



## **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** David Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Jennifer Schroder, Director  
Michael Cogle, Park Planning Manager

**Date:** September 22, 2008

**Subject:** PARK BOND CONSIDERATIONS

Earlier this year the City Council and Park Board met and among several topics discussed the merits of a possible future voter-approved park bond funding mechanism for park projects. The general consensus of the Council at that time was that a decision on whether or not to pursue a park ballot measure should be delayed until after the 2009 – 2010 biennium budget process has concluded.

### ➤ **Timing Considerations**

- Update to PROS Plan

An update to the City's current Comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is currently in progress and will be completed by the end of the year. The PROS Plan will identify capital improvement priorities for the next six years.

- Community Recreation Facility

The Indoor Recreation Study has been completed and work continues on seeking potential community partners. Potential partners that have an interest in collaborating in the facility include the City of Redmond, Lake Washington Technical College, Bastyr University, Northwest University and Evergreen Hospital. In 2008, we have funding in the Parks Capital Improvement Program to conduct a site analysis once potential sites are identified.

- 2002 Bond-Funded Projects

Projects funded by the \$8.4 million 2002 Park Bond were completed in 2007. The projects completed are: Juanita Beach Park improvements and Master Plan; Carillon Woods acquisition and development; North Rose Hill Woodlands Park improvements; playfield improvements at Kirkland Junior High, Juanita Elementary, Rose Hill Elementary, and Franklin Elementary; and open space acquisition of approximately 10 acres, including expansion of protected lands at the Heronfield Wetlands and Yarrow Bay Wetlands.

- 1989 Park Bond Debt Service

The 1989 Park General Obligation Bonds debt service schedule will conclude at the end of 2009, after which this cost to property owners will come “off the books”. The debt service for these bonds for 2009 (the final year) will be approximately \$545,000, and the cost is six cents per \$1,000 assessed value. Note that this was a voted bond, so the excess levy rate will be reduced when the debt is retired.

➤ **Potential Timelines and Process**

While the time requirements to prepare and present a park ballot measure to voters can vary considerably based on a number of factors, the timeline and process for the successful 2002 Kirkland Park Bond and Levy is shown below as an example:

	1997	Park Board recommended that Council consider Park Bond
	1999	Park Board recommended that Council consider Park Bond
	2000	Updated to City PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation, and Open Space)
January	2001	PROS Plan adopted by City Council
March	2001	City Council approved recommendation for Park Bond exploratory process and timeline – consideration for a 2002 ballot measure
April	2001	First meeting of Council-appointed Park Bond Exploratory Committee
July	2001	Committee prioritized list of possible projects and reduced to several semi-finalists
Aug '01 - Feb '02	2001	Six months to develop additional project designs, cost estimates, secure property purchase options, etc.
February	2002	Hired Trust for Public Land (TPL) for strategic planning
February - April	2002	Public opinion polling and Council Study Sessions
April	2002	Developed final draft funding package - Additional public opinion polling
May/June	2002	Final Council deliberations – Council vote to go forward
July	2002	Adopted Ordinance to place bond and levy on ballot
July - November	2002	Community debate and campaigning
November	2002	General Election

➤ **Upcoming Park-Related Ballot Measures in King County**

Below is a description of park-related ballot measures put forward by King County communities in the November 2008 general election.

As a reminder, bonds (general obligation bonds) are used for capital improvements while a levy (levy lid lift) can be used for capital improvements as well as operational expenditures. Bonds require a “super-majority” (60%+1) to be approved while levies require a simple majority (50%+1). Bonds are typically repaid over a long period, such as 20 years. A levy, depending upon its nature, can be permanent or can be set for a limited time, usually up to 6 years. Bonds provide the entire funding for projects up-front, while levies provide a set amount of funding on an annual basis, as determined by the established levy rate.

