

2012 King County Parks Levy Task Force

September 11, 2012 Meeting Summary
As approved by Task Force on September 25, 2012

Levy Task Force Members Present: Shiv Batra, David Burger, Leda Chahim (representing Gene Duvernoy), Mike Deller (representing Roger Hoesterey), Karen Daubert, Hilary Franz, Donald Harris, Al Isaac, Terry Lavender, Gordon McHenry, Jr., Louise Miller (co-chair), Matthew Pruitt, Charles Ruthford, Chukundi Salisbury, Kathy Surace-Smith (co-chair), Jim Todd, Justin Vander Pol.

Levy Task Force Members Absent: Julie Colehour, Terry Higashiyama, Joey Martinez, Sili Savusa, Jeff Watling (co-chair).

Parks and Recreation Division Staff and others present: Bob Burns, Deputy Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP); Megan Smith, Environmental Policy Advisor, Executive Office; Kevin Brown, Director, Parks and Recreation Division; Katy Terry, Parks Assistant Director; Jerry Hughs, Parks Finance Manager; Frana Milan, Parks Program Manager; Cristina Gonzalez, Parks Deputy Finance Manager; A.J. McClure, Councilmember Patterson staff; David Schaefer, Woodland Park Zoo; Shelley McVein, City of Bellevue; Mark Johnson (future proxy for Terry Lavender); Karen Reed, meeting facilitator.

Summary:

Co-Chair Louise Miller convened the meeting at 4:05pm and led introductions.

Karen Reed reviewed the agenda. Members approved the previous meeting's summary notes as presented.

Kevin Brown reviewed the key findings of the survey done on behalf of King County Parks by EMC Research. Co-Chair Miller described the discussion at the most recent King County Parks Directors meeting, noting that the group emphasized that jurisdictions should work better together, that current levy funding is crucial to being able to fund various projects, and that cities would prefer increased flexibility in future funding.

Ms. Reed led the Task Force member discussion and deliberation portion of the meeting. She reviewed major discussion points from the past meeting, including: support for funding at least basic system maintenance; taking care of the current system and assets; priority to develop a credible proposal that will be successful; continued consideration of funding for the Woodland Park Zoo (the Zoo), cities, acquisition of regional open space, development of the Regional Trails System (RTS), and projects that help to make access to parks facilities more equitable across the county.

Mr. Brown gave a high-level review of the division's financial situation, re-describing current challenges to division; he noted the cost of the current pair of levies to households at the time of their passage and at current effective rates, and he noted the levels of funding necessary for the continuation of service and development at current levels. Mr.

Brown reviewed the four goals of the division: take care of what we have, grow/connect regional open space and natural lands; improve the Regional Trails System (RTS) and regional mobility; and, make parks more accessible. He described how the division's proposal aligns with these goals. He then answered Task Force members' questions about the importance of meeting the division's goals.

Mr. Brown reviewed the division's funding priorities, including operations and maintenance (including additional resources for the preservation and protection of the BNSF rail corridor acquisition, the division's volunteer program, the regional 4-H program, and improved service standard, including increased safety patrols and seasonal staffing, asset replacement and repair, bridge and trestle maintenance, and trailhead development and accessibility), open space acquisition, RTS development, Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) program at current levels, funding for the cities and the Zoo. Katy Terry then answered members' questions about the assumptions used in the economic modeling of the proposal.

Ms. Reed suggested a structure for Task Force member discussion in order to come to consensus on funding options and she reviewed decision criteria to be used to evaluate and prioritize the options, based on the Task Force Mission statement--including consideration of options' alignment with the King County Strategic Plan and the County's Equity and Social Justice ordinance. She noted other criteria mentioned by Task Force members, including the need for a "realistic proposal that will preserve the parks system," prioritizing taking care of the existing system as opposed to funding expansion of the system, and considering the likelihood of success of the ballot measure when sent to the voters. Task Force members did not identify additional criteria.

Task Force members asked which of the individual components of the division's proposal support the County's equity and social justice goals. Some Members noted that they don't have enough information to determine what levy rates would be palatable to voters, given the limitations of the survey. Other members noted that it may not be the members' role to determine what is palatable and rather that it may be their role to give a recommendation on what the system needs.

Ms. Reed led a process in which Task Force members were asked to rate each proposed component. Of the thirteen components in the division's recommended proposal, nine received consensus support (80%) from the Task Force; four items did not receive consensus support and will require additional discussion due to questions remaining.

There were several components that had been presented as potential items for funding during earlier Task Force meetings, but were not part of the division's recommended funding priorities. The Task Force decided to vote on these items as a group and voted not to recommend them for funding. Individual Task Force members nominated for funding some individual subcomponents out of the components not included in the division's proposal; some failed to receive consensus support, while others will require additional discussion, given Task Force members' concerns and questions and time constraints at the meeting.

The results of this rating process are summarized in the handout “Funding Components”, distributed at the September 25th meeting..

Ms. Reed noted that the next meeting would take place on September 25, 2012. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.