

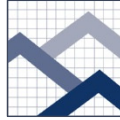
Si View Metropolitan Park District

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NEW AQUATICS CENTER

MARCH 2020



ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.



Si View Metropolitan Park District

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Si View Metropolitan Park District

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR NEW AQUATICS CENTER

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a survey to assess public support for the development of a new aquatics center proposed by the Si View Metropolitan Park District (SVMPD). The survey, conducted on behalf of the District by Elway Research, Inc., was designed to assess:

- Use of Si View parks and evaluation of the Parks District administration;
- Favorability of several design features “under active consideration” for a proposed new aquatics center;
- Willingness to increase property taxes to fund the center;
- Preference for certain trades-off with regard to the construction schedule and location of the new center.
- Demographic information was collected to compare answers.

A total of 309 registered voters in the park district were interviewed between March 5–20, 2020. This sample includes approximately 5% of the voter households in the District.

Respondents were contracted by landline telephone, cell phone and US mail. The interviews were conducted via telephone and online.

This report includes Key Findings, followed by annotated graphs summarizing the results to each question. The full questionnaire and a complete set of cross-tabulation tables are presented in the appendix.



METHODS

SAMPLE:	309 Registered voters in the Si View Metropolitan Park District.
TECHNIQUE:	Mixed Mode 22 Land line interviews with live interviewers 112 cell phone text; 176 online survey via mailed invitation.
FIELD DATES:	March 5-22, 2020
SAMPLE FRAME:	All households within the District in which at least one person was registered to vote (N=6342).
MARGIN OF ERROR:	±5.6% at the 95% level of confidence. That is, in theory, had all registered voters been interviewed, there is a 95% chance the results would be within ±5.6% of the results in this survey.
DATA COLLECTION:	<p><u>LAND LINE:</u> Calls were made during weekday evenings and weekend days by trained, professional interviewers under supervision.</p> <p><u>CELL PHONE:</u> Text messages were sent to cell phones with a link to the online survey.</p> <p><u>ON-LINE:</u> Invitation letters were mailed to households asking residents to log on to the survey website to complete the questionnaire. A reminder postcard was mailed one week later.</p> <p>Virtually every voter household in the District was either called, texted or received a letter of invitation to participate in the survey.</p>

It must be kept in mind that survey research cannot predict the future. Although great care and the most rigorous methods available were employed in the design, execution and analysis of this survey, these results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these respondents to these questions at the time they were interviewed.



Mixed-Mode Survey Method

This survey was conducted using a mixed-mode sample design that combined land-line and cell phone telephone with online data collection. We used the same sample frame used for the 2016 and 2018 surveys: households in which at least one member was registered to vote – a total of 6342 households.

We had telephone numbers for 3,948 of the households, 1946 of which were land lines. Those numbers were called up to 6 times each or until someone answered and either agreed or refused to be interviewed.

There were 2002 cell phone numbers, plus 752 household for which we had both landline and cell phones. Those 2754 numbers were sent a text with an invitation and link to the online survey.

The 2,394 households for which we had no telephone number were mailed a letter from the District Executive Director asking a designated adult in the household to log on to our survey website and complete the questionnaire on-line. They were sent a thank you/reminder postcard one week after the initial mailing.

Overall, the combined completion rate (completions ÷ numbers) for this survey was 4%, including 1% for the landlines; 4% for the cell phones; and 7% for the mail/online.

The data from all modes were combined into a single data set. The combined data were statistically weighted to balance the telephone and mailed contacts and for gender because 57% of the interviews were completed with women.

Interpreting the Findings

More people responded to the mailed invitation than to the telephone contact, even though the sample had more telephone numbers than not. This suggests that people positive to the parks, or at least more interested in them were more likely to respond to the mailed invitation to take the survey. The letter came in Parks Department envelop and was signed by the Parks Director. For that reason, the data presented here were re-balanced to reflect the proportion of phone and mail contacts in the original sample.

Another factor to keep in mind involved the questions used to measure support for the proposal. This survey makes use of four-point scales for that purpose. There are several ways to interpret the results from scale items. A customary practice is to combine "strongly support" and "support" into "total support" and then do the same for the "oppose" side of the scale. In the *realpolitik* of public debate, however, it is likely that those with the strongest opinion will have the loudest voices. In this case, those who said they "definitely" support a proposal are more likely to act on that position, and more likely to engage in the debate, than those who said "probably."

Moreover, there is a known tendency on the part of survey respondents to answer positively. Most respondents tend to want to be helpful and polite. It is therefore pragmatic to treat "probably support" answers as less reliable than "strongly



support." Think of it as latent support. Those who said they "probably support" a proposal are positively inclined, but not convinced.

Because of this positivity bias, it is prudent to consider "oppose" and "strongly oppose" responses to be reliable estimates of active opposition. If people naturally tend to give positive answers in surveys, then those who say they are opposed are likely to be genuinely opposed.

For purposes of situation assessment and strategy development, then, examining the "strong support" versus the "opposed" provides a prudent (some would say realistic) assessment of public thinking.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the people interviewed. This table presents a profile of the respondents in the survey. As noted, the results have been statistically adjusted by gender and by survey mode. The "Combined" column displays the weighted sample profile used in this report

NOTE: Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

Sample Profile

GENDER	Female	51%
	Male	49%
	Non-binary	>1%
AGE:	18-35	19%
	36-50	38%
	51-64	24%
	65+	18%
	No Answer	1%
PARK USE *	None	12%
	1 to 6 visits	20%
	More than 6 visits	66%
	Unknown	2%
HOUSEHOLD:	Couple with children	45%
	Couple with no children	37%
	Single with children	6%
	Single with no children	13%
	No Answer	1%
INCOME	\$50,000 or less	8%
	\$50 to 75,000	11%
	\$75 to 100,000	16%
	\$100,000 or more	55%
	No Answer	10%

This sample was slightly younger than the sample for the 2018 survey, and more affluent:

42% of these respondents were over age 50, compared to 56% in the 2018 survey and 45% of those in 2016.

