

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING PFEC RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL (to be incorporated into a report from the PFEC to the City Council)

Principles to consider in developing the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS):

- **Kirkland parks should be safe, clean, in good repair and reflect the values of environmental sustainability** – There was some discussion about whether parks should be “green” both in terms of sustainable practices and/or color. The committee was less concerned about having all lawns green all summer than using maintenance methods and products that are good for the environment.
- **Preservation of natural areas and parks through reforestation and removal of invasive species should be a component of the City’s ongoing maintenance program.**
- **Parks and recreation facilities should be accessible and support healthy living for all citizens.**
- **Parks and open spaces are essential elements of vibrant neighborhoods and business districts.**
- **The City should pursue a balance of natural and active areas.**
- **Parks should be seen as community gathering places that everyone has a responsibility to help maintain** – Kirkland parks are and should continue to be a place where the community can come together, work together and take responsibility for their parks and open spaces.

Principles to consider in developing a ballot measure:

- **Providing stable funding for maintaining and repairing existing parks and facilities is a high priority** – Both the on-line survey and PFEC survey placed high importance on taking care of our existing parks. Approximately 50% of the levy lid lift recommendation provides for maintenance, repair and restoration of existing parks, recreation facilities and natural spaces in Kirkland. Similarly, the development of any new facilities recommended is accompanied by a companion maintenance levy.
- **Volunteers should continue to be used to sustain existing parks and open spaces** – The financial challenges experienced in recent years have highlighted the importance of volunteers for maintaining parks and open spaces. The recommendation to fund maintenance with the new levy is not intended to replace volunteer efforts but to maintain and enhance community involvement.
- **Open and honest communication will be critical to the success of this effort**
 - **Wise use of resources should be emphasized** – The public wants to be assured that the City is making the best use of the resources it has now before

they approve new resources. The community needs to be assured that the Parks Department is making the best, most efficient, use of resources. Specific examples should be provided.

- **The community should be reminded that we followed through on all projects in the last bond measure** – All of the projects approved on the previous park bond measure were completed and all of the bond proceeds were expended. It will be important to remind the community about the new and improved facilities that they now have as a result of the last park measure. At the same time, some members were concerned that we have many unfinished projects, such as development of McAuliffe Park and the north portion of Juanita Beach Park, that the public may want to pursue before any new facilities or purchases are made.
- **Voter education will be a key to the success of programs such as Green Kirkland, maintenance of OO Denny Park and development of the Eastside Rail Corridor** – These projects are important but not well-understood by a majority of residents. There seems to be a great deal of confusion about the ERC purchase versus the proposed development. Careful and clear explanations will be important.
- **Descriptions of principles, projects and written materials should use phrases and terms that are familiar to the average citizen and that speak to a need they can identify with** (e.g. use “parks” instead of “facilities” and “parks within walking distance” instead of “level of service”) – Communication materials should be couched in terms that most people can relate to and understand. They need to speak to a basic need or desire of the public.
- **There should be an overall theme for the measure** – Messaging will be important and an overarching theme will be helpful.
- **We are excited about the annexation area and want to see parks distributed throughout the new City.**
- **The public needs to be educated about property taxes** – The public should have a better understanding of how much of their property taxes go to the City.
- **The content of the ballot measure should be developed with thought to several underlying principles:**
 - **Proposed projects should reflect geographic distribution throughout the community** – The committee agreed that we need to consider Kirkland as one community as opposed to “the annexation area” and “old Kirkland.” Although an equal distribution between those two areas shouldn’t be a requirement, the committee agreed that it still an important consideration. There was an acknowledgement that the specific project locations in the recommendation do not cover all areas of the City. However, it was noted that

geographic equity could be achieved through strategic application of the "Neighborhood Park Acquisition" and "City/School Partnership" projects.

- **New capital facilities should be accompanied by a companion operating levy that provides ongoing maintenance funding.**
- **Projects should have a broad-based appeal and spark excitement and imagination** – Projects should not only represent a variety of locations in the City, but they should appeal to a variety of interests and needs. Also important was the notion of one or two projects that could really excite the public. Some members believed that the development of the Eastside Rail Corridor could pique the interest of many residents.
- **Projects should meet an important need or opportunity** – Projects should relate a sense of urgency to motivate the community. Again, the Eastside Rail Corridor, if presented correctly, could be seen as an urgent need as would the need to improve funding for parks maintenance. The community is aware of the recent reductions in parks maintenance and has reiterated this as a priority.
- **A nine-year levy is preferred over an excess bond measure**
 - **The 50% approval threshold is more realistic to attain this year** – Some committee members questioned the advisability of taking a measure to the voters in 2012 given the challenging economic environment. The measure should be sized to have a good chance of success.
 - **The nine-year levy will allow us to retire the 2002 outstanding debt and the 2012 debt at about the same time** – This presents the opportunity to do a larger, more ambitious measure in the future.
- **City Council should continue to actively pursue regional partners for an indoor recreation facility**
- **A citizen survey should be conducted to gauge the amount of taxes the public might be willing to consider for parks and also to gauge public interest in an indoor recreation facility.**