

ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITY INVESTMENT IN NORTH KITSAP



March 2026

Economic Activity Analysis: Updated North Kitsap United Project¹

Executive Summary

In June 2023, Raydient Places + Properties started a two-year process to engage the North Kitsap community on how to best develop some 400 acres off Bond Road, called North Kitsap United (NKU). The NKU effort uncovered major unmet needs in the north end of Kitsap in the form of a severe shortage of youth sports recreation facilities and childcare. Given that much of North Kitsap is interested in seeing those needs met, Raydient has agreed to attempt a community sale of the property. As of early 2026, Raydient will work for up to two years to allow for the community to raise money and purchase the 400 acres, which the company values in excess of \$6 million. Raydient is engaging with multiple stakeholders on the community sale effort.

What's currently proposed is that 300 acres would be dedicated to preserving open space (i.e., some form of conservation), while 100 acres would be dedicated to creating new outdoor ballfields and trails for a youth-focused recreation campus. A key element of this proposal is that this largely outdoor campus would be anchored by one purpose-built indoor health facility, currently intended to be a YMCA.

The Kitsap Economic Development Alliance (KEDA) has internally analyzed the economic activity potential of this use in accordance with our general responsibility to grow investment in Kitsap. It's important to note that our analysis relies exclusively on the potential economic impact of the newly proposed YMCA facility. With that YMCA facility included, ***KEDA finds the total potential economic contribution of the current NKU project to be in excess of \$100 million, via the components below:***

- \$60 million of economic activity for the construction of the YMCA and its associated short-term jobs;
- \$40 million in direct, indirect and induced wages over a ten-year period with 190 new jobs;
- Note: Not included in this \$100 million estimate are two other potentially significant economic components: a) the potential for new wages generated by the North Kitsap families who will be able to utilize the estimated 100 childcare spots² provided by the YMCA; and b) the long-term economic impact of both the outdoor fields and the 300 acres which will be placed in conservation.

Given all the above, the North Kitsap United project represents significant positive economic activity for Kitsap. The opportunity goes beyond initial construction expenditure to deliver on many community benefits that are stated goals of Kitsap County in terms of pursuing improved healthcare, childcare and recreational opportunities. Put simply: In the regular world of everyday real estate transactions, few go beyond the financial return to offer a triple bottom line opportunity. The NKU project does, offering both over \$100 million in potential economic activity, as well as environmental and social returns, to the community.

¹ All data and information included in this analysis are subject to revision.

² estimated of number of spots

Background

This sale is proposed by property owner Raydient Places + Properties, which has a documented history of successful civic partnership that includes previously working with Kitsap County, the Greater Peninsula Conservancy, and other stakeholders to place 5,000 acres of land into permanent protection. They have also previously partnered in other jurisdictions, such as Gig Harbor, Washington, to bring a YMCA and recreational spaces to communities.

Job Associated with the Proposed YMCA

190 New Jobs

The project leverages construction spending as a primary driver of short-term economic activity. Regarding NKU's proposed \$40-million, 70,000-square foot YMCA, the project utilizes established economic multipliers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other sources to project a substantial \$40 million in additional economic activity. Also, our research shows that 100 FTEs may be employed by the new YMCA. (Staffing would also include many volunteer positions.) Salaries and wages for these 100 workers is estimated to generate annual payments of more than \$1.4 million³ which would circulate locally each year, fostering an estimated 90 indirect and induced positions.⁴

The new YMCA facility is designed to serve over 10,000 residents with affordable health and wellness programs. The facility also addresses the lack of childcare in the area. By adding scalable capacity to North Kitsap, the new YMCA would help parents return to the workforce, boosting labor participation rates and alleviating a major staffing challenge for local employers. With Kitsap at present facing a childcare shortage, this facility represents a significant enhancement for the region's long-term economic productivity. Currently there are approximately 5,800 childcare spots in Kitsap County, but approximately 15,000 children and infants living in Kitsap under the age of 6.

The YMCA

YMCAs are vital social anchors that strengthen communities by promoting healthy living. Offering cost-accessible fitness centers, pools, and a variety of programs like group exercise classes and chronic disease prevention initiatives, YMCA programs can reduce healthcare costs in an area. Improvements may be noted in physical and mental health of residents of all ages, from youth learning to swim to seniors participating in specialized fitness classes. Beyond health, the YMCA is deeply committed to youth development and strengthening families. The organization provides safe, structured environments for children and teens through programs like after-school care, summer camps, and youth sports leagues. These activities nurture potential by promoting academic support and fostering leadership skills.

³ Est. FTEs 100 positions including full-time and part-time. The current staffing at the Silverdale YMCA includes approximately 20 fulltime positions and 270 parttime positions.

