The Essential Pool

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Community Swimming Facilities, Social Capital, and the High Cost of Losing a Place to Belong

A Research Briefing on the Osborn Aquatic Center, the Corvallis Community, and Why Investing in Shared Spaces Is One of the Most Important Things We Can Do Right Now

About This Briefing

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This briefing is thirty years in the making.

In the mid-1990s, Anne Murphy arrived at Huff Hall at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as a transfer student and found herself in one of the most rigorous and justice-centered academic departments in the country. The Department of Leisure Studies - now Recreation, Sport and Tourism - was home to scholars who were making the case, with peer-reviewed evidence, that recreation is not a luxury. That who gets to play is a justice question. That the presence or absence of shared public spaces shapes the health, equity, and cohesion of entire communities.

Murphy earned her **B.S. in Leisure Studies in 1996** and her **M.S. in Leisure Studies in 2002**, completing a graduate thesis under the mentorship of **Dr. Bruce Wicks** that asked a question that still feels radical in some budget rooms: Why would people contribute philanthropically to a cause ostensibly funded through taxes - and parks at that? The answer, documented through original research, was that people understand the value of shared civic space even when public institutions underestimate it. They give to parks because they know what parks do - even when they can't always articulate it in the language of economic multipliers and disability-adjusted life years.[1]

That thesis was written more than two decades ago. The research Murphy has continued since - on the role of recreation in civil society, on the equity dimensions of leisure access, on the intersection of community infrastructure and public health - finds its most urgent application in the question before Corvallis today: whether to restore, fund, and sustain its community aquatic center.

This briefing synthesizes that decades-long body of research alongside the most current evidence in the field. It is offered as both a scholarly argument and a personal one - from someone who has spent a career studying what happens to communities when people have places to come together, and what happens when they don't.

The Scholars Who Shaped This Work

The faculty at UIUC whose scholarship forms the backbone of this briefing:

Dr. Kimberly J. Shinew - one of the first professors Murphy encountered at Illinois, and among the most influential voices in the field. Dr. Shinew's canonical research on race, class, gender, and leisure access is cited throughout and forms the equity core of this argument.[2][3][4][1]

Dr. Lynn Barnett-Morris - whose research on children's play, intrinsic motivation, and structured leisure established the developmental science behind why play is not optional.[5][6]

Dr. Bruce Wicks - Murphy's thesis advisor, whose work on parks philanthropy, event management, and the civic role of public investment gave her the research tools to ask the hardest questions about public funding and value.[1]

Dean Michael J. Ellis - dean of the College of Applied Life Studies and author of the canonical 1973 text Why People Play - the foundational argument that play is intrinsically motivated human behavior, not a reward for productivity. The expectation he built into the culture of that department - that students would go out into the world and lead - is the reason this briefing exists.[7][8][1]

Dr. Myron F. Floyd (Texas A&M University) - co-author with Dr. Shinew on the race and leisure scholarship that defines the equity dimension of this work.[4][9]

This briefing also draws on current Oregon-grounded research by **Dr. Xiangyou "Sharon" Shen** and her team at Oregon State University - **Megan MacDonald, Sam Logan, Lydia Gorrell**, and **Kreg Lindberg of OSU-Cascades** - whose 2025 Play2Cope study is the most timely and geographically relevant evidence yet that recreation is a public health necessity.[10][11]

And it builds on the civic scholarship of **Robert Putnam** - Bowling Alone (2000) and The Upswing (2020, with Shaylyn Romney Garrett) - and **Eric Klinenberg** - Palaces for the People (2018) - whose work on social capital and social infrastructure has made the civic case for shared spaces impossible to dismiss.[12][13]

How to Use This Document

- **For budget committees and city councils:** Start with Part I - the economic case. The numbers are sourced and defensible.
- **For public health and equity advocates:** Parts II and III make the racial equity and social determinants arguments.
- **For community members and families:** Parts IV and V speak to belonging, safety, and what it means for a generation to lose pool access.
- **For healthcare and aging advocates:** Part VI addresses healthy aging and Medicare cost implications.
- **For funders and philanthropists:** The full document is relevant - including the author's lineage above, which explains why this work matters personally.

