



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Parks and Community Services**  
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## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Kurt Triplett, City Manager

**From:** John Lloyd, Deputy Director of Parks and Community Services  
Hillary De La Cruz, Management Analyst

**Date:** January 30, 2024

**Subject:** Post Ballot Measure PFEC and Park Board Feedback and Community Survey Questions

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council receives a presentation about feedback provided by the Parks Funding Exploratory Committee (PFEC) and Park Board related to the 2023 Proposition 1 results. It is further recommended that the City Council reviews and provides feedback on updated questions for the post ballot measure community survey.

## **BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:**

As outlined as the plan at the January 16, 2024<sup>1</sup>, Council meeting, staff met with members of PFEC on January 23, 2024, and members of Park Board on January 24, 2024. Each group was asked to share their thoughts about what happened with Proposition 1 as well as what they've heard around the community. The following summaries provide details about the breadth and depth of feedback provided.

## **PARKS FUNDING EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE FEEDBACK:**

Twenty-five PFEC members attended the January 23, 2024, PFEC meeting and three additional members provided feedback via email. Attendees at the PFEC meeting included members who worked on both the yes and no campaigns and overall, members shared a variety of perspectives. Staff facilitated a two-part conversation with small groups followed by large group synthesis and reflection. Attachment A has a detailed list of the insights shared by PFEC members during the meeting and is an important attachment for Councilmembers to review.

The first conversations focused on what happened in 2023, asking PFEC members to provide insight about the reasons that people voted yes, reasons that people voted no, and any confusion or misperceptions they heard in the community. PFEC members were asked to share any opinions they had heard in the community, not just their own, in an effort to gain deep and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/january-16-2024/3a\\_study-session.pdf](https://www.kirklandwa.gov/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/city-council/agenda-documents/2024/january-16-2024/3a_study-session.pdf)

broad insight. Overall, a main decision point for whether people voted yes or no was the aquatic and recreation center element and perceived overall cost of the measure.

Reasons named for people voting yes included:

- Knowing the need for a pool in Kirkland;
- Families with children;
- Having a sense of community pride and thinking the measure would bring community benefit;
- Support for the additional elements in the Prop 1 package beyond the aquatics center.

Reasons named for people voting no included:

- Thinking Prop 1 was too big and too expensive;
- Dislike of the permanent tax structure;
- The impact that recent property value assessments and property tax increases have had on households;
- Not supporting an operating model of having taxpayers subsidize operations;
- Concern about having to pay a membership fee as well as a tax to use the facility;
- Seniors on fixed incomes feeling that Prop 1 was unaffordable;
- Tech industry undergoing a contraction over the same time period, creating concern for economic stability of tech families;
- The location at the Houghton Park and Ride as too far south.

A strong majority of PFEC members expressed that a pool-only measure would likely have received greater support.

PFEC members also shared several points of confusion and misperceptions that seemed to impact what people thought about Prop 1. Highlights included:

- The complex and complicated ballot measure language, funding mechanism, and funding structure;
- Some people thinking there was no demand for a pool and not knowing about the 10,000+ swim lesson waitlist entries;
- confusion about the operating model and different options for entrance fees;
- A general misunderstanding that everyone was going to be required to have an annual membership.

See Attachment A for more specifics about the reasons for voting yes or no and these points of confusion and misperceptions.

### **Lower Cost Community Pool And A Term-Limited Tax**

After the first series of questions asking PFEC members to provide insight about what happened in 2023, the conversation shifted to a forward focus. Staff asked PFEC members if they thought Council should pursue a ballot measure for construction in 2024 then reviewed two potential funding options (described later in the memo) and asked for PFEC's input.

Most PFEC members were supportive of another ballot measure in 2024 since there is still a strong need for a pool, though there were members who said it was not the right time. PFEC

members expressed that a measure should be focused on a community pool for a much lower cost and paid for with a term limited tax measure. PFEC members felt that it was important that any measure be accompanied by messaging from Council that Councilmembers heard the community's input and created a new proposal based on the asks for a scaled down community pool building that is less expensive to build and without a permanent tax.

Though staff were only presenting PFEC members with two options to finance the construction of an indoor community pool, PFEC members shared that having a proposed operating model in place when talking to the community would be important so that people can understand how much the construction property tax plus entrance fees would cost them to use the community pool. An operating model of this type would be developed as part of the additional concept plan work should Council decide to move forward with exploration of a 2024 ballot measure.

PFEC members also shared thoughts about timing considerations for 2024, specifically wondering if the August ballot or November ballot would be best. The August ballot is likely to have no other property tax measures but has lower turnout. The November ballot is likely to have other property tax measures, including Lake Washington School District levies, and statewide initiatives as well as the presidential election with a higher voter turnout. When considering timing, PFEC members again mentioned the healing and trust repair work that needs to happen between the City and community. See Attachment A for specific thoughts that PFEC members shared about whether to go to the ballot or not in 2024 and timing considerations.

