

From: [Livingston Montana](#)
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Question/Comment

To: City Commissioners

I spoke to Grant Gager about this, and presented the idea to the commissioners' June meeting. The following is an edited version of my comments with some added information.

How to best use private and government contributions for the safety and healthy well-being of our students and adult citizens:

Objectives–

- Promote mental and physical health for student-age population by supplying an easily accessible and affordable fieldhouse for outdoor sports activities (batting cages, soccer practice, running/walking track, overall physical conditioning, etc.) especially in the winter months.
- Fulfill the local citizen's needs for a walking track.

The NEED: Rationale: Due to our lower household socio-economics, combined with the depression that is exacerbated by our cold, dark winter months, and unhealthy pressures from social media – it would seem prudent to give our middle to senior high students a place to participate in healthy activities after school.

This can be used by students year-round. Yet, it is most important during the winter months where the students default to being on the streets -- and too often in unhealthy environments or cyber space -- when they could be developing better health and social skills by participating in supervised physical activities.

Easily accessible – meaning within walking distance of the currently active school properties. This fieldhouse can be located on or near the schools' softball/baseball fields.

- This project would not be in conflict with the Wellness Center as the Wellness Center could be built in anyone of the 4 finalist locations – while the fieldhouse would be located on school property within walking distance from the middle and sr. high school.

Cost of basic functional building:

- Preliminary research on the cost of a 20,000 sf (100'W x 200'L x 24'H) metal fieldhouse shows the cost of the bare-bones steel building is about \$600k.

- The cost of the foundation, doors, windows, electrical, plumbing HVAC, and other necessary elements could probably be covered by an additional \$1.2M. Add \$8-15 per sf for a local contractor to construct (20k sf x \$15 = \$300k). – for a total of \$2.1 MM. Totalling somewhere around \$100 per sf. (I'm in the process of getting actual cost figures from a similar structure in Bozeman that was built for the baseball teams.)
- This fieldhouse has 20,000 sf of unobstructed clear space -- no roof supports interfering with activities. It would begin service with a dirt floor
- Over time, money can be raised from private citizens for artificial turf, interior offices, landscaping, etc.
- Meanwhile, within a year of approvals and planning, it could go to work to benefit our student-aged population and supply the much-requested winter-walking track for adult citizens.

Timing: Once finances are secured, this fieldhouse can be built within a year -- 4-6 months to get the steel building materials and 6 months to build it. Once the parents and community see what is happening, they'll join in the support.

Sources of revenue to build the fieldhouse:

- Options:
 - o This project could be integrated into 4 Ranges current financial plans.
 - o Or it could be a stand-alone project that supplies needs of middle school and high school students while allowing the city's citizens to use the walking track – which would reduce the cost of the Wellness Center construction.
- Grants: In a meeting with Grant Gager on this subject he seemed optimistic about possible financial support. from sources such as Urban Renewal and CDBG.
- Local citizens: I believe that when the local citizens learn about the opportunity to help build such a useful structure at a very reasonable cost per sf, many parents and other concerned citizens will contribute to the cause. Even those who contribute small amounts will feel invested in its success and will volunteer in many ways to support it.

Relationship with 4 Ranges plan for its proposed Wellness center:

The fieldhouse will supply some of the Wellness Center's current features at a much lower cost.

- The walking track planned for the wellness center could be located in the fieldhouse.
- Which could reduce the cost of the Wellness center by reducing its costs for a walking track.
- all in a centrally located school/community project.

Relationship with the schools:

In addition to giving the students a place to frequent for physical exercise and social-building activities, this fieldhouse would supply a much-needed indoor place for our school's coaches to use for such things as batting cages, golf driving cages, soccer drills, track and field practices, etc.

Additional comment regarding the Washington school location:

1. Washington is not easily accessible by the Jr and High school students. It would require transportation, which would lower the participation in the fieldhouse. However, a fieldhouse located next to the current schools would get year-round use and higher participation because it would be within walking distance of the schools.
2. Since the Washington location is in the fastest growing part of town, then that section of town would benefit from an affordable housing project built on the 2.2 acres that Washington occupies.

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The results of this submission may be viewed at:

<https://www.livingstonmontana.org/node/7/submission/1554>