Note: This table indicates program numbers for all activities offered by the Department and not just those offered at the Community & Recreation Center.

- Since COVID ended programming has rebounded well and there is now significant program growth in most areas.

- The center has a broad range of programs with an acceptable level of programs in most all categories.

- The most robust program areas are:
    - Fitness programs and services
        - Land-based fitness classes are included with membership (except for specialty classes such as Pilates).
        - Pilates has really grown in popularity (up over 200% with a nearly 100% fill rate).
        - Yoga, teen fitness, fun runs, and cycling are still popular.
        - Personal training continues to grow.
        - Nutrition counseling.
        - Fitness assessments.
        - Strength and cardio orientations.
        - Virtual classes are available.
    - Aquatic programs
        - Demand for swim lessons has reached capacity for the pool and staff.
        - Group swim lesson registration opens for members one day before non-members. There were 1,950 participants in lessons in 2023.

  - Private swim lessons are also in high demand (now available for members and residents only as a result) and are at capacity. In 2023 there were 2,500 private lessons.
  - Water exercise classes are now included with membership. In the summer these are held in the outdoor pool. In 2023 there were 5,410 participants.
  - A lap lane can be reserved with no additional fee.

- Community based programs have grown at a very strong rate since COVID, this includes:
  - Camp St. Clair is now at capacity (available to residents and members only).
  - Specialty camps have exploded in popularity.
  - General programs have also grown.
  - Many community programs are now one-time offerings rather than multi session commitments.

- Most youth team sports programs continue to be provided by Upper St. Clair Athletic Association.

- There are still relatively few teen/tweens' programs. This is a difficult age group to provide services for and most public agencies have fewer programs in this area as a result.

- The center continues to offer a number of special events throughout the year.

- Senior programs are provided by the Township in cooperation with a non-profit. Most of these programs are provided at the McLaughlin Run Activity Center.

  The center offers a Silver Card for seniors over 62 that allows for participation in a few select fitness classes for free.

- Youth birthday parties at the center continue to be popular.

- Participants have to register in advance for some drop-in volleyball/basketball times in the gym due to high demand.

- Center patrons can reserve lap lanes in the pool, time in the Playroom, and spots in fitness classes. There is no additional fee for this.

- Although it is not a true program, the Playroom has had to limit numbers due to staffing issues. This does help support participation in other programs (primarily fitness) and remains in high demand.

Sports Participation Trends

- Since the Community & Recreation Center has a strong emphasis on fitness, aquatics, and sports activities, it is helpful to examine basic participation trends for these activities. Below are listed a number of sports/fitness activities and the percentage of growth or decline that each has experienced nationally over a ten year period (2013-2022). This information is from the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA).

Sports Activity Participation Changes Over Time

Activity	2013 Participation	2022 Participation	Percent Change
Pickleball	1.7[3]	6.4	+276.50%
Kayaking	8.1	11.9	+46.90%
Hiking	39.4	54.4	+38.10%
Skateboarding	5	6.5	+30.00%
Bicycle Riding	35.6	44.6	+25.30%
Weightlifting	31.3	38.8	+24.00%
Mountain Biking (off road)	5.2	6.4	+23.10%
Yoga	25.9	31.7	+22.40%
Exercise Walking	96.3	113.9	+18.30%
Boating (motor/power)	13.1	15.4	+17.60%
Volleyball	10.1	11.7	+15.80%
Tennis	12.6	14.2	+12.70%
Hunting w/ Bow & Arrow	5.7	6.4	+12.30%
Fishing (fresh water)	27	30.2	+11.90%
Swimming	45.5	50.2	+10.30%
Soccer	12.8	14.1	+10.20%
Exercising w/ Equipment	53.1	58.2	+9.60%
Target Shooting (air gun)	4.8	5.2	+8.30%
Running/Jogging	42	45	+7.10%
Fishing (salt water)	9.5	10.1	+6.30%
Backpack/Wilderness Camping	12.2	11.9	+6.00%
Water Skiing	3.6	3.8	+5.60%
Golf	18.9	19.7	+4.20%
Hunting w/ Firearms	19.4	16.4	+3.70%
Wrestling	3.1	3.1	0.00%
Target Shooting (live ammunition)	19	18.4	-3.20%
Baseball	11.7	11.2	-4.30%
Softball	10	9.4	-6.00%
Football (touch)	8.8	8.1	-8.00%
Football (flag)	7.5	6.6	-8.00%
Basketball	25.5	23.2	-9.00%
Football (tackle)	7.9	6.7	-12.00%
Workout @ Club	34.1	29.6	-21.30%

[3] Pickleball numbers first became available in 2016.

It is important to note that while certain sports are growing at a very high percentage rate, the overall level of participation is still relatively low. On the other side, some sports (such as swimming) show a decline, but still remain immensely popular with high rates of participation.

Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) – Their 2023 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Top-Line Participation Report indicated the rate of participation by major sports activity categories over the last 6 years.

Activity Category	2017 Percentage	2022 Percentage
1. Fitness Sports	65.5%	67.4%
2. Outdoor Sports	49.0%	55.0%
3. Individual Sports	46.2%	41.3%
4. Team Sports	22.6%	23.2%
5. Water Sports	13.8%	14.4%
6. Racquet Sports	13.3%	16.4%
7. Winter Sports	8.3%	8.0%

Fitness related sports continued to be the most popular activity category, but racquet sports have shown the greatest percentage increase over the last six years due in large part to pickleball. Team sports, water sports, and outdoor sports have all seen an increase as well. Individual sports and winter sports have seen a decrease in participation.

Much of the participation data was affected by COVID-19 during 2020. Key impacts include:

- Fitness activities that require amenities typically found in fitness clubs (group exercise, stationary cycling, cross-training, aqua exercise, etc.) decreased in numbers.
- Fitness activities that require limited equipment and do not require a fitness center (running/jogging, free weights, and yoga) showed the greatest increases.
- Outdoor activities that experienced large increases were road biking, skateboarding, and surfing.
- Team sports had a mixed impact with basketball and soccer having increases (mostly attributed to pick-up play) while volleyball, swimming on a team, gymnastics and cheerleading all had decreases.