Staff presented PFEC members with a hypothetical proposal for discussion that would construct a 40,000 square foot indoor community pool building with a recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming with two potential funding options:

- 9-year levy lid lift property tax measure; \$0.15 per \$1,000 Assessed Value (AV), \$150/year for \$1 million home; 50% + 1 needed to pass (note: 9-year levy lid lifts can be used to pay debt service for construction)
- 30-year bond property tax measure; \$0.066 per \$1,000 AV, \$66/year for \$1 million home; 60% needed to pass

PFEC members shared their thoughts about the two options and focused on the funding mechanism type and cost in their responses. The table on the next page highlights comments shared in support of and opposition to the 9-year levy lid lift property tax measure structure and 30-year bond property tax measure structure. For both options, PFEC members appreciated that they would be temporary property tax measures, are significantly less expensive than 2023 Prop 1, and convey to the community that the City listened to what community members were saying by making the potential measure smaller and less expensive with a temporary tax.

*PFEC Comments About Potential Funding Mechanism*

<b>Ballot Measure Structure</b>	<b>Pro Comments/Rationales</b>	<b>Con Comments/Rationales</b>
<b>9-Year Levy Lid Lift Property Tax Measure \$0.15 / \$1,000 AV for 9 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost half of original proposal</li> <li>• 50% + 1 threshold to pass</li> <li>• Payments over shorter time (9 years)</li> <li>• Can be used to directly pay debt service on Council-issued construction bonds</li> <li>• This would be over the construction timeline of the project as opposed to burdening the next generation with construction cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher annual tax</li> <li>• People who aren't sure if they'll stay in Kirkland would rather pay less annually (favor 30-year)</li> <li>• Could be confused with Prop 1 permanent levy lid lift structure</li> </ul>
<b>30-Year Bond Property Tax Measure \$0.066 / \$1,000 AV for 30 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One quarter of original proposal</li> <li>• Lower annual tax</li> <li>• Payments spread over lifetime of facility, may seem more fair</li> <li>• Pays directly for debt service on voter approved bonds</li> <li>• Gives potential capacity to address other needs in other possible measures</li> <li>• Anything under 10 cents allows people to think of public good instead of cost</li> <li>• Easier to understand than levy lid lift</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% threshold to pass, may be harder to achieve</li> <li>• Payments last longer (30 years)</li> <li>• 6.6 cents is so low – why even bother?</li> <li>• The City has to pay more interest</li> <li>• Bonds are more complex to explain</li> </ul>

**Pool Location**

The location of a potential new smaller community pool was also discussed. Feedback was mixed with no clear majority. Some PFEC members expressed a preference for North Kirkland Community Center (NKCC) over Houghton Park and Ride as being more centrally located. PFEC members mentioned that some Finn Hill community members felt disenfranchised by the choice for a facility at Houghton Park and Ride. Other PFEC members mentioned that those living in the south of Kirkland appreciated the Park and Ride location. Other comments included that the ability to build at less cost at Houghton Park and Ride should be prioritized and that having space for future expansion is a major benefit of the Houghton Park and Ride. In general, PFEC supported asking about the location in the survey.

**PARK BOARD FEEDBACK:**

Seven Park Board members attended the January 24, 2024, Park Board Meeting. Staff led Park Board members through the same questions that were discussed with PFEC, hoping to gain Park Board insight into what happened with the 2023 Prop 1 vote and what Park Board members thought about the potential of another ballot measure for the construction of a 40,000 square foot indoor community pool that is less expensive and uses a temporary tax structure.

Park Board members provided similar feedback to PFEC. Reasons provided that people voted yes on the Prop 1 include:

- Access to swim lessons for children;
- Replacing aging infrastructure;
- An indoor pool being a critical need that has been missing from the community;
- The community benefit that would come with the investment.

Reasons provided that people voted no on Prop 1 included:

- Too big and too expensive;
- The permanent tax structure;
- People feeling tax burdened and just not wanting more property taxes;
- Confusion over operational versus capital versus program costs;
- Location.

When asked about misperceptions or confusion that members heard, they shared that people didn't understand how the pool was going to be funded and had lots of detailed questions, people didn't know how the taxing would work, and that there was confusion about entrance fees and membership structure.

When presented with the two potential options for financing construction of a 40,000 square foot community pool and the question of whether Park Board members thought that Council should pursue a ballot measure in 2024, members again provided feedback similar to PFEC.

The Park Board generally supported going forward with a smaller pool-only focused measure, but there was no clear consensus on which funding mechanism is preferred. Questions were also raised about the operating plan and members shared the importance of identifying a plan. Park Board members' thoughts about a 9-year levy lid lift tax measure versus a 30-year bond property tax measure mirrored information included in the table above. The Park Board also discussed the consideration about a 9-year measure being more likely to pass with only 50%+1 of the vote needed. Members shared that both options seem easy and clear to understand and like reasonable prices.

### **August or November Election**

Related to timing, staff shared that there is likely to be at least one other property tax measure on the November ballot and asked how that would impact members' thoughts about timing. Reasons to try in November included higher voter turnout, especially among families. And despite the crowded ballot, people will vote for their individual priorities when it comes to weighing which property tax measures to support or not (which could mean pools rise to the top for some). Reasons to try in August included the timing being before the second 2024 property tax payments are due, the demand for a pool would be more top-of-mind for people having just gone through swim lesson registration and the summer season, and that there would be less competition on the ballot.

