

City of Woodinville

**City Hall & Community Center
Feasibility Study**

March 31, 1997

BOSMA & ASSOCIATES
International

Overview of the Project

City residents have been previously surveyed about their interest in a proposed Community Center and City Hall at the Sorenson school complex. Following the surveys, two bond issues were voted down that, if approved, would have allowed the City to purchase the Sorenson School complex and develop it as a Community Center and City Hall.

Currently, the Sorenson School complex, owned by the Northshore School District is for sale. This 10-acre site includes ballfields, the old brick school house containing City Hall, and the newer buildings behind the old brick school which include the pool, gym, and classrooms. The City's lease agreement for space at the Sorenson complex expires in 1999, and the City also has a purchase option which expires December 31, 1997.

Also, in October 1996, the City purchased 3 acres of undeveloped property located south of the Sorenson complex on 133rd Avenue NE. However, since the last study and vote, a snow storm caused damage to one of the building classrooms. These events caused the School District and City Administration to re-examine the Sorenson complex.

As a result, Bosma & Associates International was contracted to conduct a phone survey of Woodinville City residents to learn how a representative sample of the community feels about the potential to develop a Community Center and City Hall with the City. This report presents the findings of the telephone survey conducted in March, 1997.

Findings Related to the Development of City Hall

A first section of the survey with residents asked them to discuss a variety of scenarios regarding City Hall. When asked whether City Hall needs to find a permanent home, 86 percent of respondents responded "yes" to the question. When asked to explain their answers, over 60 percent of respondents highlighted the need of a city to have a permanent location for conducting city business. Some of their comments include:

"A city should have a place to operate from."

"We need to have a permanent home."

"I don't know of any other city without a permanent city hall."

A second group of respondents (36 percent) conveyed the importance of Woodinville having a central location as well as the cost inefficiencies of leasing space. Some typical comments include:

"It seems weird for a city to be renting property from someone else."

"The city is growing. It's difficult for administrative offices to be moving all the time."

"If we are growing, it is better to buy property in the long run than to keep leasing property."

A third group of respondents (17 percent) discussed how having an established City Hall serves as both a historical and focal point of the City. Some of their comments include:

"Woodinville needs a building that is a center to focus around -- it doesn't really have place for the community to gather and act as a community."

"Our city is growing and City Hall should reflect that growth -- what the City can be in the future."

"We need a center for our city and a place where people can conduct business. Having it in a landmark type of building adds definition to the city."

In general, the comments of respondents opposed to City Hall having a permanent home were related to the cost of changing facilities and the perception that the current situation is fine as is. Some of their comments include:

"I see no compelling reason for the City to actually own property for City Hall."

"There are a lot of issues that need to be settled with Sorenson. I understand the concerns about the cost. They still have a few years to go on their lease and a lot of things could change between now and then."

"I don't think the city is big enough and we don't have the tax base to support it."

When asked to rate importance of Woodinville having a City Hall located downtown, two-thirds of respondents indicated that it was important for Woodinville to have a City Hall located downtown.

Of the sites proposed for City Hall, respondents were asked to rank their preferences for the Sorenson School complex and the three-acre lot owned by the City. Over half of respondents indicated that the Sorenson School complex was their first preference for City Hall and an equal number of respondents indicated that the three-acre lot owned by the City was their second preference. When asked for a third preference, three-quarters of respondents had no clear preferences for sites other than the previous two. When asked to explain their answers, respondents highlighted the central and/or convenient location of the school complex (38 percent) as well as the existing benefits of maintaining the current infrastructure (33 percent). Some of their comments include:

"Sorenson is in the middle of everything downtown."

"It seems like a central location and it fits well with what the city is doing."

"Because of the location -- it's already built and already established as the central government of the City."

"The central location of Sorenson -- we are already there. There are facilities there that could be used for the community center."

"It seems like it would make more sense to use a building that's already in place than to build a new one."

