

May 6, 2021

Request for Funding for the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center Project

Dear Chairs Girod and Holvey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Chambers and I am a past Mayor of Toledo, Oregon.

Imagine living in a small town when the City Council decides to close the city swimming pool to save money. This is a choice many small communities must face when they don't have the resources that larger cities enjoy. This decision is not always popular in a small town that knows the importance of having a swimming pool.

Our community members, over the last 73 years, have watched their children and grandchildren learn to swim. Families play together and watch their kids join the swim team. Parents and grandparents benefit from lap swims, exercise classes and taking swim lessons themselves at our local swimming pool.

The Greater Toledo Pool was, and still is, the center to our community. Today, this pool has reopened as a District formed by voters that want their present and future families to have the same opportunities. A pool that someday may save a family member from drowning in a local river or the ocean.

Oregon State Parks wants families to enjoy the outdoors. Many new outdoor parks are built along the rivers or the ocean in our State. Many built with grant dollars available from Oregon State Parks. We hear every year the loss of someone who drowns while enjoying the City, County and State Parks. Why? One reason is Oregon State Park Grant dollars are not available for indoor swimming pools because they are not considered "outdoor recreation." Most "outdoor" pools must close during the winter months. The Greater Toledo Pool continues to remain open and operates year round offering important life skills, exercise and physical therapy opportunities, and of course, recreation. Yet, because our pool is "indoor" it is not eligible for park grants.

We ask for your funding support to renovate and make much needed improvements to our 73 year old pool. Our community has stepped up to provide for permanent operating and maintenance costs, but we must have grants and donations for the essential capital improvements – and most funding agencies will not fund pools. Our renewed facility will be the Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center, and an added community multipurpose room and fitness center will increase the use. We want to continue our legacy of teaching lifesaving swimming lessons, and providing our community with programs that benefit and enhance the lives of patrons of all ages, as well as providing our economically disadvantaged district with vital employment opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration for funding this vitally important project -The Greater Toledo Aquatic and Community Center.

Jim Chambers
Past Mayor of Toledo Oregon