### **COMMUNITY SURVEY UPDATED DRAFT QUESTIONS:**

Based on Council feedback at the January 16, 2024, Council meeting and PFEC feedback on January 23, 2024, staff decided to extend the survey question development timeline by two weeks to allow another round of edits and final Council review of questions at the February 6, 2024, Council meeting. Staff shared all Council comments and suggestions with EMC Research

for their review and potential implementation. Many, but not all, Council suggestions were implemented. EMC Research recommended not implementing a couple of the suggestions due to the survey length, potential additional confusion, and structuring the survey in a way that is answering the questions that Council wants throughout the sequence of questions.

A revised draft of the survey questions is in Attachment B. Changes made to the survey included:

- Accepting two responses each instead of one for questions 6 and 7 about best reasons to support or oppose the measure.
- Addition of introduction language to question 8 sharing Council's desire to hear from and listen to community members.
- Using "entrance fees" instead of "membership fees" to convey that there would be multiple payment type options.
- Consolidating questions about facility operations and subsidy into one question 14.
- Adjust questions 15 and 16 about location preference in the first agreement scale, and adding question 23 to directly ask respondents to indicate a preference between the same approximately 40,000 square foot indoor community pool at Houghton Park and Ride and NKCC, knowing that it is more expensive to build at NKCC.
- Clarifying "other parks investments" in question 17.
- Clarifying the audience of question 18 to be "my family."
- Adjusting forward-looking questions to use the term "indoor community pool building with a recreation pool and a lap pool" to be clearer about the purpose of the building, and sometimes adding a description that includes "for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming."
- Elimination of previous question that asked about three possible ways to move forward. EMC Research suggested that just including the updated text of 21INT and questions 21 and 22 would address Council's desire to provide more detailed information about proposals before respondents answer questions in the most straightforward way. As written, these questions will help provide insight into the levy vs. bond question.
- Adding a second agreement scale set of questions that are more forward focused (questions 25-30).
- New open-ended question 31 about the most important pool features or amenities.
- Consolidation of North and South Juanita into "Juanita" for neighborhood question 33. Noting the concern that not everybody will know their neighborhood, staff are exploring options to have a link to the neighborhood map or a text box for cross streets in the open-link version of the survey.
- Adjusting question 42 asking about interest in participating in additional conversations.

Councilmembers will be asked to provide any additional feedback on the updated survey at the February 6, 2024, Council meeting so that questions can be finalized in the following days and survey collection can begin.

With the updated timeline, the statistically valid survey is planned to be in the field in early February and reach a sample size of 600 adult Kirkland community members. This sample size was increased from 400 to 600 after the January 16, 2024, Council meeting in recognition that a sample size of 600 adults in Kirkland will provide a better analysis of sub-populations. The statistically valid survey will be followed by an open-link online version of the same community survey circulated by the City for approximately eight days. Results from both surveys will be shared with Council at the March 1, 2024, Council retreat.

## **ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK EFFORTS:**

### **Youth Council**

The City Manager met with the Youth Council Leadership Team in January and discussed the ballot measure. Leadership team members felt that the ballot measure was too big and too complex. They highlighted that the term “aquatic center” was confusing. Most members in the meeting interpreted an aquatic center as a water park like Great Wolf Lodge or Wild Waves and therefore discretionary and unnecessary in Kirkland. They did feel that an indoor swimming pool was a good idea. Youth Council members suggested that using the term “community pool” or “swimming pool” makes it much clearer and might eliminate some of the confusion. The Leadership Team also agreed to have staff come to a full Youth Council meeting in February for a conversation similar to the Park Board and PFEC.

### **Lake Washington School District, Splash Forward and Wave Aquatics**

The City Manager also met with the Lake Washington School District (“District”) and Wave Aquatics in January. Wave Aquatics operates the Juanita Aquatic Center at Juanita High School for the District. The meeting was coordinated by the non-profit organization Splash Forward. The purpose was to understand if the District and Wave would consider a new indoor pool in Kirkland helpful to meet the District’s aquatic needs as well as provide additional community swimming capacity. The Wave and District representatives noted that the Juanita Aquatics Center was at capacity and being used by multiple high schools, including Juanita, Lake Washington, and Northshore high schools. They also expressed that new indoor pool space is needed, would not be seen as competition, and would be highly sought after by all aquatic programs. Potential uses for the District could include the Lake Washington High School swim team training and meets and possible elementary school swimming lessons.

This meeting led to a second meeting also coordinated by Splash Forward with the District Athletic Director and representatives of the KingCo athletic conference, which includes most of the public high schools in north and east King County. KingCo representatives explained that current indoor pools are all at capacity and it is extremely difficult finding training and competition time in the water. Training and meets occur in the early morning and late evening, impacting students’ ability to balance school and athletics and limiting participation and the size of swimming programs. KingCo representatives said a new indoor pool would be highly desirable to all regional high schools if pool time were available.

