

THE OWNER'S GUIDE TO RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION



Recreational facilities take many different forms and thrive in many different places, but they share one thing in common: The goal of improving the physical and emotional health of those who use them.

Achieving that goal goes deeper than developing the right programs or purchasing the right equipment. Long before that's done, preliminary discussions and pre-construction decisions will significantly impact the way a facility is built and how well it meets community needs for years to come. In this guide, we discuss:

- Keys to strategic and financial planning ahead of a recreational facility construction project.
- Multi-purpose design elements that maximize a recreational facility's space and flexibility.
- Why the Design-Build delivery method of construction makes sense for recreational facility construction projects.
- Real-world examples of recreational facilities designed and built to meet unique community needs.

We hope this guide spurs owners and their teams to ask the right questions and think critically about their goals for a recreational facility. Those are key first steps to realizing a successful Design-Build construction project that results in achieving your goals of improving health and wellness in the community.



STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITY CONSTRUCTION

The work done long before groundbreaking is arguably the most important part of a recreational facility construction project. It is during these crucial strategic and financial planning discussions that ideas evolve into concrete plans. Those plans take shape based on the following considerations:

- Who the facility's targeted users are and what the facility is expected to accomplish.
- How the facility's size or accommodations are expected to evolve over time.
- How construction and operation of the facility will be financed.
- How life cycle cost analyses and the owner's financial circumstances impact the viability of a proposed facility.

Let's discuss each point in more detail.



WHO ARE YOU SERVING?

Answering this question is critical to the success of any recreational facility. Ultimately, a recreational space's purpose is to improve mental and physical health and enhance a community's quality of life. Of course, different people in different communities have differing needs.

For example, a facility serving a restive retirement community will look a lot different than one targeted to urban or suburban families. When owners can pinpoint who is most likely to use the facility, they can make refined design and construction decisions that will result in a space tailored to accommodate users' interests.

HOW WILL THE FACILITY EVOLVE?

Recreational facilities shouldn't be static. Users' tastes and needs change over time. The hallmark of a recreational facility that remains vital to its evolving community is its ability to evolve in kind.

It's hard to predict what the future holds. The key is recognizing the eventual need to change and maintaining the flexibility to do so. We discuss this flexibility further in a later section.





WHAT'S YOUR FINANCIAL PICTURE?

Often, the financial circumstances of a recreational facility's owner are reflected in the way the facility is built and maintained. An owner needs to know ahead of time not only [how construction of a recreational facility will be paid for](#), but how the facility will be sustained.

Will you need to borrow money? Do you have the cash on hand? Will the site generate its own revenue? And if so, do you expect it to sustain itself, or will it need ongoing support beyond fees paid by users? Finally, can you build business relationships with other local institutions or organizations to help sustain the facility?

The answers to those questions will impact some of the design and construction decisions you make. We'll talk more about that later, but note for now that it's important that your vision remain flexible during planning. As you consider how to pay for construction and maintenance of a recreational facility, challenges and ideas each will likely emerge that can significantly impact construction.



HAVE YOU DONE LIFE CYCLE COST ANALYSES?

Just as a physical facility shouldn't remain static over time, financial pressures on a recreational facility change over time as well.

This is where life cycle costs come in. It's not enough to plan for a facility's maintenance based on a snapshot of opening day. You'll need to carefully consider a number of costs, including:

- Utility costs and the potential for rate changes.
- Liability insurance costs.
- Staffing costs, including increases or decreases in staffing levels and the cost of training when necessary.
- Maintenance, repair and replacement costs. It'd be great if everything inside the facility worked perfectly forever, but that's never the case.
- Potential capital improvement costs beyond general maintenance.

While you're at it, review your current financial situation again as you compare the above costs against potential revenue drivers:

- User fees and the potential increase or decrease of users.
- Ongoing community partnerships that result in recurring revenue outside of regular users.
- Potential net payoff as a result of adding new activities or services.

