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October 5, 2021

Ms. Lee Napier  
Director, Lewis County Department of Community Development  
2025 NE Kresky Ave.  
Chehalis, WA 98532

Dear Ms. Napier:

The YMCA of Greater Seattle appreciates the opportunity to respond on the record to comments submitted by local residents regarding our application for a change to the Lewis County Comprehensive Plan to provide a master-planned resort overlay on a portion of the property we have acquired adjacent to Mineral Lake.

Our review of the comments makes it clear that local residents are keenly interested in our project and we look forward to working with you and with them to continue addressing their questions throughout the permitting review and approval process. We also appreciate their desire to preserve the natural beauty of the site, and we believe that our project can not only accomplish that objective, but also represents the best way to ensure that the majority of the property will be sustained in its natural state into the future.

Here are our direct responses to some of the more commonly mentioned and/or significant concerns:

**11 comments mentioned concerns regarding drinking water supplies to serve the camp, whether water supplies for local residents would be impaired, and/or wastewater treatment concerns.**

**Response:** While initial studies are encouraging, detailed studies will have to be completed and demonstrate that the water supply at the site is sufficient to serve the camp without negatively impacting the water supply for local residents. These studies will be included as part of a future Binding Site Plan application and environmental checklist that will be submitted when the comprehensive plan amendment is approved. A detailed plan for wastewater treatment will also be developed and approved by local and state regulators

**9 comments mentioned concerns about traffic volumes and/or the capacity of local roads.**

**Response:** The majority of campers and staff will come to and leave the camp in school buses, helping to mitigate vehicular traffic in the area. Additionally, a complete traffic study and mitigation plan, including identification of any required improvements to local roads, will be completed as part of the binding site plan application.

**7 comments mentioned the role of the Nisqually Tribe in the acquisition of the property and whether the Tribe is looking to increase its land holdings or create new hunting opportunities that will negatively impact options for local residents.**

**Response:** The Nisqually Tribe has provided financial resources that have helped the YMCA acquire the first parcel of the site, but they do not have an ownership interest in that property. The YMCA's plan to work with the Tribe in providing Tribal members access to the land for cultural and traditional uses is not expected to negatively impact the local community.

**7 comments mentioned impacts on wildlife and/or aquatic habitat.**

**Response:** The majority of the total site would remain in its current state for the practice of sustainable forestry. The proposed master-planned resort overlay would impact less than a quarter of the total site, and the actual camp facilities are expected to utilize approximately one-quarter of that acreage. The eventual site plan

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will comply with all required setbacks from the lake. Additionally, campers would not be using any powered watercraft, resulting in minimal impact on fish and other aquatic habitat compared to the impacts of motorized fish boats and other recreational craft currently used on the lake.

**6 comments mentioned the YMCA's non-profit status, tax treatment of the property, and/or impact on local residents' tax bills.**

**Response:** After reviewing its options, the YMCA has publicly stated that it does not intend to file for a property tax exemption on the camp property at this time. Additionally, the YMCA intends to practice sustainable forestry on the majority of the total site, which would result in the generation of timber tax revenues. With no change in tax status of the property, there should be no negative tax impact on local residents.

**6 comments mentioned fire protection and emergency response and whether the current volunteer fire department is equipped to handle additional demand for service generated by the camp**

**Response:** The YMCA's 2 existing overnight camps are also located in rural areas, and solutions have been found to provide appropriate emergency response coverage for those camps, including trained YMCA staff serving as additional volunteers for local agencies. To ensure that an appropriate plan is established for the Mineral Lake property, the YMCA has offered to fund a consulting contract with Modern Volunteer Fire Service Consulting, LLC, to work with Lewis County Fire District #9 leadership to identify equipment and other needs in serving the camp. A detailed fire protection plan will have to be agreed upon as part of the binding site plan before any development or construction can begin.

**6 comments mentioned potential restrictions on the public's use or enjoyment of the lake.**

**Response:** The number of campers participating in water-related activities at any one time will be limited by the number of canoes/kayaks available and the need to maintain appropriate lifeguard-to-swimmer ratios. Because of these limitations, camp-related lake usage will be confined to a fairly small area adjacent to the camp itself, keeping most of the lake available for public recreation. Despite the fact that the YMCA would own additional land abutting the lake, it has neither the intention nor the authority to dictate how those areas of the lake are used.

**5 comments mentioned a perceived lack of notice and/or public meetings regarding the project.**

**Response:** Public meetings and other communications will occur in compliance with the county's established land use review and permit approval processes. In addition, although not legally required to do so, the YMCA has already held two public meetings with the local community and plans to continue offering opportunities for additional dialog with the public throughout the comprehensive plan amendment and future Binding Site Plan permitting process.

**2 comments questioned the appropriateness of the land for development, noting the failure of past development proposals.**

**Response:** The YMCA proposal is fundamentally different from past development proposals, which focused on building large lot waterfront housing. The proposed camp represents a much lower impact project that would maintain more of the shoreline in an undisturbed state.

**2 comments mentioned safety and security and asked how many full-time residents the YMCA expects to have on site.**

**Response:** This is a programmatic decision more appropriately addressed during the review of the future binding site plan application.

**1 comment expressed confusion on the acreage involved in the project, whether the total was 2,000+ or 463 acres.**

**Response:** While the total property the YMCA hopes to acquire exceeds 2,000 acres, the proposed area to be designated for the master-planned resort overlay is 463 acres. The YMCA intends that the balance of acreage acquired remain undeveloped or as timber harvest lands.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to provide this additional information for the record. If you have any questions, please contact me or Dan Penrose at SCJ Alliance.

Sincerely,



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Camping and Outdoor Leadership

Gwen Ichinose Bagley  
Youth Development Officer  
Youth Development Center of Excellence