



## Frequently Asked Questions

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**Everything Grand Forks ever wanted to know about Choice Wellness Center**

**And is not afraid to ask!**

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### **I. BACKGROUND:**

**1. What is unique about this facility?**

- a. This new facility will be more than a one-stop health and fitness center. The goal is to make it the “heart” of the Grand Forks community where people of all ages could gather at a place where they could get healthy with friends and family. The goal is to offer comprehensive support including physical, social, medical and research components.
- b. The community partnerships that are involved in this facility are what make it unique. The combination of fitness, medical, research, nutrition, recreation and arts all under one roof.

**2. How can this possibly be a good thing for all the citizens if it's not centrally located?**

- a. While we would love to have the facility more “centrally” located, the Grand Forks Park District does not have any land available in the north end.
- b. The 43 acres donated to the Park District (\$6,000,000 value at no cost to the taxpayer) allow for future “community campus” growth, potentially housing several community activity centers together.
- c. Because the YMCA and Center Court have joint membership, residents can access a fitness facility on either end of town for one membership fee. Public transportation options are currently being reviewed to ensure easy access to community members. Funds raised through the project will also be used to renovate the YMCA.

**3. Is it fair that the government-funded Park and Recreation District be in direct competition with for-profit healthcare clubs?**

- a. The mission of the Park District is to provide recreation options for youth and families in our community. While a majority of these programs are offered outside, given our climate, it's necessary to expand these options indoors.
- b. Grand Forks' current for-profit workout facilities cater to a different market of adult individuals who want low-cost, convenient access to workout equipment, not full family programming.
- c. No for-profit businesses have offered to build this size and type of facility and keep membership costs affordable for all youth and families.
- d. In Fargo, Minot, Bismarck and Aberdeen, after such complete facilities were built, the number of other exercise facilities increased, and the ratio of total facilities per populace is currently double that of Grand Forks.

**4. When did it become the Park District's mission to provide medical care?**

- a. In a way Parks and Recreation has always provided a form of preventative health care as well as recreation being a form of therapy itself. It has only been because of recent societal changes related to the sedentary lifestyles that fitness-oriented recreational activities have been recognized as a form of health care. Parks and Recreation will not provide mainstream health care, but will try to motivate citizens to be active so that health care costs are reduced in our community and our people will live happier lives.
- b. It has always been the mission of Parks and Recreation to provide residents with recreation opportunities they want and need. As times have progressed, so has our mission: indoor facilities for winter activities, organized sports teams, golf courses, swimming pools and safety-conscious and handicapped-accessible playgrounds are just a few examples. With today's active aging population, sedentary lifestyle, and health and obesity concerns, residents now want full-service indoor recreation facilities with physical therapy, nutrition and diet experts. The Park District does not provide these services, but can lease space in our facility to professionals who do so.

**5. Why is it called Choice Wellness center?**

- a. The Grand Forks Parks District sent out a request to local businesses and institutions, asking for a naming-rights donation, and Choice Financial was the institution that responded

**6. I've heard of so many partnerships, so who would own and operate the facility?**

- a. The Choice Wellness Center will be a public facility that is owned and operated by the Grand Forks Park District.
- b. Altru, the USDA, Ascent and others will lease space within the facility.
- c. The YMCA Family Center will continue to be privately owned and operated by the YMCA.

**7. How does this merger between the Park District and the YMCA work?**

- a. Between the two facilities, local residents have access to more options and a wider variety of different services. To ensure equal access to facilities on both the north and south ends of town, the organizations have formed dual-facility membership. One membership allows access to both facilities, and membership fees will be divided proportionate to the facilities.
- b. In the Choice Wellness Center fundraising campaign, a portion of all private and business grants and donations raised will go to help improve the current YMCA facility.

**8. How much say will Altru have in facility operations?**

- a. They will operate their own services in the space that they rent from the facility. There will be an advisory committee, composed of all entities in the building that will meet monthly to discuss issues relating to overall building maintenance and operation. None of the members will have veto power in the operation of the other's services, as each complies with the missions stated in their own rent agreements.

**9. Will I get a chance for input?**

- a. We welcome input from every member of the community and encourage you to contact the Grand Forks Park and Recreation office or the YMCA Family Center with your ideas, questions and/or concerns. Focus group sessions, presentations and forums have been conducted through the community to gather input from all areas of the community. Plus, we completed a middle and high school survey to gather the youth perspective.

