







**City of Sammamish  
Community Center Focus Group Research**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*June, 2011*

# Table of Contents

---

Research Goal and Objectives ..... 3

Research Methodology ..... 4

Respondent Profile ..... 5

Awareness of City of Sammamish Projects ..... 6

Important Attributes in a Community Center ..... 7

Location Selection ..... 9

Lake Washington School District Property Site ..... 11

SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Site ..... 12

Kellman Site ..... 13

All Sites ..... 14

Conclusion ..... 15



# Research Goal and Objectives

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## Research Goal

The goal of this research was to evaluate the perceptions and opinions of City of Sammamish residents in regard to the construction and location of a potential new community center.

## Research Objectives

The following objectives were addressed in this research:

1. Determined awareness of any new community facilities the City of Sammamish has been managing or planning.
2. Assessed the awareness of the City of Sammamish's Community Center Feasibility Research.
3. Identified what the most important features are in a community center among participants.
4. Identified the types of events participants would like offered at a community center.
5. Evaluated how frequently the community center would be used and what specifically for.
6. Evaluated three potential locations for the community center:
  - a. The Lake Washington School District Property Site
  - b. The SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Site
  - c. The Kellman Site
7. Determined the benefits and negatives of each site.
8. Assessed which site is the preferred choice among the participants.
9. Evaluated the level of support for a new community center.
10. Determined how likely participants and their families would be to use the new community center.

# Research Methodology

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## **Focus Group Process and Research Documentation**

Jim Hebert, President of Hebert Research, moderated the focus group and the data collection staff of Hebert Research recruited the focus group participants.

## **Focus Group Location**

The focus group was held on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at the City of Sammamish City Hall.

## **Sampling Frame**

Participants of the focus group were all residents of the City of Sammamish.

## **Research Team**

Members of the research team included:

- Jim Hebert, President and Senior Research Director, Hebert Research
- Cynthia Hebert, COO and Senior Research Director, Hebert Research
- Bret Buttenob, Research Analyst, Hebert Research
- Jay Jolisin, IT Manager, Hebert Research
- Michael Wasnock, Programmer, Hebert Research

## Respondent Profile

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All of the 12 participants in the focus group were from the City of Sammamish and the majority have lived in Sammamish for ten years or more. Participants in the focus group were all between the ages of 35 and 63 with the highest frequency of the participants in their 40's. Many of the participants have children and all reported that they were very active. Hobbies among the participants included: golfing, hiking, skiing, boating, stationary bike, as well as frequent exercise. Participants also reported that they belong to health and fitness clubs, with the majority mentioning the YMCA.

## Awareness of City of Sammamish Projects

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### City of Sammamish Projects

Participants were first asked on an unaided basis if they were aware of any new community facilities the City of Sammamish has been planning or managing. Participants were aware of several new community facilities, with the most frequently mentioned being the YMCA. This was attributable to the fact that the YMCA sent out a letter to residents of Sammamish informing them of the new development. Participants also reported that they were aware of the following:

- New Boys and Girls Club
- Swedish Club
- New park by Skyline
- Town Center
- Aquatic Center
- Community Center

### Community Center Feasibility Study

Next, participants were asked if they were aware of the City of Sammamish Community Center Feasibility Study. All of the respondents with the exception of one reported that they were aware of the new community center plans. This knowledge primarily came from the local City of Sammamish newspaper, “The Sammamish Review.” Specifically, participants were aware that a new community center is under consideration and preliminary estimates for the costs and location of the community center had been developed. Participants also discussed the community center’s link to the aquatic center, and stated that some of the plans include a pool and some do not. In regard to the aquatic center, one participant referred to the community center as a “given” when referring to the community center, indicating the community center would need to be built in order to house the pools. The remainder of the group echoed this sentiment.

### Analysis

Participants were highly aware of the projects the City of Sammamish has undertaken. It is clear that the participants are highly engaged with their City and like to be informed of the direction the City of Sammamish is taking. Also important to note is the readership level of the “Sammamish Review.” This particular community newspaper is a key source of information about the City’s community activities. It is important to note that participants were well aware of the new community center discussion and had read the article regarding the potential development of the community center in the most recent addition of the newspaper.



# Important Attributes in a Community Center

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## Important Features

Participants were then asked to describe what features are most important to them in a community center. The first statement made which the rest of the group was in consensus with was:

- *"It [the community center] needs to support all ages, from newborns to senior citizens."*

This was very important to the group specifically because if a new community center is going to be built, everyone in the city should have equal opportunity to enjoy it.

Additionally, participants reported that they would like to see meeting rooms and gathering areas for people to get together and play cards, games or simply socialize with one another. As one participant stated, which the rest of the group agreed with:

- *"Having a place to meet and mingle is great."*

It was clear from the group's responses that a new community center in Sammamish should place a large emphasis on gathering areas for socialization. This is also attributable because of the growth of the City and an expected increase in the percentage of families in Sammamish.

Participants unanimously agreed that the community center should place an emphasis on health conscious activities. This would include having weight rooms, a cardio room, fitness classes and other physical activities. Currently, approximately half of the participants reported that they do belong to a gym or fitness center, but agreed that they would be likely to use the new community center and more importantly, that others in the community would be too. A statement made by one participant reflected the attitude of the entire group:

- *"Not everyone can afford to belong to a club."*

The general consensus among the group is that it is imperative that the community center includes these features so that the whole community has the ability to enjoy them.

Finally, participants stressed the point that the community center should not be focused on one or just a few activities, agreeing that if this were the case, the community center could not be enjoyed by all residents.

- *"Defining and understanding the purpose of the community center is important."*
- *"It will not be a community center if it [the community center] is too focused on one thing."*

## Events/Programs

As a follow up, participants were asked to what types of events and programs they would like to see offered at the community center. First mentioned were youth programs at the

community center, such as sports, day camps and even child care/day care. Participants with children agreed that day camps would be valuable, especially since they are extremely popular in the Sammamish area. For childcare, participants were in consensus that childcare should only be allowed to parents who are staying and using the community center, not as a place to drop children off.

