

# Frequently Asked Questions – November 3, 2020 Referendum

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## 1. Why hasn't the City spent more time detailing Option 3?

*The answer is simple. By voting "neither" you are voting "no" to spending the money and likely ending the service soon. That has been clearly stated and there are no further details to give. We would not relist everything the City would not build or show an empty lot. As the referendum outcome does not alter the 10 year capital improvement plan excluding those specific items in Option 1 and 2 no further details on capital planning are necessary.*

## 2. What is the actual tax impact of the referendum?

*We concentrated on the most recent tax bill as of January 2020 (after the recent school referendum impacted the tax rate) to January 2024 when the City will make its first bond payment. This is to give a complete picture on what the tax payer may experience. Essentially an estimated \$197 decrease per \$200,000 assessed value in the school district's debt payment sets the total tax increase to the \$125-\$186 per \$200,000 assessed value in 2024. This detail was published in various packets and is on our website. Please reference the web page for the referendum and click 'Referendum Budget'.*

## 3. Why is the bond amount less than the project total?

*We expect a minimum of \$1,500,000 in private donations from individual donors to offset the costs.*

## 4. Why are the cost so high compared to other projects?

*Construction costs have escalated greater than interest rates, wages and more in recent years. We hired architects/engineers to create rudimentary designs that fill needs first, then estimate the costs. We are not looking for a dollar amount to fill with projects, rather a project to complete under a budget. We will create the most efficient construction design that meets the expected service levels of the public. We have a track record on referendum projects like the lake dredging and library coming in under budget.*

## 5. Can we save money using local companies?

*Yes and we encourage local contractors to participate in the construction of the project. The City will use an open bidding process to find qualified contractors and sub-contractors. Having local companies participate returns the investment back into the community and potentially saves on costs.*

## 6. Will this cost more in operations?

*Here is what we do know:*

- The current pool has developed expensive leaks adding to operation costs in 2018-2019 and repairs in 2020 (anticipating a 2021 season). We anticipate more problems and repairs.*

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- *The current pool has concessions separated from the facility cutting sales and adding labor.*
- *The current facility is inefficient to what it could be for heating, treating and filtering water.*
- *We reduce a small portion of our potential revenue closing down our smaller facility for specific needs rather than having a larger facility accommodate many needs simultaneously.*
- *We are installing solar panels to reduce electric costs in operations.*
- *We will design the pool layout to maximize life guard placement.*
- *We will invest by building with quality materials to reduce future maintenance costs.*
- *In anticipation of adding park space, planned capital investments will reduce labor and maximize use for multiple recreation programs.*

**7. Why is the first tax increase in 2024?**

*The City will use bonding options to borrow only what is necessary as the project is constructed. The debt payments is delayed to 2024 due to the timing of completed construction.*

**8. Will the current pool remain open?**

*If the referendum passes in favor of construction at Westside Park the pool should remain open until the new facility is constructed and ready for operations. If the location is at Lake Leota demolition will have to begin in fall 2021 and likely will not be finished by spring of 2022. The pool will be shut down for one season while construction continues.*

*If the referendum fails, the Council will re-evaluate the community's desire of continued tax supplementation on operations and maintenance of the current facility.*

**9. How will this expansion of the parks and changing locations of existing fields impact current facilities?**

*Regardless of Option 1 or 2 passing, our goal is to have the project staged moving west to east at Westside Park to minimize disruption while also planning on low costs auxiliary sites for continued operations as needed.*

**10. Why not an indoor pool?**

*There have been previous discussions and referendums on building an indoor pool attached to the High School. This was rejected by the public. There are significantly greater construction costs for indoor facilities which are rarely paid for by passes and entry fees. The tax impact would increase significantly more if the City constructed an indoor pool.*

**11. If it were indoor we would make more money to cover costs?**

*Quadrupling the current operations budget of 3 months would not include the costs to heat the air and water. We would have to add the costs of benefits for a fulltime staff member. The tax supplementation for an indoor facility under the best circumstances would increase City operational levy by \$100,000 to \$150,000 excluding the larger maintenance and repair items. Under state statutes this would require an additional referendum to expand the City's general levy or cut services elsewhere.*

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## **12. What is the Return on Investment?**

*The City cannot determine what the return on investment would equal in dollar amounts regarding these projects. However consider why somebody or a family would move to Evansville rather than another community. With more work from home options, a living location will become less dependent on job/office location. This was already a growing trend with younger generations and after recent events should continue to increase. Desirable locations for living is becoming a stronger focus and recreational opportunities are part of that desirability. By people choosing to move here it improves the housing market. A market that many residents have made as their primary investment. Communities are now more destinations of where to live first and it is likely that having these facilities (or others like it) will add more families to the community.*

*Recreational programs are a commitment to having a healthy community that is inclusive and resilient. This does not mean it has to include a swimming program, added baseball, added softball or better soccer fields, however there has to be a strength to the recreational program the community offers. The Council knows the current facilities are limited in meeting public demands or are in critical condition. What is unknown is the community's full opinion on whether this investment in recreation should take place. Vote on this long term investment for generations to be repaid over 20 years.*

## **13. Where can I find more information?**

*The Evansville Review recently printed an article describing the pool and park referendum options. A copy of this article can be found on our web page [https://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/city\\_government/referendum/](https://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/city_government/referendum/). The City sent an informational mailer on the project in addition to the article and that as well can be found on the webpage. We encourage all residents to visit our webpage and read the materials for more detail.*