55% had incomes over \$100,000, compared to 46% in 2018

Park usage was consistent with previous surveys, with 88% reported visiting a park in all three surveys



KEY FINDINGS

- ◆ **Si View parks continue to be highly used and highly rated.**
 - 88% of respondents lived in a household where someone had visited a local park, pool or community center in the last year.
 - 66% had visited a park more than 6 times in the last year – an increase from 57% in the 2018 survey.
 - 72% said that SVMPD was providing “excellent” (36%) or “good” value (36%) for their tax dollars – equivalent to the ratings in 2018.
 - Even 69% of non-users of the parks rated the value as “satisfactory” or better.

- ◆ **There was strong support for each of 4 design concepts for the proposed Aquatics Center.**
 - At least 73% supported each of 4 design descriptions present to them.
 - A 53% majority supported all 4.

- ◆ **3 in 4 (74%) were inclined to support an Aquatics Center that included all 4 of the features described.**
 - Supporters focused on the benefits to the community (40% said it would be “good for the community” when asked why they would support it.)
 - Opponents focused on the taxes (42% cited taxes as a reason for their opposition).

- ◆ **Support softened when the tax increase was introduced, but a solid majority remained in support.**
 - More than 6 in 10 (63%) were still inclined to support the measure when it would increase property taxes by an average of \$11.85 per month per average household.
 - Opposition rose from 20% to 31% when the tax amount was introduced.

- ◆ **A 45% plurality preferred building the center in two phases to “spread the cost out over time” versus partnering with another jurisdiction and building it all at once, but probably outside of North Bend (27% preferred that option).**

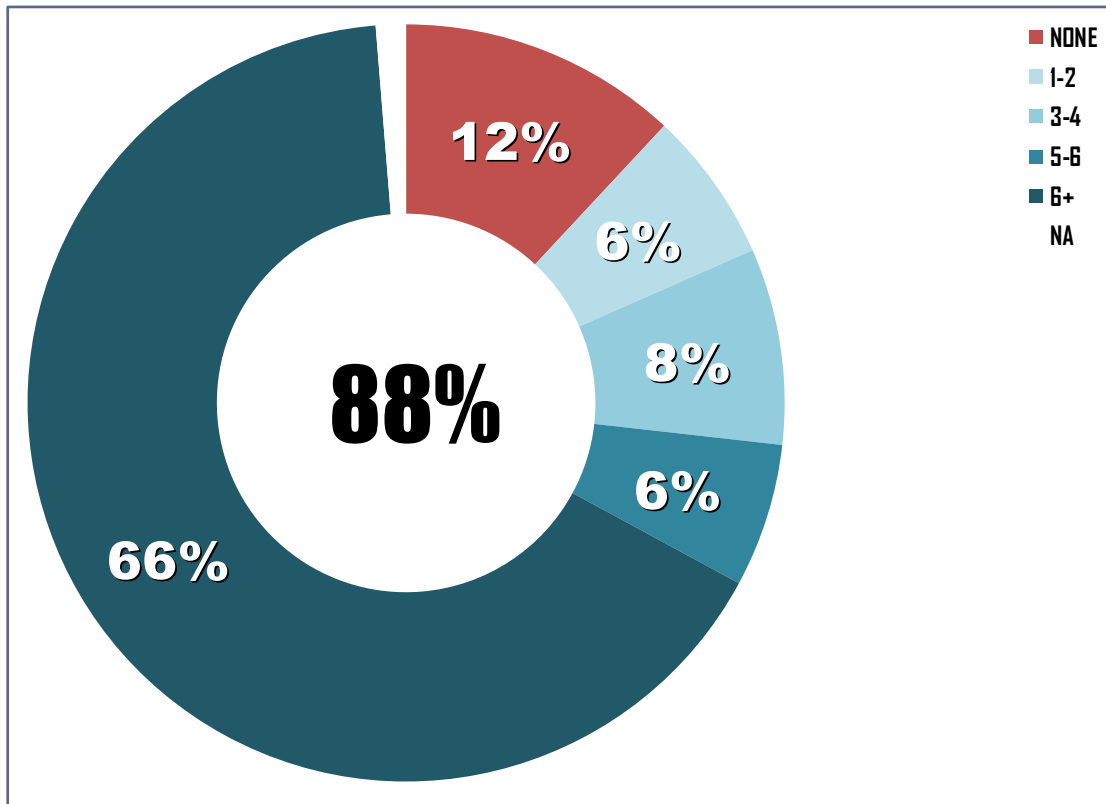


FINDINGS

- This section presents the survey findings in the form of annotated graphs.
- Bullet points indicate significant or noteworthy differences among population subgroups.



