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Question/Comment

Thank you so much for all of the work on the Wellness Center! I think this is going to be an excellent community resource. My community resource wish list would include an indoor pool, walking track, gymnasium, a large multi-purpose room that could serve as pickleball courts, basketball court or group fitness area; plus a small group fitness area that could be used for quieter group fitness classes like yoga, pilates, stretching, or senior fit-and-sit classes. My biggest wish for the Center is to also serve as a emergency refuge area for Livingston and surrounding community. I have been involved with the post-flood recovery process since June 2022, and it is painfully clear that Livingston is ill-equipped to shelter and support large numbers of people during an emergency event, be that a large-scale flood that inundates the south and east end of town, a fire, widespread power outage, or extreme heat/cold events. This is a piece of critical infrastructure that our community is lacking and the new Wellness Center would be an excellent dual-purpose for emergency preparedness and emergency response. Plus, if the Center is developed with this additional purpose in mind, the Center and access to the Center could be funded through a variety of FEMA grants that support community emergency preparedness and response: <https://www.fema.gov/grants>

This leads me to my last comment about location: We MUST not develop the new Center at the Civic Center location. I know this is a very appealing location, but the risks and costs associated with the building being damaged, or isolated during another significant flood is too great. This is backed by the hydrology report that was developed for this proposed location which acknowledges that the Center could be surrounded by 2-3 feet of water during a 500 year flood event (which has a 1 in 500 chance, or 0.2% of occurring each year NOT once every 500 years). We also know that the Livingston levee is not up to FEMA design standards and sustained a lot of damage during the 2022 flood. To invest a huge sum of money into this location will also require expensive building designs, permitting and upgrades to the levee to ensure the new facility does not get damaged and can be useful for the community. When these factors are considered, the Civic Center location is likely cost prohibit and negates the ability for the project to tap into additional FEMA funds as an emergency refuge. on the other hand, if the Center is located on the north side of town and is developed to also serve as an emergency refuge for the community, a compelling argument could be made to use FEMA funds to help pay for an additional overpass/underpass on the North side to ensure residents have sufficient access to the emergency refuge location.