

Reach Amphitheater Feasibility Study

Overview & Findings

“A Strategic Framework for Future Investment and Operations”

Prepared for the

Richland Public Facilities District

Prepared by



with professional support from

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Architectural Planning & Order-of-Magnitude Cost Analysis

SONAR INSIGHTS

Community Survey & Market Research

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*This Overview & Findings provides a concise summary of the principal findings, recommendations, and planning considerations presented in the **August 2026 REACH Amphitheater Feasibility Study**. It is intended as a stand-alone overview for readers seeking a general understanding of the study. The complete feasibility study remains the source document for supporting analysis, consultant reports, cost estimates, assumptions, and detailed documentation*

REACH Museum Amphitheater

The Opportunity

Located adjacent to the REACH Museum within Columbia Park West, the REACH Amphitheater is an established community asset supporting museum programs, community events, educational activities, rentals, and selected performances.

The feasibility study evaluated opportunities to strengthen that role through practical, right-sized improvements to the existing venue. Facility assessment, stakeholder input, community research, operational analysis, and architectural planning identified meaningful potential to expand amphitheater use while improving the experience for performers, patrons, renters, and community partners.

Current Amphitheater Activity

~35

Use days per season

125–130

Estimated potential operating days

~27%

Current seasonal utilization

~\$40,875

Gross annual operating revenue

A Central Finding

The primary barriers to expanded amphitheater use are functional rather than market driven.

The amphitheater benefits from a distinctive riverfront setting, an established history of community activity, and demonstrated interest from potential users. However, limited performer support, patron amenities, production infrastructure, and other operational constraints increase reliance on temporary solutions and limit the range and frequency of events the venue can efficiently support.

Addressing these functional limitations creates an opportunity to strengthen current operations, increase venue utilization, and expand the amphitheater's long-term value as a community and regional performance asset.

What the Study Found

Community research, stakeholder and facility-user input, existing venue activity, and regional comparisons point to meaningful opportunities for expanded use of the REACH Amphitheater. Together, these findings indicate that future success will depend on aligning venue improvements, programming, and operations with uses naturally suited to the site.

Opportunity for Expanded Use

Community research and market analysis indicate interest in expanded outdoor programming, particularly live music, family-oriented events, community programming, and flexible seasonal entertainment.

Attendance potential, however, varies by event type, programming quality, scheduling, pricing, and overall audience experience. Expanded use alone should not be assumed to guarantee increased attendance or financial performance.

Facility Users Identified Consistent Barriers

Stakeholders and prospective users expressed interest in expanded amphitheater use if targeted infrastructure and operational improvements are made. Recurring needs included performer support facilities, permanent production infrastructure, secure storage, improved site control, and reduced dependence on temporary equipment and event-specific workarounds.

Music, touring performances, community events, festivals, and other flexible outdoor programming were identified as particularly compatible with the venue. Selected traditional performing arts uses are also feasible but require greater operational and facility support.

A Distinct Role Within the Regional Market

The REACH Amphitheater occupies a different position from larger regional concert venues and smaller park or hospitality-based performance spaces. Its riverfront setting, connection to the REACH Museum and Columbia Park West, and potential for improved permanent infrastructure provide an opportunity to serve a distinct community and regional role.

An improved REACH Amphitheater can complement—not duplicate or directly compete with—the region's existing outdoor venue network.

Four Areas of Investment

The study identifies four interconnected areas of investment that together address the principal limitations affecting amphitheater use. Rather than functioning as independent projects, these improvements work together to strengthen venue capability, operational efficiency, and the experience of performers and patrons.

Performer Support Highest Priority

Dedicated backstage facilities address the venue's most significant operational limitation. Dressing rooms, green room and production support space, performer restrooms, storage, backstage circulation, and stage improvements would expand programming compatibility and reduce reliance on temporary solutions.

Patron Support High Priority

Permanent restrooms, concessions and event-support space, along with improved ticketing and access functions, would support increased attendance, improve the patron experience, and allow greater operational independence from the REACH Museum.



Site Functionality & Audience Experience Medium-High Priority

Improvements to accessibility, circulation, seating and sightlines, site access, event control, wayfinding, and gathering areas would improve event-day operations while creating a more comfortable and functional visitor experience.

Production Systems Medium-High Priority

Permanent audio, lighting, electrical distribution, rigging, and production communications would reduce dependence on temporary systems, simplify event delivery, and support a broader range of performances and community event

A Coordinated Improvement Program

The study recommends implementing the identified improvements as a coordinated capital program whenever practical. Addressing performer support, patron support, site functionality, and production systems together provides the greatest operational benefit while helping minimize disruption, duplication of effort, and future reconstruction.

Planning-Level Investment

\$3.63 Million

Architectural improvement program

Exclusive of Washington State sales tax

\$430,000

Production systems allowance

These planning-level estimates establish an initial framework for budgeting and funding discussions. Costs should be refined through future design development, system design, and construction planning.

Implementation & Phasing

While coordinated implementation offers the greatest overall benefit, the study recognizes that funding availability may require improvements to advance in phases. Thoughtful sequencing or value engineering can allow individual components to proceed while preserving compatibility with the long-term vision and avoiding unnecessary duplication of work.

