



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Parks & Community Services
505 Market Street, Suite A, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3300
www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Jennifer Schroder, Director
Michael Cogle, Interim Deputy Director

Date: May 5, 2011

Subject: ESTABLISHING AN AD-HOC EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER A POSSIBLE FUTURE PARK FUNDING BALLOT MEASURE

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council receives a briefing on the history of Kirkland park ballot measures, the successful Parks exploratory committee of 2001-2002 and the potential costs, logistics and timelines associated with creating an exploratory committee and potential ballot measure in 2011 and 2012.

The May 17th study session is intended to be a background briefing. At the June 7th Council meeting, staff will be seeking direction on establishing an exploratory committee to consider and develop recommendations for a possible future park funding ballot measure.

At the June 7th Council meeting, Council direction and input will be requested on the following key questions (staff will suggest options and/or recommendations for some questions):

- Should the Committee evaluate and make recommendations on the potential for a ballot measure for both 2012 and 2013?
- How should the exploratory committee be comprised?
- How should the exploratory committee be selected?
- How would the Council like to participate on the committee?
- Are there particular issues that the Council would like the committee to consider or not consider?
- How should the Park Board be involved?
- How will the work of the committee integrate with any other anticipated Council fiscal initiatives involving citizens serving as advisors (e.g. blue ribbon committee, etc.)?

BACKGROUND

At their regular meeting of April 19 the City Council expressed interest in convening a citizen committee to explore the possibility of a future park funding ballot measure. This interest is consistent with the 2011 City Work Program adopted via Resolution R-4864 (specifically: *9. Exploring new revenue options authorized by the State Legislature or requiring voter approval*).

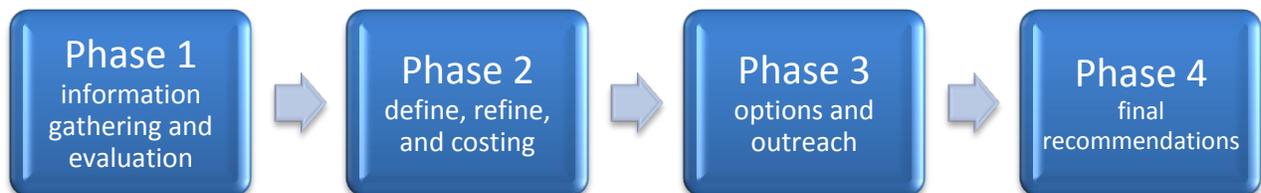
To begin, staff suggests that the Council revisit the successful process implemented for the 2002 Park Bond and Levy. While a future exploratory committee process need not follow this exact blueprint, a refresher on the prior process might help us to better understand the nature and extent of the tasks, resource needs, and decisions we might expect over the coming months.

2001 COMMITTEE

The City last convened an ad-hoc Park Bond/Levy Citizen Exploratory Committee (hereafter the "Committee") in the spring of 2001, as part of a planning process which led to two successful park ballot measures in November of 2002 (each with over 64% voter approval). An \$8.4 million Bond provided for acquisition and development of Carillon Woods, transfer of Juanita Beach from King County, open space acquisition, expansion of North Rose Hill Woodlands Park, and development of playfields at several school sites. An accompanying Maintenance and Operations Levy provided on-going funding to care for the Bond-funded projects as well as existing City-School partnership playfield sites, with the initial levy rate set at \$0.10 per \$1,000 assessed valuation and initially generating approximately \$670,000.

This Committee was comprised of nearly 30 members, including two members of the City Council (Nona Ganz and Tom Dillon, who served as Committee Chair). Committee members were appointed by the full Council and represented a broad spectrum of community stakeholders. The Committee met approximately six times over the course of nine months, as well as three separate study sessions with Council. The Committee was supported by staff from the Parks and Community Services Department, City Manager's Office, and the Finance and Administration Department.

