



**KING COUNTY**

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

**Signature Report**

**July 7, 2008**

**Motion 12809**

**Proposed No.** 2008-0247.1

**Sponsors** Hague, Phillips and Patterson

1                   A MOTION identifying a process by which parks  
2                   expansion levy projects will be developed, reviewed and  
3                   recommended for council approval in accordance with  
4                   Motion 12587.

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6                   WHEREAS, the citizens of King County approved the parks expansion levy  
7                   ballot measure on August 21, 2007, and

8                   WHEREAS, the five cent parks expansion levy will be collected for six years,  
9                   beginning in January 2008, as a dedicated portion of the property tax, and

10                  WHEREAS, parks expansion levy funds are to be used in accordance with  
11                  Ordinance 15760, in part for the purpose of acquiring open space and natural lands  
12                  critical to the preservation of regional watersheds and streams, developing rights-of-way  
13                  for regional trails, acquiring missing critical links throughout the regional trail system  
14                  and providing capital funding through the community partnership grant program, and

15                  WHEREAS, on October 1, 2007, the council approved Motion 12587 requesting  
16                  the executive to establish a process by which parks expansion levy projects will be  
17                  developed, reviewed and recommended to the King County council, and

18 WHEREAS, Motion 12587 requested the executive to develop this process for  
19 implementation in 2008 with approval by motion, by the council;

20 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

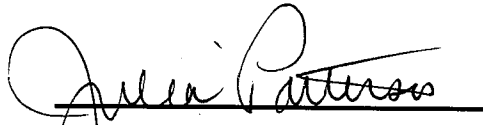
21 The process identified in Attachment A to this motion by which parks expansion  
22 levy projects will be developed, reviewed and recommended for council approval is  
23 hereby approved.

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Motion 12809 was introduced on 5/5/2008 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 7/7/2008, by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Ms. Patterson, Mr. Dunn, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Lambert, Mr. von Reichbauer, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Gossett, Mr. Phillips and Ms. Hague  
No: 0  
Excused: 0

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julia Patterson, Chair

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Attachments A. King County Parks and Recreation Division Response to Motion 12587

## **King County Parks and Recreation Division Response to Motion 12587**

### **BACKGROUND:**

On October 1, 2007, the King Council approved Motion 12587 requesting that the Executive establish a process by which parks expansion levy projects will be developed, reviewed and recommended to the County Council.

The five cent parks expansion levy, approved by the King County voters on the August 21, 2007 ballot, will be collected for six years, beginning in January 2008, as a dedicated portion of the property tax. The levy will generate an estimated \$16.1 million in revenue in 2008.

Ordinance 15760 establishes a three-way allocation of parks expansion levy proceeds with 60 percent to be allocated to King County for the purpose of acquiring open space and natural lands, developing the regional trail system, as well as acquiring critical links in the regional trail system and providing capital funding through the Community Partnership Grants (CPG) program; 20 percent to be distributed among cities in King County for trail and open space projects; and 20 percent to the Woodland Park Zoo to expand environmental education and conservation programs and fund capital improvements to Zoo facilities.

The largest of the three components of the expansion levy is the 60 percent allocation to King County for the following project categories:

- Community Partnership Grant (CPG) Program: Up to \$500,000 annually for capital grant funding to improve and/or expand recreational facilities within the King County Park system;
- Acquiring and preserving open space and natural lands: The focus for open space and natural lands acquisition will be on protecting additional resource lands, shorelines, and streams within our watersheds. Priority would be given to those acquisition projects which utilize efficient funding tools such as transfer of development rights; and
- Regional trail development as well as acquisition projects identified within the county's regional trails plan: The emphasis would be on securing and developing key urban trail corridors and those that link city to city, community to community, and urban King county to rural King County as well as access to regional trails by underserved or at risk populations to include health disparities and equity of service levels.

### **PARKS EXPANSION LEVY PROJECTS:**

#### **Community Partnership Grant (CPG) Program**

In accordance with Ordinance 15760, up to \$500,000 of the King County share of the parks expansion levy may be allocated annually for capital grant funding through the CPG Program, or up to \$3 million over the life of the six-year levy.

The CPG Program was established in 2003 as a public/private partnership program, whereby King County empowers community-based organizations to maintain, operate, enhance, and in some cases, develop new public parks, sports, and recreation facilities. It was a concept recommended by the Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission as a tool to enhance existing facilities and create new facilities without adding new operating costs to the Parks and Recreation Division.