- **Bellevue** – Levy for Parks and Open Spaces (\$40.5 million)

This levy is being billed as a replacement for an expiring 1988 park bond. This multi-faceted ballot measure would fund a variety of park and recreation projects, including open space acquisition, park development, new synthetic turf playfields, a new youth performing arts facility, and improvements to trails, natural areas, and urban forests. The levy rate would be 12 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

- **Carnation** - Levy Lid Lift for Public Safety and Parks

This ballot measure would fund law enforcement operations, prosecution services and jail costs, as well as parks maintenance and operations. If approved, the levy would generate \$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

- **Mercer Island** – General Obligation Park and Open Space Bonds (\$12 million) and Levy for Operations and Maintenance (\$900,000)

Two ballot measures will be presented to Mercer Island voters in November. A park bond would provide funding for over \$6 million of improvements at Luther Burbank Park, new synthetic turf fields, and other various park improvements. The M & O levy would pay for maintenance costs associated with park improvements included in the park bond, for open space and forest restoration, and for school-related park and recreation activities. The levy would also replace an existing levy which will be expiring in 2009.

- **Sammamish** - Park, Recreation and Athletic Facilities Bonds (\$19 million) and Levy Lid Lift for Park Programs and Operations (\$310,000)

Sammamish will also have two park measures on the fall ballot. The park bonds would pay to convert a County library into a community recreation center, develop a park on Lake Sammamish, develop new synthetic turf playfields, built a community trail, and fund park land acquisition. The bonds would raise property taxes 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The park levy would pay for new park programs and maintenance of the new recreation facility, and would cost 4 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The City has stated that both ballot measures will need to be approved for the projects to occur.

- **Seattle** – Proposition 2: Parks Levy (\$145 million)

This proposal would fund a number of projects, and includes \$24 million for new parks, \$6 million for the purchase of green spaces, \$9 million for the Seattle Asian Art Museum, renovation of 23 playgrounds, 4 new sports fields, stream and forest restoration and other park improvements. Funding would also be provided to complete the Burke-Gilman Trail and would provide funding for an “opportunity fund” to pay for neighborhood-sponsored projects. The levy would replace an expiring parks levy and would cost \$2.60 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would be approximately \$0.19 more than the existing parks levy.

- **Snoqualmie** – Recreation Facility Bonds (\$10 million)

This bond measure would help fund a new 30,000 square feet community recreation center in the Snoqualmie Ridge area which would be operated by the YMCA. The bonds would cost 30 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

- **Finn Hill Park and Recreation District** – Six Year Regular Property Tax Levy

Voters in this park district will be asked to continue funding the districts maintenance and operations of O.O. Denny Park. The levy would impose 6 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Attachments:

Bellevue Park Levy Background

Mercer Island Park Bond and Levy Background

Sammamish Park Bond and Levy Background

Seattle Park Levy Background

# City of Bellevue Parks & Natural Areas Levy

November 4, 2008 Voter Initiative



## **Background**

With the city's existing parks levy expiring this year, voters are being asked to consider a new funding measure to provide additional investments in Bellevue's nationally accredited park system. The measure would replace the purchasing power of the expiring bonds. Following significant public input, Bellevue City Council approved the measure for the November 4 ballot.

## **The Parks & Natural Areas Levy**

This measure includes funding to enhance and maintain the Bellevue Parks & Open Space System. If approved, the package would accomplish the following:

- Protect water quality in Bellevue's lakes and streams and preserve natural areas throughout the city;
- Enhance existing parks such as Bellevue Downtown Park, Surrey Downs, Crossroads Community Park and Bellevue Botanical Garden;
- Invest in sportsfields, trails, community parks, and neighborhood parks; and
- Maintain improvements consistent with Bellevue Parks' standards.

Specific project funding details are further described below:

### **Acquisition Opportunity Funding (\$10M)**

Dedicate resources to obtain land that complements the existing parks system to increase public access to lake shores, preserve open space, protect water quality, increase trail connectivity and create opportunities for new neighborhood parks.

### **Eastgate Area Community Park (\$6M)**

This 27-acre undeveloped site will be improved following a community-based plan to preserve natural areas and add new recreational amenities.

### **Neighborhood Park Development (\$5M)**

Smaller-scale parks will be developed with amenities such as play equipment, open space, and trail connections. Proposed sites are along Lake Sammamish and in the Bridle Trails neighborhoods.

### **Downtown Park (\$5M)**

Complete additional phase of the Downtown Park master plan, including completion of the circle around the waterfall and reflecting pond.