The Committee undertook a process structured around four distinct phases. The completion of each phase led to important decision points for the City Council – essentially "stop or go" decisions on whether or not to proceed with a subsequent phase of the planning process leading up to a possible fall 2002 ballot measure. The four phases of the Committee's work can be characterized as:



Phase 1 – Learning, Evaluating, and Developing Preliminary Findings

Phase 2 – Project Defining, Refining and Cost Estimating

Phase 3 – Developing Options and Gauging Public Support

Phase 4 – Presenting Final Recommendations

➤ **Phase I - Learning, Evaluating, and Developing Preliminary Findings and Recommendations**

The Committee's initial meetings were focused on:

- ✓ Understanding the Committee's role and responsibilities;
- ✓ Learning more about the City's park and recreation system, including mission, goals, and values;
- ✓ Evaluating community needs and priorities (described in City documents such as the CIP and PROS Plan, gleaned from existing citizen surveys, soliciting perspectives of Park Board and professional staff, and so forth);
- ✓ Sharing personal perspectives on community needs and priorities;
- ✓ Learning about past funding measures and why they were successful or unsuccessful;
- ✓ Understanding the differences and relative merits of various funding mechanism bond and levy options;
- ✓ Understanding the City's current financial situation and fiscal capacity;
- ✓ Considering information about potential election dates;
- ✓ Gathering information about other possible competing local and regional funding measures on the horizon;
- ✓ Determining which additional information was deemed necessary in order to provide advice to the City Council.

These early meetings allowed the Committee in the fall of 2001 to present to the City Council their preliminary findings and to develop consensus around two primary preliminary recommendations: (1) continuing with the next phase of the planning process in order to be prepared to place a possible ballot measure before voters in the fall of 2002; and (2) an initial list of project priorities which might be considered for inclusion on the ballot measure, including potential capital projects requiring further planning and analysis in order to make them "ballot-ready".

➤ **Phase 2 – Project Defining, Refining and Cost Estimating**

Following a joint Study Session with the Committee, the City Council authorized the next phase of the planning process. Much of the tasks involved in this phase involved several months of technical work by City staff, the Park Board, and consulting design/engineering professionals. Tasks included:

- ✓ Completing a property appraisal and securing a purchase agreement with King County Water District #1 for possible acquisition of what is now Carillon Woods;
- ✓ Negotiating with King County the terms and conditions for possible transfer of Juanita Beach Park;
- ✓ Evaluation by the Park Board of possible trail projects (none were deemed ready for inclusion in a bond);
- ✓ Park Board evaluation of the merits of funding a new recreation center as a component a of a possible ballot measure (their conclusion was that the idea was too ill-defined and cost-prohibitive to include on a bond, and it was subsequently dropped from Committee consideration);
- ✓ Initiating public workshops hosted by the Park Board in order to develop preliminary design concepts and cost estimates for possible expansion of North Rose Hill Woodlands Park and possible development of Forbes Lake Park (neighborhood input subsequently indicated that

Forbes Lake Park was a lesser priority so it was ultimately removed from consideration)

- ✓ Discussions with the School District regarding possible playfield partnership opportunities at school sites scheduled for renovation, from which a project list and cost estimates were developed;
- ✓ Finalizing a park master plan and cost estimates for Heritage Park (the project was ultimately not included in the future park bond);
- ✓ Evaluation by the Park Board on the preferred approach for securing future park property and preserving open space –either by identifying specific properties in advance or by creating an “acquisition opportunity fund” (the latter was recommended by the Board).

The results of these tasks were shared periodically with the Committee (including joint meetings with the Park Board) and by the City Council via staff updates. In February of 2002 the City Council authorized the Committee to move to the next phase of their work.

➤ **Phase 3 – Developing Options and Gauging Public Support**

During this phase the City hired a strategic consultant to work with the Committee and Council on crafting a public outreach strategy to help evaluate support for specific projects (such as “Juanita Beach”) and project types (such as “playfields” and “land preservation”); determine public tolerance for various levels of spending, taxation and indebtedness; and test the effectiveness of themes, messages, and arguments (pro and con) of a proposed measure. The non-profit organization Trust for Public Land (TPL) was selected for this phase of the project.

Based on the information gathered from a survey (indicating general community support for additional park funding) and the results of the Committee’s strategic analysis work with TPL, the City Council directed the Committee to prepare for their consideration different “funding packages” of projects for consideration. Further interest in a companion maintenance levy was also expressed by the Council at this time and the Committee was asked to work with staff on preparing M&O cost estimates for the projects being considered.

➤ **Phase 4 – Presenting Final Recommendations**

The final phase of the Committee’s work involved presenting four different “bond packages” of varying amounts to the Council, ranging from \$6.5 to \$7.4 million for a bond and from \$580,000 to \$670,000 for a maintenance levy. Potential costs to property owners were calculated for each option. The Committee also recommended that the two funding measures be placed on the November 2002 general election ballot.

The Council decided to commission TPL to conduct a second survey to help finalize the proposal. The results led the Council to move forward with an \$8.4 million park bond – higher than what the Committee had recommended.

