



Prescott Area Fitness Center Survey Report

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Executive Summary

In February 2007, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at UW-River Falls sent questionnaires to 1,100 randomly selected residents of the City of Prescott and the Towns of Oak Grove, Clifton, Trimble, and Diamond Bluff seeking their input on a prospective year-round fitness facility. The overall response rate was a robust 51 percent (560 completed questionnaires). The estimates provided in this report should be accurate to within plus or minus 3.7 percent. Further, based on statistical tests described in Appendix A, non-response bias (concern that non-respondents hold consistently different views than those who completed the questionnaire) does not appear to be a problem with this survey. Finally, the demographic profile of survey respondents closely aligns with comparable data from the 2000 Census. In short, we expect the sample to accurately represent the opinions of the population in the Prescott area.

The following are key observations from the survey results:

1. The population in the Prescott area is closely divided on the issue of whether public funds should be used to build a year-round fitness center. Fifty percent oppose the use of public funds to help build such a facility and 50 percent are supportive.
2. If public funding is used for such a facility, the results of this survey indicate that the public would support no more than about 25 percent of the cost (between \$250,000 and \$500,000) coming from the taxpayers.
3. There are distinct demographic divisions with respect to public funding for a year-round fitness facility with some groups – higher income households, households with children at home, younger residents, those living in Prescott, Oak Grove and Clifton, and more recent arrivals to the area – being significantly more supportive of the use of tax dollars.
4. Given the number of comments, the intensity of the 50 percent who oppose public funding for a year-round fitness center may be greater than the 50 percent who are supportive of public funding.
5. There is relatively weak support for locating such a facility on the grounds of the Prescott High School but there is also nothing like a consensus on an alternative site.
6. Slightly less than one-quarter of the sample population reported being a member of a fitness center at this time.
7. More than 40 percent of the sample said they are currently using cardiovascular equipment (e.g. treadmill) and strength training equipment (e.g. weights). More than 40 percent reported that they do not participate in any of the fitness activities or services about which we asked.
8. More than 40 percent of the sample agreed that Prescott needs cardiovascular equipment, strength training equipment, weight management programs, an indoor track, active older adult fitness programs, aerobics classes, adult fitness classes, a gymnasium, and rehabilitation opportunities.
9. Women agree, in significantly higher numbers than do men, that all of the fitness activities about which we asked are needed in Prescott
10. Recognition of a need for fitness activities in the Prescott area tends to be higher in families with higher incomes, with children living at home, younger adults and those living in the city of Prescott and the Towns of Oak Grove and Clifton.

Survey Purpose

The motivation for this study was to gather opinions of residents about a year-round physical fitness facility serving the greater Prescott area, which includes the City of Prescott and the townships of Oak Grove, Clifton, Diamond Bluff and Trimbelle. The survey was sponsored by the Intergovernmental Council that includes representatives of local governments and the Prescott School District. The Council chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls on this survey.

Survey Methods

In February 2007, the SRC sent questionnaires to a random selection of 1,100 households in the study area. A survey cover letter asked the adult in the household who would be having the next birthday to complete the survey and return it in a postage paid envelope to the SRC at UW-River Falls. After two weeks, the SRC mailed postcards to those from whom we had not received a completed questionnaire. A second questionnaire was sent to remaining non-respondents in early March. The SRC received a total of 560 completed questionnaires from residents for a strong response rate of 51 percent. Based on the number of households in the area, the estimates provided in this report are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.7 percent with 95 percent confidence.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias”. Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. **Based upon a standard statistical analysis that is described in Appendix A, the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that non-response bias is not a concern for this sample.**

In addition to the numeric responses, respondents provided additional written comments which were compiled by the SRC from the surveys. As appropriate, selected quotes will be used in some sections of this report to illustrate these comments. **Appendix B to this report contains the complete compilation of comments.**

Appendix C contains a copy of the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question.

Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of respondents to the survey. Where comparable data was available from the 2000 Census, they were included to indicate the degree to which the sample represents the underlying adult population in Saint Croix Falls. The data in Table 1 show that, in general, the sample matches the underlying population quite well. The sample contains slightly more males and home-owners and fewer low-income households than we might have expected. The use of the water bill mailing list probably accounts for both the preponderance of homeowners and the scarcity of low-income households (who are probably less likely to be homeowners). In short, however, the demographic profile of respondents aligns well with the Census data.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents							
Gender	Count	Male	Female				
Sample	519	46%	54%				
Census (18+)	6,404	51%	49%				
Age 18+	Count	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Sample	544	1%	10%	26%	28%	20%	15%
Census	6,404	11%	18%	27%	21%	11%	12%
Household Size	Count	0	1	2	3	4	5+
Number Adults	539		12%	73%	12%	3%	0%
Number Children (<18)	501	56%	16%	19%	6%	2%	0%
Housing	Count	Own	Rent				
Sample	538	99%	1%				
Census	3,189	80%	20%				
Work Status	Count	Full-Time	Part-Time	Self	Unemp	Retired	Other
Sample	545	56%	9%	12%	2%	18%	3%
Census	6,623	75%			3%	22%	
Income Range	Count	<\$15,000	\$15-\$24,999	\$25-\$49,999	\$50-\$74,999	\$75-\$99,999	\$100,000+
Sample	488	4%	4%	18%	24%	23%	27%
Census	3,161	6%	7%	25%	34%	15%	13%
Length Residency	Count	<5 years	5-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	31+ years	
Sample	547	20%	19%	18%	14%	29%	
Place of Residence	Count	Prescott	Oak Grove	Clifton	Diamond Bluff	Trimbelle	
Sample	534	39%	19%	21%	7%	14%	

The demographic profile of the sample, as summarized in Table 1, generally aligns quite well with the Census data for the area. The three exceptions are:

- The sample contains too few young adults (18 – 24 year olds)
- The sample contains more wealthy individuals (more than one-quarter reported household income in excess of \$100,000 per year)
- The sample has too few renters (1 percent vs 20 percent in the Census)

Despite these differences, the relatively close match with the Census provides additional confidence that the sample is a good reflection of the underlying population.

