

NEED FOR A SPEEDSKATING RINK
IN THE TWIN CITIES METROPOLITAN AREA
A Report to the Minnesota State Legislature

Adopted by the Metropolitan Council

January 21, 1982

300 Metro Square Bldg., 7th and Robert Sts.
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101 Tel. 612 291-6359

Publication No. 11-81-108



PREFACE

Minnesota Laws, Ch. 304, Sec. 3 (1981), directed the Metropolitan Council and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to:

"...examine the need for a speedskating rink in the Metropolitan Area. The Council and Commission shall submit recommendations and findings regarding the speedskating rink to the Legislature on or before January 15, 1982."

At its meeting on Jan. 21, 1982, the Metropolitan Council adopted the following motion:

"That the Metropolitan Council adopt the report, Need for a Speedskating Rink in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, and forward it to the Legislature in fulfillment of Minn. Stat. Ch. 304, Sec. 3, (1981)."

The major finding in the report is that there is a need for a 400-meter, artificially-refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. In adopting this report, the Metropolitan Council wants to make clear, given the fiscal constraints of the times, that it will not proceed with further planning for the rink until the Minnesota State Legislature provides further direction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION	1
About This Report	1
Major Findings	1
Recommendation	2
2. INTRODUCTION	3
Need For Study	3
Purpose of Study	3
Background	4
The Sport	4
The Facilities	4
The History	6
3. FACTORS REFLECTING NEED	7
Participants	7
Use of Existing Facilities	7
Organized Programs	8
General Public Interest	9
Participant Costs	11
The Speedskating Season	12
Growth Potential	12
Inventory of Rinks	13
Local	13
National	14
International	16
4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE NEEDS ANALYSIS	17
5. FUTURE ACTIONS	19
APPENDIX	21

Table of Contents
Page 2

	<u>Page</u>
FIGURES AND TABLES	
Figure 1. Olympic Speedskating Rink at Lake Placid, N.Y.	5
Table 1. Use of Twin Cities Area Facilities	7
2. Speedskating Associations and Clubs	8
3. Speedskating Rinks, 1981-82 Season	9
4. Operating Costs at the Milwaukee Rink in 1981	15
5. Speedskating Interest in the Region	22

1. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report was prepared by the Metropolitan Council in response to a directive from the 1981 Minnesota Legislature to examine the need for a speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. It describes the sport of speedskating and examines eight factors related to the need for a rink, including current participation, general public interest and existing facilities. The need for a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink is the focus of the report. Speedskating interest groups were consulted, as were park and recreation professionals in the Twin Cities Area. A general population survey was conducted to assess interest and other similar facilities were examined. The report concludes that there is a need for such a facility and recommends future actions.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. There is a need for a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.
2. The general population appears to be interested in the sport of speedskating, both as participants and spectators. Survey results, general interest in ice skating and current activity in areas with speedskating programs support this conclusion.
3. Annual participation in the sport is difficult to measure. It appears to be about 15,000 speedskating occasions, but would most likely be about 35,000 overall in a longer season, 25,000 of them at an artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink. There are currently about 800 novices and 200 club speedskaters in the Area.
4. There is moderate potential for growth in the sport of speedskating in the Twin Cities Area. However, this will result only if a larger percentage of the skating-aged population is involved through active programming.
5. There are two 400-meter speedskating rinks in the Metropolitan Area and five smaller rinks. All are provided by land flooding or lake ice. The limits imposed by the current short season (mid-December to February) pose a significant constraint to competition and programming of speedskating in Minnesota.
6. Major speedskating facilities will likely become the responsibility of the Region or the state.
7. The cost of constructing a facility would be at least \$1 million and possibly as much as \$2 million. The annual operating cost of a facility would be approximately \$125,000, not counting debt service costs.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Metropolitan Council, in cooperation with other public and private interests, should do the following:

1. Determine an implementing agency for a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink in the Metropolitan Area.
2. Specify the conditions under which implementing responsibility would be accepted by the implementing agency.
3. Recommend the funding source and timing of development for the facility to the 1983 session of the Minnesota State Legislature.

2. INTRODUCTION

NEED FOR STUDY

Minnesota Laws, ch. 304, sec. 3, (1981), directs the Metropolitan Council and Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission to:

"...examine the need for a speedskating rink in the Metropolitan Area. The Council and Commission shall submit recommendations and findings regarding the speedskating rink to the Legislature on or before January 15, 1982."

This report is submitted to the Legislature in fulfillment of that directive.

The legislative action requiring this study came as a result of interest expressed by speedskating groups in the Twin Cities Area. These groups have been actively seeking construction of an artificially refrigerated speedskating rink for the past 10 years. Several government agencies have been approached with this proposal. A proposal for construction of a rink was presented to the Metropolitan Council in 1977. It was not considered because no public agency was committed to operating such a facility. Past proposals have resulted in several fragmented studies of this subject. Most of these studies dealt with the physical design and cost aspects of the proposed facility. A comprehensive assessment of the need for this kind of facility has not been done. This study provides that assessment.

The Recreation Open Space Development Guide/Policy Plan contains a classification system for recreation facilities in the Metropolitan Area. One of the classes is "special recreation uses." These facilities are seen as one or few of a kind in the Area and constitute the kinds of recreation facilities necessary to round out a park system. The Council studied the question of regional special recreation uses in 1976 and began a comprehensive study of them in 1981. Speedskating needs and facilities have been included in both these studies, albeit not in the detail presented here. This study was part of the on-going study of special recreation uses. It is a necessary prototype for the more detailed needs assessment required prior to proceeding with any special use facility.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a need for a speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Area. The focus was on an artificially refrigerated outdoor rink since regular outdoor facilities already exist in the Area. The study did not explore details of siting, construction or management of such a facility. These items are seen as more appropriate for further study if, and when, a need is established.

The study focused on speedskating to the exclusion of other activities that could use the same ice. Hockey, figure skating, long-blade skating, etc., would be desirable in conjunction with any speedskating rink and may be necessary for full utilization of any facility. The report consists of a background discussion of speedskating in this Area. Factors affecting the need for an artificially refrigerated rink and conclusions regarding these factors.

BACKGROUND

THE SPORT

Speedskating is a competitive sport generally conducted outdoors on an oval ice rink. There are two styles of competition -- metric and pack. Metric competition involves two skaters racing against the clock in well-defined lanes. This is the racing style used in the Winter Olympic Games. The season for this style of skating, except for the top-line competition, begins in October and lasts through January. This season is followed by the pack-style season. Pack competition involves six to eight skaters who start in a "pack" and race over the course without regard for specific racing lanes. This is the style used in the races held on Como Lake during the St. Paul Winter Carnival. The season runs through early March.

