



CITY OF KIRKLAND
Parks and Community Services Department
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Lynn Zwaagstra, Director
Hillary De La Cruz, Management Analyst

Date: July 7, 2022

Subject: Establishing a Parks Funding Exploratory Committee to Explore Options to be Considered in a Potential 2023 Parks Ballot Measure

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council provides direction regarding:

1. Establishing a Parks Funding Exploratory Committee (PFEC) through draft resolution R-5551 (**Attachment A**) to review and recommend to the Council capital and operating elements and funding mechanisms for a potential November 2023 ballot measure for Parks.
2. A preliminary list of potential PFEC members, curriculum topics, and timeline for placing the potential measure on the November 2023 ballot.

Council input and direction will be used to bring an updated resolution and stakeholder list to the August 3, 2022 Council meeting for final adoption.

BACKGROUND DISCUSSION:

The Parks & Community Services Department (PCS) began the process of updating the PROS Plan in the summer of 2021. The PROS Plan acts as a six-year guide and strategic plan for managing and enhancing park and recreation services. The planning process included robust community engagement led and facilitated by BerryDunn with supplemental engagement efforts led by the City. In total, the community engagement and inclusive needs analysis process incorporated the opinions, needs, and desires of over 4,700 Kirkland community members. The engagement process included stakeholder interviews, focus group meetings, community conversations (public forums), and statistically valid and open-link surveys. To help ensure inclusivity, several focus groups were held specifically for individuals from potentially underrepresented groups, individuals with disabilities, and individuals from different cultural backgrounds. An emphasis was also placed on including youth and teens in the planning process. As a result of the many public input opportunities initiated by the City, the engagement interwoven throughout the PROS Plan is extremely comprehensive.

At the end of 2021, City Council began considering a potential parks ballot measure. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan update process had been occurring for approximately 6 months and public interest in expanding park and recreation service levels, amenities and facilities had begun coming forward. In response, City Council allocated funding during the

2021 mid-biennial budget process for a potential parks related ballot measure exploratory process.

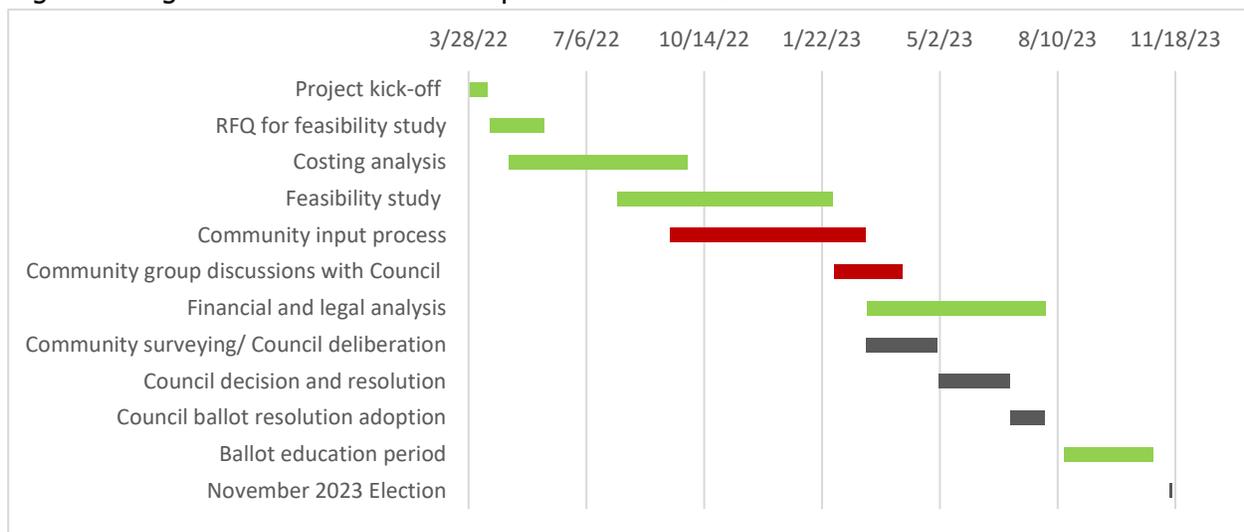
Preliminary results of the PROS Plan community engagement process were presented to City Council at the [January 28, 2022 Planning Retreat](#). Results and findings from the PROS Plan outreach process delivered strong messages from the community about needed park improvements, adding new park components (e.g., playground, pickleball court), constructing an indoor aquatics center, recreation center, and developing a trail network connecting parks throughout the city. The community expressed the need to provide more aquatics programming, sports programming, fitness activities, outdoor recreation opportunities, and more free or non-fee-based special events.

In response to hearing these needs expressed by the community, City Council adopted a new work plan item at the [March 1, 2022 City Council meeting](#) through [R-5514](#). The new work plan item reads:

*Explore potential comprehensive Parks ballot measure options to be placed before Kirkland voters in 2023 for the purpose of maintaining and expanding natural areas, open spaces, aquatic and recreational facilities, and program opportunities that enhance the health and wellbeing of the community to further the goals of **abundant parks, open spaces, and recreational services**.*

The City Council directed staff to take the necessary steps to place a potential ballot measure(s) on the November 2023 ballot. As shared at the [May 17, 2022 City Council meeting](#), the City Manager and PCS Director have chartered a "Ballot Action Team (BAT)" to steer the ballot measure development. The BAT consists of leadership staff in the City Manager's Office, PCS, Public Works, and Finance and will meet every other week through 2023 to keep the initiative on track. Figure 1 displays a high-level timeline of this body of work.