Nearly 9 In 10 Had Visited a Park in Last Year

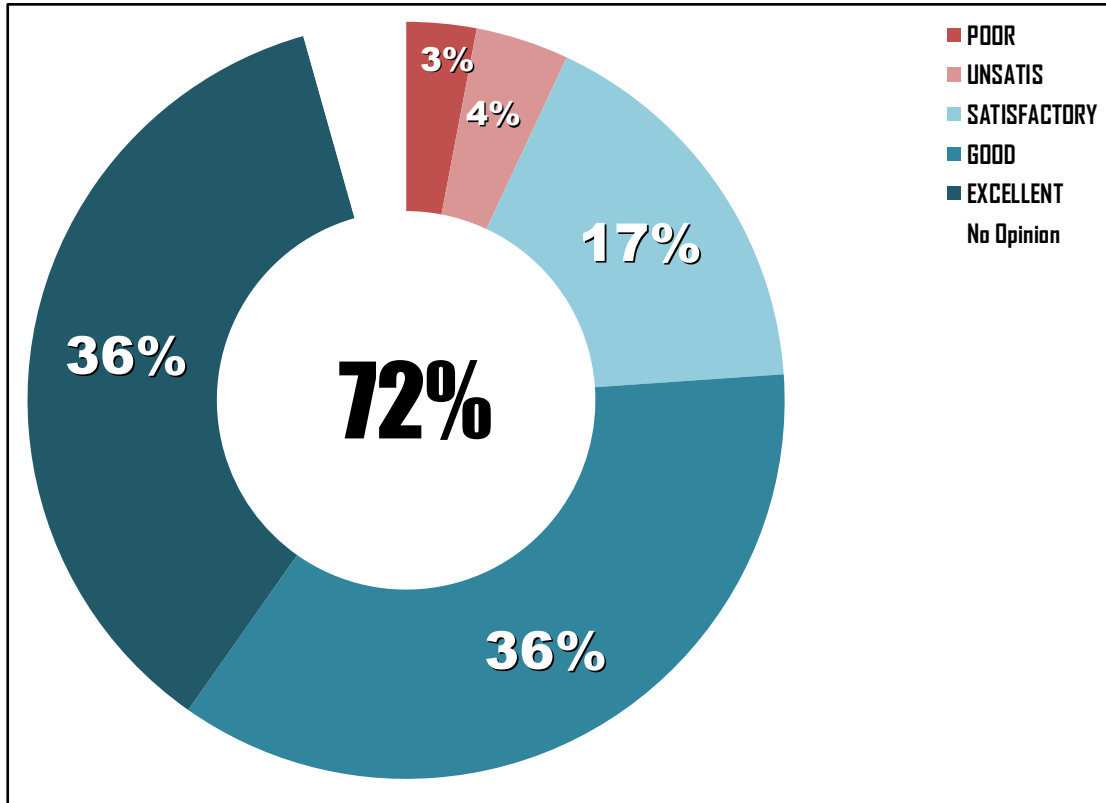


Q1 First, has someone from your household visited a local park, swimming pool or community center in the last year? How many times has someone visited one of these facilities?

- **The number of people visiting Si View Parks was the same as in 2018, but the number of visits was higher:**
88% made at least one park visit in the last year (same as in 2018); and 66% visited a park more than 6 times (v. 57% in 2018).
- **Park usage was high across demographic categories, from:**
84% among those over age 65 to
78% among those 51-64; and
83% among those with no children at home, to
95% among households with children.
- **As before, the highest usage was among couples with children, although usage was higher across all household types:**
89% of whom visited a park more than 6 times last year, (79% in 2018);
65% of couples with no children at home (47% in 2018); and
48% of singles with no children at home (32% in 2018).



72% Rated Value from SVMPD as “Excellent” or “Good”



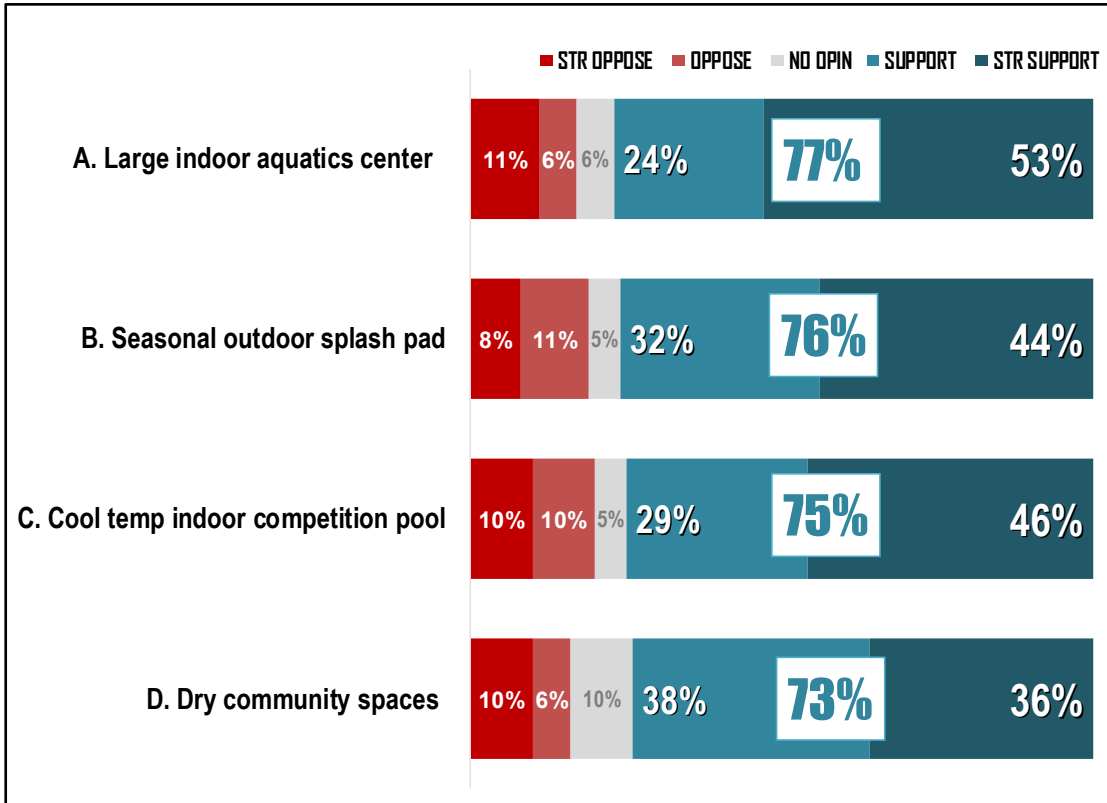
Q2 As you may know, the Si View Metropolitan Park District is a public agency supported by local tax dollars. Overall, how would you rate the value your household receives from Si View Parks. Would you say the value is excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory or poor?