Speedskating requires a special long-bladed skate. Competitors at the upper levels wear skin-tight uniforms. Little else is necessary in terms of equipment. Competition is held over 500, 1,000, 1,500, 5,000 and 10,000 meters for men and 500, 1,000, 1,500 and 3,000 meters for women. The world's record for men in the 1,500 meters is 1 minute, 54.79 seconds, or nearly 30 miles per hour. Pack-style speedskating is governed in the United States by the Amateur Skating Union (ASU). Olympic and international competition is governed by the United States International Speedskating Association (USISA).

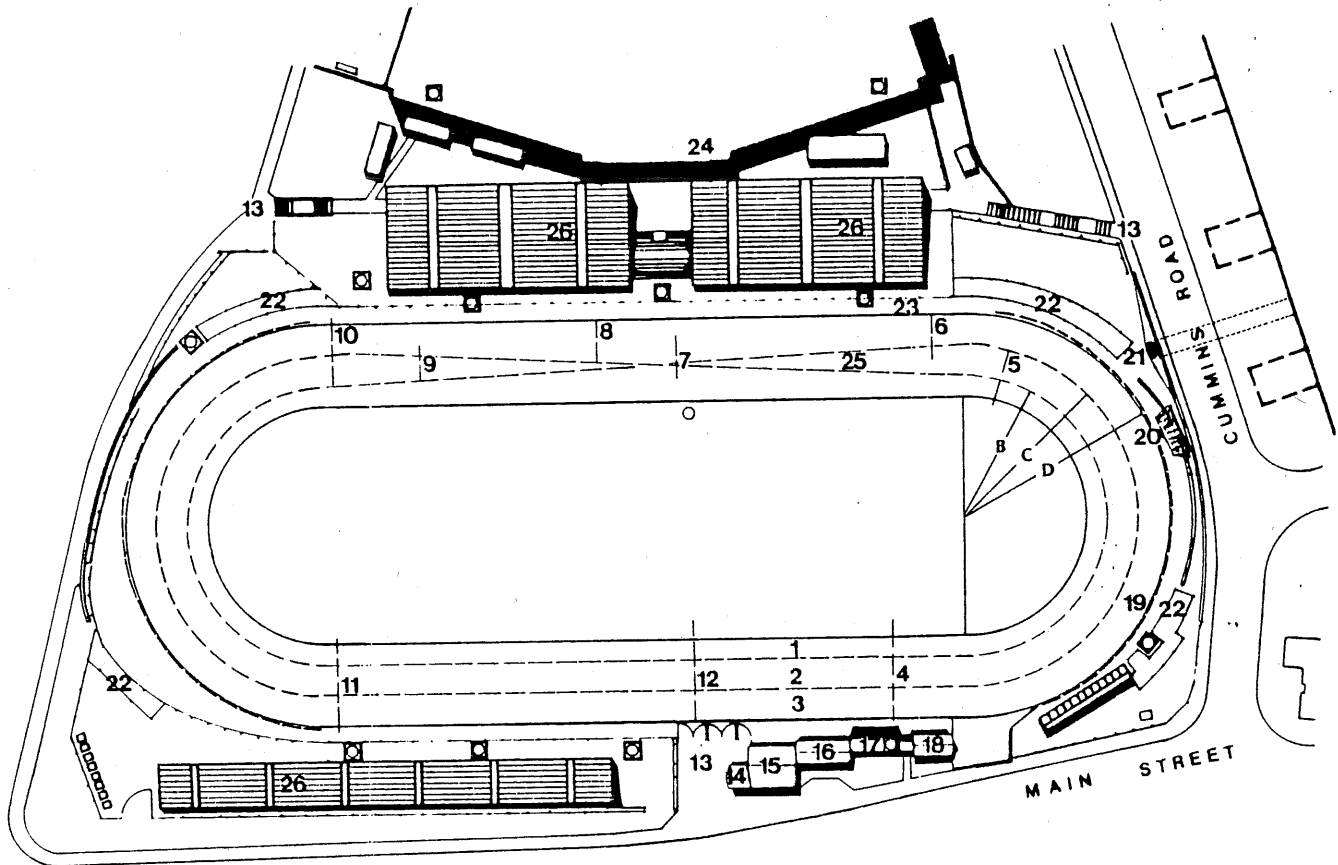
THE FACILITIES

Speedskating facilities range from artificially refrigerated 400-meter rinks to rinks that are no more than the marked perimeter of general skating areas. World and other major competitions are generally conducted on 400-meter rinks, but rinks of 333 meters can be used for all but world and Olympic competition. Rinks are generally about 45 feet wide, which allows for two five-meter (16.4 feet) metric racing lanes and a four-meter (13.2 feet) warm-up lane. A full-sized 400-meter track has about 60,000 square feet of ice, or 1.38 acres. This is roughly 3.5 times the surface of a regulation hockey rink. Such a facility would be similar in length to the running tracks that ring most high school football/soccer fields, but would be significantly wider. Figure 1 provides an example of a full-sized speedskating rink.

Rinks can be provided by artificial refrigeration, natural lake ice or land flooding. Artificially refrigerated rinks generally provide ice from late October through mid-April. Both natural lake ice and land flooded rinks are possible from about mid-December through mid-March, with land flooding getting a head start in the fall and lake ice lasting a bit longer in the spring. Artificial refrigeration is similar to that used for hockey arenas in that brine-circulating pipes are placed in a concrete floor. Ice depths of 1-1½ inch are normal. Rink maintenance for artificially refrigerated rinks is performed by an oversize Zambonie. Other rink types are maintained by a scraping sled and plow or by hand.

Support facilities vary widely. Basic support includes a warming house, timing facilities, a maintenance shed and parking. The larger facilities in Europe may include weight rooms, lockers, saunas, dining halls and other facilities typical of a large athletic training complex. The infield area may be left in grass or can be used for a variety of other activities including general skating, hockey or bandy, a team sport played on skates with a stick and ball. Some European rinks have the entire infield artificially refrigerated.

Figure 1
 OLYMPIC SPEEDSKATING RINK AT LAKE PLACID, N.Y.



