

READY, SET, GROW!

Frequently Asked Questions about the Downtown Berkeley YMCA's Earthquake Safety and Expansion Project

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1. What are the major goals of the project?

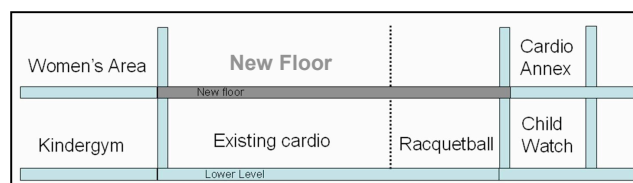
- Increase the safety of the YMCA in the event of a major earthquake
- Keep the YMCA open and all programs running during the seismic retrofit by creating new “swing space” for programs that will need to be moved during construction
- Expand the YMCA to meet member requests for more space and new programs for youth and families

2. Is the YMCA seismically safe *now*?

Yes, the YMCA is currently safe. The YMCA Board is voluntarily upgrading the earthquake integrity of the 1960 Building and the 1910 Building.

The life safety seismic retrofit of the 1960 Building will reinforce the connections between the floors and the walls, which will improve the performance of the building in an earthquake.

The structural strength of the 1910 Building will be increased with the addition of a new



floor over the existing cardio room and racquetball court, which have very high ceilings. The new floor will reinforce the perimeter walls to prevent them from collapsing in a major earthquake.

3. Why does the YMCA need “swing space”?

In order to keep the YMCA open during construction, many programs will move to temporary swing space. Part of that swing space will be in the former lobby of the YMCA Hotel and Residence, and the other part will be in the new floor of the 1910 Building.

The programs in the 1960 Building—aerobics, cycling, and strength training—will move temporarily to new swing spaces while the seismic retrofit is underway. The existing cardio machines will move into the Family Gym temporarily while we construct a new cardio area.

4. How much space is being added to the Y?

When the seismic work is complete, we will have added over 6,000 square feet for new and expanded programs that are a response to member surveys, meetings with groups of members, and tracking community health trends. For example:

- The Strength Training and Cardio Center will grow by over 20 percent. That means more room to move among pieces of equipment, which will greatly improve accessibility for seniors and people with disabilities.
- A Youth & Family Fitness Zone, Interactive Wellness Center and Youth Dance Studio will provide more activities for kids, including special programs for 7- to 13-year olds, and more space for families to work out together.

5. What happens to racquetball?

Regrettably, the seismic retrofit plan will require closing our racquetball court. We have studied numerous alternatives to see if it is possible to save the court, or build a new court on the roof or second floor, but none of these options proved feasible.

For example, we investigated building the new swing space floor only over the cardio room in order to leave the racquetball court intact. That was not feasible because it would have required building a costly new shear wall, foundation and footings through the men’s locker room below with an estimated cost of over \$1 million.

We also looked at whether a new racquetball court could be built within either the Main or Family Gyms. But we soon realized that doing so would eliminate use of the gym space for full-court basketball and volleyball. Nearly 600 people use the Family Gym every week, and over 700 use the Main Gym.

Similarly, locating the court in the Mind/Body Center would eliminate our Yoga, Pilates, Chi Gung, Feldenkrais, Meditation, Prenatal Yoga, and Tai Chi programs, which are used by over 1,400 people per week. We also considered building a new court on the roof, but our engineers told us that the roof isn’t strong enough to carry such a heavy

structure without spending over \$2 million to reinforce it.

In the end, the loss of the racquetball court, used on average by about 10 to 20 players daily, serves the larger YMCA community of nearly 17,000 people by providing substantial new program spaces for people of all ages and abilities while we make the Y safer for everyone.

6. Will racquetball players be able to play somewhere else nearby?

For our valued members who regularly play racquetball three or more times a month, we are offering complementary Bay Area YMCA Access to nearby YMCAs with racquetball courts including the Oakland Downtown YMCA, Hilltop YMCA, Presidio YMCA, and the Treasure Island facility operated by the Embarcadero YMCA.

Additional accommodations for members who play racquetball regularly will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Peter Chong or Hae Won Rhoo directly to make arrangements. (See contact information below.)

7. Will the YMCA be open during construction?

Yes! We have developed a careful plan to complete all construction with a flow that minimizes disruptions. Most classes and programs will continue as currently scheduled.