In all, from the time that the City Council decided to establish an exploratory committee in late spring of 2001 to the date of the general election in November 2002, the entire process encompassed nearly 18 months of intensive effort on the part of citizen volunteers, the City Council, and staff.

A DECADE LATER – SUGGESTED TIMELINE SCENARIOS

Using the experience acquired from the successful 2001-2002 planning process, staff has prepared some suggested timeline scenarios for City Council consideration, as described in the following chart. Each scenario leads to a potential November general election ballot measure, but could be adjusted should there be a desire to consider a primary or special election.

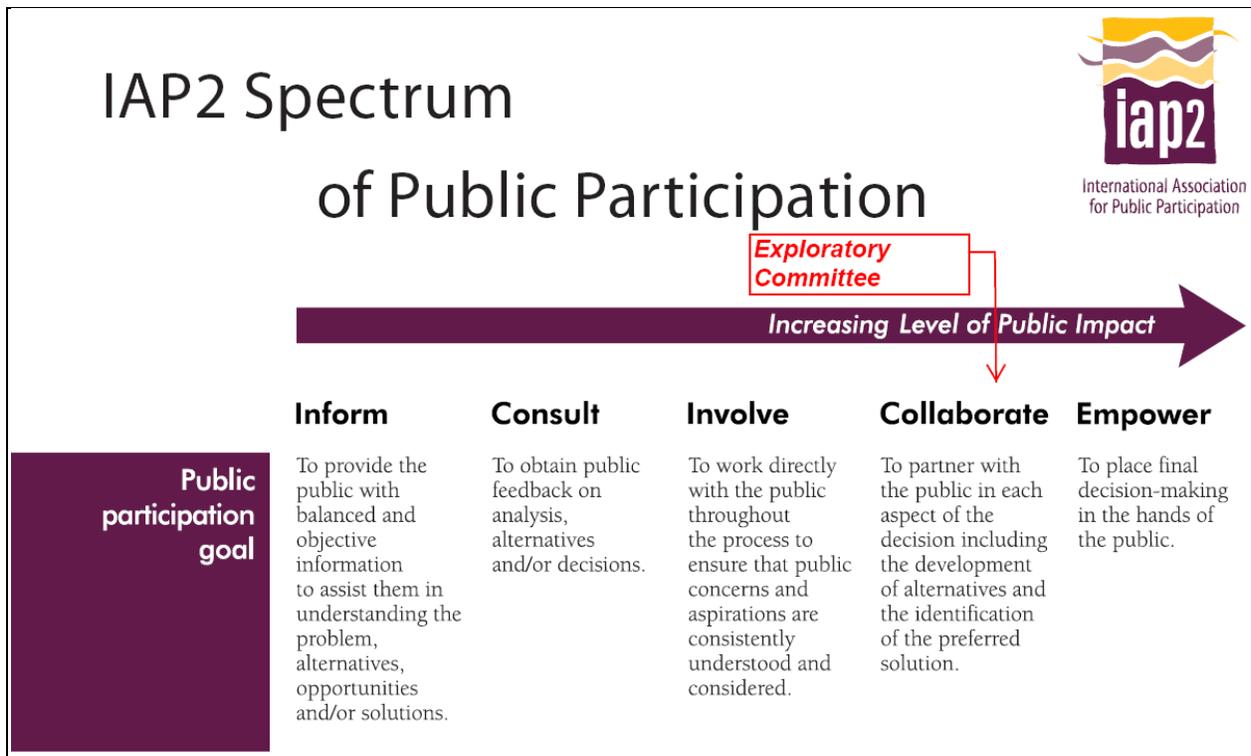
Committee Phase	Task	November 2012 Ballot Measure	November 2013 Ballot Measure	November 2014 Ballot Measure
		Complete by:	Complete by:	Complete by:
	Council Authorizes Project Start	June 2011	March 2012	March 2013
1	Form Citizen Exploratory Committee	July 2011	May 2012	May 2013
1	Preliminary Recommendations 	October 2011	August 2012	August 2013
2	Project Planning and Cost Estimating	March 2012	December 2012	December 2013
3	Finalize Potential Project Options 	April 2012	January 2013	January 2014
3	Surveys and outreach 	April 2012	February 2013	February 2014
4	Determine Final Potential Funding Package	May 2012	April 2013	April 2014
4	Possible additional survey and outreach	May 2012	April 2013	April 2014
	Council Decision to Place on Ballot 	June 2012	May 2013	May 2014
	Council Passes Formal Ballot Ordinance	July 2012	June 2013	June 2014
	General Election	November 2012	November 2013	November 2014

