

III. Conclusion

Based on our case studies, we can speculate the reasons that Madison is an anomaly because it has no city run public swimming pools. First, there is the geographical reason. Due to Madison's location amongst numerous lakes, rivers and bodies of water, a pool has not been necessary in the past, as outdoor public pools had little to no advantage over swimming in the lakes. Due to climate, public pools would not be able to remain open any longer than a beach, so just having beaches instead of pools made economic sense. The cities we studied are not located in areas with such an abundance of water, Austin in the arid environment of central Texas, Des Moines among the fields of Iowa, Lincoln in the Great Plains, and Milwaukee lies on Lake Michigan, which is too dirty to swim in. All of these cities have plenty of city run public pools. Holding geographical factors responsible for the lack of a municipal pool in Madison is consistent with city residents who expressed that the city does not need a lake because of its wealth of natural lakes.

Second we looked at the income distribution and tax aspect of the pool issue. Madison has an average tax rate comparable with the cities we analyzed. The money collected by taxes goes into the budget and indirectly helps pay for pools. The maximum cost of building a pool would be approximately \$2.4 million dollars. The median income in the city of Madison is above the national average, and was higher than the four cities we did case studies on. Lower income appears to correlate with more public pools, and the four cities we did case studies on had lower average incomes than Madison, therefore giving a reason that Madison currently has no public pools. This is consistent with the opposition of Madison residents to municipal pool construction on the grounds that

residents who want to swim should either build their own pools or belong to private swim clubs.

Lastly, we looked at age distribution. The median age in Madison is approximately 30 years old, this is the age people are starting families and having children. We can speculate from data we gathered that a high family population, specifically youth population, increases the need for pools, as families are the most likely demographic group to use public pools.

These factors, however, do not mean that Madison should not have any public pools. Lately, due to rising levels of bacteria such as E.coli, Madison has increasingly had to close its beaches. While the average income of Madison residents is above average, there still is a population of poor people who cannot afford their own pools or a private membership. And since Madison taxes are average and incomes are above average, the residents and city could easily absorb a small increase to help build public pools. Despite the fact that Madison has fewer people under 18 than the cities we researched, due to the population of Madison, it still accounts for approximately 40,000 residents. Additionally, the fact that a 1989 poll showed that 63% of Madison residents were in favor of the city building pools provides evidence that a large segment of Madison residents, not just youth, would swim in public pools.