- | | | | | | |
|---|---|----|-------------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | 4m practice lane | 9 | Start 3,000m, 5,000m | 18 | Zamboni Garage |
| 2 | 5m race lane | 10 | Start 3,000m, 5,000m | 19 | Pads |
| 3 | 5m race lane | 11 | Start 500m | 20 | Scoreboard |
| 4 | Start 10,000m, Finish 500m;
1,500m, 5,000m;
3,000m, 10,000m | 12 | Finish 1,000m | 21 | Tunnel |
| 5 | Start 1,500m | 13 | Entrances | 22 | Press pens |
| 6 | Start 1,500m | 14 | Tickets and information | 23 | Coaches' pens |
| 7 | Start 1,000m | 15 | Comfort rooms | 24 | Press center |
| 8 | Start 1,000m | 16 | Warming | 25 | Crossover lanes |
| | | 17 | Judges and officials | 26 | Bleachers |

THE HISTORY

Speedskating as a formal, competitive sport goes back over 100 years. Minnesota produced its first national champion in 1893. The sport became part of the Winter Olympic Games in 1924. The Twin Cities has been a center of speedskating in this country throughout this century, placing a large number of people on the U.S. National Speedskating Team each year. Since 1946, the U.S. National Outdoor Championships have been held on Como Lake in St. Paul. Minnesota's role as the center for U.S. speedskating declined in the mid-60s when an artificially refrigerated rink was built in Milwaukee, Wis. However, the national team has continued to draw about 30 percent of its members from Minnesota in the last 10 years. The 1981 team counts 14 Minnesotans among its 47 members. Other major concentrations of 1981 team members are in Wisconsin (13) and Illinois (9).

Facilities have varied in location in the Twin Cities, but Minneapolis and St. Paul have each had at least one 400-meter natural ice rink since the 1930s. The Minneapolis facility at Lake Nokomis will not be open in 1981. Because of the city's tight budget, funds will be used to operate facilities used by more city, as opposed to suburban, residents. Smaller rinks have come and gone in several suburban communities over this period.

Through the late 1950s, all national competition was held on natural ice. The first U.S. artificial rink was built in Squaw Valley, Cal. for the 1960 Winter Olympic Games. This rink has since been dismantled. The Milwaukee rink was built in 1965 and has operated continuously since then. A third, shorter rink was built and dismantled in Detroit. The newest rink was built for the 1980 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid, N.Y. It is still in place, but is not being used on a regular basis. There are at least 30 artificially refrigerated rinks in the world, with the Netherlands having the greatest number (14).

3. FACTORS REFLECTING NEED

PARTICIPANTS

Aside from national and world competition, there are two levels of participation in speedskating -- novice and club. Novice skaters are elementary- and junior high-aged children. Competitions are held on a local basis over short distances. The emphasis is on basic racing skills, recreation and some competition.

Club skaters are generally high school-age and older, although some younger skaters are involved. Most club skaters are under age 25. These are the skaters who form the talent pool for the major national and world competitions and teams.

In this Twin Cities Area, there are currently about 800 novice skaters. The largest concentration is in the Ramsey County suburbs with lesser concentrations in the Robbinsdale and Bloomington areas. There are about equal numbers of boys and girls in these programs.

There are currently about 200 active club skaters in the Area, although there have been as many as 400 in recent years. St. Paul and the Ramsey County suburbs provide most of the club skaters, with south Minneapolis and the western suburbs a close second. Men slightly outnumber women at the club level.

Nationally, there are between 8,000 and 10,000 competitive skaters. About 60 percent are novices, leaving between 4,800 and 6,000 club-level skaters. The highest concentration of club skaters is in the Milwaukee-Madison area, where about 300 skaters compete. There are smaller concentrations in New York, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri. A national team of about 40 skaters is selected each year in time trials against an absolute standard. From this team, a world team of about a dozen skaters is selected for international competition.

USE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Use of existing facilities has not been systematically tabulated, either locally or nationwide. Observations by clubs and rink managers are the only sources of data. With this in mind, figures are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
USE OF TWIN CITIES AREA FACILITIES

<u>Event</u>	<u>Number of Skaters</u>
National Outdoor Championships (Como)	225
Average Twin Cities Club Meet (Como and Nokomis)	100
Average weekend day (Como and Nokomis)	125
Average weekday (Como and Nokomis)	20
Average weekend day (Roseville)	50
Average weekend day (Robbinsdale)	15

Based on average weekend-weekday use levels, two-month seasonal use is estimated at about 15,000 speedskating occasions for Twin Cities Area outdoor facilities. This is roughly equal to the total amount of ski touring use at Hyland Lake Park Reserve or Bunker Hills Regional Park, or picnic-swimming area

use at Battle Creek or Baylor Regional Parks. In contrast to these other park facilities, fewer individuals use speedskating facilities over the course of a season. Use estimates should improve with St. Paul's monitoring of use at the Como rink during the 1981-82 season.

The Milwaukee rink is used more due to factors described later in this report. Total paid participant use has fluctuated between 11,000 and 19,000 for all types of skating over the last six years, depending on weather conditions.

In addition to use by participants, spectator use can be significant. National Outdoor Championship meets at Lake Como have drawn in excess of 2,500 spectators on good weather days. The Milwaukee rink, which has better spectator and warming facilities but charges an entry fee, has had up to 5,000 spectators at major events, but averages about 5,000 per year when those events are excluded. All persons reporting usage state that weather is the main determinant of spectator interest. Cold, windy days usually restrict the audience to parents, friends and other skaters.

ORGANIZED PROGRAMS

Twin Cities speedskating is organized and programmed by a combination of clubs, schools, and municipal park and recreation department activities. Two speedskating associations and six clubs are the main units of organization. They are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
SPEEDSKATING ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS

<u>Speedskating Association</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Clubs</u>
Eastern Minnesota (EMSA)	St. Paul and Suburbs	Midway Eastside
Minnesota (MSSA)	Minneapolis and Suburbs	Sons of Norway Richfield Legion Westphal Legion Bearcat Legion

These clubs are also affiliated with the novice programs in their areas. However, each novice program has its own controlling board. The main novice program is the Northern Lights program in the northern Ramsey County suburbs. It has organized sub-groups in St. Paul (Como), Roseville, White Bear Lake, Shoreview and New Brighton. A new sub-group is starting this year in Woodbury. Other novice programs are located in Bloomington and Robbinsdale.

The clubs run the instructional and competitive program in speedskating. They charge membership dues of \$50 to \$60 per year. The novice programs range from no cost to \$10 per year and are staffed by volunteers. The 1981-82 competitive schedule shows 20 club meets, starting with metric speedskating indoors in late October and running at least one per weekend through early March. There are three major novice meets and several smaller novice races throughout the winter. In addition, the Minnesota clubs will send about 30 of the best skaters to train and compete in Milwaukee. Individuals foot most of the bill for this, but the club does contribute from dues, concessions and other fee revenues.

Municipal park and recreation departments are involved in speedskating mostly through the provision and maintenance of facilities. They also provide some publicity through their seasonal brochures. Programming is channeled through the clubs in the area. A survey of park and recreation departments revealed seven facilities for the 1981-82 skating season, as listed in Table 3.

Table 3
SPEEDSKATING RINKS, 1981-82 SEASON

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Length (meters)</u>
Como	Lake	400
White Bear Lake	Land	400
Roseville	Land	250
Bloomington	Land	225
Robbinsdale	Lake	225
Shoreview	Land	150
New Brighton	Land	75

While the park departments bear overall responsibility for maintaining the facilities, volunteer help from the clubs usually supplements park staff.

