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**Subject:** Support for LB City Council Agenda Item 20 and background info on Community Pool issue

**-EXTERNAL-**



Thanks to City Councilmembers Richardson, Zendejas, Price and Autin for introducing this resolution which promotes community safety, health, and equity. The City staff's support for the resolution is also much appreciated.

When the Long Beach Area Peace Network first challenged the proposed Belmont Beach and Aquatics Center, my young friend Erin Grisson had a dream in which I blasted the project and she replied, "Don't just say what you don't want, say what you do want." In response to her wise words, LBAPN began our "Everybody in the Pool" campaign, which advocates for a public pool in every city council district, starting with the 9th. We researched and distributed information about the many life-saving and life-enhancing benefits of community pools as well as the city's demographics and a history of racism that has resulted in the inequitable distribution of pools, parks, and public services and it looks like LBAPN's hard work may have had an impact.

With your support, the 9th District will have a community pool. With respect to public funding and any timeline, the building of community pools in every council district must be prioritized over the construction of the environmentally unsound, unaffordable, and unjust BBAC.  
Anna Christensen, member, LBAPN Swimming Pool Committee.

**Agenda Item 20 at the next LB City Council meeting on Tuesday:**

20. 21-0737 Recommendation to direct City Manager and the Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department to explore the feasibility of, locations for, and funding options for the construction of a public pool to serve the North Long Beach community and return to council with a report within 120 days. VICE MAYOR REX RICHARDSON, NINTH DISTRICT; COUNCILWOMAN MARY ZENDEJAS, FIRST DISTRICT; COUNCILWOMAN SUZIE A. PRICE, THIRD DISTRICT; COUNCILMAN AL AUSTIN, EIGHTH DISTRICT Office or Department: Suggested Action: Approve recommendation.

[CCC Presentation .pptx](#)

## Everybody in the Pool Resolution, Long Beach Area Peace Network

Recognizing both the health and safety benefits of swimming instruction and community aquatics facilities, and the need to address ongoing issues of health equity, the Long Beach Area Peace Network recommends that the City of Long Beach:

1. Ensure equal access to public pools and swimming instruction for all residents in accordance with the goals of the Healthy Communities Policy of the City of Long Beach
2. Build and maintain a community pool in every city council district
3. Raise community awareness as to the health and safety benefits of swimming, water sports, and lifeguard training
4. Increase diversity and city-wide participation in public aquatics programs for youth including swimming lessons, water sports, sailing and boating, Jr. Lifeguarding, and aquatics day camps

We take this position because a significant number of children are not learning to swim and, as a consequence, drowning is a leading cause of accidental death among young people. Evidence supports a relationship between fewer opportunities to take swimming lessons and higher minority drowning rates. USA Swimming reports that 70% of African American children and nearly 60% of Hispanic children have low or no swimming ability, compared to 40% of white children. Noting that “swimming skills can be lifesaving,” the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in 2010 that black youths ages 10-12 are ten times more likely to drown in pools than their white peers. American Indian, Asian American, and Hispanic youth are also more at risk. Long Beach, a majority-minority city, has no public pools in six of its nine districts.

We researched the modern history of swimming regarding public access to beaches and swimming pools and recognize that issues of diversity and equal opportunity must be addressed through public policy. We also reviewed best practices regarding drowning prevention and public health. Community pools and swimming instruction ensure equal access to lifesaving skills and lifelong health for all residents. If you build it, they will come and learn to swim, and some will love it so much they will become champions, or lifeguards, or surfers. So everybody in the pool!

## **EVERYBODY IN THE POOL!**

**The following goals, priorities and strategies have been approved by LBAPN**

### **Goals:**

Insure equal access to public pools and swimming instruction for Long Beach residents

Build public pools in underserved communities

Increase minority participation in public swim, boating, and junior lifeguard programs

Raise community awareness about the health benefits of swimming and water sports

Provide free swimming lessons to Long Beach youth

Address current inequities and biases in aquatic settings that are the consequence of a history of racist attitudes, practices, and laws

### **Priorities:**

Oppose The Belmont Pool Revitalization Project as described in the Draft EIR due to its location, size, cost, lack of public input, and conflict with The Healthy Communities Policy of the City of Long Beach

Secure more public input re The Belmont Pool Revitalization Project, including comments on current plan and alternative ideas

Call for a public vote on the Belmont Pool Revitalization Project, requiring that the public approve of the project design and location before Tidelands Oil funds or other public monies can be spent on construction

Educate the public about and gather public input re

1) the history of swimmers of color in the Americas

2) the history of racism re public pools and beaches

3) the consequences of lack of access for today's minority and poor populations

4) efforts to reverse inequities and promote swimming for underserved populations

### **Strategies to build support for Goals and Priorities:**

Provide information to and dialogue with public through handouts, articles, social media, community events, public speakers, LBAPN swim history calendar &/or exhibit

Work with individuals and community groups that prioritize environmental justice and health equity re increasing diversity in both recreational and competitive water sports

Work with individuals and groups from the aquatics community re increasing diversity in both recreational and competitive water sports

Meet with public officials re increasing diversity in both recreational and competitive water sports

Seek support and funding for public pools and swimming lessons for all

**Community Swimming Pools Provide:**

Equal Access - access by all residents throughout the city to:

- 1. Public Education - swimming and water safety instruction
- 2. Public Safety - drowning prevention, crime prevention
- 3. Public Health - recreation and exercise
- 4. Aquatic programs for the public all day, every day, year round
- 5. Skills needed for other aquatics programs - boating, Jr. Lifeguards, sports teams
- 6. Increased public safety at and public enjoyment of local beaches and marinas
- 7. Affordable and sustainable aquatics facilities in the neighborhood - community pools are cost-effective to build and maintain unlike larger venues for competitive aquatics

**Long Beach**, the second most diverse city in the U.S. and the seventh largest in California, has no public pools in six of it's nine City Council Districts.

How does this compare with other cities?

Long Beach - 3 community pools for 462,000 residents

Lakewood - 2 community pools for 80,000 residents (4 times as many as Long Beach)

**PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS BY CITY**

City	total #of pools	# of pools per 100,000 residents
Madison	28	11.2
Cleveland	42	10.7
Cincinnati	26	8.8
Pittsburgh	19	6.2
Washington, D.C.	36	5.7
Atlanta	22	5.0
Henderson	13	4.9
Denver	29	4.6
Lakewood	2	4
<b>Long Beach</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>.7</b>

In the United States 4,000 persons die from drowning each year. Ten people drown every day, two of these are children.

Drowning is one of the top 3 causes of unintentional death for those under the age of 30

70% of black children, 65% of Asian American and Native American children, 60% of Hispanic children, and 40% of white children cannot swim

Black youths age 10-14 are ten times more likely to drown than their white peers. Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American youth are also more at risk.