Citations are numbered and sourced from peer-reviewed academic literature, government data, and institutional research. Sources noted as canonical are foundational texts that have shaped the scholarly conversation for decades.

Executive Summary

Let's be honest about where we are. We're living in a moment when many people - particularly immigrants, families of color, and communities already on the margins - don't feel safe showing up in public spaces. When joy feels hard to come by. When the fabric of everyday civic life is being stretched in ways that worry a lot of us deeply.

And into that moment, Corvallis's community has lost its primary public aquatic center.

This briefing makes the case that restoring and investing in the Osborn Aquatic Center - and by extension, in community pools everywhere - is not a feel-good project. It is a strategic, evidence-based response to a constellation of urgent social problems. The economic case is strong. The public health case is stronger. And the equity case is urgent.

Research on aquatic facilities documents social and health value. PricewaterhouseCoopers' Australian analysis estimates **A$2.18 per operating dollar for regional facilities and A$4.87 in capital cities**. An Osborn-specific estimate would require local participation, operating, and outcome data. In the United States, inadequate aerobic physical activity is associated with **$192 billion in annual healthcare spending in 2019 dollars**. Social isolation among older adults is associated with an estimated **$6.7 billion in additional annual Medicare spending**. Community pools offer places for physical activity and social connection.[14][15][16]

The drowning gap between Black and Hispanic children and their white peers is a public health crisis - and it widens every year a public pool is unavailable to the communities that need it most. The generation of children who lost pool access during COVID is now entering adolescence carrying compounding skill deficits and social development gaps. And at a moment when half of American adults report significant loneliness, the U.S. Surgeon General has named community infrastructure - exactly what a pool provides - as the solution.[17][18][19][20][21][22]

The choice to restore Osborn is not a close call. It is a declaration of what kind of community Corvallis intends to be.

Part I: The Economic Case - What a Community Pool Is Actually Worth

The conversation about Osborn has to start with money - because that is the conversation budget committees actually have. And the numbers are unusually strong.

Oregon's Recreation Economy

Oregon's outdoor recreation industry generated **$8.4 billion in economic impact** in 2023, accounting for 2.6% of the state's economy and supporting approximately 73,000 jobs. In 2022, outdoor and local recreation supported **$16 billion in spending** statewide, with $8.2 billion in associated wages and compensation. Critically, **local recreation** - the kind that happens at neighborhood pools and community parks, not at Mount Hood or the coast - accounted for **$2.9 billion in Oregon spending in 2022 alone**.[23][24]

Oregon's own state budget acknowledges this: the 2025-27 biennial allocation for Parks and Recreation specifically recognizes that recreation infrastructure drives health outcomes, tourism, and regional economic vitality.[25]

The Corvallis Calculation

Corvallis is a small city with outsized civic assets - and outsized civic stakes. Its 2024 population of approximately 60,408 anchors a metro area of 98,900. It hosts Oregon State University, the state's largest university, with 36,636 students and a $1.84 billion annual operating budget. Local recreationists and visitors spent **$80 million on outdoor recreation in Benton County in 2019**. That countywide spending figure does not establish a measured Corvallis share.[26][27][28][29][30]

The National Recreation and Park Association reports **$201.4 billion in nationwide economic activity from local park and recreation agencies' operations and capital spending in 2021**. Its 2023 agency review also reports a typical operating expenditure of **$94.77 per capita**. These figures provide national context. A Corvallis estimate would require local spending data and a local economic model; the national report does not establish a 4.9-times operating-spend multiplier for the city.[31][32][33][34]

PricewaterhouseCoopers' analysis estimates **A$2.18 in social and health value per operating dollar for aquatic facilities in regional Australia**. Applying that ratio to Osborn would require a local operating-cost base, participation data, and an assessment of how the Australian valuation assumptions apply in Corvallis. The study provides evidence about aquatic facilities, but it does not calculate Osborn's annual value.[16]

U.S. healthcare research offers another measure of the stakes. A 2025 study found an adjusted **$2,025 difference in annual healthcare expenditures between inactive and active adults**, measured in 2019 U.S. dollars. This national association does not establish how many Corvallis residents would become active through Osborn or the healthcare savings attributable to reopening the pool.[15]