School district involvement consists of provision of the program and facility in White Bear Lake and active support and promotion in Roseville. Other school districts do not have speedskating programs.

Elsewhere in the country, the situation is much the same. Skating programs at the school and municipal levels emphasize hockey and general skating. The major programs using the Olympic Ice Rink in Milwaukee are general skating programs. The rink is open to the general public about 15 hours a week. Another 15 hours is devoted to "Kids on Ice," a general learn-to-skate program sponsored by the Rexnord Corporation and offered through the Milwaukee Public Schools. This 30-hour total for general skating is more than the total for both pack and metric skating at that rink. The people in charge of the Milwaukee rink say that significantly more general public programming should be done at the facility.

GENERAL PUBLIC INTEREST

Interest in speedskating has always been high in Minnesota's two governing associations. General public interest in the sport and its facilities has been harder to determine. This study assessed potential public interest in three ways: a survey of 35 municipal park and recreation directors in the area, a random survey of the general population and a survey in the 1979 Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

The park and recreation directors were surveyed by phone or in person and asked to describe the interest, programs and facilities for speedskating in their communities. The area of coverage included Minneapolis, St. Paul and most of the first two rings of suburbs. The responses were quite variable. A dozen directors indicated that no interest had been expressed to them and no special facilities or programs could be justified. Another nine said they had had some interest expressed to them over the years, but not enough to really get a program going. The remaining 14 directors said there had been enough interest expressed to start a program or, at least, to refer a few people a year to programs in other cities. Six departments had provided programs or facilities

in the past, but are not doing so now. One department, Eden Prairie, will open a lake rink next year. There seemed to be a general consensus that past speedskating interest in the suburbs centered around one or two active families. When members of these families stopped competing or found a facility elsewhere, the local interest subsided. Since most speedskating activity is centered in private clubs, public promotion and recruiting for the sport may be limited. Hockey seems to overshadow all other winter activities in most communities. None of the directors thought a program and facility such as that envisioned in this report could be justified on a local scale. Several thought that speedskating provided a good example of "latent demand," i.e., it's there, but it needs a dependable facility and an active, broad-based program to bring it out.

The general population survey was conducted by Mid-Continent Surveys, Inc., as part of its November 1981 PROBE survey. Survey design and detailed responses are provided in the Appendix. Three questions concerning speedskating were asked. Pertinent responses follow:

- Skating is an activity of much interest to Metropolitan Area residents. Sixty-four percent of the households in the Area have at least one person interested in some kind of skating. The percentage is significantly higher in the upper income and lower age groups. There are about 973,000 persons in the Region interested in skating.
- About 43 percent of the households in the Region indicate a potential interest of at least one person in watching speedskating events at a track. This expands to about 556,000 people. The socio-economic pattern is similar to skating in general. There is significant interest even in the lowest income and highest age categories.
- About 16 percent of the households indicate that at least one household member would be interested in participating in speedskating. That is about 139,000 people region-wide. The socio-economic pattern is the same, with a large drop-off in interest in older and poorer households.
- In about 48 percent of the households, people say they would be willing to pay two dollars per year in order to build an artificially refrigerated speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Area. Forty-six percent of the Area's approximately 758,000 households would yield \$1,516,000 annually for this type of facility. In reality, the total amount could be higher, assuming that some of the negative respondents would pay something between nothing and two dollars and some of the positive respondents would pay more than two dollars. Two dollars is approximately five times what would be necessary for annual debt service and operating subsidy according to cost estimates given by speedskating groups, and about twice the annual cost using figures given later in this report.

The results of this survey are surprisingly positive toward speedskating. The large interest figures probably represent a lot of hockey players and general skaters who might want to try speedskating "just once." Since the respondents were adults, there may be some overstatement of children's interest in the sport. The "willingness to pay" figure is particularly surprising in light of these tight economic times. There is no reason to believe that respondents did not know what they were saying. However, the survey is only a measure of potential interest and willingness to pay; i.e., the people say they would be interested. Actual interest and participation would probably be somewhat

lower, depending on location, programming, cost and other recreational alternatives available.

The survey presented speedskating in isolation from other potential recreation interests and public projects. A broader survey should be done as a basis for project planning or a feasibility report. However, for purposes of this study, there seems to be interest in speedskating and its attendant facilities.

The other source of general population interest is the Minnesota State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The SCORP included a detailed participation and perceived need survey of a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities. Speedskating was not specifically mentioned, but was included under the general heading "ice skating." In 1978, there were more than 7,750,000 ice skating participation occasions in the Metropolitan Area. Although questions were not specifically about one type of skating, responses were categorized as figure skating (6 percent), hockey, (38 percent) and "free-skating" (56 percent). This was by far the largest number of occasions of the 14 winter activities surveyed. When figures for summer season activities are included, ice skating ranks fourth behind bicycling (26,900,000), boating-fishing (16,000,000) and swimming (13,200,000) in number of participations. When asked about relative need for more facilities, 2.7 percent of the population said more ice skating facilities are the most important recreational need in their area. Ice skating ranked thirteenth of the 30 activities listed. People who said ice skating facilities were needed most felt more strongly about this need than people who said other facilities were needed. All these statistics must be tempered by the fact that the great majority of skating activity is in hockey and general skating. However, it does give some idea of the potential activity pool that could be tapped by speedskating.

PARTICIPANT COSTS

Speedskaters spend money for equipment, travel and rink time. Equipment consists of long-bladed skates and racing uniforms for advanced competitors. Good skates cost from \$100 to \$200, although beginners' skates cost about \$50. Equipment to maintain skates costs \$30 to \$50. Racing uniforms cost about \$100, depending on weight and material, and are worn only by top competitors. This amounts to between \$200 and \$350 for a fully-outfitted skater. This compares with about \$400 for a hockey player outfitted at the same level of competition. Figure skaters can be outfitted for about \$150.

Travel costs depend on the level of competition. As mentioned earlier, about 30 Minnesota skaters go to Milwaukee for two weeks each year to train and take part in national competitions. Some stay in motels and some with friends. Some take part-time jobs in the Milwaukee area for the skating season. In addition, some skaters make several shorter trips to Milwaukee during the course of a year. It is not uncommon for competitors to spend over \$500 per year to travel to Milwaukee to practice. Top-level competitors often travel to Europe early in the season because the rinks there have ice earlier. Only about the top 25 percent of the Twin Cities' speedskating population travels out of state, however. The others incur few travel costs.

Costs for rink time vary, but are increasing. Early in the season, limited indoor arena time costs about \$55 per hour. Novices pay up to \$10 for program registration. When the season moves outdoors, there is generally no cost for rink time on municipal facilities. However, this is changing. St. Paul began charging \$1.75 a day for use of the Lake Como rink for the 1981-82 season; season passes cost \$5.00 to \$25.00, depending on age and skill level.