### **Surrey Downs Community Park (\$3.5M)**

Transferred to the City from county ownership in 2005, this park will be improved to offer new sport and recreational amenities for the neighborhood and broader community.

### **Sports Field Improvements (\$3M)**

Building on the expanded capacity of Robinswood Sports Fields, additional synthetic fields will be installed to improve safety and play at Wilburton Hill and Newport Hills parks.

### **Bellevue Botanical Garden (\$2M)**

Planned improvements will expand opportunities for visitors to experience botanical displays and educational programs.

### **Expansion of Crossroads Community Center to Support Youth Performing Arts (\$2M)**

A larger, improved facility will help meet the facility needs of the City's youth performing arts programs.

### **Lewis Creek Park Phase II (\$2M)**

Group picnic areas and more trail connections will complete the planned improvements to this community park.

### **Trail and Natural Area Improvements (\$2M)**

Investments within the City's 1,800-acre open space system will improve forest conditions and stabilize slopes to reduce erosion in the Coal Creek Natural Area, and create hiking and walking trails throughout the City.

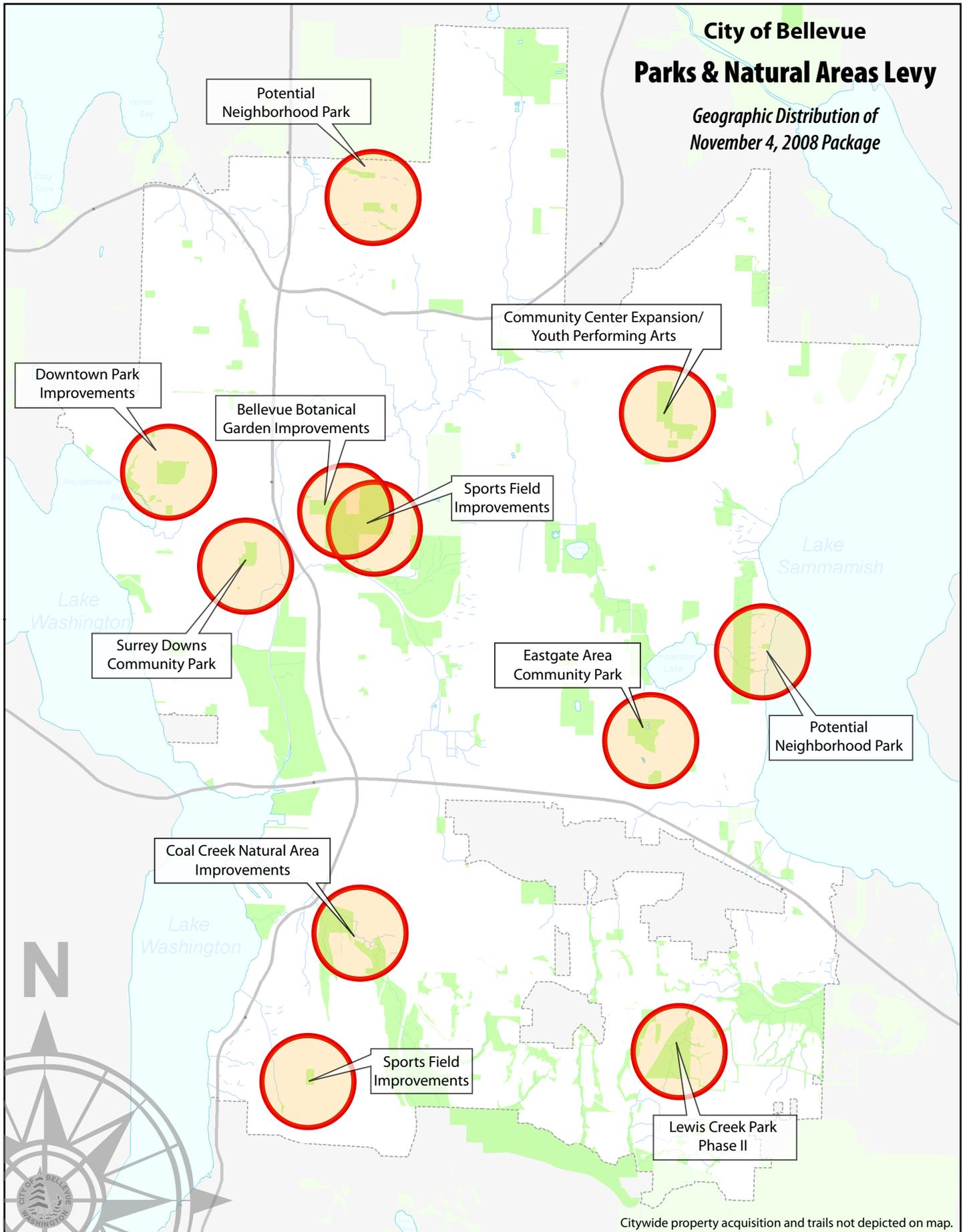
## **Cost**

If approved, this measure would cost a typical homeowner about \$71 per year for the next 20 years, or 12 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. This measure was set to replace the expiring 1988 Bellevue Park Bond which had an average property tax rate of 17 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

## **Additional Information**

If you have questions about the Bellevue Parks & Natural Areas Levy, please call the Bellevue Parks & Community Services Department at 425-452-2805.

# Geographic Distribution of Levy Package



## Mercer Island Parks Ballot Measures 2008

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

#### ***When is the election date for the Parks Measures?***

November 4, 2008. Voters may vote at the polls or by absentee ballot.

#### ***What are the Parks Measures?***

Two ballot measures will go before Mercer Island voters:

A bond package of \$12 million for park improvements

An Operations & Maintenance levy of \$900,000 to support the bond projects and other park and recreation operations.

