

For Rent

Designing flexible spaces for increased revenue



BY STEPHANIE FUJIMURA



Increasing demand for services presents community park and recreation districts with challenges when already faced with aging facilities and limited budgets. Smart and thoughtful design can help make the best use of budgets by making spaces rentable, efficient, and flexible to staff and to operate.

START WITH THE LOBBY

Lobbies provide an opportunity to create that first impression to the public:

■ **Provide a place to meet.** Entry areas should be configured for social interaction, offering sitting areas for visitors to meet, have casual conversations, or learn about the facility. A small bar with computer access can add to its flexibility to allow for online program registration.

■ **Use the space to expand.** A lobby can double as a pre-function space to support rented rooms for guests. This is especially nice for registration and socializing before events and during intermissions. This area can also serve as a place for celebration or festivities before or after an event.

■ **Bring the exterior in.** Large expanses of glass, oversized sliding doors, or glass roll-up doors help to quickly and easily (both visually and physically) enlarge lobby space without the increased cost of a larger structure.

SPACE ALLOCATION AND ADJACENCIES

In a larger facility, the ability to separate different amenities provides greater revenue-generation options. Hosting multiple events simultaneously immediately increases these opportunities—making use of space that otherwise would have been vacant due to a single event.

Revenue generation was one of the main goals in the programming and design of the Emerald Glen Recreation & Aquatic Complex, known as The Wave, in Dublin, Calif. Each aquatic feature is set up to allow for a logical separation. Some gates are made of custom-patterned, perforated aluminum panels that are lightweight and durable, able to maintain visual lines of sight. A “boardwalk” runs through

Facilities Program and Plan



① Reception / Administration

② The Wave Natatorium

Swim School
Lap Swimming / Water Walking
Water Aerobics
Natatorium Viewing Room

③ Community Room

④ Outdoor Park Amphitheater

⑤ Splash Zone

Interactive water play structure

⑥ Slide Tower

4 water slides, 2 high-speed slides

⑦ Sports Pool

*Outdoor sports competition
and athletic training pool*

⑧ Future Recreation & Concessions Building

B Boardwalk / Concessions

C Cabanas (rentals)

P Group Picnic Areas (rentals)

L Lockers (rentals)