As a possible site for City Hall, respondents were also asked to rank their preferences regarding the buildings on the Sorenson School complex. While their first preference regarding the buildings was equally split (37 percent each) between bringing the buildings up to code only and renovating/restoring the buildings to a greater extent, 41 percent of respondents indicated that their second preference was bringing the buildings up to code only. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that demolishing and rebuilding the site was their third preference regarding the buildings.

Findings Related to the Development of the Community Center

A second section of the survey with residents asked them to discuss a variety of scenarios regarding a Community Center. When asked whether Woodinville needs a Community Center for youth, teen, and family-oriented activities, two-thirds of respondents responded "yes" to the question. When asked to explain their answers, two-thirds of respondents highlighted the importance of having a facility oriented for family recreation and development. Some of their comments include:

"Any city needs a place for kids and families to do things."

"Teenagers have nothing much to do and even if they go to the mall/movies, they need a place to meet so they don't hang out on the streets."

"It doesn't seem to me that there is much available for community events. Our teens and families need some space for their activities."

A second group of respondents (33 percent) conveyed the importance of the community having a focal point for recreational activities. Some of their comments include:

"I don't feel that there are any community center resources like that [the proposed community center] close in Woodinville. We need a focus point and an area in the community that all the people in the community can use for sports, theatre, and other activities."

"Having such a facility not only gives people a place to go, it strengthens the community."

"A center builds a sense of community -- it keeps kids out of trouble, it provides meeting and classroom space for clubs and social groups, it's good to have a place where people can get exercise."

In general, the comments of respondents opposed to Woodinville needing a Community Center were related to the cost of developing a Community Center and the perception that families and kids currently have enough options. Some of their comments include:

"Similar development in other small cities have not done much good and are not cost-effective."

"The City does not have the money and they rely on a few homeowners with the city and that's not right."

"There are all kinds of facilities already available and further development would cause further congestion."

"We have a YMCA, the Hollywood school house, and other community areas around here. We don't need another one and we don't have the tax base to pay for it."

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of Woodinville having a Community Center located downtown and adjacent to City Hall. While over half of respondents (56 percent) indicated that it was important for Woodinville to have a Community Center located downtown, less than one-third of respondents said it was important for the Community Center to be adjacent to City Hall.

~~Of the sites proposed for the Community Center, respondents were asked to rank their preferences for the Sorenson School complex and the three-acre lot owned by the City. Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that the Sorenson School complex was their first preference for a Community Center and an equal number of respondents indicated that the~~

three-acre lot owned by the City was their second preference. When asked for a third preference, three-quarters of respondents once again had no clear preferences for sites other than the previous two. When asked to explain their answers, respondents highlighted the benefits of maintaining the current infrastructure (52 percent), the central and/or convenient location of the school complex (25 percent), and the cost-effectiveness of using Sorenson. Some of their comments include:

"It's more economical to use something that's already there."

"Sorenson already has a lot of amenities."

"It's already there -- it requires some work, but I'm sure it's convenient to everyone regardless of where they are."

"Sorenson is centrally located and has easy access from any location you are coming from."

"Sounds like the buildings are already there and not being used, and the location is good."

"Sorenson is already there and we could just develop that and bring it up to code."

As a possible site for the Community Center, respondents were also asked to rank their preferences regarding the buildings on the Sorenson School complex. Their first preference regarding the buildings was to renovate/restore the buildings to a greater extent (41 percent) and to bring the buildings up to code only (31 percent). Their second preference regarding the buildings was to bring the buildings up to code only (45 percent). Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that demolishing and rebuilding the site was their third preference regarding the buildings.