- **A large majority (72%) believed that SVMPD is providing “excellent” or “good” value for their tax dollars.**
 - 89% rated the value as “satisfactory” or better.
 - These ratings are equivalent to the ratings in 2018.
- **Park users rated the parks higher than non-users**
 - 76% of those who had made at least one park visit rated the value as “excellent” (41%) or “good (35%), compared to
 - 43% of those who had not been to a park in the last year (30% of whom rated the parks as “unsatisfactory” or “poor”).



Proposed Features

Majorities Support All Four Features of Proposed Aquatics Center



Q3 Over the past year, the Si View Metropolitan Park District has conducted a comprehensive feasibility study, with public input, for a new aquatics center that reflects the needs of the community. I am going to read you a list of features under active consideration. As I read this list, tell me whether you are inclined to Strongly Oppose, Oppose, Support, or Strongly Support, that improvement. The first one is...

- **Presented with a list of four “features under active consideration by Si View Parks,” solid majorities of respondents were inclined to support each one.**
 - A A large indoor aquatics center with a warm temperature beach entry recreation pool and interactive water features, a river current, a flexible programming space with a three lane 25-yard lap swim area, community gathering space, spectator seating, and a separate water slide.
 - B A seasonal outdoor splash pad with spray features and multiple zones for age appropriate play that does not require a lifeguard.
 - C A cool temperature indoor competition pool that accommodates diving, allows for 8 to 10 lap lanes, spectator seating, two 1-meter springboards, a climbing wall and water polo.
 - D Dry community spaces including a multi-purpose room, and classroom spaces.

CONTINUED ►



Proposed Features

Strong Support for Proposed Features

- **More than 70% of respondents supported each of the four concepts tested in this survey'**
 - More than half (53%) supported *all four*.
 - Just 10% of respondents failed to support *any* of the four concepts.
- **For each concept, the number of respondents who “strongly supported” the concept was greater than the number who opposed it, either mildly or strongly.**
 - This pattern held for every demographic category, including non-users of the parks.

A. Large indoor aquatic center

- 53% “strongly supported” this concept, Including
 - 71% of couples with children;
 - 65% of respondents under age 50;
 - 61% of households with income above \$100,000;
 - 60% of women.

B. Outdoor splash pool, etc.

- 44% “strongly supported” this feature, including:
 - 62% of couples with children
 - 60% of those under age 35;
 - 53% of those with incomes of \$50-74,000;
 - 51% of those who used the parks 6+ times last year.

C. Indoor competition pool

- 46% “strongly supported” this feature, including:
 - 60% of couples with children;
 - 54% of those under age 50;
 - 53% of those with incomes over \$100,000
 - 53% of those who used the parks 6+ time last year.

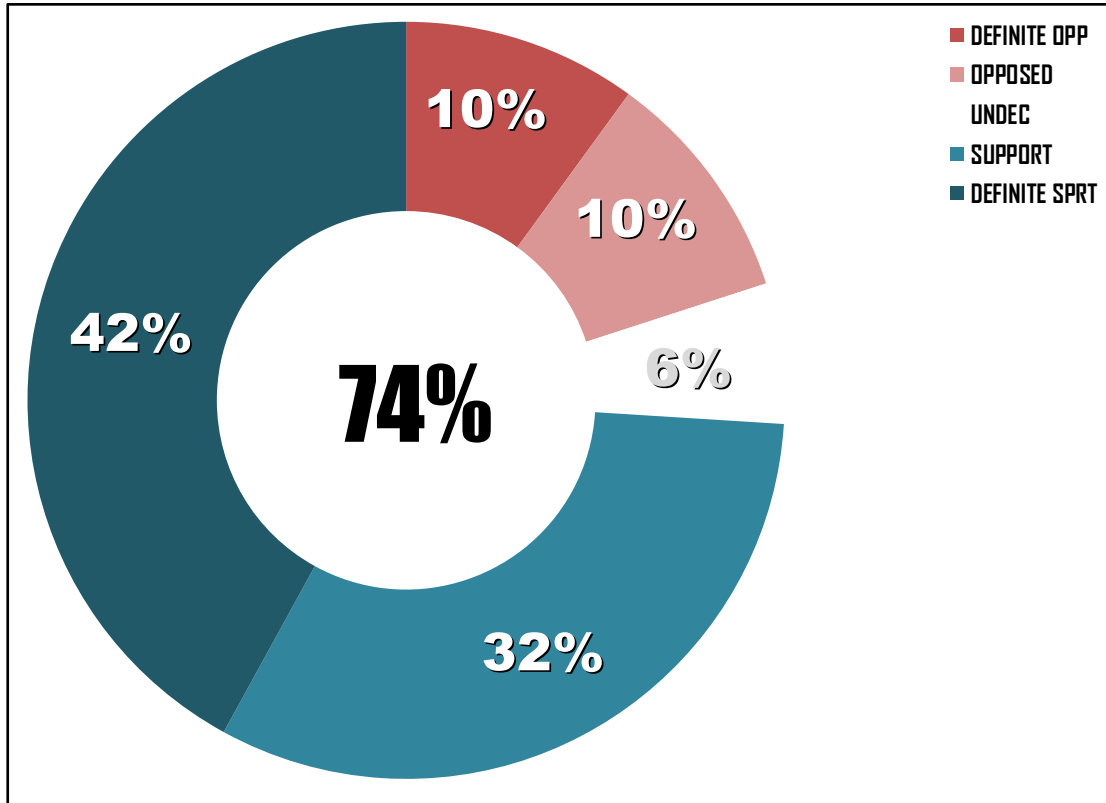
D. Dry community spaces

- 36% “strongly supported” this feature, including:
 - 45% of couples with children;
 - 46% of those with incomes of \$75-100,000;