 = indicates key possible City Council “STOP OR GO” decision points throughout process, although Council could decide to stop the process at any point prior to passing a ballot ordinance

Important Dates for 2012:

- May 15, 2012 – Deadline to submit ballot request to King County Elections for Primary Election
- August 14, 2012 – Deadline to submit ballot request to King County Elections for General Election
- August 21, 2012 – Primary Election
- November 6, 2012 – General Election

THE EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE



As shown in the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, by convening an advisory committee the City Council is establishing a collaborative process with citizens. In effect, the agreement that the Council is making with the Committee is that *"we will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible"* (courtesy of IAP2).

The 2001-2002 Committee was comprised of nearly 30 members, including two City Council members (one of which served as the Committee chairperson), two Park Board members, the Parks Director and Assistant City Manager, and representatives of various community organizations. The Committee was selected via a process in which key stakeholder groups were identified in advance and requested to appoint a representative to the Committee. A final list of names and organizations was submitted to the City Council for final approval.

As noted previously, the Committee met six times over the course of about nine months (plus Council study sessions), with their most active meeting period being during Phases 1, 3, and 4 of the process.

STRATEGIC ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Annexation and our New Neighborhoods. Our City's current Comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan was updated in August of 2010 but it does not address the park needs or establish priorities for the Juanita, Finn Hill, and Kingsgate neighborhoods in the pending annexation area (whose residents will comprise approximately 40% of Kirkland's population). Funding has been approved to update the PROS Plan beginning in 2012 with a process to include an inventory and analysis,

community meetings, focus groups, and telephone surveys of the entire community – new neighborhoods included.

In the meantime, given that the PROS Plan update process may not start prior to convening an exploratory committee, it will be important early on for the Committee to consider expanded outreach to our new Kirkland neighborhoods in order to better ascertain priority needs and opportunities.

Finn Hill Park District. Citizens in the Finn Hill area have established a separate taxation district within their defined geographic area. The Finn Hill Park and Recreation District provides funding for maintaining and operating O.O. Denny Park (owned by the City of Seattle). Approximately 15,000 (soon to be) Kirkland residents live within the District's borders. Their most recent six-year operating levy was approved by voters in 2008 and will expire in 2014.

The Committee may want to consider the future of the Park District as part of its evaluation process.

Community Recreation Center. A feasibility study was completed in 2007 detailing the program components and operating model for a future multi-dimensional indoor recreation facility. However community partners, deemed necessary to move this project closer to reality, have yet to be identified.

The Committee may want to evaluate the status of the project and determine if the City's needs for additional indoor recreation space should be further considered.

Eastside Rail Corridor. While no decisions have been made at this point, considerable effort is being undertaken to evaluate and possibly pursue Kirkland ownership of at least a portion of the Eastside Rail Corridor within our city limits.

Given strong community interest in this significant possible recreation asset, the Committee should be prepared to give timely consideration to the project as events unfold.

Park Board Role. An exploratory committee in many ways is simply an expanded version of the City Council's official park advisory body, the Park Board. The Board has a strong desire to be actively engaged in the planning process for possible future voter-approved park funding, and welcomes an opportunity to participate on the Committee. Based on the phased process enacted in 2001/2002, the Board would be expected to play a critical role particularly during Phase 2, during which project ideas are further explored and refined.

POSSIBLE EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE RESOURCE NEEDS (APPROX \$40,000 - \$70,000)

Based on our experience with the previous exploratory committee, staff has identified the following possible resource needs for each potential phase of the process. We anticipate that several staff from the Parks, Finance, and CMO offices will support the work of the Committee throughout the process.



COUNCIL DIRECTION NEEDED ON JUNE 7TH

Staff requests that Council discuss the following key questions and issues at their May 17 study session, with decisions finalized on June 7th. Based on Council direction, staff will be prepared to return to the Council on June 21st for formal action.

(1) Without committing at this time to placing a park funding measure on the ballot, does the City Council consider the possibility of a 2012 ballot measure "in play" for the purposes of planning and in convening an exploratory committee?

If the Council's answer to this question is yes, then staff recommends that the Council immediately begin to form an exploratory committee to initiate the planning process. If the Council does not consider 2012

desirable or feasible at this time, then staff would recommend deferring until early next year a decision on whether or not to convene a committee to explore the possibility of a 2013 ballot measure.

