



Old Fire House Teen Center Community Focus Groups Summary

Oct. 30, 2025



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Executive Summary

On Sept. 22 and 24, 2025, the City of Redmond invited community members to participate in focus groups to share thoughts and ideas on the future of the Old Fire House Teen Center (OFH) building and community spaces for teens. The focus group meetings aimed to gain feedback from teens, parents and caregivers, teen service providers, city teen services alumni, and community members to inform the Stakeholder Group's recommendation to City Council and City Council's decision on the future of the building.

Meeting promotions were done through Parks and City social media, email newsletters, and print materials, as well as through direct outreach to key audiences such as teen drop-in users, teen music participants, parents and caregivers, teen leaders, service providers, and city teen services alumni.

A total of 57 unique attendees, 10 of whom attended both focus group meetings, participated in the two focus group meetings. Participants learned more about the recommendation and decision process, including how their feedback would be provided to the Stakeholder Group and City Council, and participated in facilitated, affinity-based breakout groups to share their thoughts on teen community spaces, priorities to consider on the building's future, and the OFH space during its active use.

Summary of feedback heard

Although each group provided distinct feedback, they echoed similar themes about preserving the teen vibe and historical location:

- Teens and adults want a **dedicated teen space** with **teen-led programming** that allows teens to have a sense of ownership and autonomy, and where they can safely and comfortably explore their identities without judgement, particularly for low-income and LGBTQIA+ teens.
- The **look and feel** of the space are important to all groups, describing the ideal space as "cool," "real," and "grungy," and looks and feels like a teen bedroom with art on the walls, minimal glass, and separate but interconnected rooms that allow teens to move between activities easily and choose where they spend time.
- The **central, accessible, and historic location** is important to all groups but especially to parents and service providers, emphasizing that the historical aspect attracts and inspires teens, and the downtown location taps into teen independence and supports working parents. Teens also expressed a strong desire to **keep the location**, emphasizing that the surroundings are convenient and not corporate, leading to a feeling of safety and freedom of expression.
- Teens and alumni emphasized the **importance of city teen services staff** who have empathy, shared life experiences, and are relatable to teens.
- Alumni and community members recognize the need to improve accessibility, especially in the bathrooms and stairs. However, parents and service providers had **mixed perspectives on the extent to which accessibility changes are needed**, with some advocating for more universal accessibility and others concerned about losing the "quirkiness" of the space.

- All groups appreciated the **free amenities**, including mental health services, food, kitchen, art supplies, and use of equipment in the recording studio, contributing to the comfortable and safe environment.
- When asked what **components to keep**, participants mentioned the recording studio, stage, kitchen, mental health services, free food, supplies for creative expression, and ability to decorate the space with posters. Participants also wanted the new space to memorialize the OFH in its design and décor.
- When asked what could make the space **better**, participants mentioned better temperature control, an expanded kitchen space, more staff on hand, better meal and food availability, and expanded programs for teen help.

For a detailed report of each group's conversations, see the Detailed Feedback Report section of this report, and Appendix A: Flipchart Notes.

Overview

Background

The OFH has served the community well for 73 years, functioning as a teen center since the 1990s, but now faces substantial long-term challenges that go beyond routine maintenance.

In late 2024, a comprehensive facility assessment of the Old Fire House found that the building was facing substantial long-term challenges beyond routine maintenance. The City also began planning for the future of teen services in Redmond to understand teens' needs and preferences through the Teen Services Engagement project.



Teen services and programs were transitioned from the OFH to the Redmond Community Center at Marymoor Village (RCCMV) and other city facilities beginning in March 2025 and were operational in their new locations in April. The proactive relocation allowed the City to ensure continuous teen services and programming while conducting further research and assessments to inform the building's future.

From March through June 2025, city staff implemented the Teen Services Engagement process and gathered input from over 300 teens, families, service providers, and community members to understand teens' needs and preferences and inform the future of teen services.

In July 2025, additional facility condition assessments were completed, revealing substantial challenges including: failing roof and building envelope, structural and seismic concerns, outdated building systems, hazardous materials, and ADA accessibility issues.

In August 2025, the City launched a community engagement process to provide a recommendation to City Council about the future of the building based on two options:

- **Renovate** the current building structure, or
- **Investigate rebuilding** the structure in an unknown location.

The recommendation process included the formation of a Stakeholder Group and two community focus group meetings. The Stakeholder Group consisted of diverse Redmond community members chosen from the community and existing City advisory groups, including teens, parents, service providers, commission representatives, and others.

The focus groups on September 22 and 24 were open to the public. These focus groups provided an opportunity for the broader community to provide feedback on the future of the building through facilitated discussions that would answer questions of the Stakeholder Group and City Council.

Information and updates about the OFH and decision process were provided on the [Old Fire House Teen Center webpage](https://redmond.gov/OFH) (redmond.gov/OFH).

Engagement Purpose and Objectives

The specific objectives of the focus groups were to:

- **Offer the public an opportunity to engage in the conversation** about the future of the Old Fire House Teen Center facility and the Stakeholder Group process
- **Hear from voices who we haven't heard from before** to ensure diverse participation
- **Provide targeted feedback to the Stakeholder Group** to inform their recommendation.

In the first Stakeholder Group meeting on September 10, stakeholders submitted the following questions to ask the community:

- What made the OFH special? Can it be recreated?
- What would attract you to a teen-only or teen-led space?
- Can you describe the importance of the original location? Additionally, that of the building layout?
- Is there anything about OFH that you would change?