Economic Dimension	Research Finding and Scope
Parks & recreation economic activity	$201.4B nationwide from local agencies' operations and capital spending in 2021
Outdoor recreation spending	$80M in Benton County in 2019; no measured Corvallis allocation in the cited source
Aquatic facility health & social value	A$2.18 per operating dollar in regional Australia; A$4.87 in Australian capital cities
Physical activity and healthcare spending	$2,025 annual expenditure difference between inactive and active U.S. adults, in 2019 dollars
Social isolation and Medicare spending	Estimated $6.7B in additional annual spending nationally; no Osborn-specific savings estimate

Sources: NRPA, Travel Oregon/Earth Economics Benton County fact sheet, Matjasko et al. (2025), PwC/Royal Life Saving, AARP/Stanford research[32][34][28][14][15][16]

For a local tourism projection, Travel Oregon's September 2026 grant announcement anticipates **approximately 12 competitive aquatic events and 2,000 hotel room nights in 2028** following improvements to Osborn. These are projected future outcomes, not measured results.[42]

The Cost-Effectiveness Evidence: Prevention ROI

Community pools don't just generate economic activity - they prevent economic loss. A systematic review of 52 public health intervention studies published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health found a **median return on investment for local public health interventions of 4.1 to 1**. The Pew Charitable Trusts, synthesizing 34 studies, found that **every dollar spent on public health saves approximately $14 in medical and societal costs**.[35][36]

PricewaterhouseCoopers' analysis of 2,113 publicly accessible aquatic facilities in Australia estimated **A$2.5 billion in annual health benefits**, **A$3.8 billion in social benefits**, and **7,479 disability-adjusted life years saved per year**. Facilities in regional Australia returned **A$2.18 in social and health value per operating dollar**.[16]

A 2026 peer-reviewed cost-benefit study (Wang, Macnivel, Peden & Angell, George Institute for Global Health / UNSW Sydney), published in the Health Promotion Journal of Australia, found that learn-to-swim programs return a **benefit-cost ratio of 1.40 to 2.23**, with consistent results across every socioeconomic group tested. Inadequate aerobic physical activity is associated with **$192 billion in annual U.S. healthcare spending, in 2019 dollars**. The HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation estimated that increasing regular moderate physical activity among inactive Americans could reduce annual direct medical costs by **$76.6 billion**. Less than 3% of the U.S.'s $3.6 trillion annual healthcare spending goes to prevention and public health. Community pools are part of that prevention layer.[37][38][39][15]

The Osborn Aquatic Center: The Local Stakes

The Osborn Aquatic Center - a four-pool facility operated by the City of Corvallis in partnership with the Corvallis School District - closed its indoor pools in October 2024 because of structural roof damage. Limited outdoor operations resumed in February 2025, with additional lessons and programs later that year. The entire facility closed for construction in September 2026, with reopening anticipated in fall 2027.[41][43][73]

Benton County's Board of Commissioners, in approving a repair grant of up to $100,000 in 2025, acknowledged the center's direct role in community health and the regional economy. As of February 2026, **$5,175,902** had been secured for Priority 1 repairs: **$4,045,902** in state legislative funding, **$500,000** from the City of Corvallis, **$500,000** from the Corvallis School District, **$100,000** from Benton County, and **$30,000** from the Corvallis Aquatic Team. The September 2025 facility condition assessment identified repair needs exceeding **$24 million** across all priority levels.[40][41]

In July 2026, the school board approved a **$5,212,000 construction bid** for structural repairs, HVAC replacement, and safety upgrades. Travel Oregon announced a further **$500,000 grant** in September 2026. These dated commitments describe different parts of the funding history; they do not establish the project's current remaining balance.[42][43]

Deferring that investment leaves repair needs unresolved and risks further costs in healthcare, lost economic activity, and compounding social harm - and, for families who need to learn to swim, preventable tragedy.

Part II: The Equity Imperative - Who Bears the Cost When Pools Close

When pools close, they don't close on everyone equally. This is among the strongest arguments in this briefing - and the one most often missing from municipal budget conversations.

