

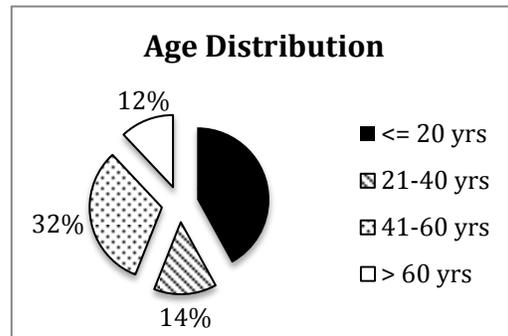
# Wellesley Aquatic Facility Survey Executive Summary

## Survey Overview

At the end of 2012 the window to respond to the Wellesley Aquatics Facility Survey was closed. A total of 2,556 completed surveys were collected, representing approximately 30% of the households in the town. The number of residents accounted for by the survey was 7,959, or approximately 28% of town residents. It is important to remember that unless specifically defined, a response typically represents a multi-person household. 640 of the surveys were submitted in paper format and 1,916 electronically.

## Age Distribution

The demographics of the households represented by the responses to the survey were a good representation of the demographics within the town. The survey represented the interests of 42% under the age of 20, 14% between the age of 20 and 40, 32% between the age of 40 and 60, and 12% over the age of 60.



## Overall Facility Usage

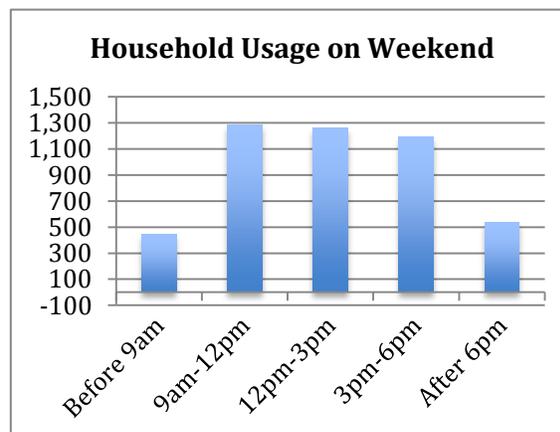
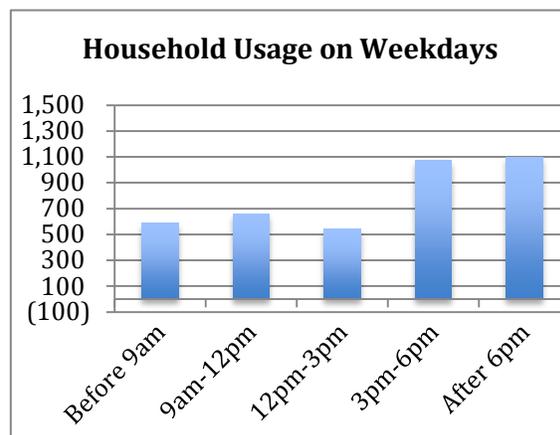
In response to the question of how many likely users in their household, the total number for the survey was 7,226.

To the question of whether existing facilities in the area met their aquatic needs, 1,210 (52% of responses to the question) strongly disagreed and another 413 responses (18% of responses) somewhat disagreed.

To the question of whether members of their family would likely use the proposed aquatics facility, 1,734 responses strongly agreed (74% of answers) and 262 somewhat agreed (11% of answers).

Of the 1,996 responses indicating a strongly agree or somewhat agree that a member of their family would likely use the proposed aquatics facility, 1,912 (96% of responses) indicated a willingness to pay either by day or through an annual membership.

In response to the time periods the household would most likely use the facility, the heaviest usage would likely be the weekends between 9am and 6pm, followed by the weekdays between 3pm to close.



The seasonality of the facility would likely be fairly consistent throughout the year with roughly 1,700 to 1,800 households expressing interest in using the facility throughout the fall (1,699), winter (1,805), and spring (1,746) seasons. The variation occurs during the summer when 969 respondents would use an indoor facility and 1,636 respondents would use an outdoor facility.