(2) Should the Committee evaluate and make recommendations on the potential for a ballot measure for both 2012 and 2013?

Council direction on this question will be requested.

(3) Does the Council generally support the four-phase Committee process successfully implemented in 2001/2002, with pre-determined decision points (Stop or Go) established by the Council?

Council input on the Committee's potential process will be requested.

(4) What direct role would the Council like to have with the Committee?

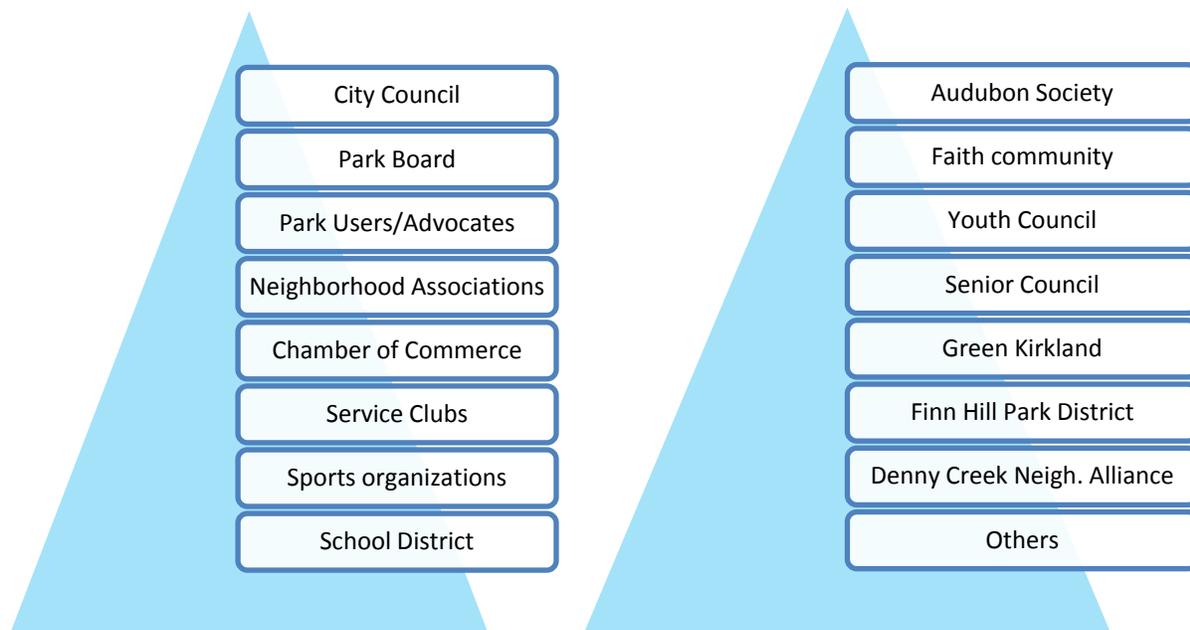
Options include:

- (a) Appoint one or more members to serve on the Committee.
- (b) Appoint a member to serve as Chairperson.
- (c) Appoint a Council subcommittee to oversee the process.
- (d) No direct participation by Council on the Committee.

(5) Who should be on the Committee?

The chart below identifies some key potential stakeholders for Council consideration.

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS FOR A PARK FUNDING BALLOT MEASURE EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE



(6) What process would the Council like to follow in selecting Committee members?

Options include:

- (a) Ask identified stakeholder groups to appoint representatives, with a final Committee appointed by Council (as per 2001).
- (b) Implement an application and selection process for citizens interested in participating.
- (c) Direct staff to develop a preliminary list of names for Council consideration.

(7) Are there particular issues that the Council would like the committee to consider or not consider?

Staff has identified some key strategic issues that the Committee might consider (annexation, Finn Hill Park District, Eastside Rail Corridor, etc.). Are there any other issues that the Council would like to see addressed (or not) as part of the proposed process?

(8) How should the Park Board be involved?

Staff suggests that the Park Board be represented on the exploratory committee and that the Board have an active role as technical support for those planning tasks involving project design, refinement, and cost estimating and budgeting.

Council input on the Park Board's role in the potential process will be requested.

(9) How would the Committee's work relate to other anticipated Council fiscal initiatives involving possible ad-hoc citizen advisory groups and public outreach (e.g. blue ribbon budget committee, etc.)?

Council input on this issue will be requested.

cc: Park Board
Jason Filan, Park Maintenance and Operations Manager
Linda Murphy, Recreation Manager
Tracey Dunlap, Director of Finance and Administration