



## Snoqualmie Community Center 2008 Bond Proposition

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

On August 11, 2008, the Snoqualmie City Council voted unanimously to submit to the voters of Snoqualmie a proposition that would authorize the City to issue general obligation bonds to construct and equip a community center. The vote will take place at a special election to be held in conjunction with the statewide general election on November 4, 2008.

The following information is a summary of frequently asked questions associated with this bond proposition.

Additional information is available on the City of Snoqualmie website at [www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us](http://www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us). Questions may be directed to the City of Snoqualmie Parks & Recreation Department at 425-831-5784 or write to [SnoqualmieCityHall@ci.snoqualmie.wa.us](mailto:SnoqualmieCityHall@ci.snoqualmie.wa.us).

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#### **TIMING OF THE PROPOSITION**

##### **Why propose the bond now?**

Construction inflation is about 12% per year currently. Delaying the vote for another two years will add approximately 24% to the cost of the project, which amounts to approximately \$3.5 million. The \$800,000 that the City has put aside for the community center loses buying power each month due to inflation, as does the \$3 million commitment from Quadrant, the property developer of Snoqualmie Ridge I and II.

Additionally, since a capital bond must be passed by 60% of voters, and that 60% must come from a turnout of 40% of voters who cast ballots in the preceding general election, it is likely that after the November 4, 2008 election, there will not be another 40% voter turnout until November 2010.

### **Why not wait until after the school bond passes?**

The City has taken the school bond issue into careful consideration in relation to a community center bond. The City believes that Snoqualmie citizens would be supportive of both the school bond and the community center bond. This is supported by resident surveys and by the fact that the February 2007 school bond proposal of \$209.2 million was passed by Snoqualmie voters with 71.4% approval and again passed by Snoqualmie voters in May 2007 with a 75.9% approval. The Snoqualmie voter approval for the March 2008 school bond vote of \$189.6 million was 76.8%.

Three school bond attempts have been made since the 2006 community center vote. The failure of the school bond has been rooted in other communities in the Snoqualmie Valley School District, not in the City of Snoqualmie. The entire Snoqualmie Valley School District encompasses Snoqualmie Pass, North Bend, Snoqualmie, Fall City, and the unincorporated area surrounding these towns.

While the City of Snoqualmie remains in strong support of the school district, further delays in the community center vote would be fiscally irresponsible due to rising construction costs as noted above.

The Snoqualmie Valley School District Board of Directors declared its support for this project on September 25, 2008. To read the full resolution, visit the City of Snoqualmie website.

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## **PROJECT COSTS AND FUNDING**

### **How much will it cost to build the community center and pool, and how will it be funded?**

The total estimated cost of the project is \$14 million. Most of the cost will be funded by a \$10 million bond that must be approved by our resident voters in Snoqualmie. Approximately \$3 million will be provided by mitigation funds from Quadrant. The remainder will be funded mostly by real estate excise tax reserves.

### **Are the projected maintenance and operation (M&O) costs the responsibility of the taxpayers?**

No. The YMCA of Greater Seattle has agreed to operate and maintain the community center and will be responsible for these costs. As a result, there will be no M&O levy accompanying the proposed construction bond. Voters are being asked to fund construction only.

### **Would building and maintaining a community center take funds away from public safety, parks, and roadway maintenance?**

No. The financing package outlined is designed to avoid impacts on essential city services including, but not limited to, fire, police, parks, and streets. The construction of the community center would be funded by a bond measure (property tax levy).

**How long is the bond term?**

Twenty years.

**Is the City's budget healthy enough to pursue building a community center?**

Yes. The Snoqualmie City Council has established measures to keep the City's budget under control and ensure expenditures reflect the needs and wants of our growing community. A bond-funded revenue source for construction and a partnership with the YMCA for maintenance and operations will protect the core City services budget.

**How confident is the City that the project will not go over budget?**

A very conservative construction estimate and contingency have been built into the cost estimates. The project will be limited with the bond value that voters approve. Once the value is set, no other funding would be available unless more housing is developed beyond Snoqualmie Ridge II, and that is not in the City's current plans.