The focus groups were designed to gather this information from the community and present it in a way that would be useful for the Stakeholder Group to inform their recommendation.

Communications and Promotions

To encourage participation in the focus groups, the City used their Parks and City social media, email newsletters, and print materials, as well as direct outreach to key audiences such as teen drop-in users, teen music participants, parents and caregivers, teen leaders, service providers, and Old Fire House alumni.

The City promoted the focus groups on Facebook on Sept. 17 and 22. On Sept. 20 and 22, Redmond Parks posted on Facebook and Instagram. The Old Fire House Teen Center Instagram, largely followed by teens, promoted the focus groups on Sept. 15, 17, 20, and 24. The City also promoted the meetings in the Sept. 17 edition of [eNews](#).

The City also sent focused invitations and follow-ups to 95 specific groups, sub-groups and individuals who have ties to the OFH, are involved in city commissions, or have expressed interest in the focus groups.

Engagement Activities

The Focus Group agenda included an informative overview of the recommendation and decision-making process, facilitated breakout groups and space for Q&A and insight sharing with everyone at the beginning and end. Both meetings lasted two hours in the evening and followed the same agenda to ensure comparable results.

Presentation

At the beginning of each Focus Group, city staff provided a brief presentation to explain how participant feedback would be used to inform the future of the OFH building. Participants learned about the makeup and process of the Stakeholder Group, the City Council decision date, and how the Focus Group feedback would inform both. The presentation included:

- A visual of how focus group input would provide feedback directly to the Stakeholder Group and City Council.
- A description of the Stakeholder Group.
- A brief description of the Stakeholder Group recommendation options.
- An engagement timeline from September through November 2025, including the Stakeholder Group, focus group meetings, and City Council meetings and decision dates.
- Links to resources and an opportunity to provide direct feedback or ask questions to the Parks Planning Manager via email.
- An opportunity for questions.

Breakout Groups

After the brief presentation and opportunity for questions, participants split into breakout groups based on their affiliation with OFH. Each breakout group included between 10 and 18 participants, a



FIGURE 1. FACEBOOK POST PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN THE FOCUS GROUPS

facilitator, and a notetaker. To gather specific input based on participants' ties to the OFH, facilitators asked participants to join groups based on their affiliation to the OFH Teen Center:

- Teens
- Parents and Caregivers (Sept. 22)
- Alumni and Community members (Sept. 22)
- Combined adult group (Sept. 24)
- Online group (Sept. 24)

Facilitators posed tailored questions to each group about what would encourage them to attend a teen center. Participants paired up with each other to discuss their thoughts.

Participants were then given the chance to share with the whole group while the notetaker summarized their feedback on a flipchart. When participants echoed each other's ideas, the notetaker added tally marks or stars next to the idea. All flipcharts were preserved to document results.

Participants were then asked to rank which factors they thought were most important when considering the future of the OFH building, keeping in mind that these were likely factors that City Council would also consider during their decision-making process. Facilitators distributed three stickers to each participant. Participants indicated their thoughts by placing stickers on the board in the box labeled with a factor in the decision. Returning participants in the second focus group were given stickers of a different color to distinguish their responses from those of first-time attendees.

After the activity, the facilitators asked why they chose those factors and if there were any elements that could be improved at OFH. Responses were recorded on flipcharts.

Plenary Session

After 75 minutes in breakout groups, participants returned as a full group to share highlights and takeaways from the breakout group discussions.

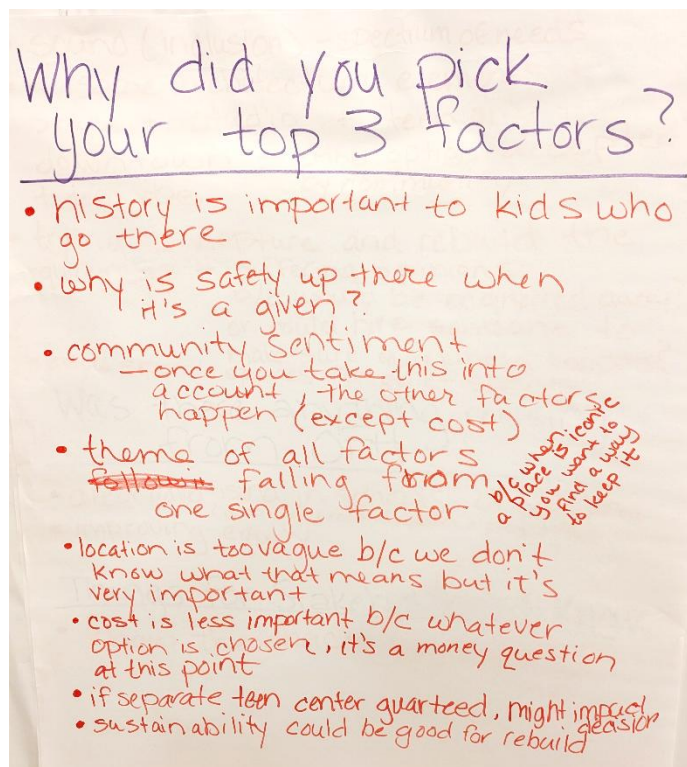


FIGURE 2. FLIPCHART NOTES

Teens

"What would encourage you to come to a teen space or event?"

