



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

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

Date: May 25, 2011

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

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council provide direction on establishing an exploratory committee to consider and develop recommendations for possible future park funding ballot measures.

BACKGROUND

At their study session of May 17 the City Council received a briefing on the history of Kirkland park ballot measures, the successful exploratory committee of 2001-2002 and the potential costs, logistics and timelines associated with creating an exploratory committee in 2011. The City Council expressed interest in convening a citizen committee to explore the possibility of future park funding ballot measures.

Staff requests that Council provide direction on the following key issues:

(1) Without committing at this time to placing a park funding measure or measures on the ballot, does the City Council consider the possibility of 2012 ballot measures "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 (the 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 so that more staff evaluation of the newly expanded City-wide needs and opportunities can occur.

(2) If Council proceeds with an exploratory committee, should the Committee evaluate and make recommendations on the potential for ballot measures for both 2012 and 2013?

Council direction on this question is requested. Staff recommends that the Committee consider both 2012 and 2013 as options.

(3) Does the Council generally support a four-phase Committee process (see Attachment 1) with pre-determined decision points (Stop or Go) established by the Council?

Council input on the Committee’s potential process, as described during the May 17 study session, is requested.

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

Options include:

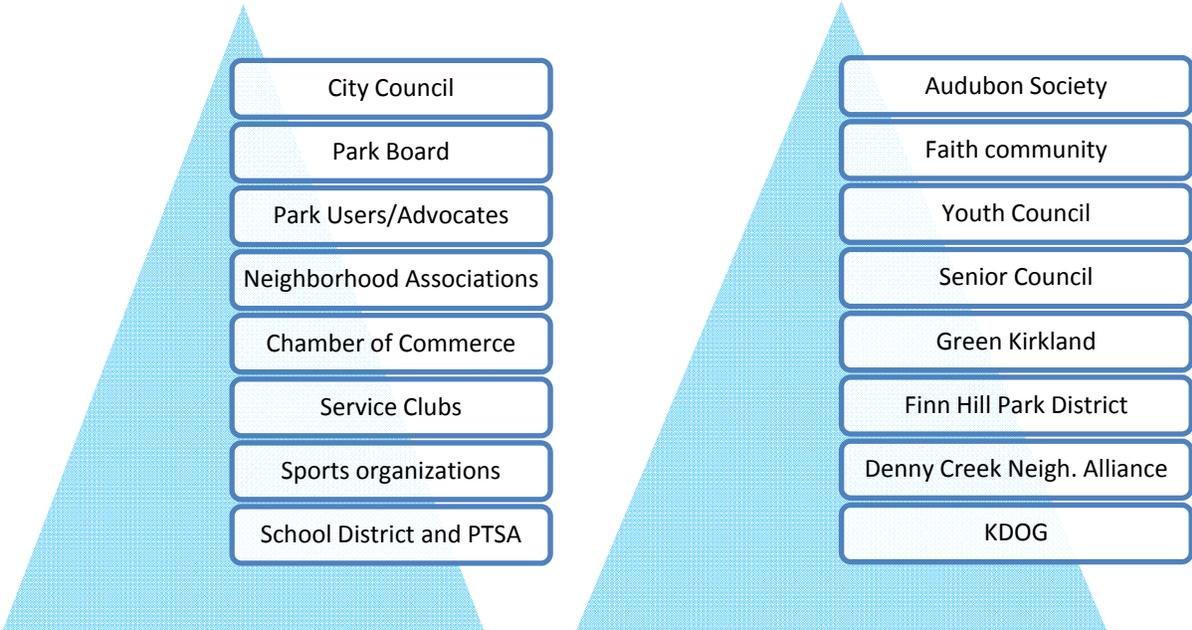
- (a) Appoint one or more members to serve on the Committee.
- (b) Appoint a member to serve as Chairperson.
- (c) Appoint the Council Finance Subcommittee to oversee the process.
- (d) No direct participation by Council on the Committee.
- (e) Other options identified by the Council

Staff recommends that the Council have a direct role and membership on the Committee. The credibility and effectiveness of the Committee would be strengthened through Council direct participation and oversight.

(5) What stakeholders should be represented on the Committee?

The chart below identifies some key potential stakeholders for Council consideration. Are there others the Council wishes to add?

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS FOR PARK FUNDING BALLOT MEASURE(S) EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE



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

Options include:

- (a) Direct staff to contact identified stakeholder groups requesting them to appoint representatives, with a final list of Committee members appointed by Council at an upcoming meeting (this selection process was used in 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.
- (d) Allow each Council member to appoint one or more citizens to serve on the Committee.
- (e) A combination of the above options.

