



**Summary Report on the
Community Center Advisory
Committee Sessions
March 29th & April 5th, 2023**

To

City of Snoqualmie

May 5th, 2023



Project Background & Context

The expansion of the community center has been a priority project for the City of Snoqualmie for some time. Gathering community input has been a critical piece of the preparation work. It was important to the city leadership that an inclusive, participatory process involving a cross section of the community, and welcoming input from all those who will be impacted by the project should be carried out.

In June 2019, a community town hall, attended by approximately 80 people, gathered input and recommendations however the resulting momentum faltered with the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. The intent of the recent online sessions was to reestablish momentum and provide updated recommendations to the city, building on the prior work.

Recruitment Process & Participants

To ensure a broad cross-section of participants that reflected the whole community, a survey was developed for city council and senior staff seeking input in identifying public, private, and community entities - as well as individuals who would best represent that entity - for the advisory/steering committee. Using this input, four categories of participants were invited on behalf of the mayor:

- Public Partners - including government and tribal agencies, nearby municipalities and taxing districts, school districts.
- Private Partners – such local businesses and media.
- Community Service Partners – such as health and human services organizations, nonprofits, associations, faith-based organizations, volunteer organizations.
- Community and Neighbors - such as direct neighbors of the project and other interested individuals.

There was enthusiastic uptake of the invitation and a group of 30-35 participants which also included the City Council, city leadership (staff), and the YMCA, were convened for two online sessions.

Prior Work

The goals of the June 9th, 2019, Community Meeting were to seek broad and diverse community input and generate ideas and recommendations from multiple perspectives. After a short initial presentation around options, the participants – in self-selected small groups each with a generational or age group perspective – had discussions facilitated by city staff to identify features they sought in the center expansion, along with areas of enthusiasm, areas of concern, and overall recommendations. This compiled community input was the starting place for the recent sessions.

Methodology

Certified facilitator and principal of Creative Strategy Solutions, Una McAlinden, who had designed and supported the 2019 process, was again engaged to design and facilitate the 2023 sessions. This continuity provided helpful insights in understanding how the 2019 work was carried out and created a throughline of participatory engagement. The methodology used was the Technology of Participation, a structured facilitation method that enables highly energized, inclusive, and meaningful group collaboration. The online whiteboarding platform, Miro, was used for the group collaboration.

Session 1: March 29th, 2023

The goals for this session were to review and analyze the community input from 2019, discuss implications from today's perspective, and compile the recommendations of the advisory committee in light of the data review.

Participants utilized breakout rooms and worked in groups of three to review and discuss the emerging themes around desired features of the community center, key areas of community enthusiasm, and areas of

concern. Each small group documented their discussions and reported out to the full group where additional common threads emerged.

Key Themes:

A pool is by far the most sought-after feature of the community center expansion. Comments included: *“The pool is key in this endeavor!”* A variety of reasons and motivations align around this goal. These include:

- Opportunities to improve water safety through availability of swim lessons, lifeguard roles etc
- A location for competitive swimming and competing.
- Providing an exercise and recreational asset.
- Interest was expressed in other water features, e.g. splash pad

Enthusiasm for the pool also highlighted support for a school district partnership, opportunities to become a water safe community, especially given the natural water elements in the vicinity, and that another pool would meet valley needs.

Expanded workout and multifunctional spaces are also extremely important to the community as these will allow for flexible programming options that serve a range of needs and age groups. One group articulated this as *“an inclusive, multiuse facility that meets the diverse needs of all.”* The theme of community and flexible spaces was strong – *“The expansion will open up the community by providing more space to connect.”* Larger, flexible space was articulated in different ways – *“all-purpose in design, capable of handling many different activities.”* Outdoor space expansion was also referenced. A key benefit mentioned was that expanded and additional amenities would *“keep people local more often.”*

A related theme around ADA access and inclusive access was also noted. This would also apply to the pool which should cater to all users with the examples of ramps, lifts, and zero entry functionality mentioned as possibilities. The discussion around access was also expanded to consider how people might be able to get to the location. Access by those who are not members of the YMCA also emerged below as a concern.