M Pool Operations / Maintenance

R Restrooms / Showers

P Parking

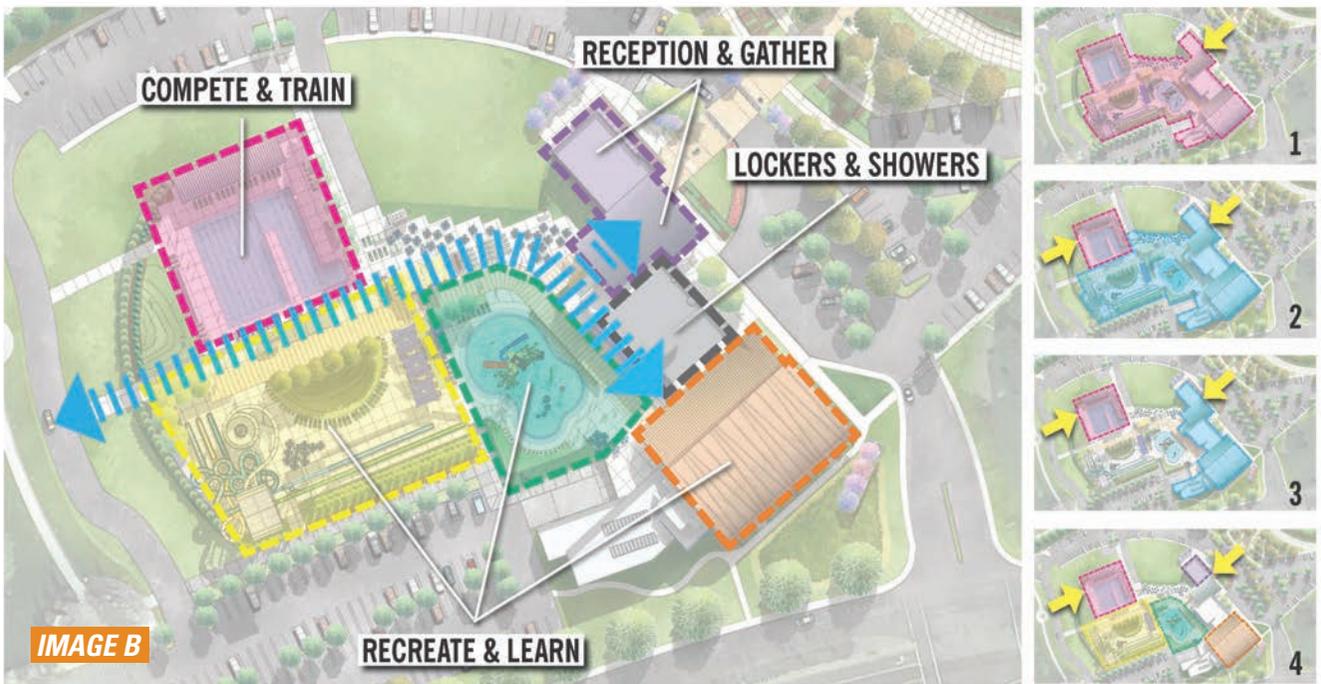
IMAGE C

**FORMAL SEPARATION OF AMENITIES
ALLOWS THE WAVE IN DUBLIN, CALIF.,
TO OPERATE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS—
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the entire exterior portion of the aquatic complex, providing clear access to each of these features, as well as linking back to the main building. When gates are rolled open, different elements can be combined to allow for access to the entire park (Image C). When gates are separated, safety is maintained while still preserving the open-facility feeling. In addition, the concession building, which was added by the city after the first season, is designed to serve multiple areas simultaneously, even when the park is separated for different events. (Image B)

Formal separation of amenities allows the facility to operate in a variety of ways—from opening the entire park to the public to only renting out select portions as needed. The competition pool area at The Wave is designed with a stand-alone pool building, which has pool-equipment storage, restrooms, and outdoor showers. The area is provided with dedicated access points and can operate independently without the need to open the main building, reducing overall staffing needs.

Separation also allows the city to rent out different areas of the facility for private events. The community room is an additional resource available for rental or corporate events and parties. From the city's standpoint, providing maximum flexibility of the facility maximizes revenue-generating opportunities.



SEPARATING FACILITIES ALLOWS FOR RENTING DIFFERENT AREAS FOR PRIVATE EVENTS, MAXIMIZING REVENUE-GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES.

CONSIDER STAFFING IMPACT

The other half of the revenue equation is minimizing costs. Since staffing is every facility’s number-one budget cost, designing to minimize staffing needs can increase a facility’s bottom line.

From allowing staff members to complete both reception and administrative duties simultaneously to reducing the amount of supervision needed on a pool deck, strategic design moves can create opportunities to reduce staff.

Use circulation to your advantage. At The Wave, separation of aquatic activities is organized off a central spine, allowing for each different water feature to be closed and unstaffed without draining pools.

Use adjacencies for double duty. The lobby and reception desk should be located adjacent to administrative offices for the greatest staff efficiency. Staff members can act as both

greeters and support for the administrative team. Having direct line of sight through the entire lobby and circulation spine also provides an additional sense of security.

When space doesn’t allow for immediate adjacency, consider using one-way glass between the administrative office and the building lobby to allow for a direct line of sight. At The Wave, the reception desk is a dual-sided feature, allowing for exterior ticket transactions on one side and general-activities questions and registration on the inside, allowing staff to flex and serve both sides of the ticketing areas, rather than needing duplicate staff members for separate areas.

CAPITALIZE ON EVOLVING PROGRAMS

Spaces need to accommodate a variety of activities and classes. The Pleasant Hill Community Center in Pleasant Hill, Calif., is one example of a building that successfully houses a broad range of programs and activities for the recreation and parks district and regional events within a single venue.