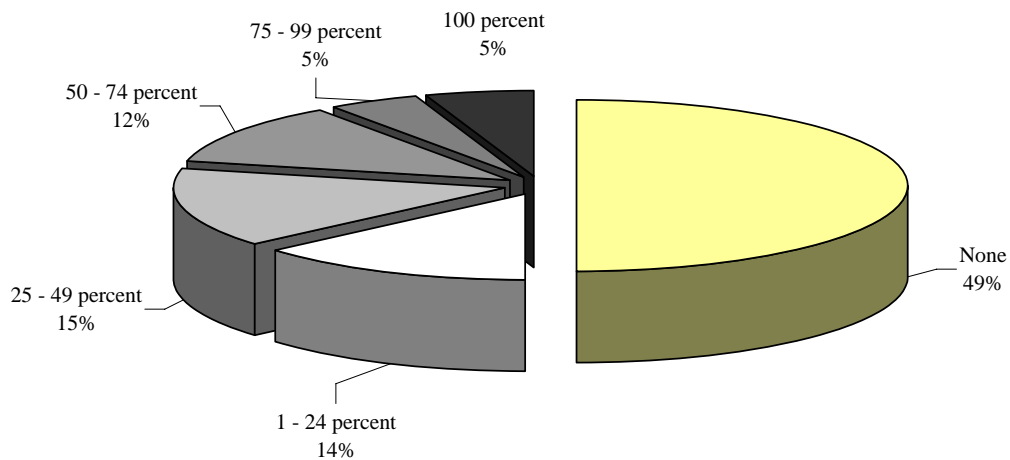
Key Questions

Respondents were asked to provide input on two key questions with respect to a year-round fitness facility:

- What percentage of funds to build a facility should come from taxpayers?
- Where should a facility, if built, be located?

The questionnaire stated that a facility would cost \$1 - \$2 million dollars, which would add \$7 - \$14 per \$100,000 in assessed value to residents' property taxes. Respondents were then asked the percentage of this amount that should come from taxpayers, ranging from none to 100 percent. Figure 1 illustrates the fact that there is an even split between those who are opposed to any public funding for a community fitness facility and those favoring at least some such funding.

Figure 1: Percent Funding from Taxpayers



There are a number of interesting demographic divides with respect to how much (if any) public funding should be used if a community fitness facility is built. People who reported that they are currently a member of some fitness facility are significantly more supportive of public funding for a community fitness center than are those who are not. Households with children living at

home, those with household incomes greater than \$75,000, residents of the city of Prescott or the towns of Oak Grove and Clifton, younger adults, and people who've lived in the area for 20 years or less, are significantly more supportive of taxpayer funding than households with the opposite characteristics (no kids, incomes less than \$75,000, residents of Trimbelle or Diamond Bluff, older and longer-term residents). On average, people with characteristics that tend to be supportive of using taxpayer funds to help fund the center (kids, higher income, etc.) fall half-way between the category saying public dollars should cover up to 25 percent of the cost and the category calling for public funding for up to 50 percent of the cost.

In general, people with characteristics that tend to be less supportive of public funding of a facility (no children, lower incomes, etc.) tend to fall in the category saying taxpayer funds should cover no more than 25 percent of the cost. More than 70 percent of people with incomes less than \$25,000 per year feel that no public funds should be used to cover the cost of building a community facility.

In addition to the numeric data, there were nearly 250 written comments about the possibility of building a community fitness center. These comments fall into three broad categories: those opposed to building a facility (58 comments), those opposed to taxpayers funding for a facility (81 comments), and those who are supportive of a facility (47 comments). The following quotes are examples of each of these groups:

"I would not use it and don't believe there would be enough use of such a facility to warrant the expense of building one. If one were built, the money to build it should come totally from contributors. I would not use one."

"There are several fitness facilities on the RF/Prescott/Ellsworth area – Snap fitness, etc. People who use them can pay for them – none are expensive – and those who don't should not have to pay with taxes for those who do use them. I don't get gas money from non drivers – it's the same thing. If I bowl, I pay. If you bowl, you pay. Same principle."

"There is a desperate need for an indoor fitness facility in Prescott since there is very little activities to do and people seem to leave the area for Hastings, Woodbury, etc since we have no adequate facilities for fitness especially for youth and elderly. We need this absolutely and it would improve the health of residents."

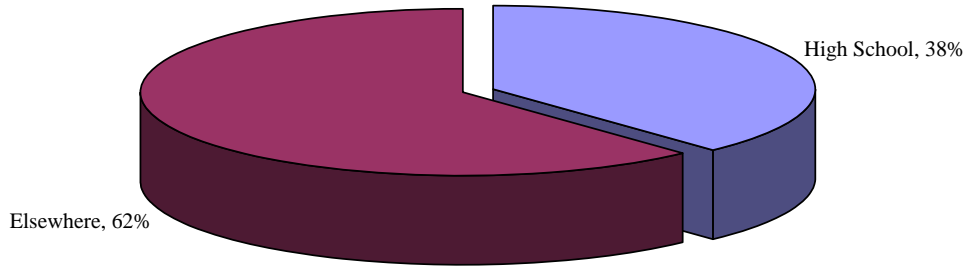
One other item of note from the supportive comments, nearly one-quarter said that they hoped such a facility would include a swimming pool.

Two impressions emerge from the data regarding taxpayer support for a community fitness facility. First, the population in the study area is closely divided on the issue of taxpayer support for a community fitness facility and public funding in excess of about 25 percent is likely to run into significant opposition. Second, the intensity of those opposed to public funding of a community fitness center appears to be greater than those who are supportive.

The second major question asked was, "If a year round fitness facility were built, would you prefer that it be on the grounds of Prescott High School or elsewhere. At Figure 2 indicates, a

very solid majority said that they would prefer that a fitness facility be located somewhere other than on the high school grounds.