Teen participants also expressed an appreciation for the OFH's free amenities, including the kitchen, food, art supplies, and musical instruments. Participants noted that many of the instruments are historical, and even if they aren't functional, they add to the feeling of being part of a legacy that "can't be replicated."



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In addition to the factors that teens generated in the previous question, teen participants also pointed out that the OFH feels safe, specifically for queer, alternative, neurodivergent, and disabled teens. Teens appreciated the low bar of entry and familiar staff that greeted them and knew them well. For teens from all backgrounds, the OFH was a space away from school and home life that felt like a safe space to express themselves. They valued support from counselors, programs for housing and food, and resources to navigate gender issues.

Teens also described the building layout and the uniqueness of the structure itself. They described it as a “labyrinth” of rooms with different, flexible activities happening concurrently. They appreciated the ability to put posters on the walls, decorate with art, and choose their own activity. Aspects of the building they appreciated were the recording studio, stage, quiet rooms, and garage that opens into an outdoor space.

“Was there anything missing from the OFH that would have made it an even better space for teens?”

- More materials to create with (paint, sewing)
- Better temperature control
- Dedicated space to store stuff, including a coat check
- Items to sort, donations, and ways to help out that are passive
- An improved sign-in to value privacy more

“What advice would you give the Stakeholder Group as they consider their recommendation to City Council?”

Teens in both focus groups expressed a desire to renovate. They expressed that they believed it would be less expensive and a way to ensure historical preservation and fulfill community sentiment.

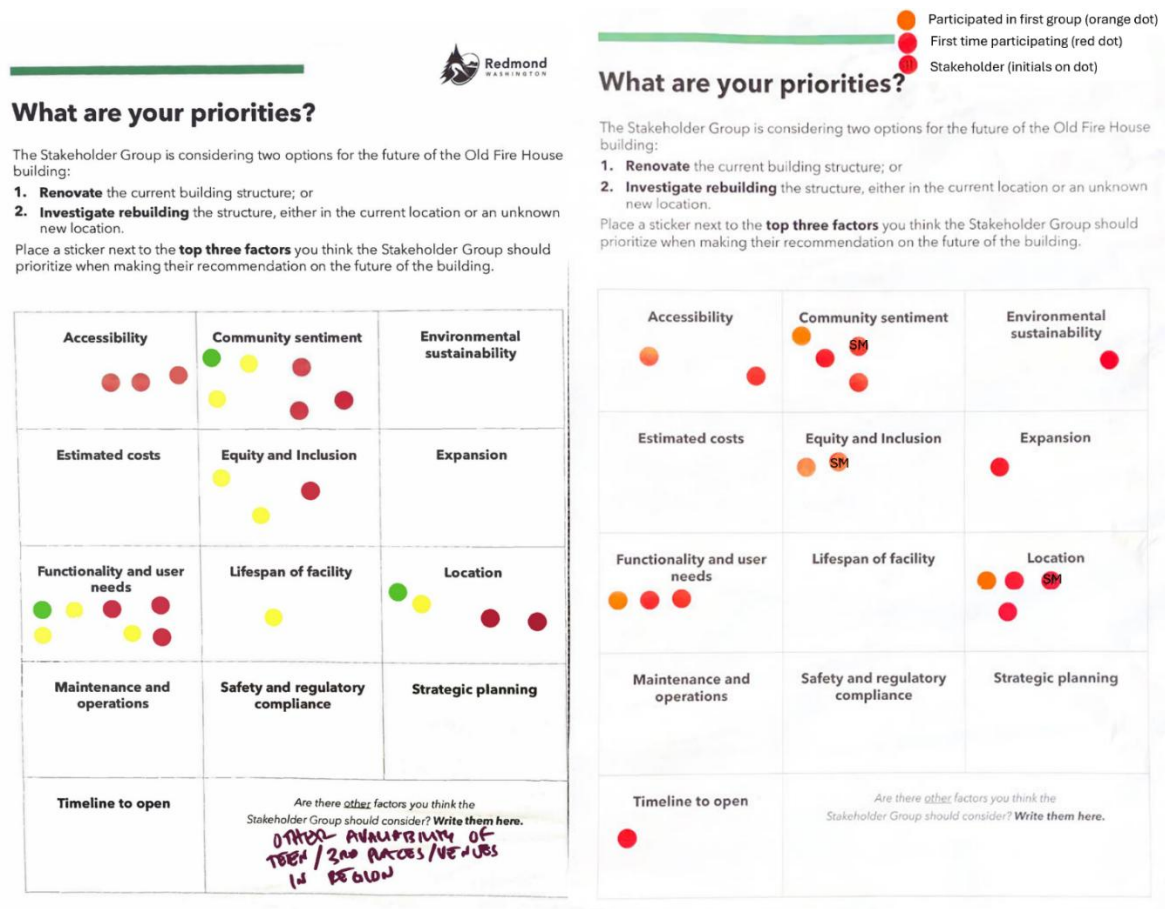


FIGURE 3. TEEN GROUP STICKER ACTIVITY ON SEPT. 22 (LEFT) AND SEPT. 24 (RIGHT)

*The dot colors in the activity on the left do not have any significance.

Parents and Service Providers

There were 10 parents and service providers who participated in the first focus group meeting on Sept. 22. The second focus group meeting on Sept. 24 had a combined adult group that included parents and service providers. See the Alumni and Community section for a summary of feedback received from the combined adult group.

"What would encourage teens to come to a teen space or event?"