In addition, the Eastern Minnesota Speed Skating Association has pledged \$4,200 for operation of the Como rink. With the closing of the Lake Nokomis facility in Minneapolis this year, the St. Paul fee structure marks a significant increase in the cost of speedskating in the Twin Cities. Traditionally, speedskating clubs have also put in significant amounts of time establishing and maintaining the smaller rinks they use.

THE SPEEDSKATING SEASON

Outdoor ice is seldom available before mid-December in the Twin Cities Area. The metric speedskating season begins in October. Area skaters are at a competitive disadvantage due to this late local start. They use dry-land practice and some indoor ice time to prepare for this relatively short season. Small shallow lakes can be expected to support a single adult's weight about Thanksgiving through April 1, according to the state climatologist. Large lakes are generally safe from the first week in December through mid-April. Even though lakes have frozen later than usual the last three years, the climatologist said there is no long-term warming trend occurring. The so-called "heat island" effect is increasing every year, however, thereby contributing somewhat to the slower freezing of lakes in populated parts of the Region.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

Growth potential for any activity can be approached from two directions: changes in the existing user population and potential additions to the user population. The current speedskating population, as in other competitive sports, is young.

The Council did a comprehensive forecast of the Region's population in 1977 and an interim update in April 1980. The 1980 Census figures for population by age group are not available for the Region. This analysis uses the Council forecasts for 1980, 1990 and 2000.

The Region's population is getting older. The average age was estimated to be 31.5 years in 1980 and is forecast to be 32.5 years in 1990 and 34 years in 2000. The age groups most important for speedskating, 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24, are all below the average age. These groups differ in the way they will change over the next 20 years.

The 10-14 group had 184,000 persons in 1980. It is forecast to have only 134,000 persons in 1990, but will increase to 187,000 persons in 2000. Since this is the main group for entry into speedskating, these figures indicate that entry could be a good deal slower in the next 10 years, but would be up in the longer run. The under 10 age group pattern is similar. The 15-19 group, with 176,000 persons in 1980, will experience a similar decline and rise, but will return to only about 170,000 persons by 2000. The 20-24 group will decline from 208,000 to 161,000 by 2000. These last two groups indicate a substantial decline in the number of people in the speedskating age group in both the short and long run.

Overall, the 10-24 group had 588,000 people in 1980, and will have 475,000 in 1990 and 518,000 in 2000. These changes show that growth in the speedskating population could be slow in the next 10 years, faster in the following 10 years -- especially in entry-level programs -- and then quite fast after the year 2000.

Growth in the Region's speedskating population would involve adding more people in the age group now participating. Speedskating has been a very localized activity, i.e., a few interested individuals in a club with little systematic programming or promotion. New novice programs in several suburbs show that a good number of individuals can be attracted with the proper programming. With region-wide programming and promotion, a larger portion of the young population would probably participate. There is less potential for attracting the older population, as speedskating is strenuous and competitive.

Overall, there appears to be moderate potential for growth in speedskating participation in the next 10 years. Lower numbers of people in the entry-level age group will act to depress this growth, but more systematic and aggressive region-wide programming would probably capture a larger proportion of this group. If programs and facilities remain localized, the general drop in the entry-level age group will probably mean a decline in the number of participants region-wide.

INVENTORY OF RINKS

LOCAL

There are seven speedskating facilities in the Twin Cities area. Two -- Como and White Bear Lake -- are 400 meters in length. The other five are shorter than the alternate standard length of 333 meters, which limits them to novice and practice use. Support facilities at these rinks vary, but do include warming facilities, parking and lights. All but the Roseville rink have hockey and/or general skating rinks associated with them, and general skating is often done on the speedskating rinks. Since they are all seasonal facilities, the total cost is part of each managing agency's annual budget. Expenditures vary greatly depending on the amount of in-kind labor provided by the skaters; direct annual costs are less than \$1,000 per rink. None of the rinks produces any direct revenue, although some do charge program participants.

The two 400-meter rinks are not much more sophisticated in terms of support facilities. The White Bear rink, located on the running track at the senior high school, has bleachers. The annual operating cost is approximately \$1,000.

The Como 400-meter rink does not provide spectator facilities, but does provide the concession facilities associated with the lake pavilion. The warming facility is in the pavilion basement. There are no lights directly on the rink but area lighting makes it usable for casual practice. The annual cost for the Como rink is estimated at \$21,000 and includes the scraping and staffing not provided at the smaller rinks. In the past, no revenue has been obtained directly. Regular use by Twin Cities club skaters could provide as much as \$5,000 via the new fee system this season. In addition, the Eastern Minnesota Speedskating Association has pledged \$4,200 from outside sources. The rink has limitations in terms of when it can be ready for use (by Christmas, generally) and the condition of the warming facility. St. Paul has plans to renovate the pavilion as part of the overall Como Park rehabilitation. Local speedskating groups think that the poor condition of the pavilion was the main reason for the decision to move the 1983 National Outdoor Championships to Milwaukee. This will be the first time this meet has been held elsewhere than Como Lake since 1945.

The 400-meter rink at Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis will not be provided in 1981-82 or the foreseeable future because of the city's tight budget. Its facilities were similar to those at the Lake Como rink. The annual cost for maintaining the ice surface was \$28,000. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board estimates a total of \$40,000 was spent annually when warming house attendants and other maintenance were included. The rink produced no revenue.

NATIONAL

There are two 400-meter, artificially refrigerated outdoor speedskating rinks in the country:

1. The James B. Sheffield Speedskating Oval, Lake Placid, N.Y. (see Figure 1, p. 5).
 - a. Facilities - This is a standard 400-meter track. It has a warming facility, halide lights, an electronic scoreboard, timing shed, maintenance shed, bleachers and ticket office directly associated with it. It is located on a former high school athletic field. It was constructed in 1978 along with a new indoor arena. The complex of the speedskating rink and two ice arenas shares the same refrigeration plant, locker room and training facility. The refrigeration plant has a capacity of 1,000 tons and is powered by electric engines.
 - b. Costs - Total cost of the complex, built in 1978, was \$3,007,000. Costs allocated to the speedskating rink by rink staff are approximately \$2,400,000. Several inquiries by Council staff and others in past years have not been able to pin down a reliable estimate of annual operating costs. Due to problems mentioned later, the facility's refrigeration system isn't being used.
 - c. Use limitation - The facility is fully usable for all speedskating competitions. Two major events -- the North American Outdoor Championship and the Short Track Trials -- are scheduled for the 1981-82 season. However, the location and administration of the rink limit its use. Located in a small, relatively inaccessible, town in upstate New York, it is not usable as a major training facility. It is currently administered by a three-agency committee and is generally caught up in the "who pays" question regarding the entire 1980 Winter Olympic Games site.
2. The Olympic Ice Rink, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
 - a. Facilities - This is a standard 400-meter track. Direct support facilities include a maintenance shed, bleachers, incandescent lights, and a timing shed. Warming areas, offices, a lunch-room and parking facilities are provided by the Wisconsin State Fair Board, with all utility costs paid by the Wisconsin DNR. There are rental skates available. The rink and its direct support facilities were constructed in 1965. It uses a natural gas-fired refrigeration plant with a capacity of 350 tons. This compares with a typical ice arena capacity of 140 to 180 tons.

