

## **Pro-Statement**

It's been 22 years since Park City last asked voters to approve a recreation-focused bond. Vote Yes on the Park City Recreational Facilities Bond Question.

As Park City residents, we benefit from a long and storied commitment to recreation, health, and wellness. Over 50 years ago, organized fitness began in the War Memorial Building on Main Street with a local adult basketball league. Nearly 40 years ago, Park City purchased the foreclosed and privately-owned tennis facility which became the PC MARC. Twenty-two years ago, residents approved a bond for the construction of the Park City Ice Arena and the construction of several neighborhood parks.

Due to careful management by the Recreation Department and support of current and prior city councils, Park City has continuously improved recreation over the last two decades through varied sources of funding including grants, impact fees, and mindful budgeting. Notably, the City built the Park City Sports Complex at Quinn's Junction and funded the 2011 renovation of the PC MARC. Many additional improvements have been made possible through the ingenuity of city staff seeking grants. Summit County RAP Tax Grants, for example, supported projects ranging from field turf replacement to pickleball sound mitigation.

As our community expands, and demand on existing facilities increases, residents need to comprehensively look at how best to improve recreation in our community while ensuring existing facilities receive the maintenance and attention they need. Over the past year, recreation department staff, the recreation advisory board, and community stakeholders have come together to create a future-looking Recreation Master Plan based on community outreach and volumes of feedback from previous recreation planning.

Park City voters now have the opportunity to pass a \$30 million general obligation bond to bring this work to life. The plan includes both new construction and improvements to existing facilities: 1) indoor and outdoor pickleball courts, 2) a refrigerated and covered outdoor ice sheet, 3) a Nordic skiing and trailhead area, 4) expanded fitness facilities, 5) a bicycle pump track, 6) new sports field lighting and 7) maintenance facilities.

As part of this Recreation Master Plan, the City is also committing existing funds to replace the aging pools at the PC MARC and build a new City Park Recreation Building, home to the PC Summer Camp and other recreational programming.

These investments not only create new recreation buildings but also substantially improve our existing facilities - many of which are operating beyond their intended capacity. Some of these needs (such as expanded field lighting and an additional ice sheet) had been identified as far back as 2013.

As Park City continues to see growth, recreation provides the opportunity to gather with friends, meet new people and build community. Having a robust public recreation program ensures that everyone has access to the benefits that come from recreation, regardless of income. Now is our chance. Vote Yes on Question 1 and continue to advance the City's mission

and commitment to “enriching the lives in our community through exceptional people, programs, and facilities.”

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### **Rebuttal to Pro-Statement**

It’s been seven years since Park City voters approved a \$25M open space bond to protect the Bonanza Flat. The bond allowed the City to purchase the area, securing it from potential development and providing ample outdoor recreational opportunities for residents and non-residents alike.

Two years later, Park City voters were asked to approve another bond in the amount of \$48M to conserve Treasure Hill as open space. The recreation value of both properties cannot be overstated and was highlighted in the 2016 and 2018 bond language appealing to 84060 residents.

It is true that Park City has made significant and successful investments in recreation. That is evident in the 2022 NCS data. 95% of respondents ranked recreation opportunities as good or excellent while only 12% of residents ranked the cost of living as good or excellent. It is also true that many of these opportunities are also enjoyed by non-residents.

While it’s true the area is growing, Park City is not. The population of Park City has declined slightly since 2020. That is not the case for greater Summit County, and even less so in Salt Lake and Wasatch counties who have seen significant growth. Demand for recreational facilities is up but not just from Parkites. 85% of 2022 Ice Arena participants were non-Park City residents.

It is NOT appropriate to ask 84060 taxpayers to fund additional recreation that benefits the entire region when critical needs are not being met within city limits.

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### **Con-Statement**

#### **Prioritizing Critical Needs Over Recreation**

In their March retreat, the City Council reviewed the 2022 National Community Survey results. The data reveals Park City excels in safety and recreation and falls short in affordability and transportation. The Council identified affordability/housing and transportation as critical priorities. Now is not the appropriate time to ask taxpayers to take on debt for recreation.

