



Date: October 5th, 2024

To: Brooks Chandler, Interim City Manager
Nome Common Council

CC: Dan Grimmer, City Clerk
Angie Nguyen, Administrative Assistant
Cole Cushman, Building Maintenance Director

From: Chip Leeper, Director of Parks and Recreation

Re: Poor Condition of Locker Rooms at the Nome Recreation Center

The locker rooms at the Nome Recreation Center are an important hub within our facility. They are essential for gym, weight room, and sauna-users by providing space for changing, storing personal belongings and congregating with friends and family for a relaxing sweat.

Current Condition of the Locker Rooms

1. Structural and Aesthetic Deterioration

- **Wear and Tear:** Frequent use has led to significant wear on the infrastructure and flooring. Many surfaces are scratched, cracked or all-together missing which detracts from the overall aesthetic and functionality of the space.
- **Hygiene Concerns:** Aging facilities often show signs of mold, mildew and hard-water marks, particularly in the areas with high moisture, such as the shower and sauna areas especially if there are no means of removing the moisture from the space.
- **Deterioration of Grout/Tile:** In both group shower areas there has been significant degradation of the grout. In the corners most of grout has already been removed and water has penetrated into the walls and down into the subsurface material leading to soft and rotted areas. In the men's locker room some fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP) has been placed in the corners to add some modicum of protection but we are now experiencing the same thing in the women's locker rooms except along the walls.

2. Insufficient Amenities

- **No Air handling/Ventilation System:** Despite the presence of vents in the ceilings near the saunas of each locker room no functioning system exists within the facility. At the time of its construction it was not required code to have an air handling system installed. I've been told the original plans included one but that once cost overruns occurred it was one of the first things removed to lower expenses.

3. Air Quality and Ventilation Issues

- **Health Risks:** Without an effective system to remove all the moist, heated air generated by the saunas our locker rooms lack effective ventilation, leading to stale air, unpleasant odors, high humidity levels and the formation of mold. This can create



an uncomfortable environment and contribute to health issues, such as respiratory problems especially for older patrons or those with compromised immune systems.

- **Temperature Control/Comfortable Enjoyment Experience:** Inadequate temperature regulation can make locker rooms uncomfortably hot or cold, further discouraging usage and affecting overall user satisfaction.

Implications of Poor Conditions

1. User Experience

- **Decreased Usage:** Users are less likely to return to facilities that do not meet their hygiene and comfort standards. This can result in decreased usage or participation rates thereby negatively impacting revenue as well.
- **Negative Perception:** Poorly maintained locker rooms can lead to negative perceptions of the overall facility, deterring potential new use and shedding negative light on the facility and staff.

2. Health and Safety Risks

- **Increased Risk of Illness:** The presence of mold and poor air quality can lead to respiratory issues and other health problems among users.
- **Safety Hazards:** Damaged flooring or equipment can pose safety risks, increasing the likelihood of accidents and injuries.

Need for Improvements/Overhaul

1. Structural Improvements

- **Renovation of Facilities:** Upgrading locker rooms to include new floors, amenities, saunas, and shower facilities will enhance user comfort and safety. Incorporating durable, easy-to-clean materials will improve hygiene.
- **Modern Design:** Aesthetic upgrades can create a more inviting atmosphere, encouraging more users to utilize the facilities.

2. Enhanced Air Handling Systems

- **Installation of Ventilation Systems:** Implementing a modern air handling system will improve air quality by facilitating proper airflow and reducing humidity levels. This can help eliminate odors and create a more comfortable environment.
- **Temperature Control:** Advanced HVAC systems can regulate temperatures effectively, ensuring that locker rooms remain comfortable year-round.

Conclusion

The current state of our locker rooms which need to be able to function in a heavy-usage environment necessitates urgent attention. Upgrades to the facilities, combined with the installation



of an effective air handling system, are essential for enhancing user experience, promoting health and safety, and maintaining a positive reputation for the facility. Investing in these improvements will not only serve the current user base but will also attract new members, ultimately benefiting the community as a whole.

Recommendations

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing locker room conditions.
- Seek funding for locker room renovations and an air handling system installation as designed by RSA Engineering.
- Engage users to support these requests so that these improvements will take place.

By addressing these issues, facilities can create a more functional, safe, and enjoyable environment for all users.

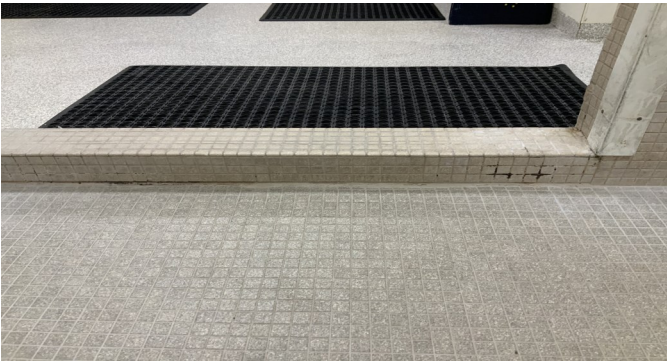
Locker Room Pictures



Mold in Grout of Men's Showers: Once mold gets into grout it is impossible to remove. Staff have tried numerous ways to remove it and none have been successful.



Rotten Flooring and Sub-Flooring: Water has been escaping the shower pan in one of the single showers in the ladies' locker room leading to rotten flooring and unsafe conditions.



More Mold in Men's Group Shower: The existence of mold is pervasive throughout the shower areas. Mold exposure can lead to respiratory and other health issues.



Worn Out from Heavy Usage: The women's sauna is in particularly poor condition. Years of neglect have led to loss of grout and rotten subflooring. Floor has hard water stains throughout.



Beyond Repair: Years of water flowing out of the women's sauna has rotted the threshold, flooring and sub-flooring. As patrons need to step on this area to enter the sauna there are major safety concerns regarding the possibility that the floor will collapse causing potential injury to a patron.

Locker Room Pictures (Cont'd)



Mold Growing on the Ceiling: Lack of ventilation has led to mold growth on the ceiling of the men's locker room. The build-up of moisture is making the plaster peel.



Old Worn Flooring: Heavy traffic and repeated use have led to cracks forming on the floor of the women's locker room. As the degradation continues water will seep down into the subfloor.



More Mold in the ceilings: The existence of mold is pervasive throughout the ceiling areas of both locker room ceilings.



Compromised Floor in Men's Sauna: The last time the men's sauna floor was fixed it was not graded to drain properly leading to failure in the flooring seams. Once water began to get underneath it the floor began to peel.



Needs Immediate Attention: Water has permeated the tile in the women's group shower so thoroughly that the walls are collapsing as evidenced by the wavy pattern visible above. In the lower right corner it is completely rotted.