Support for the Package

3 in 4 Inclined to Support Aquatics Center with Features Described Above



Q5: This new Aquatic Center would be paid for with tax dollars. If a proposal including the features just described were put before the voters, would you be inclined to READ & ROTATE this proposal?

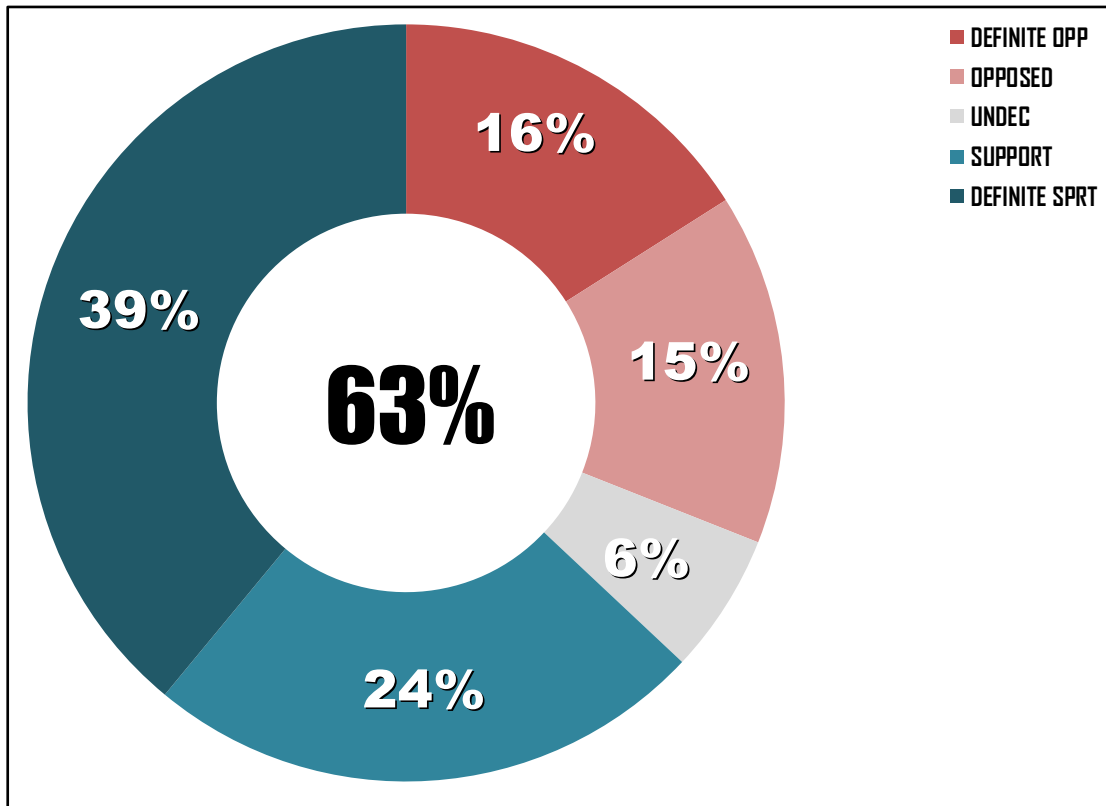
- After the features of the proposed aquatic center were described, 3/4 of respondents were inclined to support the use of tax dollars to build it.
 - 74% said they were inclined to support it, including 42% “definitely”;
 - 20% were inclined to oppose it, including just 10% “definitely.”
- Asked why they held the position they did:
 - Supporters focused on the benefits to the community, whereas
 - Opponents focused on the taxes and cost.

REASONS TO SUPPORT		REASONS TO OPPOSE	
Good for the community	40%	No new taxes/ Already too high	42%
Good for kids/ families	19%	Won't use it	14%
We use / would use it	18%	More important priorities	14%
Named a specific feature	15%	Not needed	10%
The pool needs an upgrade	9%	Too expensive	5%
Exercise/ Healthier Community	5%	The money will be wasted	1%



