

## 2. Facilities Evaluation

This chapter presents the results of the background analyses performed and the public involvement process. Background analyses included:

- Site ownership and history
- Building and site facilities analysis (architectural, mechanical, electrical, structural, civil engineering, and hazardous materials).
- Facilities Use/Needs Analysis (analysis of use trends at SRC and County recreation needs that could potentially be located at SRC).
- Benefit Cost analysis (analysis of existing operations and finances, comparison of similar facilities, and evaluation of different operations and management scenarios).

A summary of the public involvement process and results, and a summary of Findings are also presented in this Chapter.

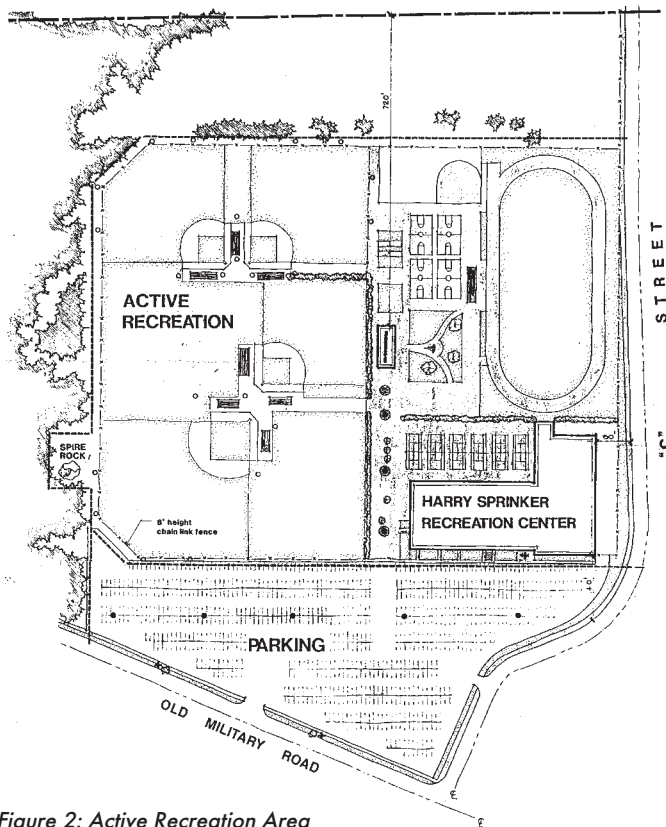


Figure 2: Active Recreation Area  
(shown on 1984 drawing)

## Description of Facilities

The Harry Sprinker Recreation Center (SRC) is a major facility within the Pierce County regional park system. The SRC provides facilities for active recreation both indoors and outside. The 105-acre site where SRC is located also contains the Breseman Forest, a passive recreation area. Together, these areas constitute the study area for this Master Site Plan. The SRC and associated outdoor areas are immediately adjacent to two other major facilities in the County's regional park system, Spanaway Park and Lake Spanaway Golf Course.

The County's park system is operated in accordance with the *Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan* (Parks Plan). The Parks Plan provides general direction and guidance for both facilities and programs. The Parks Plan does not contain site specific plans for each of the County's properties. These site-specific plans have been prepared, modified and implemented as needed over the decades. The original 1975 site plan for SRC has continued to govern development of the site with only a few modifications such as Spire Rock and the imminent reconfiguration of the outdoor track area.



In response to a variety of proposals, concepts and ideas regarding future activities involving the SRC and adjacent grounds over the last few years, the County Executive and County Council decided to initiate a formal process to develop an updated Master Site Plan for the Sprinker Recreation Center. This report constitutes the first portion of the process, with an emphasis on presenting both an analysis of current conditions and a range of viable options to consider before proceeding into the second portion of the Master Site Plan.

The Sprinker Recreation Center is a multipurpose facility of approximately 86,000 square feet of total building area (lower and upper levels) with a 970-space parking lot in front (south). The facility is a combination of a one and two-story masonry building and a pre-engineered metal building. The two-story portion houses the ice arena, racquetball courts and viewing stands. Attached to the north, the metal portion houses the indoor tennis courts. The one-story masonry portion of the building, which is located south of the ice arena, houses four multipurpose rooms and the Sheriff's Detachment office.

Located adjacent to the ball fields, there is a concession building of approximately 4,000 square feet. It is a one-story masonry structure with a wood frame and wood shingle roof.

The Harry Sprinker Recreation Center is located on C Street and Old Military Road in the Parkland area of unincorporated Pierce County. The Center's site has an irregular rectangular shape, which encompasses approximately 66 acres of active and passive recreation, shoreline management and flood plain areas. Combined street frontage is approximately 4200 feet.

The active recreation area consists of approximately 86,000 square feet of building area (the Recreation Center and concession stand) and 35 acres of outdoor activities. The existing active recreation area includes:

- 6 Outdoor tennis courts
- 4 Outdoor pickleball courts
- Track and field area (undergoing reconfiguration in 2000)
- Batting cages
- Horseshoe pits
- 4 Outdoor basketball courts
- Play area
- 970 space parking lot
- Spire Rock (climbing rock)
- Multipurpose fields:
  - 8 for softball/baseball
  - 4 for football/soccer

The facility is located in a mixed-use area. The northern and western boundaries adjoin moderate-density single family housing. Commercial and multi-family housing lie to the east. Spanaway Park and Lake Spanaway Golf Course are immediately south of the Recreation Center. Zoning classification of this site is Activity Center. The Recreation Center is a permitted use within this Pierce County zoning classification.

## Building and Site Facilities Evaluation

### SITE OWNERSHIP ANALYSIS

Pierce County acquired the site that now contains both the Sprinker Recreation Center and the Breseman Forest in March 1959. The acquisition of the site was part of a multi-property conveyance from the Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma to Pierce County. This complicated conveyance included properties that have been developed over the intervening years into significant park and recreation facilities including Lake Spanaway Golf Course, Spanaway Park, American Lake South (Harry Todd Park), and Sprinker Recreation Center.

The conveyance contains a number of specific deed restrictions over the use of the various properties. The deed specifies that all of these covenants "shall run with the land". The various properties "shall be used for park and recreation purposes only". In addition, the deed restrictions prohibit Pierce County from selling or conveying most of properties, including much of the Sprinker Recreation Center and Breseman Forest site. Pierce County may sell other portions of the property "on the condition that proceeds of said sale shall be applied to and used exclusively for the development and maintenance.....of the Spanaway Park property, over and above the yearly amount of money budgeted by the County of Pierce for the maintenance of said recreation area".

In July 1982, Pierce County Fire Protection District No. 7 acquired .60 acres in the southwest corner of the Sprinker Recreation Center site "for the purpose of constructing a satellite fire station". The agreement noted that "funding is currently not available for the construction of the station but it is the intention of the District to proceed with the project at a future date". Until the District proceeds with construction of the fire station, the agreement provides the County with continued use of the site for vehicle parking for the Sprinker Recreation Center. Given the time that has transpired, and the current standards for siting new fire protection facilities, the County should initiate discussions with the District about the status of the satellite fire station and if possible, the potential reacquisition of this small parcel.

Resolution R99-90S requested the development of a Master Site Plan for the Sprinker Recreation Center, focussing on the issues of operations, financial support

of public recreation facilities and programs, future management and utilization of the Center. In accordance with the Resolution, this report and the recommendations contained herein assume the continued ownership the subject site by Pierce County. In the event that disposition of the underlying property were to be considered further, then a detailed legal analysis and certified title report would need to be obtained in order to identify appropriate authorities, limitations and any remedies.

## **ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS**

### ***Methodology***

Between October 1999 and January 2000, the architectural and engineering consultant team conducted a building and facilities analysis.

The purpose of the analysis was to evaluate the life cycle of the building and facilities in terms of viability of existing systems and facilities, and to provide recommendations that would facilitate the decision-making process for alteration/repair projects by Pierce County.