Some participants answered this question by sharing ways in which the OFH and its programming met their needs and encouraged their participation. Parents and service providers in this group were passionate about teens having their own space. They feel that it should be teen-led and not adult "observed." They believe the space should feel "cool," "real," and "grungy," and not like a school or an office. It was important to them that teens could drop in and spontaneously choose their own activity. They also felt that a connection to history was important and added a special, inspirational element.

Parents and service providers also voiced a desire for:

- A regular cadence of staff that felt familiar and contributed to the community at the Teen Center
- Easy access to the facility from school without a parent, which is important for working parents and taps into teen independence
- Accessibility to food and mental health resources without needing to ask

"Why did you pick your top three factors?"

For parents and service providers who chose community sentiment as at least one of their factors, they said that once you take this into account, the other factors happen (except cost). Because, they said, "when a place is iconic, you find a way to keep it." They said, "all factors fall from one single factor."

There were no parents or service providers on Sept. 22 that included safety and regulatory compliance as one of their top three priorities because they believed it was a given in either option (renovate or rebuild).

There were also comments about the definition of location in the context of these factors. However, they expressed that it was important.

Accessibility was also part of the conversation. Participants valued universal accessibility and acknowledged the spectrum of needs that the space needs to accommodate. There was mention of the need for separate, quiet spaces as well as optimizing acoustics and sound for those who are hard of hearing.

"Was there anything missing from OFH?"

Parents and service providers expressed a desire for more direct advertising of the OFH programs in schools.

"What advice would you give the Stakeholder Group?"

Participants in this group were concerned that a rebuild would open up the possibility of losing the downtown location and history of the building. Therefore, they wanted the stakeholders to "know the choices very clearly."

They also acknowledged that if the following elements are preserved, either option may be accepted by the community:

- Architectural elements
- Stage
- Studio

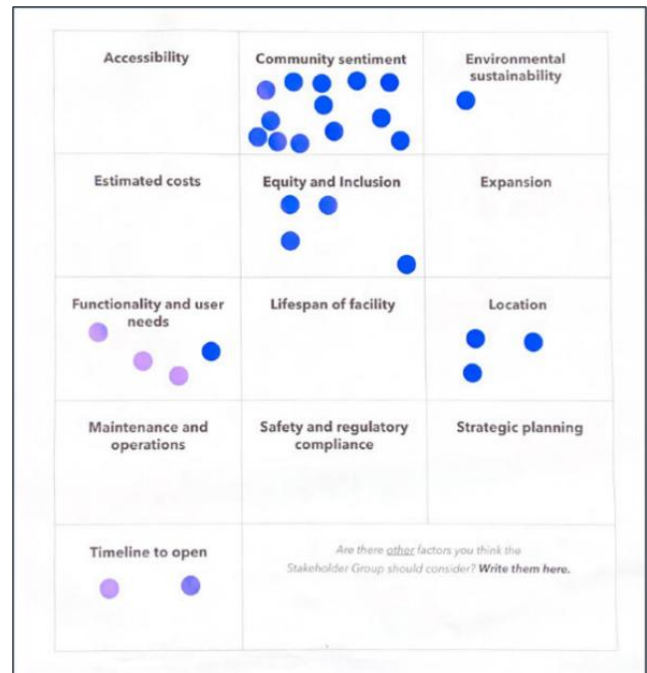


FIGURE 4. PARENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSES ON SEPT. 22 TO "WHAT ARE YOUR TOP THREE PRIORITIES?"

- Teen-only space
- Teen vibe
- Downtown

Alumni and Community

In the Sept. 22 Focus Group, there were 13 community members and city teen services alumni.

“What made the OFH a comfortable and safe space for you?”

Alumni in this group expressed that the welcoming staff, music, and location made the OFH comfortable and safe. They felt free to be themselves where they aren’t “other-ized” in a space that was outside of school and home. They appreciate that the location is easy to access for after school activities. Teens could participate in a variety of art and music activities and curate programming to evolve to meet their needs.

“Whether the OFH building is renovated or rebuilt – are there components that you want to ensure are kept in the future space to honor the old space or recreate its specialness?”

In terms of physical aspects of the building, participants in the group wanted to keep the studio, concert space, recording studio, and kitchen. The location was also important for easy access.

They also emphasized that the intangible aspects of the space are equally important, including the character and heart of the room that they characterized as “weird” and “iconic.”

What advice would you give to the Stakeholder Group?

This group wanted to recommend a renovation and to keep the location. They also wanted to recommend for adults to listen and talk to teens and recognize the history and future of the Old Fire House Teen Center.

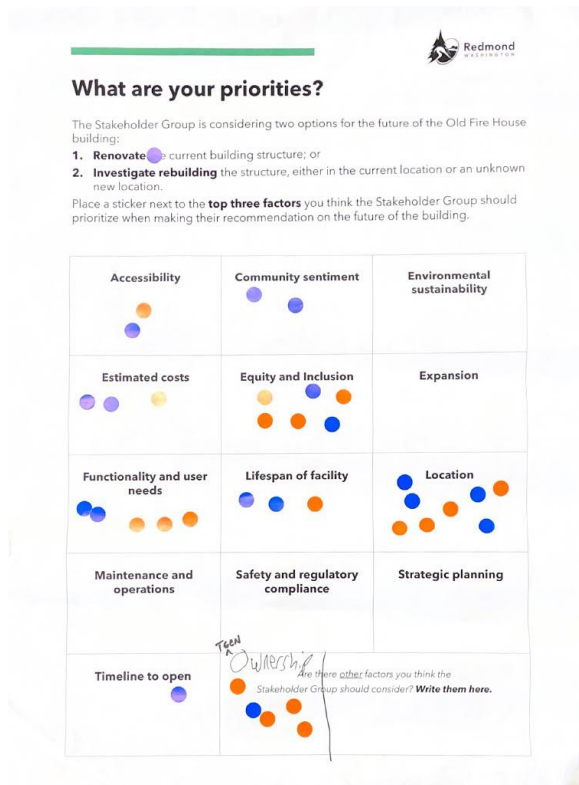


FIGURE 5. ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY GROUP ON SEPT. 22

