



September 5, 2024

Enclosed is a draft resolution created by The Converge Foundation for consideration of a bond to fund the completion of a community center addition to the Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park.

During the summer of 2024 The Converge Foundation funded a statistical poll to gauge support within the City of Missoula community for a March 2025 special election regarding this resolution. The poll found very strong support for a community center, but there is insufficient support at this time to proceed with a special election due to the challenges we face as a community regarding property taxes.

The resolution references a number of documents, resolutions, and attestations that support the need for a public recreation and arts facility that is accessible and affordable to community members of all ages and abilities.

Our hope is that this draft resolution will provide a foundation for understanding the long-term need and continuing the effort to identify a funding source for this endeavor on behalf of the Missoula community.

Sincerely,

Michael Sweet, Chair

On behalf of the board and volunteers of The Converge Foundation

Board Members

Mike Sweet

Amy Ragsdale

Tarn Ream

Ashley Zhinin

Rosie Ayers

Resolution Number NNNN

A resolution of the City Council of the City of Missoula, Montana, submitting to the qualified electors of the City of Missoula, at an election on [MONTH] [DAY], [YEAR], the question of whether the City of Missoula, on behalf of the Missoula community, be authorized to sell and issue general obligation bonds of the City in a total principal amount of up to Forty-nine Million and No/100 Dollars (\$49,000,000.00) for the purpose of designing, constructing, and equipping a community center addition to the Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park to serve as a climate-controlled, indoor, multi-use hub for community events, multigenerational programs in recreation and the arts, and public health and social services, with spaces for aging adults, teens, youth and child care; and to pay costs associated with the sale and issuance of the bonds.

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation is essential to the quality and way of life for individuals, families, community, and the environment and has as its mission to enhance the quality of life in our community by promoting health and wellness; stimulating, supporting and encouraging community and economic development; protecting the environment; educating and enriching the citizens of our community; and ensuring that all people feel safe, welcome and valued in Parks and Recreation facilities and programs; and

WHEREAS, over the past 25 years, a group of local citizens has engaged with the City of Missoula, Missoula Parks and Recreation, and the community to advance a community recreation and arts facility for Missoula to provide indoor year-round opportunities for people of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, in 1998 the City of Missoula community-wide needs assessment showed strong support for indoor programs and facilities in our community; and

WHEREAS, a 1999 survey of 140 Missoula organizations identified both the support and the need for a community center; and

WHEREAS, in 1999-2002, a community center was an identified component of the Missoula Parks and Recreation planning activities; and

WHEREAS, the community wide Celebrate 2000 effort selected a community center as one of three transformative projects for Missoula; and

WHEREAS, public meetings and citizen surveys conducted in 2001 indicated very strong support for a community center with a cultural component; and

WHEREAS, in 2003 the Missoula City Council endorsed the McCormick Park Master Site Plan (Resolution 6688) to include setting aside real property for a year-round community center, citing as one of many reasons: "... there has been much additional support for a community center to allow year-round indoor recreation, cultural, and social opportunities."; and

WHEREAS, in conjunction with the 2004 City of Missoula Comprehensive Master Park Plan process, the University of Montana's Bureau of Business and Economic Research's (BBER) survey of citizens, identified strong support for park-related indoor cultural and recreational facilities; and

WHEREAS, the 2004 City of Missoula and Missoula County Master Parks and Recreation Plan recommended the construction of a multi-purpose recreation center within the next 5 to 10 years to accommodate a variety of recreational and leisure-time activities for seniors, teens, youth and serving the general population with indoor arts and craft spaces, fitness facility, a gym, and meeting spaces; and

WHEREAS, a community center in McCormick Park was identified in the 2004-2008 City of Missoula Strategic Plan under Goal 2: Community Livability; and

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula completed the first phase of the community center master plan by funding the construction of the Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park that opened to the public in 2006; and

WHEREAS, in 2015 the City Council adopted the "Our Missoula, City Growth Policy 2035" to guide growth and development in the City of Missoula over the next 20 years to create a sustainable, resilient, livable community, and throughout the document multiple references are made to the need for indoor recreation, cultural and gathering spaces that meet Growth Policy goals in Community Design, Livability, Safety and Wellness; and

WHEREAS, in 2019 the Missoula Downtown Partnership completed Missoula's Downtown Master Plan which identified the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity as an anchor facility and includes additional references to Missoula's need for indoor gathering places; and

WHEREAS, the 2019 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) survey stated that two-thirds of households said a new recreation center should serve a multi-generational population, and 58 percent of households said a new recreation facility should prioritize offering fitness and wellness; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Ready Missoula Plan: Building Resiliency adopted in May 2020 states as one of its Climate Adaptation Goals and Strategies goals: "Find, develop and

promote indoor recreation, exercise and creative activity spaces that are available to individuals and recreational programs (youth and adult) that are accessible to all income levels."; and