The analysis identified the condition of building systems and materials, as well as any regulatory deficiencies observed. Most of the items identified as non-compliant with current codes are not required to be modified at this time. There are some life-safety and access code requirements needing more immediate action. Many of the items of non-compliance only need to be modified as major renovation is undertaken. Recommended actions and suggested priorities are grouped into four categories reflecting the hierarchy of action needed: Immediate, Suggested, Desirable, and Optional.

The analysis was conducted after reviewing a set of 1975 record drawings for the original construction of the building, and by making on-site observations during a site walk-through. Record drawings for renovations subsequent to the original construction were not available. Visual observations did not include wall cavities, areas within walls, subterranean conditions and other conditions at locations, which were not readily visible; consequently, there may be conditions present at those locations, which, if known, would alter certain conclusions, or recommendations.

Unless required by the local building authority, performing corrections on most of the code deficiencies is voluntary. However, as additions, alterations or repairs are

made to the buildings, it may trigger other upgrades, such as compliance with zoning, building, accessibility and energy codes. ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) is Civil Rights legislation and needs to be addressed. Even if no work is being done in an existing publicly owned building, ADA requires a public entity to make its programs accessible in all cases, except where to do so would result in an "undue burden."

## GENERAL

The following section is a summary of the recommendations for renovation of SRC from the Building and Site Facilities Analysis. The complete analysis and findings are located in Appendix C.

## PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS / REPAIR PROJECTS

Potential repairs and improvements are prioritized in the following manner.

- **Immediate:** Access and life-safety code deficiencies. Also includes items that if not repaired would result in serious damage to the building or its content.
- **Suggested:** Although not life-threatening, serious deterioration of the building will result if left as is.
- **Desirable:** While currently in good condition, these items are approaching the end of their economic life and may need replacement within this time frame (life cycle).
- **Optional:** Within the holding period of the assets, these items will need major repairs/replacement. Also includes all "major" energy savings or operational improvements.

### **Immediate**

#### Non-Construction/Minor Improvements

1. Remove stored material from the exit way to meet current clear exit-path requirements.
2. Provide occupancy signs to indicate maximum occupancy loads.
3. Add grease interceptor at water wash hood, second floor kitchen, if required by the wastewater utility.

### Repairs

1. Replace flashing at joint between metal building and masonry building with expansion joint flashing.
2. Provide fireproofing for the columns in the tennis area up to a height of 25 feet to meet building code requirements.
3. Repair cracking of masonry at elevator. Since the masonry wall lacks spalling and other signs of damage, the crack appears to be due instead to lateral movement. This may be due to the increased shear forces in the re-entrant corner or perhaps thermal expansion due to its southern exposure that acts against the cooler indoor temperatures.
4. Clean, snake, and repair damaged downspouts and connections.
5. Repair missing or damages floor tile in multi-purpose rooms.

### Access/ADA/Codes

1. Upgrade exit stairs. Provide at least a 44 inch deep bottom landing at the north ice arena exit stairs and at the east tennis building exit stairs (partial upgrade).
2. Upgrade at least one toilet facility to meet Washington Accessibility Code (WAC) standards, which includes installing one accessible toilet stall and lavatory with an accessible path of travel and mark the room accordingly in the main facility and in the concession stand facilities. An alternative for the concession stand facilities would be to install an accessible portable restroom, which may be more cost effective.
3. Install a 1:12 ramp at the level change in the Rainier Room for accessibility.
4. Supply cups near drinking fountains to comply with WAC requirements.
5. Install ADA Plumbing Fixtures. Replace all plumbing fixtures in existing restrooms with ADA compliant fixtures.
6. Provide ducted outside air to all water source heat pump units to meet state ventilation code.
7. Widen fire lane access at northeast parking lot area to meet current codes and requirements.
8. Provide fire lane connection from east building fire lane to asphalt plaza at north side of tennis courts.
9. Correct parking lot striping for ADA designated stalls to meet current requirements of widths and travel corridors. Approximately 20 ADA stalls are required

for the 970-stall parking lot. Three of these stalls are required to be "van accessible."

10. Remove extruded curb along entire length of ADA designated parking areas. Concrete wheel stops could be installed to prevent vehicle overhang onto pedestrian linkages.
11. Provide correct signage in front of each ADA designated parking stall.
12. Test all drinking fountain backflow prevention devices and repair and/or replace as applicable per local plumbing codes.

### Safety/Hazardous Materials

1. Perform a formal seismic analysis on the buildings to obtain an accurate assessment on the financial impacts of a seismic upgrade. In the tennis area there are concerns with the deck apparently being screwed down to the steel purlins. Confirm the connection of the metal roof deck above the insulation and determine what, if any, connection exists to transfer shear. Existing bracing needs to be evaluated. If it is determined that the roof diaphragm does not connect to the southwest masonry wall, a new lateral element, such as a x-braced frame or new shear walls, will need to be added in this direction. Any new braced frames will need connections to the existing steel bents as well as to the roof diaphragm.

Areas of concern in the ice arena are that the existing connections appear to transfer loads down from the roof diaphragm, through the shear walls or other lateral elements, down to the conventional concrete footings, which dissipate the loads to the surrounding soils. The existing connections may need amendment to transfer the higher forces. The metal deck roof diaphragm shows signs of extensive rust (addressed in the building condition letter) and should be cleaned to avoid damage to the existing welded connections. Other maintenance to control accumulated water should also be addressed to avoid degrading the existing lateral system. Upgrading of the connections for the metal deck to the steel roof joists with additional puddle welds is also needed, and welds to the wide flange beam at the south end may need to be increased as well. Additional welds may also be required at the existing connections to the reinforced masonry wall.

2. Provide ducted return air to all water source heat pump units in lieu of return air plenum (UBC/UMS code).
3. Add fire/smoke dampers at area separation walls and corridor walls.

4. Install an emergency light for each of the racquetball courts.
5. The lighting is original equipment with core and coil PCB ballasts and F40T12 fluorescent lamps. These should be replaced with new energy-efficient electronic ballasted fixtures and either T8 or T5 lamps. The old PCB ballasts should be disposed of in a proper manner. The energy savings would be significant. As an example, a four-lamp fixture with core and coil PCB ballasts and F40T12 fluorescent lamps draws approximately 200 watts. A corresponding electronic ballasted fixture with either T8 or T5 lamps draws approximately 110 watts.
6. Remove the existing swings and install a two-bay swing w/two belt seats and two tot seats in the playground area. Provide proper safety fall zones and setbacks for new equipment per manufacturer's recommendations.
7. Remove 12" depth of existing sandy-loam surfacing throughout the playground area. Install a subsurface drainage system with pea gravel drainage course, filter fabric and 12" minimum depth of wood fiber safety surfacing. Surfacing shall be a manufactured fibrous wood product composed of random sized wood fibers that meets current impact and shock absorption criteria, is fire resistant in its natural form and meets current ADA accessibility guidelines.
8. A double check valve backflow preventor should be installed in a vault at the existing connection to the Parkland Water System. This will protect the main water supply should contaminants enter the site's supply.
9. At West Sports field, install backflow prevention device(s) per local plumbing codes at every irrigation source connection to the domestic main line. Current irrigation connections are serious cross connections that could introduce contaminants into the domestic water supply.

#### **Efficiencies**

1. Study Utility Service and Power Distribution. Since the service is fed with aluminum conductors and the service is over 20 years old, thermographing the service is strongly recommended and all of the lugs torqued to manufacturer's recommendations.

#### ***Desirable***

#### **Non-Construction/Minor Improvements**

1. Replace all existing benches (approx. qty.: 16).
2. Replace existing trash receptacles with standardize models with lids (approx. qty.: 20).

