

# King County Parks Levy Task Force



## Meeting #1

Tuesday, June 26, 2012

4 – 6 pm

Mercer Island Community and Event Center

# Meeting #1 Agenda

- I. Welcome
- II. Introductions
- III. Task Force Business:
  - I. Task Force Mission
  - II. Logistics
- IV. About King County Parks:
  - I. Overview of assets and operations
  - II. Overview of funding
  - III. Citizens Oversight Board
  - IV. Overview of current levies
- V. Next steps
  - I. Next agenda
  - II. Field Trips (optional)





## INTRODUCTIONS

- Your name, affiliations
- In what part of King County do you live?



# Task Force Business



**200 PARKS 175 MILES OF TRAIL 26,000 ACRES OF OPEN SPACE**

King County Parks **Your** Big Backyard  King County



# Mission of Task Force

The Parks Levy Task Force is charged by King County Executive Dow Constantine to make recommendations by September 2012 addressing the following issues:

- *What should be done to preserve the County's 26,000-acre system of parks and trails after the current operating and capital levies expire at the end of 2013?*
- *What should be done to meet the future parks and recreation needs of King County residents?*

The Task Force should outline the structure and scope of any funding options it recommends. The Task Force recommendations should promote the goals of the County's equity and social justice initiative to promote fairness and opportunity and eliminate inequities and should further King County Strategic Plan priorities, including service excellence, environmental sustainability, and financial stewardship.

# Task Force Meeting Schedule

\*All meetings are 4 pm – 6 pm at MICEC\*

Meeting #1

06/26/2012

Meeting #5

08/07/2012 (proposed)

Meeting #2

07/10/2012

Meeting #6

08/21/2012 (proposed)

Meeting #3

07/17/2012

Meeting #7

09/04/2012 (proposed, schedule as needed)

Meeting #4

07/24/2012

Meeting #8

09/04/2012 (proposed, schedule as needed)

# Other Business

- Ground Rules
- Public Disclosure / King County Emails
- Sign-in sheet / confirm contact information





# About King County Parks



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# Our Vision



**Providing** regional  
and rural  
recreational facilities



**Partnering with**  
business and  
community



**Connecting** the county:  
Regional Trails System  
and open space corridors



# A New Way of Doing Business

## 2002 Business Transition Plan – Key Principles:


- Regional Parks, Open Space and Trails
- Local, rural parks
- Maximize business revenues
- Strategic partnerships
- Be entrepreneurial
- Transfer assets in urban areas



**200 PARKS | 26,000 ACRES | 175 MILES OF TRAILS**





- 
- An aerial photograph of Marymoor Park in Seattle, Washington. The park is a large green space with various athletic fields, a baseball field, and a large oval track. In the foreground, there are several large industrial or commercial buildings with parking lots. To the right, a colorful striped tent is visible, likely for an event. The park is bordered by a dense forest and a body of water (Lake Washington) in the background. In the far distance, the snow-capped Mount Rainier is visible under a cloudy sky.
- 1 million visitors annually
  - 640 acres (300-acre conservation area)
  - 25 athletic fields; 4 tennis courts
  - 40 acre off-leash dog area
  - Event area, concert venue and historic Clise Mansion - attracts major events (Cirque, Washington Brewers Festival)

# Marymoor Park




- Olympic-sized competition pool
- Dive tank with springboards, platforms
- Recreational pool
- Conference center / banquet hall
- 70+ events held annually, including major national competitions



Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center



- 
- A person with dark hair, wearing a light grey long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, is seen from behind, hiking up a dirt trail. The trail is surrounded by dense green ferns and other foliage. Sunlight filters through the trees, creating dappled light on the ground. The person is wearing dark shoes and is captured mid-stride, moving away from the camera.
- 3,100 acres with 36 miles of trails
  - Crown jewel of “Issaquah Alps”
  - Formerly site of mining, logging, and US Army missile site
  - Most visited natural area park

# Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park



- 
- An aerial photograph showing a vast, lush green forested valley. In the background, there are rugged mountains, some with patches of snow. The foreground is filled with dense evergreen trees. A small river or stream winds through the valley, and some small settlements are visible. The sky is blue with some light clouds.
- 22,000 acres of forests and natural lands
  - 180 miles of backcountry trails
  - 5 working forests
  - Protecting and restoring forests and other natural areas improves water quality, provides habitat for endangered salmon, and reduces region's carbon footprint

26,000 acres of open space



- 4 sites on Maury Island = 700+ acre green belt
- 2+ miles of publicly accessible, undeveloped Puget Sound shoreline
- Protecting and restoring critical nearshore habitat for salmon



# Maury Island Marine Park





# King County's Regional Trails System (RTS)

## Major Trails


1. Burke-Gilman Trail
2. Sammamish River Trail
3. Tolt Pipeline Trail
4. East Lake Sammamish Trail
5. Snoqualmie Valley Trail
6. Preston Snoqualmie Trail
7. Cedar River Trail
8. Soos Creek Trail
9. Lake Youngs Trail
10. Interurban Trail
11. Green River Trail

- 175 miles of regional trails
- Dedicated to non-motorized transportation and recreation
- Long-term vision is 300 miles



Burke-Gilman Trail



- 
- A photograph of a gravel trail winding through a forest. In the foreground, a cyclist in a red shirt and helmet is riding towards the camera. In the background, another cyclist in a yellow shirt is riding away. The trail is surrounded by lush green trees and grass.
- 175 miles of regional trails
  - Dedicated to non-motorized transportation and recreation
  - Long-term vision is 300 miles

# Snoqualmie Valley Trail



- Local parks serve residents in unincorporated King County
- Offer ballfields, picnic shelters, play structures, and community gathering spaces



# Ravensdale Park



- Local parks in urban unincorporated King County are intended to transfer to annexing jurisdiction



Skyway Park





Tanner Landing Park



Island Center Forest



Tolt-MacDonald Park



Cougar-Squak Corridor



Duthie Hill

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# How we do business



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# Organizational Snapshot

## Employees

180 FTEs \* 90 Seasonals \* 120 Intermittent Temps

## 11 Maintenance Districts

## 3 Business Units

(Marymoor, WKCAC, Facility Scheduling)

## 6 Specialty Crews

(Crafts, Grounds, Small Contracts, Backcountry Trails, Volunteer, Playgrounds)

## 4 Professional Support Teams

(Capital Planning/Land Management, Business Development, Finance, HR)

## 2 Public Service Programs

(White Center Teen Program, Greenhouse)





# Our entrepreneurial spirit

**User Fees:** Ballfields, Indoor facilities, Scheduled events, Camping, Picnic shelters, Parking

**Use Agreements/Concessions:** Major events (Concerts at Marymoor, Washington Brewer's Festival, Cougar Trail Running Series) Johnny's Dog House, The Wash Spot, Professional dog walkers

**Naming Rights/Sponsorships:** Facilities, Maps, Special events, Kiosks

**Legacy Fund:** Bench and tree memorial donations, Individual and corporate giving

Flaming Lips concert at Marymoor



# Our entrepreneurial spirit





# Partnership for Parks



PARTNERSHIP  
for  
**PARKS**

**YOUR LOGO HERE**

**CIRQUE DU SOLEIL**

**STARBUCKS COFFEE**

**msn. WI-FI**

**SUBWAY**

**us bank MARYMOOR THE CONCERTS**

**GroupHealth VELODROME MARYMOOR PARK**

**REI**  
www.rei.com

**Aegis Living**  
People live here.

**PCGI**  
NATURAL MARKETS

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# Community Partnerships & Grants Program (CPG)



- Invests **seed funding** from King County Parks
- Community partner **leverages public investment** with in-kind goods/services, private fundraising, and sweat equity
- **40 projects** in development or completed since 2003
- Adding public recreation facilities valued at **\$50 million**