(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 (summarized below). Are there any other issues that the Council would like to see addressed (or not) as part of the proposed process?

- **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 recently annexed 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 new 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.

- **Green Kirkland**. This City-wide initiative to restore Kirkland's urban forests continues to grow as measured both by an every-increasing volunteer commitment and community interest in seeing the program expand to more sites. The Committee may want to consider this popular program as part of their evaluation.
- **Alternative Service Delivery Mechanisms**. A discussion between the Kirkland and Redmond city councils last year included the topic of metropolitan park districts and recreation service areas, by which park and recreation needs for communities can be delivered through a cooperative, sub-regional approach. The Committee process may be a good venue for further discussion on this topic.

(8) 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.)?

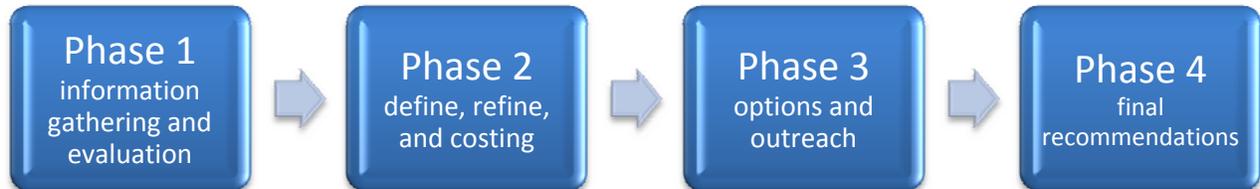
Council input on this issue is requested.

Attachment 1 – Possible Process For Exploratory Committee

PROPOSED PROCESS FOR PARK FUNDING EXPLORATORY COMMITTEE

The following process is modeled after that of the committee established in 2001. 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 ballot measure.

The four phases of the Committee’s work can be characterized as:



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

The Committee’s initial meetings would focus 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 would lead the Committee to present to the City Council their preliminary findings and recommendations such as: (1) whether or not to continue with the next phase of the planning process in order to be prepared to place possible ballot measures before voters in the fall of 2012; and (2) an initial list of capital and/or maintenance priorities which might be considered for inclusion on any ballot measures, 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 would authorize moving to the next phase of the planning process. Much of the tasks involved in this phase could involve several months of technical work by City staff, the Park Board, and (as necessary) consulting design/engineering professionals. Tasks may include:

- ✓ Completing property appraisals and securing purchase agreements for approved sites;
- ✓ Evaluation by the Park Board of project proposals identified by the Committee and Council;
- ✓ Initiating public workshops hosted by the Park Board in order to develop preliminary design concepts and cost estimates for designated projects;
- ✓ Discussions with possible community partners regarding opportunities for joint project development or cooperative ventures (examples: School District, Finn Hill Park District, King County, etc.);
- ✓ Developing maintenance and operational budget estimates as necessary.

The results of these tasks would be shared periodically with the Committee (including possible joint meetings with the Park Board) and by the City Council via staff updates.

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

During this phase the City could hire a strategic consultant to work with the Committee and Council on crafting a public outreach strategy to help evaluate needs, priorities, and support for specific projects and activities. The non-profit organization Trust for Public Land (TPL) was selected for this phase of the project in 2001/2002.

Public outreach strategies could include telephone surveys, focus groups, public workshops, hearings, or other activities.

➤ **Phase 4 – Presenting Final Recommendations**

The final phase of the Committee's work involved presenting its final recommendations to the City Council, which would include a "go or no go" recommendation for any ballot measures. If a recommendation to proceed was provided, it would likely also include recommendations on:

- Expenditure priorities and purposes
- Choice of funding mechanism(s)
- Amount and duration of financing
- Timing – choice of election date

The City Council might choose to employ additional public outreach to gauge citizen interest in the final recommendations, such as with surveys and/or public hearings.

Potential Project Timeline

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



= 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 any ballot ordinances.

Important Dates for 2012:

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

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.

<p>Phase 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No funding likely needed for this phase • Committee tasks focused on gathering and evaluating existing data and developing preliminary findings and conclusions
<p>Phase 2 \$10K - \$25K</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding may be required for design/engineering/cost estimating consultants (amount varies based on project need) • Funding may be required to evaluate and appraise potential properties targeted for acquisition
<p>Phase 3 \$20K - \$30K</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding may be required should the Council desire to bring in a strategic consultant such as Trust for Public Land • Possible funding to conduct surveys and outreach
<p>Phase 4 \$10K - \$15K</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible funding to conduct a second survey (if desired to confirm final proposal)