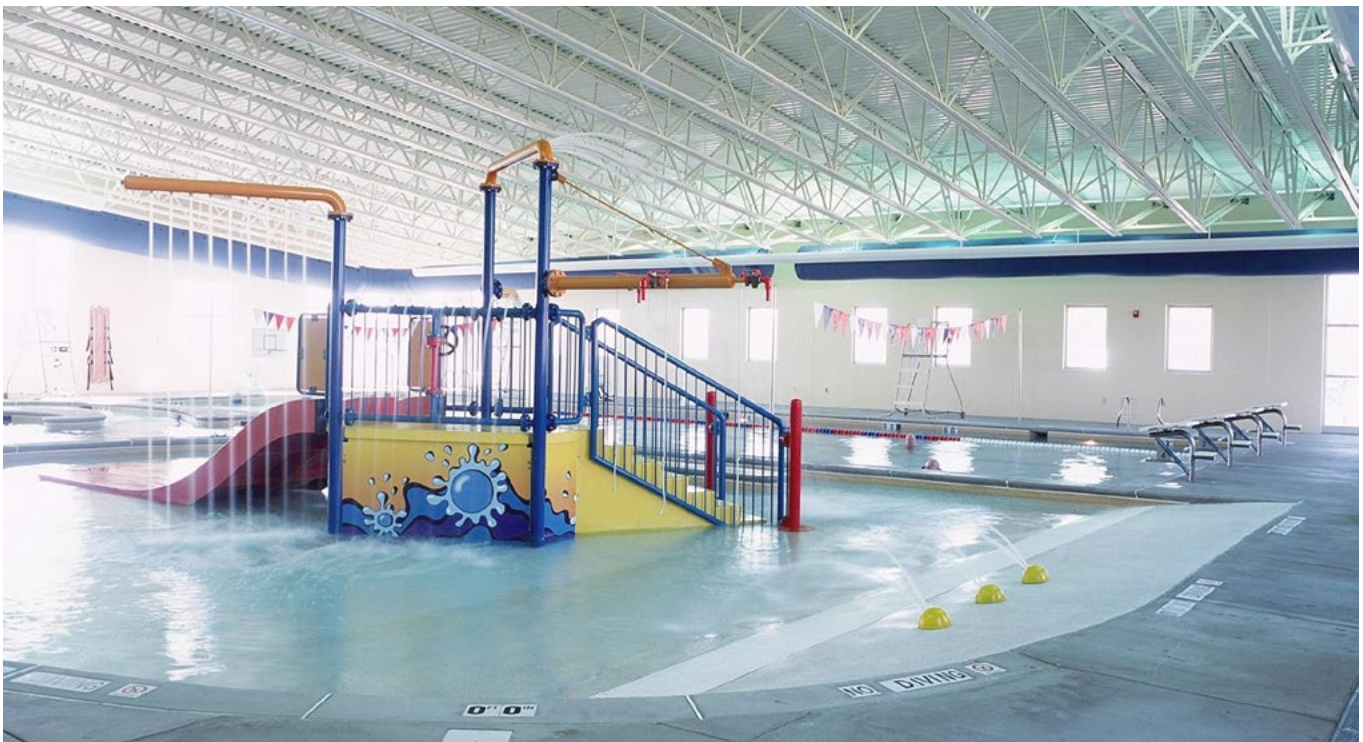


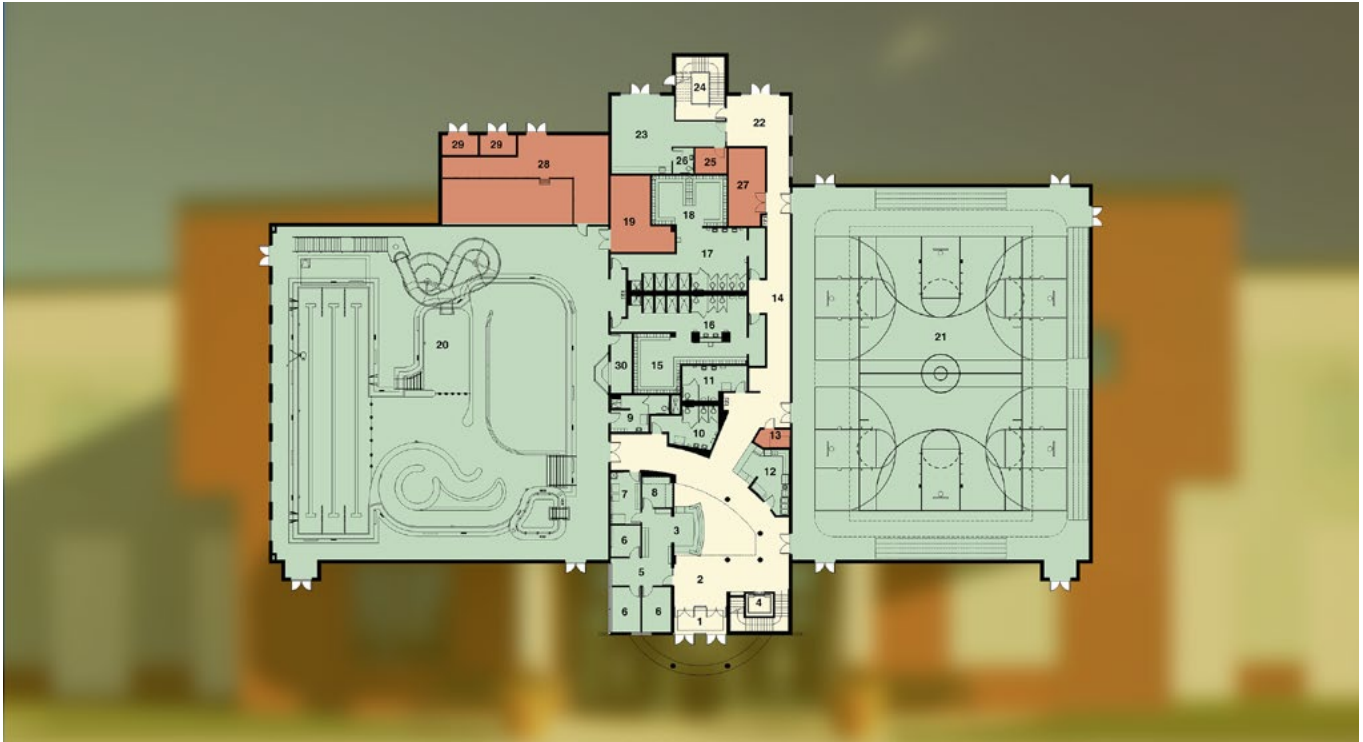


Use your Design-Build contractor as a resource during life cycle cost analyses. Lots of the factors described above are beyond their control, but your contractor can counsel you on key design and construction strategies that will maximize the value of your facility. Those can include:

- Designing spaces to take advantage of ambient light and installing energy-efficient lighting to save on electricity costs.
- Installing energy-efficient insulation and HVAC solutions to achieve cost-effective climate control.
- Using lower-maintenance and [sustainable construction](#) materials.
- Installing solar panels or other renewable energy systems to become more self-reliant.
- Building bioswales and / or rooftop garden spaces to limit the adverse impact of runoff to adjacent properties and infrastructure.

Careful study of the factors in this section will provide a clearer picture for owners planning a recreational facility. At the end of the day, two yes-or-no questions matter the most: Is this project viable? Can we justify the cost? Be diligent in your planning and you'll have the answer.





DESIGN KEYS FOR MULTI-PURPOSE FUNCTIONALITY

A few of the points we made in the previous section lead us to the idea of multi-purpose functionality. One of the constants we've encountered on recreational facility construction projects is that flexibility is key. As we stated before, a key characteristic of a good recreational facility is its ability to change alongside its changing community.

Designing and building for multi-purpose functionality ensures the space remains flexible, come what may.

KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN

We've seen first-hand how modern recreational facilities are designed and built on the understanding that 'recreation' by definition is a lot bigger than the way it's perceived in society. It's far more than just hitting the gym, shooting hoops or swimming laps. And while that's about all you could do in recreational facilities of years past, much has changed.