3. Remove tires from base of light poles. Wrap pole bases with all-weather sport impact cushioning.

#### Repairs

1. Replace damaged toilet partitions at east end of ice arena.
2. Patch and repair gypsum wallboard in multi-purpose rooms.
3. Patch and/or replace ceramic tile in east-end ice arena toilet rooms.
4. Replace door handles with WAC compliant door handles.
5. Caulking at top of foundation walls is not structurally necessary, however it may be necessary for weatherproofing; proper materials should be used and repairs should be made.
6. Reconfigure irrigation system to provide appropriate levels to wet and dry areas of the site.
7. Replace missing and damaged wood screen slats within east perimeter fencing adjacent to "C" Street. Stain all slats to achieve uniform appearance.
8. Repair perimeter fencing at northeast corner of developed property.

#### Access/ADA/Codes

1. The baseboard heaters in the Alder Room, Birch Room, Cedar Room, and Pre-School should be replaced and interlocked with the HVAC system per code.
2. Construct an accessible concrete ramp into the playground area at a key point of linkage with the play structure and swings. Ramp not to exceed 1:20 slope.
3. Provide (1) accessible drinking fountain and (3) trash receptacles within playground area.
4. Provide ADA-approved access paths to spectator viewing areas within the West Sports field pedestrian corridors.

#### Safety/Hazardous Materials

1. Provide one barrier-free racquetball court by widening the entrance and removing the curb.
2. Increase opening size at remaining three racquetball courts for easier access and to remove a tripping hazard.
3. Replace guardrails to meet the maximum spacing (to prohibit a 4 inch sphere from penetrating between) for intermediate rails per current code.

4. Remove the existing climbing structure and install a large play structure that accommodates 45-50 children 5-12 years old. Provide proper safety fall zones and setbacks for new equipment per manufacturer's recommendations.
5. Relocate all surface valve boxes outside of active areas of play.

#### Efficiencies

1. Replace all toilet fixtures to meet WAC requirements.
2. Replace the existing exit sign and egress lighting with new energy-efficient light fixtures.
3. Install new irrigation system that achieves a minimum of 65% distribution uniformity and abandon existing irrigation circuits. Cap at source connections to domestic water supply. Remove all existing surface components (sprinklers, valve boxes, quick coupling valves, etc.). Retain existing controller and provide head-to-head coverage with matched precipitation rates. Specify sprinkler rotors that are easy to adjust and maintain and perform optimally when installed below grade. Provide small exposed surface diameter with rubber covers that include vandal-resistant features. Perform independent review of design documents (plans and specifications) of the new irrigation design associated with the proposed field renovation project prior to bidding and construction. Review should include written comments pertaining to targeted distribution uniformity and evaluation of watering efficiency, sprinkler types, spacing, and features. Include circuit zoning, operating pressures, coverage and precipitation rates, and surface component locations in relation to active areas of play.

#### Aesthetics

1. Install penthouse screening to hide roof ductwork from view.
2. Touch up paint or repaint throughout the building.

#### Maintenance

1. In the ice arena, apply a water-resistant coating to the slab's surface to help with maintenance.
2. Resurface the tennis courts for recreational level play and practices.
3. Provide minimum 2" depth fine bark mulch in all shrub beds. Fine bark mulch will help retain moisture in the soil and reduce the occurrence of weeds.

## **Optional**

### **Repairs**

1. In the indoor tennis area, patch and repair damaged plastic coating on batt insulation or install a surface that will withstand projectile tennis balls.
2. Clean cracks in the slab across the walkways south of the ice arena, which form due to the lack of control joints. Create a clean joint by saw cutting the slab.

### **Access/ADA/Codes**

1. Replace a minimum of one main entrance door with an automatic/power-assisted door or replace all doors with an automatic/power assisted sliding door assembly to meet ADA requirements.

### **Safety**

1. Widen stair access to playground area.
2. Resurface outdoor basketball courts.
3. For security, reengineer walkway lighting (mall and parking lot) to include good optics and increase the quantity of lights. Use metal halide fixtures to improve perceived light and to impart a sense of security to the users.
4. Continue program to relamp baseball and softball fields and refocus lights to maintain uniformity.
5. Increase light levels in the East Sports fields to the recommended foot-candles for security in these areas.

### **Efficiencies**

1. Replace single pane glazing with double pane glazing to improve energy efficiency.
2. Install weather-stripping at curtain wall to improve building energy efficiency.
3. Replace the electric boiler in the refrigeration equipment room - (rated at 270 kw @ 480 volts, 3Ø, 3W) with gas.
4. Replace the electric hot water tank (rated at 180 kw @ 480 volts, 3Ø, 3W) to gas.
5. Install one (1) additional play structure that accommodates 25-30 children 2-12 years old. Provide proper safety fall zones and setbacks for new equipment per manufacturer's recommendations.

6. Provide four (4) additional six-foot long benches (for a total of eight benches within play area).
7. At West Sports fields, provide controller connection to a central control system.
8. At East Sports fields, perform an independent irrigation audit assessment of the newly installed irrigation system(s) to evaluate existing site conditions, observe operation of irrigation system(s), inventory irrigation components/equipment, review record construction drawings, general recommendations to prepare for audit.
9. Review and implement audit plan, confirm circuit testing times, perform field measurements, collect precipitation data, collect supporting data. Tabulate and review of audit results, recommend irrigation base schedules, identify phased "trim back" schedules, identify weak areas and potential modifications to system for improved efficiency. Provide controller connection to central control system. Renovate all remaining manual irrigation circuits to provide the following efficient application of water and distribution uniformity, and head-to-head coverage with matched precipitation rates. Separate irrigation circuits to individual plant hydrozones.
10. Install sprinklers that are easy to adjust, maintain and have vandal-resistant features. Eliminate all manual control valves. Provide remote control valves for each circuit and connect to new site irrigation controller. Provide controller connection to central control system.
11. Reengineer the parking lot lighting for security to include good optics and to increase the quantity of lights. Use of metal halide fixtures should be strongly considered to improve perceived light and to impart a sense of security to the users.
12. Replace concession building lighting under the overhang with energy efficient fluorescent lamped fixtures with polycarbonate lenses to discourage vandalism.

### Aesthetics

1. Refinish racquetball court walls for competitive and general play.
2. Install streetscape landscaping (w/irrigation) along Military Road and "C" Street.
3. Install drought tolerant/native landscaping within parking lot island planters.
4. Renovate the front building landscape areas with trees, shrubs and ground covers to mitigate and complement horizontal and vertical building elements. Provide accent plantings at main building entry.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ANALYSIS

The hazardous materials survey included a building survey for asbestos, lead-based paints, PCB-containing transformers, and an assessment of leaking refrigerant. The findings are summarized here.

The asbestos survey was conducted to identify which materials in the site buildings contain asbestos, particularly which ones contained >1% asbestos, which according to EPA is considered an asbestos containing material (ACM). All ACM must be removed from the site prior to renovation/demolition activities that involve these materials. This must be done by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor according to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements.

The lead paint survey was conducted to identify which major paint types contain lead in order to inform site renovation/demolition workers of potential lead exposures during renovation or demolition, as required by the Washington State Labor and Industries (L&I) and in order to appropriately designate the post-demolition construction debris pursuant to the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) Dangerous Waste Regulations - WAC 173-303).

A polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) survey was conducted of the thirteen electrical transformers. PCB reports on these transformers from the Elmhurst Mutual Power & Light Company. Since the nature of the transformer oils was confirmed in these units, no sampling was necessary. Given the large number of fixtures, the costs of doing the survey could exceed the costs (approximately \$500) of disposal at a licensed landfill. These fixtures were not tested.