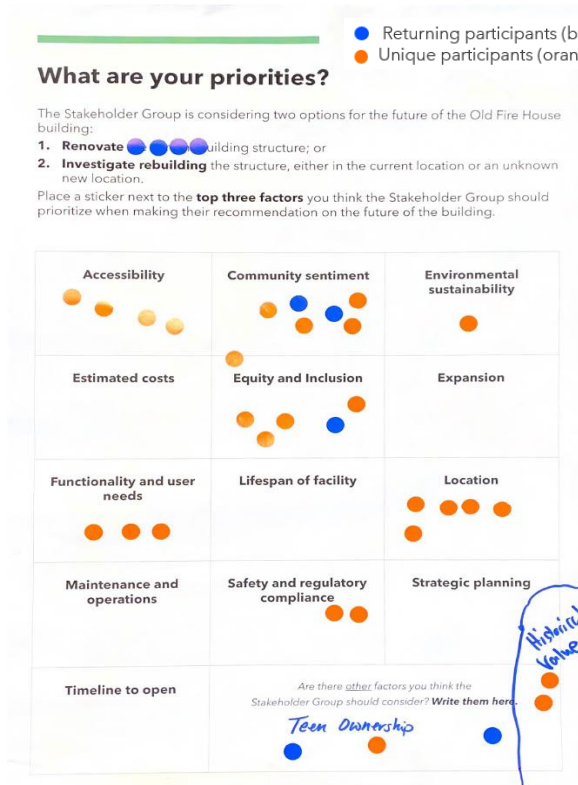


FIGURE 6. COMBINED ADULT GROUP ON SEPT. 24

*The dot colors in the activity on the left do not have any significance. In the combined adult group on Sept. 24, a several participants did not participate in the factor prioritization activity and instead placed stickers next to the "renovation" option.

Combined Adult Group

There were a total of 12 participants in the combined adults group on September 24 (4 of whom were returning participants from Sept. 22).

"What would encourage a teen you know to come to a teen space or event?"

Alumni and community members emphasized location in these discussions. They expressed a need for a welcoming, warm space for teens to be themselves surrounded by friends and staff that they feel comfortable with. Participants in this group emphasized that the Old Fire House Teen Center should be teen-led. They expressed a desire for the space itself to feel like a teen bedroom, which they described as a space that feels less organized, not corporate, and has less glass.

Music was central in these discussions. They said that teens are attracted to spaces that celebrate teen creativity and feel like a "tapestry of people are there and were there." This includes a space to play music, dance, and be loud without judgement. Participants in this group also expressed a desire for LGBTQIA+ representation among adult staff.

Alumni and community members also discussed preserving the central location of the Teen Center as a priority when considering a renovation or a rebuild.

“What made you feel comfortable and safe at OFH?”

In addition to the factors listed above, adult participants also discussed that the OFH should feel like a community with teen-to-teen leadership and mentorship, but that adults can be there for all-ages shows. They appreciate quiet spaces for people who get overwhelmed.

The group also feels free to express themselves in an area of downtown Redmond without corporate surroundings.

What components should be kept regardless of the decision?

The group wanted to keep the studio, poster wall, stage big enough to dance, kitchen, and intangible aspects such as the “grunge” feel and historic value. They also appreciate the outdoor space, including the basketball court, side yard, and patio.

Was there anything missing from OFH or new you’d like to add?

Alumni and community members generated the following list of elements:

- New stage
- New kitchen
- Maximizing use of every available space
- Memorializing the old space, including its historical timeline
- Building up to code and ADA compliance (especially bathrooms and stairs)
- Air conditioning
- Extended hours for those not on a traditional school schedule
- More staff that teens trust to prevent burnout of current staff
- Expanded building footprint in place of the basketball court
- Teen agency in use of the space
- Room dividers
- Meal and food availability

Why did your dot go there?

After they had the opportunity to think about prioritizing the factors, members of this group explained their reasoning. Group members emphasized that the location is central, accessible, and historic and therefore should be prioritized. Location was integral to community sentiment in these discussions.

In addition, participants felt that dedicating the space to teens was important because teens would not be willing to go to a space in which they don’t feel a sense of ownership. Equity and inclusion and safety and regulatory compliance was also a priority to ensure the space is inclusive.

“What advice would you give the Stakeholder Group?”

Adult participants in this group wanted to recommend renovation to keep the location and preserve this piece of Redmond history. They reflected teens’ desire to keep the building “as-is.” They see the OFH as a space for teens who identify as “alternative” to be themselves. They also asked that the Stakeholder Group consider the long-term future of Redmond, “think big (for decades)” and “preserve the vibe when renovating.”

Online Group

In the online group on September 24, there were 8 alumni, 4 community members, 1 teen, 1 nonprofit service provider from the Redmond Historical Society, and 3 parents. Former Mayor of Redmond, Rosemarie Ives, was also in attendance.

