



Legislation Text

File #: 22-807, **Version:** 1

Report regarding adoption of a resolution supporting the reopening of the Mack E. Mickelson warm water therapy pool. (*Christina Fernandez, Assistant to the City Manager*)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution supporting the reopening of the Mack E. Mickelson warm water therapy pool.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION

Warm water therapy pools are not recreational pools and are specifically designed for disabled individuals to exercise safely. Therapeutic warm water temperatures are between 92 and 95 degrees and are compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Therapy pools require many amenities, many of which distinguish them from recreational pools:

- Several spacious unisex dressing rooms, to allow caregivers to aid in dressing and undressing patrons with disabilities.
- Non-skid floor surfaces are prevalent in dressing rooms, restrooms, showers, and therapy pool deck areas. Therapy pool access via steps with handrails, ramp with handrail and/or pool chair lift/Hoyer lift for safe entry and exit.
- Square bottom or nearly square bottom edge where the floor meets the therapy pool side walls to allow for proper balance while performing supported standing exercises.
- Grab rails along the therapy pool edge at or just below water level for safety and balance in entry and shallow areas, as well as on all ramps and stairs into the pool.
- Appropriate depths for prescribed needs, ranging from 3.5 to 6 feet.
- Licensed therapy pool operator/manager with the appropriate credentials as designated by the state or national codes.
- Very warm air temperature maintained for patrons.
- Numerous easily accessible showers for rinsing off prior to entering the therapy pool.
- Decking immediately around the therapy pool wide enough for walker/wheelchair bound users or those on crutches to pass each other safely.
- Poolside seating available for the use of caregivers.
- Certified and specially trained lifeguards on duty at the therapy pool.

- Convenient facility parking near the therapy pool area with a path wide enough for walker/wheelchair-bound clients or any person with special needs to easily access the facility.

Mack E. Mickelson Therapy Pool

The Mack E. Mickelson therapy pool is located in the Mack E. Mickelson Arthritis and Rehabilitation Center at Mills Health Center in San Mateo. It is the only warm water therapy pool on the Peninsula outside of San Francisco, and patrons come from all over San Mateo County. The therapy pool served as a resource for chronic pain management and rehabilitation for seniors, disabled individuals, patients recovering from surgeries, children with special needs, and pregnant women. Physical therapists with specialized aquatics training worked with insurance-backed patients two or three afternoons each week, including a pediatric program. There are no other fully accessible ADA-compliant rehabilitation pools on the Peninsula with the same amenities. In March of 2020, the Mickelson therapy pool was closed because of the San Mateo COVID-19 shelter-in-place county directive. The pool remains closed.

There has been growing support within the San Mateo County Community advocating and recognizing the importance in calling for the pool's reopening. Over 4,300 patients, caregivers, and community members have signed a petition to reopen Mickelson in order to increase the health, independence, and dignity of residents who rely upon it. Legislature at the County level has also supported the initiative with Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin and Senator Josh Becker having written letters to Sutter Health asking for their commitment to find a solution. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Sequoia Healthcare District have both passed resolutions calling for the pool's reopening. The cities of Belmont, Burlingame, Colma, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Millbrae, Pacifica and San Mateo have passed resolutions in support of reopening the Mickelson therapy pool.

The Mack E. Mickelson therapy pool is the only one of its kind in San Mateo County. Given the critical importance of providing rehabilitation and chronic pain management to our most vulnerable residents, staff recommends City Council support of the reopening of the pool.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no known fiscal impact to supporting this resolution.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Support of this resolution meets the city's strategic goals of providing a high quality of life for all residents.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a resolution supporting the reopening of the Mack E. Mickelson warm water therapy pool.