#### ***What projects will the Parks Bond fund?***

If passed by the voters, the Parks Bond would pay for \$12 million in park improvements. This includes shoreline restoration and other improvements at Luther Burbank Park, ballfield improvements, trail development, development of a small dog off-leash area, swim beach improvements, and Mary Wayte Pool improvements. To support the increase in maintenance and operation costs that will result from implementing some of the projects, an additional operations and maintenance measure will also be on the November 2008 ballot. The improvement projects are described below:

#### **Luther Burbank Park Improvements may include the following (\$6,252,000):**

- *Luther Burbank Park Shoreline Restoration (includes Calkins Point and South Wetland)* - Restore shoreline and create erosion control beaches; add a demonstration garden; and develop environmental learning amenities and furnishings.
- *Luther Burbank Park Waterfront Improvements* - Make improvements to the dock, float, pier, boiler building, pathway, drainage and sewer system and conduct waterfront planning process to identify future improvements and enhancements.
- *Luther Burbank Park Playground* - Replace existing children's playground equipment with new equipment.
- *Luther Burbank Park Swim Beach Improvements* - Expand the swim and beach area; provide on-grade access to beach; construct new floating swim dock and ladder; and add small water spray park, upland sand kids play area, sand volleyball court and arbors for shade.
- *Luther Burbank Park North Wetland* - Complete the north wetland boardwalk, expand north wetland to the south and add new plantings.
- *Luther Burbank Park Trail Connections* - Build the missing trail connection from "Luther Lid" to North Mercer Way; build a trail adjacent to Upper Luther Burbank Park/84th Ave SE to Town Center; develop the downtown park entrance including wayfinding signage to Luther Burbank Park; create a park area for Town Center users and add new furnishings.

**Ballfield Improvements may include the following (\$4,035,000):**

- *South Mercer Playfields* - Install artificial turf and new lighting at Field #3 and create new Field #5; add artificial turf on infields at Fields #1 and #2.
- *Island Crest Park North & South Infield* - Install artificial turf on the infield of the north and south field.
- *Island Crest Park Outfield* - Install artificial turf on the outfield of the south field.

**Engstrom Open Space (\$236,000):** Build a trail to make open space accessible and connect to Pioneer Park and East Mercer Way.

**Small Dog Off-Leash Area (\$316,000):** Expand Luther Burbank Park off-leash area to create a small dog area or create a new one elsewhere.

