

YMCA Submits Plans to City
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Parking for Proposed Recreational Facility Looms as Major Issue
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As proposed, the footprint of the two-story YMCA facility would occupy approximately one-quarter of the 5.8-acre Park and Ride lot, located at the corner of Warm Springs and Saddle roads.

Leaders of the Wood River Community YMCA are aggressively moving forward with plans to build a recreational complex and community center north of downtown Ketchum.

On Nov. 10, one week after hearing that Ketchum voters had endorsed a plan to grant the YMCA approximately 1.5 acres of the city-owned Park and Ride lot, directors of the Ketchum-based organization submitted formal plans to develop the site.

The YMCA has asked the city to approve plans for an approximately 85,000-square-foot facility that would include an ice rink that converts to an indoor event center, two indoor pools, a gymnasium, a fitness center, a day-care center and a climbing gym.

As proposed, the footprint of the two-story YMCA facility would occupy approximately one-quarter of the 5.8-acre Park and Ride lot, located at the corner of Warm Springs and Saddle roads.

Including open areas and landscaping around the building, the project would occupy more than a third of the Park and Ride lot.

A pending agreement between the city and the YMCA will allow the YMCA to lease one-quarter of the Park and Ride lot for 99 years, at a cost of only \$1 per year.

To date, \$6 million has been raised for the estimated \$16 million project.

Harold Moniz, Ketchum planning director, said the project proposal will be presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the first time on Monday, Dec. 13.

Moniz said he believes traffic circulation and parking will be near the top of the list of issues that will be debated during the review process.

Indeed, the parking debate could become quite long and involved.

With its application, the YMCA has outlined plans to install approximately 100 paved parking spaces on land immediately to the north and south of the recreational facility.

The spaces would be divided among two parking lots built on areas of the Park and Ride lot that would remain under the city's control.

However, competition for use of the public land around the YMCA site has been intensifying in recent months.

Ketchum Mayor Ed Simon is backing a plan to build affordable housing on the north end of the Park and Ride lot. Developers planning a \$180 million project on the 77-acre Warm Springs Ranch property have proposed to build a complex of public tennis courts and a public swimming pool on the parcel. And, a group linked to the Ketchum-Sun Valley Historical Society wants to relocate on the site the historic Congregational church known as Louie's, after the convivial Italian eatery it once housed.

Further complicating the matter, the city has decided to pursue an approximately \$1.4 million federal grant to install paved, landscaped parking surfaces on all sections of the Park and Ride lot not occupied by the YMCA.

If the city receives the grant and decides to develop public parking, the plan could supersede the parking-lot plans the YMCA has proposed.

Nonetheless, Moniz said, the YMCA will be required to fund parking on the Park and Ride lot.

"The Y has a responsibility to provide whatever parking the P&Z and the City Council agree is appropriate for the site."

The YMCA is planning to break ground on its project next spring.