Figure 1: High-level Ballot Measure Exploration Timeline



During the May 17 meeting, staff shared an update about, and received City Council's support for, a Feasibility Study process. Staff are currently completing the final steps of the procurement process and consultant work will soon begin to evaluate feasibility for an indoor aquatics and recreation center (large size facility) and a local recreation community center (medium size facility). The consultant is being asked to provide four concept plans: one for redevelopment of Peter Kirk Park with a large facility, one for a large facility at another site, and two plans for medium facilities at other parks locations to be determined through consultant and PCS staff due diligence process to determine the most feasible locations. These plans will be used during

the ballot measure community input process, and City Council will receive updates and presentations in early 2023.

Simultaneously, staff are identifying a slate of potential capital and operating investments to be considered for a ballot measure, based on goals and priorities established in the draft PROS Plan, and conducting siting and costing analysis for each investment. Staff are also developing communications materials and plans. The next step is to formalize the community input process. Final steps to the process involve funding mechanism research, community surveying and adoption of a resolution directing the City staff to proceed with legal steps necessary to pursue a ballot measure.

Community Engagement Component of the Ballot Measure Exploration Process

Parks and recreation services are a vital component of the quality of life for all Kirkland community members, businesses, and visitors to the City. These services belong to the entire community and it is critical that the entire community understand and support the need for new investments for any ballot measure to be successful. To accomplish this, based on the successful model from the 2012 Parks Levy, staff recommends re-establishing the Parks Funding Exploratory Committee (PFEC) to lead a community input process to identify the capital and operating elements and the funding mechanisms to be placed on the ballot. After a comprehensive process, PFEC will present their recommendations to City Council in the first quarter of 2023.

The new PFEC should be comprised of diverse stakeholders that have an interest in Kirkland's parks and recreation services. Table 1 (see following page) provides a list of potential groups or types of groups to include on the PFEC, sorted by group type. Staff recommends that Council identify up to 38 groups from this list, or other stakeholders that Council wants to include, to invite to participate in PFEC on behalf of the specific groups. Staff further recommends that each group select their delegate to represent them on the PFEC. An alternative would be for the Council to appoint the individual delegate from each group.

Additionally, staff recommends that Council support a staff-led process to recruit two at-large members through a public application process. As much as possible, staff recommends that PFEC members reflect the diversity of Kirkland, including with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identification, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, background, and perspective, and status as a homeowner or renter in Kirkland. People with these types of experiences will likely also be represented through the group-affiliated members.

See **Attachment B** for a Draft PFEC Member Position Description that outlines member responsibilities and roles that will be shared during the member recruitment process.

As mentioned above, this process is modelled after the 2012 Parks Funding Exploratory Committee as well as the 2020 Community Safety Advisory Group, which both resulted in successful voter-approved ballot measures. Both groups were chaired by Councilmembers to keep a strong connection between the group and City Council. Staff recommends that a similar approach be taken with the PFEC. During the May 17 meeting the Council discussed having Councilmember Kelli Curtis as the Chair and that is reflected in this preliminary draft. The PFEC would meet for the duration of September 15, 2022 to February 2023 as outlined in **Attachment C**, the Draft PFEC Meeting Dates and Topics.

Table 1: Potential List of Parks Funding Exploratory Committee Members

| Group type | Specific Group |
|---|--|
| City Groups | Chair/Convener: Councilmember Kelli Curtis Park Board Delegate from each of the 13 neighborhood associations Youth Council Senior Council Green Kirkland Partnership Park Steward |
| Community Associations/ Civic Groups | Kirkland Chamber of Commerce Kirkland Downtown Association Kirkland Parks and Community Foundation Service Clubs of Kirkland Individual from the 2015 "no" Metropolitan Park District Campaign |
| Community Groups | Kirkland Promotores Right to Breathe Committee Eastside for All Eastside Pathways Imagine Housing |
| Aquatics Groups | Splash Forward Swim Team Representative |
| Sports Groups | Little League Representative Soccer Representative Lacrosse Representative Puget Sound Cricket Club DiscNW |
| Education | Lake Washington School District Lake Washington School District PTSA Council Northwest University Lake Washington Technical Institute |
| Health | EvergreenHealth Hospital |
| Businesses | Large Business Small Business Event Organizer |
| At-Large Community Members (2)? | |

QUESTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL

Is there any additional information that Council needs prior to August 3?

Does the Council have feedback on:

- Draft Resolution R-5551
- Narrowing the list of stakeholders to 38 groups and 2 at-large members
- Any additional issues

NEXT STEPS

Next steps for the ballot measure exploratory process consist of incorporating the Council's feedback into the resolution and stakeholder lists and returning to the August 3, 2022, Council Meeting for final adoption. With Council concurrence on July 19, staff will begin contacting stakeholders' groups to initiate delegate selection.

Council discussed and provided feedback on the draft PROS plan at the [June 7, 2022 Council meeting](#). Also scheduled for the August 3, 2022, City Council meeting is presentation of the PROS Plan final draft. The PROS Plan is a key document for the community and articulates the community's interests. The PROS Plan will be a foundational document for review by the newly established PFEC.

Attachments:

- A. Draft Resolution R-5551
- B. Draft Parks Funding Exploratory Committee Position Description
- C. Draft Parks Funding Exploratory Committee Meeting Dates and Topics