Figure 2: If Built, Where Should a Fitness Center Be Located



The reason for opposing the construction of a community fitness facility at the high school is not clear. What is clear, from the comments, is that there is no clear alternative location that most

people have in mind. If a respondent said that they would prefer that the facility be built somewhere other than on the grounds of the high school, they were asked to indicate where it should be built. Table 2 summarizes their response and indicates that the ever-popular “other” was the category attracting the most support. Included in “other” were two suggestions that the facility be built in Iraq, 3 for it to be built in Minnesota, and one each suggesting Canada and Alaska!

Table 2: Where Should a Community Fitness Center Be Located (other than High School)	
Location	Number
Other	39
Somewhere in Prescott	36
River Falls	20
Highway 29 and 10/36	13
Ellsworth	8
Not on School Property	4
Jacques Building	2
Don't Care	30
Don't Build	20
Private Facility Only	11

The next most popular response, as shown in Table 2 was “Somewhere in Prescott” and, again, this was a bit of a catch-all category. Some respondents in this category suggested locating the facility in the new industrial park, some downtown, and others more generically “anywhere in town.”

So, in terms of location, the most that can be said is that relatively few respondents seem comfortable with the idea of locating a community fitness facility on the grounds of Prescott High School.

Current Fitness Facility Participation and Desired Community Fitness Center Facilities/Activities

Slightly less than one-quarter of the survey population (23 percent) reported that they are currently members of a fitness facility. Higher income households and those living in the Towns of Oak Grove or Clifton were significantly more likely to hold a fitness center membership. Residents who've lived in the Prescott area for more than 30 years were significantly less likely to be fitness center members. As noted, the 23 percent of the sample that are members of a fitness center are significantly more supportive of using public funds to partially fund a year-round community facility.

Sample households were asked to indicate which of the 11 activities/ services listed in Table 3 they are currently using. Substantial numbers of households reported using cardiovascular equipment (e.g. treadmills) and strength training equipment (e.g. free weights or weight lifting machines). Fewer than one-quarter reported that they are currently using any of the other facilities or activities in Table 3. Indeed, 241 of the 560 households (43 percent) indicate that they participate in none of the 11 items included in Table 3. The average number of activities in which the sample households reported participating was 2.0. Seven percent reported participating in 7 or more activities

Table 3: Facility Amenities: Percent Currently Using		
	Number	Currently Use
Cardiovascular Equipment	500	49%
Strength Training Equipment	497	42%
Weight Management	488	23%
Indoor Track	497	21%
Active Older Adult Exercise	487	19%
Aerobic Classes	485	18%
Adult Fitness Classes	482	17%
Gymnasium	498	16%
Rehabilitation Opportunities	477	12%
Personal Trainers	482	11%
Racquetball Courts	480	9%

Respondents were also asked to state whether they agree, are neutral, or disagree that Prescott needs the fitness activities or services listed in Table 3. Their responses are summarized in Table 4 and suggest the following:

- For most of the items listed in Table 4 (cardiovascular equipment, strength training equipment, weight management, indoor track, active older adult exercise programs, aerobic classes, adult fitness classes, a gymnasium, and rehabilitation opportunities) a majority or near-majority of respondents agreed that Prescott needs them.
- For these same items, there is a fairly consistent level of opposition to the proposition that they are needed in Prescott; generally about one-in-five residents feel they are not needed.

- There is also a fairly consistent percentage, ranging from about one-quarter to one-third, of the sample population who are neutral on these 9 items.
- The level of perceived need for personal trainers and racquetball courts is much lower than for the other items listed in Table 4.

	Number	Needs	Neutral	Doesn't Need
Cardiovascular Equipment	514	53%	25%	21%
Strength Training Equipment	509	50%	28%	23%
Weight Management	515	52%	29%	19%
Indoor Track	509	52%	25%	23%
Active Older Adult Exercise	512	54%	29%	18%
Aerobic Classes	514	49%	32%	20%
Adult Fitness Classes	514	48%	31%	21%
Gymnasium	509	48%	28%	24%
Rehabilitation Opportunities	510	44%	35%	21%
Personal Trainers	506	32%	42%	26%
Racquetball Courts	508	29%	41%	30%

- Women agree at significantly higher rates than men that **all** of the items in Table 4 are needed.
- Younger residents are significantly more interested than older ones in a gymnasium, cardiovascular equipment, aerobics, adult fitness classes, weight management, personal trainer, and racquetball courts.
- Higher income households agree at significantly higher levels that Prescott needs a gymnasium, weight lifting equipment, cardiovascular equipment, aerobic and fitness classes, adult fitness classes (yoga, pilates, etc.), and weight management/nutrition education.
- Households with children feel that Prescott needs a gymnasium, aerobics classes, adult fitness classes, and racquetball courts at significantly higher percentages than households without kids.
- Residents of Prescott, Oak Grove, and Clifton agree that the area needs a gymnasium, aerobics classes, and weight management opportunities more than do those living in Trimble and Diamond Bluff Towns.

Conclusions

The SRC sees 3 key conclusions from this study:

1. The public is closely divided on the use of public funds to build a year-round fitness facility and support or opposition to public funding follows distinct demographic patterns.
2. There is no consensus as to where to build such a facility if one were to be constructed
3. There is a relatively high level of agreement that most of the fitness activities or services about which we asked are needed in Prescott.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Tests

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who don’t return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, suppose that most non-respondents feel that no public funds should be used to construct a year-round fitness facility while those who did return their questionnaire were supportive of public funding of such a facility. In this case, non-response bias would exist and the raw results would overstate the overall public’s support for public funding of a fitness facility.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who return the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who return the second mailing. Those who return the second questionnaire are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing) and we assume that they are representative of that group. In this survey, 396 people responded to the first mailing and 164 responded to the second mailing.

We found 5 variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1) out of 34 tested. Further, the differences, with one exception, have no practical meaning in that the values “round” to the same result. For example, we found that respondents to the first mailing were significantly more likely to belong to a fitness center than were respondents to the second mailing (25 percent for mail 1 vs 17 percent for mail 2). However, this means that the vast majority of both groups do not currently belong to a fitness facility. There, is in short, no substantive difference in fitness membership even though there is a statistical difference.