Feedback Regarding Future Initiatives

A third section of the survey with residents asked them to provide guidance for future City initiatives. With a first question, respondents were asked to discuss, from their perspective, why they feel the previous two bond issues were voted down. Overall, 40 percent of respondents indicated that people do not want to pay more taxes and/or spend more money, and 29 percent of respondents reported that the cost/financing of City plans were too high and/or involved too much money. An additional group of respondents (13 percent) indicated that the bond issues had been voted down because community residents were uninformed and/or lacked awareness. Some of their comments include:

"People are scared of paying more money -- they are worried that they will be over-taxed even more."

"Basically, it's concern about costs/taxes increases and whether a city our size needs this facility and whether this need equals the cost and increase of taxes."

"Because people don't feel that homeowners should pay for the whole thing -- people said no because it's not only the residents of Woodinville that would use a Community Center, the whole North Shore would be using it. You need to charge the people that will be using it."

"Lack of turnout, lack of awareness and education on the benefits to the community."

"The cost was too high. If they could purchase and renovate the facilities for less money, I think they would have a better chance of getting the issue passed."

"People don't want to pay more taxes."

Respondents were also asked to discuss the extent to which they would support future City initiatives. When asked whether they would support a Community Center if the City could do it without raising taxes, respondents indicated they would support the City if it were to purchase and bring up to code the Sorenson School complex (41 percent), create a new development on the City's three-acre site (23 percent), and purchase/construct new buildings/facilities on the Sorenson School complex (20 percent).

When asked whether they would support a City Hall if the City could do it without raising taxes, respondents indicated they would support the City if it were to purchase and bring up to code the Sorenson School complex (51 percent), create a new development on the City's three-acre site (22 percent), and purchase/construct new buildings/facilities on the Sorenson School complex (16 percent).

Respondents were also given the opportunity to share any additional comments. Some of their responses include:

"As much as I'd like to see this happen, my concern is cost and tax increases. I would be willing to do it without the community center if it meant keeping taxes lower."

"There is a reason that the two previous levies did not pass and the reason is that people are not happy with it. I think that the City should listen to the people -- the City Council is elected by the people to listen to the people and they don't."

"I would like them to consider other options -- property outside of town for purchase or lease. It's a function of the best use of my money. They have fixated on those two buildings at Sorenson and the 3-acre site. With the mall going in, I would take a look at that."

"We voted down the bond issue, but the City went ahead and bought the 3-acre site anyway. I would vote against any bond issue for that reason -- they are going to do what they like whether I like it or not."

"I'm pleased to see the City trying to get the involvement of citizens in the community."

Respondent Demographics

As a part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide a variety of demographic information about themselves.

<u>Gender:</u>	Male	49%
	Female	51%

Number of persons 18 years of age and older living in your household

One	15%
Two	65%
Three	16%
Four or More	5%

Number of persons under 18 years of age living in your household

None	52%
One	18%
Two	22%
Three or More	9%

Number of years you have lived in Woodinville

1 to 5 years	28%
6 to 10 years	29%
11 to 15 years	18%
16 or more	25%

Length of time since you last visited City Hall

never	38%
the past week	6%
the past month	6%
the past six months	20%
the past year	12%
a year or more	19%

Length of time since you last visited any of the facilities at Sorenson

never	31%
the past week	6%
the past month	5%
the past six months	15%
the past year	17%
a year or more	25%

Woodinville Questionnaire (Final)

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is _____ and I am calling (*name of registered voter*) on behalf of the City of Woodinville. **(If the registered voter is available, continue with the survey; if the registered voter is not available, set up an appointment to call at another time, or say "Thank you for your time" and terminate.)**

We are conducting a brief and confidential survey of city residents concerning current issues surrounding a Community Center and City Hall. This survey will take less than five minutes to complete. May I continue? **(If "yes", continue with the survey; if "no" say "Thank you for your time" and terminate)**

Thank you. Do you live within the Woodinville city limits?

- Yes No Don't Know

As you may already know, city residents have been previously surveyed about their interest in a proposed Community Center and City Hall at the Sorenson school complex. Following the surveys, two bond issues were voted down that, if approved, would have allowed the City to purchase the Sorenson complex and develop it as a Community Center and City Hall.