The Drowning Gap Is a Public Safety Crisis

Only **36.9% of Black adults and 28.1% of Hispanic adults** report ever having taken a swimming lesson. Approximately one-third of Black adults report not knowing how to swim at all. Black children drown in swimming pools at rates **7.6 times higher** than white children ages 10-14. **64% of Black children and 45% of Hispanic children** lack basic swimming skills, compared to 40% of white children. Drowning is the leading cause of death for children ages 1-4 and the second leading cause of injury death for children ages 5-14.[44][19][22]

The 2024 CDC Vital Signs report, published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, documented that drowning death rates increased significantly during 2020-2022 - precisely the years of COVID-era pool closures - with the sharpest increases among groups already at elevated risk. The report concluded: "Social and structural barriers to accessing basic swimming and water safety skills training persist; these barriers disproportionately affect groups at the highest risk for drowning."[22]

The canonical scholarship of **Drs. Shinew and Floyd** documented why: the history of racially segregated pools in America severed intergenerational transmission of swimming skill for Black families - and without public pools offering accessible, affordable lessons, that deficit compounds across generations. Research at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia confirmed the mechanism: if a parent cannot swim, there is only a 13% probability their child will learn. Formal swim lessons reduce drowning risk by **88% for children as young as one year old**.[45][46][3][4]

Corvallis Is Becoming More Diverse - and That Changes the Stakes

Corvallis has historically been a predominantly white college town - but the demographic landscape is shifting in ways that make this conversation more urgent, not less. The U.S. Census Bureau's 2024 QuickFacts for Corvallis report that **10.2% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino**. In Benton County, the Latino population grew by **31% between 2010 and 2020**, among the fastest rates in Oregon. Oregon's overall Latino population now represents 15.5% of the state - a population that is disproportionately young, disproportionately likely to include children, and disproportionately underrepresented in swim lesson participation.[47][48][49]

As Corvallis grows more diverse, its public aquatic infrastructure becomes more - not less - important. A community pool is one of the few institutions positioned to reach these families, offer life-saving skills in an accessible setting, and serve as a genuine point of civic welcome. The absence of that infrastructure leaves the most vulnerable families with the least access to the prevention and skill-building they need most. That is not a neutral budget outcome. It is a choice with consequences measured in lives.

Part III: The Intellectual Foundation - Leisure as Social Infrastructure

Recreation Is Not a Luxury

The single most damaging misconception in public budgeting is treating recreation as discretionary. Every round of cuts, every deferred maintenance cycle, every "non-essential" designation normalizes that misconception - with consequences that accumulate silently across generations.

Dean Michael J. Ellis canonized the counter-argument in 1973: Why People Play argued that play is intrinsically motivated human behavior, governed not by external reward but by the fundamental human need for arousal, novelty, and social stimulation. Remove the play, and you don't save money. You create a developmental, social, and health deficit that expresses itself downstream in cost and harm.[8][7]

Dr. Xiangyou "Sharon" Shen and her OSU colleagues reinforced it empirically in 2025. Their Play2Cope study found that reduced outdoor recreation during the COVID-19 pandemic was directly associated with higher perceived stress and depressive symptoms - and that the impacts fell hardest on people of color and those facing economic hardship.[50][51]

"Outdoor recreation emerged as a powerful protective factor for mental health during the pandemic. We should think of parks and green spaces as essential infrastructure, on par with hospitals and pharmacies."[11]

OSU-Cascades and OHSU researchers, in a 2024 study of more than 1,000 Central Oregon residents, found that community belonging is a direct, independent predictor of both physical and mental health - and that the barriers to belonging are discrimination and economic inequality, precisely the barriers that affordable public recreation spaces are positioned to reduce.[52]

The Shinew-Floyd Scholarship: Leisure, Race, and Class (Canonical)

Floyd, Shinew, McGuire & Noe (1994) - "Race, Class, and Leisure Activity Preferences: Marginality and Ethnicity Revisited," Journal of Leisure Research (canonical): public facilities are the primary site of leisure equity for lower-income communities.[3]

Shinew, Floyd, McGuire & Noe (1995) - "Gender, Race, and Subjective Social Class and Their Association with Leisure Preferences," Leisure Sciences: race, gender, and class compound to produce distinct patterns of leisure exclusion.[53][4]