II. **NEED:**

1. **Why do we need it in our city?**

- a. To provide healthier life styles for everyone in the community – only 8% of Grand Forks residents use our current centers (CCFC & YMCA), and we only support 10 total workout facilities. Minot, Dickinson, Aberdeen, Fargo and Bismarck, who have all built new health centers, have 20 % to 30 % usage and support twice as many total workout facilities per capita.
- b. Community economic sustainability – Grand Forks needs to provide the quality-of-life facilities and programs that many other small cities across the Midwest already provide in order to retain our current families, young adults and professionals, and to recruit businesses, industries and professionals who today expect such quality-of-life facilities in a community.

2. **What is the problem with Grand Fork's current recreation activities?**

- a. Our nation has been experiencing significant growth in interest and participation in the field of health and fitness. Annually Americans spend \$18 billion pursuing health and fitness goals. Recent consumer polls suggest that Americans are learning about the benefits of modifying their lifestyles to include exercise and healthier eating habits.
- b. Yet, according to the national Centers for Disease Control, more than 60 % of adults are overweight or obese and 13 % of children and 14 % of adolescents are overweight.
- c. In a recent Surgeon Generals' Report, 60 % of adults don't get the recommended amount of physical activity and 25 % are not active at all. 64 % of North Dakotans are overweight or obese. ND ranks 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation for obesity, 33 % of our children will develop Type II Diabetes at some point in their lifetime and one in three North Dakota women will die of heart disease.
- d. As a result, more and more park districts and municipalities have invested in recreational centers and some have partnered with local healthcare providers for wellness programs as one way to improve the healthcare status of their communities.
- e. A survey of our community identified the following challenges: childhood obesity and diabetes, chronic health issues, aging population, returning veterans and their families, recruiting and retaining young families and individuals, and lack of family recreation time.

3. **Why is another health and fitness center needed?**

- a. The Grand Forks Park District owned and operated Center Court Fitness Club and the YMCA Family Center facilities are outdated, inadequate, limited in space for expansion of programs and not accessible to everyone due to their building design. By building a new facility and renovating the YMCA, we can create or add more program space to help meet the current health and wellness needs of our community, make the facilities more accessible for those with mobility concerns, as well as, more convenient.
- b. Other fitness facilities offer specific services to a targeted population. For example, the Wellness Center at the University of North Dakota is only available to the students and staff of the University, and does not provide access or programming for anyone under the age of 18years or for families.
- c. Storefront fitness facilities offer low-cost convenience for individuals who want quick access to workout equipment, but do not provide full recreation programs and facilities for youth and families.
- d. This proposed facility will be for the general public and will provide programming for all ages and ability levels, regardless of economic position.

4. **Why don't we just use the new UND Wellness Center?**

- a. Because the UND Wellness Center was built with student fees, it is available only to the students and staff of the University and it does not accommodate their families.
- b. It is not designed to accommodate either seniors or children.

5. **Why does Grand Forks need to build a larger facility, when we keep hearing that Center Court and the YMCA are struggling because of the loss of members to UND?**

- a. Both Center Court and the YMCA have rebounded from the student drop and are now over-taxed to accommodate all users. Both facilities are pressured to offer more youth and family program options. Their current building designs and spaces are unable to address these needs.

**III. FINANCIAL:**

**1. What are the funding sources?**

- a. It is the objective that no new taxes will be used to support the facility.
- b. Private donations, in-kind donations, leases, grants and one of the existing Park District's mills will cover the cost of building the facility. These will be the basis for a 20-year bond.
- c. A professionally commissioned feasibility study shows that 25-50% of net operations income from memberships and programming can be used to help pay remaining annual interest on the bond.

**2. How much will it cost?**

- a. The cost of the new facility is \$23,000,000, of which \$19,000,000 has already been raised.
- b. In addition, the 42 acres donated to the Parks District for this project are worth \$6,000,000 commercially.
- c. The YMCA will receive a percentage of all private (non-tax supported) grants and donations, estimated at approximately \$4,000,000.
- d. The fundraising effort for this facility is already the greatest ever undertaken in Grand Forks (outside the University).

**3. What are people who've donated money to this project receiving in return?**

- a. All the benefits previously listed of having such a facility in Grand Forks.
- b. Inclusion on the lobby donor wall being designed for the facility, with size of listing varying with donation level.
- c. Donations of \$25,000 - \$1,000,000 qualify for naming rights to areas of the facility.

**4. What affect will this have on my taxes?**

- a. It has been and continues to be the objective that no new taxes will be used to support the facility. The Grand Forks Park District will use some of its existing funding for the new facility.