**Trail Enhancements (\$323,000):** Construct a trail connecting SE 36th street via a portion of the I-90 service road to Shorewood Heights and construct a trail adjacent to and inside Gallagher Hill Open Space to SE 40th street. Improve Ellis Pond trails.

**Swim Beach Improvements (\$788,000):** Repair and improve other Mercer Island swim beaches.

**Mary Wayte Pool Improvements (\$50,000):** Partial funding for new pool liner, locker room renovations and boiler system upgrades.

***When would the projects be implemented if the Bond is approved by voters?***  
Projects would be phased in over the next nine years beginning in 2009.

***What projects will the Parks Operations & Maintenance Levy fund?***

If passed by the voters, the Parks Operations & Maintenance Levy for \$900,000 per year would pay for maintenance costs associated with park improvements included in the Parks Bond, open space and forest restoration and school related park and recreation activities. The Parks Operations & Maintenance Levy would also replace the current levy which pays for operations and maintenance of Luther Burbank Park and which expires in 2009. The operations and maintenance costs include the following:

**Luther Burbank Park Operations and Maintenance (\$370,000):** Continue funding annual operations and maintenance of Luther Burbank Park at existing levels. Mercer Island City Council agreed to accept transfer of Luther Burbank from King County effective January 1, 2003. Luther Burbank represents a permanent obligation and expense. The levy approved by voters in 2003 for maintenance and operation of Luther Burbank expires in 2009.

**Open Space Vegetation Management (\$65,000):** Increase existing maintenance efforts. Restore the health of open space areas through enhanced levels of invasive vegetation removal; new trails; replanting of native species.

**Pioneer Park (\$77,000):** Increase existing maintenance efforts. Restore the health of Pioneer Park by removing diseased trees and invasive plants and replanting with new vegetation and trees.

**Capital Projects Operations and Maintenance (\$128,000):** Fund park operations and maintenance costs associated with new capital projects once constructed.

**School Related Park and Recreation Activities (\$260,000) may include:**

- *School Facility Scheduling* - scheduling of school district facilities
- *School Athletic Field Maintenance* - maintenance of school district ballfields
- *Other School Related Park and Recreation Activities*

***How was this list of projects determined?***

In 2007, the Mercer Island City Council appointed a Citizens Stakeholder Committee to develop a list of park projects that could be funded through a levy lid lift and/or bond levy. In addition, the Committee relied on park master plans, studies, staff expertise, and a citizen survey of 700 residents. To learn more about the process, please visit [www.mercergov.org/parkslevy](http://www.mercergov.org/parkslevy).

***How many years will the Bond and the Operations & Maintenance Levy be in effect?***

The bonds would be repaid over a 20-year period. The levy lid lift would be in effect for 15 years.

***What would the interest rate be on a 20-year bond?***

The actual interest rate of the bonds will not be known until the City sells the bonds to investors. This cannot occur until after voters approve the bond issue. Even though this is the case, the City has used a 5.35% average interest rate for planning purposes.

***Which agencies get your property tax dollars?***

The total property tax bill that a resident pays consists of not only the City levied and voter approved portion but also the property taxes that other jurisdictions assess on the residents. The City portion of the property tax bill has totaled less than 20% for the past five years and in 2008 amounts to 15.9% of the total tax bill. There are 6 other jurisdictions that have taxing authority on Mercer Island. The largest two in 2008, totaling 51.9% of the total tax bill, were the assessments for school funding—the State School Fund at 29.8% and the Mercer Island School District at 22.1%. King County is the next largest taxing jurisdiction receiving 16.9% of the total property tax bill. The Port of Seattle, the King County Library District, the Emergency Medical Services levy, the King County Flood Zone District, and the Ferry District receive the remainder of the taxes, which amounts to 15.3%. For a homeowner with property valued at \$1.0 million, the City's portion of the property tax bill in 2008 would amount to \$1,137.

***How much debt does the City currently have?***

In 2008, voted debt payments supported by taxes amounts to \$425,000, which represents the final year of the bond issue which funded the remodeling of City Hall. Beginning in 2009, the City will have no outstanding debt funded by property taxes. The City has very little debt outstanding, maintaining a sizable debt capacity. Moody's rating service, a leading company that ranks credit-worthiness, rates the City at Aa1. Only two cities have higher ratings – Bellevue and Seattle have ratings of Aaa. A high bond rating equates to lower interest costs.

