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## **Arguments for and against the proposed Public Safety Building Bond.**

*The arguments for or against a ballot proposition are the opinions of the authors.*

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### **ARGUMENT FOR THE PROPOSED BOND**

The citizens of Pleasant Grove overwhelmingly recognize the need for new public safety facilities. A professional consultant was hired and a broad system of public input and feedback was implemented to study the problem. Over 850 hours were dedicated by staff and citizens working together to produce a proposal that has wide consensus among the various groups. Through this process it has become evident that the current buildings have reached a point that additions or repairs can no longer be justified as fiscally responsible. City Council unanimously approved a resolution asking voters to authorize issuance of General Obligation Bonds to finance the construction of a new public safety facility which will house fire, police, dispatch, and justice court.

Our fire station was built in 1949 as an addition to the old public high school. It was converted to a fire station in 1980 when the population of the City was 11,000 and we had a volunteer fire department. We now have a fulltime fire and EMS department servicing almost 35,000 people. There are serious concerns with the current building as it does not meet seismic safety standards. It is not large enough to house all of the fire/rescue apparatus that we currently use. This 75 year old structure is inadequate for day to day operations and could be destroyed in a seismic event, leaving the citizens without emergency services.

Our police station has outlived its usefulness and functionality as a police facility. It is not in compliance with current regulations for police departments that require heightened security and separation from public access. Prisoner processing and transport facilities are not secure; there is inadequate evidence storage space – evidence is being stored under stairways, in hallways and in an elevator shaft; interrogation rooms are undersized, lack ventilation and windows; the booking area is open to dispatch and puts the safety of civilian employees at risk. Despite repair efforts, there are ongoing issues such as frequent flooding, and roof leaks.

Our justice court facility is drastically undersized and functionally inadequate. It seats approximately 30 people but 50 -70 defendants are scheduled to be seen on any given day. People are forced to stand in the lobby until it's their turn. The public's safety is compromised since there is no secure way to transport prisoners, they must be walked through the foyer among the general public. There are no conference rooms. Attorneys confer with their clients and private information must be discussed in the middle of the lobby. There is insufficient storage space for court records. There is no jury deliberation room.

The need is clear. The citizens have been heard. The amount of actual debt has been reduced through extensive cost cutting review and funding from other sources. The bond will not exceed \$12.67 million dollars and will increase the average property owner's tax \$7.46 per month. The project fulfills needs in 4 areas that are currently in operational failure and assures functionality for the next 50 years.

Pleasant Grove City

### **ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE BOND:**

Pleasant Grove needs improved public safety facilities now. However, this bond proposal does not appropriately, affordably or adequately meet these needs:

**A) It is inappropriate because unpaid professional consultants recommended less expensive options that the city won't consider:**

1 - The city appointed a Blue Ribbon committee of prominent citizens with professional backgrounds in construction and public safety to advise the city. These original volunteers researched and proposed 5 options that are millions of dollars less expensive.

2 - The Citizens Committees of Pleasant Grove never saw those 5 options; as the city did not present them for review.

**B) Because less expensive options are available, this bond is unaffordable, especially in light of other city financial burdens:**

1 – Per Mayor Daniels, the budget for road repairs is insufficient; our roads are deteriorating faster than they can be maintained. The investment required to repair PG Roads to safe and reasonable conditions is \$200 Million over 20 years. **To pay for this \$200 million, the average property owner's tax would eventually have to increase by \$117.74 per month.**

2 – PG culinary and waste water infrastructure is 50 to 80 years old and seriously deteriorated. The investment required to repair this vital system is \$100 Million over 20 years. **To pay for this the average property owner's tax would eventually have to increase another \$58.87 per month.**

3 – These looming costs will overwhelm both taxpayers *and* a city budget already overburdened: The PG swimming pool operates at a loss and demands \$168,000 annually from the General Fund. Over the past 2 years the city had to transfer \$151,772 from our General Fund just to keep the Rec Center operating, and PG is required to pay \$240,000 annually to the unprofitable Fox Hollow golf course.