The CPG Program has three goals:

- To address present and future regional public parks, sports, and recreation facility needs without increasing the County's operating budget.
- To empower user groups, sports associations, and other community-based organizations to leverage their commitment, passion, and resources into long term, high quality, self-sustaining public parks, sports, and recreation facilities.
- Develop a region-wide network of users, organizations, and citizens, in general, whose successes are interconnected with and supportive of the political, financial, and operational successes of the region's park, sports, and recreation system.

Since 2003, the CPG Program has been funded annually through an appropriation in the Park and Recreation Division's operating and capital budgets. The overall approach for developing and funding CPG Program projects has been and will continue to be consistent with Motion 11680 which approved the program policies and project selection guidelines for the distribution of funds under the CPG Program.

Motion 11680 established the criteria for approving CPG Program proposals including:

- Regional scope and nature of proposed facility.
- Addresses an identified community recreation need.
- Overall project plan and budget.
- Short- and long-term revenue plan.
- Positive neighborhood relations and stewardship.
- Healthy organizational standing and strong leadership.
- Community outreach.
- Funding match (for CPG Program proposals requesting grant funds).
- Programming and outreach to non-traditional users for additional public benefits beyond specific recreation opportunities (i.e., public health, accessible recreation, intervention/prevention, or other broader public benefit).

Community partners under the CPG Program are typically current park stakeholders or users of a park or facility who have a desire to improve the facility and/or expand its use. In addition to working with existing user groups, King County Parks and Recreation Division also seeks out new, compatible user groups or community organizations to partner with on specific park and recreation improvement projects, consistent with the direction from the Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission in 2002 to 2003. Additional outreach to the general public about the program is accomplished via the Partnerships for Parks Initiative, an on-going effort of King

County Parks to find strategic partners who will work with the division to increase community and park amenities without increasing ongoing operations costs.

Proposals meeting the above criteria and approved for grant funding must be formalized through the execution of a formal CPG Program agreement which outlines the terms and conditions for capital grant funding and establishes reporting requirements.

There are currently over 25 projects in various stages of planning, development, and/or construction through the CPG Program. CPG partners represent over 80,000 users or constituents who have contributed millions of dollars of community investment in the construction, programming, and maintenance of new or enhanced facilities. The CPG model has been successful in leveraging community-based capital investment and developing long-term community stewards of new and existing Parks facilities.

#### Open Space and Natural Land Acquisitions

It is anticipated that over the six-year life of the levy, one-third of the county share of the parks expansion levy<sup>1</sup> will be allocated for open space acquisition for a total of approximately \$20 million to be allocated for open space. These open space acquisition projects will be developed in coordination with the Conservation Futures (CFT) program.

The overall approach for funding allocation and coordination with the CFT program is proposed as follows:

1. Early each calendar year, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) will set a proposed allocation for open space from expansion levy funds for the following fiscal year.
2. Staff will generate proposals for the use of these funds, taking into account opportunities to leverage resources with funding from Conservation Futures, as well as from other local, state, and federal funding sources.
3. An overall proposal allocating the open space funds to specific projects will be developed and discussed with the Citizens Oversight Committee (COC) that is responsible for developing CFT funding recommendations. These discussions are expected to occur in the spring, during the same time frame during which the COC annually reviews CFT project proposals. This will create an opportunity for the COC to provide an advisory recommendation regarding allocation of these parks expansion levy funds.
4. Taking the COC's recommendations into account, DNRP will develop a proposed budget for these parks expansion levy funds.
5. The DNRP proposed budget for parks expansion funding will be reviewed by the County Executive, and ultimately County Council, as part of the overall budget process for the following year.

This combination of COC review of proposed parks expansion levy projects, followed by consideration during the annual budget process, will provide a transparent process that is accessible to the public, stakeholder groups, and government agencies and officials.

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<sup>1</sup> The open space allocation will be one-third of the County share of parks expansion levy funds *after* assuming a \$500,000 allocation for the CPG Program.

For 2008, the open space funding level is at \$500,000 as a regional open space initiative. Recommendations for project specific allocation of this money will be developed in the early spring of 2008, during the same time frame as proposals for the use of 2009 funds. Both 2008 and 2009 funded projects can then be discussed with the COC in the spring of 2008.

