

YMCA Contract Renewal Update and Frequently Asked Questions

Dear Friends,

As you may know, the City of Sherwood owns your YMCA building and last year ordered a study to evaluate its options for prospective Operators. The decision to renew or replace the YMCA contract must be made by 10/31/17. Below are answers to important questions which people have been asking.

Q. What did the City's Feasibility Study conclude?

A. Among other things, the Study listed the "Pro's and Con's" of the YMCA and other possible operators. After reading those, we believe your YMCA stands out as the top choice in terms of its combination of breadth of services offered and lowest cost to the City (zero). The author says, **"there are an extensive number of ways in which the YMCA shows community responsiveness."**

Q. Why would the City want to change its Operator of the building and community programs?

A. The City is exploring all options, and there may be a diversity of preferences on the City Council. Some may want to sell the building, and others may want to bring in a for-profit operator in hopes of earning a modest rental fee.

Q. What programs would the community lose if a for-profit gym took over?

A. The YMCA's primary focus is on positive personal and community impact, not shareholders profits. Because of this, we are able to offer special programs which don't generate positive cash flow. We also have expertise in programs which **serve children, teens, seniors, physically and mentally handicapped**, nearly all of which would be changed or eliminated. Our extensive volunteerism in the community (generating volunteer hours equivalent to \$207,000 last year) would also be eliminated, as would numerous free classes and community-based and vendor partnerships unique to the Y.

Also, if an operator which doesn't use lifeguards took over (like 24 Hour Fitness), all youth and most senior **aquatics** programs would end, affecting at least 2,500 people.

Q. What other alternatives might the City choose?

A1. They could run it themselves, but the **Study says it will cost the City (taxpayers) money if the City runs the facility**, and that's even before adding in hefty City administrative fees. Public documents show the City of Wilsonville expected to lose \$7.4 million over 5 years if they ran their proposed facility.

A2. They could also award it to a professional manager like Sports Facility Management (SFM) out of Florida. SFM might offer more programs than a gym club, yet still lacks the breadth and depth of what the YMCA offers. They also offer far less in the way of financial assistance than the YMCA, which **donates over \$300,000** per year in reduced fees to over 1,000 **lower-income families**. Community involvement and **free child watch** would also likely be adversely affected.

Q. Has the YMCA been doing a good job serving Sherwood and Y members?

A. The Feasibility Study's author summed it up during his 2/7/17 City Council presentation: **"the YMCA does a great job meeting the needs of the community through scholarships and other services."** Some on the City Council may have differing opinions.

Q. Did the Study survey residents or YMCA members?

A. The City chose not to include that in its Study. However, in 2016, the YMCA paid for an independent survey of its members and the greater community. This survey showed the Sherwood YMCA had an overall member **Net Promoter Score of 87**, of which its author reported, “...**any score 80 or above is considered excellent.**”

Q. Is the YMCA a religious organization?

A. No, we are a Social Services non-profit. Yet, our Christian heritage is reflected in our core values of “Love, Respect, Honesty, Responsibility, and Service.” We aim to serve all, employ all, and love all, 100% inclusively. Many ***members and staff tell us these core values are the reason they belong to the Y.***

Q. What is the YMCA’s community focus?

A. Your YMCA is focused on being the hub of Sherwood’s community, where people of all ages and backgrounds can connect and thrive. As we have for nearly 150 years in the greater Portland area, we uniquely offer programs for the whole person, “**Mind, Body, and Spirit.**” In contrast to profit-oriented centers, our staff’s primary goals are on *positively impacting people’s lives and serving the community.*

Q. Will the building be expanded?

A. The Feasibility Study recommended expansion and upgrading the facility. The YMCA of Columbia-Willamette agrees, and would likely contribute to the cost. For instance, if the current facility Bond was renewed (to expand the building) while adding no additional cost to taxpayers, the YMCA could once again share in a portion of that cost.

To quote the Study’s author, it is “**remarkable**” the YMCA previously paid for 74% of the City’s expansion-related debt. The YMCA **voluntarily paid \$1.71 million** for the teen and senior center annex and related expansion.

Q. What’s next in the City of Sherwood’s evaluation process?

A. On March 7, the City announced (on its website) it will be having a “Town Hall” to discuss the future of the YMCA facility. It will take place on **March 14, 2017** in the Sherwood Center for the Arts (venue change), at 7:00 PM. City management has also advised us the ***format has been changed*** from one with open microphones to one of “several table discussions, with topic each being led by a City Councilor.” This will still enable members and others to give Councilors input on why they value the YMCA. Visitors can also submit questions and comments at the meeting.

Please come and tell your Y story!

Shortly after the March 14 meeting, Sherwood’s City Manager will be issuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) to manage and operate your YMCA building. In fairness to our City partners, we note this was a recommendation made by the Ballard/King Feasibility Study’s authors.

We promise to keep you updated as we receive new information.

Sincerely,

Your Sherwood Regional YMCA Staff