# Volunteer Program



Grand Ridge Park



Duthie Hill Park

- 58,000+ service hours
- 8,300+ volunteers
- 400+ events
- 50+ schools, companies, community organizations, church groups
- 50 Parks & Trails Ambassadors
- 2 National Civilian Community Corps crews
- 2 AmeriCorps Individual Volunteers

# King County Parks in a nutshell



- Providing a growing system of active and natural area parks
- Connecting the county with regional trails
- Offering diverse, close-to-home recreation
- Protecting natural heritage: forests, streams, salmon
- Reducing region's carbon footprint
- Partnering to nurture corporate and community stewardship





# How We're Funded



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# King County Parks: Current Levies



Two county-wide levies approved in Aug 2007

- Prop. 1 – Operating & Maintenance Levy
- Prop. 2 – Open Space & Trails Levy
  - 62% and 59% Approval respectively
- 6-years: 2008-2013
- Each 5¢ per \$1,000/AV
- Annual CPI adjustment
- Owner of a \$400,000 home estimated to pay \$20 / year for each levy

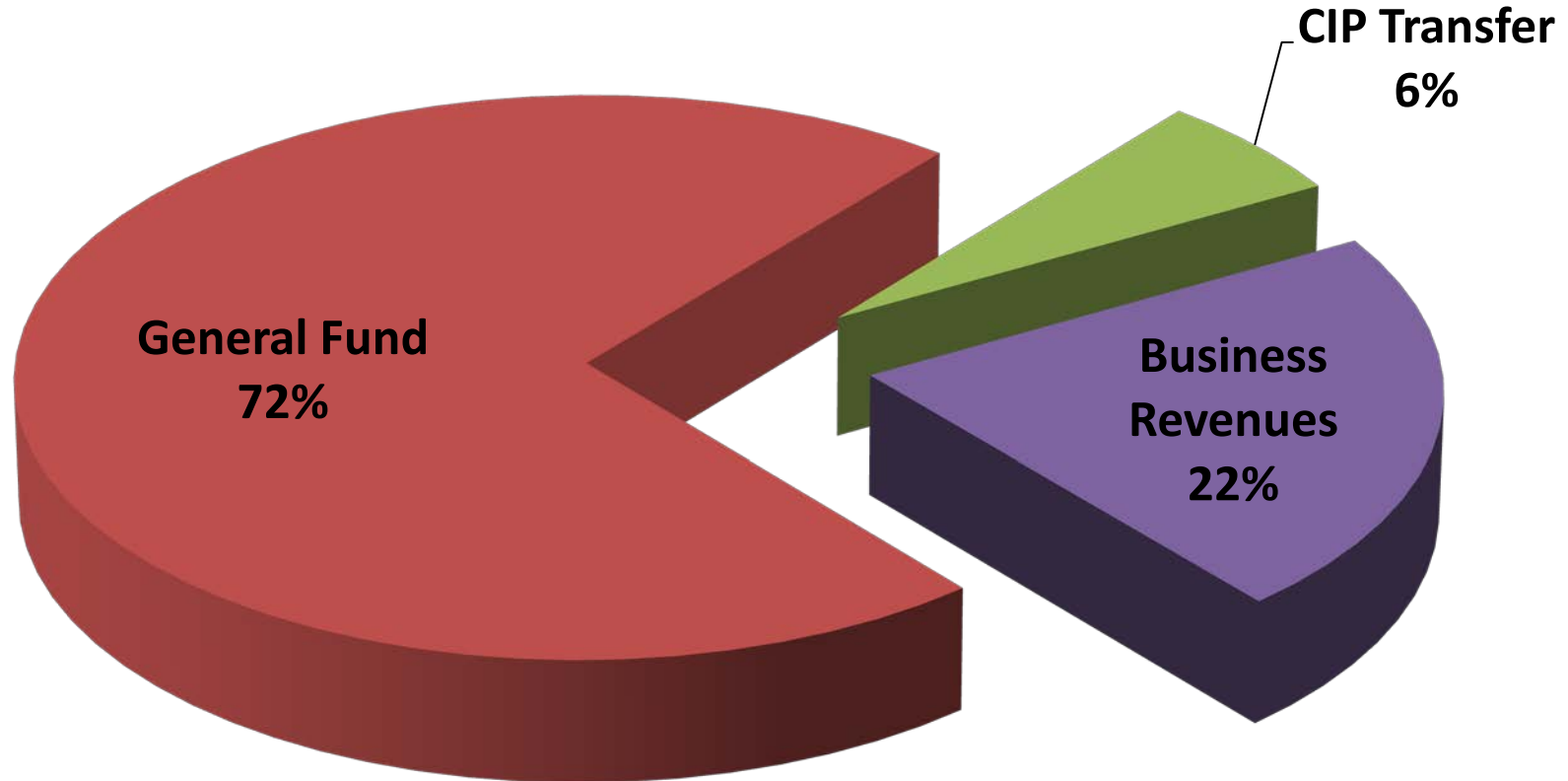


# Operations & Maintenance





# 2002 Adopted Revenues



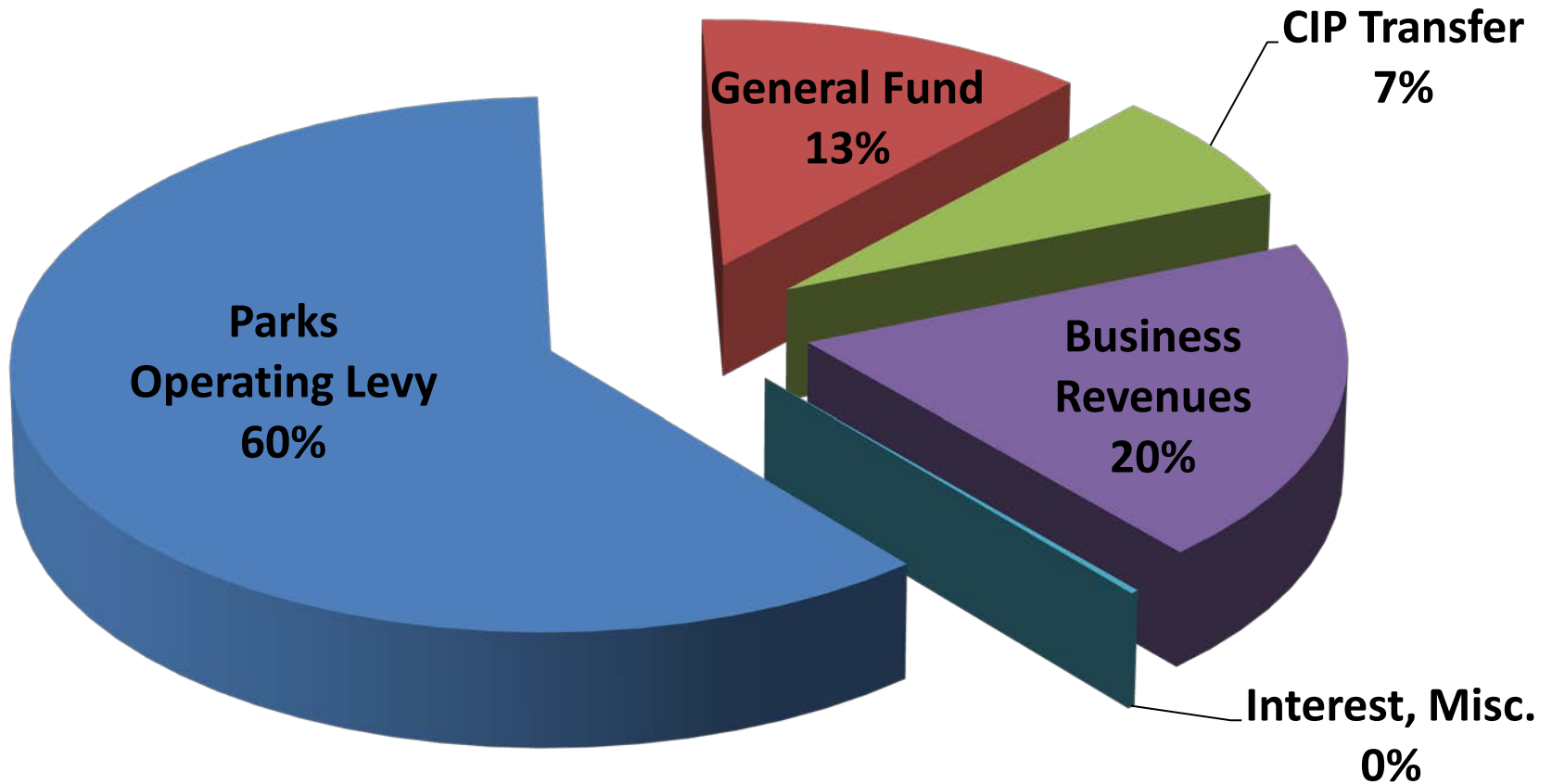
# A Decade of Transition



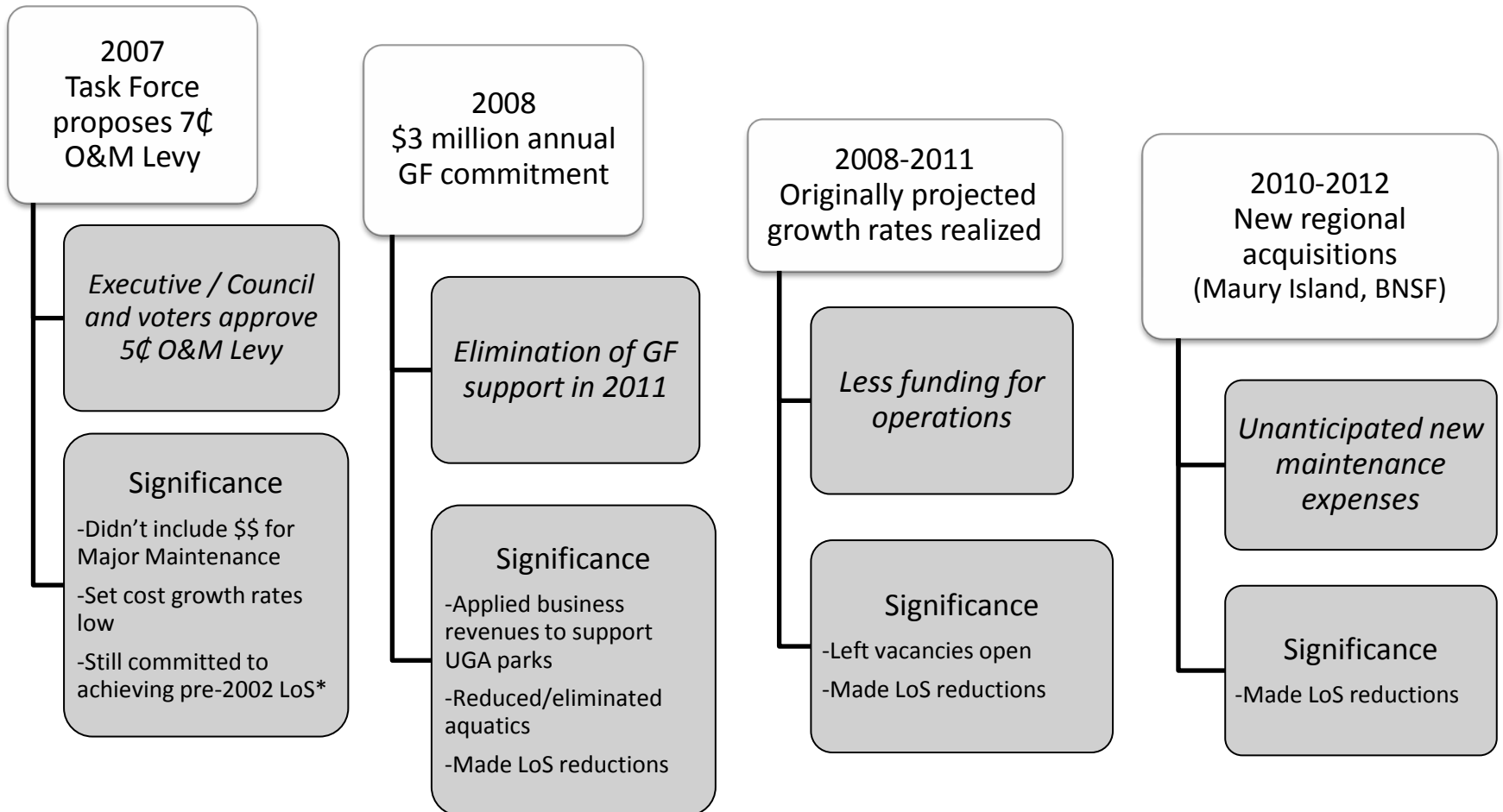
\*MPTF = Metropolitan Parks Task Force



# 2008 Adopted Revenues



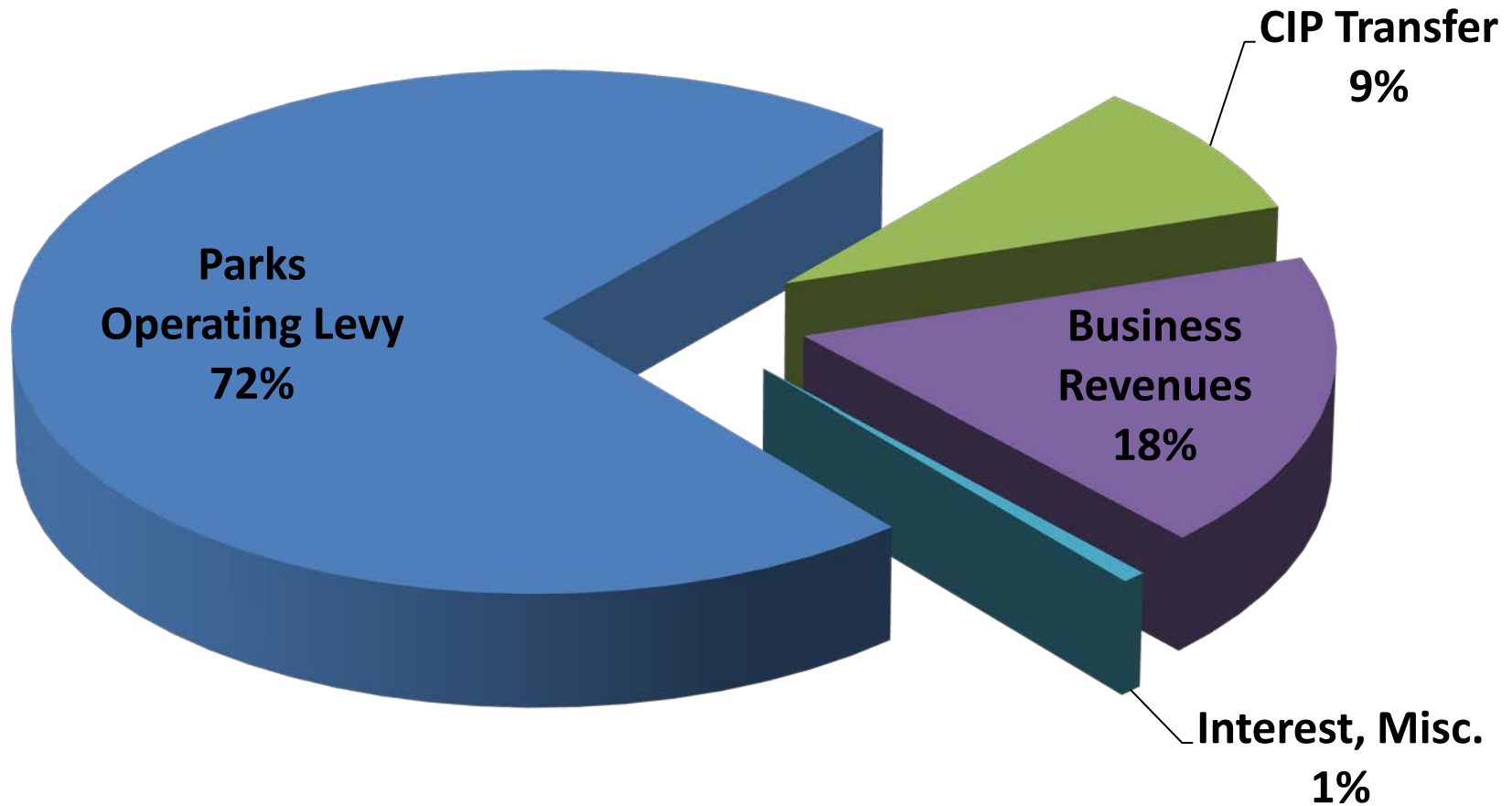
# 2007 vs. 2012: Reality Check



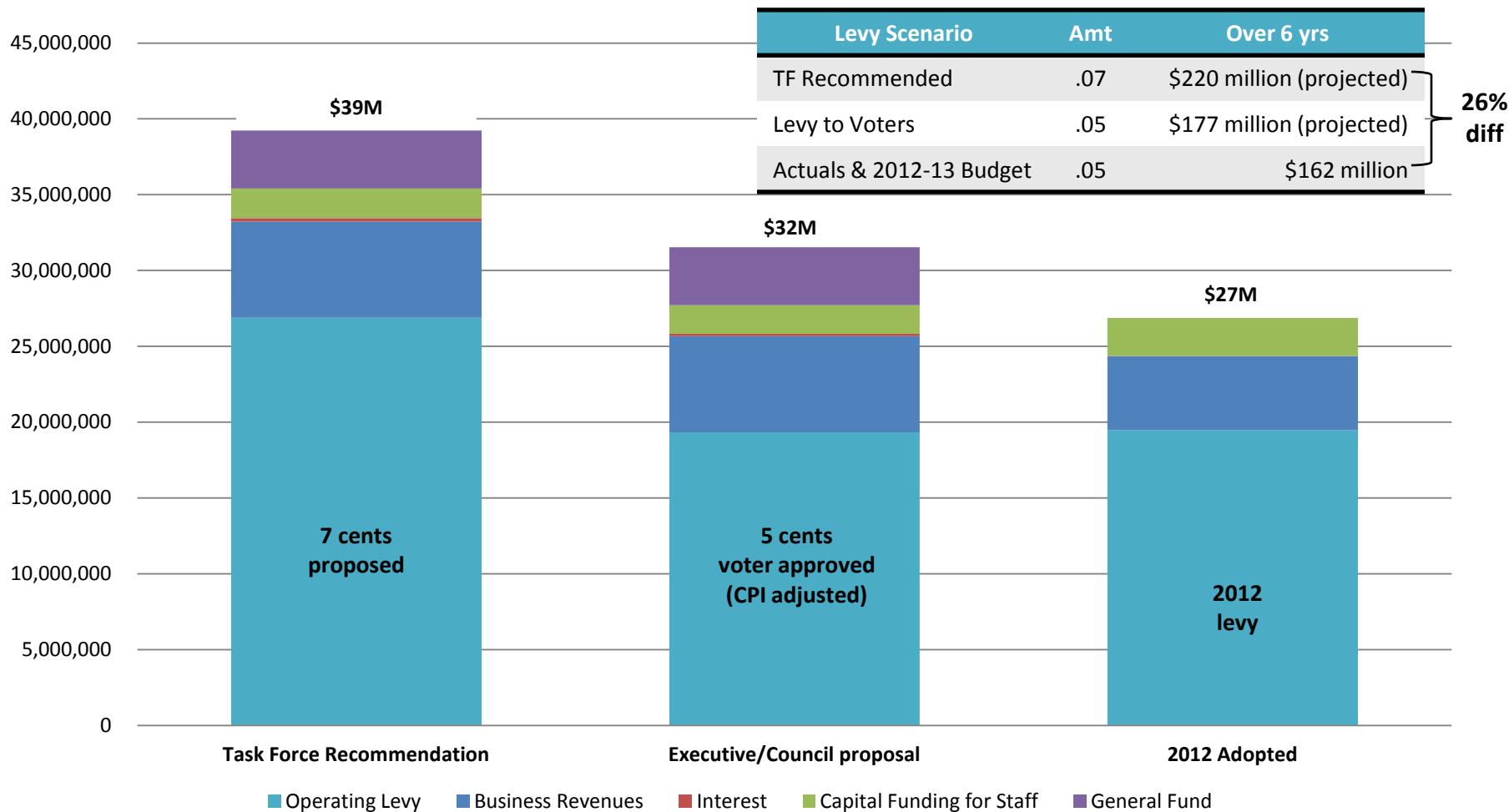
\*LoS = Levels of Service



# 2012 Adopted Revenues



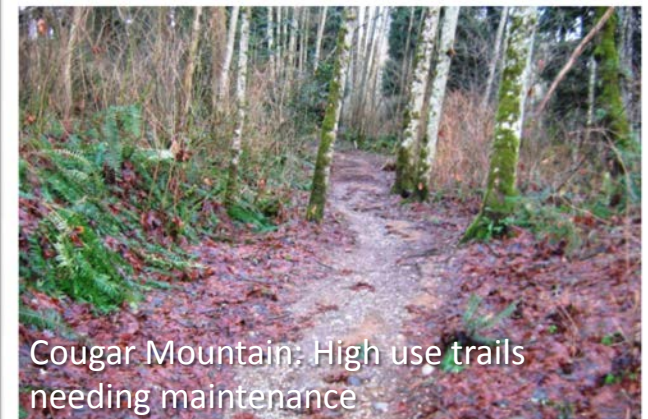
# Parks Operating Revenues 2012: Task Force v. Ballot v. Projected





# Implications on operations

- Eliminated local aquatics
- Eliminated King County Fair from budget
- Lowered levels of day-to-day maintenance



# Capital Improvement Program



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# CIP Overview

## What is the Parks CIP?

- Acquisition
- Construction and rehabilitation of facilities

## Guiding principles:

- Safety
- Regional Focus
- Efficiencies
- Enterprise
- Partnerships



*King County Parks crews installing climbing boulder at South County Ballfields*

# CIP Sources of Funding

- 2008-2013 voter-approved Open Space and Trails Levy
- Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
- Conservation Futures Tax (CFT)
- Federal and State Grants
- Partnerships