### **Splash Forward Pool Programming Example**

Splash Forward retains consultants with expertise in pool development, operations and programming. Splash Forward is using all the conversations highlighted above as well as feedback from the Kirkland Parks and Community Services Department to develop an example of how an indoor community pool might be programmed to optimize uses for all members of the community and have a strong cost recovery. The goal is to have this example completed in time for the March 1, 2024, Council retreat.

### **Online Survey and Community Outreach**

Staff continue to plan to add additional open-ended question boxes into the online version of the survey to prompt respondents to share why they chose the answers they chose. Additionally, staff are planning a few opportunities for community members to participate in more in-depth discussions about these topics. These discussions will be hosted by City staff, and community members will be invited to share their perspective in an informal, conversational setting. Staff will introduce the session by conveying the Council’s and staff’s interest in listening to and

learning from their perspectives while determining what comes next. Feedback from these efforts will be shared at the March 1, 2024, Council retreat.

**NEXT STEPS:**

Statistically valid and open-link survey results and information from the additional feedback efforts will be shared with Council at the March 1, 2024, Council retreat. During that meeting, staff will also provide high-level financial details for levy and bond ballot measures, election costs, additional consultant work needed, and discuss potential users, programming, and cost recovery. At their retreat discussion, Council will be asked to decide if staff should bring an implementation plan for a 2024 indoor community pool ballot measure to the March 5, 2024, Council meeting. This implementation plan would include an updated timeline and a request to authorize funding for concept plan work and other potential costs.



**January 23, 2024 Parks Funding Exploratory Committee Focus Group Feedback**

Notes from the PFEC small- and large-group discussions

**Why do you think people voted yes? What were the most critical reasons?**

- Need for an indoor pool:
  - There has been a large need for an indoor pool for a long time.
  - Don't want to drive out of Kirkland to use a pool.
  - The aquatics aspect of the center was more important to people than recreation aspect.
  - Swim lessons – people who understand how hard it is to get lessons voted yes.
  - Renters thought it would be good to have somewhere to swim and didn't always think they would experience the impacts of property taxes as directly.
  - Weather: indoor center beneficial both in cold winters and smoky summers.
- Children, Youth, and Family Support:
  - Sense that families with children at home were turning out to vote.
  - Youth encouraged parents to vote yes.
  - Families thought they would use the facility and didn't want to travel so far for other pools.
  - Grandparents voting yes for grandchildren to have aquatics access.
- Community Pride and Community Benefit:
  - Pride in Kirkland community and parks and recreation.
  - Investing in community assets would benefit all.
  - Safe place that encourages diversity and community.
  - Meeting space: We have a shortage of meeting places, and the facility would offer more.
- Overall package:
  - The overall package was appealing – not just a pool.
  - Restrooms, pickleball, green loop trails, safety and security were named as other priorities that caused some people to vote yes.
- Some people who are not eligible to vote would have voted yes.
- Pool was the main decision point for whether people voted yes or no.

**Why do you think people voted no? What were the most critical reasons?**

- General feelings about City of Kirkland:
  - Perception that South Kirkland doesn't trust the City, community members have been asking for crosswalks and told there is no money.
  - City services are going downhill so why should I pay for this when other things need support?
  - Want to maintain smaller government and taxes.
- Tax and financial structure:
  - Dislike of permanent / "forever" tax.
  - Not understanding why there is a permanent tax on a capital project.
  - Complex financial structure was not fully conveyed in the ballot measure or other communications to the public.
  - Lots of rumors about money and confusion around this, when people realized it was permanent, it was doomed.
  - Concern about ability for additional percentage to be added to tax in future.
  - Preference for a bond that would be time limited.

- Too big:
  - People were split on their desired “gets” from the measure – some people cared more about the aquatics and recreation center than other elements and vice versa.
  - Got confusing with so many items in the measure, had opposite effect of hoped for “something for everyone.”
  - Parks parts of Prop 1 were “scraps” compared to pool parts.
- Too expensive
  - The measure was too expensive.
  - People wanted an aquatics facility, but this package was too much.
  - People compared how much this would have cost to other LA Fitness and the math didn’t work for them.
  - Overall cost per home was too high for those that are low income.
  - I always vote for parks, but I cannot vote for this because it is too much, too expensive.
- Operations:
  - Frustration that Kirkland wants to charge to build it and then have users pay more to use it.
  - Dislike of membership fees (see misperception point below about fee structure)
  - Interest in having YMCA operate instead of City of Kirkland.
  - Don’t want to subsidize other people’s recreation via property taxes.
- Location:
  - Too far from Finn Hill.
  - Houghton perceived as more for Bellevue and Redmond than the north half of Kirkland.
- Pool only: would have supported pool only measure.
  - We need a pool but not a whole recreation center, no community space.
  - Tax burden was big and people thought too many items were lumped together.
- Property assessments and other property tax increases:
  - Property assessment postcards arrived shortly before the election, caused no votes.
  - Property taxes have increased too much over last 10 years and I can’t support.
  - There have been a lot of tax increases over the last 5 years, newer people seemed to vote yes but longtime residents were found to be against it.
- Seniors:
  - Seniors on fixed income couldn’t afford.
  - Medicare fitness reimbursement program offers up to \$1,200/year per person to use anywhere, Silver Sneakers program. Why pay more when already included?
  - Seniors who wouldn’t use the center and didn’t want to pay for it.
- Want but don’t want to fund:
  - We’d love to see the pool, but don’t ask me to pay for it.
- Facility design: some people didn’t know what was included (i.e., gym) and may have voted yes if they had known.
- I won’t use the facility so why should I pay for it?
- Tech layoffs caused some who might have voted yes to vote no due to uncertainty.