**Why should the City get involved in providing something that could be provided solely by private business?**

The purpose of having the YMCA operate the community center is to provide well-rounded, affordable recreational services and facilities to citizens while also encouraging connections between neighbors and civic involvement throughout the community.

Private athletic clubs often have different priorities and are often less affordable for the general public. While some people prefer the "club" atmosphere of a private athletic facility and are willing to pay more for it, it is the goal of the YMCA to be accessible to all citizens.

The City will contribute \$100,000 annually to help ensure that assistance is available for families in need so that all residents can afford to access their community center. These funds are from a contractual agreement with the Snoqualmie Tribe (derived from casino revenues), which requires that these funds be spent on human services exclusively.

Every amenity that would be built in a YMCA community center would be evaluated in terms of the service it provides to the community and the revenue it produces in order to off-set the maintenance and operation costs in a non-profit environment.

**What is the total cost of construction to an average taxpayer each month?**

The construction bond will cost approximately \$0.30 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Following are some examples of costs broken down per month and per year.

<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Cost per Year (approx.)</b>	<b>Cost per Month (approx.)</b>
\$200K	\$60	\$5.00
\$300K	\$90	\$7.50
\$400K	\$120	\$10.00
\$500K	\$150	\$12.50

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## **MEMBERSHIP, USE, AND FEES**

### **What user fees will be proposed?**

The YMCA will operate the facility and charge fees similar to other local YMCA facilities.

There will be resident and non-resident fees.

- Residents of Snoqualmie will receive a discount because the City will own the building. They will also have priority registration for all programs.
- Non-residents will pay a higher fee since they will not be paying property taxes for the construction bonds.

Fee examples are provided in the next question.

### **What types of memberships are there?**

There are two types of memberships:

#### **1. Facility Membership**

This is a full facility membership for those who will use the community center frequently (two or more times per week). This membership includes use of the entire facility, pool, and gymnasium; participation in fitness classes; and access to all eleven YMCA of Greater Seattle locations.

#### **YMCA of Greater Seattle Facility Membership Rates (10/01/2008)**

<b>Type of User(s)</b>	<b>Monthly Dues</b>	<b>Joining Fees</b> <i>Joining fees are waived for Snoqualmie residents.</i>
Youth	\$25	\$25
Teen	\$27	\$50
Adult	\$55	\$100
Adult Couple	\$85	\$125
Senior	\$47	\$75
Single Adult Family	\$68	\$100
Family*	\$93	\$125

*\*Family, in this instance, is defined as any two adults plus children.*

There are other benefits to Facility Membership such as "Y Bucks"; each Snoqualmie resident membership would be awarded \$25-50 in "Y Bucks" each year to spend toward their monthly membership or on programs not already included in the membership, such as swim lessons.

#### **2. Program Membership**

This membership allows youth to participate in programs without having a full facility membership. Those programs include swim lessons, youth sports, after school activities and enrichment, and summer camps.

A Program Membership is \$35 annually with no monthly dues. Members are charged fees on a program-by-program basis. As an example of price difference, swim lesson fees for facility members would be approximately \$45 per course/program and for non-members approximately \$65 per course/program. Although the individual program fee is higher, the member is not responsible for a joining fee or monthly dues.

There are other membership features and options to allow individuals and families to meet their particular recreation and program needs.

**Will there be programs or activities in which non-members can participate?**

Yes. All Snoqualmie residents will be able to participate in many programs and use parts of the facility whether or not they have a membership, such as community open swim night, use of community meeting rooms, and rental of a multi-purpose/reception room, among others.

Additionally, non-members will be able to buy day passes with which they can use the entire facility for one full day.

**Will financial assistance be available for children and families?**

The City of Snoqualmie will contribute \$100,000 annually to serve children and families who may need financial assistance. These funds are from a contractual agreement with the Snoqualmie Tribe (derived from casino revenues), which requires that these funds be spent on human services exclusively.