The one area in which there is a meaningful difference between mail 1 responses and those from mail 2 was with respect to current use of cardiovascular equipment (e.g. treadmills). More than half of all those in the mail 1 group said they currently use cardiovascular equipment compared to only about one-third (38 percent) of those in the mail 2 group.

Variable	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing	Statistical Significance
Q1 Current fitness facility member	1.75	1.83	.039
Q4 Currently using weights	1.55	1.65	.027
Q5 Currently using cardiovascular equipment	1.47	1.62	.004
Q5 Need cardiovascular equip in community	1.63	1.80	.041
Q9 Currently doing adult fitness program	1.81	1.88	.047

Appendix B: Prescott Community Written Comments

Question 13 – *Where to build YMCA?* (177 responses)

Diamond Bluff (2 response)

- Diamond Bluff (2x)

Do not care / No opinion (30 responses)

- Doesn't matter (3x)
- No opinion (3x)
- Don't care (2x)
- Neutral (2x)
- Not interested (2x)
- Open (2x)
- ANYWHERE!!
- Anywhere in town
- Anywhere, Maybe downtown
- Don't know?
- Either Fine
- Most appropriate location
- Nowhere
- No preference
- No preference-any place in town
- No pertinence
- No real preference
- Not sure
- On neutral land
- Unsure
- Unknown
- Whichever is cheaper

Ellsworth (8 responses)

- Ellsworth (6x)
- By new water tower in Ellsworth
- Ellsworth area

HWY 29 or HWY 10/35 (13 responses)

- 10 and 29/35
- 40 acres previous Jacques Property parcel owned by school on HWY 29
- Across HWY 10
- Along HWY 10
- Along HWY 29 between River Falls and Prescott
- Both, by HWY 10/35
- By HWY 35 and HWY 10
- County road F halfway between Hudson and Prescott

- HWY 10 east
- HWY 29 or HWY 10
- HWY 29/10
- HWY 29 and County F
- On HWY 10 between Ellsworth and Prescott

In town / city (27 responses)

- Downtown (2x)
- Industrial park (2x)
- In town (2x)
- New Industrial Park (2x)
- At the river heights motel site
- Anywhere in town
- Business
- By the mall
- Commercial area
- Community
- East or north of town
- Industrial area
- In community
- Near High School
- Near Snap Fitness
- Near town
- Oak Grove Township
- Snap
- So the community could use it during the school year daytime and evening
- Strip-mall
- Townhall, Oak Grove
- Walking distance from downtown Hager City
- Within city limits

Jacques Building or Land (2 responses)

- Jacques Land School District Owns
- Old Jacques building

Non supportive (20 responses)

- None (3x)
- No where (3x)
- Don't need (2x)
- NOT NEEDED (2x)
- Against it, wouldn't the wellness facility committee pay for their own building? Who pays their property tax and where does their money come from to do this?
- Anywhere else
- Don't want it

- Not built
- Not exist
- No Room on grounds
- No where, do no build
- Snap fitness just opened
- We don't need one
- We have Snap

Not School Property (4 responses)

- Near the school but not right on the grounds so students can use it easily
- Non school property
- Non school campus location
- Not on school property

Prescott (6 responses)

- Off-site – Prescott Business Park area
- Right outside Prescott
- Somewhere in Prescott
- South end of Prescott

Private Facility (11 responses)

- Community center or privately owned center
- Free standing
- Free-standing building. Accessible to major roads
- Land purchase
- Private business
- Private enterprise
- Private facility
- Privately owned
- Private land
- Private property
- This should be a private enterprise, not a public one

River Falls (20 responses)

- River Falls (19x)
- Close to River Falls

Other (34 responses)

- Minnesota (3x)
- Iraq (2x)
- Not in Prescott (2x)
- Anywhere but a school
- As a commercial endeavor
- Between Prescott and River Falls

- Big River, WI
- Canada
- Central area fro all races listed
- Central location
- Central Pierce County
- Close to people that pay for it
- Easily accessible
- Kasilof, Alaska
- Mary T Property
- Near heart and hands daycare
- Neutral site
- New development where the new daycare facility is
- Next to MN.
- Open land available for development so we don't have to pay for a new high school too!
- Out in the country
- Outside the city
- Places with ample partners
- Rural
- Somewhere between Prescott and Ellsworth
- Somewhere near woods so a running path could run through the woods
- Somewhere off school
- Where citizens have most money
- Where the new high school was built
- Where there is more room

Question 15 – *Additional comments concerning the possibility of building a facility in the Prescott area.* (246 responses)

Non-supportive (58 responses)

- Anyone interested in a physical fitness facility should join a health club, people who aren't interested shouldn't have to have higher taxes for those who are interested. Health clubs are reasonable in price and are the same things as #2-12.
- Curves didn't make it.
- Do not do it!
- Don't!
- Don't feel we need that type of expensive facility in Prescott. Plenty of facilities close enough to use. Otherwise, have users pay for facility.
- Due to where we live we aren't interested in a facility in Prescott. We are 3 miles from Ellsworth and 15 miles from Prescott.
- Hastings is building a new YMCA; I do not see any need for a facility in Prescott. If there is a need for one in Prescott, use the high school gym.
- Hastings is now building a YMCA – Prescott should be careful as to how much they duplicate services.
- I currently go to the YMCA in River Falls on my way home from work. If Prescott had a facility I would still go to River Falls.