Adult programs were another area discussed by participants. Participants agreed that these would encourage socialization and bring the community closer together. Additionally, for many physical fitness classes, participants agreed that a fee could be charged and in most cases, insurance would cover the cost.

The discussion of adult classes led to the topic of the swimming pool. One participant mentioned that it is often frustrating when at a swimming pool to find an area for swimming laps, since pools are mainly used for recreation. The rest of the group agreed that if a pool is to be included, there needs to be a reserved area for swimming laps at specified times. Additionally, participants discussed the possibility of swim teams using the pool and agreed that this should be supported. However, participants did agree that if too many programs are included, the community center can become too difficult to use for those not participating in programs.

Participants also discussed how the community center could be used to generate revenue. Specific events mentioned included:

- Weddings
- Birthdays
- Sports leagues
- Adult classes
- Rehabilitation classes

### **Analysis**

It was highly important to participants that a new community center is all inclusive and offers events and activities for all residents of the City. Additionally, participants want traditional events and activities offered such as fitness classes and swimming, but also placed an emphasis on using the community center as a source of revenue by hosting events. Ultimately, participants want the community center to be a point of convergence and provide a sense of belongingness to residents of Sammamish.

## Location Selection

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### **Unaided Selection of Community Center Site**

Respondents were then asked on an unaided basis, where they would prefer a new community center to be located. The first site mentioned by the respondents was “right here” referring to the property behind the City Hall. Participants had strong support for the location because the City of Sammamish already owns the property.

Additionally, participants stated that wherever the community center is to be built, there would need to be “easy access.” Participants are concerned that there potentially could be an added burden to the roadways and that more traffic lights would have to be installed.

The group unanimously agreed that they would not want to travel to a community center and joked that “I don’t want it [the community center] in Redmond.” However, many of the participants did report that they have been to the Issaquah community center, mainly because it is in fairly close proximity.

### **Initial Selection of the Three Sites**

Respondents were then shown a PowerPoint slide with all three of the potential locations and asked to select which one they would prefer. The initial reaction by one participant was the Lake Washington School District Site. This was primarily due to “concern about the access to the other two [properties].” The rest of the group agreed that the Lake Washington site appeared to be easily accessible. One concern participants had about the Lake Washington School District Site was the size of the wetlands and how that would impact the construction.

Other participants liked the Kellman property because of the proximity to City Hall. However, one participant was concerned about what would happen to the fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Another attribute participants noted about Kellman was the fact children already play there and it is convenient if parents wanted to go into the library or City Hall.

The SE 4<sup>th</sup> property was initially seen as “too far away” and did not receive a lot of debate. One of the concerns with the property was that parents would not trust their children to walk to the community center if they were at City Hall or the library.

Participants also had concerns about the zoning of the sites and how it would affect the cost of construction. This was another important finding as the majority of the group was aware that the City of Sammamish already owns the Kellman property and would not have to purchase additional land if the community center were to be constructed.

## **Analysis**

Access was one of the primary concerns participants had when discussing where the community center should be located. Initially, the Lake Washington School District site was seen as somewhat accessible, but upon further discussion, the group agreed that the Kellman Site would be the most convenient. Participants unanimously agreed that the site must provide easy in and out access to all residents without placing too much of a burden on traffic through the city.

## Lake Washington School District Property Site

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Next, participants were shown a series of slides for each of the three potential sites. After being shown the slides for a property, participants were then asked to identify what stood out to them, the benefits and the negatives of each site. The first site evaluated was the Lake Washington School District property. The first thing participants discussed was the negative of sharing an access road with high school students. This was their primary concern and one participant stated, "I can't see why Eastside Catholic would want to do this." Participants also discussed how this would impact the usage of the site, particularly during school times where there was concern of the high school students parking in the community center lot.

In regard to the features of the community center, participants also had concerns about the size of the swimming pool and if it would be regulation size for events. In addition, the space of the two gyms was an issue and one participant had concerns that it would not be large enough to accommodate events such as teen dances.

### **Analysis**

The Lake Washington School District Property Site ultimately became the least preferred choice among participants. The location and access were the primary deterrents as well the parking difficulties participants agreed would arise if the community center were to be built at this location.

## SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Site

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The SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street site was more attractive to the participants than was the Lake Washington School District site. One of the primary reasons was in and out access to the site. Participants agreed that this road has the potential to provide better access and has been proven to handle large volumes of traffic when used as a recent detour for Southeast 228<sup>th</sup> Street. However, the group did agree that the road would still need improvements and most likely need to be widened.

The primary benefit of this site among the participants was the potential for the town center to be developed around the community center. One participant stated the following which the rest of the group agreed with:

- *“If the town center is developed, you could drop your children off [at the community center] and go and use the retail area.”*

Participants also liked that this site would be close to City Hall and that trails could be taken between the town center and community center to City Hall.

- *“If the community center happens, it would be nice if it is integrated with the town center.”*

One participant even commented on the construction of the site and noted that the existing grade could be a positive.

- *“Works to building advantage when there is that existing grade.”*

However, participants did have concerns about the location of the site, primarily since no one knows for sure if the town center will ever be developed. In addition, participants also stated that there is already existing shopping nearby, most notably Redmond. One participant also stated that she is concerned that it would get in the way of park property.

At the conclusion of the discussion, one participant stated the following indicating that even though the town center may never be developed, it does not mean that the location of the community center depends on it.

- *“You can’t let the perfect get in the way of the good.”*

### **Analysis**

The potential for a new town center was the primary reason why participants found this site to be appealing. However, with no guarantee of the town center being constructed, participants became more likely to favor the Kellman site. Additionally, participants had a difficult time seeing the connection between having the community center located at the same site as the town center.

## Kellman Site

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Although when shown the slides participants did not discuss the Kellman site as much as the previous two, it was primarily due to the fact they found less negatives associated with the site. The group agreed that the location was ideal next to the City Hall. Initially, the group's concern had to do with the availability of parking, but once they saw the plans for the structured parking complex, the concern diminished.

Participants also admire the views from City Hall and agreed that if the new community center were able to retain those views, especially from the second level, that this would be another benefit to the Kellman site.