Top Activities with Intent to Participate by Age

Age 6-12	Age 13-17	Age 16-24	Age 25-34
Fishing	Fishing	Workout w/Weights	Fishing
Camping	Swimming for Fitness	Running/Jogging	Camping
Soccer	Basketball	Workout w/Machines	Workout w/Weights
Running/Jogging	Running/Jogging	Cardio Fitness	Running/Jogging
Swimming for Fitness	Martial Arts	Yoga	Cardio Fitness
Hunting	Workout w/Weights	Basketball	Yoga
Sledding	Camping	Hiking	Hiking
Shooting	Cardio Fitness	Shooting	Workout w/Machines
Baseball	Soccer	Camping	Basketball
7 on7 Football	Hunting	Volleyball	Shooting

Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65+
Fishing	Fishing	Fishing	Fishing
Camping	Camping	Shooting	Camping
Workout w/Weights	Cardio Fitness	Camping	Cardio Fitness
Cardio Fitness	Workout w/Machines	Workout w/Weights	Swimming for Fitness
Workout w/Machines	Workout w/Weights	Swimming for Fitness	Workout w/Machines
Yoga	Hiking	Hunting	Workout w/Weights
Running/Jogging	Shooting	Workout w/Machines	Shooting
Swimming for Fitness	Swimming for Fitness	Hiking	Yoga
Shooting	Yoga	Cardio Fitness	Hunting
Hiking	Hunting	Running/Jogging	Hiking

The most popular activities that all age groups intend to participate in are generally fitness or outdoor recreation related. It is important to note that pickleball was not tracked for the top activities by age.

General Analysis

- There are basic metrics on the programs that take place in the center. However, the center needs to track programming on an annual basis with the following information:
    - An annual listing of programs that are offered by general categories.
    - Number of classes on a percentage basis that had to be cancelled due to a lack of registration compared to the number of programs that were a "go".
    - The fill rate for classes that have a minimum and maximum number of participants.
    - Program registration numbers broken down by member/resident/non-resident status.
    - Programs offered in-house vs. contracted.
    - An up-to-date listing of programs provided by other organizations or agencies.

- A capacity/use analysis (number of uses/activities per space for the hours available, determined on a percentage basis) should be completed for each major space in the building to determine the current percentage of utilization. It is recognized that most of the spaces in the center are operating at or near capacity during the high use times of operation. This effort should also develop basic priorities of use by space and activity.

- Despite the growth in program participation numbers, continue to track the rate of program cancellations with a goal of keeping the percentage under 20%.

- To determine the future direction for recreation programs and services, the following is necessary:

  Establish a Programming Philosophy
    - Ensure that recreation program and service opportunities are available to all ages, incomes, abilities, gender, and ethnic groups.
    - Ensure that recreation programs and service opportunities are available in areas of interest that are identified as a need in the community.
    - Recreation and program service offerings will respond to identified community needs in a cost effective and efficient manner.

  Develop a Program Plan – Based on the programming philosophy, develop a program plan that includes the general direction of recreation programming for the next 5 plus years. This should include the following areas:
    - Respond to the realities of the demographics of Upper St. Clair and the market area.
    - Respond to priorities for programming based on community/member input (primarily the survey) including:
        - Land based fitness

        - Youth learn to swim
        - Adult recreation sports
        - Summer camp programs for youth
    - Maintain and enhance programming contracts with existing organizations for key program areas such as
        - Youth sports
        - Seniors
    - Attempt to develop programming at the center that appeals to teens and tweens. This could be provided by contract.
    - Determine the required resources (staff, facility, funding, fees, etc.) to implement the activity.
    - Considering the capacity of the center, recognize that it will be difficult to continue to increase programming opportunities in many areas.

- The center should explore forming a partnership with a local healthcare provider to enhance opportunities for medically based wellness programs and services that would go beyond what is currently available to the community and members of the center. While fitness programs are currently strong, they are the lifeblood of the center and protecting and enhancing these opportunities in the future is important. The healthcare provider would not replace in-house center fitness programs but would be able to focus on wellness programming and education (healthy eating, lifestyle classes and injury prevention) that is more appropriate coming from a health care professional.

- The Department needs to have a comprehensive annual report where each major program succinctly summarizes program numbers and participation rates for the year and compares them with the previous years. The information should then be compiled into a single document for the center and the Department. Most of this information is currently available in some form but would be better presented in a summary format.

- Each program should also have a calculation of the cost per participant to determine the value that is received for the cost.

- The Department should continue to track program trends on a regional and national basis to ensure that program offerings are current and reflect the opportunities that are available.

- A lifecycle analysis of center's recreation programs and services needs to be undertaken where program registrations by interest area are tracked and reviewed on a yearly basis. Programs should be slotted into the following categories:
    - *New* – programs in the start-up phase that are just starting to build in popularity.
    - *Mature* – programs that have consistent high levels of registrations and are still growing in popularity.

- *Old* – programs that are seeing a decline in popularity.

Program offerings should be reasonably distributed among the three areas noted to have a healthy and vibrant programming focus. Programs that are in the old category should ultimately be changed, updated, or discontinued.

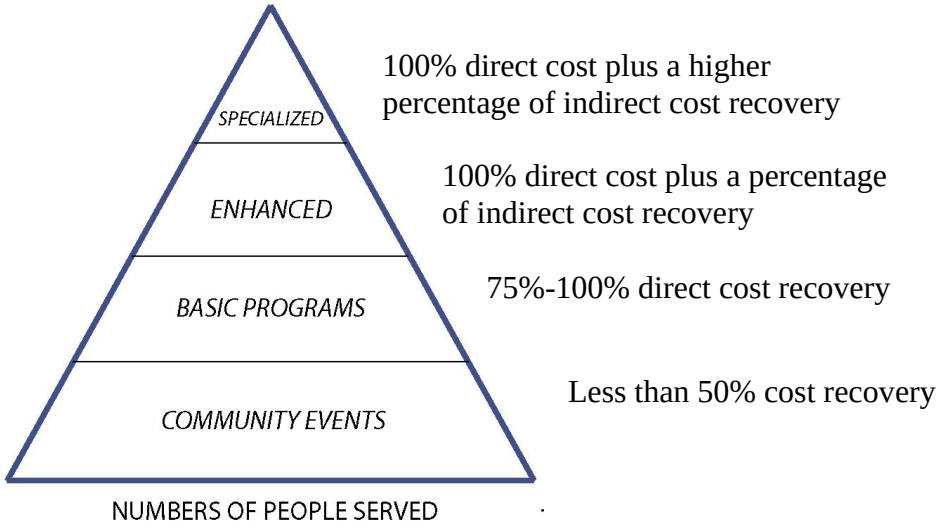
- There must be a strong recognition of the different demographic markets that must be served. The youth, teen, senior and family populations in the area should be specifically addressed.