*Mel Olson baseball stadium field improvements  
at Steve Cox Memorial Park*

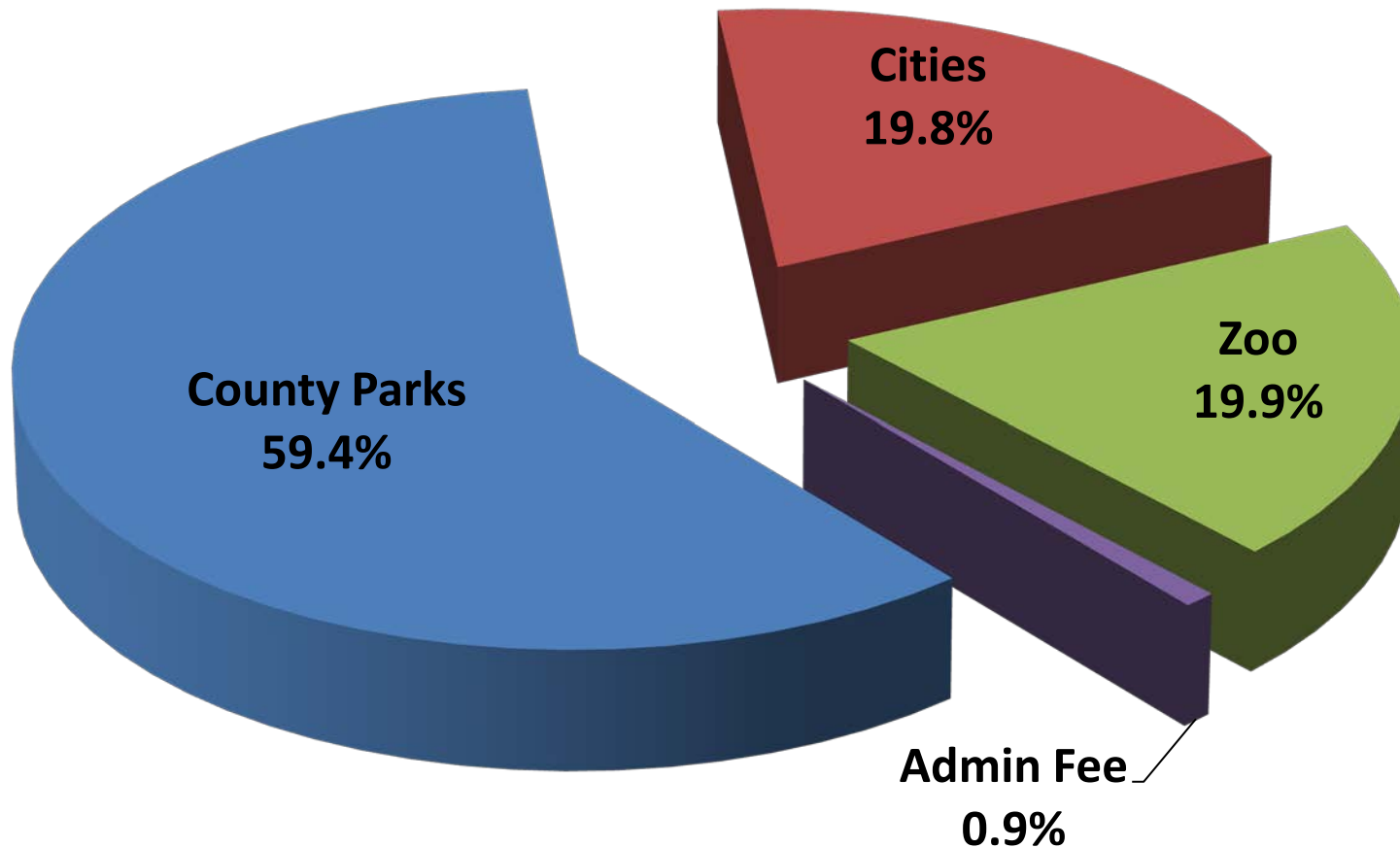


# 2008-2013 Open Space & Trails Levy

5¢

| King County Parks<br>60% (= 3¢)   | 39 Cities<br>20% (= 1¢)  | Woodland Park Zoo<br>20% (= 1¢)   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space &amp; Natural Lands Acquisition</li> <li>Regional Trail Acquisition &amp; Development</li> <li>Community Partnerships &amp; Grants Program (<math>\leq \\$500k / yr</math>)</li> <li>Repay costs of interim financing (none)</li> </ul> | Proportional allocations based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population (50%)</li> <li>Assessed value (50%)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open Space &amp; Natural Lands Acquisition</li> <li>Trail Acquisition &amp; Development</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental Education</li> <li>Conservation Programs</li> <li>Green Space Acquisitions</li> <li>Capital Improvement Projects, excluding parking</li> </ul> |
| A reasonable portion retained by the county for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds  |  |   |

# Open Space & Trails Levy





# Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)

## What is REET?

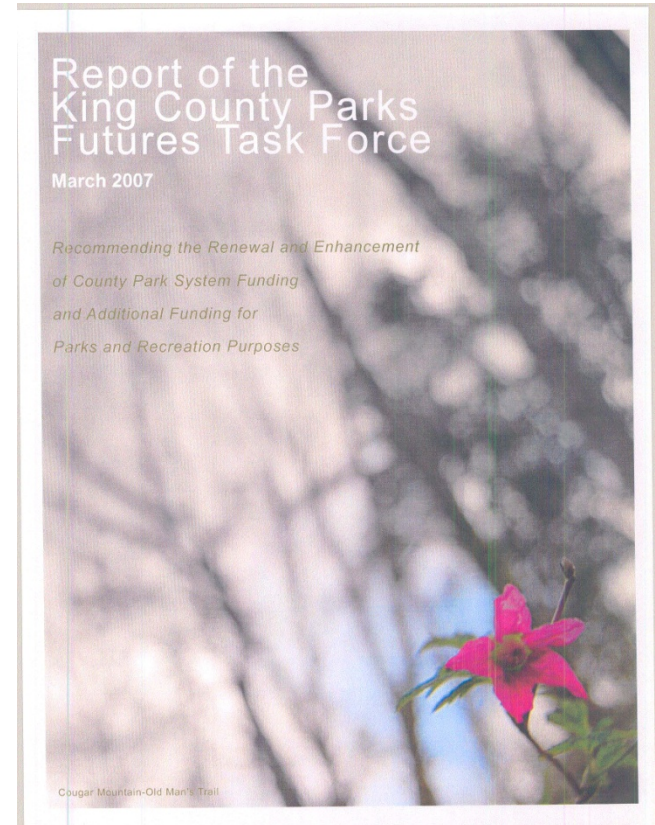
- Tax on real estate transactions (1/4 of 1%)
- County receives only from unincorporated areas

## Why it matters to King County Parks:

- Historically, primary source of funds for CIP
- Funds “planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, improvement of parks, recreational facilities, and trails”
- Only source of funding for major maintenance, park development, and revenue enhancement investments

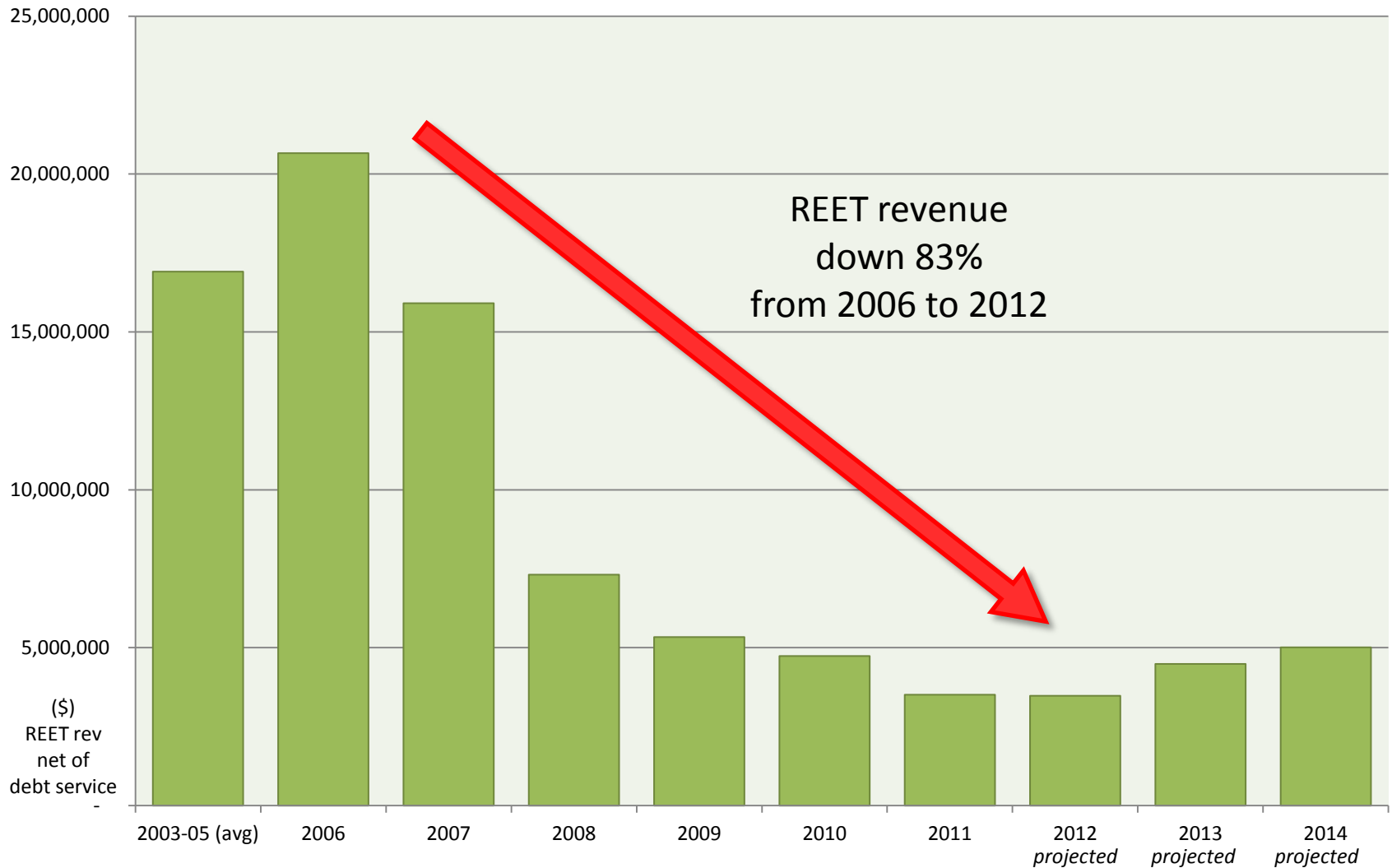
# Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)