"What would encourage you (or teens) to come to a teen space or event?"

The online group described many of the same elements as other groups that would encourage teens to come to the Teen Center and make them feel comfortable. The group felt that it should be a teen-dedicated space for decorating, exploring arts and activities, and recording and performing music. They also see the Teen Center as a place to experiment with self-expression.

The group felt that the OFH history and connection to the downtown community are reasons to preserve the location.

Accessibility 	Community sentiment 	Environmental sustainability 
Estimated costs	Equity and Inclusion 	Expansion
Functionality and user needs 	Lifespan of facility 	Location 
Maintenance and operations	Safety and regulatory compliance	Strategic planning
Timeline to open 	Are there <i>other</i> factors you think the Stakeholder Group should consider? Write them here.	

7. ONLINE GROUP STICKER ACTIVITY. SUN SIGNS INDICATE RETURNING PARTICIPANTS FROM THE FIRST FOCUS GROUP.

"What made the OFH a comfortable and safe space for teens?" (Alternative question for those whose teens didn't go to OFH: "Think about community spaces where you spend time, or where you would want to spend time. What makes, or would make, these spaces comfortable and safe for your teens?")

Participants expressed that the OFH feels safe and welcoming, specifically for teens "that aren't from 'normal' backgrounds," including those that identify as alternative and queer. Teens felt like they were part of a community where everyone cared about the building and its history. As echoed in the other

breakout groups, participants in the online group emphasized that it felt safe because teens were able to lead the programming.

Part of the feeling of safety also came from the staff. Participants believed that many of the staff were musicians and artists in their 20s and 30s who identify as queer, making them cool and relatable to teens. Participants also emphasized that the staff were transparent with teens and respected confidentiality when teens shared their issues and asked for advice. Overall, the staff made teens feel valued and like part of the community, without judging or telling teens what to do.

Whether the OFH building is renovated or rebuilt – are there components that you want to ensure are kept in the future space to honor the old space or recreate its specialness?

Participants in the online group described a vision for the Teen Center that includes archived work so that the history of the Teen Center is visible for newcomers and returners alike. This includes old posters, teen art, and historic instruments. Other aspects of the Teen Center that participants wanted to see kept include the recording studio, roll-up garage doors with access to the outdoors, and small pocket spaces that ensure teens can experience privacy when needed. Regardless, participants wanted to ensure that it remains a venue to play music.

“Was there anything missing from the OFH that would have made it an even better space for teens?”

Similar to participants across groups, the online group expressed a desire for HVAC and good ventilation. They discussed the benefits of modern construction in terms of safety, occupancy, and fire safety, while discussing the need to preserve the Teen Center’s charm.

Plenary Session Feedback

After the breakout sessions, participants returned as a full group to share highlights and takeaways from their discussions. Group participants, including teens, parents, service providers, community members, and alumni, expressed that they want to preserve a dedicated space for teens that feels comfortable to them. Participants emphasized the importance of the building’s history and unique features and amenities, including the recording studio, kitchen, garage doors, and outdoor space that allow them to freely choose their activity without a signup process. Representation among staff is also important to all groups, especially alumni and community members, for teens to relate to the staff. They emphasized that the Teen Center provided a safe space for “alternative” teens who don’t feel comfortable in other spaces.

Appendix A: Flipchart Notes

The following notes are transcribed from flipcharts used to document the focus group discussions.

Teen Groups

There were 10 teens who attended the focus groups, including five who participated on both dates.

What would encourage you to come to a teen space or event?

- Dedicated teen space - no surprise kids or adults
- Having specialized spaces that don't exist elsewhere
- Space for youth culture in Redmond. Redmond has bland corporate culture
- Express your art and yourself with no judgement
- Free ways to express creativity
- Kitchen free to use and free food
- History and culture that can't be replicated!
- Chill and flexible environment!
- Can be chill but also a concert space!
- Small spaces that force proximity!
- Many options for activities! Music, art, etc. Supplies
- Dedicated activity but it was an option
- Welcoming nature of amazing staff
- Live music - it attracted teens to OFH
- Close to bus stops
- Juju was the history and culture, being part of a legacy, quirky
- Built culture is also accumulated - the space is a shared interest
- Even if you didn't come often people knew you
- Teen led
- Convenient location downtown
- Easy sign up to host event - no sign up
- A place to invite all your friends and meet new people
- Our priorities are to find compliance and accessibility while still keeping charm
- What is required to be compliant?
- Rooms with different uses and places to meet
- Places by teens, for teens
- Location by stores, schools, transit, walkable
- Not corporate feel, lived in space
- Convenient location downtown
- Unique culture/atmosphere
- Low barrier for entry
- Free materials, food, studio, instruments
- Alternative space

- Welcome and encourages creation by queer/alternative, disabled teens. Space for them.

What made OFH comfortable and safe?

- Centering teen creativity and sentiment
- Same location
- Dedicated studio, kitchen, etc.
- Stand alone
- Artsy fartsy-ness - unique structure
- Being able to put posters on walls
- The whole building
- Décor and artwork
- Labyrinth floor plan - 4 areas
- A/C - HVAC, better temp control
- Dedicated space to store stuff (coat check)
- Items to sort! Donations! Ways to help out that are passive
- Improve sign in - name and emergency contact - value privacy more
- Safe for queer and neurodivergent
- Yes counselor
- Programs for housing and food
- Resources on gender issues and how to navigate
- Spaces for teens and nonprofit
- Familiar staff - greeted, know you
- Not advertised much but everyone had similar vibes, safe space
- Made for self-expression
- Low bar of entry
- Extra amenities
- Food
- Welcome no matter your background

What is missing at OFH or could be even better?