- A qualitative analysis should be completed for each program and activity that is offered by the center. This assessment should primarily be conducted through evaluations by the participants themselves. It is not necessary to evaluate each program every session, but every program should be evaluated at least once during the course of a calendar year. Ideally this should be done on-line.

- The Township's library also provides some recreation programs and services (often free) that can undercut programming at the center. There should continue to be coordination between the two departments to try and avoid direct duplication of programs.

Fees and Charges

- Establish a comprehensive and formal program fee policy to guide program and service fee setting (beyond 100% of direct costs). Many parks and recreation agencies tier their programs into different categories with differing levels of cost recovery.



FEE CONTINUUM

In this case, programs in the community events category would have the lowest cost recovery level, while specialized activities would have the highest. Cost recovery refers to all direct costs associated with the program or activity plus a percentage of indirect costs. The exact percentage of cost recovery is established for each program category noted and then individual programs are slotted into the appropriate category. It is important that there are programs available for most demographic groups (youth, teens, and seniors especially) in each of the categories and not just in the basic or community events classifications.

Program examples by category could include:

Category	Example Program
Community Events	Special events such as the 4th of July, Christmas, etc.
Basic Programs	Group swimming lessons for youth, youth sports lessons (tennis, etc.), seniors, special needs
Enhanced Programs	Group exercise classes for adults, adult sports leagues, summer camps for youth
Specialized	Personal training, private swim lessons

Key Recommendations:

The following is a summary listing of the key recommendations from the information in this section with a designation of a high or low priority.

High Priority

- Establish a long-term programming philosophy and supporting programming plan within the next year.
- Increase the number of program performance measures that are tracked.
- Explore a fitness/wellness program partnership with a health care provider.
- Adopt a formal program fee policy.
- Attempt to grow programming in the following areas:
  - Aquatic programs
  - Fitness/Wellness programs
  - Youth summer camps
  - Adult sports
  - Seniors
  - Teens/Tweens

Lower Priority

- Develop capacity/use analysis for the major spaces in the building.

- Complete a lifecycle analysis of the center's programs and services.
- Develop a comprehensive annual report of Department programs and services.
- Continue to coordinate with the library on recreation programs.

Section VII – Operations

This section examines many different aspects of the operation of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center. With COVID, a number of aspects of the center's operation changed, the impact is noted below.

General

- The center now has a much stronger emphasis on members rather than the general public (with limited daily admissions and a smaller community lobby). The center is open to all, both residents of Upper St. Clair and the surrounding communities can join. The center offers both annual memberships billed monthly with a one-year commitment and three-month memberships. Members are also permitted to bring up to five visitors per day per membership at a cost of $15 per visitor.

- Daily access passes are now limited. Non-members of the facility can access the center Monday to Friday by purchasing a daily admission online in advance using the department registration website. A limited number of daily visitor passes are sold (15-40 passes per day). The cost is $15 per visitor over the age of two.

- The Community & Recreation Center provides rental opportunities for businesses, private parties, and non-profits to host events in the community room spaces. In addition, pool parties, gym parties, and playroom parties are also available.

- Since COVID The center's hours have been adjusted to close earlier on weekday evenings. The center is open seven days a week with the hours of 5:30am to 9pm Monday through Friday, 6:00am to 5pm on Saturdays, and 12pm to 5pm on Sundays. This accounts for 93.5 hours of operation a week (down from 97 pre-COVID). This change is not unusual as many centers have reduced their evening hours after the pandemic.

- Program registration for swim lessons, enrichment programs, and general wellness programs are available for non-member residents and non-residents. However, some programs (private swim lessons and Camp St. Clair) are only available to members and residents due to high demand.

- With the center currently nearing capacity for many programs and uses, the Township is close to maxing out the number of members that can be served.

- The Community & Recreation Center operates as an enterprise fund that consists of all costs of operation and all revenues generated by the facility. This results in a very high level of cost recovery when compared to other public recreation centers on a national basis. It is the opinion of Ballard*King & Associates that the center remains in the top 5% nationally for cost recovery. This is despite the impact of COVID and rising operating costs.

- Staff will need to continue to make operational improvements that are cost effective and enhance the services offered to members and the residents of Upper St. Clair.

- The Township should continue with the basic operational model that is currently in place or it will risk changes to the financial performance of the center.

Community & Recreation Center Usage Numbers

- When the center closed due to COVID in mid-March of 2020, all active memberships were put on hold and not charged during the duration of the facility closure. When the center re-opened in June, membership fees were adjusted to return a portion of the March dues paid that were unused due to the March closure. Upon re-opening, all members were given the option to freeze their membership if they were uncomfortable returning to the facility. Membership dropped to a low point of 2,100 units before starting to rise again in the beginning of March 2021. The summer of 2021 began to see slow upward momentum with membership and continued to see monthly gains through the end of 2022. During 2023 there has continued to be a high demand for membership with units sitting at 3,398, extending beyond pre-COVID numbers where membership was starting to see a slow decline.

- As a result of the pandemic and capacity limitations, the center instituted a policy limiting daily admission purchases. In 2019, over 30,000 daily visitor passes were sold. The new daily admission policy requires advanced booking with daily limits and members only weekends. This has lowered that number by nearly 75% to 7,500 daily admission passes in 2022 and 77% to 6,836 in 2023.