In 2008, the City increased funding for human services from \$37,000 to \$98,000. This increased funding and commitment is separate and will not be affected by the \$100,000 allocation to the YMCA. The \$100,000 will not affect any general fund services – such as police and fire – since this money is restricted and cannot be used for such purposes.

The YMCA also provides an extensive range of assistance to income-qualified families and individuals.

**If we allow non-residents to use the facility, will it eventually be too crowded once Snoqualmie Ridge is built out?**

The YMCA has more than 130 year of experience operating community center facilities. They will ensure that the building is designed and sized to serve the local and surrounding community in a sustainable manner.

A 30,000 square foot building can accommodate Snoqualmie's current 9,360\* residents as well as numerous non-residents from within the surrounding service area.

*\*Washington Office of Financial Management, April 1, 2008 ([www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov))*

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**LOCATION**

**Where would the community center be located?**

The proposed community center would be located in Snoqualmie Community Park, 35016 SE Ridge Street, next to Cascade View Elementary School. The building will be located in the open area next to the tennis courts. The total acreage of this park is 33 acres. The property at this location was provided by the developers for this purpose.

## **Why locate the facility on Snoqualmie Ridge?**

Developers paid a mitigation fee to build the community center and donated the property to the City. All mitigation fees that were paid are for the impact a developer has in the area in which they impacted; in this case, the area is Snoqualmie Ridge. As well, the site has all utilities installed to accommodate such a facility.

The site is within walking and biking distance for Snoqualmie's most densely populated area, which is essential for high use and sustainable revenue. The site also is adjacent to the Ridge Marketplace. According to a recent Snoqualmie Ridge retail study, the community center will act as a significant anchor for the retail businesses in the area.

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## **FEATURES AND AMENITIES**

### **What amenities would be included in the community center?**

The size of the proposed community center is 30,000 sq. ft. The aquatic area is approximately 6,000 sq. ft. and the remaining square footage will be devoted to amenities such as a gymnasium, weight and fitness room, multi-purpose room, locker rooms, class/meeting rooms, and staff offices.

### **Why a 30,000 sq. ft. community center?**

The YMCA will be operating the facility and has determined that a 30,000 sq. ft. full "Express YMCA" facility is appropriate for a community the size of Snoqualmie.

### **Why does Snoqualmie need a pool when there is already one in North Bend?**

The Si View Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) commissioners voted to support Snoqualmie's efforts to build a community center and pool facilities by approving a Si View MPD resolution on September 3, 2008. The resolution recognizes the tremendous population growth experienced by the City of Snoqualmie and the expected further growth in the Snoqualmie Valley now that North Bend's ten year water moratorium has been lifted.

The Si View MPD has spent two years working in partnership with the Snoqualmie Valley School District and the cities of North Bend and Snoqualmie to formulate a common vision to meet the parks and recreation needs through the Snoqualmie Valley.

To read the Si View MPD resolution in full, please visit the City of Snoqualmie website.

### **Is this the same facility from the 2006 bond?**

No, this is not the same facility.

In 2006, the proposed building was 35,000 sq. ft. compared to the currently proposed 30,000 sq. ft. facility. The 2006 proposal required the City to operate and maintain the facility.

The 2008 proposed facility has a smaller gymnasium and smaller leisure pool. The 2008 proposal requires the YMCA to operate and maintain the community center. Consequently, direct costs to the taxpayer have been reduced by approximately 40%.

## **Is there enough parking at the Snoqualmie Community Park site?**

Yes, in addition to the facility parking lot (115 spaces) and on-street parking (100 spaces), the City and school district have agreed to share parking between the two adjacent facilities. This agreement provides overflow parking at Cascade View Elementary School (78 spaces) plus parking behind the school (100 spaces). The community center will be located in the center of a densely populated area where many users will walk or bike to the site.

