

1/18/19

Fidalgo Pool & Fitness Center Commissioners voted unanimously Jan. 17 to build the new pool complex without trying to save the Fitness Center addition. Commissioners spoke to the construction advantages of that plan, and they emphasized the benefits in added space and the better overall layout that would result – benefits the community will enjoy for generations and are part of the commissioners' vision for the new facility.

Fitness Center FAQs

What's the bottom line on tearing down the Fitness Center when a new pool complex is built.

For an additional \$31,000 in construction costs, you get a better design and floor plan and an additional 1,000 square feet.

Why was the Fitness Center built?

Pool commissioners knew existing fitness space was cramped, inadequate and ill-suited as it had to pull double-duty, providing a quiet space for yoga classes alongside active gym activities. Moving fitness equipment to the new facility better-served those users. And as importantly, that freed up more upstairs space for yoga, aerobics, Silver Sneakers and other land-based classes.

How much did it cost and how was it paid for?

The Pool borrowed \$343,000 to build the fitness center in 2014 (total cost was \$375,000). The Pool is paying back the 15-year loan at \$2,800 a month. Money to service the debt comes from increased fitness revenue. In the first year the Fitness Center was open, total fitness revenue doubled and total fitness visits tripled.

How much tax money was involved?

None. No taxes were increased and no existing tax revenue was used to support the center. The big increase in fitness revenue, which wouldn't have come without the new facility, is paying off the loan now and will continue to do so in the future. The Fitness Center has been a big financial success since day one and the new revenue more than covers the loan

payments.

What happens when the Fitness Center is torn down?

The Fitness Center has always been envisioned as part of the new complex, whether the space that houses the equipment now was torn down or not. The Fitness Center will work far better upstairs in the new pool complex rather than off in the corner as it is now. The rearrangement will allow for a more efficient and cohesive overall design and floor plan in the new pool complex — and it will mean an additional 1,000 square feet of space.

If commissioners had decided to save the Fitness Center building, how would it have been used?

The space would have been turned into a community room, something it wasn't designed for with its high ceilings and configuration. When the building is torn down, the new pool complex will have a community room in about the same spot, but it won't have the high ceilings. The ability to use the space above the community room is how the additional 1,000 square feet of space is obtained.

What about the loan? That still has to be paid.

The loan payments will continue until February 2029, whether the facility was torn down or not. They will continue to be paid for by the ongoing bump in fitness revenue that started in 2014. Those additional users will simply be working out and exercising in new spaces.

Isn't tearing it down a waste of money? The Fitness Center is only five years old.

No, it's just the opposite. It's a more prudent and fiscally responsible decision. The cost of building a new facility, while razing the current gym space, is only \$31,000 more than the cost of retaining the current gym space. The trade-off: an improved, cohesive layout; simplified construction; and 1,000 more square feet. An additional \$31,000 (about one-tenth of 1 percent of the total construction cost) is a small price to pay to get substantial benefits for decades to come.

Another point: The Fitness Center will operate as is until 2022 when the new pool opens. That's a eight-year payoff in terms of the Pool providing

much more “Fitness, Fun and Fellowship” to more members of our community.