- *"If walking on an indoor track, it would be nice to have a view."*

However, the group agreed that these views would not be a necessity.

The group also liked that other City buildings are centrally located, and as mentioned previously in the group, if parents wanted to visit the library or use the community center, their children could still use the outside basketball courts, skate park or the community center as well. Participants were also relieved to find out that the Kellman site construction would not interfere with the Commons Park.

The main concern with the Kellman site continued to be the access. Participants were concerned about the effects on traffic it would have and how everyone would get in and out of the complex.

### Analysis

It was clear that the Kellman site was the preferred choice among participants. Having the site next to City Hall was seen as a benefit and the group was in consensus that it just feels like the right place to have the community center. Participants also agreed that if a new town center were to be constructed at the SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street site, that community center users would still be able to easily access the town center as well as the City Hall and the library.

## All Sites

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At the conclusion, participants were shown the all of the slides briefly one last time and then asked to summarize their opinions and perceptions towards each. They were as follows:

### Lake Washington Property Site

- “At first I really liked it, now it is the worst [of the three options].”
- Too far away from City Hall
- Too close to Eastside Catholic
- Would not be close enough to the potential town center
- No sidewalks on Southeast 228<sup>th</sup> Street or trails to connect to the other two potential sites
- The City facilities would be too spread out
- Remote from other city functions
- Parking from the high school would overflow into the community center

### SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street

- It would be closer to City Hall
- Trails could connect to City Hall
- Could be an investment in the future with the addition of the town center
- Parking could be an issue if the town center were to be built
- Spreading the City facilities out is not a good thing
- Being adjacent to the Commons Park is a good thing
- The increase in traffic would be a problem
- Concern with what variety would be at the town center and fear it would turn into another strip mall
- Difficulty understanding the connection the community center has to the town center

### Kellman

- Close to City Hall
- Close to the Library
- Easier and more access
- The space already has a community center feel with many positive activities for children
- Possibility of still being able to walk to a potential town center at SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street site
- Limited expansion opportunities not perceived as a large issue



## Conclusion

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At the conclusion of the group, participants were asked to select their preferred site location for a potential new community center. The group unanimously selected the Kellman site as their first choice, the SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street site as their second choice and the Lake Washington School District site as their least preferred choice. It is important to note that participants also understood that the square footage for each of the potential sites was very similar as was the construction costs.

It is also important to note that participants were eager to carry on the conversation at the conclusion of the group and agreed that they appreciated the efforts the City is making to include their opinions. The group also was interested to find out if there would be future research projects put on by the City of Sammamish.



**City of Sammamish  
Community Center Focus Group Research**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*July, 2011*

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# Table of Contents

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Research Goal and Objectives ..... 3

Research Methodology ..... 4

Respondent Profile ..... 5

Important Spaces in a Community Center..... 6

Exercise 1 ..... 7

Exercise 2 ..... 9

Exercise 3 ..... 11

Exercise 4 ..... 13

Analysis of Spaces ..... 15

Usage of the Community Center ..... 16

Membership and Rates ..... 17

Potential Costs ..... 18

Conclusion..... 20

Appendix A: July 6<sup>th</sup> Moderator’s Outline ..... 21

Appendix B: June 29<sup>th</sup> Moderator’s Outline ..... 24



## Research Goal and Objectives

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### Research Goal

The goal of this research was to evaluate the perceptions and opinions of City of Sammamish residents in regard to potential programs and spaces in a new community center. In addition, the research analyzed residents' attitudes towards various payment and financing options.

### Research Objectives

The following objectives were addressed in this research:

1. Identified which community center spaces are most important to participants.
2. Determined which spaces participants would like to see prioritized for sooner use.
3. Identified which programs participants would like to see offered.
4. Determined which aquatic programs participants would like to see offered.
5. Evaluated preferences for payment and membership options.
6. Evaluated cost and funding options.
7. Assessed how knowledge of costs and revenues changed preferences for prioritization of features.

# Research Methodology

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## Focus Group Process and Research Documentation

Jim Hebert, President of Hebert Research, moderated the focus groups and the data collection staff of Hebert Research recruited the focus group participants.

## Focus Group Location

The focus group was held at the City of Sammamish City Hall on Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. in the Executive Briefing Room. A focus group was also held on Wednesday June 29<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. in the Executive Briefing Room. After conducting the first group, it was agreed that too many areas were discussed and there was not enough time to present them with the information needed to make decisions in some areas. Therefore the second group was conducted which narrowed down the focus and provided the respondents with more detailed information.

## Sampling Frame

Participants of the focus group were all residents of the City of Sammamish.

## Research Team

Members of the research team included:

- Jim Hebert, President and Senior Research Director, Hebert Research
- Cynthia Hebert, COO and Senior Research Director, Hebert Research
- Bret Bittenob, Research Analyst, Hebert Research
- Jay Joslin, IT Manager, Hebert Research
- Michael Wasnock, Programmer, Hebert Research

## Respondent Profile

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Respondents from both focus groups were all residents of the City of Sammamish and there were 14 participants in the June 29<sup>th</sup> group and 10 participants in the July 6<sup>th</sup> group. Respondents were between the ages of 21 and 68 years old with the majority of respondents in their 40's and 50's and there was an even distribution of males and females. The majority of the participants have lived in the City of Sammamish for 7 or more years and many have children. Many of the participants also belong to health and fitness clubs, including:

- Pro Club
- Columbia Athletic Club
- Washington Athletic Club
- 24 Hour Fitness
- Gold's Gym
- Bally's

Participants from the June 29<sup>th</sup> focus group also discussed their backgrounds:

- Starbucks, Finance Manager
- Microsoft
- Boeing, retired engineer
- Hydrologist
- Former CEO of a non-profit
- Student
- Retired

The majority of participants reported that they and their families are active and participate in activities such as:

- Jogging
- Hiking
- Basketball
- Scuba Diving
- Lap Swimming
- Swim Lessons
- Weight Lifting
- Aerobics

## Important Spaces in a Community Center

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Respondents in the June 29<sup>th</sup> focus group discussed the important spaces in a community center. Their discussion led to a refinement of questions for the July 6<sup>th</sup> focus group. The group was divided on which types of spaces they would like to see incorporated first. Approximately half of the group wanted a competitive swimming pool and the other half stated that a gymnasium should be the first priority. Additionally, participants reported that community rooms and weight rooms were also important.