WHEREAS, the risk of wildfires and accompanying wildfire smoke is increasing, a longer fire and smoke season is projected for the West, and Missoula is particularly at risk due to our valley location; and,

WHEREAS, a study completed in 2017 by Climate Smart Missoula identified centrally located households to be the most vulnerable to increases in urban heat due to hotter summers, which presents the need for cooling centers; and

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula 2020-2023 Strategic Priorities identified a community center in McCormick Park as part of its City of Missoula Strategic Plan 2020-2023, becoming one of the City of Missoula's highest priorities for addressing equity and serving as a hub to engage neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 the City of Missoula completed a community-wide effort to update and revise the community center master plan for McCormick Park with a vision to create a flexible, multi-use space to support healthy lifestyles in an equitable, multi-generational, and inclusive atmosphere; space for inclusive arts, culture, creativity, recreation, and social programs for all ages, income, and ability levels; connecting people of all backgrounds, offering diverse program and recreation opportunities; and growing a stronger, more equitable community in a safe, year-round environment; and

WHEREAS, many of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (JEDI) goals in Resolution 8553 adopted by the City of Missoula in 2021 parallel the guiding principles for the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the Missoula Energy & Climate Team adopted Resolution 2021-3A: voiced support of the use of energy efficiency and renewable energy efforts in the proposed Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity and to educate citizens about those efforts; and

WHEREAS, the 2022-2025 City of Missoula Strategic Plan under Goal 2: Design and create programs, facilities and spaces that promote equity; and

WHEREAS, in February 2022, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board adopted the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity (CCRC) conceptual plan; and

WHEREAS, the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity (CCRC) has the capacity to be

a NetZero public facility and may be able to reduce the amount of non-renewable energy used by the Currents Aquatics Center, which is consistent with the City of Missoula's Climate Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, Missoula Parks and Recreation's only indoor facilities are the Currents Aquatics Center and the former Missoula Public Library facility (the latter slated for demolition) and whereby neither facility meets the needs of the community as an indoor year-round recreation and arts facility to provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula County Public School system's facilities are at capacity and cannot accommodate the needs of the community for indoor year-round recreation and arts opportunities for people of all ages and abilities; and

WHEREAS, a community center in McCormick Park is centrally located where lower median household income relative to the city's median household income is mostly concentrated, specifically the Heart of Missoula, the University District, and the Westside and Northside neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, a resource center within the community center could address the needs of residents who want to see the City of Missoula and human service providers strengthen connections with people in need of these services; and

WHEREAS, a healthy and thriving community committed to significantly increasing affordable housing will have considerable impact on existing infrastructure by removing recreational and gathering spaces, therefore, a community center can fulfill the needs of those living in smaller and denser housing; particularly our aging adults, young families, low-to-moderate income groups, those living with disabilities, and veterans, helping them to stay physically and mentally healthy and socially engaged; and

WHEREAS, both aging adults and teens are experiencing an epidemic of loneliness due to social isolation and the lack of opportunities to engage in a social environment; and

WHEREAS, the closure of private facilities, the change in post-pandemic use policies, the inability of existing facilities to meet space demands, and a constrained supply of spaces due to business development have exacerbated the availability of affordable, accessible locations for recreation and the arts; and

WHEREAS, investment in the Currents Aquatics Center and Fort Missoula Regional Park have demonstrated the value of investment in public facilities with a 6 and 8-fold increase, respectively, in participation in activities since opening, thereby significantly enhancing the

physical and social/emotional health of our community; and

WHEREAS, past investments in recreational facilities, parks, trails, and open space are community amenities that are attractive to businesses that consider locating in Missoula; and

WHEREAS, the City of Missoula 2024-2028 Consolidated Plan and Equity Plan Update findings from community engagement identify “New community and recreation centers” as one of three Top Development Needs; and

WHEREAS, in the Missoula County 2024 Housing and Community Development Survey, "mental health" and "community center" ranked above other facilities with 57% support in the City of Missoula; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula Aging Services 2024-2027 Strategic Plan states: “(C)reating an age-friendly public space, where intergenerational connection is recognized, developed, and nurtured is the most powerful tool we have to combat ageism, and where older adults can develop meaningful and satisfying relationships that give them a sense of belonging and connection, with the potential to connect to services through a community resource center and potentially an expanded congregate meal program”; and