Currently, the Sorenson School complex, owned by the Northshore School District is for sale. This 10-acre site includes ballfields, the old brick school house containing City Hall, and the newer buildings behind the old brick school which include the pool, gym, and classrooms. The City's lease agreement for space at the Sorenson complex expires in 1999, and the City also has a purchase option which expires December 31, 1997.

Also, in October 1996, the City purchased 3 acres of undeveloped property located south of the Sorenson complex on 133rd Avenue NE.

Since the last study and vote, a snow storm caused damage to one of the building classrooms. These events have caused the School District and City Administration to re-examine the Sorenson complex.

1. In your opinion, does City Hall need to find a permanent home?

- Yes -- Why? _____
 No -- Why? _____

2. How important is it to you that Woodinville have a City Hall located downtown?

- Very important
 Somewhat important
 Not very important
 Not at all important

3. Of the sites proposed for the City Hall, please rank the following by your first, second, and third preference.

___ The Sorenson school complex located downtown on NE 175th Street
Why? _____

___ The 3 acre, undeveloped property owned by the City located to the south of the Sorenson complex
Why? _____

___ Other _____
Why? _____

4. As a possible site for the City Hall, please rank the following approaches in terms of your first, second, and third preferences:

___ Bring the buildings up to code only

___ Renovate and restore the buildings to a greater extent with additional facilities

___ Demolish and rebuild the site

5. Does Woodinville need a Community Center for youth, teen, and family oriented activities?

Yes -- Why? _____

No -- Why? _____

6. How important is it to you that Woodinville have a Community Center located downtown?

Very important

Somewhat important

Not very important

Not at all important

7. How important is it to you that a Community Center be adjacent to City Hall?

Very important

Somewhat important

Not very important

Not at all important

8. Of the sites proposed for the Community Center, please rank the following by your first, second, and third preference.

___ The Sorenson school complex located downtown on NE 175th Street
Why? _____

___ The 3 acre, undeveloped property owned by the City located to the south of the Sorenson complex on 133rd
Why? _____

___ Other _____
Why? _____

9. The City has been reviewing options for the Sorenson School site. As a possible site for the Community Center, please rank the following approaches in terms of your first, second, and third preferences:

___ Bring the buildings up to code only

___ Renovate and restore the buildings to a greater extent with additional facilities

___ Demolish and rebuild the site

10. Gender (**do not ask**): Male Female

11. Number of persons 18 years of age and older living in your household? _____

12. Number of persons under 18 years of age living in your household? _____

13. How many years have you lived in Woodinville? _____

14. How long has it been since you last visited City Hall? Within . . .

never

the past week

the past month

the past six months

the past year

a year or more

15. How long has it been since you last visited any of the facilities, which include the pool, gym, ballfields, and classroom, in the C.O. Sorenson School? Within . . .
- never
 - the past week
 - the past month
 - the past six months
 - the past year
 - a year or more

16. From your perspective, why do you feel the previous two bond issues were voted down?

17. Finally, the City of Woodinville needs to know which of the following you would support, if they could do it without raising your taxes.

For a Community Center (choose one):

- purchase and bring up to code the Sorenson complex
- purchase and construct new buildings/facilities on the Sorenson complex
- create a new development on the City's 3-acre site
- other _____

For City Hall (choose one):

- purchase and bring up to code the Sorenson complex
- purchase and construct new buildings/facilities on the Sorenson complex
- create a new development on the City's 3-acre site
- other _____

18. Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make?

To remind you, this survey is confidential. If you would like somebody from City Hall to contact you regarding any comments you have made, I need your consent to provide them with your name and telephone contact number. Would you like to be contacted by a city official concerning one of your comments? **(If "yes", collect the following information; if "no" say "Thank you for your time and participation" and terminate)**

Name _____

Phone Number _____