From CPR classes to art shows to dance lessons to computer labs, modern recreational facilities host many activities. They must be built to accommodate them. Here are some features:

- Large, open rooms with temporary partitions to accommodate groups of all sizes.
- Ample electrical outlets or other IT infrastructure throughout the space to meet a variety of technical needs.
- Floors built to handle everything from yoga groups to spin classes to Zumba training to CrossFit.
- Pools that accommodate lap swimmers, swim lessons, pool parties and rehabilitative therapy.
- An open, inviting vestibule with room to easily handle all the different groups gathering in a facility each day.
- Outdoor fields and tracks designed for multiple uses (artificial turf and synthetic track surfaces are much easier to maintain).
- Enough storage space to accommodate the rotating fleet of tables, chairs and other equipment that moves from space to space as needed.



Flexibility on a larger scale is beneficial, too. Recreational facilities designed and built with easy renovation or expansion in mind are poised for long-term success. Literally growing alongside a community will ensure a facility continues to play a central role in the lives of those who use it.





DESIGN-BUILD SAVES TIME AND MONEY

We helped develop the Design-Build method decades ago, and we think it's perfectly suited to recreational facility construction. Modern recreational facilities are built to host a wide array of activities under a single roof—or at least confined to a single property.

Design-Build is similar in that it gathers the planning, design and construction disciplines under one roof. That gives owners a single point of contact that reduces headaches, makes construction easier and [saves time and money](#).

01. It starts with listening. Because recreational centers take shape based on the communities they serve, it's critical that your Design-Build contractor listen in on your planning discussions. As the owner, you're the resource your contractor depends on. You know your community. You know what will enhance its quality of life. As contractors, we can't deliver the space you envision if we aren't willing to listen first.