Instead of simply discussing the priorities like the group on June 29<sup>th</sup> did, the group on July 6<sup>th</sup> participated in four exercises. These exercises involved prioritizing the different potential spaces of the community center by using cards which explained what amenities would be featured in each of the spaces, the construction costs, and the revenue potential. Before the exercises were conducted, a PowerPoint presentation introduced the 14 potential spaces, their specific features and potential programs that could be included in the spaces. In addition, participants were presented with information regarding a potential LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) premium, shelter premium, structured parking, off-site construction, on-site construction, soft costs, sales tax, and project contingency.

# Exercise 1

## Exercise 1: Prioritize the Potential Spaces of the Community Center

In the first exercise, participants were handed 14 cards which included the potential spaces of the community center with only the gross square footage of the space provided. Participants then spread the cards across the table and were asked to prioritize the 14 spaces in terms of which are of the highest importance to be included in the community center. This process lasted approximately 10 minutes and the results were as follows:

Priority Spaces	
Space	Priority
8-Lane x 25 Yard Lap Pool	1
Medium Leisure Pool	
Double High School Gymnasium	2
30-40 Person Group Fitness Studio	3
Small Child Watch/Babysitting	4
Community Room/Banquet Hall	5
Children's Indoor Playground	6
80-100 Piece Weight/Fitness Area	7
Elevated Walk/Jog Track	8
Wet Classroom/Party Room	9
50 Person Classroom	10
Senior Adult Lounge	11
16-20 Person Group Fitness Studio	12
Commercial Kitchen	13

### Analysis

The most important space to the participants was clearly the pools (both the competitive and the leisure pool). One of the primary reasons for this was the belief that the competitive pool would be a top revenue generator for the community center. The following are statements participants made regarding the two pools:

- *"More people are going to use the pool"*
- *"Accommodating swim lessons is important"*
- *"If you look down the road, you have three major high schools that have no pool"*
- *"Concern that the leisure pool is like a Wild Waves Park"*
- *"In the winter time, everyone is going to want to use it (the pools)"*
- *"The two pools are side by side (referring to their prioritization)"*
- *"I couldn't say one over the other right now (regarding the pools)"*



The double high school gymnasium was the second priority which was followed by the 30-40 person group fitness studio. Participants also agreed that the small child watch/babysitting space would be important for those who would like to use the facilities and not be concerned about their children.

- *“You have to have a child watch/babysitting area, you have to.”*

In addition, one of the primary reasons that a weight room did not receive a higher priority is due to the fact there are other facilities in close proximity that provide this:

- *“There are places close that already have weights.”*

The 16-20 person group fitness studio and commercial kitchen were seen as the least important spaces. This was primarily because participants stated that the 30-40 person group fitness studio would be important and that the commercial kitchen would have too much liability, especially concerning inspections as one participant mentioned which the rest of the group agreed with.

Revenue was a big concern when discussing the first set of spaces and participants made assumptions with one another on what they believed would be the largest revenue generators. Overall, participants were highly engaged with one another and were able to arrive at an agreement while prioritizing all 14 potential community center spaces.

Compared to the focus group on June 29<sup>th</sup>, the spaces were prioritized in a similar manner. The one exception was the debate over the pools and whether or not both pools should be included in the community center. The gym was also seen as a top priority among participants in the June 29<sup>th</sup> group. The other spaces were not discussed in as much detail.

## Exercise 2

### Exercise 2: Prioritize the Potential Spaces of the Community with Construction Costs Included

Once participants completed the first exercise, they began Exercise 2. Similar to Exercise 1, cards with the community center spaces were distributed, however these cards included the construction costs. In addition, participants were distributed the following cards which identified other costs of the community center:

- Blue Cards: Required Facility Support Spaces
- Yellow Cards: Optional Additional Project Expenses
- Green Cards: Required Additional Project Expenses

This process was quicker than Exercise 1 and the spaces were prioritized as follows:

Priority Spaces: Construction Costs Included	
Space	Priority
8-Lane x 25 Yard Lap Pool	1
Medium Leisure Pool	2
Double High School Gymnasium	3
30-40 Person Group Fitness Studio	4
Small Child Watch/Babysitting	5
Community Room/Banquet Hall	6
Wet Classroom/Party Room	7
80-100 Piece Weight/Fitness Area	8
Elevated Walk/Jog Track	9
Children's Indoor Playground	10
50 Person Playground	11
16-20 Person Group Fitness Studio	12
Commercial Kitchen	13
Senior Adult Lounge	14

### Analysis

After having the construction costs shown to them, participants did change their opinion on priorities which were further down the list, but the top priorities did not differ significantly. The two pools continued to be highest priority with the competitive pool slightly more important than the leisure pool. There were concerns among the participants over both of the pools:

- *"I am concerned that the high schools and leagues will monopolize it too much."*
- *"It (the competitive pool) will be bring in the most money and amortize the cost of this project."*

- *“It is more expensive for the leisure pool.”*

The double high school court gymnasium remained a second priority behind the pools and the small child watch/babysitting remained behind the gymnasium. The most notable movement among the priorities was the children’s indoor playground which went from the sixth highest priority to the tenth after the construction costs were shown to the group. It should be noted that the senior lounge was seen as the least important space not because of it specifically being for seniors, but because participants agreed that the community room could be used as a similar space.

The focus group on June 29<sup>th</sup> prioritized the spaces in a similar manner. However, the debate over the pools and which one was most important was still a point of discussion after seeing the construction costs. Participants did not go into as much detail as participants in the July 6<sup>th</sup> focus group in terms of prioritizing all of the spaces.