- b. Costs - The best estimate of direct construction costs is approximately \$650,000 in 1965-67. Thirty-year bonds were issued by the State of Wisconsin to provide the rink and direct support facilities. No land acquisition costs were incurred. Using the current construction cost index in the Engineering News Record, this would be the equivalent of \$2.2 million in November 1981.

By comparison, a separate rough cost estimate for a 400-meter rink was obtained from a firm with experience in building ice arenas in the Twin Cities Area. The estimate was about \$600,000 for a very basic facility in 1977. This would be about \$825,000 in November 1981. Compared with the Milwaukee rink, the ice surface area was smaller and the refrigeration capacity was quite a bit less. It is probably a low estimate.

The operating budget for 1981 is \$88,000. About half of this is for staff, half for supplies and services. The rink operates from early November through late February and has no significant off-season use. The rink will generate about \$30,000 in revenues this season. This results from a \$15,000 grant from the U.S. Olympic Committee (see Appendix), about \$3,000 in event rental fees and \$12,000 from admission fees. The fee schedule is \$1 for adults and 75 cents for children 16 and under. The 1981 operating subsidy is about \$58,000.

In addition to the normal budget, which derives from the Wisconsin DNR's standard state park budgeting process, the rink receives a \$62,500 biennial appropriation from the Wisconsin Legislature for operation, maintenance or capital improvements. This fund is used to pay the annual cost of servicing the refrigeration system prior to start-up. It also has been used to purchase a jeep to aid in rink maintenance, to repair a major break in refrigeration lines and to make up for revenue shortfalls. Beyond this, there is a yearly debt service payment of \$35,400 made from the Wisconsin general fund. The cost and revenue picture for the rink in 1981 is shown in Table 4.

Table 4
OPERATING COSTS AT THE MILWAUKEE RINK IN 1981

Budget	\$ 88,000
Maintenance and Development Fund	31,250
Total Expenditures	<u>\$119,250</u>
Revenues	30,000
Total Operating Subsidy	<u>\$ 89,250</u>
Debt Service	35,400
Total Annual Cost Subsidy	<u>\$124,650</u>

The last four skating seasons show an average total annual operating subsidy of about \$72,000. These estimates seem reasonable, considering increasing natural gas prices, slightly decreasing public paid attendance and several repairs on a 15-year-old facility.

- c. Limitations on Use - The rink is fully usable at this time, with several national competitions scheduled for the 1981-82 season. The rink has several mechanical problems that generally fall in the category of "don't do it this way again." The main problems are the gas-fired engines, which are extremely costly to operate. One of them is down now and will require about \$100,000 to repair. A more important problem is the lack of programming at the rink. It is run by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which is a facility-oriented agency with little programming expertise. As such, use of the rink and possible revenues from use are less than optimal. A third problem results from the warming facilities. The building is very energy-inefficient and the facilities are often inadequate to handle the large national and world meets that might be possible at the rink. The operation is "in transition" right now. The rink manager is retired and day-to-day operations are being run by temporary employees, as the DNR is studying a restructuring of its staff in the Milwaukee area.
- d. Other Factors - Probably the most important thing to note about the Milwaukee rink is the ice skating activity context in which it operates. Skating, in general, and hockey, in particular, are not as "big" as they are in the Twin Cities. A quick count reveals a minimum of 62 indoor ice arenas in the Twin Cities Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), where the 1980 population is 2,109,207. The Milwaukee-Racine SMSA, with a 1980 population of 1,565,737, has five arenas. The 35 park and recreation agencies in the Region surveyed revealed that about 350 outdoor hockey rinks and 500 general skating rinks will be provided for the 1981-82 season. Exact comparable figures are not available for Milwaukee, but it is likely that fewer than 25 rinks will be provided in Milwaukee County this winter. The Olympic Ice Rink is obviously a big part of the skating facility supply in Milwaukee. General skating is a large contributor to use at this facility because of the lack of alternatives in the Milwaukee area. This is one reason why the operators of the Milwaukee rink are not concerned about competition with any rink built elsewhere. They do think, however, that the Olympic training program will remain in Milwaukee for the foreseeable future, regardless of whether another rink is built.

INTERNATIONAL

There are at least 30 artificially refrigerated rinks world-wide. Inquiries were sent to Norway and The Netherlands for comparative data. Both have acknowledged receipt of the request and willingness to send data, but none has arrived as of this writing.

4. CONCLUSIONS OF THE NEEDS ANALYSIS

The data in this report can be used to draw several conclusions concerning the need for a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink in the Twin Cities Area. As mentioned earlier, this report deals with need only and does not attempt to locate or design a facility. With this in mind, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There appears to be a general population interest in the sport of speedskating. Survey results, general interest in ice skating and activity in areas with programs support this conclusion.
2. Annual participation in the sport is difficult to measure, but would most likely be about 35,000 overall and 25,000 at an artificially refrigerated rink. This assumes a four-month season, closure of the rink on Lake Como, re-direction of all Area club skating to the new rink and continued maintenance of a few local rinks for novice use. No drastic increase in programming is assumed, nor is any other skating use included.
3. There is moderate potential for growth in the sport of speedskating in the Twin Cities. However, this will result only by capturing a larger percentage of the skating-aged population through active programming. This potential will probably not be realized with existing facilities and programs.
4. The limits imposed by the current short season (mid-December to February) pose a significant constraint to competition and programming of speedskating in Minnesota. Competition for indoor ice and the physical constraints of indoor arenas make them unsuitable for early season use.
5. Major speedskating facilities will likely become the responsibility of the Region or the state. It is unlikely that any single local unit of government will provide a major speedskating facility by itself. The user population is shifting toward the suburbs, thereby making it a less attractive proposition for the central cities. The closure of the Nokomis rink and the new operating rules for the Como rink support this conclusion. As the population diffuses, no single suburb will be able to fill the gap.
6. There is really little to compare between the artificially refrigerated rinks in other parts of the country and any such facility proposed for the Twin Cities. The Lake Placid rink is too far removed from population centers to be of comparative value. The Milwaukee rink exists in a very different setting as it relates to skating interest and need. The cost and physical construction details are helpful, but the potential participation and revenue situation is quite different.
7. The cost of constructing a facility would be at least \$1 million and possibly as much as \$2 million. Estimates received by speedskating groups in 1977 would indicate the lower figure, but updating the 1967 cost of the Milwaukee rink would indicate the upper figure. This assumes a facility with rink, refrigeration, warming facilities, maintenance sheds, ice maintenance equipment, lights and minimal earthwork. To the extent these facilities could be provided in conjunction with an existing arena or other facility, the costs may be less.