### ***Asbestos Survey***

A walk-through inspection of all accessible areas in the site's two buildings was performed to identify suspect asbestos containing materials. Materials that were buried, enclosed behind walls or plaster ceilings, under metal jackets or otherwise inaccessible without destructive sampling, such as breaking out plaster walls, were sampled as necessary.

### ***Lead Paint Survey***

The lead paint survey was conducted in compliance with WAC 296-155-176, the Lead-in-Construction regulation. Suspect lead paint was identified and bulk samples were collected for laboratory analysis using inductively coupled plasma-atomic

emission spectrometry (ICP). Laboratory testing for lead paint samples was conducted according to EPA method 3050A/6010A at the Onsite Environmental laboratory in Redmond, Washington.

Since there were only three or four main paint types found, and since these were primarily newer paints applied by the Sprinker Recreation Center staff, Materials Safety Data Sheets were obtained on these products from the manufacturers to determine lead content.

### ***PCB Survey***

A PCB survey of electrical transformers was conducted throughout the facility. PCBs represent a class of dielectric coolants and lubricants and are an EPA priority pollutant that has strict regulatory limits under the Toxic Substance Control Act (TSCA). PCBs were commonly used in transformers and the ballasts for fluorescent light fixtures manufactured and installed from the 1950s through the 1970s. As such, these fixtures need to be analyzed to determine if PCB-containing oils are present. This was done by reviewing manufacturer information of the PCB content in each of the 13 transformers onsite.

### ***Refrigerant Leakage Assessment***

An assessment of the refrigerant used for the ice skating rink was conducted because there was a significant loss of refrigerant at the site in the past. The refrigerant was Freon, a chloro fluoro carbon (CFC) which is governed under Federal law, specifically regulations under 40 CFR 82 for ozone depleting substances. Pierce County staff provided information documenting past site operations/maintenance issues related to the refrigerant leakage and repairs.

## **TEST RESULTS**

Test results indicate no major hazardous materials present in the facility. Asbestos was found in a portion of the floor tiles at SRC and would need to be replaced if those areas of the flooring were disturbed or replaced.

### ***Asbestos Survey***

Only one type of material tested was shown to be ACM; the 12" x 12" white floor tiles and its associated black floor tile mastic found throughout the recreation center.

These applications were shown to contain between 2% and 3% chrysotile asbestos, respectively. However, this covers a significant amount of floor space in the facility. The total amount of ACM onsite is estimated at approximately 26,500 square feet. If the building is demolished in the future, then all of the ACM must be removed prior to demolition.

### **Lead Paint Survey**

Lead was not found in the two samples collected onsite, nor was lead listed in either of the MSDS's provided by the Sprinker Recreation Center staff. It is possible that lead may be in paints found on the ceiling of the ice skating rink. Given the height and relative inaccessibility of the ceiling, a sample was not collected from that application. Analysis to determine if it contains lead content will be needed prior to any renovation/demolition work related to this ceiling.

### **PCB Survey**

Only one transformer has PCB-containing oils - Unit TBU8654-01 located in the Ice arena. This unit is dated April 6, 1986 and contains 323 ppm PCBs. PCBs were also found in four other units, but all at levels below 50 ppm, therefore they are considered Non-PCB containing oils. Discarded transformers containing 2 ppm or greater of PCBs are regulated as Dangerous Waste (W001) under the State of Washington Dangerous Waste Regulations (Chapter 173-303 WAC).

### **Refrigerant Leakage Assessment**

Leaks in the freon refrigerant line were attributable to joints, couplings, and corrosion in the ice arena's piping system. The original specifications called for continuous pipes without joints or couplings between the headers. However, the tubing was installed with some joints and couplings. Considering the pressures in this system, over time these joints developed leaks, which was one source of the problem. There have been leaks attributed to the chiller unit itself. These problems were identified and properly repaired or replaced. There are currently no leakage problems.

The Sprinker Recreation Center has an operations and maintenance program which documents all of these activities, and are fully under compliance for personal training, recordkeeping, and equipment certification with EPA's TSCA regulations (40 CFR 82.36-42).

## Facilities Use Analysis/ Recreation Needs Analysis

This analysis is intended to document present facility utilization trends and identify potential Center use options related to such trends.

The following analysis is based on use statistics compiled on an annual basis by the SRC staff. The statistics provide a rough indication of the Center's volume of use and the relationships emerging between players and spectators, and the volume of use in regards to the County's population total.

### Summary of General Use Trends

- The number of player or program participant occasions (volume of use) - increased from 82,725 occasions in 1976 to 349,292 occasions in 1998 or by 422%.
- The number of spectator occasions (volume of use) increased from 19,575 occasions in 1976 to 160,631 occasions in 1998 or by 821%. In 1976 spectators represented about 19% of all use volume, by 1998 spectators represented 32% of all volume - meaning spectator use is an increasing component of all Center activity.
- The total number of play and spectator occasions (volume of use) increased from 102,300 occasions in 1976 to 509,923 in 1998 or by 498%. During the same approximate time period, Pierce County population growth increased 172%. Consequently, SRC's use volume increased at a rate approximately 2.9 times faster than the increase in county population.
- In 1976 the average rate of use of SRC by all County residents - was 0.2558 times per county resident (or the equivalent of 26% of the population), by 1998 the use rate was 0.7425 times per County resident (or the equivalent of 74% of the population) a 290% increase.

### Summary of Use Trends by Activity

The annual use statistics compiled by the SRC staff estimate activity participants and spectators based on program enrollments, skate rentals, league statistics, and general observation. The information is generally complete though its reporting may vary in detail from year to year.

- Between 1994 and 1998, the total number of player and spectator use occasions - increased by 109,638 events or 27%.



1998 activities	Number of occasions			Percent Activity
	Players	Spectators	Total	
Skating rink*	127,143	64,401	191,544	38%
Tennis courts	66,534	13,930	80,464	16%
Racquetball courts	12,623	0	12,623	2%
Class/meeting rooms	48,857	0	48,857	10%
Baseball/softball	64,946	75,250	140,196	27%
Soccer /football	3,680	4,480	8,160	2%
Track/field	16,875	25	16,900	3%
Volleyball/basketball	0	0	0	0%
Spire rock	4,225	0	4,225	1%
Other activities	4,409	2,545	6,954	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>349,292</b>	<b>160,631</b>	<b>509,923</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* The rink was closed for some weeks during 1998 to allow renovations - which may result in a lower volumes during 1998 than would be common otherwise.

- Baseball and softball activities increased the most, by 76,885 use occasions or 91%.
- Tennis court activities also increased significantly, by 31,826 use occasions or by 65%. Indoor and outdoor court use increased though indoor by the greatest degree.
- Skating rink activities remained relatively constant, increasing by 8,277 use occasions or 5%, which may mean the rink has been scheduled to capacity.
- Other activities declined significantly due primarily to the relocation of the Rainier Shows Carnival and Parkland/Spanaway Community Festival, events that generally used the parking lot and grounds rather than indoor facilities or fields.
- In 1998, the skating rink accounted for 38% of all use or 191,544 player and spectator occasions of all SRC activity. Public ice skating provided the largest volume of use (88,878 occasions, of which 14,813 were spectators) followed by children/student skating lessons (25,280 occasions) and patch/freestyle/dance sessions (14,302 occasions). Generally, skating rink activity increased over the years with the largest volumes provided by public ice skating and lessons. In 1998, the arena was closed for some weeks to allow renovations, which may have resulted in lower use rates than usual.
- Baseball and softball fields accounted for 27% of all use, or 140,196 player and spectator occasions. The Girls Fastpitch League and Jamboree provided the largest volume of use (22,525, of which 13,250 were spectators) followed



by Preseason Slowpitch Tournaments (22,880) and the batting cages (14,585 occasions). Generally, ballfield activity increased significantly over the years from special tournament events.