- I don't think a facility is needed in Prescott; Hastings is building a new YMCA.
- I don't think Prescott is a big enough community to make it a worth while project. The SNAP fitness center serves us well enough!!
- I live in Clifton, 1 mile from River Falls. I would not go to Prescott for a YMCA.
- I live in River Falls and I use the River Falls YMCA and school facilities. There is also a YMCA being built in Hastings. I don't think another facility is necessary. Money can be used elsewhere.
- I'm not sure not sure if it's a real need. There are other greater needs.
- It may be needed but I'm not for it.
- I won't go to one in Prescott – would consider one centrally located. Does Prescott school even have room for one on the school grounds? Have you thought of doing one in Ellsworth?
- I would not use it and don't believe there would be enough use of such a facility to warrant the expense of building one. If one were built, the money to build it should come totally from contributors. I would not use one.
- No need, do not build!
- No to building
- Not a good idea, do not compete with private fitness facilities.
- NOT INTERESTED!!
- Not needed at this time.
- People should exercise, but a lot can be done in homes or indoor walking at the schools or in the parks. Please – they built a pool in Ellsworth because it was so needed. How often is it really used? If people want to be fit, they can do it in their own homes or Snap Fitness/Curves/school. Want me to keep going? I can! This is a really dumb idea put out there by a handful of lazy people who don't want to use the facilities already out there. Our parks, schools, sidewalks, Curves, Snap Fitness, etc. They should use there imagination and their own pocket books to get rid of their OWN body fat, not ours!
- Prescott taxes are high enough. Not much to show for them.
- Prescott has a fitness center already. We have Snap fitness nearby available 24/7. My wife is member, I am not.
- Snap came in lately.
- Sorry I was out of town. My property has been in my family for almost 90 years, but it is used only occasionally at the present time, and I would not be using a physical fitness facility.
- STOP!
- The facility would serve only its immediate area and there for should be the responsibility of the city or township in which its located. Nobody is going to drive from Diamond Bluff to use a facility in Prescott on a regular basis, for example.
- The need of gym space is most important for the students. I feel as adults there are plenty of other opportunities for these activities in the area. Should we be looking at other needs for the high school first?
- The way people move in and out of Prescott – the physical fitness building probably wouldn't stay in business – like most all the other new business in town. People do not support new business.
- There is a new facility in Prescott (Snap Fitness) why would Prescott need another one?

- There is a YMCA, 24 hour fitness and curves in Red Wing. There is a YMCA in River Falls. We DO NOT need a facility built and ran on tax payer funds in Prescott!
- There is a YMCA being built in Hastings – our family plans to join that. Community Ed already does some fitness classes. What Prescott really needs is an indoor swimming pool.
- There is no need in Prescott for such a facility. The neighboring cities all have such things and we should spend our money on more important things like education, roads, and schools.
- Too late!
- Traveling 10-14 miles from home would not be that beneficial or convenient. Mostly beneficial for residents in Prescott, not outlying areas.
- We already have one. We already have classes through community recreation. Snap Fitness has some of these activities and Comirec offers classes.
- We do not need one.
- We have one.
- We have the Snap Fitness center. I do my workouts at home in my own gym.
- We need other things than a gym, use the gym at the high school.
- We need to ensure our schools have appropriate space for additional buildings to support school needs and athletic program requirements first.
- We now have Snap Fitness and all schools have gyms.
- We would never use a facility in Prescott. We are over 16 miles from Prescott and rarely even drive through this town. Private business should build this.
- Why? Can't people just take walks, bike or jog?? Complete waste of money!!
- Why have one when there is Snap Fitness in Prescott and two facilities in Hastings and Hudson?
- Why not use the Prescott High School equipment and then nothing has to be built.
- YMCA's nearby if people want to join I prefer not to have to pay for something people already have access to. How much would it really get used? And for how long? Things start out with a bang and then drop off and the novelty wears off!
- Even if you set this up without taxpayer support eventually you or someone will determine that it can not survive and taxpayer money will be needed. We do not need more taxes they are too high already. Let free enterprise set this up if indeed it is needed.
- Homeowners are already taxed to the max and most of the homeowners are elderly and on social security. And the younger homeowners usually have lots of money and little time – or are members of a nearby (Hastings, Cottage Grove) fitness center or have access to outdoor tennis courts etc. Where's Prescott's Wal-Mart, Target, etc? we have to go out of town for everything else, so why not fitness?
- It is an insult to be asked. Our taxes are insane as is. They talk of cancelling bus routes and you ask me to finance someone else's physical fitness. If you want to work out go to a gym. If you can afford it get a job or walk on the road. It's not my problem.
- NO NO NO, insane. You will not have anybody who will want to live in this town at that tax rate. No property tax increase. I think this should come out of all the property taxes we pay now. We pay high property taxes and where does all the money go? Does not appear to be going towards schools or community. No tax increase, we can use MN facilities.
- No taxes!
- Our taxes are high enough now – there are fitness facilities in Hastings now.
- Stop spending and lower taxes! Make better use of school facilities that we have.

- The taxes in the Prescott area are twice as high as they should be already. This is not a good idea!
- There are facilities in Hastings, River Falls, Ellsworth, and Redwing. Why would you even consider using tax payer money?
- This is for private enterprise. We just had a privately financed exercise center opened in Prescott. Taxpayer dollars should not be used to compete with them and drive them out of business.

Do Not Support using tax dollars (81 responses)

- A facility like this should use fundraising and user fees.
- Aren't Prescott taxes high enough? The majority of taxpayers would not use this.
- As far as higher taxes I don't need that.
- Curves for women and Snap Fitness are in Prescott. Home equipment in fitness room. No more taxes.
- Do a funding drive before building anything. Get the money up front (or at least dated pledges).
- Don't want my taxes used for such a facility.
- Do not build using tax dollars for construction, staff, or maintenance. Hastings is getting a YMCA, if anyone needs a facility just go across the river.
- Facility should be financed by those who use it and is should be totally separate from schools/government.
- How could area taxpayers be receptive to subsidize a fitness facility for Prescott?
- I am all for good health but not at the cost of raising taxes.
- I am concerned about further increase in property taxes at all.
- I do my own wellness program with my own equipment and the great outdoors. With the high taxes we have in this area, we can't afford any additional burdens. SORRY!
- I do not believe that tax dollars should be used in any way for a year round fitness facility.
- I don't think they will make the money in this smaller community to sustain and I don't think taxpayers should foot the bill. Leave it to private enterprise if you are doing it.
- I feel it would be a waste of tax payer's money. If a facility was needed a health fitness gym would have already built one. (Lifetime fitness, Gold's Gym, etc.)
- I feel this is a personal matter and government should stay out of it completely. My taxes high enough without this.
- I have a hard time with raising taxes any higher than they already are, if the community really wants this facility, I believe that it should be financed with all by fundraising or partially but with limited tax payer money!! The community seems to do a great job fundraising for something they really would like to see happen.
- I just don't think it should be paid for only with property taxes. There should be a fee for the people who are using the facility also.
- I live in the town of Diamond Bluff and am only 10 miles to Red Wing and 14-15 miles to Prescott so I would continue to use the Red wing YMCA therefore I wouldn't want my taxes to increase for a facility I would never use.
- I like the idea but if this is all TAX based and it goes through I know where the people of Prescott stand. Vain! Can't get a new school this way. Kids are more important.