The following considerations will help to guide DNRP's annual development of specific project proposals:

- Evaluation of the most significant opportunities in a range of open space categories, including habitat/salmon recovery projects, farmlands preservation, forestry preservation, projects that secure the urban/rural interface and perhaps provide incentives for cities to accommodate TDR receiving sites, and opportunities for passive recreation.
- Evaluation of projects using a variety of open space protection approaches, including fee simple acquisition, acquisition of conservation easements, and acquisition of development rights.
- The ability of specific projects to leverage other funds, including Conservation Futures.

#### Regional Trail System Projects

It is anticipated that over the six-year life of the levy, two-thirds of the county share of the parks expansion levy<sup>2</sup> will be allocated for developing regional trail corridors and acquiring rights-of-way throughout the regional trail system for a total of approximately \$41 million.

In addition, the Parks and Recreation Division is working with cities who will receive a 1-cent share of the levy, to discuss regional trail links and projects which provide benefit and provide access to more users and residents of King County for recreation, commuting and improving individual health and quality of life.

To date, Parks and Recreation Directors from the Cities of Tukwila, SeaTac and Des Moines have met with King County staff to form a working group that will identify and plan for South County trails and missing links which provide key access to the rest of the county's regional trail system and improve local community quality of life issues thru enhanced recreational opportunities.

In particular, the working group will gather information on existing and potential corridor connections in the cities of Des Moines, Burien, SeaTac and Tukwila in an effort to link these communities with the County's Green River Trail in Tukwila and the Cedar River Trail in Renton. Susan Black and Associates has been hired to lead the effort for a SeaTac/Tukwila Trail Connection Study on behalf of the working group and a draft scope of work has been developed which includes the following:

- Gather existing information on corridor connections.
- Prepare trail standards reflecting on site conditions
- Identification of Route Alternatives.

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<sup>2</sup> The regional trail system allocation will be two-thirds of the County share of parks expansion levy funds *after* assuming a \$500,000 allocation for the CPG Program.

- Public/City/Official Input.
- Finalizing Recommended Route, Crossings, and Linkages.
- Design, Environmental and Engineering.

Additional trail connections are being pursued as well to include the Des Moines Creek Trail from the waterfront at Marina Park in Des Moines up to SeaTac. King County will continue to work closely with the cities in this area to identify highest priorities projects to be considered for levy funds over the next 6 years.

The overall approach for funding Regional Trail System projects is proposed as follows:

1. Early each calendar year, the DNRP will review the status of the Regional Trail System and generate proposals for the use of levy funds for the following fiscal year.
2. Staff will generate proposals for the use of these funds, taking into account opportunities to address safety issues, acquire critical missing links within the system or proceed to the next phase of development of an existing project.
3. Projects will be consistent with the adopted King County *2004 Regional Trail Inventory and Implementation Guidelines Plan* which guides the County's trail acquisition and development projects.
4. An overall proposal allocating the levy funds to specific regional trail projects will be developed as part of the annual County budget process.
5. The DNRP proposed budget for parks expansion funding will be reviewed by the County Executive, and ultimately by the County Council, as part of the overall budget process for the following year.
6. Projects that provide links or access to populations currently underserved or as identified as health risk populations.
7. Projects which address social equity and fairness.

The annual budget process will provide a transparent process that is accessible to the public, stakeholder groups, and government agencies and officials. This funding will allow the Parks and Recreation Division to build on its success to date in developing and maintaining one of the largest urban regional trail systems in the country. The Parks and Recreation Division is preparing a 6-year CIP which evaluates projects based on criteria listed above.

For 2008, just over \$8.5 million has been approved for three projects: redevelopment of the Burke Gilman Trail, design of the 11-mile East Lake Sammamish Trail corridor for master plan development; and the South County Regional Trail Linkages project.

The following priorities will help to guide DNRP's annual development of specific project proposals:

- Redevelopment projects that bring heavily used trail segments up to the County's current regional trail standards.
- Projects that develop key urban trail corridors with an emphasis on those that link city to city, community to community, and urban King County to rural King County.
- Projects that link underserved or at risk populations to the Regional Trail System.

- Acquisitions of right-of-way along key missing links in the trail system which could be lost to development.
- Projects which impact health inequities and health disparities in accordance with Ordinance 15760.

With approximately \$9.6 million available annually over the six-year duration of the levy, it is proposed that all levy funded projects be implemented on a “pay as you go” basis rather than through a bond; thus the annual process described above would be repeated each year.