- Tennis courts accounted for 16% of all use, or 80,464 player and spectator occasions. Public use of the indoor courts provided the largest volume of use (32,403 player occasions) followed by junior lessons on indoor courts (22,882 occasions of which 10,150 were spectators) and public play on the outdoor courts (6,030 occasions of which 555 were spectators). Generally, tennis court activity increased significantly over the years, particularly public play on the indoor courts.
- Classrooms, meeting rooms, the nursery, and arts and crafts rooms accounted for 10% of all use, or 48,857 user occasions. Group meetings and room rentals provided the largest volume of use (25,285 occasions) followed by arts and crafts and leisure activity classes (10,544 occasions), Sheriff Department functions (9,075 occasions), and the childrens' cooperative nursery (3,953 occasions). Generally, however, class and meeting room activity varied during the time period from a high of 61,889 occasions in 1996 to a low of 37,566 occasions in 1995.
- Track and field (3%), handball/racquetball courts (2%), soccer/football fields (2%), and all other facilities accounted for the remaining 9% of all use, or 16,900 occasions for track and field, 12,623 occasions for handball/racquetball courts, 8,160 occasions for soccer/football fields, and 11,179 occasions for all other activities, as these activities are presently recorded. The grounds are no longer used for carnivals and community events like the Rainier Shows Carnival and Parkland/Spanaway Community Festival, which generated 27,401 occasions in 1994.

**Summary**

The following are based upon (limited by) the preliminary information analyzed above and pending further analysis of physical and financial variables:

- SRC provides for a significant and increasing volume of recreational activities. The center is being used by an increasing number of persons (equivalent to an increasing percentage of County residents) because the Center provides a unique blend of regional, indoor and outdoor activities of interest.
- The ice arena represents a significant and important feature. The rink provides a unique anchor activity for the center. A public access rink is not duplicated elsewhere within the County, and in only a few places within the region.



However, the rink's volume of use is relatively stable, because the rink has been scheduled to capacity. It should be determined whether rink facilities can be expanded, possibly by adding a practice ice sheet (rink), to accommodate increased user volumes and activities.

- The baseball/softball fields have realized significant growth potential more than doubling the overall player and spectator use occasions within recent years. This potential increase may be due to the increasing number of tournament and season competitions being conducted at the site. There are relatively few facilities within the County or region able to provide adequate tournament play. It should be determined whether this potential can be expanded, possibly by providing more lighted, all-weather fields of interest to tournament players.
- The tennis courts have also achieved significant growth potential increasing overall play and spectator use occasions by 65% within recent years. Almost all of this use volume, however, is focused on the 4 indoor rather than the 6 outdoor courts. Some increased demand for the outdoor courts may be associated with tournament practice or elimination playoffs that are conducted in support of the indoor facility. There are very few indoor tennis facilities within the region. It should be determined whether the indoor potential can be expanded possibly by enclosing the existing/covering outdoor courts.
- The Center's classrooms, meeting rooms, arts and crafts, child nursery, and other community spaces provide for a significant volume of use. However, the volume of use seems to have peaked in 1996, and declined slightly since. These spaces are not unique to Sprinker. There are a number of other centers and schools with flexible meeting room spaces being created within the County and surrounding community area. These spaces should be retained at the center, since they seem to provide for a significant volume of activity. However, these spaces are critical to the Center's more unique functions (i.e. support for ice skating events, field sport tournaments, etc.).
- The football, track, and soccer fields are significantly underutilized based on the use statistics provided in the annual reports, and compared with the other activities being conducted at the center. Unlike the baseball/softball field complex, these fields were not developed to competition quality, nor of a sufficient number to support tournaments, competitions, or even large volume use. Nor are the fields unique to the Center or County. There are other football and track facilities being provided or about to be developed within the surrounding area at middle and high schools. This type of facility may be better

provided at another County, school, or even a joint venture project site. The track/field area could be redeveloped for other higher volume center activities.

- The handball/racquetball courts are somewhat used, even though they are provided without other ancillary physical conditioning and indoor gymnasium activities. However, they represent a relatively small percent of user volume activity compared to the other functions at the center. Like the football, track, and soccer fields, they are not a unique function and could be better provided elsewhere in association with a full conditioning or gymnasium complex. Or, the missing physical conditioning, weight training, aerobics, lap pool, and other missing gymnasium elements could be developed at Sprinker to balance activity demand.
- Spire Rock, pickleball and basketball courts, and the grounds in general provide suitable supporting space to the other events being conducted at the site and center. They are important park elements even though they do not generate significant (or measurable) volumes of use. They may be relocated or reconfigured, however, to accommodate the other higher volume activities.
- Indoor soccer represents another unique function that could be added to the center, if physically and financially feasible. Like the ice arena, indoor tennis courts, and competition baseball/softball field activities, dedicated public indoor soccer facilities are not generally provided elsewhere within the County or region. Indoor soccer programs are often provided within gymnasiums. Indoor soccer could provide another destination type activity broadening the center's user populations and expanding its unique opportunities so long as the use does not displace established ice arena, indoor tennis, and ballfield activities. If an indoor facility is to be provided at the Center, then some outdoor playing capacity should be retained from the existing soccer/football field area to provide a broad activity base.

## Benefit Cost Analysis

The management and operations cost benefit analysis was intended to identify current operations and performance, and to evaluate the costs and benefits of alternative management operations and approaches. The scope of the analysis included three things:

- Analysis of existing facility operations
- Analysis of similar facilities
- Evaluation of alternative approaches

### ANALYSIS OF EXISTING OPERATIONS

SRC has a unique combination of indoor and outdoor tennis courts, and ice skating rink, racquetball courts, and various outdoor ball fields and related facilities.

SRC served more than 500,000 participants and spectators in 1998. The number of participants has grown at a compounded average rate of 2 percent over the last 10 years. The ice arena is the most heavily used of the facilities, with over 125,000 participants per year. The outdoor facilities serve approximately 100,000 participants per year, tennis facilities 60,000 per year, and racquetball and fitness and other classes 13,000 and 12,000 respectively. In 1998, the ice arena was closed for some time to allow for renovations which may have resulted in lower rates than usual.

The ice arena is in use 97.50 hours a week and is at capacity for the current hours of operation at SRC. The ice arena is most heavily used during prime evening and weekend hours. The indoor tennis courts are in use approximately 55 percent of the available hours. The racquetball courts are in use approximately 16 percent of the available hours.

### *Revenue and Expense*

The ratio of operating revenue to operating expense has been in the 60 percent range in recent years and has been in the 70 percent range in previous years. Seventy per cent is generally a strong performance for a public recreation facility.

## ANALYSIS OF SIMILAR FACILITIES

SRC provides a unique mix of facilities. Other known facilities, either public or private, offer both indoor ice skating and tennis facilities.

This analysis compared SRC to 8 other facilities. Tennis facilities at SRC were utilized at SRC at rates comparable with those facilities compared. Skating usage was higher at SRC than at those facilities compared.

The fees charged by SRC are comparable to fees charged by competitive facilities in those instances where the charge is based on usage.

The operation and performance of SRC are comparable to the performance of public recreation facilities offering similar activities. The operations differ significantly from the private facilities in 2 respects:

- The private ice facilities generally host local clubs and associations which in turn provide programs for their members.
- The private tennis facilities are true membership clubs with members paying a regular fee for unlimited use of recreation facilities and programs.

The comparison demonstrated a strong demand for ice activities throughout the region. The demand for indoor tennis facilities is not quite so strong, but SRC is the only non-membership facility available to the public in the area.

## EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES

The range of alternative approaches is based upon the extent to which private organizations have responsibility for various aspects of facility operation.