- I own a home in Prescott but I have resided in Alaska for 36 years. I do not want anything more added to my tax bill. I would like the users of such a facility to pay for that facility. Not me!!
- I think it is a bad idea, our taxes (property) have been going up and we just redid Freedom Park with its learning center. Stop for this reason. #2-12 Join curves in town, high school gym, walk around town. All of these will not be free to us they have not mentioned the cost to us. Property tax special price on classes, what? Why don't they build this in River Falls? With our property taxes going up who wants to pay more money out, everything is going up. Are all of these classes free? And joining the center free?
- I think the tax payers would have a problem paying anymore property taxes.
- I would choose not to pay taxes on a facility we would not use if built in Prescott.
- I would not travel 15 miles to use any facility. If it is built in Prescott, have Prescott pay for it and not the county as a whole.
- I would strongly disagree to any more property tax on my house. I am about to be forced out of my house that I built with my own two hands because I pay \$4,400 in tax already. Please do not raise my property tax or I will loose my house. This is very important to me. I cannot afford a tax raise on my house. I will loose my house if tax goes any higher.
- If a facility is built, it should be privately funded. No tax payer dollars should be spent for this facility. Not everyone wants or needs these types of facilities. Whoever wants this should build it themselves.
- If a private enterprise – business should foot its own expense as opportunity for its own profit.
- If someone wants to build this type of facility let them pay for it. They can charge the people that use it to re-group their investment.
- If the Prescott community would like a facility there community can pay for it. Any facility should be private not public.
- If this is private enterprise no tax payer money. If this is community (Prescott) owned taxpayer fundraising. Many of these activities are already available in many forms. Don't put someone out of business.
- If you can build it with 100% private funds then proceed with it. People on fixed incomes can't afford more taxes to pay for things they many not use or should be private plus it would take away a tax paying business to come into this area.
- If you want built it with private money.
- If it is needed let it be built by the people who will use it.
- If my property tax is used to build this facility, do I still pay a user fee? What if I don't pay property tax, do you have to pay a fee to use the facility? Where does the money to operate the building come from?
- If the demand for the facility is great enough the fees should support it. If the fees to use the facility do not support it you have no right to ask taxpayers to support something their not using.
- I'm on fixed income. Now just whose idea was this? Going to put tax payers out of their homes.
- I'm not against people getting fit but it doesn't have to cost the tax payers. I personally walk 3-10 miles a day on the beautiful roads of Clifton! I've lost 60 pounds and I feel great, didn't cost me a thing other than time and I sure didn't put a financial burden on my neighbors.

- Is there going to be an annual membership fee or is it free if the tax payers pay for it?
- It would be great if fundraising would sustain a major amount of required funding. We have our own equipment and walk outside year round.
- Keep this idea funding private – non public funds. Nothing around the high school. Walk to streets for fitness. Walking is supposed to be healthy.
- Let private enterprise invest their money in a facility.
- Let the people who use it pay for it.
- Most people can't afford to have taxes increased and then pay for membership.
- NO MORE TAXES!!
- No way, taxes are too high now. Get a grant or benefactor.
- Only going to be used by Prescott residents why should I pay for it?
- Our older community members shouldn't have to pay more taxes because of something as stupid as THIS.
- Our property taxes are high enough in Prescott! We would never vote for anything like this that would increase our taxes. If residents want a fitness facility let them go to a privately owned facility.
- Our taxes are high enough! Don't you think? Stop for a while!
- Our taxes have increased too much already in the last couple of years. Other towns fund projects through fund raising and this should be the same.
- People can join private gyms and pay their own memberships. Should not be tax payer supported.
- Pierce county taxes are significant and should not be raised. Only existing taxes should be used.
- Prescott taxpayers already are being held hostage in their homes, as homes aren't selling, because of the high taxes and new buyers are looking elsewhere like areas with lower taxes. Causing a stalemate in growth. No taxpayer money for private industry.
- Private enterprise supplies these companies and government should not compete with private enterprise.
- Private pay membership to those who wish to use the facility.
- Privately funded if built.
- Privately funded business.
- Residents of Prescott pay excessive amounts of taxes in comparison to surrounding communities. WE DO NOT NEED TO BE CHARGED MORE! In addition IF our taxes did increase for this fitness club, would residents receive a discount for their patronage?
- Should be privately owned and operated.
- Taxes are already too high for River Falls.
- Taxes are high enough.
- Taxes have already been too high in Prescott – no need to add the financial burden to all when only some would benefit from this facility. Senior citizens are already being chased out of the Prescott area because of taxes being so high.
- Taxes in Prescott are already pretty high.
- The people who want it can pay for it.
- There are several fitness facilities on the RF/Prescott/Ellsworth area – Snap fitness, etc. People who use them can pay for them – none are expensive – and those who don't should

not have to pay with taxes for those who do use them. I don't get gas money from non drivers – it's the same thing. If I bowl, I pay. If you bowl, you pay. Same principle.