- The sale of 3-month memberships has increased since the low in 2020 due to COVID's impact on the center. 2024 saw a significant increase from 2022.

Annual Memberships	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Youth	70	98	132	157	139
Adult	499	304	348	369	419
Family	1,823	1,305	1,712	1,950	1,898
Senior	810	633	744	860	942
Total	3,202	2,340	2,936	3,336	3,398

- In 2023 the following was the breakdown of the membership mix.

Type	Percentage
Family	56%
Senior	28%
Adult	12%
Youth	4%

Three Month Memberships	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Youth	58	35	100	85	137
Adult	77	26	51	65	84
Family	187	23	89	164	207
Senior	24	44	74	66	118
Total	346	128	314	380	547

Note: This information represents membership units.

Daily Visitor Passes	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	31,291	6,418	6,301	7,380	6,836

Note: Daily admissions were limited during COVID, and this has continued since.

- With the limit on daily admissions, the number of memberships sold has continued to increase as community members want to access the facility on a regular basis or on the weekends and can only do so through the purchase of a membership.

- It is important to note that approximately 46% of memberships are non-residents. Having this high percentage of memberships (and revenue) from non-residents is not unusual for smaller communities that are in urban areas. This provides a strong revenue source for the center and helps to ensure strong financial performance.

- The majority of memberships are family followed by seniors. Membership numbers and usage at the center peaks from June through August due to the presence of the outdoor pool.

- The Department should continue to track the following membership information:
    - The average number of individuals per family membership.
    - Numbers of specific types of memberships, passes, and daily admissions that are non-resident.
    - Revenue per membership unit.

Expenditures and Revenues

- The Community & Recreation Center has one main budget account (Boyce Mayview Community & Recreation Center Fund), but within this budget, expenditures are tracked by the indoor center, outdoor aquatic area, and debt service. Revenues are in the same budget except for general fund appropriation for debt service.

- The expense budgets carry the full burden of all costs associated with the center. This includes:
    - All personnel costs and benefits
    - Liability insurance
    - All utilities
    - All maintenance and custodial costs
    - On-going capital items
    - Depreciation costs for equipment
    - Data processing costs

  This represents a true operating budget with all costs being accounted for. It is not unusual to have municipal governments exclude one or more of these line items from a center's operating budget which can result in skewed cost of operations calculations.

- Revenues include all revenue generated by the facility from daily admissions, 3-month memberships, annual memberships, rentals, and programs. There is also a general fund appropriation shown in the revenue budget to cover operations and maintenance of the public space in the building.

- The following is the budget history for the last five years (minus debt service).

Operations Budget Review (does not include capital projects or debt service payment)

Revenues	**2019 Actual**	**2020 Actual**	**2021 Actual**	**2022 Actual**	**2023 Actual**
Combined Member	2,684,349	1,544,196	2,138,197	2,879,151	3,343,461
3 Month Member	54,954	34,341	94,289	136,805	149,607
Daily Admissions	377,981	77,020	75,612	110,712	102,516
Program Revenue	357,192	147,080	378,575	437,579	430,903
Facility Revenue	86,119	23,338	45,621	84,110	91,165
Other Revenue	39,337	14,332	18,613	34,968	29,139
General Fund App.	494,417	368,864	427,164	513,079	555,332
Total	$4,094,349	$2,209,171	$3,178,071	$4,196,404	$4,702,123

Expenses	**2019 Actual**	**2020 Actual**	**2021 Actual**	**2022 Actual**	**2023 Actual**
Indoor					
Personnel	2,116,936	1,652,710	1,856,848	2,150,695	2,336,481
Contractual	948,836	676,022	825,090	1,084,652	1,158,384
Commodities	230,339	130,361	165,824	245,341	249,879
Distributed Cost	218,948	203,215	205,886	249,095	241,500
Total	$3,515,059	$2,662,308	$3,053,648	$3,729,783	$3,986,244
Outdoor (Pool)					
Personnel	102,947	80,948	92,435	120,526	130,509
Contractual	36,245	45,837	10,118	23,553	39,308
Commodities	23,606	10,910	14,385	31,122	25,435
Distributed Cost	0	0	0	0	0
Total	$162,798	$137,695	$116,938	$175,201	$195,252
Grand Total	$3,677,859	$2,800,003	$3,170,586	$3,904,984	$4,181,496

Operations Budget Totals

Comparison	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenues	$4,094,349	$2,209,171	$3,178,071	$4,196,404	$4,702,123
Expenses	$3,677,859	$2,800,003	$3,170,586	$3,904,984	$4,181,496
Difference	$416,490	($590,834)	$7,485	$219,420	$520,625
% Recovery	111%	79%	100%	107%	112%

Note: Budget information was obtained from the Township's 2023 adopted budget.

- Except for the COVID year of 2020, the financial performance of the center has resulted in a cost recovery rate of 100% or more and a positive cash flow. Even in 2021 when the effects of COVID were still very strong, the center was able to cover its operating costs. Since 2021, the cost recovery level has increased to well over 100%. Despite significant increases in personnel and contractual costs, overall revenues have grown significantly especially in the area of memberships and programs.

  It should be noted that a cost recovery in the 100% range is extremely high for a public recreation center. It is important to remember that the vast majority of public recreation centers across the United States (in urban environments) operate in the range of 70% to 90% cost recovery and the rate has been falling the last few years due to the same rising costs that the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center has been dealing with.

  It is also important to realize that the cost recovery percentage is impacted by a general fund revenue transfer that is in the $500,000 range annually (2022 and 2023) to cover the cost of operating the public access portions (community rooms and lobby) of the center.

- The vast majority of public recreation centers are included as part of a township's general fund and are not listed as an enterprise fund. This is due to the fact that it is unusual for public recreation centers to be able to cover their operating costs through revenues generated by the facility itself.

- As has been shown above, staff should track actual costs with revenues for the center and make yearly comparisons between expenses and revenues.

- The center has a very strong "unrestricted net position" that will likely need to be utilized for center improvements in the next few years.

- While the center currently has the two budget accounts that separate indoor operations from the outdoor aquatic center, these are backed up by other sub-budgets for several areas. This helps to identify a series of "cost centers".