- 2007 Task Force recommended:
  - 7¢ O&M levy (with 1.7¢ for REET replacement)
  - 5¢ Open Space & Trails levy
- 2007 Ballot propositions:
  - 5¢ O&M levy (**no** REET replacement)
  - 5¢ Open Space & Trails levy





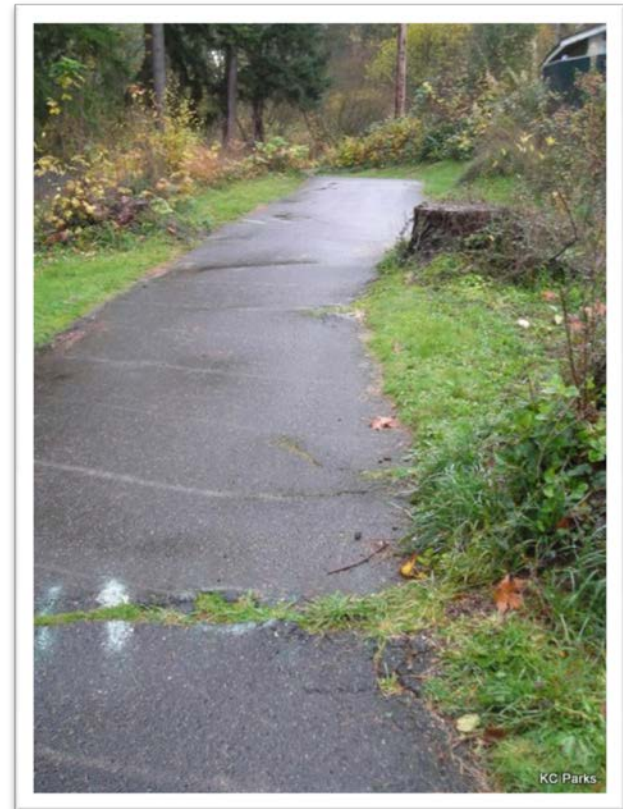
# REET Challenges



# REET Challenges

Without REET, the division is limited:

- Accomplishing minimal major maintenance
- Reactive vs. scheduled maintenance approach
- No funding for strategic investments
- No funding to acquire land for active parks



*Pavement needing repair along  
Soos Creek Trail*



# Parks Levy Citizens Oversight Board



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# The Role of the 2008-2014 Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board

Justin Vander Pol

Member, King County Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board



# Citizen Oversight Board's Mission

“...to review and report to the County Executive and County Council on the Parks and Recreation Division's expenditure of parks levy proceeds...to confirm that the proceeds have been expended consistent with requirements of the parks levies...” (Ordinance 15759)

“...make policy recommendations...regarding future expenditures” of levy proceeds...” (Ordinance 16931).

## Permissible Levy Expenditures under the Parks Operating Levy:

“... the continued and increased operations and maintenance of King County's regional and rural parks, program improvements to provide increased accessibility for the disabled and to provide up to \$300,000 annually for recreation grant programs. Eligible expenditures shall include all costs and charges to the parks and recreation division or the county associated with or attributable to the purposes listed in this section.” (Ordinance 15759)

## Permissible Levy Expenditures under the Parks Open Space and Trails Levy:

“...for King County's acquisition of open space and natural lands...for distribution to cities...for city projects...for Woodland Park Zoo projects. (Ordinance 15760)



# Membership

The Citizen Oversight Board is appointed by the County Council members, each representing his or her legislative district. There are nine members on the Board and their appointments expire on June 30, 2014.



# Review Process

The Board meets annually to review levy expenditures for eligibility and appropriateness from the previous fiscal year.

The Board submits its annual report on the Parks Operating Levy and Open Space and Trails Levy to the County Executive and County Council.

# Work Completed Thus Far

The Board has met the last two years and reviewed levy expenditures for the fiscal years 2008 through 2010. Although the Board members do not perform an accounting audit, they reviewed financial information provided by the Parks Division staff.

The Board concluded that the Parks Division has complied with the levy requirements and has no concern with the Parks Division's fiduciary responsibilities or financial management of the levy funds.



# Recommendations for the Future

The Board made policy recommendations to the County Executive and Council. Recent policy recommendations included encouraging the Parks Division to:

- Expend the maximum amount allowable towards the Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) programs.
- Make significant progress on the backcountry trails program.
- Ensure appropriate public access to open space acquired by the Division.
- Maximize collaboration with cities on linking trails under multiple jurisdictions.
- Maintain and expand volunteer involvement.
- Increase the marketing of parks and facilities.

