

From: Nicole Banks <nbanks@newtonma.gov>
To: Nicole Banks <nbanks@newtonma.gov>
Cc: GathPool <gathpool@newtonma.gov>
Sent: Fri, Mar 10, 2023 7:18 pm
Subject: Gath Pool lap pool shallow end depth

Dear Councilors and people interested in the new Gath Pool,

In early December, the design team settled on a configuration of 2 separate pools, with both having an accessible ramp and lift chair for full inclusivity. The lap pool with diving boards has a 12' deep end and a 4' shallow end, allowing it to be used by the swim league, lap swimmers, and recreational users. The design went before the Parks and Recreation Commission soon thereafter for a public hearing, and the 2-pool design was supported.

The Parks, Recreation & Culture Department has recently received messages from swim team parents and coaches requesting that the lap pool design be modified again to have 2 lanes with a 4' depth and the other 6 having a 6'7" depth to allow for safe diving at both ends. We sought to clarify that the starting blocks are at the deep end of the pool which has a 12' depth and that diving could occur at this end of the pool very safely. We met with swim team representatives to explain the requirements for the pool depth and the building code limitations on the slope angle in the shallow end. We discussed options for the swim team to emulate all other teams in the league by starting all meet events in the 12' end of the pool.

After receiving additional questions about the pool design, we held a subsequent meeting with swim team representatives this past Friday (3/3) to listen to their input on the pool design. Immediately following this meeting, we discussed with our project consultant what options might be possible to achieve the swim team's desire for having some lanes be 6'7" depth at the shallow end. Our consultant was able to draw up the design with the first 2 lanes being at 4' so the accessible ramp can connect to the pool floor, and then having the floor slope across the other 6 lanes.

However, the requested design does not meet the swim team's requested outcome, significantly limits the Department's ability to expand programming, and significantly reduces the amount of space available to pool guests for recreational swimming and enjoyment throughout most of the hours of operation. For these reasons, the design team sees the preferred design of a consistent 4' shallow end of the lap pool as the best outcome for the community. See illustrations below for pool depth analysis of the preferred pool design and alternative design. Further explanation of the alternatives design is available in the attached memo.

The following opportunities and challenges provide a summary of the preferred option and the alternate design that was requested.

Option A – Preferred Option for Lap Pool

Uniform 4' shallow end sloped to a 12' deep end lap pool

Opportunities:

1. Provides a 12' deep end for diving from starting blocks, unlike the current Gath Pool which starts as low as 4' at both ends
2. Meets the recreational aquatics demand
3. Expands the aquatic capacity for expanded youth swim lessons and other programming
4. Provides for a more universally accessible aquatics experience for swimmers of all abilities
5. Allows for a uniform lateral pool depth between lanes for competitive swimming
6. Less expensive to construct, operate and maintain
7. Lower water volume will allow water temperatures to more quickly reach ideal levels
8. Allows for recreational aquatics flexibility if the recreational pool needs to be secured for maintenance or accidents
9. Results in a 33% increase in the lap lanes and diving capacity as compared to the current Gath pool
10. More environmentally sensitive due to less water volume that must be pumped, treated, and maintained

Challenges:

1. Competitive swimmers who do not dive into the deep end either on or off the blocks, but who must dive, will need to continue to be supervised by the coaches during their dives into the shallow end, as they do now, or the swim league will have all diving occur in the deep end.

Option B – Alternative Design

Cross-sloped shallow end from 4' to 6'7" to a 12' deep end lap pool

Opportunities:

1. Provides 2 lanes for diving into water 6' deep or greater in the shallow end of the lap pool
2. Expands the aquatic capacity to more easily meet the league's diving demand request

Challenges:

1. Results in the Gath complex not meeting the recreational aquatics demand and requirements
2. Reduces the aquatic capacity for youth swim lessons and other programming
3. Results in a less universally accessible aquatics experience for swimmers of all abilities
4. Different lanes will have different swim performance based on varying levels of pool depth
5. More expensive to construct, operate and maintain
6. Larger water volume will result in colder water temperatures
7. Increased complexity to delineate the shallow area from the swim area of 5' or greater
8. Pool floor is sloped both across and along the lane lines, at varying slope angles
9. Less environmentally sensitive due to the water volume that must be pumped, treated, and maintained
10. More difficult for lifeguards to monitor

Option A (Preferred Option)

Alternative Design (Cross Sloped Shallow End)

The preferred design will bring an amazing new two-pool and splash pad complex that will serve Newtonians and the swim league well for decades to come.

Respectfully,

Nicole Banks, Commissioner
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