- Programs by teens in art and creativity
- Tips for finance, driving = life skills
- Live shows
- Free food and cooking classes (low barrier)
- Hyper fixation sharing day
- Jam sessions
- More materials to create with (paint, sewing)

Advice for Stakeholders

- Renovate! Cheaper! Preserves environmental history and keeps location!
- Other considerations
 - Lack of teen third spaces

- Lack of venues in surrounding area
 - Teens experiencing homelessness need access to resources at a teen center
- Renovation is cheaper and surer way to preserve culture and history and meet community sentiment
- How much more would it be to make a whole new building, unknown
- They have money to repair
- Problems with OFH or exaggerated
- Keep in similar location if rebuild (prefer renovate)
- Teens should have most say

Parents and Service Providers

There were 10 parents and service providers in this breakout group in the first Focus Group. Parents and service providers joined the combined adult group in the second Focus Group.

What would encourage teens to come to a teen space or event?

- Own space
- "Cool"
- Art on wall
- Not a school or office
- Real, grungy
- Connected to history
- Dance
- No barriers to participate or attend
- Easy access from school without a parent
- Taps into independence
- Supports working parents
- Familiar faces = community
- Regular cadence can aid in this
- Drop-in that is a "choose your own adventure"
- Hang, try a craft, learn something, free flowing
- Harry Potter common room
- Opportunity for spontaneous activity
- Feels teen-led and not adult "observed"
- Accessibility to food and mental health services without having to ask

Why did you pick your top 3 factors?

- History is important to kids who go there
- Why is safety up there when it's a given?
- Community sentiment
- Once you take this into account, the other factors happen (except cost)

- Theme of all factors falling from one single factor (because when a place is iconic you want to find a way to keep it)
- Location is too vague because we don't know what that means but it's very important
- Cost is less important because whatever option is chosen, it's a money question at this point
- If separate teen center is guaranteed, might impact decision
- Sustainability could be good for a rebuild
- Sound (inclusion) – spectrum of needs
- If some architectural elements, stage, studio, teen-only space, downtown are preserved, either option accepted by community
- Trying to capture and rebuild the quirkiness – differing opinions
- What would be engineered away? Could we hire someone to make sure quirkiness happens?
- Ensure separate spaces for quiet spaces

Was there anything missing from OFH?

- Direct advertising in schools of programs (drop-in, mental health, and programs)
- Improving equity

Things for Stakeholders to Know

- Know the choices very clearly

Alumni and Community

In the Sept. 22 Focus Group, there were 13 city teen services alumni and community members.

What made you feel comfortable and safe at OFH?

- If allowed, trans adults provide resources and support, volunteer
- Welcome, safe, music!
- Friends, community, "third space/place", role models
- Opportunities that aren't elsewhere
- Location – new or current
- Safe, easy to get to
- Music
- Activities
- A place for others to find
- Location
- Teens feel safe, feel a part of something, not corporate
- Promotions: a variety of art/music; volunteer
- Teen-curated vibes; advertising and promotion
- After school programs and promote
- Ownership of space
- Welcoming, warm place to be yourself
- A space you're not "other-ized"

Whether renovate or rebuild...

- Showroom
- Concert space
- Recording studio
- Teen art centric
- Beautification by teens
- Proud of history
- Weird, iconic, architecture is important, hose tower
- Character and heart of the room
- Kitchen
- Transit between schools and OFH

Was there anything missing at OFH?

- Dark room

What advice would you give the Stakeholder Group?

- Renovate; keep it cool and safe
- Keep location
- Which option will take longer? Cost more? Renovate partly?
- Location is iconic
- Listen and talk to teens
- Recognize history, recognize future

Combined Adult Group

The group on September 24 included parents, service providers, city teen center services alumni, and community members. There were a total of 12 participants, including 4 returners from September 22.

What would encourage a teen you know to come to a teen space or event?

- Freedom of expression (not just audible)
- Music equipment
- Representation in the space (LGBTQIA+)
- Space to play music and dance
- Safe – express yourself (no one will judge)
- You can be loud without judgement
- Where teens can decide what they are doing (where, when)
- Looks and feels like a teen bedroom (less glass, less organized, you could throw your jacket on the floor)
- Easily accessible (bus, walk)
- Centrally located (you don't have to drive)
- Unique
- Safe staff (boundaries/not free for all)
- Celebrates teen creativity

- Feels like a tapestry of people who are there and were there

What made you feel comfortable and safe at OFH?

- Community (teen to teen leadership and mentorship)
- Focused on teen creation
- Adults can be there for all ages shows
- Quiet spaces (for people who get overwhelmed)
- Surroundings aren't corporate so leads to freedom of expression
 - Places where other things are going on are less safe/comfy
- Judgement-free zone
- Community (like minded)

What component to keep?