Support for Package

6+ in 10 Inclined to Support Ballot Package



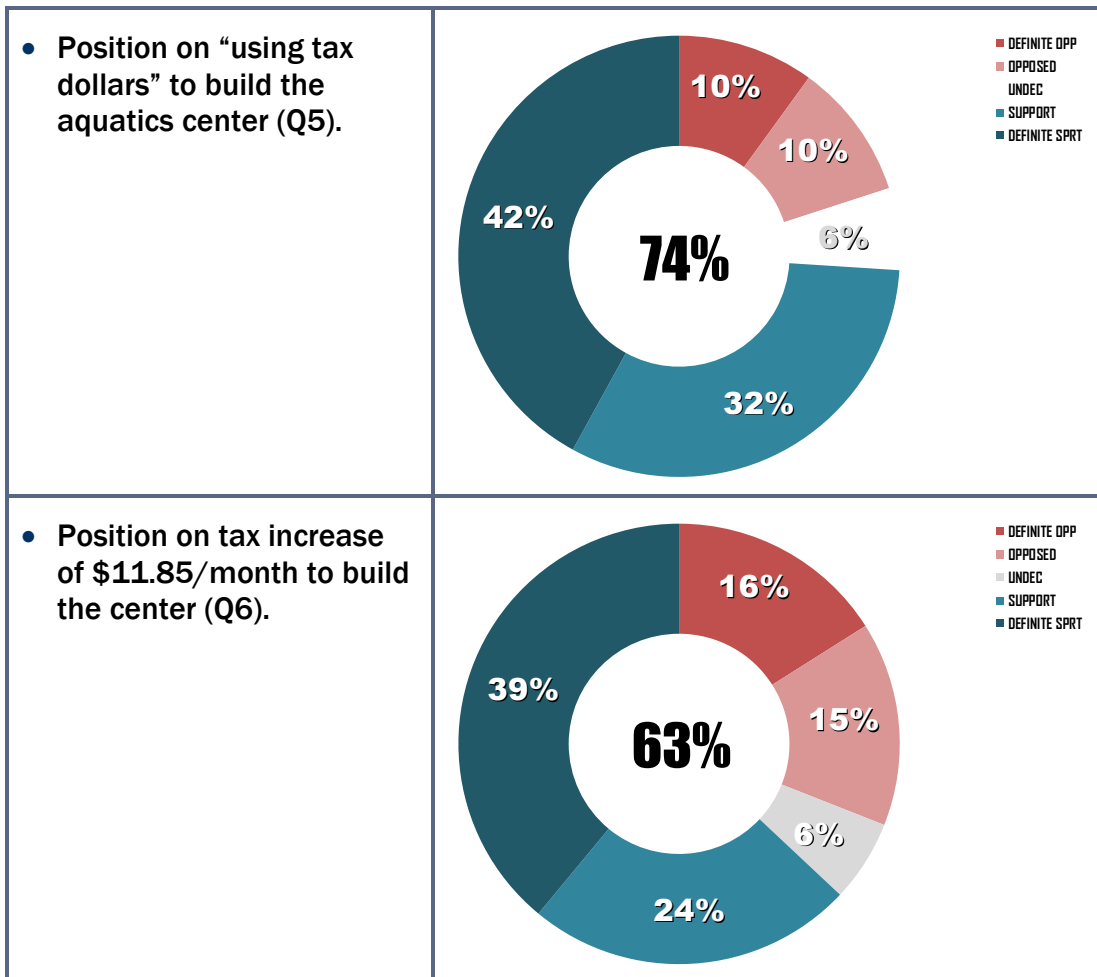
Q6 Funding the new aquatics center as described would require a property tax increase of \$11.85 dollars per month for an average household in the district. Would you be [READ LIST] to a tax increase of that size to build a new aquatics center?

- **A-majority of 63% were inclined to support a tax increase to build the new aquatics center**
 - The amount cited was \$11.85 per month for the average household.
 - By a margin of 39% to 30%, more respondents were “definitely in favor” of the proposal than were opposed to it. (The discrepancy with the graph is due to rounding).
- **Support**
 - Was highest among couples with children (53% “definitely in favor”);
 - Went up with park usage (47% of heavy users were “definitely in favor v. 18% of non-users);
 - Went up with income (44% with incomes over \$100,000 were “definitely in favor” v. 26% of those with incomes under \$50,000)
- **Opposition**
 - Was highest among non-users of the parks (54%) and singles without children (54%).