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## **CITY/YMCA PARTNERSHIP**

### **Why partner with the YMCA and not other local organizations?**

Numerous potential partners were contacted, interviewed, and investigated during the past year. The City contacted the Boys & Girls Club, Encompass NW, Northwest Center (pools), Mt. Si Senior Center, Unity Theatre, Si View Metropolitan Parks District, Friends of Youth, Snoqualmie Valley Youth HUB, and the YMCA.

The YMCA was the most logical choice since they proved to be the only organization that provided a full spectrum of programming for all ages and were experienced at running pools.

Working with the YMCA also provides an opportunity to restore a valued historical partnership which existed for several decades in the old Weyerhaeuser Hall/YMCA once located at the old mill site. Many people in the Snoqualmie Valley have fond memories of growing up with this community gathering space.

### **Are there local examples of YMCAs being built by taxpayers but run by the YMCA?**

Yes. The closest example is in Sherwood, Oregon. The community is roughly the size of Snoqualmie and their community center/YMCA was built about 10 years ago using taxpayer dollars. It is operated by the YMCA.

### **Why can't the YMCA fund the construction of the building, too?**

The YMCA is building three YMCA facilities in the Puget Sound area with donated funds. It has taken 17 years to raise the \$36 million dollars they needed to construct those buildings and they are still \$4 million short.

Sammamish was originally on the list of sites to get a YMCA, but fell off the list and now is not likely to be built for another 20 years unless they choose to use the public/private partnership model that Snoqualmie is pursuing.

### **What happens if the City/YMCA partnership fails at any point during the next 20 years?**

Numerous organizations expressed interest in partnering with the City to run a community center. While these alternatives would be more difficult to negotiate, they are certainly available. However, it would take a combined partnership to offer the same diverse services as the YMCA. As an example, Encompass NW could contract for children services, Northwest Center for running the pool, and the Mt. Si Senior Center for programs for the wise and mature.

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## **JOB OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Will the YMCA staff with local residents?**

Yes. The YMCA of Greater Seattle estimates that the Snoqualmie community center will create about 100 new jobs, many of which will provide teens with their first meaningful employment

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## **BOND PASSAGE OR FAILURE**

### **What will be required to pass the bond proposition?**

The proposition must be approved by no less than a 60% majority of voters rather than a simple majority.

A capital bond must pass with a 60% of YES votes. In addition, there is a voter turnout requirement. The turnout must equal 40% of the voters who cast ballots in the last general election. In essence a bond measure could get the required number of YES votes, but could still fail if not enough people turn out to vote.

### **If the proposition passes, when will the bonds be sold?**

The bonds for the community center would not be sold until 2009, which means that property owners will not see an increase on their tax bills until 2010. This will not slow down the construction of a community center because there is already nearly \$4 million in cash available to get started with design and construction.

The facility would open approximately 18 months following voter approval (Spring 2010).

### **What will happen if the community center bond fails?**

If the bond fails, the City could consider the following options:

- Submit another bond proposition for a vote in November 2010.
- Don't build a community center and return the approximately \$3 million funding back to the developer due to non-use.

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## **ENDORSEMENTS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

The following organizations have declared support for the City of Snoqualmie's efforts to construct a community center. Their endorsements and letters are posted on the city website.

- Snoqualmie Valley School District
- Si View Metropolitan Parks District
- Encompass
- Snoqualmie Ridge Merchants Association

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## **MORE INFORMATION**

There are many reference documents on the City of Snoqualmie website such as endorsements, surveys, news releases, information about YMCA collaborations with government, and presentations made by the Parks & Recreation Department.

[www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us](http://www.ci.snoqualmie.wa.us)

The YMCA of Greater Seattle website provides a wealth of information and will provide an idea of what a Snoqualmie community center would look like.

[www.seattlemca.org](http://www.seattlemca.org)

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## **QUESTIONS**

If you have questions about the community center proposal, please contact the City of Snoqualmie Parks & Recreation Department at 425-831-5784 or write to [SnoqualmieCityHall@ci.snoqualmie.wa.us](mailto:SnoqualmieCityHall@ci.snoqualmie.wa.us).

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