8. The annual operating cost of a facility would be approximately \$125,000, not counting debt service costs. Revenues of all types should not be expected to cover more than half of this cost. The letter from the U.S. Olympic Committee in the Appendix shows the committee's potential interest in helping with these costs.

In summary, there appears to be a need to provide a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink in the Metropolitan Area.

5. FUTURE ACTIONS

Since this study was not aimed at location, design or management of an artificial speedskating rink, further study is necessary. The facility would require a major operating subsidy, so the question of who would run it is important. There are a number of possible administrative set-ups, including the following:

1. The facility would be owned and managed by one of the 10 implementing agencies of the Regional Recreation Open Space System for the Twin Cities Area. This alternative would provide capital funds through the Metropolitan Council and operating subsidies from the agency's own sources. This approach would be consistent with the 1974 Metropolitan Parks Act and the Council's Recreation Open Space Development Guide/Policy Plan.
2. The facility could be assigned to the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission for development and management. This approach has surfaced previously in the Legislature. Since the rink would be a major sports facility, the approach is logical.
3. The Legislature could assign the facility to the Minnesota DNR, similar to the action taken in Wisconsin. However, the DNR has no experience with this type of facility and the programming necessary to make it work.
4. Some other local governmental agency could be asked to provide the facility. No agency appears willing to take on a facility and cost of this magnitude by itself, but cooperative arrangements between several suburbs might be possible.
5. A consortium of foundation, club and public interests could be combined to operate the facility. The clubs have indicated an interest in helping with most of the facilities they use.

Regardless of the alternative chosen, much discussion and specific study will be necessary. Perhaps the best way to proceed is for the Council to consider the facility for inclusion in its capital improvement program for regional recreation open space. The next regular revision of this program will be done in late 1982. In the interim, the above alternatives could be explored by the Council to determine which, if any, is feasible. This activity could proceed at little additional cost to the Council and may result in a preliminary assignment of responsibility, location and timing of development.

Prior to siting this kind of facility, a feasibility study would have to be done. Design, engineering and programming details would have to be addressed, including the possibility of using the facility for additional activities and designing it in the most energy-efficient way possible. Such a study may be eligible for state development funds or it may need to be done with Council funds. The study would cost at least \$15,000.

In summary, the Council, in cooperation with other public and private interests, would attempt to:

1. Determine an implementing agency for a 400-meter, artificially refrigerated, outdoor speedskating rink.

2. Specify the conditions under which implementing responsibility would be accepted by an agency.
3. Recommend the funding source and timing of development for the facility to the 1983 session of the Minnesota State Legislature.

APPENDIX

GENERAL POPULATION SURVEY

The general population survey was conducted by Mid-Continent Surveys, Inc., as part of its November 1981 PROBE survey. A sample of 504 households in the Metropolitan Area was selected at random using a multi-stage cluster sampling technique based on congressional districts and city size. A 15-20 minute personal interview was conducted with a randomly-selected adults aged 18 or over in each household. Three questions concerning speedskating were placed about three-fourths of the way through the survey, which dealt with a wide variety of topics. Sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is ± 5 percent.

The questions and tabulated percentage of responses are given in Table 5. In designing the questions care was taken to define speedskating clearly, differentiate it from other kinds of skating and portray the cost of an artificial rink in a realistic way.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Table 5
SPEEDSKATING INTEREST IN THE REGION

PRCEE - A QUARTERLY OPINION SURVEY OF MINNESOTA ADULTS - NOVEMBER 1981

HOW MANY PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD ARE INTERESTED IN ANY KIND OF ICE SKATING ... BE IT PLEASURE, ... FIGURE, ... HOCKEY, ... SPEED SKATING, ... OR SOME OTHER KIND OF ICE SKATING.

	A R E A		S E X		I N C O M E				A G E			E D U C A T I O N				
	ST.	MPLS	PAUL	MEN	WOMEN	UNDER \$8000	\$8000 15000	25000 UNDER	30	30-49	50-64	65 & OVER	HS & POST COLLEGE	LESS HS GRAD		
NONE	36%	37%	33%	36%	35%	63%	42%	26%	29%	17%	24%	55%	70%	42%	31%	27%
ONE	21%	25%	14%	22%	20%	24%	22%	24%	19%	28%	18%	20%	17%	18%	24%	24%
TWO	21%	21%	23%	20%	23%	9%	22%	27%	21%	32%	22%	13%	12%	21%	22%	21%
THREE	12%	9%	17%	10%	14%	4%	8%	13%	16%	14%	17%	10%	10%	10%	14%	14%
FOUR	7%	5%	10%	8%	6%		1%	7%	11%	5%	14%	1%	5%	5%	12%	12%
FIVE	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	3%	3%	1%	2%
SIX	+	1%		1%		1%		+	1%	1%				+	1%	
SEVEN	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	+	1%	1%
DON'T KNOW	+	+			+								1%			1%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BASE FOR PERCENTAGES	504	330	174	225	279	46	83	135	205	139	150	92	83	238	147	119

Table 5 (Cont'd.)

PROBE - A QUARTERLY OPINION SURVEY OF MINNESOTA ADULTS - NOVEMBER 1981

ONE PARTICULAR KIND OF ICE SKATING IS SPEED SKATING, ... IT IS A COMPETITIVE SPORT THAT IS DONE OUT OF DOORS ON AN OVAL TRACK. YOU MAY HAVE SEEN SOME OF THE SPEED SKATING EVENTS. IF YOU WATCHED ANY OF THE 1980 WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES. AS A SPECTATOR, HOW MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE INTERESTED IN WATCHING SPEED SKATING AT A TRACK?