Shinew & Floyd (1996) - "Class Polarization and Leisure Activity Preferences of African Americans: Intragroup Comparisons," Journal of Leisure Research (canonical): public pools are a uniquely equalizing gateway to water-based recreation for lower-income communities.[4]

Floyd & Shinew (1999) - "Convergence and Divergence in Leisure Style Among Whites and African Americans: Toward an Interracial Contact Hypothesis," Journal of Leisure Research: shared public leisure spaces are the primary mechanism for building cross-racial trust.[2]

Part IV: Bowling Alone at the Pool's Edge - The Social Capital Crisis

Putnam's Warning - and His Vision of the Upswing

Robert Putnam's 1995 essay "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," published in the Journal of Democracy (canonical), and the 2000 book that followed, documented a slow-motion civic collapse: club meeting attendance down 58%, family dinners down 43%, having friends over down 35%.[54][55]

In The Upswing (2020, with Shaylyn Romney Garrett), Putnam made his most hopeful - and most demanding - argument: the "I-We-I" arc of American history is not destiny. The country corrected this trajectory before, during the Progressive Era, by rebuilding the physical and civic infrastructure of shared life. Choosing to restore Osborn is a vote for the upswing.[13][56]

Eric Klinenberg: Social Infrastructure Is the Answer

In Palaces for the People (2018), Eric Klinenberg coined "social infrastructure" to describe the physical places and organizations that shape how people interact. When social infrastructure is strong, neighborhoods flourish. When it is neglected, "families and individuals must fend for themselves." His study of the 1995 Chicago heat wave - which killed more than 700 people, nearly all isolated and alone - found that survival was markedly better in neighborhoods with robust recreation and community infrastructure.[57][58][12]

"If we don't invest in social infrastructure, we're all the more likely to wind up hunkering down, staying home, being alone, getting our source of social satisfaction from the machines that we carry with us in our pocket everywhere we go."[58]

When Third Places Aren't Safe for Everyone

Ray Oldenburg's "third place" concept rests on an assumption: that people feel welcome there. That assumption is under direct pressure right now.[59][60]

Immigration enforcement has explicitly targeted churches, clinics, and schools. Research published in 2025 found that 52% of Spanish-speaking immigrants reported fear about engaging in essential public activities. The Project for Public Spaces' 2025 State of Public Space survey found that communities of color receive less investment in public space creation and upkeep - and ranked that disinvestment among their top concerns.[61][62][63]

A community pool - where lifeguards enforce the same rules for everyone, where the language of participation is water - can be exactly the refuge that a fractured civic moment demands. Children play together regardless of where their parents were born. The pool doesn't ask for papers. It asks you to swim.

In a moment when joy is genuinely hard to come by for many families in Corvallis and across Oregon, that matters more than any spreadsheet can capture.

The Surgeon General's Call to Action

In May 2023, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared loneliness an epidemic - half of American adults significantly lonely, adults ages 30-44 the loneliest demographic in the country. The advisory named community infrastructure as the solution: "investing in local institutions that bring people together." The U.S. currently ranks **118 out of 191 countries** on the 2024 Global Social Capital Index. That is a policy choice - made every time a community decides whether a shared space is worth maintaining.[20][64][17]

Part V: The Generational Stakes - What We Lose When the Pool Closes for Even a Year

The Skill Gap That Compounds

More than **two million youngsters missed swimming** due to COVID-era closures in the UK alone, with nearly a quarter of a million unable to swim a pool length as a result. The 2024 CDC Vital Signs report confirmed the American consequence: drowning death rates rose during 2020-2022, sharpest among groups already at highest risk. Every year of closure is a year that gap widens.[18][22]

COVID-19 pandemic cancellations also took a documented toll on adolescent mental health - with rates of anxiety and depression roughly halving when young people returned to organized activity. UCSB researchers found adolescent social well-being continued to decline even after restrictions lifted, with over 60% still "languishing" through 2022. A generation carrying two to three years of missed recreation doesn't bounce back automatically.[65][21]