4 - Each of these programs are bigger financial burdens than promised, and explain why secondary water fees now cost well above what taxpayers were told, and have increased each year for the last 4 years.

5 – The Aug 14th Council Minutes noted that last year the Fire Department did not have enough money budgeted to operate for 12 months. That being the case, the city's paid consultants have noted that the building costs of this bond will only be 30% of the actual operating costs over 40 years. This is also unsustainable.

**C) This bond is inadequate because real solutions for improved public safety facilities will be delayed when taxpayers once again reject this bond:**

1 - Our Public Safety personnel need improved facilities, however the city won't consider other affordable options that would not require any bonding.

2 - Accordingly, affordable \$2 million renovations (to solve evidence storage, escorting prisoners, sleeping quarters for firefighters, and seismic issues) have now been delayed more than 2 years while the city keeps pursuing downtown facilities that cost more than SEVEN TIMES that amount and misdirect millions of dollars away from more critical infrastructure needs that the city will eventually require all PG citizens to pay.

Common Cents Coalition

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## ***Rebuttals for and against the proposed Public Safety Building Bond.***

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### **REBUTTAL FOR THE PROPOSED BOND**

The facts do not support the opposition arguments. The opposition focuses on claims of better solutions that have no supporting detail. The bond proposal has been developed through thorough research, and empirical data based on current pricing and construction practices:

- Building size has been reduced
- Location is on city owned property
- Price has been reduced by \$4.29 million dollars
- Bond amount has been reduced by \$1.3 million dollars
- Detailed spreadsheets, analysis, renderings and cost breakdowns were provided
- Process took over 8 months, over 850 hours dedicated to concerns and suggestions at: 12 Neighborhood meetings; 10 Steering Committee meetings; 5 Blue Ribbon Committee Meetings; 5 Citizen Committee Meetings; and 1 Pleasant Grove City Employee Meeting.

Last year, the Blue Ribbon Committee submitted a report that made suggestions for cost savings, several of which were adopted. Cost estimates from the BRC did not include all of the costs for the project leading to unrealistic cost projections. Through the vetting process not all suggestions were found to be feasible. The BRC stated at the conclusion of its report: “the Committee encourages our elected officials to mix and match, add further costs to the options, and to make them fit the overall needs of our community.” (BRC Report of Findings Addendum) This bond proposal has done just that. Only 2 members of the current BRC do not support this proposal.

This proposal is principled, consistent, affordable and defensible. As one resident recently stated, “What are we waiting for?”

Pleasant Grove City

### **REBUTTAL AGAINST THE PROPOSED BOND**

Why Vote No on another unnecessary Tax Increase

In the 2012 citizen’s survey, Pleasant Grove overwhelmingly rejected the idea of paying more taxes and going into debt for new Public Safety Buildings. The survey showed that citizens wanted improved Streets and Roads.

In 2013 citizens again rejected excessive debt for a new Public Safety Building, yet the city council is again asking voters to authorize debt to finance more than 130% of the construction costs of a new Public Safety Building, while nothing additional is being proposed for street repair.

While volunteer committee members tried to advance positive alternatives that meet the Public Safety needs for a fraction of the proposed cost, 850 hours were spent discussing only the city’s pre-determined options.

Instead of listening to citizens input and feedback, the city council hired a professional consultant to overshadow alternatives. The city’s unwillingness to accurately analyze these alternatives is quite concerning. How can the city say there is wide consensus when no one was able to comment on alternatives?

PG citizens deserve to know ALL needs and ALL options. PG is facing a \$200 million bill to bring our streets and roads up to a safe and reasonable expectation. Our culinary and waste water infrastructure is facing a \$100 million crisis. To pay for this over 20 years, the average citizen’s tax must eventually increase over \$176.61 per month.

Vote NO on the Bond proposal and demand the city seek significantly less costly alternatives.

Find out more at: [PGcanDoMoreForLess.com](http://PGcanDoMoreForLess.com)

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