



Emma Hood Pool FAQ

Why does the Emma Hood pool need to be replaced or repaired?

The Emma Hood Swim Center, which is located at Alameda High School (AHS) and is 65 years old, has been in disrepair for some time. The Alameda County Department of Environmental Health Department (ACDEH) first issued a notice of closure due to public safety and code violation concerns in 2010. Since then, AUSD, the City, ACDEH, and Aquatic Design Group have met repeatedly to develop solutions to the many problems afflicting the pool, but the overall problem remains that it is an old facility in need of a significant rehabilitation or replacement.

In 2019, the ACDEH issued a Notice of Health Concerns to AUSD about the condition of the pool. The agency allowed the pool to stay open until the end of May so that the AHS water polo team could complete its season. After the season ends, however, the pool needs to be closed until it is repaired, replaced, or removed.

What are the problems with the pool?

The two pools have a number of problems, with the most significant ones being:

1. Refinishing the plaster in the dive pool.
2. Addressing an air leak that affects the required water turnover rate so the water is safe for users.
3. Repairing areas of concern on the concrete pool deck to address safety and ADA issues.

Outside of the repair issues, the pool is only 25 yards long, and the facility is not big enough or deep enough for California Interscholastic Federation swim or water polo meets.

Who uses the pool?

AUSD holds its swim, dive and water polo practices at the pool. The Alameda Recreation and Parks Department (ARPD) also runs spring and summer programs at the pool. The largest users are the local swim clubs and teams, including the Alameda Gators, Alameda Aquatic Masters Swim Team, and Neptunes Water Polo for youth and adults.

Who is responsible for maintaining the pool?

The pool used to be operated and maintained by the City of Alameda, with the District paying half the maintenance cost. In 2016, AUSD took over the maintenance and operations and the two agencies continue to share the roughly \$140,000 it takes to run and keep the pools in good repair.

What are the City and AUSD doing about the pool?

In February, the City of Alameda and AUSD set up a joint ad hoc committee to discuss the Emma Hood Swim Center. The committee members include the Mayor, Vice Mayor, two Board of Education members, AUSD's CBO, the AHS Principal, EJSHS Athletic Director, an AHS student representative, the Interim Assistant City Manager, and representatives from ARPD and Alameda's aquatics community.

The County Health Department issued their repair requirements in mid-May. The main requirements were to re-plaster the dive pool, patch the lap pool, and repair the deck. Based on those requirements, AUSD issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) on June 10, 2019. To expedite the process, AUSD used what's called the CUPCAA process to ask for bids from pre-qualified vendors.¹ A compulsory site walk was conducted on June 20, 2019 with interested contractors. When none of the contractors submitted proposals by July 2, AUSD extended the RFP deadline to July 12, 2019.

On July 12, 2019, the District received one proposal in the amount of \$595K. This was \$245K more than the amount allocated for repairs. The contractor, who specializes in pools, disagreed with the County's assessment that the lap pool could be patched and submitted prices for a full re-plaster of the lap pool. The repairs to the deck also came in higher than anticipated.

¹ CUPCAA stands for California Uniform Public Construction Cost Accounting Act, which allows public agencies to pre-qualify vendors for projects that will cost \$200,000 or less.

In response, the District conferred with the County Department of Health to reduce the scope of mandated work to make it more affordable and then went back out to bid. Two contractors submitted quotations, one was selected, and the contract will go to the Board on August 27, 2019. The contract amount is \$195K. Several further delays also occurred as both the City Council and Board of Education go on hiatus for one month during the summer.

When will the pool be re-opened?

It's hard to tell at this point. The contractor will apply for a permit with the County Health Department and will start work after receiving the permit. Once the permit is received and the contractor is on site, the actual construction period is estimated to be about a month. However, it's important to note that the Emma Hood pools are more than 50 years old. As such, once the plaster is removed and the underlying shell revealed, more damage may become apparent. In that case, the repairs could take longer.

We've been hearing about a new swim center. What's that about?

The ad hoc committee has also been developing a long-term plan for a new City aquatic center. Information about this has been presented to both the Board of Education and City Council.

Where would the new swim center be located?

The ad hoc committee considered 10 options for a new swim center, including the current location at Alameda High School, Thompson Field, Alameda Point, and the former Lum Elementary School campus. After considering factors such as parking, traffic, community impact, size, infrastructure, student access, and time needed to complete the project, the committee narrowed the options to the current Emma Hood location with an expanded footprint or Thompson Field, with the latter being less desired. The committee was clear that no other sports would be disrupted and if Thompson Field were chosen, it would be a longer timeline until a new field is built elsewhere. The City Council is also considering other city-owned locations at its May 21 meeting. There will be a broad community engagement effort before the location decision is finalized.

What will be included in the swim center?

Although no final decision has been made, the ad hoc committee has reached consensus that the following elements would be desirable:

1. 30 to 50 meter competition pool for swimming, diving, and water polo
2. 25-yard pool that can be used for practice, warm up, swim lessons, and recreational swimming and would include a “zero depth entry” area that is helpful for seniors, ADA access, and young children
3. “splash zone” for children
4. multi-purpose room for trainings, work out area, and birthday parties
5. lighting for evening programming
6. modernized lockers and seating
7. snack bar and picnic area

If a new swim center is built, where will people swim?

Currently all swim programs – including Masters, ARPD swim lessons, lap and rec swims, and non-profit community youth programs – are being held at the Encinal Swim.

If Emma Hood needs to be closed for reconstruction during the school year, the new pool at Encinal Jr. and Sr. High School can accommodate both the Encinal and Alameda High programs. The district would need to improve lighting so that the teams can practice past dark. Community groups and ARPD summer programming would also be scheduled at Encinal Swim Center when space is available.