Future Enhancements

Additional improvements may be considered as venue utilization, funding, and broader campus planning evolve:

Permanent Structural Stage Roof — \$610,000

Expanded weather protection, production capability, and rigging capacity.

Parking & Site Access Improvements — \$325,000

Potential future improvements supporting increased venue activity and campus access.

Audience Comfort Enhancements — Cost TBD

Additional shade and other improvements supporting patron comfort and the audience experience.

What the Investment Makes Possible

Improved infrastructure can increase the amphitheater's ability to support additional events while reducing many of the operational limitations that affect current use. With approximately 35 use days during a typical season, the venue currently utilizes about 27% of its estimated seasonal operating capacity.

Capacity for Increased Use

Review of the operating calendar identified approximately **85 potentially available booking days** after accounting for existing use and excluding Sundays and Mondays as generally less desirable operating days. Availability is not evenly distributed, however, and desirable dates—particularly Saturdays—are more limited.

Rather than assuming that all available dates can be programmed, the study uses a conservative planning range of:

+10 to +20 Additional Use Days Annually

Rental Revenue Opportunity

At an assumed average rental rate of **\$2,500 per use day**, the modeled increase in utilization represents approximately:

+\$25,000 to +\$50,000 in Potential Annual Gross Rental Revenue

Permanent production systems could provide an additional source of rental revenue through charges for sound, lighting, and related equipment.

Presented Programming

Selected available dates could also support events presented directly by the venue. Presented programming offers potentially greater revenue opportunity than facility rental but also requires greater investment and exposes the operator to ticket-sales and event-level financial risk.

The study therefore does not prescribe a single revenue model. A **hybrid approach** could preserve and expand rental activity while using selected dates for presented events, community programming, and other venue activation.

Planning Perspective

These projections are planning-level estimates rather than forecasts of guaranteed financial performance. Actual results will depend on market demand, programming, pricing, scheduling, operating capacity, and the future operating approach.

Infrastructure Creates Opportunity. Operations Determine Results.

The recommended capital improvements establish the physical foundation for a more capable and flexible amphitheater. Long-term success, however, will depend on an operating framework that connects those improvements to programming, partnerships, day-to-day management, financial stewardship, and ongoing evaluation.

Leadership & Administration

Clear leadership is needed to provide strategic direction, financial oversight, scheduling, community relationships, and operational coordination while guiding the venue's continued development.

Programming & Venue Activation

Programming is the primary driver of venue utilization. A balanced mix of rentals, presented performances, community events, educational activities, and collaborative programming can broaden participation while maximizing the value of the improved facility.

Operations, Partnerships & Marketing

Consistent operations, effective marketing, and strong partnerships can improve event delivery and expand the resources available to the venue. Relationships with arts organizations, educational institutions, community groups, event producers, and other regional partners can also create additional programming opportunities.

Performance Measurement & Continuous Improvement

Measures such as utilization, attendance, earned revenue, rental activity, community participation, customer satisfaction, and financial performance can provide an objective basis for evaluating results and informing future decisions.

From Framework to Business Plan

The feasibility study intentionally establishes an **operating framework rather than prescribing a specific business plan or operating model**. A detailed operating plan should follow future decisions regarding strategic objectives, organizational structure, programming priorities, available resources, financial expectations, and acceptable levels of risk.

Findings & Path Forward

The feasibility study concludes that the REACH Amphitheater is a valued community asset with meaningful opportunity for expanded use. Its existing riverfront setting, history of community activity, and interest from current and prospective users provide a strong foundation for future investment.

The study also finds that the venue's principal limitations are functional and operational. Targeted improvements to performer support, patron amenities, production infrastructure, accessibility, and overall site functionality can strengthen current operations while expanding the range and frequency of events the amphitheater can successfully support.

Guiding Future Decisions

As planning moves forward, four principles should continue to guide investment and implementation:

Strengthen the Functional Foundation

Prioritize improvements that enhance operational capability, performer support, production infrastructure, patron experience, accessibility, and overall site functionality.

Coordinate with the Broader REACH Campus

Plan improvements in concert with future REACH Museum and Columbia Park West initiatives to strengthen long-term site functionality and preserve future opportunities.

Maintain a Long-Term Perspective

Evaluate individual investments not only for their immediate benefit, but also for how they contribute to operational flexibility, community value, and the amphitheater's continued evolution.

Continue a Collaborative Approach

Ongoing coordination among the Richland Public Facilities District, REACH Museum, community partners, funding organizations, and future design professionals can help ensure that improvements remain responsive to community needs and organizational objectives.

Moving Forward

The study does not prescribe a single implementation strategy. Instead, it provides a practical framework for making informed decisions as priorities, funding opportunities, operating objectives, and broader campus plans evolve.

By strengthening the amphitheater's functional foundation while preserving flexibility for future growth, the Richland Public Facilities District can build upon an existing community asset and position the REACH Amphitheater to provide greater community value over time.

For supporting analysis, assumptions, consultant reports, cost estimates, and detailed documentation, readers should refer to the complete
August 2026 REACH Amphitheater Feasibility Study