Support for Package, Taxes

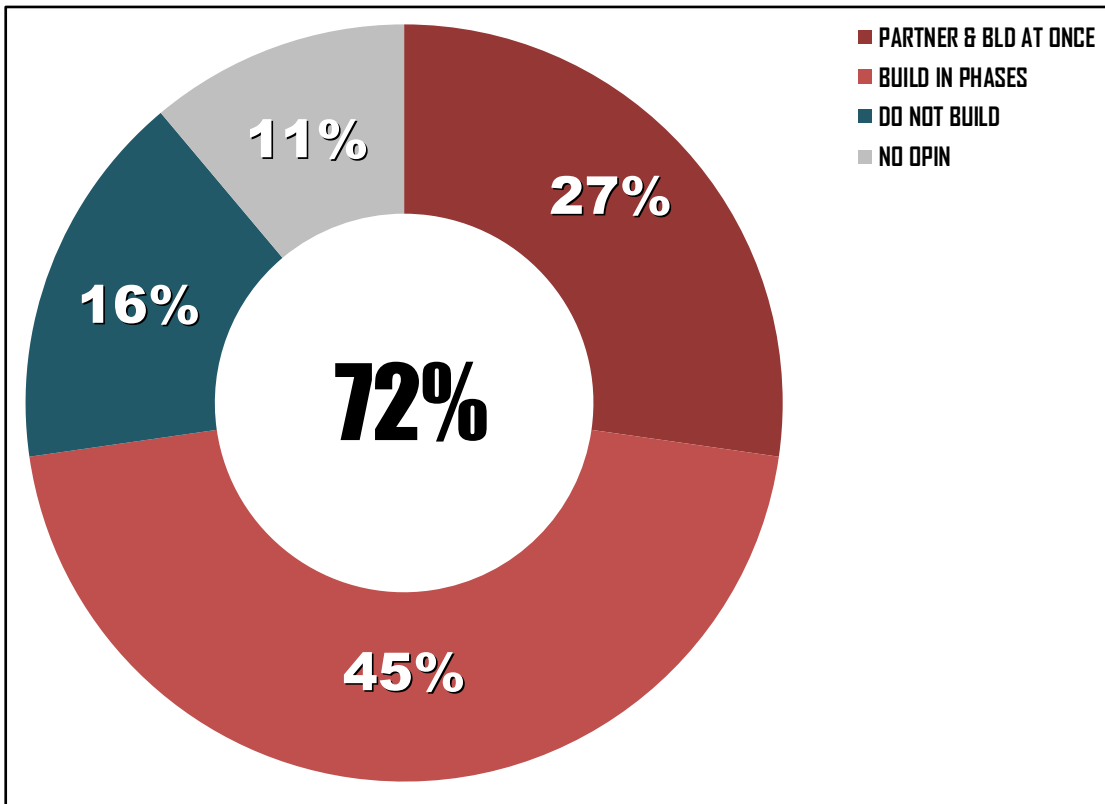
Support Before / After Specific Tax



- Notably, those who “definitely support” the package still outnumber all those “opposed (39% to 31%).
 - As noted earlier, “probably support” should be considered less reliable than the other answers, so looking at the “strong support” versus the “opposed” provides a prudent assessment of current public thinking.
- Overall, 34% shifted their position upon hearing the proposed tax amount.
- 26% of supporters softened their position:
 - 14% switched to opposition
 - 8% softened their support;
 - 4% moved to undecided.
 At the same time, 7% strengthened their support
- 29% of initial opponents shifted their position:
 - 18% went from “probably” to “definitely” opposed;
 - 10% switched to support.



Plurality Favors Building the Center in Two Phases



Q7: The proposal is to complete the new aquatics center in two phases to spread the cost out over time. An alternative is to build it all at once, but that would require a partnership with another city or school district. A partnership may require that the new center be located outside of North Bend in a location central to all partners. If so, it would most likely be within a mile of the North Bend city limits. Which of the following alternatives are you likely to support. The taxes would be the same for either alternative:

- **Respondents were presented with two options for building the center. The options presented were:**
 - Partner with another agency and build it all at once, even if that means it is located outside North Bend.
 - Build the center in two phases, to keep it in North Bend, even if that means waiting longer for the whole center to be built.
 - Don't build it at all
- **Given a choice of building the center in two phases or partnering with another jurisdiction to build it all at once, but outside North Bend**
 - 72% favored one of the two "build" options:
 - a 45% plurality favored the two-phased development option.



- **Most of those who “definitely” supported the center (including the specific tax) supported building it in two phases inside North Bend (60%).**
 - Those “probably” in favor were more divided:
47% favored the two-phase approach, while
21% preferred to partner with another agency, and
21% had no opinion.
- **Opponents were also somewhat divided:**
 - Of those “probably opposed,” most expressed a preference for one of the “build” options:
33% favored the two-phase approach, while
20% favored partnering with another agency, and
24% had no opinion.
 - 75% of those “definitely opposed” chose the “Don’t built it” option.
- **This suggests that the choice of the development option could persuade some opponents to at least take another look.**



Remaining Questions

Questions About the Proposal

At the end of the interview, respondents were asked what questions they had about the proposal.

- 58% responded, although many of the responses were statements, not questions.
- The main questions should be easy to address and probably would be in the final description of the proposal. The low number and nature of questions suggest that public opinion is more or less settled on the center, reflecting the amount of community work that has already gone into the proposal.

Specific Questions / Statements

- **The most-cited questions were:**
 - When will it be finished? (13%)
 - Questions about specific features. (8%)
 - Where will it be located? (5%)
 - How much will the tax be? (5%)
 - Do we really need it? (4%)
 - Will there be an entry fee? How much? (3%)
 - Who will be hired to build it? (2%)
- **Statements (not questions) included:**
 - No new taxes / Too high already (5%)
 - It's too expensive (3%)
 - It will have a good impact on the community (2%)
- **Others just expressed support or opposition**
 - Support it (2%)
 - Oppose it (2%)



DISCUSSION

The results of this survey are encouraging for the development of the new Aquatics Center. Three-quarters of survey respondents were inclined support the project in concept. Two-thirds were still positively inclined after the price tag was revealed in higher property taxes.

With 63% of respondents inclined to support the District's plans, most residents in this survey do not need to be persuaded to support the proposals – they already do. The task will be one of reinforcement rather than persuasion.

The usual caution also applies here that inertia is on the side of a “no” vote for tax measures. It is one thing to tell a pollster you intend to vote for a proposal; it is another cast a ballot to raise your taxes for a specific project. For one thing, no one has the “average house” used to calculate the \$11,85 per month price tag, so the tax is almost certain to be different for any given household than the one tested.

The tax issue is a potent argument, as evidenced by the negative shift in support when a dollar amount was introduced. The fact that a 63% majority were inclined to vote for a specific tax increase, however, indicates the strength for the proposal. Further, those “definitely” for the proposal (39%) outnumber all of the opposed (31%), suggesting that community is strongly leaning toward support.

“Soft supporters” and undecided respondents comprised 30% of the sample. They are the difference between 39% support and 69% support. It will be prudent to consider these “soft supporters” as *latent* supporters who lean toward support but need to hear the arguments in favor of the proposal to reinforce their innate inclination to support it.

Further strength is indicated by the fact that the plurality of supporters (40%) said it would be “good for the community.” Just 18% said they supported it because they would use it. Presumably, more will use it than gave that as a reason for supporting it, but the fact that their personal use was secondary to the good of the community in their reasoning is an indicator of broad support. Opponents tended to focus more narrowly on their personal tax bill and the lack of potential use.

The public debate, then, will turn on value to the community. Here, the District's strong ratings for providing value for tax dollars will be an advantage. The high proportion of park usage and the positive evaluation of the value received for taxes spent continue to underlie a strong inclination to support development of the new Aquatics Center.