8. What about noise and dust during construction?

We will work closely with our contractors to minimize the amount of noise and dust from construction and ensure that our members can work out safely. We are working with a general contractor who is an industry leader in working on buildings that are occupied. In addition, we plan to:

- Provide early notification of any schedule changes when disruption is unavoidable
- Reschedule impacted classes if necessary

9. When does construction begin?

We plan to start the first phase of construction in late spring of 2008. We chose our general contractor based partly on the contractor's ability to work in an occupied building in a compressed timeline. The contractor estimates that the project should take nine to ten months to complete.

10. How does the Y plan on communicating with members during construction?

We are developing a comprehensive communications plan to ensure that staff and members have current information during construction. Members will have many ways to stay informed including a dedicated website, emails, a telephone "hot line," posters throughout the building, letters, brochures, and flyers.

11. Is this project "green"?

Yes. The YMCA is a member of the Berkeley community and shares its values regarding environmental responsibility. In fact, the YMCA is a signatory member of the Sustainable Berkeley Initiative.

- We have chosen a leading Green-certified contractor.

- We will be installing energy-efficient lighting and windows.
- We will use low- or non-toxic materials.

12. How did the YMCA decide what kinds of programs to put in the new spaces?

The Y conducts a member satisfaction survey every two years (the last one was in 2006). We also track community health trends, such as the current youth obesity crisis and a growing senior population. We've also just completed interviews with members of the YMCA and the broader community as part of our Five-Year Strategic Plan process. The information gathered through these means and daily conversations with our members, tells us that members want more space for:

- Strength training and cardio (including more machines and more room to move among pieces of equipment)
- New activities for 7- to 13-year olds
- Fun programs for younger kids while parents work out

13. How will these changes be helpful for seniors and people with disabilities?

There are several areas where seniors and members with disabilities will see improvements:

- The Y will be less crowded overall.
- There will be more room to navigate among pieces of equipment.
- The Interactive Wellness Center will have adaptive equipment.

14. What is the impact to Y residents?

When construction is complete, residents will have a new kitchen, a new common area, additional accessible bathrooms, and a new computer lounge closer to their rooms.

Only one long-term resident will permanently change rooms, 13 residents will be temporarily relocated while their rooms are being renovated, and a number of rooms normally reserved for overnight guests will be temporarily closed.

15. What is the Youth & Family Fitness Zone?

The Youth & Family Fitness Zone is a place that will:

- Expand the Kids Zone (for youth ages 7 to 13)
- Give families a place to exercise together
- Create room for more middle school fitness, martial arts, and sports conditioning programs
- Add space for youth, teen, and family personal training
- Provide opportunities to work with special populations like youth dealing with early-onset diabetes, teen pregnancy, and so forth

16. What is the Interactive Wellness Center?

The Interactive Wellness Center is designed to combat the obesity crisis by engaging underactive youth and teens, especially those who are most resistant to exercise.

The Interactive Wellness Center will contain new equipment like "Dance Dance Revolution" pads, cycles with Play Station 2 video capabilities, and Nintendo Wii. This

equipment gets youth and teens motivated to exercise, and also serves as adaptive equipment for people with disabilities. Like the Youth & Family Fitness Zone, this is an area for family members of all ages and interests to get fit.

17. What is the Youth Dance Studio?

The YMCA offers 28 dance classes for over 250 kids in a space that is currently far too small. In order to meet both the current and growing demand, we will convert the Cardio Annex into a dedicated Youth Dance Studio, allowing us to offer more and larger classes. The Y currently offers classes such as Pre-Ballet, Rhythm and Roots, Marital Arts, and Yoga.

18. What will happen to the Teen Education Center?

When construction is complete, the Teen Education Center will move to its permanent home in the new YMCA Teen Center located in the former PG&E building at Center Street and Martin Luther King Way.

19. What will happen to the Mind/Body Center classes?

While no construction is planned for the Mind/Body Center, there may be times when construction noise will be disruptive. We are researching options for moving Mind/Body classes if necessary.

20. What about the Main Gym and the Family Gym?

Like the Mind/Body Center, no construction is planned for the gyms. However, there may be some temporary disruptions as we make room for all programs to be operational. We will notify members of any changes to the existing gym schedules.

21. Will member dues be increased to pay for this project?

No. The YMCA has a financial strategy that fully funds this project.

22. Where can I get more information?

Prior to construction, in the spring of 2008, we will post updated information in the entrance lobby and at our website, www.baymca.org/grow. Please feel free to talk to our staff any time about the projects:

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