	A R E A		S E X		I N C O M E			A G E			E D U C A T I O N					
	METRO	ST.	PAUL	WOMEN	UNDER \$8000	\$8000-15000	OVER 15000	UNDER 30	30-49	50-64	OVER 65	HS & POST COLLEGE	LESS HS GRAD			
TOTAL	56X	57X	54X	60X	53X	63X	59X	50X	55X	46X	48X	67X	78X	61X	50X	55X
NONE	18X	19X	16X	15X	21X	33X	19X	21X	12X	22X	17X	20X	12X	14X	22X	21X
ONE	15X	16X	13X	16X	13X	4X	16X	17X	18X	22X	16X	9X	7X	13X	18X	14X
TWO	3X	2X	5X	4X	3X		5X	5X	6X	6X	3X	2X	1X	4X	2X	3X
THREE	4X	3X	7X	3X	6X		4X	4X	6X	6X	11X	1X	1X	4X	5X	4X
FOUR	2X	1X	4X	1X	3X		1X	1X	4X	2X	4X	1X		3X	1X	2X
FIVE	+	+			+			1X	1X	1X						1X
SIX																
SEVEN																
DON'T KNOW	1X	1X	1X	1X	1X	1X	1X	1X	+	1X	2X			1X	1X	1X
TOTAL	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X
BASE FOR PERCENTAGES	504	330	174	225	279	46	83	135	205	139	190	92	83	238	147	119

Table 5 (Cont'd.)

PROBE - A QUARTERLY OPINION SURVEY OF MINNESOTA ADULTS - NOVEMBER 1981

ONE PARTICULAR KIND OF ICE SKATING IS SPEED SKATING, ... IT IS A COMPETITIVE SPORT THAT IS DONE OUT OF DOORS ON AN OVAL TRACK.
 AS A PARTICIPANT, HOW MANY PEOPLE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SPEED SKATING?

	A R E A		S E X		I N C O M E				A G E				E D U C A T I O N			
	PAUL	WOMEN	PAUL	WOMEN	UNDER \$6000	\$6000-14999	15000-24999	25000 UNDER	30-49	50-64	65 & OVER	LESS HS	HS GRAD	LESS HS	HS GRAD	
NONE	84X	85X	81X	86X	93X	86X	82X	81X	75X	78X	97X	98X	83X	84X	85X	
ONE	11X	10X	13X	10X	4X	8X	11X	14X	20X	12X	3X	2X	13X	10X	9X	
TWO	4X	4X	4X	4X	2X	6X	6X	3X	4X	8X			4X	5X	3X	
THREE	+	+	1X	1X			1X	+	1X	1X					2X	
FIVE	+		1X					+		1X					1X	
DON'T KNOW	+		1X	+			1X		1X	1X				1X	1X	
TOTAL	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	100X	
BASE FOR PERCENTAGES	504	330	174	225	279	46	83	135	205	139	150	92	83	238	147	

Table 5 (Cont'd.)

PROBE - A QUARTERLY OPINION SURVEY OF MINNESOTA ADULTS - NOVEMBER 1981

- HERE'S A DESCRIPTION OF AN OUTDOOR SPEED SKATING TRACK THAT COULD BE BUILT IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA.
- A 400 METER OVAL TRACK
 - AN OUTDOOR FACILITY TO BE OPERATED DURING THE WINTER SEASON, FROM NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH.
 - REFRIGERATION WOULD BE USED TO MAINTAIN ICE SURFACE.
 - THE TRACK WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND A USER'S FEE WILL BE CHARGED TO HELP DEFRAY THE COST OF UPKEEP AND MAINTENANCE.
 - BASED UPON THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER SIMILAR TRACKS AROUND THE COUNTRY, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT THE COST TO BUILD AND OPERATE A SPEED SKATING TRACK WOULD BE ABOUT TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD IN THE SEVEN COUNTY TWIN CITIES AREA.
 - IF IT WERE TO COST YOUR HOUSEHOLD TWO DOLLARS PER YEAR, WOULD YOU BE IN FAVOR
 - ... OR NOT IN FAVOR OF BUILDING AN OUTDOOR SPEED SKATING FACILITY LIKE THAT IN THE TWIN CITIES AREA?

	AREA		SEX		INCOME		AGE		EDUCATION							
	PAUL	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	UNDER \$8000	15000	25000	UNDER 30	30-49	50-64	OVER 65	HS	COLLEGE	LESS HS	GRAD	
YES - IN FAVOR	48%	45%	54%	43%	43%	30%	53%	48%	54%	47%	39%	47%	46%	55%		
NO - NOT IN FAVOR	49%	52%	43%	55%	43%	65%	46%	44%	48%	43%	50%	60%	50%	52%	41%	
DON'T KNOW	3%	3%	3%	2%	4%	4%	1%	3%	4%	3%	1%	3%	2%	4%		
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
BASE FOR PERCENTAGES	504	330	174	225	279	46	83	135	205	139	150	92	83	238	147	119



UNITED STATES OLYMPIC COMMITTEE

OLYMPIC HOUSE:

1750 EAST BOULDER STREET, COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80909

Tel: (303) 632-5551 Telex: 45-2424 Cable: "AMOLYMPIC CSP"

IX PAN AMERICAN GAMES, Caracas, Venezuela, August 20-September 3, 1983
XIV OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES, Sarajevo, Yugoslavia, February 7-19, 1984
GAMES OF THE XXIII OLYMPIAD, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., July 28-August 12, 1984

WILLIAM E. SIMON

President

505 Park Avenue

New York, New York 10022

October 30, 1981

Mr. Charles Weaver
Chairman Metropolitan Council
300 Metro Square Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Weaver:

It is my understanding that an artificially refrigerated 400 meter Speed-skating Oval is currently being studied for construction in your area. If this is completed, it will indeed be a very big boost for your area skaters as well as being a much needed facility for the United States as a whole in order to help prepare our future World and Olympic Teams.

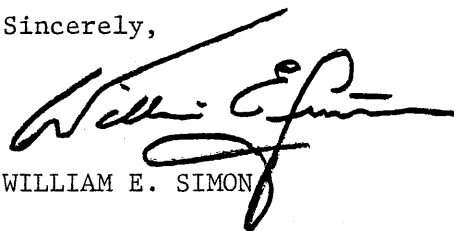
In the way of financing the year to year operating expenses, you may be familiar with the operation of the track in the State Fair Park at West Allis, Wisconsin just outside of Milwaukee. The track is owned and operated by the State of Wisconsin DNR.

The USOC annually contributes to the reduction of operating costs through the USISA Development Committee at this track. Over the last few years, this contribution to the DNR has been \$15,000 annually and has come directly through the United States International Speedskating Association (USISA) which receives the money directly from the USOC. The USISA is the National Governing Body for International and Olympic Speedskating in the United States.

I have just had a conversation with George Howie, President of the USISA, and he informs me that they would be extremely interested in helping to establish this facility in your area and would try to make a similar financial arrangement as that in West Allis with USOC Development Funds.

I heartily endorse this action and if there is any other information I can provide or help I can give, please ask.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM E. SIMON

ROUTING

Admin. _____
P. R. _____
H. R. _____
CS/PIO _____

NOV 5 1981

WES:ldb

For your information _____
Take appropriate action _____
Please reply _____
Prepare reply for Chmn sig _____

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE FOR INCOME TAX PURPOSES