Three alternatives were considered in this analysis:

- Public Management and Operation (existing conditions). This option means that Pierce County would manage and operate the facility and most of its programs.
- Contract Operation by Private Clubs. This approach is similar to the approach of many private ice arenas where a non-profit association rent the facility and manage all of its operations. There are likely to be 3 or more individual clubs or associations involved if this approach were applied at SRC - 2 for ice and 1 for racquet sports.

- **Single Contract Operators.** Under this approach, a single contractor would assume responsibility for the entire facility. This operation may or may not choose to subcontract with clubs for certain programs.

### ***Evaluation Criteria***

Each of the above approaches was evaluated against 5 criteria:

1. **Financial Impact to Pierce County.** To what extent does it reduce costs or increase revenues to the County?
2. **Impact on Users.** To what extent does it affect the availability and cost of recreation programs to County residents?
3. **Accountability.** To what extent are programs monitored and evaluated against County objectives?
4. **Long Term Protection of Assets.** To what extent is the facility maintained for long term use?
5. **Practicality.** Are there organizations which will be attracted to any particular approach, and are there logical divisions of responsibility among multiple participants?

### ***Public Management and Operation***

#### 1. Financial Impact to County

Under this approach, the County currently provides approximately \$600,000 per year beyond program revenues to operate Sprinker Center. It is certainly possible to improve this performance at the margins. The program fees are competitive in the marketplace, but could probably be increased somewhat. The rental rates to groups and the tennis vendor could certainly be increased. Some savings from operational efficiencies might be possible. But the net effect of all adjustments might be a reduction in the annual subsidy of up to \$100,000 in a given year.

#### 2. Impact on Users

The current approach provides specialized facilities to the general public on a very affordable per use basis.

#### 3. Accountability

This approach provides the greatest level of accountability as the County controls the facility and programs directly.

#### 4. Long Term Protection of Assets

As both the owner and operator of the facility, the County has a strong incentive to maintain the facility for long term use.

#### 5. Practicality

The approach is in place, the operating relationships and responsibilities are established, and the facilities and programs are operating smoothly.

### **Contract Operation by Private Clubs**

#### 1. Financial Impact to County

In theory, this approach offers the potential to eliminate the County's ongoing financial subsidy. The clubs would contract to operate programs, or more simply rent the facility to cover maintenance and depreciation. The clubs, non profit organizations in the case of figure skating and hockey groups, or perhaps an entrepreneur in the case of racquet sports, would fund their programs through membership fees, charges for use, or outside fundraising. Such approaches are working at other ice arenas, and in private tennis clubs.

#### 2. Impacts on Users

Members of the public will likely have to join the clubs or associations to be eligible to use the facility. Membership fees will increase the cost to users, particularly the infrequent user.

#### 3. Accountability

The County could make a variety of requirements on the operating clubs, in order to achieve public objectives – perhaps in the form of limits on charges, or requirements to provide open sessions to the general public. The County would need to specify the requirements, monitor them, and enforce them.

#### 4. Long Term Protection of Assets

The extent to which the facility is protected long term is dependent upon the structure of the agreement. The County could keep the responsibility for maintenance. In that case, the County would have the ongoing financial obligation. The County could also require a certain level of investment. This approach would require an ongoing audit.

#### 5. Practicality

The most significant potential problem with this approach is the assurance of coordination among the participating organizations. While there is lots of

experience with skating groups sharing an ice arena, there are no examples of groups sharing a combined facility. One group must take overall responsibility for staffing the desk (i.e. security/access control, scheduling, collection of fees, rentals, information, etc.) maintaining the locker rooms, and operating the concessions. If the groups cannot form the ongoing relationships, then the County would have to continue the coordinating role.

### **Single Contract Operator**

#### 1. Financial Impact

The financial impact could vary significantly depending on the exact relationship. In theory, a private entrepreneur can collect a profit and still provide services at a lower overall cost. Whether savings occur depend on whether the contract is structured to provide incentives. At one extreme a contract operator has full authority to operate programs and keep any financial windfalls, while at the other extreme the operator simply is reimbursed for direct costs plus a contract fee.

#### 2. Impact on Users

Users are likely to be affected in two ways – availability and cost. Availability of certain programs will be curtailed if they don't pay their way. The cost of popular programs may increase, although current rates were shown to be competitive.

Under a hybrid approach, with the contractor leasing or subcontracting to clubs or associations, users could be further affected by the imposition of membership fees.

#### 3. Accountability

The degree of accountability is related to the terms of the contract. A contract which provides a lot of flexibility and financial incentive will provide less accountability. A contract with strong accountability requirements may reduce the financial incentives and therefore the net financial benefit to the County.

#### 4. Long Term Protection of Assets

An operator with a short term contract isn't likely to be concerned with the long term value of the facility. In order to protect the facility, the County could keep the maintenance responsibility or require a certain level of investment on the part of the contractor. In either case, there is a financial impact on the County.

## 5. Practicality

A single contract operator solves the coordination issue associated with the multiple club approach. As a practical matter, however, the most likely contract operator may be one of those clubs.

### SUMMARY

The Sprinker Recreation Center offers facilities which are unique and in strong demand in the area. Alternatives to public management and operation are viable because ice activities are generally supported by strong association programs, and tennis lends itself to a monthly fee structure rather than a fee per use basis. However, there is a clear trade-off between reduced recreation subsidies in the case of the private operator approach; and the preservation of the facility assets, the public accountability, and the open access to all members of the public under the public management and operations.

### Public Outreach

Public involvement has been integral to the evaluation of Sprinker Recreation Center (SRC). Pierce County's goal was to find out how the community perceives SRC's building, programs, and operations. Hearing from facility users, managers, and community members is an essential component of the decision-making process.

The public involvement process was designed to use a variety of techniques that would ensure involvement of all of those constituents who have an interest in Sprinker Recreation Center.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Public involvement and input has been a regular and ongoing process for the SRC. The Department periodically conducts formal and informal surveys involving users of SRC to get feedback on programs and facilities, and on occasion, to determine the travel distance (market range) of the users and visitors. In addition, there have been formal public input processes to gather feedback on specific proposals. Most recently, three public meetings were conducted between June 1998 and April 1999, to gather input on potential opportunities for service enhancements. The



results of that public process, in part, lead to the initiation of this Master Site Plan. The formal public involvement process for this portion of the Master Site Plan study included 19 structured stakeholder interview sessions involving more than fifty (50) individuals, and a public Open House, conducted on January 20, 2000 involving more than 160 individuals.

The informal process included meetings with groups and organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and the Teen Advisory Committee, numerous phone calls, letters and e-mails. The Teen Advisory Committee conducted a public meeting on January 19, 2000 to present the findings of their recent efforts with the Parkland Rotary Foundation and Boys and Girls Club, Inc. regarding formation of a Club in the Parkland-Spanaway area. This included a petition containing more than 700 signatures from students in the local schools supporting a Boys and Girls Club in the area. The Committee also used this meeting to provide input on the County's Master Site Plan, requesting additional youth programs, after school activities and supporting consideration of the Boys and Girls Club being located at Sprinker Recreation Center.

As the result of the public involvement process, a sizable (and growing) mailing list has been prepared in conjunction with this process, and will be used throughout the planning and implementation process.

## **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

### ***Public Open House, January 20, 2000***

A public Open House was held on January 20, 2000 at Sprinker Recreation Center. The format was a self-guided tour through displays about the Center. Approximately 160 people attended and wrote their comments on "ballots" and flip charts about the future use and operations of the facility.

Following is a summary of comment from the meeting. Full written comments are located in Appendix F.