***How much will the Bond and the Operations & Maintenance Levy cost taxpayers annually?***

For the owner of an average valued Mercer Island home of \$1 million, the estimated annual cost is \$94.44 for the Bond and \$113.68 for the Operations & Maintenance Levy, for a total of \$208.12. Because both the Luther Burbank levy lid and the MIDA City Hall Bond are expiring, the net tax impact on an average home is \$95.05. To see a cost summary of the parks measures, [click here](#).

***Who can I contact with questions about senior tax exemptions?***

King County Department of Assessments, (206)296-7300.

***How many votes are needed to pass the Parks Measures?***

Information is available on the [King County Elections website](#).

***What if voters approve the Parks Operations & Maintenance Levy but not the Parks Bond?***

The City would have the legal option to collect the full levy amount. However, the City may choose to collect only on the portion of the Operations & Maintenance Levy to pay for open space and forest restoration, school related park and recreation activities, and operations and maintenance of Luther Burbank Park and therefore not collect on the portion of the Levy that would pay for maintenance costs associated with park improvements included in the Parks Bond. Park improvement projects would not be accomplished unless other funding sources are identified.

***What if voters approve the Parks Bond but not the Parks Operations & Maintenance Levy?***

The City would phase in park improvement projects starting in 2009. Funding would not be available for open space and forest restoration, school related park and recreation activities, and operations and maintenance of Luther Burbank Park. Because the current Luther Burbank levy expires in 2009, additional funding would be needed to continue funding operations and maintenance of Luther Burbank Park at existing levels. Additional funding sources would also need to be identified to pay for maintenance costs associated with Parks Bond projects.

***When would the taxes take effect?***

There would be no effect on property taxes until 2009.

To read the bond ordinance, [click here](#).

To read the levy ordinance, [click here](#).

For additional information, please contact Pete Mayer, Parks and Recreation Director/Assistant City Manager  
at (206) 275-7609 or [pete.mayer@mercergov.org](mailto:pete.mayer@mercergov.org).



## 2008 Sammamish Park Bond & Park Levy Facts

On July 21, 2008, the Sammamish City Council voted to place two parks measures on the November ballot:

- 1 - A \$19 million bond to build new recreational facilities.
- 2 - A property tax levy lift to pay for \$310,000 in annual programming and operation costs at the new facilities.

“Putting this on the ballot will let the residents decide an important issue,” City Manager Ben Yazici said. “This vote, whichever way it goes, will put the power in their hands.”

The \$19 million bond would pay for the following:

- \$5 million to purchase the existing King County library for conversion and expansion into a recreation center for residents of all ages. The city intends to partner with the Boys and Girls Club to operate the facility.
- \$3 million for Phase I development of Sammamish Landing, a waterfront park along Lake Sammamish.
- \$2.5 million to convert an existing grass athletic field at Pine Lake Middle School into an artificial, multipurpose field with lights.
- \$1.8 million for major improvements to East Sammamish Park (next to Margaret Mead Elementary).
- \$1.7 million for construction of the Beaver Lake Vicinity Trail, a path connecting Beaver Lake Park to Beaver Lake Preserve along West Beaver Lake Drive.
- \$4 million for land acquisition in the northeast quadrant of the city, which is not currently served by a community park.
- \$1 million for estimated park bond fees.

“If the voters approve the bond, it will be paid off over 20 years by raising property taxes 14 cents per thousand of assessed valuation,” Yazici said. “That translates into \$84 per year, or \$7 per month, on a \$600,000 home. After 20 years that tax would go away.

“If the voters approve the levy lift to pay for the programming and operations of the new facilities, that will raise 4 cents per thousand of assessed valuation. That translates into \$24 per year, or \$2 per month, on a \$600,000 home. Since the cost of programming and operations will go on indefinitely, the levy lift will not be discontinued.”

Although residents will cast separate votes on the bond and the maintenance levy lift, the two are linked. The city won't proceed with the bond unless the programming and operations money is also approved.