**5. Are public dollars being used for the YMCA?**

- a. As a private entity, the YMCA is receiving a portion of all non-tax grants and donations raised. Any tax-based in-kind or financial contributions will be used only for the new public facility.

**6. Will this project be self-sustaining?**

- a. The capital costs are all being raised in advance to help keep membership fees down.
- b. Leasing space to Altru Health Center and the USDA Grand Forks Human Nutrition Research Center will contribute to facility income.
- c. A conservative feasibility study, based on capturing 12% of the local populace, indicates that it is possible for the facility to be self-sustaining.
- d. Similar facilities in the area and Dickinson are capturing 20% - 30% of the local populace, and all are self-sustaining.

**7. How will Grand Forks be able to sustain both facilities?**

- a. Providing adequate facilities that meet the current health and wellness needs of our community will help keep current members and help to encourage residents to become more active and to attract new members.
- b. Memberships will be purchased by Human Nutrition Center on an annual basis for obesity research will bring in individuals who are not currently active.
- c. Combined resources and expertise of CCFC and YMCA will help both facilities reduce costs and operate more efficiently.
- d. The total square feet of exercise and programming space of both facilities together will be standard for a community the size of Grand Forks.
- e. With the population of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks wanting both north- and south-end full-program facilities, we have the market to sustain both centers.

**8. If the facility makes a profit, what is done with the money?**

- a. As a public Park District facility, the goal of the facility is not to make a profit, but to be self-sustaining. Profits raised after paying operation expenses will be used to help pay off debt interest, improve the facility and contribute to Park District program scholarships.

**9. What will be done with Center Court Fitness Club, if it isn't sold?**

- a. We are investigating the possibility of razing and selling the building itself as scrap steel.
- b. The CCFC site will be sold as prime 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. frontage commercial property

**IV. FACILITY:**

1. **What will be in the entire facility?**
  - a. Gymnasiums, tennis courts with viewing stands, exercise and leisure pools, spinning, aerobic and group exercise rooms, running and walking tracks, machine and free-weight spaces, cardio areas ,physical training and therapy area, young child and youth rooms, juice/snack bar, lounge, community and party rooms, locker rooms.
  - b. USDA Human Nutrition Research Center obesity research program.
  - c. Altru clinical and physical therapy services.
  - d. Ascent workforce wellness services focusing on work site wellness.
  - e. Other potential community or health-related leases.
  
2. **Besides the traditional fitness areas, what other amenities will the facility have?**
  - a. We want the facility to be a place where family and friends can get together, exercise, and enjoy themselves. Amenities such as a juice/snack bar, lounge, community rooms, etc., will create a pleasing atmosphere.
  - b. USDA Human Nutrition Research Center obesity research program.
  - c. Altru clinical and physical therapy services.
  - d. Ascent workforce wellness services.
  - e. Other potential community or health-related leases.
  
3. **Where will the facility be located?**
  - a. The facility will be located just east of S. Washington St. between 40<sup>th</sup> Ave. S. and 47<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.
  
4. **What will surround the facility?**
  - a. The facility is conveniently located near, and will be connected to, the Greenway walking and biking trail. In order to enhance the facility and make it aesthetically pleasing we want to create a park-like setting around the facility. There may also be private development that surrounds the facility.
  - b. Possible future additions to the campus include: outdoor tennis, volleyball, basketball and field hockey areas; a two-rink ice hockey and curling lanes arena; and a new Senior Citizens Center.
  
5. **How large will the facility and the parking lot be?**
  - a. The new facility will be approximately 145,000 square feet.
  - b. The general rule for adequate parking is 1 parking space for every 200 square feet, so 750 parking spaces are planned.
  
6. **Will it include an aquatic center?**
  - a. Yes, it will include exercise and play pools, plus two lap lanes and adjacent party rooms.
  
7. **How does this compare to the new Fargo wellness center?**
  - a. This center contains similar fitness facilities to those in Fargo, plus medical, nutrition, worksite wellness and USDA research facilities.
  
8. **When will the facility be ready?**
  - a. Once we break ground the facility will be ready in approximately 18 months. Currently, we are expecting to complete it in 2012.
  
9. **Will this facility have a green element to it?**
  - a. While the cost to build a "green" facility is more expensive during construction, over time it will save money. We are committed to constructing a facility that is energy efficient and are considering geothermal and wind turbine energy sources. The campus grounds around the facility are being designed by the National Resource Conservation Service and will include rainwater runoff trap ponds.
  
10. **Do you plan to include the new library on your site?**
  - a. There are no plans at this time to locate a proposed library on the site, but the Park District is open to possible future community additions to the campus, which may or may not include a library.