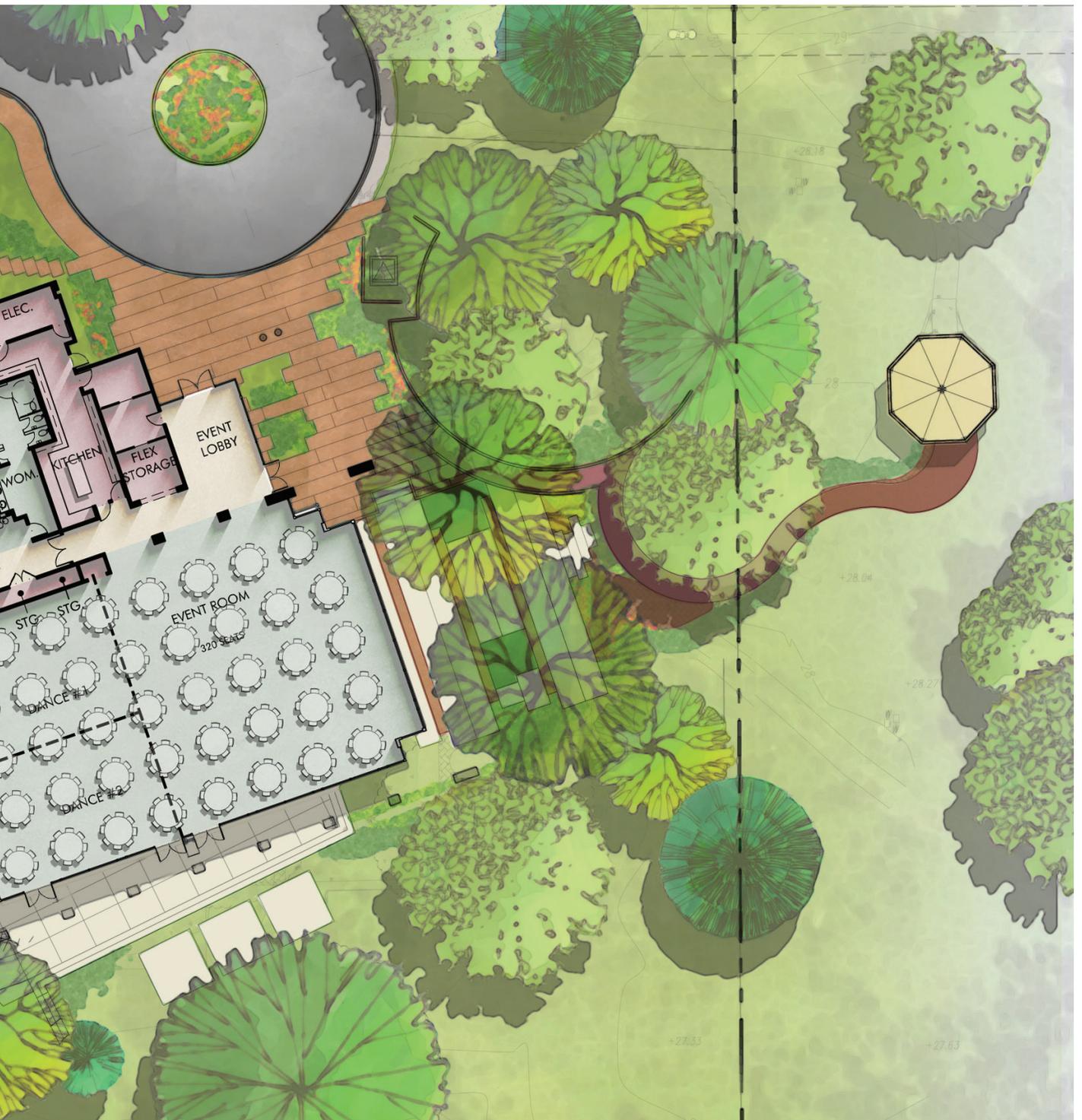


To maximize flexibility and minimize staff time, each of the large programs—preschool, events, and general community-center activities—has separate points of entry, which allows each to function independently with hours suited to each program. (Image A)

Flexibility in configuration of the events venue was a key consideration during the design process. The community center’s Perera Pavilion can be divided into three rooms and rented out in seven different configurations, allowing clients to customize space as needed with the use of folding partitions

designed to disappear when not needed. Each space can function as a smaller, stand-alone room or work seamlessly as a larger space. The floor in these spaces is a combination of carpet and cushioned wood, specifically selected to host programs from weddings to ballet classes. The pavilion is often pre-booked a year in advance—and in many cases, booked for more than one event at a time.

Much of the space in community centers is dedicated to “back of house” operations, such as kitchens. For this reason, consider simple adjustments in the equipment and layout to



support events and additional programming, such as cooking classes or healthy-meal initiatives.

Finding the balance between functionality and flexibility is the key—especially with the growing trend of multi-generational centers that provide services for an entire community under one roof. Smart and thoughtful design can help make the best use of a budget by allowing more money to be spent on programming. Taking advantage of opportunities to incorporate flexibility will allow a facility to grow. Understanding that activities are constantly evolving, creating spaces with the

goal of being able to grow with a community will keep a facility relevant and functioning longer. **PRB**

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