# PARKS AND GREEN SPACES CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 26, 2008

Honorable Richard Conlin  
President  
Seattle City Council  
Seattle City Hall  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Council President Conlin:

I am writing on behalf of the twenty-eight members of the Parks and Green Spaces Citizens Advisory Committee to convey our final report, which contains our recommendations for a \$140 million levy to address our City's needs for parks, green spaces and trails. The report is the product of many hundreds of hours contributed by the members of the Committee during seven Committee meetings, four community outreach workshops, and a public hearing. We also wish to acknowledge the contributions of the hundreds of citizens who attended the workshops, testified at the hearing, and made their opinions known to the Committee through letters and e-mail.

The Committee worked within the parameters set by the Council, which limited our proposed package to \$140 million. Our proposal addresses five principal goals:

1. Ensure that our parks facilities are safe:

The proposal provides funding to bring twenty-three substandard playgrounds into compliance with federal safety standards, to make safety improvements at Othello Park, and to make critical seismic repairs at two Parks Department cultural facilities – the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park and Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center in the Central Area.

2. Protect and enhance Seattle's Green Legacy for future generations:

The levy proposal provides funding to acquire critical parcels in our City's remaining greenbelts and natural areas, to continue the renewal of the Washington Park Arboretum, and to restore forests, streams and shorelines on City-owned lands. The proposal makes imaginative use of the City's mandatory investments to protect its reservoirs by providing the funds for development of new parks on reservoir lids at Jefferson Park and Myrtle, Maple Leaf and West Seattle Reservoirs. When completed, these parks will add seventy-three acres of new park land. The proposal also provides funding to renovate Camp Long

for environmental education and camping opportunities for families and youth groups, and funding to expand the City's network of P-Patches and community food gardens.

3. Create healthy neighborhoods that support healthy living for all ages:

In addition to upgrading twenty-three neighborhood playgrounds, the Committee's proposal will fund major improvements in sports fields at lower Woodland, Genesee, and Delridge Parks to improve playing conditions. The package includes funds to extend the Burke-Gilman and Duwamish Bicycle Trails, and construct the Thomas Street overpass to provide a trail connection between South Lake Union, Queen Anne, Seattle Center, and the Olympic Sculpture Park. Funding for three skateboard projects is also included.

4. Provide the parks and green spaces that are essential for vibrant neighborhoods as our city grows:

The proposal includes \$24 million to acquire park land and trail corridors in urban villages and single-family neighborhoods which have been identified by the City as having critical deficits of parks and green spaces. In addition, funding is included to complete the development of parks in the International District, Whittier Heights and Crown Hill on property previously acquired with Pro Parks funding, as well as a park in the Northgate urban center.

5. Encourage community creativity in implementing the levy:

The Committee proposal allocates \$15 million for an Opportunity Fund, to provide communities with the chance to submit innovative proposals for projects to address emerging needs during the life of the levy.

Although the Committee was working in a compressed timeframe, it is important to note that each of the projects we have recommended has been previously vetted through a public review process or recognized in an adopted neighborhood plan, watershed plan, or Parks Department plan. The Committee owes a debt of gratitude to the citizens who laid the groundwork for our proposal through their participation in those planning efforts during the past decade.

Everyone involved in this process held passionate views about the need for a park levy and the types of projects it should emphasize, and the Committee reflected the full spectrum of the community's diverse opinions in its deliberations. I am pleased that we were able to reach agreement on a list of projects that balances those diverse interests and addresses the most urgent needs of the community.

In addition to our project recommendations, the Committee has prepared a list of pros and cons for moving forward on the November ballot as the Council had requested. We have also provided recommendations for policy and programmatic changes which we believe will contribute to the goals of providing Seattle's citizens with the parks and green spaces our City so desperately needs if Seattle is to "grow with grace" in the years ahead.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to have served our City as members of the Committee, and we look forward to working with as you consider how best to move forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beth Purcell".

Beth Purcell  
Chair  
Seattle Parks and Green Spaces  
Citizens Advisory Committee

BP:kp

Enclosures

cc: City Council Members (w/ Encls.)  
Parks and Green Spaces Citizens Advisory Committee (w/ Encls.)



