

Executive Summary



IDYLLWILD

Community Center



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*Idyllwild Community
Recreation Council*

*www.idyllwildrecreation.org
info@idyllwildrecreation.org
951/659-2360
PO Box 1770, Idyllwild, CA 92549*



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JCC Feasibility Study Executive Summary

At the request of the Idyllwild Community Recreation Council (ICRC), Underwood & Associates of San Diego was contracted to conduct a feasibility study for mounting a capital campaign to build the Idyllwild Community Center (ICC). Confidential interviews formed the basis of this study and these resulting recommendations.

Principal Objectives

- 1. Assess the potential** for raising the cash and pledges necessary to meet the estimated funding needs of a **\$6.5 million Community Center** that would include a **facility maintenance reserve fund of \$500,000**. This total included the advance gift of land and a \$3 million commitment from an anonymous donor, which made for a projected fund raising campaign for \$3.5 million from Idyllwild stake holders.
- 2. Identify potential major donors** and key volunteers, and encourage their early interest in an anticipated fundraising campaign.
- 3. Develop specific recommendations** that will enable ICRC leadership to maximize fundraising potential for this project over both the short and long term.

A total of **79 people were identified with a total of 43 individuals participating in personal, confidential interviews**. Of the additional 36 names on the interview list, many expressed support but were not available or declined interviews during the interview period. The interviewees were selected from lists of community leaders identified by the ICRC's Pre-Campaign Committee members who participated in the final determination of those to be interviewed.

Summary of Findings & Conclusions

Through this study, ICRC has identified sufficient gift support and leadership to proceed with a community-wide campaign with an **initial working goal in the range of \$1 million to \$1.5 million**. The success of a future Campaign should be based on the following recommendations:

- 1. Because a campaign of this magnitude has never been undertaken in the Idyllwild area, and because there developed some unsettling information disseminated about the ICRC during the course of this study, a lengthy planning, public awareness, and leadership recruitment/cultivation period will be required.**
- 2. The total recommended Capital Campaign goal will not fund the design and construction** of a Community Center of the magnitude proposed in the Case for Support. The proposed \$500,000 maintenance reserve fund goal should, for the time being, not be announced, but will be an internal working goal as part of the overall campaign objective.
- 3. The Facilities Planning Committee should convene** and begin planning for a construction budget consistent with **\$1 to \$1.5 million through the fund raising campaign and a comparable matching amount from the anonymous donor.**
- 4. Consideration might be given to developing a multi-year, phased approach** to funding the elements of the Center that may need to be cut with the reduced budget.

Preparatory Recommendations

As a precursor to launching a campaign, ICRC must embark on some specific preparatory actions, which include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- 1. Consideration should be given to the formation of a Pre-Campaign Task Force**, to be appointed with

the help of the Idyllwild Community Foundation, as the formative group for the organization and implementation of the capital fundraising drive. Further, this Task Force should be asked to continue at the conclusion of the campaign, perhaps to include new members with management and operations skills to govern the new Community Center on behalf of ICRC.

2. Recruit a “Blue Ribbon Committee” (comprised of highly visible community members who would endorse the campaign) to help build confidence, acceptance and excitement for the project, and to identify campaign leadership.

3. Consider continuation of **work with campaign counsel** to assist with staffing/fundraising processes and all the, other campaign activities outlined in this report.

4. Resolve the communication issues that developed during the course of this study.

Most of the interviewees in our study showed enthusiasm, interest and a high level of support for the plans for the Community Center. Some indicated a willingness to contribute and help raise funds for the proposed campaign. However, several significant issues need to be addressed as part of the planning for the capital campaign.

Key Factors To Consider For Planning The Campaign

1. There is a clear and present split as to whether the **ICRC has the ability to effectively manage** the Community Center once it is built, which was raised by several of those we interviewed. Most of the skepticism came from those who are “part-time” residents of Idyllwild. The issues have been perpetuated by a small but vocal group of community members who have made their concerns known through the local newspaper, which has given the debate extensive coverage.

2. There is great **praise for the work of ICRC** in creating the Community Center concepts and for taking the step of initiating this study to determine whether the project can be funded.

3. Potential campaign **leadership has been identified** among full-time and part-time residents of Idyllwild, but significant development activities will have to precede recruitment.

4. There was widespread and **overall approval of the need** to plan for the future of Idyllwild through the Community Center as presented in the Case.

5. The notion of a **\$500,000 reserve fund** to pay for a portion of maintenance costs was well received, but concern was expressed about the “communities to be served by the Center” ability to fund it.

Factors That Need To Be Addressed Before Proceeding

1. Many of those interviewed were concerned about the **state of the economy** as it affected their own giving potential and that of others in the community. Most of those interviewed felt it would be time well spent to refine the costs as presented in the Case, educate the members of the community, and develop campaign leadership and planning over a period of time to also allow the economic climate to improve.

2. Of major concern to many of those part-time residents who were interviewed during this study is the presence of **“disgruntled” community members** and the need to resolve the suggested inability of ICRC to manage the project in a transparent and effective manner.

3. With the exception of the sophisticated fundraising approach of the Idyllwild Arts School, there is a limited number of the full-time resident community who **understand the manner in which a major fundraising drive is organized**. However, among the part-time residents, there are several individuals who have participated in and/or lead such drives.

4. No staff exists at present that could manage the campaign on a day-to-day basis. At minimum, a part-time campaign coordinator will be required to work with campaign counsel to plan, organize and implement the myriad elements of a sophisticated fundraising campaign.