### Shallow Warm Water Interest

A warmer shallow pool with a maximum depth of less than five feet and water temperature above 85 degrees supports aquatic activities like swim lessons, physical therapy, more leisurely lap swimming, and recreation.

The total in response to the question of how many members of the household would likely take swim lessons at the proposed aquatics facility was 2,421. The total number of households likely (395) or very likely (702) to take swim lessons was 1,097.

A total of 1,941 replies (78% of responses) said that a pool warm enough for swim lessons and therapy was important (548), very important (720), or essential (673). The number of responses that said their household would likely (389) or very likely (210) use the facility for water therapy or rehabilitation was 599.

A total of 758 households said they were likely (462) or very likely (296) to participate in water walking or water aerobics classes.

### Deeper Cooler Water Interest

A cooler and deeper pool with a depth greater than six feet seven inches and water temperature between 79 to 81 degrees supports aquatic activities like advanced lessons, lap swimming, swim team, and potentially water polo and SCUBA. The depth of six feet seven inches is the likely updated minimum depth for a pool with starting blocks for swim races.

There were 1,326 responses (54% of answers) that considered a pool cool enough for vigorous exercise or swimming either important (466 answers), very important (412), or essential (448). A larger group of 1,612 said their household was either likely (561) or very likely (1,051) to do lap swimming. The difference between these two answers may be a preference by some to swim laps in a warmer pool.

Similar results were tabulated in the question about a pool suitable for competitive swimming, with 1,537 (62% of answers) considering it important (436), very important (422), or essential (679). A smaller group of 894 thought a member of their household was likely (327) or very likely (567) to use the pool for a school or league swim. A solid group of 692 would either be likely (341) or very likely (351) to use the facility for adult swim training, or Masters Swimming.

### Deep Water

An area of water deeper than 13 feet is suitable for diving boards, SCUBA instruction, synchronized swimming, as well as possibly water polo, and lap swimming. Depending on the primary use, the water temperature could vary between 82-85 degrees for diving and SCUBA and 79-81 degrees for more

***“This area is underserved by swimming facilities, as there is no YMCA within close proximity. The Needham YMCA facility is lacking, and the Framingham YMCA swim lessons fill up in the first hour of registration. The Boston Sports Club is overpriced, as it charges per family member for membership. I strongly support a town swimming pool- that is how I learned to swim growing up, and it made me a strong lifelong swimmer.”***

***“My oldest daughter is on a USAA swim team and it is clear that there is a shortage of swim facilities in the area. I strongly believe there would be a broad demographic and large number of people who would utilize this facility if it were built. And I think there is the revenue base to support it.”***

***“A separate diving well allows high school and club divers to practice simultaneously with the rest of the team (Brookline has a set up like this). Lastly the pool can be rented to other teams (Needham High School, which currently uses Babson, Wellesley Town team, etc.), allowing money to always be coming into the pool, and eliminating practices from 8-10pm.”***

vigorous activities like water polo and synchronized swimming.

A pool deep enough to allow for water polo or synchronized swimming was considered important, very important or essential by 1,003 households (41% of answers). Diving boards were considered an important (486), very important (391), or essential (433) feature of the facility by 1,310 households (53% of answers).

A total of 466 households felt a member of their household was likely (338) or very likely (128) to do SCUBA Diving instruction in the facility.

### **Recreational Water**

A recreation area could take a wide range of configurations, from a play structure with water slide, to simple fountains, to a shallower pool. The water temperature would likely be warmer, 85 to 90 degrees, and safety concerning young children would be the primary consideration.

***“What a wonderful idea for our town and another fabulous reason for people to want to live in Wellesley. Our residents deserve a great public space to increase the relationships of our community (for all ages) and promote a healthy lifestyle!”***

Responses indicating that members of their household would likely (482) or very likely (1,346) use the facility for recreation and family swimming was 1,828 (75% of total answers). Households also are likely to use the facility for kids’ play with 1,032 responses (43% of answers) indicating their household was likely (324) or very likely (708) to use the facility for this purpose.

