

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Council authorizes \$4 million for Capital Campaign for New Community Center** *25,000 square feet Family First Center to provide health, fitness and recreation*

Renton, WA: Renton City Council has authorized up to \$4 million for a capital campaign to build a new community center to serve the residents in the Cascade/Benson Hill area.

In requesting the capital investment, Mayor Denis Law noted the public/private partnership that has been formed creates the opportunity to provide quality services and amenities to the community that the city could not afford to do on its own.

The partnership with the city includes Doug Baldwin from the Seattle Seahawks and his Foundation, Renton School District and HealthPoint, a healthcare provider that would provide services at the center. The collective vision of this partnership is to provide youth and families in the area with a community center that offers health, fitness, and recreational opportunities. The plan is to build the center next to Cascade Elementary School.

“There is a strong need in the Cascade/Benson Hill area for a gathering place for the community that provides a variety of health and recreation opportunities, especially for youth,” said Mayor Law. “This holistic approach and creative partnership creates pathways for success for the community and provides an opportunity for us to make this critical investment in the most cost-effective manner.”

The estimated cost to build the center is about \$15 million. Over the next several months, the Family First team that includes the City of Renton, Doug Baldwin Foundation, Renton School District, HealthPoint and several community members will solicit additional partners and funds, develop a design for the center, and establish programs.

Doug Baldwin Jr. shared his reasons for being so passionate about the Family First Community Center. He said, “The day I moved to the Pacific Northwest, I fell in love with an area that has become my home for the past 6 years. The people of Renton are passionate, involved and diverse in culture. I grew to appreciate the tradition of downtown Renton. I

enjoy the excitement of The Landing. But most importantly, I enjoyed becoming a part of the community. My annual canned food drive at Pho Shizzle has brought out countless friends and supporters that I've come to know from the area. Visiting local schools and participating in family events has truly been a joy to be a part of.

Now I want to help bring back something to the community. The Family First Community Center is just that. A center where the health and wellness of families will be the priority. It's a grand vision met with a relentless passion to serve the community. And I am so grateful to once again be a part of something great happening in Renton!”

The Cascade/Benson Hill area was annexed to the city in 2008. The area has nearly a quarter of the city’s population with 12% below the poverty line. Twenty percent of the population is 14 years or younger and the community is very diverse. The area has also been historically underserved though after the area was annexed the city increased police services and also made a significant investment in roads and infrastructure. However, there has been no investment in recreation services for family and youth. The Family First Center will meet that need and offer a whole host of programs including sports and recreation, health and wellness, classes in technology, music and English as a second language.

“This project is a collaboration most cities only dream of,” said Council President Armondo Pavone. “Renton School District's creative, forward thinking approach, coupled with Doug Baldwin's unwavering commitment to the development of our youth, will allow the city to fill a tremendous need in one of the most underserved neighborhoods in Renton.”

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