⁴ Employment multiplier: <https://www.epi.org/publication/updated-employment-multipliers-for-the-u-s-economy/>

Childcare's Economic Activity on Earnings

Childcare Facility Activity on Household Earnings Over Ten Years

The YMCA's proposed facility with an estimated 100 slots for childcare is a piece of economic infrastructure, positively impacting household earnings for the parents who can take advantage of that service. The most immediate effect of increased childcare services is the new income generated by parents who can now enter or return to the workforce, or transition from part-time to full-time employment. Wages from these new workers joining the workforce over time will be beyond what can be forecast, as access to reliable care allows parents to pursue further education, training, or certifications, increasing their long-term earning potential. This investment in skills continues to yield returns long after the children leave the childcare facility. Increased productivity and reduced absenteeism are also benefits for workers and employers of working parents. Reliable childcare reduces stress, lowers the incidence of unexpected absenteeism, and allows for better focus at work.

Health Outcomes and Economic Savings

The YMCA's strongest impacts on health outcomes for residents using the facility stems from its focus on prevention and management of chronic diseases and increasing physical activity across a person's lifespan. Over a 10-year period, these efforts result in measurable reductions in disease risk and healthcare costs according to YMCA published data noted in the table below.

Program Area	Short-Term (1-3 Yr) Outcome	Long-Term (10 Yr) Activity (Nationwide data estimates)
Chronic Disease Mgmt.	Improved self-monitoring and management of conditions (e.g., Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring).	Improved management of conditions like hypertension, diabetes and arthritis across a large membership base leads to fewer hospital visits and emergency room use, driving down total healthcare costs for the community. In one model, a YMCA's program was estimated to save Medicare \$53 million over six years (projected on a national basis). Another related study shows participants in the YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program drives down the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 58% in high-risk individuals.
Physical Activity	Increased participation in exercise, swimming, and sports programs.	Consistent access to fitness facilities and pools leads to sustained reductions in obesity and related health issues. The YMCA is the largest provider of youth sports in the U.S., which helps 9 million youth annually cultivate healthier habits.
Drowning Prevention	Children learn basic water safety skills.	YMCA programs provide thousands of scholarships annually for water safety

Program Area	Short-Term (1-3 Yr) Outcome	Long-Term (10 Yr) Activity (Nationwide data estimates)
		classes for children most at risk of drowning, which reduces risk of accidental death.

In addition to the health outcomes noted in the table above, increased academic achievement and engagement in leadership / civic spaces by youth generally leads to more career success.

Economic Activities Related to Diamond and Multiuse Fields Only

In the event only additional diamond and multiuse sports fields are developed—should the YMCA not also be constructed—economic benefit is more difficult to project but will still be achieved. Sports fields and sports tourism contributes positively to local and regional economic activity. By hosting tournaments for baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse and other games and matches, sports facilities attract visitors from across Puget Sound and Washington, and even potentially further across the Pacific Northwest. This movement of people creates a multiplier effect, where initial spending at the tournament site ripples through the local economy, supporting small businesses and generating essential tax revenue that funds community services.

One of the most immediate positive impacts of additional sports fields is the reduction in team travel leakage. When Kitsap County lacks enough high-quality turf or lighted fields, local teams are forced to travel to Pierce, King, or Snohomish counties to compete, taking their registration fees and travel budgets with them. By providing top-tier local venues, the county retains the spending of resident families and gains additional economic benefit from visiting teams and guests. The economic footprint of a tournament is vastly expanded by spectators, who are most often family members including parents, siblings, and grandparents. Statistics suggest that for every youth athlete, an average of 2.5 spectators travel to an event.

In Kitsap County, these visiting families can represent an important revenue source for local business. Between games or during evening breaks, these visitors often seek out entertainment and retail options, turning a simple sports outing into a comprehensive local shopping and dining excursion.

Local restaurants are often the largest beneficiaries of this influx. Estimated per-capita spending on food and beverage for out-of-town visitors in Washington typically averages \$35 to \$50 per day. For a 10-team tournament, this can result in thousands of dollars in revenue for local eateries alone. The secondary spending on gas and other items provides a boost to service stations and convenience stores. For overnight visitors staying in Kitsap hotels, spending is higher, at approximately \$90 per day. These so-called heads in beds generate lodging taxes that are often reinvested into further support for visitor amenities.

Appendix A - Demand for Recreational Activities

The YMCA of Pierce & Kitsap Counties commissioned a market study in 2023 to assess the market demand for a multipurpose recreation center in the Poulsbo area. This study found that 68% of those surveyed would be very likely, 10% of respondents would be somewhat likely, and 22% would be not likely to use such a facility. This study asked about preferences for fitness activities, services, and programs for families.

Kitsap County recently prepared its 2024 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The County identified the current inventory and condition of the parks system and conducted engagement to hear from the community about its priorities. In general, research shows that interest and demand for developed recreation complexes and improved field play areas are growing throughout the County.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) gathers data annually from park and recreation agencies nationwide. The data does not represent level of service standards but is intended to provide guidance to recreation and parks agencies. The 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review notes agencies provide one public, official-sized diamond field for every 4,063 residents and one rectangular field (multiuse) for every 5,000 residents. North Kitsap's current population is approximately 90,000 including the communities of Suquamish, Kingston, Port Gamble, Poulsbo and Bainbridge Island. Extrapolation of this demand model based on current population estimates shows a deficit in sports fields for the North Kitsap area. An optimum number would be approximately 40 diamonds and multiuse fields; currently there are about half as many that are need according this model, with 20 sites in North Kitsap.

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