***“This would be the best addition to Wellesley in ages. Everyone I’ve spoken to is so excited about this upgrade. So many people sit in lines waiting to try to get into the Weston Pool for the summer, when really, we want our own indoor outdoor facility!”***

A total of 803 households felt a spray tower and sprinklers were important (355), very important (251), or essential (197). Alternatively, a water slide and other play features were important (396), very important (338), or essential (236) to 970 respondents.

### **Other Considerations**

In order to fund the upfront capital requirements, 1,870 respondents (80% of answers) strongly agree (1,494) or somewhat agree (376) to use town funds. Additionally, 2,004 respondents (87% of answers) strongly agree or somewhat agree with fundraising.

A change room for families and special needs individuals was considered important (595), very important (585), or essential (720) by 1,900 respondents (76% of answers).

***“A family change room large enough to support a swim lesson program is absolutely critical. It allows parents to help their children and reduces traffic in the single sex change rooms.”***

Community rooms for parties, training, meetings, and other activities were important (558), very important (388), or essential (237) to 1,183 respondents (48% of answers).

Exercise equipment was important (460), very important (373), or essential (307) to 1,140 respondents (46% of answers).

## Concerns About Facility

Concerns were expressed about

- Is there a need in the community for a pool,
- Capital sources and costs,
- Usage costs,
- Usage policies to separate age groups, including programs for teens,
- Outdoor aquatics-related spaces during the summer,
- Affordable for everyone in community,
- Location, traffic concerns, and accessibility for everyone in the community,
- Handicap accessibility and programs,
- Prioritization of town projects with other projects more important,
- Residents only access,
- Environmental issues,
- Interest in additional facilities on-site, including gym, rink, indoor track, senior center, food, art/ cultural center, rock wall
- Preference for 50 meter pool and 25 yard x 25 meter pool
- Preference for limited chlorine use
- Adding sauna, hot tub and steam room

***“Facility should be self supporting through fees and contributions and should not increase town taxes!”***

***“The proposed location on Rt. 9 seems very inconvenient due to the heavy traffic on Rt. 9.”***

***“I truly believe we need a senior center before we need a swimming pool!!!! Also a cultural center is needed before a swimming pool. The WELLESLEY Players are forced to perform in Watertown--really!”***

***“I think the town could pay for the pool fairly quickly if they built a 50Meter by 25 yard pool and then they could rent to US teams for meets. Also, the additional cost to build a 50m pool versus a 25 yard pool is minimal when you consider the additional space and revenue opportunities.”***

***“The challenges of getting people who are handicapped into a pool are varied and I have seen many models used (graduated entry like they do at Healthpoint in Waltham) or chairs on lifts like Dana Hall (these seem to break often).”***

***“Please limit membership to town residents only.”***

***“I would like to see the facility built, but I would also hope it be built according to LEED standards.”***

***“We would rather have a bark park for dogs rather than a pool.”***

***“I support the idea of community owned and managed space but would prefer any funds raised go to our schools (reverse trend of cuts every year) and other existing departments. Pools are very expensive to construct and maintain and I think we already have enough swimming options in town.”***

***“I would hope that such a pool would be free or significantly discounted for town residents, perhaps something along the lines of the fees charges for Morses Pond (which I use daily in the summer). I cannot afford membership fees charged by the local health clubs.”***

***“I strongly believe that this is NOT the best use of town funds. In a town such as Wellesley, families who want a pool and or health center have many options from which to choose and to pay for themselves. The town money should be better spent. How about more enrichment courses in the schools, or a Senior Center, or even a Town Center for local events to be used by all residents?”***

***“Please consider using a low-chlorine option for the pool. It's much better for health, especially kids' health, and for people with chlorine sensitivities. There are also several health conditions which are exacerbated by high chlorine in pool water.”***

***“Our kids learned how to swim at Morses Pond. They have fond memories of a natural outdoor experience. Invest in Morses Pond.”***