- The center's revenue is more dependent than ever on memberships. Approximately 71% of all earned income is from memberships. Most centers receive a large percent of their revenue from this source but ideally there should be better balance with other revenue sources.

- Fitness programs and services along with aquatic programs (primarily swim lessons) are a significant driver of not only memberships but also revenue from programs. Although revenue has dropped in these program areas with the inclusion of land and water based fitness classes as a benefit of membership.

- It is important to note that beyond the Boyce Mayview Community & Recreation Center Fund, recreation also has a Recreation Administration budget where a portion of the Director, Secretary and a Program Coordinators salaries are listed to reflect the time being spent on other recreation services outside of the center. There is also a Recreation Programs budget that has sub budgets for summer playgrounds (Camp St. Clair), older adults, tennis, youth baseball and other misc. programs. These programs largely take place outside of the center itself.

- The Township will need to plan for continued increases in the minimum wage at the state and national level over the next five years as well as the need to increase rates for part-time staff to simply attract qualified staff. Also, to retain great full-time staff, their wages will need to be commensurate with the higher end of the market for similar positions in the area. There is virtually no way that the center will be able to absorb these additional staff costs within the existing operating budget without lowering the cost recovery rate.

- There is a fitness equipment replacement budget in place that ensures that this key aspect of the center remains well funded.

- The center continues to have a 5-year CIP budget that guides future capital expenditures. This budget needs to continue to be updated and prioritized on an annual basis. As the center continues to age, the level of capital expenditures will likely need to increase.

- It is important to realize that recreation is a discretionary use of an individual's time and money and as a result there needs to be an adequate budget and staff commitment to marketing and promotions on an annual basis. The current level of funding will likely need to be increased in the coming years with key measures of the effectiveness and return on investment of these efforts.

- Sound financial practices require good budget monitoring procedures and strong record keeping. The operational budgets need to continue to be monitored on at least a monthly

basis with any possible deviations or modifications noted at that time. This should occur not only at the management level but also at the supervisor/coordinator level as well.

- The center does not actively track the retention rate of annual memberships. Moving forward, the center should try to do this on an annual basis. The industry average is 70% on a yearly basis and it is estimated that the center's current retention rate is 80%. Staff does conduct exit interviews with people that drop their membership.

- The existing guideline for recreation programs calls for them to recover 100% of all direct costs. This is an average to slightly high range of cost recovery when compared nationally. The development of a pricing plan that tiers (see Recreation Services and Programs section) programs with different levels of cost recovery is strongly recommended.

- As a result of the pandemic, staff should develop a basic continuity plan to cover any future interruptions in operations and protect revenues and manage expenses. The center's COVID operations plan could serve as the framework for the continuity plan.

- Any future expansion to the center will require an increase in the center's operating budget for staffing, utilities, custodial services, and other operating costs. However, there should also be an increase in the revenues generated from memberships and programs occurring at the center. Estimates of the budget implications for any expansion to the center should be calculated prior to committing to construction.

- Within the overall center budget, yearly budget priorities should be directed by long term operational and management goals that are updated on an annual basis. There must be realistic and measurable goals established to support this effort.

- The Department should identify 1-2 grants, large donations, or intergovernmental funding opportunities to pursue a year with a goal of funding specific aspects of recreation programming and/or facility development. Grants could focus on energy savings, wellness, teen services, and senior activities.

- The Department should produce a yearly "annual report" that summarizes not only the accomplishments of the center but also quantifies expenses, revenues, memberships, etc. This should also contain a rolling five-year comparison.

Fees and Charges

- The basic fees for the use of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center are noted below (2023 rates).

	Daily
Individual/Guest	$15.00

	3 Month-High (April-Aug.)		3 Month-Low (Aug.-March)		Annual (Monthly)	
	Res.	Non Res.	Res.	Non Res.	Res.	Non Res.
Adult	$300	$370	$213	$267	$50	$62
Youth	$200	$265	$150	$195	$36	$46
Senior (62+)	$200	$265	$150	$195	$36	$46
Family	$525	$650	$378	$473	$91	$112

College Punch Card $125 for 30 visits

Nanny/Caretaker Pass $75 for 3 months

- The fee structure is reasonable for the amenities and condition of the center. The fees have been increased on a periodic basis over the last 10 years with a pause during COVID. The Township is committed to an annual increase of $1 per month for membership. The idea of an annual increase is commendable but may need to be raised to a higher amount to cover increases in operating costs in the future. However, any fee increase must be balanced with what other facilities are charging in the area.

  The center will need to be careful not to price the non-resident out of the market as their use of the center and its programs is essential for revenue generation.

- The fees being charged for general rentals of the community rooms are very reasonable, especially considering that alcohol is not permitted in the center. The rates for the aquatics rooms are much more aggressive but reflect the use (and demand) of these spaces primarily for birthday parties and the benefits that come with the rental (use of the pool, a greeter, etc.).

- Most all land and water fitness classes are offered free as a benefit to members, with only Pilates having an additional fee.

- Community groups are allowed free use of the center's community rooms. While an admirable practice, this needs to have limits placed on the time when this is available, the length of use, and the yearly number of uses. This will ensure that time is available for possible paid rentals and the expansion of programs in the center.

- The center has a rather liberal refund policy for programs that does not penalize late cancellations from activities, which does not provide adequate time to fill the slot with

other participants. With a high demand for programs, this can result in open slots being left that would otherwise be filled.

- A formal fee philosophy and policy for facility use, rentals, and programs and services, should be developed (see the Recreation Services and Programs Section).

- Providing program discounts for members of the center is an important benefit that should continue to promote membership sales.