Life Skills That Can't Be Replaced Online

Dr. Lynn Barnett-Morris's research established that structured aquatic programming is a mechanism through which children develop intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and social cognition. Research on shared leisure spaces confirms these settings generate the cross-demographic contact that builds broader community trust. Third place participation is associated with nearly 6 fewer percentage points in high school dropout probability and nearly 7 more in college attendance probability. No app replicates that.[66][67][6][5]

Part VI: Aging Into the Water - Why This Matters More Every Year

By 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 or older. Swimming is the most age-appropriate exercise modality available - minimal joint stress, maximum cardiovascular and neurological benefit. Indiana University's Counsilman Center found that regular Masters swimmers can have a biological age approximately **20 years younger** than their chronological age. Regular swimming is associated with reduced dementia risk and statistically lower all-cause mortality in older adults.[68][69][70][71][72]

OSU-Cascades and OHSU's 2024 Central Oregon research confirms the direct Oregon link between community belonging, shared public spaces, and health outcomes. Social isolation among older adults is associated with an estimated **$6.7 billion in additional Medicare spending annually**. A functioning aquatic center provides a place for physical activity and social connection; the cited research does not calculate Medicare savings attributable to Osborn.[14][52]

Conclusion: The Pool as Civic Argument

From **Michael Ellis's** foundational theory that play is a human necessity - to **Shinew and Floyd's** canonical evidence that public pools are the front line of leisure equity - to **Putnam and Klinenberg's** documentation of what communities lose when shared spaces disappear - to **Dr. Shen and her OSU colleagues'** finding that recreation is a public health necessity - to the **CDC's documentation** that pool closures widen the drowning gap for communities least able to afford private alternatives - the evidence is unified and unambiguous.[54][11][12][7][22][4]

Australian research estimates A$2.18 in social and health value per operating dollar for regional aquatic facilities and A$4.87 in capital cities. Those estimates do not calculate Osborn’s return. Every month Osborn stays closed, Corvallis loses opportunities for children to learn to swim, for seniors to show up somewhere that knows their name, and for families to have one more reason to feel like this city belongs to them too.[16]

The data says: build it. The equity says: build it now.

This briefing was authored by Anne Murphy, B.S. Leisure Studies (1996) and M.S. Leisure Studies (2002), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with research support from Perplexity AI and Claude (Anthropic). It reflects thirty years of research and professional practice on the role of recreation in civil society.

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34. The Economic Impact of Local Parks | Research - NRPA's Economic Impact of Local Parks Report not only demonstrates that the nation's local parks gen...
35. Public Health Initiatives Deliver Big Returns on Investment - Community-level public health investments could save an estimated $1.10 in Medicare costs alone, acc...
36. Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic ... - The median ROI for all 29 local public health interventions was 4.1 to 1, and median CBR was 10.3. E...
37. Physical Activity Fundamental To Preventing Disease - ASPE - Physical activity has been shown to reduce the risk of developing or dying from heart disease, diabe...

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41. Frequently Asked Questions - Friends of Corvallis Parks & Recreation - Yes, the Aquatic Center is partially funded through the City's voter-approved Livability Levy, most ...

42. Travel Oregon Awards $5 Million in Competitive Grant Funds - September 28, 2026. Includes the $500,000 Osborn award and projected aquatic events and hotel room nights in 2028.

43. Corvallis School Board Approves $5.2 Million Bid for Osborn Aquatic Center Roof Repairs - July 2, 2026. Approved construction bid of $5,212,000 and project scope.

44. Drowning Prevention: Improving Youth Access to Swim Lessons - Only 36.9% of Black adults and 28.1% of Hispanic adults reported ever taking a swimming lesson. In a...

45. The Pandemic's Impact on Drowning Rates & The Importance of ... - Studies have shown formal swim lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88% for children as young ...

46. Disparities in Drowning: Swimming a Joy for Some, Deadly for Others - Between the ages of 11-12, black children drowned in pools at 10 times the rate of white children. S...

47. Corvallis city, Oregon - U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts - Table ; Hispanic or Latino, percent(b) · White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent · Veterans, 20...

48. How many people live in Oregon? - USAFacts - Between 2024 and 2025, the population of Oregon grew by about 8,300 people. ... In contrast, Oregon'...