## Exercise 3

### Exercise 3: Prioritize the Potential Spaces of the Community Center with Operating Costs Included

For Exercise 3, participants were given a new set of cards with the community center spaces which included the gross square footage per space, the construction costs per space, and a new addition, operating costs per space which included a graphic depicting the expected revenue for each space vs. the expected expense per space (Note: Since hard numbers have not been calculated, revenue and expense were categorized into three categories, “High,” “Medium,” and “Low”). In addition, participants received the same identical cards as in Exercise 2:

- Blue Cards: Required Facility Support Spaces
- Yellow Cards: Optional Additional Project Expenses
- Green Cards: Required Additional Project Expenses

This process took participants slightly longer to complete as they could now see the opportunity costs of each potential space. The spaces were prioritized as follows:

Priority Spaces: Viewed Public Opinion	
Space	Priority
Medium Leisure Pool	1
Wet Classroom/Party Room	2
8-Lane 25-Yard Lap Pool	3
Double High School Gymnasium	4
30-40 Person Group Fitness Studio	5
Small Child Watch/Babysitting	6
Community Room/Banquet Hall	7
80-100 Piece Weight/Fitness Area	8
Children's Indoor Playground	9
16-20 Person Group Fitness Studio	10
Elevated Walk/Jog Trail	11
50 Person Classroom	12
Commercial Kitchen	13
Senior Adult Lounge	14

#### Analysis

The largest shift in priorities among participants came when the operating costs were shown on the cards. The competitive pool, which had been one of the top priorities was replaced by the

leisure pool due to the potential revenue generating capacity compared to the low revenue generating capacity of the competitive pool. This was agreed upon by all participants:

- *“Looking at that (revenue and expense projections) I would switch the pools”*

Participants also then shifted the wet classroom/party room to the second priority. This was not only due to the fact that it goes along with the pool but the expense to revenue ratio favored a high return on investment for the relatively low price to construct the space. The other spaces remained fairly similar with priorities remaining within one or two rankings between the previous exercise and the current exercise with the only differences occurring because of revenue projections.

Participants were highly engaged in this process and took the revenue and expenses considerations extremely seriously. While their prioritization was primarily based on revenue projections, they also considered how the spaces would interconnect with one another. For example, participants did not see an immediate need for a senior lounge since the community room/banquet hall could be used for a similar purpose, saving expenses and increasing revenues for the community center.

## Exercise 4

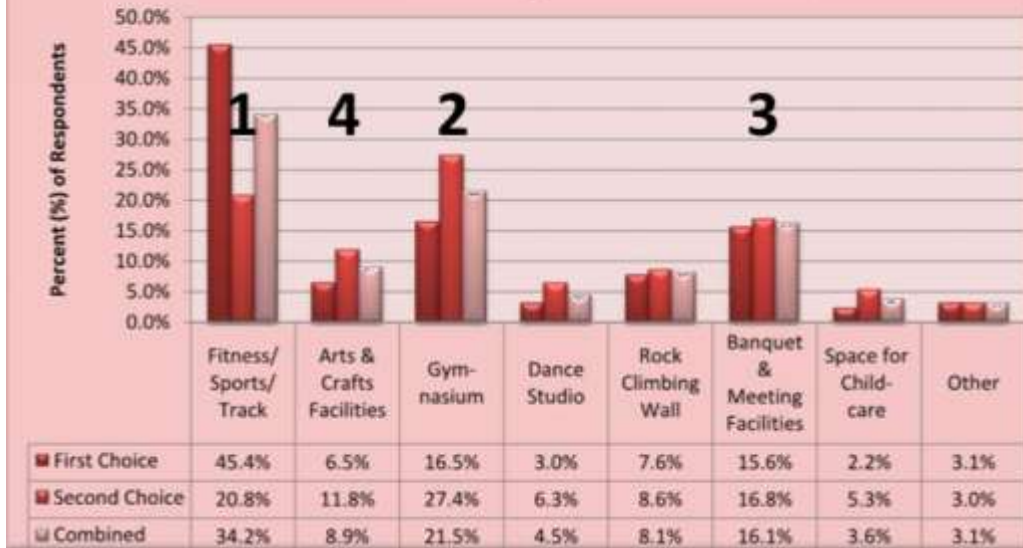
### Exercise 4: Prioritize the Potential Spaces of the Community Center After Seeing How the Public Prioritized the Spaces

Participants were then shown slides that showed the types of spaces and activities residents of Sammamish would like to see in a community center based on a public survey. The spaces rated were not the exact same as those in the focus group but were comparable. This final exercise was extremely quick as participants unanimously agreed that the way the public prioritized the community center spaces and programs did not have a drastic impact on how they prioritized the community center spaces. It should be noted that these priorities were similar with the main exception being the elevated walking track/fitness area which was seen as more important in the public survey. In addition, competitive swimming was not seen as important in the survey as public (open) swimming which the group agreed with. The spaces remained prioritized in the same order as Exercise 3 which were as follows:

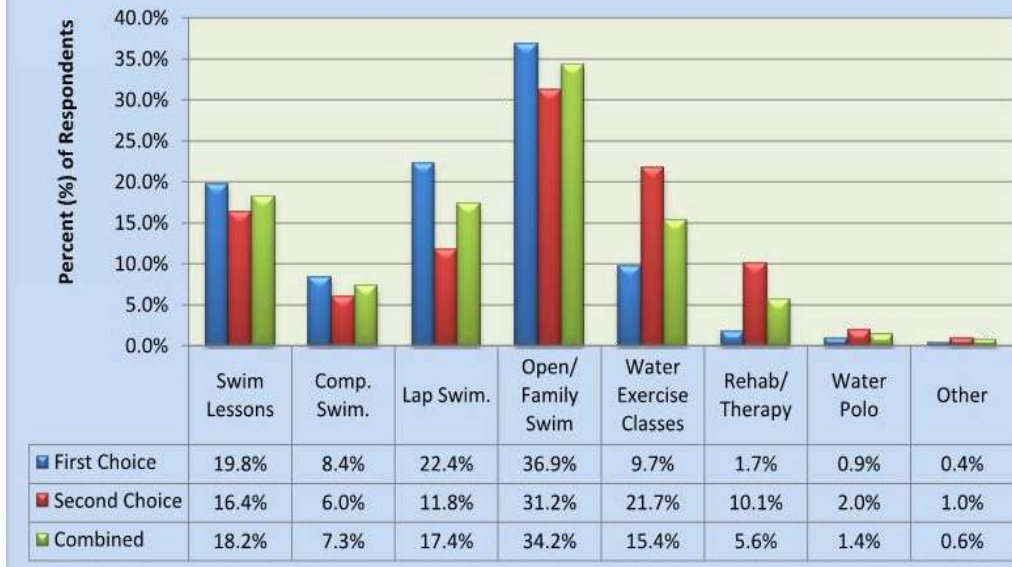
Priority Spaces: Viewed Public Opinion	
Space	Priority
Medium Leisure Pool	1
Wet Classroom/Party Room	2
8-Lane 25-Yard Lap Pool	3
Double High School Gymnasium	4
30-40 Person Group Fitness Studio	5
Small Child Watch/Babysitting	6
Community Room/Banquet Hall	7
80-100 Piece Weight/Fitness Area	8
Children's Indoor Playground	9
16-20 Person Group Fitness Studio	10
Elevated Walk/Jog Trail	11
50 Person Classroom	12
Commercial Kitchen	13
Senior Adult Lounge	14