- Studio
- Poster wall
- Stage big enough to dance
- Kitchen
- "grunge"
- Historic value
- Outdoor space (basketball, side yard, patio)
- Photo lab
- Private spaces for contractor/outside nonprofit

Missing from OFH/NEW

- New stage
- New kitchen
- Use every square inch in area
- Memorial of old space/history/timeline
- How do we make it special?
- Code and ADA compliant
- Air conditioning
- Bathrooms (ADA) and stairs
- Expanding programs for teen help
- Services for those not on a traditional school schedule (extended hours of operation)
- More staff on hand (prevent burnout of current staff)
- Teen agency in room use of flexible/versatile space
- Room dividers to make more versatile
- Meal and food availability
- Remove basketball and expand building - more square footage
- Staff that teens trust

Why did your dot go there?

- Location > accessibility because accessibility will happen no matter the choice plus if it's too expensive to make OFH accessible then location is more important
- Community sentiment, equity and inclusion, location: no matter where it is it will be accessible, location is historic, having own teen space.
- Teen ownership (addition): Teens won't go to a place that they can't decorate/own
- Location is central, accessible, historic
- Community sentiment - they want renovation at that space
- Safety/regulatory compliance
 - 9-year-old daughter
 - Invest in teens > \$

What advice would you give to the Stakeholder Group?

- Think big (for decades)
- Redmond has an opportunity to preserve something unique to Redmond
- There is not space elsewhere for alternative kids
- Preserve the vibe when renovating
- Listen to the community by asking questions and responding
- Redmond 2050 has a goal that directly describes OFH
- Read about the history of the building and its programs
- Teens are saying they want the building "as-is"
- Teens should have more weight in the group
- Worried teens are in Stakeholder Group to "look good"
 - Address and engage with the teens and take their input more seriously
 - Have adults for guidance and get as close as possible to it being a teen decision
 - Teens on an even field with adults

Online

An online option was available for the second focus group meeting. This group included 17 participants.

What would encourage you (or teens) to come to a teen space or event?

- Accessibility and access - should be near where teens are or access by bus, teen spaces or events being just for teens
- Downtown location kept it connected to the community
- Safe space there - space for experimentation, free or very affordable for such a resourced space, lots music equipment
- Visual look of the teen center - the fact that its old makes it cool - if a renovation is done it should be the same as it looks now
- Teen center can't be co-located with other programs - teens like to go where they can be away from school, jobs, home, absent other pressures, a place that is welcoming, safe accepting

- History is an important part of it – motivating to go! Inspiring to have successful musicians come out of this place! Can't get this if it's relocated.
- Wouldn't want to go if there were older folks in the center – specialized space!
- Historical significance, deep roots in 90s grunge scene, pull for teens who aren't usually interested in community spaces.
- Open center just for teens, just their space, decorate it, drop in, explore art and activities – not a stiff class schedule that you have to register for – open community! Their space, their center, food together!

What made the OFH a comfortable and safe space for teens?

Alternative question for those whose teens didn't go to the OFH: Think about community spaces where your teens spend time, or where you think they would want to spend time. What makes, or would make, these spaces comfortable and safe for your teens?

- DIY programming and programming was done for the teens by the teens, adults were mentors and models, lots of teen growth, maker spaces and writing spaces and performing spaces was important (5)
- Role models! A place to experiment, mess up, you could feel like a fish out of water in other spaces but at OFH you could experiment with fashion and identity and feel safe! (9)
- Having transparency from the adults – trust that what everyone was telling each other was in confidence and truthful, trustworthy adults, place to share issues, get advice, from not serious to serious, makes someone feel valued and like a community member! Good to know that other people can be trusted! (7)
- Teens are prone to challenges in teen years, being able to go somewhere where there isn't judgement, having access to YES, not being told what to do or being hounded about homework or responsibilities, not having outside pressures – it's an oasis! That made the teen center accessible and comfortable. (5)
- Location in middle of downtown – could go from multiple jobs to the teen center easily, you could grab something to eat on the way, the location was the most accessible it could have. (7)
- OFH – they always know your name, this is important.

Whether the OFH building is renovated or rebuilt – are there components that you want to ensure are kept in the future space to honor the old space or recreate its specialness?

- Having the space remain a venue that you can play heavier music at, punk rock, metal, spaces to play this music is rare (5)
- Archive work of the things that people came into see, bring the old posters, things about the space and how it was curated that should be brought over, teen art even not current teens, instruments that are beyond repair but loved (8)
- Existing building and elements are worthy, functioning well – dungeon like qualities of the recording studio, cool underground space, roll up garage doors with access to outdoors and summer, grill outs, small pocket spaces where there can be privacy and activity rooms, variety of seating (8)
- Display or exhibit, preservation of the cultural iconic components, poster, art, old billiard table, preserving the doors, alarm series and patio spaces (4)

- Rebuild – keep the location in the downtown corridor, extremely useful, this is important in addition to its historical value, not supportive of a rebuild but if it had to happen the location is important
- All the conditions of the old fire house need to be assessed – feels this question is a push pull and a leading question, all the conditions of the old fire house should be assessed for what is important and urgent and create a prioritized list, believes that the two scenarios do not determine what is an unsafe situation and what does it cost to resolve that issue and what would be the timeline, believes the building is capable of being remodeled.

Was there anything missing from the OFH that would have made it an even better space for teens?

- HVAC, good ventilation, struggled with this despite the charm, there are some benefits to modern construction when it comes to safety, occupancy, fire safety, share the air and not have it be unsafe
- Wasn't much missing – this feels like a leading question – can we find a reason to tear down the teen center? If it ain't broke don't fix it – let's make it occupancy safe. The teens like the teen center so let's not reinvent it.

What advice would you give the Stakeholder Group as they consider their recommendation to City Council?

- Save OFH



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