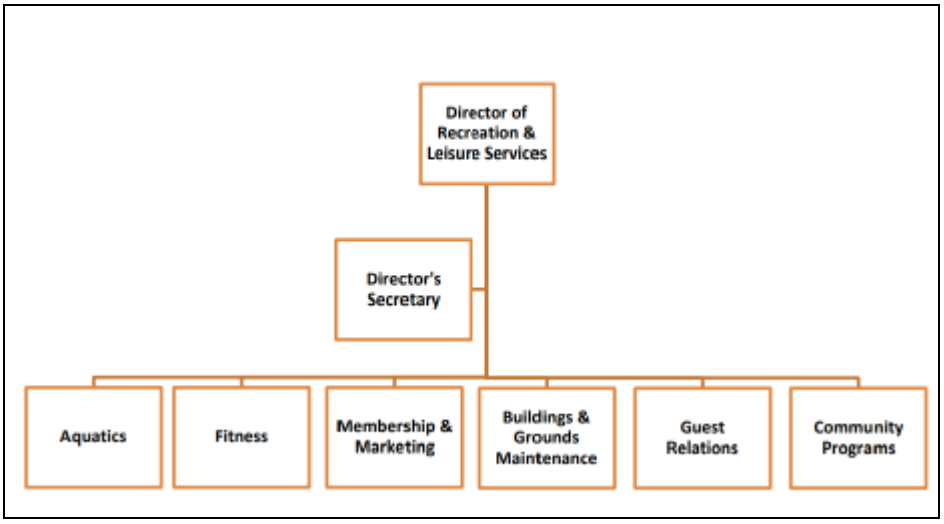
- An annual fee survey should continue to be conducted with the other facilities and organizations in the area to determine where the Community & Recreation Center fees fall in comparison.

- A scholarship program for the center and its programs should be considered for residents of the Township that cannot afford the fees for use of the center and its programs. It is understood that this is not an on-going problem for most residents and there has not been much of a demand for scholarships up to this point. However, having a plan in place to cover such instances is recommended. This is a best practice that most all public agencies have for their recreation programs and recreation facilities.

  The plan could include a sliding scale for participant payment and the utilization of an existing agency for eligibility and administration. There needs to be an established maximum value per household that can be awarded in one year, a percentage of the total fee that must be paid by the participant (should be at least 25%) and tracking actual use and attendance for scholarship recipients.

Staffing

- Below is the basic organizational chart for the Recreation and Leisure Services Department, which includes the Community & Recreation Center (based on May 2024).



- There are 16 full-time staff in the Department's budget. Fulltime staff includes:
  - Management 2
    - Director of Recreation & Leisure
    - Director's Secretary
  - Aquatics 2
    - Aquatics Supervisor
    - Aquatics Coordinator
  - Fitness 2
    - Fitness Supervisor
    - Fitness Coordinator
  - Membership/Front Desk/Rentals 4
    - Membership & Marketing Supervisor
    - Membership Specialist
    - Facility Rentals Coordinator
    - Guest Relations Supervisor
  - Community Programs 2
    - Community Programs Supervisor
    - Community Programs Coordinator
  - Maintenance 4
    - Building and Grounds Administrator
    - Building Maintenance Custodian (3)

This is an adequate level of full-time staff for a center the size and magnitude of the Community & Recreation Center, but it certainly is not overstaffed.

The center does utilize contract custodial services which impacts both full-time and part-time maintenance/custodial staff numbers.

Several positions noted above only have a portion of their salary assigned to the center. This includes:

- Director (75%)
- Director's Secretary (70%)
- Community Programs Coordinator (50%)

- One of the primary concerns of the center is the ability to staff and provide programs to meet the needs of a much larger membership base. While hiring has improved and increased in 2023, staff availability reductions have required higher numbers of staff to meet the service demands of the center from previous years.

- The center is still highly dependent on part-time staffing in the following areas:
  - Front Desk
  - Lifeguards and Swim Instructors
  - Fitness Attendants and Instructors
  - Playroom
  - Rentals/Events
  - Recreation Program Instructors

  This is a normal utilization of part-time staff in a public recreation center.

- Despite the problems that most public recreation centers have had recruiting and retaining part time staff, the center has not experienced the same level of difficulty as the number of lifeguards has been adequate but there are needs in some areas such as the Playroom and fitness floor monitors.

- The center does a good job of tracking part-time staff hours by different positions.

- Rates of compensation for full-time staff appear to be adequate and has resulted in very little staff turnover. Continuing to annually evaluate rates of compensation within the market will be important.

  Part-time staff rates are at the lower range. This could be a problem in an era of full employment and increasing minimum wage rates. The part-time pay scale is a particular problem for lifeguards due to the certification requirements and life and death nature of the job. The Township should continue to make appropriate adjustments to the wage scale on an annual basis to ensure retention.

- Staff has managed to reduce most operational issues and capacity concerns through policy changes (limiting daily passes) and by increasing benefits for members. However, behavior management issues associated with center users are a major problem and has

resulted in lower morale and burnout by staff. Developing additional behavior policies to what is currently in place is essential.

- Existing supervisory staff would benefit from having expanded responsibilities that go beyond the walls of the center and include budget and management experience. This will help with staff growth and help build a succession plan.

- Most Community Programs are contracted but are no longer on a straight gross revenue split but on a fee per registrant basis. The fee per registrant concept is an acceptable method for contract program revenue sharing.

- Only the maintenance staff are part of a union which should allow for more leeway in staff scheduling and job assignments.

- Full-time staff are permitted to teach private lessons (aquatics) or personal train on their own time at the center and receive compensation for these services. This is an added perk that most public centers do not provide.

- While the center is adequately staffed it does not appear to have any overall staffing requirements or mandates. These should be developed to cover issues associated not only with key roles and responsibilities of full-time and part-time staff but also requirements for facility staffing, the presence of a full-time staff member in the center, and the use of contract staff or services. The requirements should also address minimum staffing requirements for opening/operation and seasonal adjustments to the staffing schedule. It is recognized that the center does have a strong manager-on-duty program that covers most evening and weekend hours.

  Another key aspect of staffing is planning for eventual staff succession to occur and making sure that center operations do not suffer during a staffing transition.

- There needs to be a continued focus on safety and security at the center.

- There are job descriptions in place (full-time and part-time) that appear to adequately reflect the actual duties of each position and the performance expectations of the individual in that role.

- Background checks are completed for any new part-time staff hires and this should also be done for any volunteers and required of any contract employees.