The following graphs depict the priorities among residents from a public survey:

### Most Important Features to Include in Community Center



### Aquatic Center Programs Most Likely to Be Used



## Analysis of Spaces

### Analysis

The following table reports the differences in how the spaces were prioritized after each of the four exercises. To see how visually how each exercise affected the prioritization of spaces, the table below categorized the priorities into color codes:

Priority 1
Priority 2
Priority 3
Priority 4 to 6
Priority 7 to 10
Priority 11 to 14

Priority Spaces				
Space	Exercise 1	Exercise 2	Exercise 3	Exercise 4
8-Lane x 25 Yard Lap Pool	1	1	3	3
Medium Leisure Pool	1	2	1	1
Double High School Gym	2	3	4	4
30-40 Person Group Fitness Studio	3	4	5	5
Small Child Watch/Babysitting	4	5	6	6
Community Room/Banquet Hall	5	6	7	7
Children's Indoor Playground	6	10	9	9
80-100 Piece Weight/Fitness Area	7	8	8	8
Elevated Walk/Jog Track	8	9	11	11
Wet Classroom/Party Room	9	7	2	2
50 Person Classroom	10	11	12	12
Senior Adult Lounge	11	14	14	14
16-20 Person Group Fitness Studio	12	12	10	10
Commercial Kitchen	13	13	13	13

Throughout each of the exercises the top four priorities remained relatively similar. The main difference occurred once participants saw the potential revenue of a Wet Classroom/Party Room. Participants throughout the process had very little disagreements with the order in which spaces were to be prioritized and in most cases came to a consensus in regard to which spaces should be prioritized first. It was clear that after participating in Exercise 3, which revealed the opportunity costs for each space, participants were content with how they prioritized their spaces.



## Usage of the Community Center

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Participants in the June 29<sup>th</sup> focus group had a wide range of answers regarding the frequency in which they would use the community center. For the participants with children, they reported that although they may not frequently use the community center, their children would use it several times a month (up to 12). For the other participants, approximately half reported that they would be heavy users and utilize the community center more than 10 times per month. The other half of the group reported that they would use the community center between 0 and two times per month. Additionally, participants agreed that they would be more likely to use the community center in the winter months as opposed to the summer months where more outside activities would be available.

## Membership and Rates

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Participants in the June 29<sup>th</sup> focus group went into great detail about the preferred membership options and rates for using the potential community center.

First, participants were presented three membership types:

- Membership
- Pay as you go
- Blended (A combination of the above)

There was consensus from the group that the blended approach would be the most beneficial and allow a more customized method of accessing the community center. Participants also agreed that City of Sammamish residents should receive a discount or charge a higher rate to those accessing the community center who live outside of Sammamish.

### Hours of Operation

Next participants discuss the potential hours of operation. While participants reported that the Monday through Friday hours of 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. were sufficient, they stated that Saturday night hours should be extended past 8:00. This was primarily to accommodate the teenagers of the community and to discourage the teenagers from “hanging out in the Safeway parking lot.” Participants agreed that extending the hours and providing events such as dances would be a favorable way to ensure that teenagers are supervised on weekend nights.

### Rates

When shown the proposed rates for the daily access, three month family pass and annual family pass, participants were in agreement that these were reasonable rates.

- *“100 per month per family! That is a good deal!”*

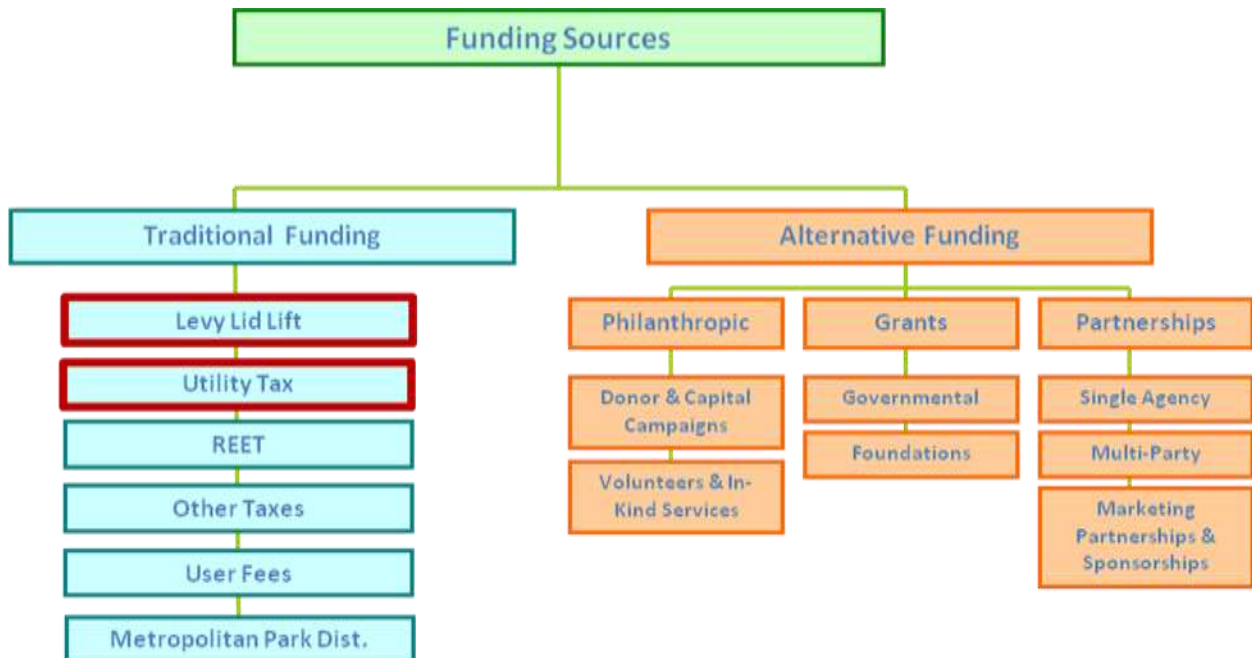
Participants also agreed that higher costs should be added for more specialized programs. In addition, one participant mentioned a concept of having customizable membership options for individuals who are only able to access the community center at certain times of the year, such as students who are home for the summer from college.