**Were there any misperceptions or confusion that you heard in the community?**

- Complex and complicated:
  - Ballot measure language was complex.
  - Some people didn't vote or voted no because it took too much patience to try and figure everything out.
  - Lots of people cared about little details of the measure, especially money, and had questions.
- Funding structure:
  - Misconceptions about funding in general.
  - Confused by bond vs. levy.
  - If the City already has the money (based on the "construction to be funded separately through the General Fund" idea), why is the City proposing this tax?
  - Confusion about how City was structuring the spending plan.
  - A few people online thought this was going to be another Metropolitan Parks District.
  - Confusion about how much each element cost.
- Lack of awareness/education:
  - Some feelings that the general public didn't know about the ballot measure, didn't have enough opportunities to learn.
  - Location: not understanding trade offs of location and site costs.
- Messaging: when at community meetings and detailed questions arose, people in support didn't always feel like they know how to answer.
- Need:
  - Some people thought that there was no demand for pool and didn't know about 10,000+ swim lesson waitlist entries.
  - Some thought that Juanita High School pool and Peter Kirk pool meet demand.
- Operations:
  - Membership/fee structure was very confusing.
  - Thought that membership was required, didn't realize there would be other forms of entrance fees for drop-in or punch card use.
  - Confusion about having to pay via tax then pay again via entrance fees.
  - Why can't the City operate a revenue neutral facility when the YMCA can?
- Pool only confusion:
  - Thought the ballot measure was only for a pool.
  - People thought the pool would be the smallest part of the cost of the ballot measure.
- High school usage: Confusion around when high school could use pool or not.
- Restrooms: we used to have the restrooms, it was just a budget cut that made them close, why do we have to pay for them again? (not understanding need for winterization and that some were going to be new)

**Do you think Council should do a ballot measure for construction in 2024? If no, why? If yes, why?**

**Yes**

- General responses:
  - Great to have 40,000 square foot options on the table.
  - Keep measure simple – “are we building a pool or not?”
  - The pool should be a taxpayer facility. We need to explain how to make it broadly available to the public and the City has to explain it well.
  - It is good to see if people want to build a pool with a separate measure or other plan for operating dollars in a few years.
  - Pool needs voters to finance – we can find other ways to work on other park elements.
  - Need something hopeful to look forward to.
- Meets the need:
  - We need a pool.
  - Meet current need for swim lessons of 10,000+ entries.
- Listen to voters and adjust what is put on the ballot:
  - Important to message that Council listened to the voters, understands their perspectives, and is proposing a much smaller measure with a time limit.
  - This is a simplified, transparent, location specific option, also want to be self-sustaining.
  - Need to talk about the need and waitlists and be transparent about budget.
  - Paring down with fixed funding is important.
  - The proposal must be understandable and cannot be as complex and confusing as 2023.
- Timing:
  - Yes but don't do a rushed job.
  - In 2024, cost estimates and needs would be similar to what we have been working on. If we wait longer, we will have to start the process over again.
  - Waiting longer would lose momentum.
  - August ballot – no competing property tax measures, people are thinking about pools and the lake is often closed because of bacteria.

**No**

- The City just asked and voters told you no, so why keep asking?
- The facility needs to be self-sufficient, there are too many questions that need answers.
- Everyone will be exhausted from the presidential election.
- Too many other items on the ballot in 2024.
- The process, especially location choice, was rushed.
- Trust issues came out in the campaign around how the City spends money. Need to message throughout the summer – info about the waitlists, need the marketing campaign beforehand. So it's much more common knowledge that the demand is there. Worry that going in 2024 is going to come back to bite the City even more. Need time to mellow out a bit.

### **Timing considerations**

- Wonder if 2024 is a good year to go to the ballot with all of the negative messaging we can expect around the national election.
  - Alternatively, this could bring something positive for people to vote for.
- There is healing and trust repair work that needs to be done between the City and community members which takes time, but if we wait that means we aren't building.
- August primary would have lower turnout.
- November 2024 will have more younger voters and renters and maybe more fiscally liberal voters.
- Bias toward having a measure during highest turnout election.
- If this goes to voters in 2024 and doesn't pass, can't go again in 2025 – too many tries.
- Other property tax measures could impact the pool vote.
- Other property tax measures will not impact the pool vote because people will decide whether the pool is important to them or not.

### **Operating Model – thoughts on whether/how to address**

- Need to understand both construction and operating model before going to ballot.
- This will be a no go if we don't talk about operations. Voters expect operations to be addressed, especially because of 2023 wording.
- Don't have to talk about operating costs, just focus on construction. If we communicate a plan for operations, it will be confusing for people.
- People will assume operations will be paid for by fees, but people will want to know what the fees are.
- Discuss reduced entrance fee rates.
- Can the city subsidize entrance fees and swim lessons for some people?
- How close to self-sufficient can we get?
- Talk about Kirkland discount.
- If private businesses can operate pools at a profit, the City should be able to at least break even.
- Once the facility is constructed, more likely to receive grant and partnership funding.