# Parks Levy 101

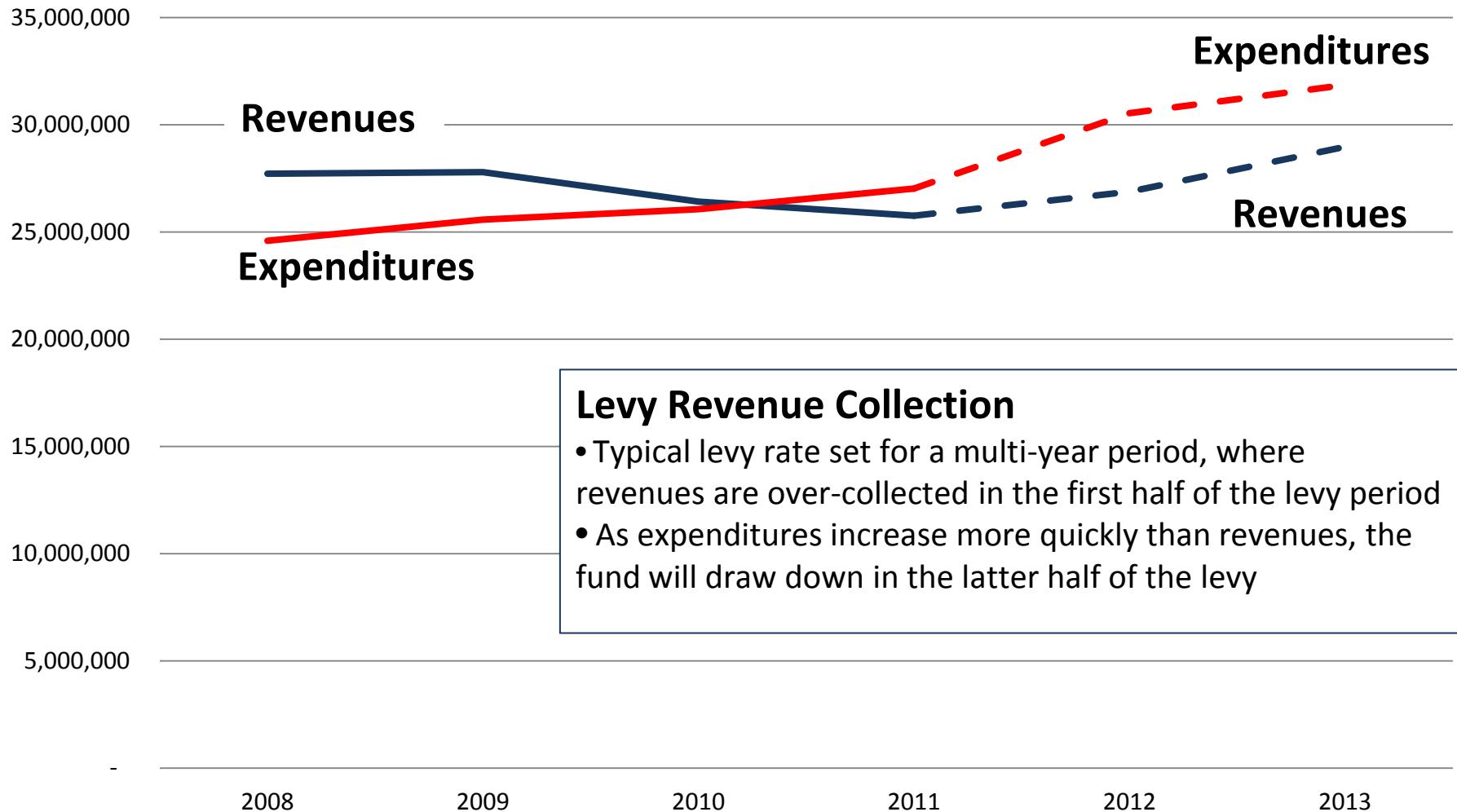


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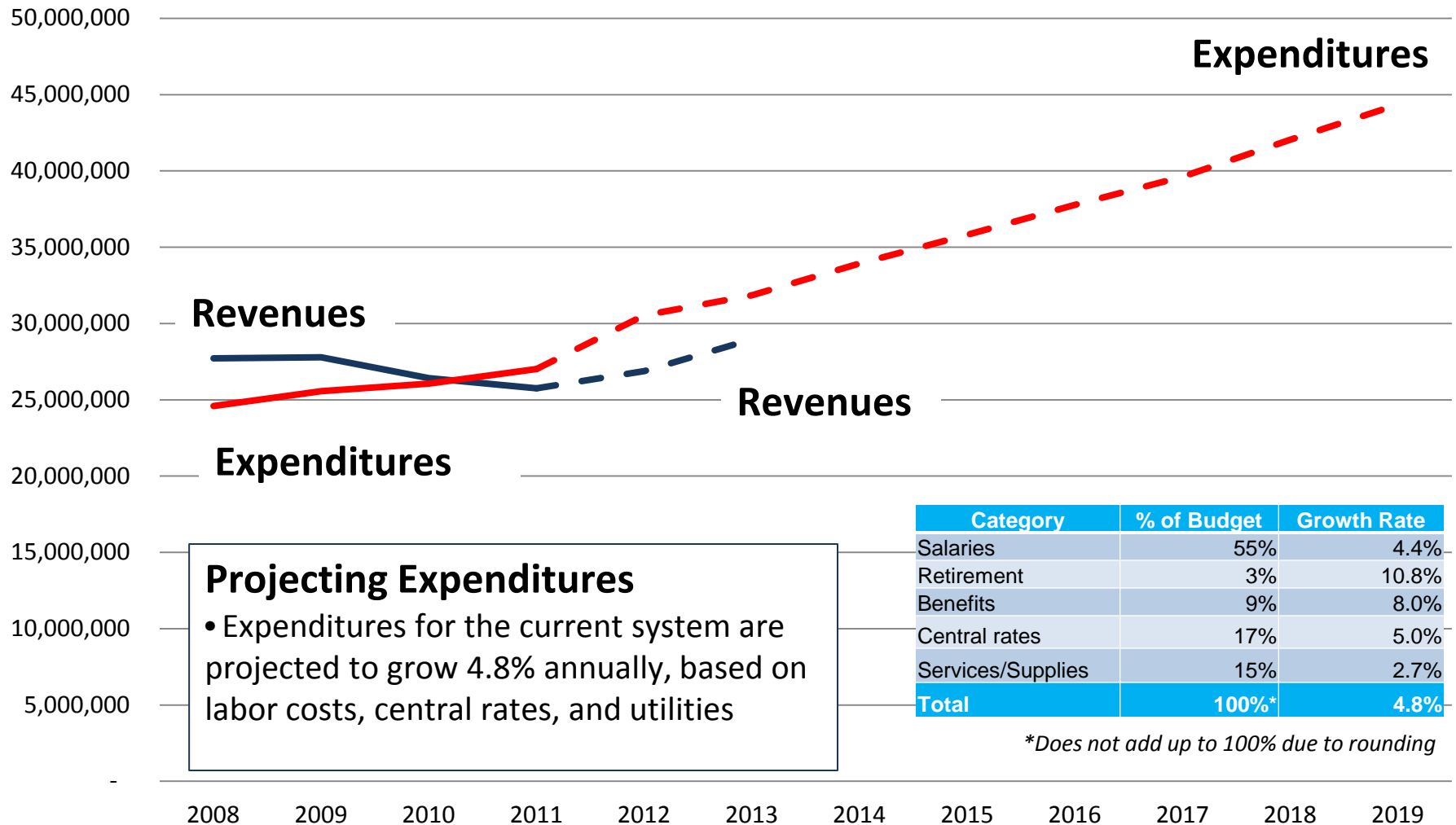
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# Parks Operating Fund 2008-2013: Total Projected Expenditures & Revenues