**Responses to "ballot questions"**

<b>A</b>	<p><b>How do you use the facility?</b></p> <p>Tennis (38)          Skating (32)          Tennis and Skating (14)          Aerobics (5)          Racquetball (3)          Breseman Forest (2)</p> <p>Fitness Classes (2)          Meetings (2)          Baseball (1)          Other sports (More than one) (32)          Other (5)</p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>What do you like about Sprinker, and why?</b></p> <p>Great facility (48)          Good skating facilities (16)          Best choice/hard to find another (15)          Convenient/Close to home (13)          Good tennis facilities (13)</p> <p>Affordable (12)          Good public facility (10)          Other (5)          Tennis and Skating (2)</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>How would you like to see Sprinker change in the future?</b></p> <p>Second sheet of ice and related facilities (30)          Keep tennis courts/add more (23)          Maintain/Upgrade facilities (19)          Leave as is (14)          Add a swimming pool (14)          Add more programs (11)          Keep facility public (6)          Upgrade restrooms (4)</p> <p>Weight training (3)          Lighted fields (3)          Make facility private (2)          Skateboard Area (2)          Walking areas (1)          Indoor Basketball (1)          BMX (1)</p>
<b>D</b>	<p><b>What other issues need to be addressed?</b></p> <p>Keep facility public (42)          Management/Efficiency/Funding Concerns (12)          Keep tennis/don't replace with indoor soccer (11)          Like Sprinker the way it is (10)          Other (10)</p> <p>New facilities/equipment (9)          Upgrades/Maintenance (9)          Add Boys and Girls Club (4)          Keep skating (4)          Privatize facility (1)</p>

**[2]** Facilities Evaluation

**Comments on Flip Charts**

**[2]**  
Facilities Evaluation

<p><i>Public or Private Facility</i></p>	<p>Keep facility public (22)          Can't afford private clubs (8)          Only facilities available (6)          Need lighted outdoor regulation soccer fields that do not get bumped for baseball season (1)          Quieter meeting rooms (1)</p>
<p><i>Programs</i></p>	<p>Privatize facility (1)          Tennis/Skating/Soccer (20)          Sprinkler programs are great (9)          Don't interfere with tennis facilities (8)          Other (4)          Another sheet of ice (3)</p>
<p><i>Facilities</i></p>	<p>Keep fitness programs (1)          Like aerobics (1)          Second sheet of ice and related facilities (7)          Add pool (4)          Add weight room (2)          Add restrooms (2)          Dance (1)          Fitness (1)          Snack bar (1)          Outdoor Lights (2)          Keep Tennis (3)          Skateboard Park (1)          BMX (1)          Boys and Girls Club (1)          Keep Breseman Forest (1)          Finance/Management          Make ice rink mechanics more energy efficient (1)          Retain center as benefit from paying taxes (1)</p>

## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Interviews were conducted with 19 groups of "stakeholders" during the course of the planning process to identify issues, needs, and priorities (more than 50 individuals were interviewed). Stakeholders were selected to represent the numerous users of the facility, and managers, community members, elected officials, and others who have expressed an interest in SRC.

Interviews were conducted during the months of December 1999 and January 2000 with the following stakeholders/groups:

- Pierce County Elected Officials
- Pierce County Sheriff's Parkland/Spanaway Detachment
- Youth Groups such as the Teen Advisory Committee
- Providers of Youth Services such as the Boys and Girls Clubs
- SRC Management Staff and County Recreation Programmers
- Representatives of Public and Private Schools
- Operators of Public and Private Recreation Facilities
- Major Facility Users and Vendors such as the Lakewood Winter Club, Skating Coordinators, the Slowpitch Softball Master's Program, the Tennis Coordinator, and others
- The Audubon Society
- Local Business Community

## SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

While specific comments from individual stakeholders are confidential, below is a summary of key themes that emerged in the stakeholder interviews.

### ***1. Private and Public Relationships***

Continued public operation of SRC is of interest to most of the parties interviewed, citing concerns about the ability to allow public use if operations of the facility are shifted to all private vendors. The majority of opinion was that SRC can best serve public demand by remaining in public operation. Private vendor services may be appropriate as long as the facility is operated for the public by Pierce County.

## **2. Need for Physical Improvements**

Support areas such as restrooms, hallways, and training rooms need to be improved and provided. Tennis facilities need to be improved for safety and attractiveness.

## **3. Improve Efficiency**

The existing facilities could be used more efficiently, in terms of space utilization, public programs, and energy efficiency. Some outdoor areas could be reprogrammed to more fully use the entire site.

## **4. Valuable and Unique Facility**

SRC is truly unique as a public facility providing both indoor skating and tennis, and particularly that it provides both of these. The Center is valued in the community and heavily used. It is the only public recreation center in the vicinity.

## **5. Groups Waiting for Decisions about the Future of SRC**

A number of groups and entities are waiting to proceed with plans depending upon the outcome of this analysis and the County's determination on this planning effort, and on the future operation/management direction chosen.

## **6. Safe Connections to Neighborhoods**

The Center needs better physical connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and to Spanaway Park through sidewalks, pathways, and crossings.

## **7. "Add, Don't Take Away"**

If changes are made to Sprinker, they should be improvements and additions, not a reduction of facilities and programs.

Youth facilities and programs are needed in the Parkland/Spanaway area. The Pierce County Youth Assessment reports that youth in this area of the County are at greater risk than in most others areas. Additional youth programs and safe places to gather would in part address this issue. The full Youth Assessment Report is located in Appendix H.

### **8. Boys and Girls Club**

Sprinker would be a good start-up location for a Boys and Girls Club as a building tenant. Space is needed for a computer lab and programs. A gymnasium is desirable. In the long term, the SRC site may be suitable for an independent Boys and Girls Club building, as a site tenant.

### **9. School and Club Use of Facility**

Local schools and sports clubs rely on the use of Sprinker fields to provide sports programs.

### **10. Trails and Breseman Forest**

The trails on site and Breseman Forest are underused due to lack of facilities. New trails and pathways should be provided to replace the impending removal of the track.

## **SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS RESULTS**

A number of common themes and issues emerged during the public involvement process:

- Keep the operation of SRC public
- Add improvements rather than giving up part or all of SRC
- Skating and tennis are the most heavily used facilities at SRC followed by the outdoor playfields
- Emphasis for additional facilities was on a second sheet of ice, improvements to the tennis facility, and the addition of support areas such as restrooms, hallways, and training rooms
- SRC is the only public facility in the Puget Sound region offering indoor skating and indoor tennis and therefore is in great demand
- Youth facilities are needed in the area and SRC may be an appropriate location
- Some outdoor areas and underused parts of the building can probably be used more efficiently

## Findings

### SITE OWNERSHIP

1. Pierce County should continue the ownership and use of the Sprinker Recreation Center and Breseman Forest site for parks and recreation purposes in accordance with the deed restrictions.
2. Pierce County should initiate discussions with the District about the status of the satellite fire station and if possible, the potential reacquisition of the .60 acre parcel.
3. In the event that disposition of the underlying property were to be considered further, then a detailed legal analysis and certified title report would need to be obtained in order to identify appropriate authorities, limitations and any remedies.

### BUILDING AND SITE FACILITIES EVALUATION

4. SRC is in relatively good condition given its age and the degree of maintenance that has occurred in the last 30 years.
5. Currently the facility is in compliance with building codes, however, upgrades to meet current codes will need to be made as renovations are undertaken.
6. Improvements should begin immediately to address life safety and public accessibility.
7. The number and types of needed improvements in the near and long term should be accomplished in a phased manner.

### FACILITIES USE/RECREATION NEEDS ANALYSIS

8. The total volume of use increased by 498% between 1976 and 1998, which is approximately 2.9 times faster than the increase in County population.
9. Between 1994 and 1998, the total number of player and spectator use increased by 27%. Baseball and softball activities increased the most – by 76,885 use occasions or 91%. Tennis court activities increased significantly – by 65%, and ice arena activities remained relatively constant which means that arena is scheduled to capacity. The ice arena is most heavily used during prime evening and weekend times. Activities that used the parking lot and grounds rather than indoor facilities or fields declined significantly.