WHEREAS, the Missoula County Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan promotes increased access to affordable childcare, strengthened community connectivity to improve mental health and resilience, program support for neighborhood centers, a one-stop resource center, regular community opportunities to learn and discuss health equity and social determinants of health, increased behavioral health services, and expanded work to decrease social isolation among older adults; and

WHEREAS, the Currents Center for Recreation and the Arts creates an active public space with increased accessibility and accommodation that helps all community members maintain a healthy work-life balance, creating a sense of wellbeing and belonging that improves mental and emotional health; and

WHEREAS, the Currents Center for Recreation and the Arts provides a place offering opportunities to engage with diverse types of people through fun, healthy, exciting activities helping to break down social silos, counter increasing divisiveness and preserve and build the strong sense of community that Missoulians value; and

WHEREAS, the population of the city of Missoula increased by 39% from 1999 when the need for a public community center was first identified and now the cost of construction is currently rising at the rate of \$1 million every 6 months, so the need steadily grows while the solution is

only becoming more expensive every month the community waits; and

WHEREAS, a summer 2024 statistical poll of likely voters in a special election showed that

- 83% think favorably of the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department, indicating strong support for investments in facilities, programs, and maintenance; and
- 73% stated that a community center would be good for Missoula; and
- 66% agreed that as kids and teens spend more time on social media, feelings of depression and isolation are at an all-time high, and that is more important than ever to preserve places where children and teens can run, play, and gather with friends, and that this center will host youth sports, recreation and arts programs, and other activities to improve kids' physical, mental, and emotional health; and
- 65% agreed that it's gotten more expensive to raise a family in Missoula – and there are not enough daycare slots available even for those who can afford it, and a community center will help working families make ends meet by providing a space for affordable childcare and programs for youth to keep them safe, healthy, and learning; and,
- 62% agreed that a community center would create a healthy, year-round space for Missoulians by providing clean air on smoky days and a warm place for residents to be active on freezing winter days, and be a central emergency evacuation point for our community in the event of natural disasters; and
- 60% agreed that it was very convincing that community organizations and local businesses are supporting a community center for Missoula because it gives residents, people with disabilities, and aging adults access to services and activities they wouldn't have otherwise; and
- 59% agreed that as the cost of living goes up, more Missoulians of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities are in need of affordable places where children, families and aging adults can gather to learn, exercise, enjoy the arts, and connect with one another and that a community center will especially benefit those in our community who don't have their own yard, access to parks or transportation, or money for club memberships; and
- 59% agreed that this community center will allow people with disabilities in Missoula to fully participate in sports and recreation, and it will provide places for them to train and practice, and store specialized gear to participate in skiing, boating, and biking; and
- 59% agreed that for aging adults (23.7% of the city of Missoula population is over the age of 55) this center would help reduce isolation and keep them healthy by providing a place where they can gather for meals, connect with the community, and engage in physical activities safely; and
- 55% agreed that Missoula's growth is at an all-time high, and that as our community grows, we need to provide public, year-round, indoor spaces to meet our community's needs now and into the future; and

- 55% agreed that hosting affordable and accessible drop-off childcare and early education programs is extremely or very important; and
- 55% agreed that Missoula needs a place for residents from all walks of life to gather and be active, and that a community center will provide a place where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can take part in social, physical and arts activities, classes, and performances; and
- 53% agreed that providing safe spaces for children and teens after school and in the summer is extremely or very important; and
- 50% agreed that a community center serving as an emergency evacuation center in the event of a natural disaster is extremely or very important; and

WHEREAS, the 2024 Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails PROST survey stated...
[RESULTS PENDING]

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, as follows:

Section 1. Recitals.

1.01 Authorization. Pursuant to Section 7-16-4104, Montana Code Annotated (“MCA”), upon approval of the qualified electors of the City, the City is authorized to issue general obligation bonds pledging the general credit of the City for the purpose of purchasing and improving lands for public parks and grounds; procuring by purchase, construction or otherwise various cultural, social or recreational facilities, including civic centers, and furnishing, equipping, repairing or rehabilitating such facilities; provided that such indebtedness will not cause the total indebtedness of the City to exceed 0.9% of the total assessed value of taxable property of the City, determined as provided in Section 15-8-111, MCA, ascertained by the last assessment for state and county taxes. The Council is authorized pursuant to Section 7-7-4223, MCA, to call a bond election by adopting a resolution to that effect.

1.02 Proposed Improvements: Bonds. The City Council hereby determines that there should be submitted to the qualified electors of the City, Missoula County will submit to the electors of the City qualified to vote at bond elections the question of whether the County is authorized to sell and issue general obligation bonds of the City in one or more series in the aggregate principal amount of up to \$49,000,000. The County will submit the bond proposition to eligible voters in the City at a special County election on [MONTH] [DAY], [YEAR].