- This sounds like a public sector, free market facility. Why does the government think they need to provide, through my tax dollars, a service better provided by a private provider? In no way do I support such a facility built and maintained by my tax dollars. If so, keep it confined to the Prescott school district.
- Those desiring such a facility should pay for it. User fees would be the appropriate source or money, not taxes of any kind.
- Those in favor of this are planning to use this facility knowing that the cost will be pro-rated amongst those who won't use it. Let them get their own exercise program and pay for it themselves.
- We are already taxed to the max so where are all the other tax dollars currently going?
- We already pay too much! I would rather not have any facility if our taxes would go up. Many people would leave town.
- We already tax too much. NO NEW TAX! NO NEW PROPERTY TAXES! Take money from the tech college that we are already paying too much for!
- While the \$7-14 per look of assessed value isn't much I'm concerned about paying it.
- We have enough taxing without causing more because a handful of people want a facility.
- What is the yearly maintenance fee? What is the long term impact on taxes? Will Prescott area (town of Clifton) residents have to pay a membership fee in addition to their tax increase? These questions would have to be answered before I could say where the money should come from to build the facility.
- Why if taxes have to go up? Why not have a person with income to invest build and then it won't cost taxpayers more per year other than their dollar amount. To come to the facility.
- Why include the town of Trimble? Most, if not all, of Trimble township is better served by a facility in Ellsworth as it is closer. I do not favor any of my tax dollars being used to build a facility in Prescott that I would have to drive 15 miles to use.
- Why on earth should tax payers fund this????!!!! There are private businesses that do this. There are also already taxpayers funded facilities that have much of this....the schools and university in the area. Taxpayers funding this would be ridiculous.
- Why tax money when there are private facilities. Or entice a private company like Lifetime or YMCA.
- You do not indicate what it will cost to run the facility. Will that be totally supported by membership fees?

Supportive Comments (47 responses)

- A facility like this would be a great asset for the community.
- A physical fitness facility would be a great addition to the school community and families interested in moving into Prescott.
- A YMCA would make the most sense. Build one between River Falls and Prescott on Highway 29. Do fundraising to support the building cost.
- An indoor swimming pool bigger than the motels.
- Attach to current high school facilities and share with the school.
- Connect a fitness center with a senior housing complex. A fitness center is defiantly welcomed and needed in Prescott.

- Doesn't need to be on school grounds, but we need some sort of facility for kids and adults to feel free to use. Need to keep children out of trouble, keep them busy.
- Great for kids and families.
- Great idea much needed. Kids are paying to belong to health clubs our own school/community should offer.
- I agree that a gym is needed with indoor track.
- I like the idea. What about a lap pool for swimming.
- I like the idea of building on school property. That way it is available to the students.
- I think a fitness facility would really benefit the area and it could be used for other functions as well.
- I would help pay for a small size pool for the school and the rest of the community. I think that would better the community as a whole.
- I would like to see swimming pool facilities – large enough so school could develop a swim and diving team. Water aerobics are great for cardiovascular. You would be able to use this facility for post surgical post heart attack. Possibly get some insurance clinic/health backing.
- I would personally love an indoor track so I can continue walking in the winter.
- I'm not a sentient elder person as you may deduct from my answers. I just don't have any opinion. A fitness facility would be valuable.
- Include a swimming pool.
- It HAS to have steam rooms!!!
- It is defiantly needed. It will keep our kids fit and will also give them somewhere to go – more choices.
- It is needed.
- It is something that could be utilized now and appreciated more as the population base increases in and around the Prescott area.
- It is unbelievable that the school does not have these facilities already.
- It would be nice to have an auditorium type of facility to be used for fitness, too.
- It would be nice to have on school grounds so it is accessible for large events. Fundraising is a good method for financing. Usage fees good way to maintain.
- Make it nice, don't go cheap!
- Make it somewhere where eventually a pool could be added.
- Must have YMCA – like child care and kid class opportunity. POOL for lap swim and swim lessons a must! For a high school swim team?
- Need an indoor swimming pool.
- Need a pool!
- Needs a swimming pool! River Heights pool and beach are not adequate for swim lessons. All children should have swim lessons.
- Now that there is a Snap Fitness a new site should be provided for youth and seniors.
- Prescott is in need of a community center especially for its gym space. However I feel the town needs a pool for lap swimming, indoor water activity to the public, and possibly a future swim team. A great activity for every age.
- Prescott really needs an all ages type of facility that offers many different activities for the community. We really need something for our teenagers! We all know what sitting around doing nothing and having no place to “hang out” does for our teens. There's no where for them to go and just be teens.

- Swimming pool for lap swim – easy on joints.
- The sooner the better we have gone too long without.
- There is a desperate need for an indoor fitness facility in Prescott since there is very little activities to do and people seem to leave the area for Hastings, Woodbury, etc since we have no adequate facilities for fitness especially for youth and elderly. We need this absolutely and it would improve the health of residents.
- There is a need for such a building in the community.
- Think it would be great for any family, but also another community strengthening opportunity.
- This is much less expensive than gym memberships and community wellness is important.
- Too many people walk or run in this town on the streets, it's too dangerous – I would love an indoor track – that would be great!
- We need a public swimming pool.
- We need facilities to attract and retain residents.
- We need something like this to take the ease from our school system.
- We really are in need of a facility like this for families in Prescott.
- We used to be members of the YMCA in Hudson for many years. Now, we find it difficult with work schedules. We would get a lot of use from a facility in town. Would love to see a pool built also.
- Would be in favor of off-site facility with hours for adults and childcare separate from open hours. Would like women only, men only, and family time/hours designated. Need indoor pool with water aerobics.

Other (60 responses)

- A large portion of all property taxes currently go for schools, what Prescott needs is more business and tax relief. Taxes continue to increase though population has grown and services have stagnated.
- A significant number of us live at the lower margins. A measure of a community of any kind is not what is done for the majority, but to not burden the elderly/poor. Many who live in mobile home parks do not want to live there. It is all they can afford. Think about them and those on the verge of joining them. Let citizens take care of their own fitness/recreation needs.
- A Snap Fitness was just built in the Prescott industrial park, and most of these activities are already being done through our community education courses. The only way another building would go through with tax payer money would be to build a community center where there could be other community activities taking place.
- Anytime you can blend age groups I think it is positive. My husband and I tend to go to the River Falls area wellness center or use the University Center. We are closer to River Falls than Prescott.
- Build a new school instead.
- City should foster a non-profit with YMCA type organization. School district should absolutely not own or finance a facility. They have proven incapable of managing and maintaining facilities!!
- Consider co branding with a similar use to reduce building/operating expenses. If health food, coffee, juice tenant solicit design ideas as a means of promoting the architect. Schools?

