

kKing County Parks Levy Task Force

Meeting 6 (August 28, 2012) Discussion

This document summarizes Task Force member comments offered at Meeting 6, in response to the following questions:

- *What are your priorities in terms of outcomes of the task force effort?*
- *What are your biggest questions or concerns?*

Items are grouped as to “Priorities/Goals/ Observations,” “Process Suggestions,” “Questions” and “Concerns.” Asterisked (*) items were mentioned by multiple Task Force members. Observed major consensus points are also noted.

Major Discussion Points

- Support for funding at least basic system maintenance
- Priority to take care of the system and assets we have now
- Priority to develop a credible proposal that will be successful
- Continued consideration of Woodland Park Zoo, cities, regional open space, regional trails, and equity and social justice issues

Individual Comments (repeated items noted with an asterisk ())**

	Priorities /Goals/Observations
	Funding for the 8.4 cents of basic operations looks solid.
*	Zoo needs to stay in the package
	Priorities are operations, Zoo, and open space (highlighting water quality and wildlife habitat)
	Renton voters noted their priority is to take care of what we have and partner with other local agencies. We should be thinking along a similar path.
	Priorities for funding are open space, parks maintenance and providing an opportunity fund to build some trail projects
	Priority must be to sustain the system operations
	Priority should be for funding parks maintenance
	Focus on equity and social justice themes and trails themes
**	Priority should be to take care of what we have.
	This is not a time to grow the system
	Some capital expenses can be framed as taking care of what we have.
*	Priority to fund more than simply basic maintenance. We need to make a strong case for this, including clarifying the downside if the levy fails.
	Enhanced maintenance funding priorities should be around regional items and equity and social justice themes
*	Focus on equity and social justice
	Equity and social justice and community program grants are important—they go together and we should support both of these.
	We should support a carefully crafted capital plan that includes some improvement of the

	existing maintenance facilities
	We should support capital to complete missing links in the trail and open space systems
	We should support capital projects with the biggest bang for the buck
	Priority is access to trails as an alternative to cars, and make trails safe and attractive for lots of different bike riders
	Priority to ensure we don't lose connectivity of trails system due to lack of maintenance /bridge failures, etc.
	Safety and security needs to be addressed
	Funding for open space is a priority
	Less clear that cities need to be part of package
	We should increase funding for City parks systems as part of the regional levy—expand the definition of things funded to include urban forests and major Seattle parks.
**	Priority should be to develop a proposal the County Council will accept, that is politically palatable
	Priority should be to develop a proposal that will pass at the polls
	Politically palatable means getting at least as much funding as we currently receive
	We should anticipate that the Council will put downward pressure on the cost of any proposal we offer.
	We should be mindful that each capital project proposal has a constituency
	Public should know we're digging deep to make this work.
	We should define how our proposal connects to city parks systems
	Process suggestions
	We should quickly decide the funding mechanism to use, then tackle operations and capital items
	We need to ask tough questions to help the County Council
	Electorate feelings will change after this November's election. We should poll again closer to the decision on the final ballot measure to be submitted (March 2014). May need to defer decision on what the funding level is until after this later polling.
	To decide what to include, we should dissect and prioritize within the various cost buckets and recombine as necessary into a package we think will pass
	We should identify our key themes and suggested messaging to the public
	We should focus on what type of levy and the amount
	We need a very well reasoned report to support the action we seek from the County Council
	Use prior success as a baseline and think what should change from the last levy proposals
	Engage individual councilmembers in advance of making our final recommendations
	Questions
	What is the process to be followed between now and the decision on a ballot proposition?
	Can we expect the Executive/County Council to approve our proposal without adjustment or should we expect some tinkering?
	What is the difference between residential demographics and likely voters?
	Could a campaign effort improve support for the legacy trails projects?
	What is the level of support for this from different cities?
	Can Maury Island clean-up be deferred?
	How do the cities fit into the final proposal?

**	Do we know what is politically acceptable?
	What are the top-5 most important capital projects for parks?
	Can the County fund the maintenance facility upgrades? Seems appropriate since the problem is a result of deferred maintenance
	What is the contingency plan if the levy is not approved?
	Can we clarify what was promised in the last levy and what was delivered?
	Concerns
***	Other competing levies on the ballot are a concern. Our recommendation needs to be considered within the context of competing ballot measures
*	Poll respondents did not necessarily “do the math” when they said they would support enhanced operations and capital.
*	Voters cannot distinguish between the city and county parks systems
	Parks operating costs growth exceeds CPI and this is a problem.
	Concerned about impact of the levy on other junior taxing districts and the impact on cities’ plans for future similar levies.
	A continuing series of growing periodic levies does not feel like a sustainable funding solution.