02. Your contractor should **build the best team** to tackle the job. [Past experience](#) on recreational facility construction projects is crucial. Getting experienced team members in place ensures the project stays on track and gives owners the peace of mind that comes with knowing their construction partner has been there before.

03. That team should **come ready to innovate**. When your contractor leaves no stone unturned in the search for best value solutions, the result is time and money saved. That means owners can do one of two things: Put that money back into the project to yield a better space for the dollar; or, in the case of municipal owners, return the money to taxpayers in a sign of good fiscal stewardship. Either way, value is maximized.

04. Good Design-Build firms form long-term bonds. The relationship between a recreational facility owner and contractor doesn't end when we hand over your new space. At least, we don't think it should. Design-Build firms understand that communities' needs change, so they'll always answer the call from an owner who says it's time to think about an expansion or renovation.





CASE STUDY: KORTE RECREATION FACILITY HIGHLAND, IL

We're proud of all of the recreational facilities we've built, but the [Korte Recreation Facility in Highland, IL](#) is especially close to home—literally. Its front door is a little over 550 yards straight north of ours. It obviously also shares our name.

When Highland city officials tapped us to build the space, we were honored to have the opportunity to focus on listening to the community and delivering a space that met its needs.

As an added bonus, the space serves our families, friends and neighbors.



MEETING OUR NEIGHBORS' NEEDS

The facility features a natatorium with 5,000 square feet of water surface in the form of a zero-entry pool, a lazy river, a vortex and three 75-foot swimming lanes. There's even a 120-foot water slide.

A multi-purpose gymnasium features two parallel basketball courts and a third full-size cross court. A walking and running track rings the upper level of the structure, which is divided into two wings.

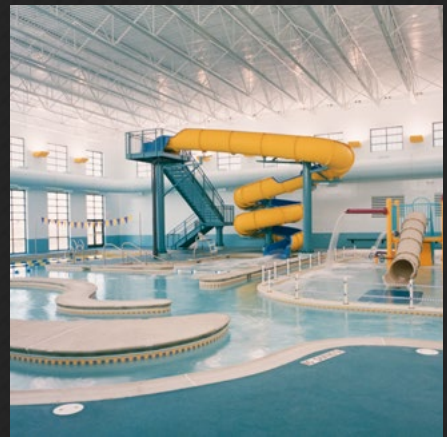
That division is critical. Protection of assets is a key design consideration. In the case of this facility, we felt it was important to protect the wooden gymnasium floors in the event of a burst pipe or other water-related problem from the pool. That's why the gym and pool area are on opposite sides of the building.

In addition, the natatorium has its own HVAC system. That's in place to ensure the higher-humidity environment in the pool area stays contained and reduces the risk that structures or equipment elsewhere within the facility will corrode.

The outer walls of the structure were designed with efficiency and cost savings in mind. Insulated sandwich concrete panels were cast on-site and installed using the [Tilt-Up method](#)

Outside, the property includes a lake, multi-sport playing fields, walking trails and ample parking. Back inside, the facility features plenty of meeting and event spaces.

The city has also formed relationships with local healthcare providers and school districts, offering space for sports training, education and physical therapy. Taken together, the amenities inside and out represent the City of Highland's commitment to meet the needs of the residents it knows best.





OTHER KEY RECREATIONAL FACILITY PROJECTS

We're proud to showcase the thriving recreational center in Highland, but it's far from the only one we want to show off. We're especially proud of these facilities, too:

- A [recreational center we built in Centralia, IL](#) features a natatorium, divided courts for basketball and volleyball and an indoor walking and running track. It also caters to family needs through its daycare center.
- An [outdoor ballfield complex at Ft. Hood, TX](#) caters to our men and women in the armed services. Its four tournament fields are served by a central two-story concession stand and fieldhouse. A running and walking track surrounds the complex.
- The [renovated Calumet New Tech High School sports complex](#) in Gary, IN includes expanded seating capacity for an artificial turf football and soccer field and running track as well as updated softball and baseball fields and associated amenities. The school has also partnered with the City of Gary and other local organizations to make frequent non-school use of the complex, turning the renovated complex into a community focal point.



Enhancing quality of life

Whether you're a municipal official, an institutional leader or in charge of a private organization, you may be searching for guidance on how to successfully manage construction of a recreational facility. Let us help.

The Korte Company has delivered community-focused recreational spaces for decades, using each project as an opportunity to learn more about how to meet communities' ever-changing needs. We combine that desire to learn with our Design-Build expertise to deliver quality recreational facilities built to enhance quality of life

If you think partnership with The Korte Company is the right fit for your upcoming project, [connect with us now](#).



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