Another caution concerns is the survey response rate. Although the sample appears to be representative of the population of the District, the attitudes of those who do not respond cannot be known. If there is a tendency for supporters to be more likely to take the survey, and/or a tendency for opponents to be less cooperative, then these results could inflate the support for the proposals. Those potential effects should be kept in mind.

Opinion is likely to shift some as the design and cost details become better known. But the finding that the new Aquatics Center is widely seen as a valuable addition to the community, and the District is a trusted steward of public resources both of bode well for the success of this proposal.



QUESTIONNAIRE

with Data



Questionnaire With Data

SAMPLE:	309 Registered voters in SVMPD
MARGIN OF SAMPLING ERROR:	±5.6% at the 95% level of confidence
DATA COLLECTION:	Multi-mode: 22 land line with live interviewers 112 cell phone text to online survey 176 Online response to letter invitation
FIELD DATES:	March 5-22, 2020
PARK USERS:	88% used the Parks in the last year; 66% more than 6 times
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The questions are presented here as they were asked in the interview • The figures in bold type are percentages of respondents who gave each answer. • The data were statistically weighted to match the city's demographic profile • Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

- 1.** First, has someone from your household visited a local park, swimming pool or community center in the last year?

88 YES → ASK Q1.1

- 1.1.** How many times has someone visited one of these facilities? Would you say: [% based on total sample]

12 None

6 [1 or 2 times]

8 [3 or 4]

6 [5 or 6]

66 More than 6 times in the last year

- 2.** As you may know, the Si View Metropolitan Park District is a public agency supported by local tax dollars. Overall, how would you rate the value your household receives from Si View Parks. Would you say the value is...

36 Excellent

36 Good

17 Satisfactory

4 Unsatisfactory

3 Poor

4 DK/NA

3. Over the past year, the Si View Metropolitan Park District has conducted a comprehensive feasibility study, with public input, for a new aquatics center that reflects the needs of the community. I am going to read you a list of features under active consideration.

As I read this list, tell me whether you are inclined to Strongly Oppose, Oppose, Support, or Strongly Support, that improvement. The first one is:

ROTATE	OPPOSE		SUPPORT		DK
	STRG	OPP	SPRT	STRG	
A A large indoor aquatics center with a warm temperature beach entry recreation pool and interactive water features, a river current, a flexible programming space with a three lane 25-yard lap swim area, community gathering space, spectator seating, and a separate water slide.	11	6	24	53	6
B A seasonal outdoor splash pad with spray features and multiple zones for age appropriate play that does not require a lifeguard.	8	11	32	44	5

4. The current planning includes some additional features that would be included in a second phase of the new Aquatic Center. Are you inclined to Strongly Oppose, Oppose, Support, or Strongly Support, the following features.

ROTATE	OPPOSE			SUPPORT	DK
	STRG	OPP	SPRT	STRG	
C A cool temperature indoor competition pool that accommodates diving, allows for 8 to 10 lap lanes, spectator seating, two 1-meter springboards, a climbing wall and water polo.	10	10	29	46	5
D Dry community spaces including a multi-purpose room, and classroom spaces.	10	6	38	36	10

5. This new Aquatic Center would be paid for with tax dollars. If a proposal including the features just described were put before the voters, would you be inclined to [READ & ROTATE] this proposal?

- 10 Definitely Oppose
- 10 Probably Oppose
- 32 Probably Support
- 42 Definitely Support
- 6 No Opin

5.1 What is the main reason you would support this proposal? [CATEGORIES]
[48% KIDS/FAMILIES] [40% GOOD FOR COMMUNITY] [15% SPECIFIC FEATURES]

5.2 What is the main reason you would oppose this proposal? [CATEGORIES]
[42% TAXES] [23% WON'T USE] [14% PRIORITIES] [6% ACCOUNTABILITY]

- 6.** Funding the new aquatics center as described would require a property tax increase of \$11.85 dollars per month for an average household in the district. Would you be [READ & ROTATE] to a tax increase of that size to build a new aquatics center?
- 16** Definitely Opposed
 - 15** Probably Opposed
 - 24** Probably in Favor
 - 39** Definitely in Favor
 - 6** Undecided
- 7.** The proposal is to complete the new aquatics center in two phases to spread the cost out over time. An alternative is to build it all at once, but that would require a partnership with another city or school district.
- A partnership may require that the new center be located outside of North Bend in a location central to all partners. If so, it would most likely be within a mile of the North Bend city limits.
- Which of the following alternatives are you likely to support. The taxes would be the same for either alternative.
- 27** Partner with another agency and build it all at once, even if that means it is located outside North Bend.
 - 45** Build the center in two phases, to keep it in North Bend, even if that means waiting longer for the whole center to be built.
 - 16** Don't build it at all
 - 11** Undecided
- 8.** What questions, if any, do you have about this proposal?
58% had at least 1 response – not all were questions. Leading questions had to do with:
[13% Schedule] [8% Design/Features] [5% Location] [4% Need] [3% Use Fee]
- 9.** I have just four last questions for our statistical analysis. How old are you?
- 19** 18-35
 - 38** 36-50
 - 24** 51-34
 - 18** 65+
 - 1** [NO ANS]
- 10.** Which of these best describes your household at this time:
- 45** Couple with Children at Home
 - 37** Couple with No Children at Home
 - 6** Single with Children at Home
 - 13** Single with No Children at Home
 - 1** No answer

11. I am going to list four broad categories. Just stop me when I get to the category that best describes your approximate household income - before taxes - for last year.

8 \$50,000 or less

11 \$50 to 74,000

16 \$75 to 99,000

55 \$100,000 or more

10 No answer

12. How do you identify

49 Male

51 Female

1 Nonbinary