### **Location comments**

- Choose a site that allows for expansion.
- Less expensive to build at Houghton Park and Ride than North Kirkland Community Center.
- Population around Houghton Park and Ride will grow.
- Finn Hill community members will care more about the location because they are more impacted by that – some felt disenfranchised with Prop 1.
- I liked North Kirkland Community Center because I live in Finn Hill, but Houghton Park & Ride makes more sense for expansion.

**Staff presented PFEC members with the possible next step of constructing a 40,000 square foot community pool building with a recreation pool and a lap pool with two potential funding options:**

- 9-year levy; \$0.15 per \$1,000 AV, \$150/year for \$1 million home; 50% + 1 needed to pass (note: 9-year levy lid lifts can be used to pay debt service for construction)
- 30-year bond; \$0.066 per \$1,000 AV, \$66/year for \$1 million home; 60% needed to pass

**What do you think about these two options? Would you pick one or none? Do you have a funding mechanism preference?**

*PFEC Comments About Potential Funding Mechanism*

<b>Ballot Measure Structure</b>	<b>Pro Comments/Rationales</b>	<b>Con Comments/Rationales</b>
<b>9-Year Levy Lid Lift Tax Measure \$0.15 / \$1,000 AV for 9 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost half of original proposal</li> <li>• 50% + 1 threshold to pass</li> <li>• Payments over shorter time (9 years)</li> <li>• Can be used to directly pay debt service on Council-issued construction bonds</li> <li>• This would be over the construction timeline of the project as opposed to burdening the next generation with construction cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher annual tax</li> <li>• People who aren't sure if they'll stay in Kirkland would rather pay less annually (favor 30-year)</li> <li>• Could be confused with Prop 1 permanent levy lid lift structure</li> </ul>
<b>30-Year Bond Tax Measure \$0.066 / \$1,000 AV for 30 years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One quarter of original proposal</li> <li>• Lower annual tax</li> <li>• Payments spread over lifetime of facility, may seem more fair</li> <li>• Pays directly for debt service on voter approved bonds</li> <li>• Gives potential capacity to address other needs in other possible measures</li> <li>• Anything under 10 cents allows people to think of public good instead of cost</li> <li>• Easier to understand than levy lid lift</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60% threshold to pass, may be harder to achieve</li> <li>• Payments last longer (30 years)</li> <li>• 6.6 cents is so low – why even bother?</li> <li>• The City has to pay more interest</li> <li>• Bonds are more complex to explain</li> </ul>

**Survey Questionnaire - DRAFT**

**Universe: Residents 18+**

**Geography: City of Kirkland**

**Mode: Phone, Email-to-Web, Text-to-Web**

Goal Length: 15 minutes

Sample Size: 600n

**DRAFT** 02/01/24

EMC Research #24-9193

***(T) Indicates tracking questions***

**GREETING:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, may I speak with **(NAME ON LIST)**?

**INTERVIEWER: NOL ONLY**

**INTRO:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm conducting a survey for the City of Kirkland to find out how people feel about issues and priorities in Kirkland. We are not trying to sell anything and are collecting this information on a scientific and completely confidential basis.

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1. Do you live in Kirkland?
  1. Yes
  2. No → **TERMINATE**
  3. (Don't know/Refused) → **TERMINATE**
  
2. Have you heard, read, or seen anything about proposals for new indoor swimming pools, parks, and recreation facilities in Kirkland?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. (No response)

**(IF Q2 = 1, YES, ASK Q3)**

3. What have you heard, read, or seen? **(TEXT BOX; FORCE RESPONSE)**

**(RESUME ASKING EVERYONE )**

4. The next couple of questions are about a measure that was on the November 2023 ballot. Were you able to vote in the November 2023 election?
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. (Don't know/Refused)

5. As you may know, there was a measure on the November 2023 ballot about funding to expand indoor swimming pools, parks and recreation facilities and programs in Kirkland. It was called Proposition 1 and it would have built an 86,000 square foot aquatic and recreation center, funded the operations of the aquatic and recreation center, and made additional park enhancements such as new year-round restrooms, sport courts, and trail networks in the city. Proposition 1 proposed funding these investments with a permanent levy lid lift of 28 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, costing the average homeowner of a \$1 million dollar home in Kirkland about \$280/year.