- Cost of using facility would need to be kept low – sharing use with the high school would help keep the user fees down – the high school would share up keep expense. It would have to be very important that they high school did not take over complete use of the facility.
- Don't bother unless you also have a swimming pool and water aerobics. I won't use it if it doesn't include a pool.
- February 12, 2007: Wellness Facility Committee, This letter is to address question fifteen of the physical fitness facility survey that was delivered this last week. This is the question asking for additional comments concerning the proposed facility. My family's comments would like to address the funding base for this type of project. As a first point, this seems like a very low priority when compared to other issues concerning the area. Namely the infrastructure of the city of Prescott is, at best, sub-par when compared to other communities in the Pierce/St. Croix county area. The roads are in poor condition and much of the city does not have curb and gutter. With the current tax rate of residential property in our town, one would expect a greater return on investment. Secondly, our school system does not seem to be able to keep its house in order. Since moving here we have not seen a school district news letter that hasn't been pandering for more money. This becomes hard to swallow as a tax payer after seeing a multi-million dollar school referendum pass that does not increase capacity, but rather pays for such things as updating locker rooms and cleaning mold. The current news letter talks about the troubles the district will have in meeting this year's budget. Everything I hear from the district implies to me that there will be another referendum soon to, if nothing else, add capacity. If such a referendum is passed our taxes would increase sharply and make our community one of the highest taxed in the area. Also, many projects seem to be poorly executed which, in the long run end up costing us more. An example is the park that was supposed to be installed in the St. Croix Bluffs neighborhood which, is where my family lives. Each residence paid in \$600 at time of closing giving that project an estimated \$60,000. We have paid that money three and one half years ago and to date the park is no where near completion. Overall, our family believes that even though this is not a large civic expenditure it is representative of our community's need to control spending and become more fiscally conscious and responsible toward required services before we start spending money on extra ordinary ones.
- Fundraising.
- Fund with user fees.
- Good idea depending on access to facility. Prescott has an Anytime Fitness center.
- How about cleaning up Main Street – the white house by the Broad Street Bar. It's an eyesore.
- I have my own equipment – most people work out or do extra curricular activities close to their place of work. The town offers many of these things in their adult education – do they fill up?
- I think Ellsworth is more centrally located in the county an the town is larger.
- I really enjoy going to Snap Fitness that is all I need.
- I voted yes for every question to build a new high school or middle school except my wasted money to re-do the old school. The people of Prescott are too cheap to build this. Good luck I will vote yes.
- I would like to make sure it is a community center, not just for school related activities.
- If it is funded totally by taxpayers \$7-\$14 per 100,000, that's still cheaper than joining a gym which would cost me \$100 a month easily to include my whole family.

- If responses are anonymous, how would you know where to send your prizes? Kind of like when they give you a number when you vote, which identifies your “secret” ballot. Anonymous is obsolete in a coded world like this.
- If school property was used the facility would need to be opened and available evenings and weekends.
- Indoor ice arena too. Bowling alley needed too. Put this in the development at the top of Hollister.
- It doesn't really concern me one way or another.
- It would be nice but our property taxes are way to high for what this company has and don't think the proposal would ever pass and would be a very hard sell. I have all my own exercise equipment and use them daily.
- It would be nice to see a larger swimming facility than the motel's pool.
- It would need a large vote, lots of turn out.
- Just got Snap 24/7 in Prescott.
- Living in the Ellsworth area I would not use a facility in Prescott.
- Make annual fee for family reasonable. Like the River Falls college gym fees.
- Make it accessible for everyone, not everyone will have transportation for that.
- Membership or user fees and temporary increase in sales tax if possible to offset the construction costs.
- Might be a good fit for downtown after hours use, keeping activity on Main Street after business hours.
- Must be clean and offer enough amenities.
- Should be centrally located.
- Should be private facility or utilize existing facility.
- Should focus more on education and needs of the students and updating the high school. Band, gym locker space, theater performance area.
- So this facility would be free to taxpayers to join and be a member?
- Stay away from school – off hours too many kids lurking around.
- Swimming pool?
- Take into consideration security and monitoring both inside and outside the facility and maintenance. How are ongoing expenses going to be paid?
- Tax payer funding should come from residence of the city the facility is located. It is unlikely that out of town residence would get much use from the facility.
- Tax payers will get free use of facility?
- Tennis facility would be nice.
- The construction of a facility in the beginning. Who will finance the maintenance and personnel after construction?
- The facility should be provided by a partnership of the cit and school district. It should also be paid by minimal user fees so that a wider variety of people use it, and are more apt to use it. I have no been impressed by the fees paid by member where the city and Lifetime fitness is a partnership. Fees are too high. City and school need to pay yearly fees as a park and recreation and school fitness facility budget.
- There should be something built for the children in or near the school, after school workouts are good for kids. Adults can go to River Falls, they have many choices of places to work out.

- This is very important that childcare be available also (like the YMCA in River Falls). It is the reason I joined the facility.
- Totally unaware of need, we don't know Prescott at all.
- Try to use local contractors to build if possible.
- Unfortunately, support for this will be tough to get if taxes are the main funding of the project. We already pay more than twice the property taxes of those in MN. The Chippewa Valley Tech fee should go away and then projects like this have a better chance to be supported by the community.
- Walking outside or at the high school is available. It would be cheaper to hire monitors/trainers and utilize the high school gym equipment when not in use or contract with the Heights pool or the former curve facility. Community education offers many opportunities for fitness.
- We are hardly ever in Prescott so would most likely not use the facility.
- We don't have time to go to a gym – we have equipment in the house.
- We have a new Snap Fitness in Prescott that can meet many people's weight training and cardio fitness needs. Aerobic, fitness classes, and weight management classes are offered through community education and should be offered year round instead of seasonally.
- We presently live in Minneapolis, MN so we would be less likely to use any facility.
- Where is the community swimming pool? What about indoor biking?
- With a new owner, Snap Fitness could be recreating the wheel.
- Would like to see it be low cost to join and belong, unlike YMCA!
- Would this facility be open to everyone? Would a membership be required? What will it cost to staff and maintain it? It would be nice to have such a facility and but at what cost?

Appendix C: Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question