

CITY OF RICHLAND CENTER - AGENDA ITEM DATA SHEET

Agenda Item: Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) Symons Recreation Complex Assessment

Requested & Presented by: Darcy Perkins, MSS and Innovative Public Advisors (IPA)

Meeting Date: Finance Committee and Common Council on 02-03-2026

Background: On October 7, 2025, Council authorized a contract with Innovative Public Advisors (IPA) to complete an Operational Structure Assessment of the Symons Recreation Complex, fully funded by a Wisconsin DOR Innovation Planning Grant.

IPA's final report (March 3, 2026) confirms Symons is highly valued and operationally stable but facing increasing long-term capital pressure. The study concludes that maintaining the current shared City/County structure increases long-term levy exposure and capital risk.

The study evaluated five governance models. However:

- **Status Quo** is not recommended due to levy constraints and the City's identified inability to continue long-term subsidy growth.
- **Single-Entity City Ownership** is not financially feasible under current municipal capacity.
- **Single-Entity County Ownership** does not independently qualify for Innovation Grant funding unless they transfer the service to another entity.

The Wisconsin DOR Innovation Grant application deadline is March 31. If operational governance transfers to the Richland School District, the County would qualify to apply for the grant. Accordingly, IPA's recommendation is that, if the City and County wish to pursue the Innovation Grant opportunity, transfer of operational governance to the Richland School District represents the most viable and immediately actionable path forward.

Department Recommendation:

Provide policy direction supporting:

- Transition of operational governance of Symons to the Richland School District; and
- Authorization for staff to work with Richland County and the School District to pursue submission of a Wisconsin DOR Innovation Grant application.

Requested Motion:

COUNCIL:

1.) Take no action this evening, receive and review information only.

OR

2.) Motion to support Richland County pursuing a Wisconsin DOR Innovation Grant application based on transfer of operational governance of the Symons Recreation Complex to the Richland School District and authorize staff to collaborate in development of the necessary intergovernmental framework.

Attachment(s):

- IPA Symons Recreation Complex Operational Structure Assessment