## 1. Recreational Strength Already Evident:

According to the survey, Park City already boasts a strong reputation for its recreational offerings. 95% of respondents ranked recreation opportunities as good or excellent. The community enjoys ample access to parks, 400 miles of trails, impressive recreational facilities, and 8,000 acres of open space. Park City provides world-class recreational opportunities and continues to allocate significant funds to recreation.

## 2. Critical Priorities:

The survey results underscore Park City's most critical challenges. Only 12% of respondents ranked cost of living as good or excellent. The cost of living in Park City is 65% higher than the national average. Affordability doesn't affect everyone equally but the impacts are community-wide. To be a world-class destination, we must support the workforce that makes that possible.

- **Housing Affordability:** The survey data highlights concerns about the escalating cost of housing. The average home in Park City is over \$2M. Housing costs are 251% higher in Park City than the national average.
- **Childcare:** The survey suggests that the accessibility and affordability of childcare is also a major concern of residents. The Council's one-time \$1M contribution to childcare will go a long way but the problem is on-going.
- **Food Affordability:** Food affordability concerns, as revealed in the survey, indicate that some residents are struggling to meet their basic nutritional needs. 16.5% of PCSD students are eligible for free and reduced lunch and the CCPC has reported an increase in food pantry services.
- **Transportation:** With 9,000 of our 11,000 workforce commuting into Park City each day, the lack of affordable housing is also a traffic problem. Dissatisfaction with transportation options, including public transit and traffic congestion, indicates a need for substantial improvements to enhance mobility and reduce the city's environmental footprint.

## 3. Exploring Alternative Funding Sources:

Instead of placing the burden of a recreation bond on taxpayers, the city should explore alternative funding sources for recreational improvements, such as public-private partnerships, grants, and user fees.

## 4. Allocating Resources Wisely:

With limited resources, it is essential to prioritize critical needs which will have a more profound and immediate impact on residents and the overall sustainability of our community over additional recreational spending.

It's vital that our elected officials, when presented with evidence, respect the will of the community and allocate resources in a way that prioritizes our most urgent needs. The 2022 NCS results provide a compelling case against the G.O. bond. Taxpayers should not be asked to fund an already robust recreational program when critical needs are not being met. It's essential to allocate resources thoughtfully to promote a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future for all residents.

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### **Rebuttal to Con-Statement**

#### **Recreation is a Top Priority for Residents**

According to the National Community Survey, which was referenced by the con argument, 87% of Park City survey respondents do believe it's important to focus on recreation opportunities in the next two years. **Now is the time to "VOTE YES" on the recreation bond.**

#### **Recreation Builds Community**

In cities and towns across the US, parks and recreation is predominantly a service provided by the local government. When Park City Municipal and Park City Recreation provide comprehensive recreation opportunities to residents, they are opening doors to a new sport or activity; helping residents live a healthy life; building closer ties with neighbors; and creating the bonds of friendship that keep Park City, Park City. Yes, we do need to tackle affordable housing and transportation, but we cannot do it at the expense of all other business of creating, managing, and nurturing our city's livability.

#### **Recreation Master Plan is Worthy of a Bond**

Recreation staff already do an exceptional job pursuing grants and being wise stewards of citizen's dollars. Most recently, the Prospector Park playground was re-imagined with funds from the Recreation RAP Tax. In addition, the Recreation Department recovers over 70% of their operating expenses through user fees (higher than industry standard), while still providing reduced or no cost memberships and scholarships to residents in need. A bond is now necessary to support a Recreation Master Plan.

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Park City shall conduct a public meeting on October 26, 2023, beginning at the hour of 6:00 p.m. at 445 Marsac Avenue, Park City, Utah. The purpose of the meeting is to hear arguments for and against the issuance of the Bonds.