**(IF Q4=YES VOTED NOV 2023)** From what you remember, did you vote yes to approve or no to reject the measure, or did you not vote on it either way? **(IF Q4= DID NOT VOTE/DK)** If you had been able to vote in the November 2023 election, would you have voted yes to approve or no to reject the measure? **(FORCE RESPONSE)**

1. Yes to approve
  2. No to reject
  3. Did not vote on the measure, either way
  4. Don't know/Do not remember
  5. Did not vote at all
  6. Prefer not to respond
6. Regardless of whether or how you voted, what are the best reasons to support this measure? **(OPEN END; TEXT ENTRY, ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, FORCE RESPONSE)**
7. And again, regardless of whether or how you voted, what are the best reasons to oppose this measure? **(OPEN END; TEXT ENTRY, ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, FORCE RESPONSE)**

8INT. As you may know, the measure on the November 2023 ballot did not pass. The City Council has heard from a wide variety of community members about their support or opposition to the measure. To better understand and balance the priorities of our community, the City is seeking more feedback about the elements that were on the measure and how the measure was presented to the community. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

(PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement?)

**SCALE:**

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. (Don't know/Refused)

**(RANDOMIZE)**

8. The proposed measure was too expensive.
9. The proposed measure was too complicated.
10. I did not like that the measure would have created a permanent property tax.



11. There are other priorities that Kirkland needs to address before expanding our parks, recreation, and aquatics facilities.
12. Kirkland currently has enough parks, recreation, and community spaces nearby and we do not need to build more of them with public dollars.
13. Kirkland currently has enough pools and aquatic centers nearby and we do not need to build one with public dollars.
14. The aquatic and recreation center should have been self sufficient. User fees and entrance fees should have paid the full price of running the facility instead of having city taxpayer money subsidize operations.
15. The aquatic and recreation center should have been placed at the Houghton Park and Ride at I-405 and NE 70<sup>th</sup> Place.
16. The aquatic and recreation center should have been placed at the North Kirkland Community Center Park on NE 124<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.
17. The measure should have had only the new indoor aquatic and recreation center and should not have included other parks investments.
18. My family can't afford any more property tax increases right now.
19. With so much uncertainty in the economy, now is not the time to raise property taxes.

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

20. **(ALWAYS ASK LAST)** I would support a new, smaller measure for an indoor community pool with a both a family recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming that costs much less than the previous proposal.

21INT. Next, there are two potential options to fund a community pool for a future ballot measure. These options would fund construction of a smaller community pool with annual property tax payments significantly lower than last November's measure. That measure would have cost the average homeowner of a \$1 million dollar home in Kirkland 28 cents per thousand of assessed value, about \$280 each year, with a permanent on-going property tax.

**(ROTATE)**

21. **(IF FIRST:** Assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately / **IF SECOND:** Now, assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately) 40,000 square foot indoor community pool with both a family recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming, and costs the average homeowner in Kirkland 15 cents per thousand of assessed value, about \$150 each year, to be collected for 9 years, at which point the property tax would expire. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that proposal?
1. Strongly Support
  2. Somewhat Support
  3. Somewhat Oppose
  4. Strongly Oppose
  5. (Don't know/Refused)
22. **(IF FIRST:** Assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately / **IF SECOND:** Now, assume the proposal is for the construction of an approximately) 40,000 square foot indoor community pool with both a family recreation pool and a lap pool for swim lessons, swim and diving meets, and lap swimming, and costs the average homeowner in Kirkland 6.6 cents per thousand of assessed value, about \$66 each year, to be collected for 30 years, at which point the property tax would expire. Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that proposal?
1. Strongly Support
  2. Somewhat Support
  3. Somewhat Oppose
  4. Strongly Oppose
  5. (Don't know/Refused)

23. There are two possible locations for the community pool. The first is the former Houghton Park & Ride at NE 70<sup>th</sup> PL and I-405 in south central Kirkland. The second is at North Kirkland Community Center Park on NE 124<sup>th</sup> St near 100<sup>th</sup> Ave NE.

Of these two locations, do you prefer one location over the other?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know/Refused)

**(IF Q23 = 1, ASK Q24)**

24. Which location do you prefer?

1. On the former Houghton Park & Ride site at NE 70<sup>th</sup> PL and I-405 in south central Kirkland
2. At North Kirkland Community Center Park on NE 124<sup>th</sup> St near 100<sup>th</sup> Ave NE

**(END ROTATE)**

25INT. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

**(PROMPT IF NECESSARY: Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement?)**

**SCALE:**

1. Strongly agree
2. Somewhat agree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat disagree
5. Strongly disagree
6. (Don't know/Refused)

**(RANDOMIZE)**

25. The aquatic and recreation center in the measure from 2023 would have addressed current and future needs for swimming lessons, swim teams, and water recreation as well as needs for indoor sports such as youth basketball, volleyball, exercise classes and more.
26. Any new community pool should be accessible to all income levels and include free programs, discounted entrance fees, and scholarships.
27. With thousands of families on waiting list for swimming lessons, the City needs to build a community swimming pool so that every child can learn to swim.
28. Building an indoor community pool should be a priority of the City to meet the water recreation and exercise needs of community members of all ages and abilities.
29. I would prefer to fund general park improvements over adding a new community pool.
30. I would not support a tax measure to fund a new indoor community pool.

**(END RANDOMIZE)**

31. If a new indoor community pool was built in Kirkland in the future, what would be the most important features or amenities for it to include? **(OPEN END; TEXT ENTRY, ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES, FORCE RESPONSE)**

Demos. These last questions are for statistical purposes only.