10. In 1998, the skating rink accounted for 38% of all use, baseball and softball fields accounted for 27% of all use, and the tennis courts accounted for 16% of all use. The rink was closed for some weeks during 1998 to allow renovations, which may have resulted in lower rates than usual. Classrooms, meeting rooms, the nursery, and arts and crafts rooms accounted for 10% of all use, with track and field (3%), handball/racquetball courts (2%), soccer/football fields (2%), and all other facilities accounted for the remaining 9% of all use.
11. SRC provides for a significant and increasing volume of recreational activities, and is being used by an increasing number of persons because the Center provides a unique blend of regional, indoor and outdoor activities that are in demand.
12. The ice arena represents a significant and important feature. The rink provides a unique anchor activity for the Center. A public access ice arena is not duplicated elsewhere within the County, and in only a few places within the region. However, the rink's volume of use is relatively stable because the rink has been scheduled to capacity. It should be determined whether rink facilities can be expanded, possibly by adding a second sheet to accommodate increased user volumes and activities.
13. The baseball/softball fields have realized significant growth potential more than doubling the overall player and spectator use occasions within recent years. There are relatively few facilities within the County or region able to provide adequate tournament play. It should be determined whether this potential can be expanded, possibly by providing more lighted, all-weather fields of interest to tournament players.
14. The tennis courts have also achieved significant growth potential increasing overall play and spectator use occasions by 65% within recent years. Almost all of this use volume, however, is focused on the 4 indoor courts. There are very few indoor tennis facilities within the region. It should be determined whether the indoor potential can be expanded possibly by enclosing/covering the 6 existing outdoor courts.
15. The Center's classrooms, meeting rooms, arts and crafts, child care facility, and other community spaces provide for a significant volume of use. However, the volume of use seems to have peaked in 1996, and has declined slightly since. These spaces are not unique to SRC. There are a number of other Centers and schools with flexible meeting room spaces being created within the County and surrounding community area. These spaces should be retained at SRC, since

they seem to provide for a significant volume of activity. However, these spaces are critical to the Center's more unique functions (i.e. support for ice skating events, field sports tournaments, etc.)..

16. The football, track, and soccer fields are significantly underutilized based on the use statistics provided in the annual reports, and compared with the other activities being conducted at the Center. Unlike the baseball/softball field complex, these fields were not developed to competition quality, nor of a sufficient number to support tournaments, competitions, or even large volume use. Nor are the fields unique to the Center or County. There are other football and track facilities being provided or about to be developed within the surrounding area at middle and high schools. This type of facility may be better provided at another County, school, or even a joint venture project site. The track/field area could be redeveloped for other higher volume Center activities.
17. The handball/racquetball courts are somewhat used, even though they are provided without other ancillary physical conditioning and indoor gymnasium activities. However, they represent a relatively small percent of user volume activity compared to the other functions at the Center. Like the football, track, and soccer fields they are not a unique function and could be better provided elsewhere in association with a full conditioning or gymnasium complex. Or, the missing physical conditioning, weight training, aerobics, lap pool, and other missing gymnasium elements could be developed at SRC to balance activity demand.
18. Spire Rock, pickleball and basketball courts, and the grounds in general provide suitable supporting space to the other events being conducted at the site and Center. They are important park elements even though they do not generate significant (or measurable) volumes of use. They may be relocated or reconfigured, however, to accommodate the other higher volume activities.
19. Indoor soccer represents another unique function that could be added to the Center, if physically and financially feasible. Like the ice arena, indoor tennis courts, and competition baseball/softball field activities dedicated indoor soccer facilities are not generally provided elsewhere within the County or region. Indoor soccer programs are often provided within gymnasiums. Indoor soccer could provide another destination type activity broadening the Center's user populations and expanding its unique opportunities so long as the use does not displace established ice arena, indoor tennis, and ballfield activities. If an indoor facility is to be provided at the Center, then some outdoor playing capacity should be retained from the existing soccer/football field area to provide a broad activity base.

**BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS**

20. SRC provides a unique mix of facilities that no other known public recreation facilities provide, particularly, the combination of indoor ice skating and tennis facilities, and there is strong demand for these facilities.
21. The ice arena is the most heavily used facility at SRC, followed by the outdoor playfields and the tennis facilities, respectively.
22. The ice arena is effectively at capacity, while the indoor tennis courts are in use approximately 55 percent of the available hours.
23. The ratio of operating revenue to operating expense has been in the 60 percent range in recent years and has been in the 70 percent range in previous years. Seventy per cent is generally a strong performance for a public recreation facility.
24. The fees charged by SRC are comparable to fees charged by competitive facilities in those instances where the charge is based on usage.
25. The comparison of SRC with other facilities demonstrated a strong demand for ice activities throughout the region. The demand for indoor tennis facilities is not quite so strong, but SRC is the only non-membership facility available to the public in the area.
26. While it is possible to improve the financial performance of SRC at the margins, through minor increases in fees, and savings in staffing, the net effect of all such adjustments might be a reduction in subsidy in any given year of up to \$100,000.
27. Alternatives to public management and operation of SRC are financially viable because ice activities are generally supported by strong association programs and tennis lends itself to a monthly fee structure. However, there is a clear trade-off between reduced recreation subsidies in the case of the private vendor approach; and the preservation of the facility assets, the public accountability, and the open access to all members of the public under the public management options.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

28. Public involvement has been integral to the evaluation of Sprinker Recreation Center.
29. Public involvement and input has been a regular and ongoing process for the SRC. Three public meetings were conducted between June 1998 and April

1999 to gather input on potential opportunities for service enhancements. The public involvement process for this portion of the Master Site Plan study included 19 structured stakeholder interview sessions involving more than fifty (50) individuals, and a public Open House, conducted on January 20, 2000 involving more than 160 individuals. The informal process included meetings with groups and organizations like the Chamber of Commerce, and the Teen Advisory Committee and numerous phone calls, letters, and e-mails.

30. SRC is truly unique as a public facility providing both indoor skating and tennis, and particularly that it provides both of these. The Center is valued in the community and heavily used. It is the only public recreation center in the vicinity.
31. There is overwhelming public support for Pierce County to continue to operate SRC. Only a handful of comments out of hundreds supported private operation of the facility.
32. Skating, playfields, and tennis are the most heavily used facilities at SRC.
33. If changes are made to Sprinker, they should be improvements and additions, not a reduction of facilities and programs.
34. Emphasis for additional facilities was on a second sheet of ice, improvements to the tennis facility, and the addition of support areas. Support areas such as restrooms, hallways, and training rooms should be improved and/or provided. Tennis facilities need to be improved for safety and attractiveness.
35. SRC is the only public facility in the Puget Sound region offering indoor skating and tennis and is therefore in great demand.
36. Youth facilities and programs are needed in the Parkland/Spanaway area. The Pierce County Youth Assessment reports that youth in this area of the County are at greater risk than in most others areas. Additional youth programs and safe places to gather would in part address this issue.
37. SRC could be a good start-up location for a Boys and Girls Club as a building tenant. Space is needed for a computer lab and programs. A gymnasium is desirable. In the long term, the SRC site may be suitable for an independent Boys and Girls Club building, as a site tenant.
38. The existing facilities could be used more efficiently, in terms of space utilization, public programs, and energy efficiency. Some outdoor areas could be reprogrammed to more fully use the entire site.

39. A number of groups and entities are waiting to proceed with plans depending upon the outcome of this analysis and the County's determination on this planning effort, and on the future operation/management direction chosen.
40. The Center needs better physical connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and to Spanaway Park through sidewalks, pathways, and crossings.
41. Local schools, colleges, and sports clubs utilize Sprinker fields to provide sports programs.
42. The trails on site and Breseman Forest are underused due to lack of amenities. New trails should be provided to replace the impending removal of the track.