- It is important that a strong staff (both full-time and part-time) training and education program is formalized to ensure that opportunities for staff growth and improvement are

organized on an annual basis and well documented. Center staff should continue to work closely with Human Resources to set up specific staff training opportunities.

- The Township has an annual performance appraisal for all full-time and part-time staff and should continue to have an action/improvement plan as part of this process.

- The Department does make use of college interns to augment paid staff. This needs to continue.

Policies and Procedures

- The center has a wide range of policies and procedures in place to guide operations and management of the facility and its programs.

- The basis for the overall direction of the center and the Recreation & Leisure Services Department is the system wide master plan that was completed in 2016. With this document nearing 8 years of age, it may need to be updated in the next two years.

- Specific policies are in place for the following:
  - Staff internet, email, and communications
  - Sexual harassment
  - Maintenance operations
  - Front desk operations
  - User behavior

- There are also a number of manuals in place for various aspects of the center. This includes:
  - Aquatics
  - Maintenance
  - Fitness
  - Emergency procedures and an emergency action plan for aquatics
  - Employee handbook. This is a Township wide handbook

- The center would benefit from having a comprehensive Operations Manual for the center that integrates much of the information above into a single document. A major emphasis should be on a comprehensive emergency action plan.

- Staff have indicated that a share of center users and members believe that there are too many rules and policies already in place and this impedes their use. However, having strong operational policies in place that result in well defined rules are more important than ever. Messaging the basis and need for the rules to members and the community will need to continue.

- There appear to be inconsistent rules on the required age of youth to use different areas of the center including the fitness equipment. This makes enforcement by the staff more difficult.

- It has also been noted that behavior management is a major concern and having better defined expectations and requirements for use of the center might help to stem this situation.

Key Recommendations

The following is a summary listing of the key recommendations from the information in this section with a designation of a high or low priority.

High Priority

- Continue to establish yearly budget priorities.

- Develop and promote opportunities that non-member residents have to utilize the center and its programs.

- Plan for continued increases in operation costs for staffing as well as goods and services.

- Establish a greater budget focus on maintenance and capital replacement in the next few years.

- Continue cost center accounting practices for the center itself as well as programs and services.

- Continue to recognize the importance of non-resident members and facility users in the revenue stream for the center.

- Develop additional policies to deal with behavior management issues by center users.

- Continue to adjust the part-time compensation schedule annual to meet staffing needs and develop a step system of payment.

- Develop a formal fee policy for memberships, programs, facility use, and rentals.

- Develop a true staffing philosophy and plan and establish overall staffing requirements.

- Complete a parks and recreation system wide master plan

- Develop a staff succession plan to keep key staff in the department.
- Develop a coordinated staff training plan with the HR Department.
- Reevaluate the existing program refund policy to reduce late cancellations.

Lower Priority

- Develop a continuity plan for the center.
- Identify 1-2 external funding sources a year.
- Produce a yearly annual report.
- Develop a comprehensive Operations Manual for the center.
- Improve budget tracking and facility use statistics.

Section VIII – Marketing Efforts

A continued focus of the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center staff should be on marketing and promoting of the facility's amenities, recreation programs, and services.

General

- It is understood that with the center nearing membership capacity and many programs already full, that over marketing and then not being able to deliver is a concern.

- It is critical to continue to emphasize strong communications between the center, the members, and the general community. This should focus on understanding what a public community recreation center is (and what it is not), operational policies, customer service, and overall community benefits. Effective communications need to continue to be an ongoing emphasis.

- Marketing must continue to focus on residents of the Township but the importance of the non-resident to center revenues cannot be overlooked and must be a strong part of all marketing efforts.

Marketing Assessment

- The primary focus of most marketing is internal to existing members and users rather than external to the community as a whole. This is due to capacity issues at the center and the fact that many programs are already full.

- Even though the center has a number of marketing tools in place it could still benefit by having a basic marketing plan that guides promotional efforts on an annual basis. This plan should be a simple document that is built on an overall promotional philosophy and contains bullet points for specific goals.

- The marketing plan must take into consideration the market role and position of the center and programs. The fact that the facility is not a private fitness center, has a broad range of programs and services, and serves all age groups needs to continue to be emphasized. Retaining existing members and users needs to be a primary area of focus.

- The marketing plan's direction and focus will need to be guided by the key target markets that will be served. This should include different age groups, interest areas, socio-economic groups, and non-residents.

- While the overall marketing effort should be coordinated and directed by the marketing staff, clear areas of responsibility for all staff as it relates to promoting the center and recreation programs should be developed.

- The annual marketing efforts should have a formal evaluation mechanism to determine the overall effectiveness of the plan as well as specific marketing efforts.

Promotional Tools/Tasks

- The marketing strategy for the center over the last five years has seen a significant shift from more traditional marketing efforts based on printed materials and advertising to social media and e-mail based efforts. The center has a contact list of over 9,900 e-mails. Center members opt into e-mails upon joining and also receive a listing of new membership information via e-mail.

- In addition to e-mail based marketing, digital marketing signage is referenced across the facility near high traffic areas as well as paper information with scannable QR codes is available. Members who request physical mailing of documents are sent information when needed. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also utilized to promote facility content.

- Rec Radio is also utilized to promote center activities and services.

- Targeted marketing is utilized and includes the following specialized groups:
    - Swim lesson participants
    - Prior special event attendees
    - Preschool/Youth enrichment and sports
    - Senior members
    - Group exercise attendees
    - General interest

- Future marketing efforts will need to focus on the value and benefits of membership as this is the primary revenue source for the center.

- The twice-a-year Community Recreation Guide is no longer utilized and has been replaced by targeted digital and printed flyers and other pieces of information. This can be effective for patrons with specific interests but does make it more difficult for the community to comprehend the depth and magnitude of the programs and services that are available.

- Continue to complete an annual survey of other public, private, and non-profit sports, fitness and aquatic facilities in the area that identifies fees, programs, and services as well

as key amenities. This information should be utilized to market the benefits of the center and to adjust fees and services when necessary.

- There should be an every other year (in-house and on-line) survey of center users' needs and concerns. This survey should gather opinions regarding the center's maintenance, staff, programs and services, and future needs.