32. Are you a registered voter?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. (Don't know/Refused)
33. What neighborhood do you live in? **(READ LIST IF NECESSARY)**
1. Bridle Trails
  2. Central Houghton **(HOE-tun)**
  3. Everest
  4. Finn Hill
  5. Highlands
  6. Kingsgate/Evergreen Hill
  7. Lakeview
  8. Market
  9. Moss Bay
  10. Norkirk
  11. Juanita **(wah-NEE-tuh)**
  12. North Rose Hill (North of NE 85TH)
  13. South Rose Hill (South of NE 85TH)
  14. Totem Lake
  15. (Other: Specify\_\_\_\_)
  16. (Don't know/Refused)
- 34A. In what year were you born? **RECORD YEAR – VALID RANGE: 1940 THROUGH 2006, 1939 OR EARLIER, AND PREFER NOT TO RESPOND**
1. 2000-2006
  2. 1995-1999
  3. 1990-1994
  4. 1985-1989
  5. 1980-1984
  6. 1975-1979
  7. 1970-1974
  8. 1965-1969
  9. 1960-1964
  10. 1955-1959
  11. 1950-1954
  12. 1945-1949
  13. 1940-1944
  14. 1939 or earlier
  15. (Don't know/Refused)

- 34B. **[AGE RANGE - CODE FROM PREVIOUS QUESTION]**  
**[IF Q34=1-2 Q34B=1]**  
**[IF Q34=3-4 Q34B=2]**  
**[IF Q34=5-6 Q34B=3]**  
**[IF Q34=7-9 Q34B=4]**  
**[IF Q34=10-14 Q34B=5]**  
**(IF Q34 = 15 THEN ASK Q34B: Which age group are you in?)**
1. 18-29
  2. 30-39
  3. 40-49
  4. 50-64
  5. 65 or over
  6. (Don't know/Refused)
35. Do you have any children under 18 living in your household?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Prefer not to respond
36. **(ASK IF Q##=1)** Do you have any children under the age 12 living in your household?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Prefer not to respond
37. **(IF RESPONDENT AGE<65 OR Q27=REFUSED)** Are there any seniors age 65 or older living in your household?
1. Yes
  2. No
  3. (Don't Know/Refused)
38. What is your gender? **(DO NOT READ LIST)**
1. Man
  2. Woman
  3. Non-binary
  4. Self describe **(RECORD RESPONSE)**
  5. (Refused)
39. Do you currently own the home or apartment where you live, do you rent, or do you have a different housing situation?
1. Own/buying
  2. Rent/lease
  3. Different housing situation
  4. (Don't Know/Refused)

40. What is the highest level of education you completed in school? **(READ LIST IF NECESSARY)**

1. Some grade school
2. Some high school
3. Graduated high school
4. Technical or Vocational school
5. Some college or Less than 4-year degree
6. Graduated college or 4-year degree (BA, Bachelor)
7. Graduate or Professional Degree (MA, Master's, PhD, MBA, Doctorate)
8. (Don't know/Refused)

41A. Do you consider yourself to be of Hispanic or Latino descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Central or Latin American background, or not?

1. Yes
2. No
3. (Don't know/Refused)

41B. Do you consider yourself to be white or Caucasian, African American or Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, biracial, multiracial or something else?

1. White or Caucasian
2. African American or Black
3. Asian or Pacific Islander
4. Biracial or Multiracial
5. Something else
6. (Refused)

41. **[COMBINED VARIABLE FROM Q41A AND Q41B]**

**IF Q41A=1 THEN Q414=1**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=1, THEN Q414=2**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=2, THEN Q414=3**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=3, THEN Q414=4**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=4, THEN Q414=5**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=5, THEN Q414=6**

**IF Q41A=2-3 AND Q41B=6, THEN Q414=7**

1. Hispanic/Latino
2. Non-Hispanic White
3. Non-Hispanic African American/Black
4. Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander
5. Non-Hispanic Biracial/Multiracial
6. Non-Hispanic something else
7. (Refused)

- 42A. As part of this feedback, the City may conduct a couple of focus group discussions and or follow-up conversations with a couple dozen Kirkland community members which would be held in the next month or so.

Would you be interested in being considered for participation in an upcoming focus group or follow-up discussion?

1. Yes, I am interested in participating
2. No, I am not interested in participating
3. (Don't know/Refused)

**(IF Q35 = 1, INTERESTED , ASK Q36-Q38)**

43. **(T)** Please enter your first name only for contact purposes. **(TEXT BOX; FORCE RESPONSE)**
44. **(T)** What is a good telephone number where you can be reached?  
**(TEXT BOX AND DROP DOWN TO SELECT CELLPHONE OR LANDLINE; FORCE RESPONSE)**
45. **(T)** What is a good **email address** where you can be reached?  
**(TEXT BOX; FORCE RESPONSE)**

CONFIRM. If you qualify for one of the focus groups or follow-up conversations, we will follow up in the next few weeks with more information and to see if you are interested and available to participate.

**(RESUME EVERYONE)**

OUTTRO. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your input will help inform the City of Kirkland as it works to provide and improve parks and recreation services throughout the community.