Moreover, participants were also intrigued by the idea of offering a limited amount of memberships to those outside of the City of Sammamish mentioned by one of the group members. Participants agreed that this would be a good way to keep Sammamish residents’ costs lower and still retain a revenue source from those outside of the community who wish to access the facility.

## Potential Costs

After prioritizing the community spaces and participating in the four exercises, participants in the July 6<sup>th</sup> focus group then received a presentation from Lyman Howard, Assistant City Manager for the City of Sammamish. The presentation included the following:

- Funding Sources for the Community Center**  
 The included the discussion of the following:



- Estimated Construction Costs**  
 Included the estimated preliminary construction estimate for the Kellman Property
- Amount of Money Needed Annually for Construction**

Amount Needed Annually (Construction Only)				
\$20 Million	\$30 Million	\$40 Million	\$50 Million	\$60 Million
\$ 1,520,000	\$ 2,280,000	\$ 3,040,000	\$ 3,800,000	\$ 4,560,000

- **Levy Lid Lift or Bond (Property Tax)**

<b>Property Taxes using 2011 Assessed Value (AV)</b>					
<b>Construction Cost</b>	<b>\$20 Million</b>	<b>\$30 Million</b>	<b>\$40 Million</b>	<b>\$50 Million</b>	<b>\$60 Million</b>
Cost per \$1,000 AV	\$ 0.18	\$ 0.27	\$ 0.36	\$ 0.45	\$ 0.54
Annual Cost*	\$ 93.60	\$ 140.40	\$ 187.20	\$ 234.00	\$ 280.80
<b>Monthly Cost</b>	<b>\$ 7.80</b>	<b>\$ 11.70</b>	<b>\$ 15.60</b>	<b>\$ 19.50</b>	<b>\$ 23.40</b>

- **Utility Tax**

<b>Utility Tax (1% = \$970k annually)</b>					
<b>Construction Cost</b>	<b>\$20 Million</b>	<b>\$30 Million</b>	<b>\$40 Million</b>	<b>\$50 Million</b>	<b>\$60 Million</b>
Utility Tax Rate Needed	1.57%	2.35%	3.14%	3.92%	4.15%
Annual Cost/Person	\$ 33.21	\$ 49.81	\$ 66.50	\$ 83.01	\$ 99.61
Annual Cost/Household	\$ 99.63	\$ 149.43	\$ 199.50	\$ 249.03	\$ 298.83
<b>Monthly Cost/Household</b>	<b>\$ 8.30</b>	<b>\$ 12.45</b>	<b>\$ 16.63</b>	<b>\$ 20.75</b>	<b>\$ 24.90</b>

- **Comparison of Financing Options**

Both the property tax example and utility tax example were shown on the same slide.

After participants heard the presentation they discussed which funding source they would prefer. Initially, the majority of participants agreed that both are so similar that it is hard to distinguish between the two. However, after further discussion the majority of participants agreed that the property tax method would be preferred because it “would be deductible on their federal taxes and is cheaper.” However, one participant stated that her utility usage is lower than the average resident so her contribution would be lower. Participants also agreed that they would prefer that the funding options go to a city-wide vote in order to determine the preferences of the residents of Sammamish.

It is important to note that participants also agreed that City of Sammamish residents should receive a discount when using the facilities (i.e. reduced parking fees, membership fees, and daily access fees).

In addition, participants from both focus groups were asked to give a range which they believed would be reasonable for the construction of the community center. In the first group the consensus was after some discussion, the \$60 million range. For the second group, four participants out of the nine remaining when the question was asked, preferred the \$60 million range, two the \$50 million range, two the \$40 million range and one participant who does not want the community center to be built. It should be noted that this participant was the outlier of the group as the remainder of the group agreed that the community center would be a valuable addition to the City of Sammamish.



## Conclusion

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At the conclusion of the July 6<sup>th</sup> group participants were asked, “Do you agree that the community center should be built.” All of the participants with the exception of one agreed that the community center should indeed be built. While some members of the group agreed that they and their families members would use the group on a regular basis (weekly), those members who did not plan on using the community center as frequently agreed that the community center should be built because of the value it gives the community.

Participants also discussed a potential option of having local business organizations sponsoring the community center for a donation. There was agreement among participants that this could potentially be a good source of revenue for the community center.

As a whole, the group considered both their personal preferences and what they believed would be in the best interest for the community throughout all areas of the discussion. For the majority, it is clear that a new community center would be an asset to the City of Sammamish and a place which strengthens the community and brings residents together.

# Appendix A: July 6<sup>th</sup> Moderator's Outline

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## City of Sammamish Moderator's Outline FG3

### INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction of the Focus Group Moderator
2. Explanation of the purposes of conducting this focus group
3. Introduction of the rules and procedures for the focus group
4. Introduction of the focus group participants

### PROGRAMS MOST LIKELY TO USE

A proposed new community center is being considered at the Kellman property directly behind City Hall. First we are going to discuss some of the spaces that would be included in a potential community center in the City of Sammamish. Please note that these areas can be used for multiple programs (i.e. exercise classes, meeting space, arts and crafts, etc.) **[SHOW SLIDES]**

### PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE 1

5. Which of the spaces are of the highest priority for you to be included in the Community Center?  
**[Place cards on the table showing the spaces being considered for the facility.]**

Next, we are going to show you the construction costs for each of the spaces.