Concerns:

One key concern was that the facility expansion be future focused and not be too small. The need to be mindful of ongoing growth and ensuring adequate parking and facility features, given the permanence of the expansion came up.

The need to balance pool access (open swim vs swim team and lessons) was raised.

Access by non-members and affordability were also an area of concern. Cost, fees, and access by non-YMCA members was a clear area of concern and uncertainty.

Overall, the participants aligned around a desire to provide a facility that met community needs and was accessible by all. The opportunity to make a major addition to the community’s assets should be embraced.

Session 2: April 5th, 2023

In the second session, the work focused on use cases meaning how the advisory committee envisioned the facility being used, and for what purposes. The in-depth grounding in the 2019 data in session 1 helped ensure that this earlier community input informed these scenarios.

At the end of session 1 and the start of session 2, the committee generated approximately 100 ideas responding to the question: *Given our review of the community input, what are all the things you picture people using the community center for?*

Again, in small groups the participants carried out three rounds of analysis of this data. with two sessions of plenary reports where the individual small group analysis around use cases were further lightly clustered into main themes identifying overall purposes anticipated. Some overlap and alternative groupings are certainly possible as the plenary discussions were not exhaustive, however the committee was satisfied that the top-level concepts identified the broad scope of purposeful use cases that would make the community center expansion a valuable asset and of use to the community as a whole.

Anticipated Uses of the Community Center

The primary use cases identified are:

- Learn New Skills
- Gather & Connect
- Teen Hangout
- Use the Pool
- Exercise
- Community Events

- Emergency Response & Safety
- Space to Socialize
- Recreate
- Find Family Support
- Compete

Full transcript of the themes is on the next page along with a screenshot of the online workspace.

Community Benefit & Underlying Values

When asked to identify which of the anticipated uses would benefit the community most, the group overwhelmingly identified Use the Pool (10 dots) with Gather & Connect plus Teen Hangout jointly attracting four, followed by three dots for Emergency Response & Safety, and several getting two dots – Exercise, Learn New Skills, Community Events, and Recreate.

As a closing exercise, the group individually articulated the values behind these choices and maximizing community benefit/providing for unmet needs, service to the community/connecting community/creating a community hub, accessibility for all and serving all ages and needs being the main underlying motivations.

Next Steps

The complete advisory committee data is available for review and further discussion and analysis by the Design/Build Team and the Public Works Department. The advisory committee sessions provided a diverse range of input and ideas with consensus around the main themes so that the technical aspects of the design are well-informed.

Anticipated Uses of the Community Center Expansion

Learn New Skills	Use the Pool	Gather & Connect	Exercise	Teen hangout	Community Events	Emergency Response & Safety	Space to socialize	Find family support	Recreate	Compete
People will learn new skills	enjoy aquatic activities and water education	People will connect	People will exercise	Find youth and family programming	Civic Gatherings	place of refuge	gather	People will trust the Y with childcare	use a gym	
learn	Use Pool	parents can connect doing pick-up	Exercise Space	grow into young adults	Performing Arts	Emergency needs	gather	use childcare	leverage multigenerational resources	
People will receive job training and skills	use the pool	Community Gatherings	Get healthier together	People will use facility	Civic	Health and Safety	People will share the space for socializing and education.	People will trust the Y with childcare	play in the gym	
Attend a Class	People will swim	People will connect	Fitness	Large Gym Space & other multi-functional space	community events	Find and give support	Inclusivity			
use the center for classes, learning new things	People will swim	a place to connect and grow their community	People will exercise and participate in intramural sports	Teens will socialize	Commerce	Community Support				
Improve themselves with new skills	Pool	network	People will engage in group fitness	Kids activities	Flex space					
Expanded special needs programming	use pool	shared experience	find indoor activities.							
Education										

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Improve themselves with new skills	Pool	network	People will engage in group fitness	Kids activities	Flex space	3				
Expanded special needs programming	use pool	shared experience	find indoor activities.	4	2					
Education	10	4	2							
2										

add appendix of participants?