- A formal survey of Township residents should be conducted on a 3-5 year basis. This survey should be conducted on-line and should gather opinions regarding facilities, staff, programs and services, and future needs.

- The center's web page is acceptable but needs to be improved and updated to meet the changing needs and expectations of the public. This should provide easy links to specific facility and program information, that also use images from the center and the programs themselves.

- The current membership guide is excellent and needs to continue to be utilized but it probably needs to be updated.

- Phone interviews should continue to be conducted with those individuals who cancel their memberships to determine the reasons for this. If a call is not possible, then an email should be sent asking for the reason for their cancellation. It is recognized that the rate of response will not be great from former members.

- On-line registration for programs is now over 95% which is outstanding, and this option should continue to be emphasized.

  Ultimately an individual should be able to sign up and pay for memberships online and even schedule and pay for room rentals.

- There needs to be continuing efforts to "brand" the Department through all publications, promotional materials, flyers, signs, web site, and other items. All marketing materials need to have the same format, look, logo, etc.

- The center now also has a mobile app that can be utilized in a number of ways to gain information about programs and center operations.

- The way users find out about center facilities, programs, and services, needs to be tracked on a regular basis and should guide future marketing resource allocation and areas of focus.

Sponsorships/Partnerships

- Expanding sponsorship/donation opportunities for key programs and services (both existing and new) will not only help to promote the programs themselves but also the center. This should be a simple program with basic levels of sponsorships/donations established based on a yearly basis, the magnitude of the program, and the cost of providing the program. It is recognized that it could take several years to totally institute a full sponsorship program.

Key Recommendations

The following is a summary listing of the key recommendations from the information in this section with a designation of a high or low priority.

High Priority

- Continue to emphasize strong communication between the center, its members, and the general community.
- Promote the center as a public facility and the importance of having non-resident users and members for financial self-sufficiency.
- Develop a basic marketing plan for the facility and its programs.
- Expand the use of on-line sign up for room rentals and memberships.
- Survey other similar providers in the market on an annual basis.
- Reinforce the clear identity and brand of the center.
- Update the center web page.

Lower Priority

- Develop a printed brochure and digital version that promotes the center and its programs for new residents and others that are not familiar with the center.
- Establish a formal evaluation mechanism for all marketing tools.
- Expand the sponsorship opportunities for programs and services.
- Conduct surveys of center members and the community.

Section IX – Implementation

As previously noted in this assessment report, the Upper St. Clair Community & Recreation Center has been one of the most operationally successful public recreation centers in Pennsylvania and the nation. It is often used as an example for other communities regarding best practices for recreation center operations. Building off this strong foundation of operations success, the implementation plan is focused on maintaining or increasing the operational efficiency, and performance of the facility in the future.

The primary recommendations from the previous sections are prioritized below with the timing for the implementation, and the general estimated capital cost of implementing (if applicable), as well as the general estimated operational impact (if appropriate). All dollar estimates are based on 2024.

Some of these recommendations could be challenging to implement with the current operational funding levels of the Department, the staffing levels for the center, and the necessary time/resource requirements for completion.

High Priority (1-2 Years)

Task	Timing	Capital Cost	Operational Impact
Facility Improvements			
Designate a supervisory staff member as the Safety Director	First 3 months		Staff time
Complete a study to determine possible improvements and/or expansions to the center (as outlined in the report)	Year 2		$50,000-$100,000
Complete a capital lifecycle schedule and	Year 2		$50,000-$100,000
Recreation Services and Programs			
Establish programming philosophy and basic programming plan	Year 1		Staff time
Attempt to grow programming in key areas	Year 1 & 2		Expenses $50,000 yr. Revenues $40,000-$60,000 yr.
Increase the number of program performance measures that are tracked	Year 2		Staff time
Explore a fitness/wellness program partnership with a health care provider	Year 2		Staff time

Operations			
Develop additional policies to deal with behavior management issues by center users	First 3 months		Staff time
Reevaluate the existing program refund policy	First 6 months		Staff time
Develop a staff succession plan	Year 1		Staff time
Develop a coordinated staff training plan	Year 1		Staff time
Plan for continued increases in operation costs for staffing, goods and services, and maintenance.	Year 1-2		$25,000-$50,000 yr.
Develop a comprehensive formal fee policy	Year 2		Staff or Consultant
Develop a true staffing philosophy and plan	Year 2		Staff time
Complete a parks and recreation system wide master plan	Year 2		$150,000-$250,000
Marketing			
Develop a basic marketing plan for the facility and its programs	Year 1		Staff time
Update the center web page	Year 1		Staff time or Consultant
Survey other similar providers in the market on an annual basis	Year 1-2		Staff time
Expand the use of on-line sign up for room rentals and memberships	Year 2		Staff time

Lower Priority (3-5 Years)

Task	Timing	Capital Cost	Operational Impact
Facility Improvements			
Complete smaller improvements to the center	Year 3-4	$1.2M-$1.5M	N/A
Complete a larger renovation and/or expansion of the center (top 3 only)	Year 5+	$3M-$5M Budget	Expenses $50,000-$100,00 yr. Revenues $75,000-$200,000 yr.
Recreation Services and Programs			
Develop a comprehensive annual report of Department programs and services	Year 3		Staff time
Develop capacity/use analysis for the major spaces in the building	Year 4		Staff or Consultant
Complete a lifecycle analysis of the center's programs and services	Year 5		Staff time
Operations			
Develop a comprehensive Operations Manual for the center	Year 3		Staff time
Produce a yearly annual report	Year 3		Staff time
Improve budget tracking and facility use statistics	Year 3		Staff time
Identify 1-2 external funding sources a year	Year 4		Staff time
Develop a continuity plan for the center	Year 5		Staff time
Marketing			
Develop a printed brochure and digital version that promotes the center and its programs for new residents	Year 3		Staff time
Establish a formal evaluation mechanism for all marketing tools	Year 3		Staff time
Conduct surveys of center members and the community	Every 3-5 years		Staff or Consultant
Expand the sponsorship opportunities for programs and services	Year 4		Staff time