



Community Recreation Center: Community Uses/Amenities

By Leadership Steamboat Class

This segment of Dialogue Before Decision addresses prospective community uses and potential benefits of a new recreation center.

What could a new recreation center be to our community? For our families, it could be an accessible, convenient, cost effective, multi-use facility for wellness and physical activity for all generations. It could be a place for kids to go without an adult, a safe place for teens to socialize, and a place for adults and seniors to comfortably enjoy physical and leisure activity. It could be a well-suited amenity for our growing community and a “place” for people to gather, ultimately enhancing cohesiveness of our community as a whole.

In August 2006, a survey conducted by the City of Steamboat Springs, indicated that 65% of the 300 voters surveyed support the general concept of a Community Recreation Center. The most important factor in the decision making process for those surveyed was the kind of facilities offered, followed by cost and then need. Certain recreation center facilities and amenities were ranked by order of overall importance, prioritized by poll results as follows:

1. Teen center featuring activities for the city’s teenagers
2. Dedicated program space for children’s summer camp and after-school programs
3. Indoor playground areas for young children
4. Community meeting and multipurpose room that can be used for classes, meetings, or other functions
5. A gym with an elevated indoor track and two courts used for basketball, volleyball, other indoor sports, as well as multipurpose activities
6. Indoor pool with lap lanes and a deepwater diving well
7. Racquetball courts
8. A small water park-style play area for younger children
9. Workout facilities with weight lifting and exercise machines
10. A climbing wall
11. A large indoor field house with a synthetic turf field for year-round use for soccer, football, baseball, lacrosse and golf.

In February 2007, the City of Steamboat Springs hosted a number of public input meetings with recreation consultants from Greenplay, LLC and Barker, Rinker, Seacat Architects. Citizens contributed to defining the nature of our community and potential recreation program and facility priorities. Public comment generated by these meetings suggests a variety of desires and potential benefits that a new recreation center could provide to our community’s families, youth, teens, adults and seniors. While there are many views as to what would be nice to have in a recreation center, there are two

considerations that should be looked into; what amenities are currently not available in Routt County and what populations are underserved.

A comprehensive, multi generational facility could allow for greater use by the whole community and foster community bonds by connecting divergent groups under one roof. Nicole DuBord conducted a survey of her peers for her Steamboat Springs High School Senior Project in 2006. Of the 117 teen respondents the overall vision was “a teen center including: a lounge, table games, availability of food and drinks, late night events. As part of a recreation center with a pool, fitness center and dance studio. A place giving teens a place to go and something to do” Interestingly, the number one amenity requested was a Study Area. 79% of the teens also indicated that they would be willing to pay to attend events at a Recreation Center.

According to those polled, the second most important amenity is a space for After School programs. Due to space constraints, there are currently 60 spaces in the City run After School Action program available for the 872 elementary school children in the SSSD. There is not a daily program for the 451 middle school kids. On school days off, there are 24 middle school spaces. The Afterschool Alliance, a national nonprofit, reports that after school programs contribute to safe communities, help working parents and their employers while improving academics. The most likely times for alcohol use and sexual activity for youth is between the hours of 3pm-6pm. A community recreation facility with adequate space, multiple amenities and appropriate staffing and programming has the potential to provide a safe, healthy environment for local youth from all kinds of families.

Some amenities are not currently available to the public in Routt County. Currently there are no public hard wood ball courts that are used for racquetball, handball and squash. There also isn't a public climbing wall, a diving well or an indoor swimming pool. These could be used for league sports, recreation or for competitive youth teams.

Some of the amenities could provide greater access to health and recreation for underserved populations. A facility incorporating adequate deck space, zero depth entry and shallow water would be advantageous in attracting young swimmers, seniors, special populations and medical community participation. An indoor walking area would allow for increased opportunities for aging well.

While Steamboat Springs has worked for many years with what is currently available there are societal, economic and populations changes that our growing community is working to address. Many ideas have been expressed about what some would like in a recreation center and what others feel is a necessity. The decision will need to be made as to what is most important and what the community is willing to pay. Dialogue Before Decision welcomes your input please email suggestions or comments to dialougebeforedecision@hotmail.com