**V. OPERATIONS:**

1. **What age groups will use the center?**
  - a. The Center will be open to people of all ages. For the convenience of our members, there will be 2-hour drop-in child care within the facility.
2. **With the youth audience mostly coming from the public school system, how will the Grand Forks Public schools partner with you on this facility?**
  - a. The Grand Forks Public Schools will be an ongoing partner throughout the development and programming of the facility. This facility will be a positive and healthy environment, where youth can actively participate and feel more connected to the community.
3. **What about people who live on the north end of town?**
  - a. In April 2008 the YMCA and Center Court Fitness Club designed a seamless membership. This partnership allows residents on both ends of town to access a fitness facility on either end of town for one seamless membership fee. Public transportation options are currently being reviewed to ensure easy access to community members.
  - b. Funds raised through the project will also be used to renovate the YMCA.
4. **Will there be bus routes to the location?**
  - a. Yes. Currently the city bus route extends to the proposed facility site. An existing bus route and enclosed shelter are in place next to the YMCA. Discussions are underway with the GF Transit System to provide easier and wider distribution of transportation services.
5. **How much will it cost to join?**
  - a. Junior - \$20; Senior - \$49; Adult - \$55; Family - \$75
6. **My family can't afford a membership. Will scholarships be available at the new facility?**
  - a. The Parks District has established a foundation and is working to raise money for scholarships for the underserved. Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota offers a financial incentive to people who join a healthcare facility; certain restrictions apply. The YMCA has a scholarship program in place and they will continue to work with youth and families who need financial assistance.
7. **What will be the hours of operation?**
  - a. Currently, the specific hours of operation have not been determined. Expect the same as current Center Court Fitness Club hours.
8. **Will there be a coffee/snack shop?**
  - a. There are plans for a juice bar, with possible leasing to a health/snack provider.
9. **Will there be space at the center for community groups?**
  - a. Yes, there will be community and party group rooms.
10. **What will happen with the existing Center Court fitness club?**
  - a. We will sell the existing Center Court Fitness Club facility. The money generated by the sale will be used to pay off any remaining debt owed on the building with the excess going toward the new center.
11. **Will racquetball courts be in the new facility?**
  - a. Currently, the number of residents requesting racquetball courts is not enough to include them in the initial phase of the facility. Because the facility is designed for expansion, racquetball courts are one of the possible future additions.
12. **What will happen to the gymnastics programs?**
  - a. We are working with the Red River Valley Gymnastics board regarding the program. Currently they plan to stay at their current location, but a future move to the new campus could be considered.

**VI. COMMUNITY IMPACT:**

**1. What will our community lose if this project doesn't happen?**

- a. A new facility that is, complete and large enough to suit the community's needs.
- b. An opportunity for economic growth in the city and the region.
- c. The opportunity to set a new standard of health and wellness and change the direction our community and nation are heading regarding lack of fitness.
- d. The opportunity to be a first class state of the art facility with the best collaboration under one roof in health, wellness, recreation, research and fitness available anywhere in the nation.
- e. A common place for fitness, health and research professionals to come together and provide the quality of programs needed to make lifestyle changes.
- f. An exciting and inviting atmosphere for our community to thrive in and for families to remain or become active in the winter months.
- g. An opportunity to educate people and change statistics on youth and adult obesity, diabetes and heart disease.
- h. National/international notoriety

**2. How does this facility bring more people to Grand Forks?**

- a. Grand Forks needs to provide the quality-of-life facilities and programs that many other small cities across the Midwest already provide in order to retain our current families, young adults and professionals, and to recruit businesses, industries and professionals who today expect such quality-of-life facilities in a community.
- b. Before locating in a community, businesses and industries evaluate whether the community provides the amenities required by today's workers and their families, in order to ensure that they will be able to recruit and retain a quality workforce. Adding this facility to the Grand Forks community will help convince them to locate here.
- c. With increased businesses, industries and their accompanying families, more retailers will see potential opportunity in our region.
- d. By providing the quality-of-life facilities that today's young adults, families and seniors desire, we can retain and recruit more young adults, families and seniors from our region, instead of losing them to other communities that provide the amenities we are lacking. This will encourage greater economic growth, which will in turn encourage further population growth, in a "snowball" effect.

**3. How does this facility affect economic development?**

- a. Grand Forks needs to provide the quality-of-life facilities and programs that many other small cities across the Midwest already provide in order to retain our current families, young adults and professionals, and to recruit businesses, industries and professionals who today expect such quality-of-life facilities in a community.
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