1.03 Debt Limitation. The Council acknowledges that, based on the total assessed value of taxable property in the City applicable for fiscal year 2023

(\$NN,NNN,NNN,NNN), the City is authorized to issue \$49,000,000 in principal amount of general obligation bonds for cultural, social and recreational purposes under Section 7-16-4104, MCA. If the electors approve the issuance of up to \$49,000,000 in principal amount of general obligation bonds, the Council will issue bonds in such amounts and at such times that the issuance of such bonds will not cause the City to exceed its general obligation indebtedness limitation under Section 7-16-4104, MCA, taking into account other outstanding indebtedness issued under Section 7-16-4104, MCA, including the City's General Obligation Refunding Bonds, Series 2015, which were issued to refinance the Currents Aquatics Center

1.04 Definition. For the purpose of this mill levy election, the term "community center," as used in the ballot question below, means the construction of a public facility in McCormick Park for the purpose designing, constructing, and equipping a community center addition to Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park.

Section 2. Calling of the Election.

The City Council does hereby call and direct to be held in the City of Missoula on [MONTH] [DAY], [YEAR], a special election for the purpose of voting on the following question:

For the purpose of designing, constructing, and equipping a community center addition to Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park to serve as a climate-controlled, indoor, multi-use hub for community events, multigenerational programs in recreation and the arts, and public health and social services, with spaces for aging adults, teens, youth and child care; and to pay costs associated with the sale and issuance of the bonds; shall the City of Missoula, Montana (the "City"), on behalf of the Missoula community, be authorized to sell and issue general obligation bonds of the City in a total principal amount of up to Forty-nine Million and No/100 Dollars (\$49,000,000.00) bearing interest at rates to be determined at the time of sale, payable semiannually over a term not to exceed twenty years for each series of bonds?

If this bond passes, it is estimated that, using current assessed values of taxable property, it would increase property taxes on a home valued at \$100,000 by \$25 in the first year, on a home valued at \$300,000 by \$77 in the first year, and on a home valued at \$600,000 by \$154 in the first year. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

Section 3. Conduct of Election.

All qualified electors of the City shall be entitled to vote at the mill levy election. The

City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to give notice of the election and details of this election to the Missoula County Election Administrator as soon as practicable and in any event on or before the date required by the Missoula County Election Administrator. The Missoula County Election Administrator is requested to give notice of the close of registration and thereafter prepare printed lists of the qualified electors in the City entitled to vote in the election in the City and to conduct the election in the form and manner prescribed by law.

Section 4. Notice of Election.

The Missoula County Election Administrator is hereby authorized and requested to cause notice of the election and holding of the election to be given by publishing notice at least three times no earlier than 40 days and no later than 10 days before the election in the Missoulian, a newspaper of general circulation in Missoula County. The notice of election as published shall read substantially as shown on Exhibit A hereto (which is incorporated by reference and made a part hereof).

Section 5. Form of Ballot. The ballot shall be printed in substantially the following form, with such revisions as are necessary or appropriate:

FORM OF OFFICIAL BALLOT

CITY OF MISSOULA, MONTANA
GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND
ELECTION MISSOULA COMMUNITY
CENTER
[MONTH] [DAY], [YEAR]

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: Completely fill in the oval using a blue or black ink pen before the words “BONDS–YES” if you wish to vote for the bond issue; if you are opposed to the bond issue, completely fill in the oval using a blue or black ink pen before the words “BONDS–NO.”

For the purpose of designing, constructing, and equipping a community center addition to Currents Aquatics Center in McCormick Park to serve as a climate-controlled, indoor, multi-use hub for community events, multigenerational programs in recreation and the arts, and public health and social services, with spaces for aging adults, teens, youth and child care; and to pay costs associated with the sale and issuance of the bonds; shall the City of Missoula, Montana (the “City”), on behalf of the Missoula community, be authorized to sell and issue general obligation bonds of the City in a total principal amount of up to Forty-nine Million and No/100 Dollars (\$49,000,000.00) bearing interest at rates to be determined at the time of sale, payable semiannually over a term not to exceed twenty years for each series of bonds?

If this bond passes, it is estimated that, using current assessed values of taxable property, it would increase property taxes on a home valued at \$100,000 by \$25 in the first year, on a home valued at \$300,000 by \$77 in the first year, and on a home valued at \$600,000 by \$154 in the first year. An increase in property taxes may lead to an increase in rental costs.

- BONDS - YES
- BONDS - NO

PASSED AND ADOPTED this [DAY] day of [MONTH] [YEAR].

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Claire Trimble

Andrea Davis