

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

The city of Santaquin has many qualities, the best of all are the people. One of the joys of serving in our city is meeting our people and getting to know them. When the people of Santaquin come together, each willing to do their part, we can accomplish amazing things and unlock the possibilities of Santaquin for future generations. This requires investment from each member of the community.

One of the most common concerns we have heard from residents in recent years is that of improving our recreation facilities and programs.

After a great deal of feedback from residents, and much discussion, the city council has chosen to place a proposed recreation center and aquatic facility on the November 2019 ballot. The cost of the bond not to exceed \$12 million. The decision to place a bond on the ballot was not made lightly. After considering the positive impacts that this facility will have in our community, we are in favor of this bond for the following reasons:

- **Community driven-** the idea of a recreation center and pool was brought to the council by residents of our city.
- **Survey results-** 88.9% of those who responded to community surveys requested a recreation center with a pool as their number one recreation desire.
- **Supporting our seniors-** This facility will provide a safe and healthy meeting place for the seniors of our community. The current senior facility has bats, mice, the roof leaks and the foundation is cracked. It is not seismic and is not ADA accessible.
- **Investing in our youth-** there are tremendous benefits which come to youth through recreation activities and increased engagement of youth within our own community.
- **Job creation-** The proposed facility will create approximately 200 jobs in our city, most of which will be part time and create in- town employment opportunities for our youth.
- **Benefits to every community member-** the facility creates enhanced recreation opportunities by offering a place to gather together, strengthen community ties and improve health.
- **Provide enough programming space-** our programs and activities currently exceed space needed for growth.
- **Location-** the proposed structure, located at 580 West Main Street, is an ideal location for members of the entire community to reasonably access.
- **Repurpose an existing building-** we will take a structure that is currently unused and make it a gathering place for our community including a pool, kid's water play area, indoor walking track, gym space, classroom space and multi-purpose room with kitchen space.
- **Attract additional businesses-** the creation of this facility will increase the quality of life for residents and attract commercial business to our city.
- **Individual resident costs-** Individual tax costs will go down as our city grows.

Santaquin is an amazing place to live! We support investing in the family and in social capital of our community by not only maintaining but improving the quality of life for each of our residents.

Santaquin City Council

REBUTTAL

While the City Council and Staff have spent a great deal of effort championing this facility, we doubt that its viability and benefits can live up to the vision.

- **Senior Center-** The City admits that it hasn't been able to properly maintain the current Senior Center. How can we now trust them to maintain a \$12,000,000 facility with an estimated \$266,000 annual operational deficit?
- **Jobs-** Springville's Rec Center also employs around 200 people, but they pay actual wages of \$1,237,646 a year - \$230,000 more than our City's proposed budget for this Rec Center of \$1,000,000. Operational costs have been severely underestimated when compared to similar facilities.
- **Community Benefit-** While about 20% of our residents might use the facility, 100% of us have to pay for it, regardless of ability to pay.
- **Additional Businesses-** Cities build Rec Centers AFTER they have businesses and a Sales/RAP tax base to pay for it. They don't spend money they don't have to build Rec Centers with only hopes that it might attract businesses.

Santaquin is an amazing place to live, especially when we look out for each other. This bond will lower our ability to invest in our public needs – police, fire, city buildings, etc. – in the future by lowering our bond capacity from \$20 million to \$8 million.

“It is human nature to want it and want it now; it is also a sign of immaturity. Being willing to delay pleasure for a greater result is a sign of maturity.” –Dave Ramsey

ARGUMENT IN AGAINST

Would you increase your total household debt by 60% to put in a pool and nice home gym, knowing that it comes with maintenance costs, and with only the hopes that you might find a new source of income to pay that maintenance each month? Of course not, yet this is what the City will be doing with the \$12,000,000 bond for a Rec Center.

The City claims that this bond will “only cost you \$0.60 a day,” for the average household. Even if true, that is still about \$250 a year in property taxes. Unfortunately, over the past few years Utah County has increased our Assessed Home Values by about 40% which has served to raise the amount of property taxes we are required to pay each year. Many in Santaquin are barely making ends meet as it is, while others are relying on Government or Church assistance to take care of basic necessities. Imagine you are on a fixed income, as many of our residents are. How do you pay for these increases? Will a new Recreation Center improve their quality of life, or will an increase overburden them, forcing them to make decisions to cut necessities like medications or food for their family?

The City has promised the \$12,000,000 bond is all the money the city will need to build the Recreation Center. However, the City has many current projects that are over-budget. The current recreation building was supposed to have a \$350,000 remodel this year, but ended up costing over \$1,000,000. The new soccer fields were supposed to cost \$736,000, but are now up to \$1,200,000 with no final cost actually estimated. Due to these miscalculations and other overages, other needed improvements and infrastructure are being postponed or just ignored. Can we honestly believe that a Recreation Center that was originally quoted to cost \$19,900,000 will be built for only \$12,000,000? One City official even said “cold hard numbers you can’t have until actual build out”.

The City projects the Recreation Center will run a \$266,000 annual deficit. The City ended last year with a surplus of just ~\$255,000. The City proposes to use its surplus for three years to fund this deficit. In other words, the City will have no surplus for actual needs over the next three years, and is already spending new tax revenues it has not yet received. These funds are better used towards current City needs like additional fire stations, a City office building, road improvement, etc. Instead of funding these needs with surplus and future revenue, the Recreation Center bond forces future needs to be funded by future bonds or tax/fee increases. The Recreation Center will be just the first tax increase of many.

Oftentimes, what’s good for the goose IS NOT what’s good for the gander. We plead that you look outside yourself and what might be good for you, and understand that many in our community cannot afford the tax increase or the use of the facility.

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REBUTTAL

Strong communities are built on solid foundations. The people of Santaquin are the strongest part of our foundation. The people are resilient, service oriented and family minded. Our city’s wise financial management decisions are also part of that foundation. You may read the entire budget at www.santaquin.org

In response to the published argument against the proposed recreation center/aquatic facility here are the facts:

- The remodel of the old public works shed into a recreation building was bid out at \$607,246, not including engineering/design, landscaping, furnishings, and signage. The total remodel came to \$795,775. This is one example of a beautiful repurposing of an existing building.
- The soccer fields were bid out at \$945,241 and the City Council chose to improve this project by adding restrooms, fencing and lighting bringing the total to \$1.2 million. This decision was made because there were funds to cover the improvements (each new home pays into the park impact fee fund, current balance \$418,000).
- The surplus we have shown at the end of each fiscal year has gone into our rainy-day funds, which are capped by the state at 25% of total budget. We are currently at 22.5%.
- This project would meet the facility and programming needs of our children, adults, seniors and families.

The city council chose to place the recreation center on the ballot because we believe voters can decide for themselves whether investing in our recreation department, and the social capital of our city, is investment they want the city to make.



NOTICE

A PUBLIC MEETING TO PRESENT THE ARGUMENTS WILL BE HELD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH, 2019 AT 6:00 P.M. AT THE SANTAQUIN CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 275 WEST MAIN STREET, SANTAQUIN, UT 84655 (2ND FLOOR)