# Parks Operating Fund 2008-2019: Total Projected Expenditures & Revenues





# Where does Cost Growth come from?

## Elements of Parks' budget:

- Labor (67%):
  - Salaries and retirement
  - Benefits, including health care

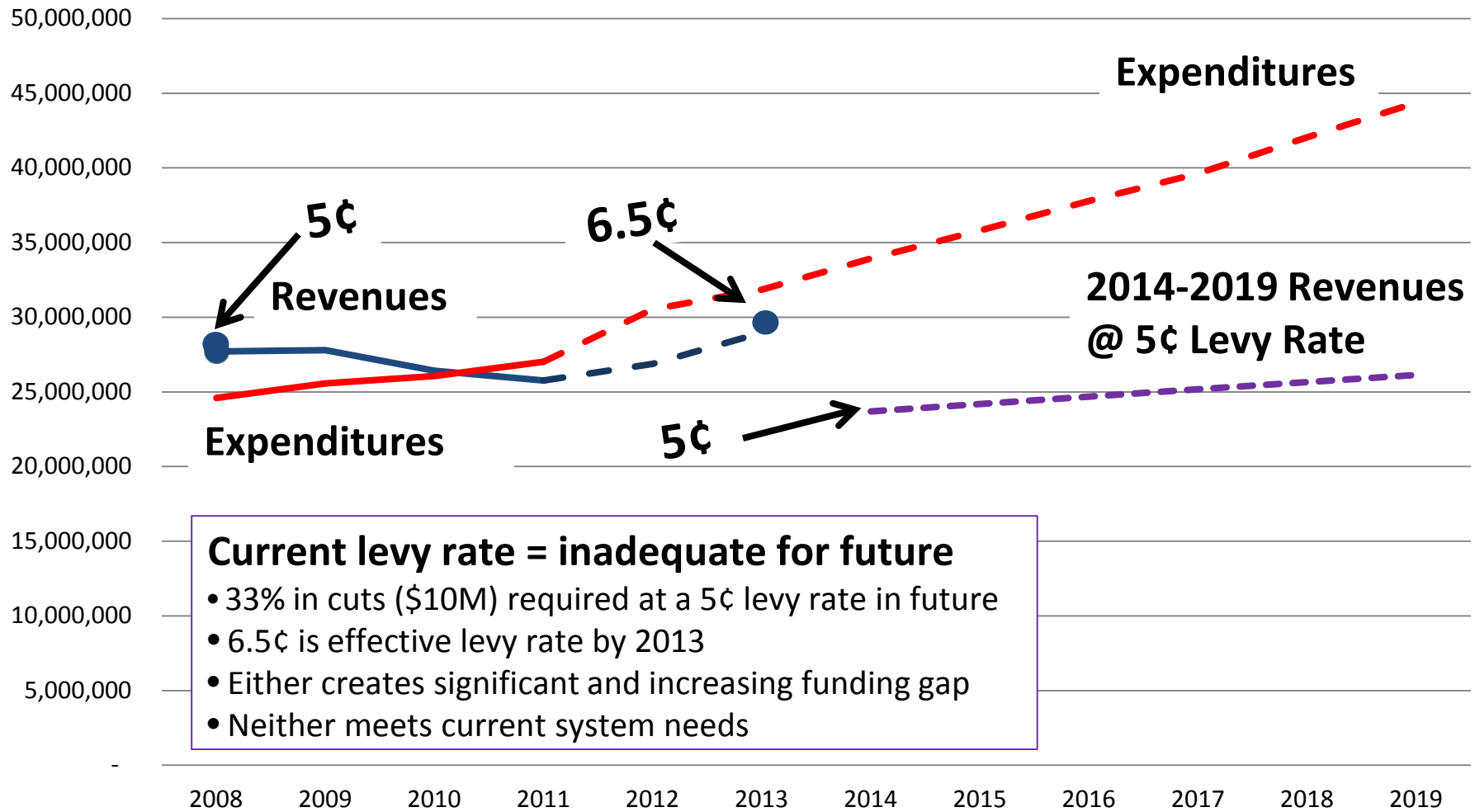
- Central Rates (17%):
  - Fleet
  - IT and other central services
  - Overhead (cost of being part of King County gov't)

- Services & Supplies (15%):
  - Utilities
  - Tools, materials, etc. (toilet paper to power carriers)

| Category          | % of Budget  | Growth Rate |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Salaries          | 55%          | 4.4%        |
| Retirement        | 3%           | 10.8%       |
| Benefits          | 9%           | 8.0%        |
| Central rates     | 17%          | 5.0%        |
| Services/Supplies | 15%          | 2.7%        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%*</b> | <b>4.8%</b> |

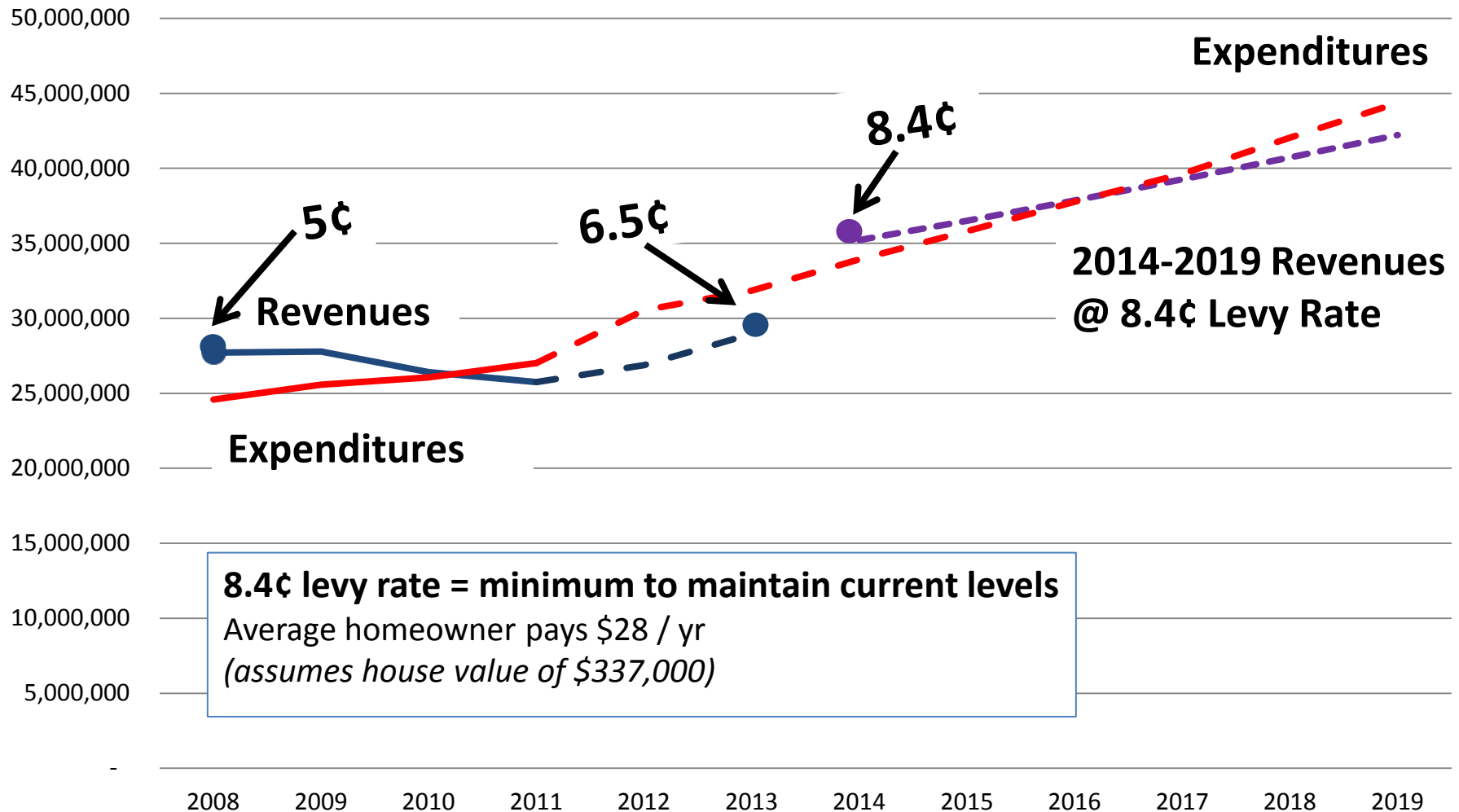
*\*Does not add up to 100% due to rounding*

# Parks Operating Fund 2008-2019: Total Projected Expenditures & Revenues





# Parks Operating Fund 2008-2019: Total Projected Expenditures & Revenues



# KC Parks Funding: Take Home Messages

- **Maintenance funding challenges:** *Since approval of 2008-2013 levies, the loss of general fund, higher cost growth reality, and major new commitments have translated to an erosion of service in maintenance and operations*
- **Capital funding challenges:** *Since approval of 2008-2013 levies, severe decline in REET has limited Parks' CIP program, negatively affecting ability to address maintenance needs*
- **Effective levy rate:** *In 2014, an 8.4 cent rate only provides funds to maintain system at existing levels, which are already below accepted standards*



# Next Steps



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# Meeting #2

\*No JULY 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting\*

July 10, 4 pm – 6 pm

Mercer Island Community & Event Center

- Guest Speaker: Dwight Dively, Director of the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
- Main Topics:
  - Current levels of maintenance
  - Current conditions of facilities
  - Strategies for taking care of existing system in 2014 and beyond