49. Oregon's Latino population grew by 30% in the last 10 years - Oregon's Latino population grew by 31% from 2010-2020, a faster rate ... Hispanic Population In Port...

50. Research shows outdoor recreation not a luxury but a public health ... - New research strongly suggests policymakers should view outdoor recreation spaces not as luxuries bu...

51. Outdoor recreation key to mental health during crises, OSU-led ... - Shen leads OSU's HEAL research lab, which studies how humans interact with the environment through l...

52. OSU-Cascades, OHSU researchers confirm connection in Central ... - A survey of more than 1,000 Central Oregonians found that community belonging is an important determ...

53. Gender, race, and subjective social class and their association with ... - This study examines the leisure preferences of subgroups defined by gender, race, and subjective soc...

54. SOCIAL CAPITAL PRIMER - Robert D. Putnam - Bonding networks that connect folks who are similar sustain particularized (in-group) reciprocity. B...

55. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community - In this important book, Putnam demonstrates that social capital increased between 1900 and the late ...

56. [PDF] Book Notes: - Jefferson Educational Society - Putnam, Robert with Shaylyn Romney Garrett. The Upswing: How America Came. Together a Century Ago an...

57. Hyping Social Infrastructure: A Review of Eric Klinenberg's Palaces ... - Klinenberg, Eric. Palaces for the People: How Social Infrastructure Can Help Fight Inequality, Polar...
58. Palaces for the People | Eric Klinenberg | Talks at Google - YouTube - ... book, "Palaces for the People". This talk is an invitation to engage with what social infrastruc...
59. Ray Oldenburg - Project for Public Spaces - When he retired, the university created a “Third Place” community room in the library. In later year...
60. “Third places” as community builders - Brookings Institution - Third places is a term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg and refers to places ... meeting places, ...
61. Ten Harmful Trump Administration Immigration and Refugee Policies - The Trump administration has enacted new immigration policies at a dizzying pace, some of which obli...
62. The State of Public Space in 2025 - In recognition of our 50th Anniversary in 2025, Project for Public Spaces invited public space profe...
63. Responding with Courage: How Spanish-Speaking Immigrants ... - This study finds that many Spanish-speaking immigrants feel the immigration climate has significantl...
64. In a Divided America, How Can We Measure Social Connection? - Here we highlight several ways to measure social connection in your community and offer resources fo...
65. COVID-19 pandemic cancellations took harsh toll on teen athletes ... - Adolescent athletes reported significant impairments in mental health, QOL and PA during the early p...
66. [PDF] Recreation, Informal Social Networks and Social Capital - Using multi-level models analysing a rich data source on the social networks of members, we show how...
67. What are Third Places and Why Do They Matter? | Shanker Institute - Third places act as a core setting for informal public life, offering connection, community, and soc...
68. Swimming For Seniors - Blakehurst - The benefits of swimming extend beyond physical health to encompass mental well-being and overall qu...
69. Why Swimming Might Be the Best Form of Exercise You Can Do - Swimming's biggest benefits come later in life, when adults may be carrying a few extra pounds becau...
70. Long-term intensity and volume of biking, swimming, and tennis - Biking, swimming, and tennis link to lower mortality risk. •. Both intensity and volume of physical ...
71. Why aquatic exercise is making a splash with health conscious adults - Research evidence suggests that moderate to high intensity aquatic exercise is at least as effective...
72. By 2030, All Baby Boomers Will Be Age 65 or Older - Census Bureau - Since then, about 10,000 a day have crossed that age threshold and by 2030, all boomers will be at l...
73. Osborn Aquatic Center Natatorium Construction Project - City of Corvallis. September 2026 full-facility construction closure and anticipated fall 2027 reopening.

Questions About The Essential Pool

What is The Essential Pool?

A research briefing on community swimming facilities, social capital, and the high cost of losing a place to belong, using Osborn Aquatic Center and Corvallis as its local focus.

What economic evidence does the paper use?

The paper draws on county recreation spending, national public-health research, and Australian aquatic-facility research. Local dollar returns require a separate local analysis.

Can I download the complete paper?

Yes. The complete research briefing is available as a downloadable PDF and as text on this page.