[Distribute new cards that now show the construction costs for each space. The construction cost is located in the upper-right hand corner of the card.]

Remaining cards will also be distributed that illustrate additional elements of the total project. Please note the following:

White Cards – Facility Spaces

Blue Cards – Required Facility Support Spaces (offices, restrooms etc.)

Yellow Cards – Optional Additional Project Expenses (LEED and Shelter)

Green Cards – Required Additional Project Expenses



## **PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE 2**

6. Now that you have seen the construction costs for each of the spaces, which of the spaces are of the highest priority for you to be included in the Community Center? Have your priorities changed?
7. Should the funding for LEED (sustainable initiatives) be included in the project? Should the funding to retrofit the facility to serve as an emergency shelter be included in the project?

Next we are going to show you a graphical depiction of the expected cost recovery for each of the spaces:

[Distribute new cards that now show the cost recovery grid. The grid is located in the lower-left hand corner of the card. The relative revenue and expenses are depicted by a “star” placed in the high, medium and low range.]

## **PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE 3**

8. Now that you have seen the construction costs and operating costs for each of the spaces, which of the spaces are of the highest priority for you to be included in the Community Center? Have your priorities changed?

Finally we are going to show you the public priorities of the community center spaces identified in a statistically valid survey conducted by Hebert Research in June 2010:

## **PARTICIPATE IN EXERCISE 4**

9. Now that you have seen the construction costs, operating costs and public priorities for each of the spaces, which of the spaces are of the highest priority for you to be included in the Community Center? Have your priorities changed?
10. Do you agree with how the spaces were prioritized?

## **FINANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **[DIRECTOR OF FINANCE WILL PRESENT]**

11. What are your initial reactions to the two preliminary options (levy or utility tax) for paying for the construction of a potential community center? Do you have a preferred funding method? (Finance Director will explain the difference between the two funding options).



12. Which is your preferred range for the construction costs for the potential community center (i.e. \$30 to \$40 million)?



## Appendix B: June 29<sup>th</sup> Moderator's Outline

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### City of Sammamish Moderator's Outline #2

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction of the Focus Group Moderator
2. Explanation of the purposes of conducting this focus group
3. Introduction of the rules and procedures for the focus group
4. Introduction of the focus group participants

#### PROGRAMS MOST LIKELY TO USE

A proposed new community center is being considered at the Kellman property directly behind City Hall. First we are going to discuss some of the spaces that would be included in a potential community center in the City of Sammamish. Please note that these areas can be used for multiple programs (i.e. exercise classes, meeting space, arts and crafts, etc.) **[SHOW SLIDES]**

5. Which of the spaces are of the highest priority for you to be included in the Community Center?
6. It is likely that these spaces will be built in several phases. Which of the spaces are most important for you to access first?
7. What types of programs would you like to see included in these spaces?
8. How many times per month will you or members of your family be likely to utilize the community center?

Next, we are going to show you how these spaces were prioritized during public meetings, the cost of each and the layout at the potential community center site.

9. Do you agree with how the spaces were prioritized?
10. Now that you have seen the costs for the spaces, would you change the order in which you prioritized the spaces, in terms of which should be built first and which should be built in a future phase?



## **AQUATICS**

First we are going to show you some slides regarding what may be included in the potential aquatic center at the community center.

11. What types of amenities are most important to you in the aquatic center?
  - a. Adult whirlpool (i.e. hot tub or spa)
  - b. Family whirlpool (i.e. hot tub or spa, slightly cooler to accommodate small children)
  - c. Therapy/Wellness pool (warm water pool for young children, senior adults, and people with disabilities – or anyone else that desires a warmer pool)
  - d. Interactive water features (splash and spray features)
  - e. Water Slides
  - f. Zero-depth entry
  - g. Lazy river/Current channel (for recreation and resistance based fitness workouts)
  - h. Water walk
  - i. Lap lanes/Competition pool
  - j. Diving (requires a deep pool tank)
  
12. What types of programs would you like to see offered at a potential aquatic center
  - a. Learning to swim programs/swim lessons
  - b. Swimming competitions
  - c. Aquacise
  - d. Health and wellness classes
  - e. Waterwalking
  - f. Specialty Classes (i.e. scuba training)
  - g. Recreation elements for drop-in swimming (i.e. indoor water park features)
  
13. What age demographic should water features such as water slides be constructed for (i.e. smaller slides for toddlers, or larger slides for older children)?
  
14. How important is it that the aquatic center features a therapy pool?
  
15. How important is it that the aquatic center has a separate competitive pool for swimming laps and competitions?

## **OPERATING COSTS**

Next we are going to discuss some of the potential operating costs of the potential community



center. These are based on the community center being constructed at the Kellman site right here behind City Hall.

16. Which of the following three payment/membership fee models would you prefer?
17. Based on the information presented in the slides, would you be more likely to pay daily fees to use the community center or membership fees?
18. Would you be more likely to purchase a three month or annual pass? (Some explanation needed here that shorter term passes or daily passes may increase the subsidy required). Would be nice to know if that would impact their recommendation overall, although I'd still like to know their personal preference.)
19. Having now seen the influence certain spaces of the community center have on revenue, would you be likely to change your priorities from earlier in the discussion?

#### **POTENTIAL COSTS**

20. What are your initial reactions to the two preliminary options (levy or utility tax) for paying for the potential community center (i.e. are they too expensive, not expensive, about right)? (May need to explain the difference between the two funding options).
21. Which range do you prefer for the cost of the potential community center (i.e. \$30 to \$40 million)?
22. Having now seen the cost for each space of the community center, which spaces do you believe are less important that the potential community center could do without?
23. Has the price ranged changed now that you've seen the costs for the spaces?