## Frequently Asked Questions

- **How much does the levy cost? How much money will it provide?**

The 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy provides over \$145 million for parks projects throughout the City. The average cost is \$81 a year for the typical homeowner, a decrease of about \$30 from the current expiring Pro Parks Levy.

- **Why do we need to do this now? What happens if voters reject the levy?**

Seattle residents have enjoyed the benefits of the \$200 million Pro Parks Levy passed in 2000. However, that levy is expiring, and with it, Seattle will lose a significant source of funding for the places that make Seattle great. With a high turnout of voters, an expiring successful levy, and time sensitive opportunities to improve parks (i.e. reservoir lids), now is the time to continue support for neighborhood parks. The current levy package is built on the hard work of citizens around the city who identified neighborhood green space needs in their neighborhood plans, and the projects in the levy are all fiscally sound.

- **Who decided what projects would be included in the levy?**

This levy is truly a citizen-lead effort. A 28-member Parks and Green Spaces Levy citizens' advisory committee was formed in April to ensure citizen participation in the development of the package of parks, open space, boulevards, trails and other proposals in the levy. The group identified projects to address the parks and green space acquisition and improvement needs in each neighborhood and remained within the overall budget of \$145 million over six years. The committee was made of representatives from diverse interest areas such as: sports, green space, culture, and habitat restoration.

- **Why is there funding for the Seattle Asian Arts Museum in a parks levy?**

The funding for the Seattle Asian Art Museum is for infrastructure improvements to the 70-year old building located in Volunteer Park and owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Seattle Art Museum leases the space, but maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the City. Currently the building is in need of seismic repairs, and the levy funding will provide for 80% of the funding for these safety improvements.

- **What safeguards are in place to make sure the money will be spent wisely?**

A 16-member Oversight Committee will be established to review the spending of levy funds and to make recommendations for spending in future years. The Committee will have direct access to all financial records of levy projects and will meet regularly with Seattle Parks & Recreation officials.

- **What are some of the major projects to be funded by the levy?**

The levy includes \$24 million for new parks in our urban villages, \$6 million for the purchase of green spaces, \$9 million for the Seattle Asian Art Museum, renovation of 23 playgrounds, 4 new sports

fields, stream and forest restoration and many other major improvement projects in our parks across the city.

- **How will this levy impact the City budget?**

Levy funds are in addition to the operating budget for Parks and Recreation, and provide for improvements and the acquisition of land that are outside current budget appropriations.

- **What is the Opportunity Fund and what is the money for?**

One of the most successful elements of the Pro Parks Levy was the opportunity fund, which allowed neighborhoods to access funds for additional projects over the course of the levy. Projects might include the purchase of open space, the development of parks and playgrounds as well as building trails and community gardens throughout Seattle. The Opportunity Fund was expanded in the Parks and Green Spaces Levy to \$15 million.

- **What kinds of improvements will be made to biking, hiking, and walking trails?**

The levy includes funds to complete the Burke-Gilman Trail through Ballard, create a linear park, including bicycle and trail improvements along the Duwamish River, and construct a Thomas Street Overpass between Myrtle Edwards Park and Queen Anne as part of the Lake to Bay Trail.

- **Are there projects included for the Central District?**

Projects were chosen throughout all of Seattle's neighborhoods. In the Central District the projects include the Judkins Skatespot, the Atlantic Street Playground, and seismic improvements to the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center, a Parks and Recreation facility. In addition neighborhood groups are encouraged to apply for funding from the Opportunity Fund, which will focus on neighborhoods underserved by green space needs.

- **Who's supporting the levy? What groups have endorsed it?**

Several groups and individuals have endorsed the levy, including Seattle Parks Foundation, Allied Arts, Feet First, P-Patch Trust, Groundswell NW, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, Friends of Athletic Fields, American Society of Landscape Architects-Washington Chapter, Friends of Discovery Park, Seattle Great City Initiative, and Disc NW.

- **How can I get involved? Where can I go for more information?**

Visit the campaign website at [www.seattleparksforall.org](http://www.seattleparksforall.org). If you have any questions contact Brady at [brady@seattleparksforall.org](mailto:brady@seattleparksforall.org) or call 206.484.8125.