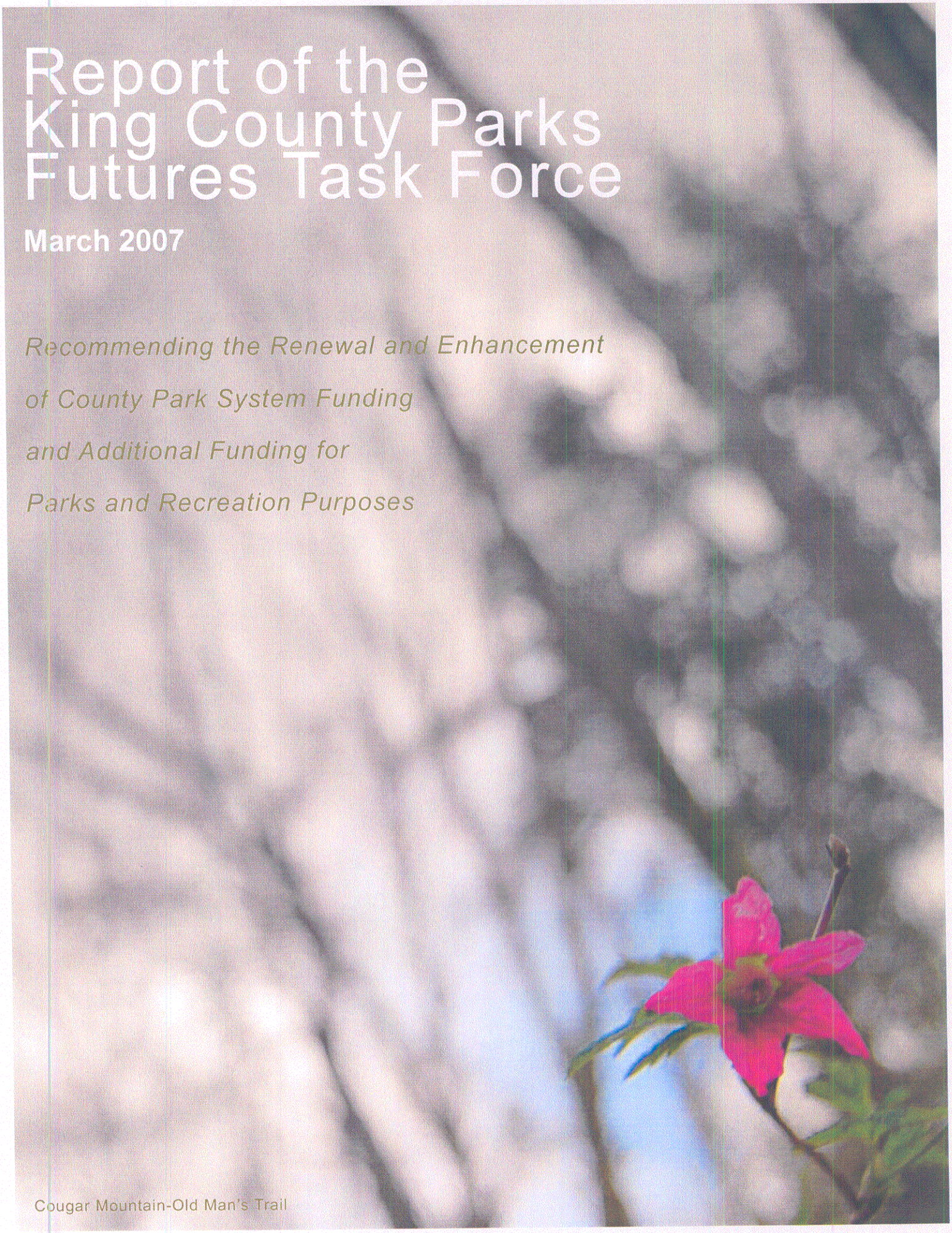
Report of the King County Parks Futures Task Force

March 2007

Recommending the Renewal and Enhancement of County Park System Funding and Additional Funding for Parks and Recreation Purposes



Cougar Mountain-Old Man's Trail

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Executive Summary

The County park system has undergone tremendous transition over the last four years. The onset of the County's fiscal crisis in 2002 required a wholesale change in the way the County Parks Division does business. The mission of the Division has been refocused on regional parks and trails, and there has been tremendous work to reduce the property tax dependence of the system. Today, the Division operates fewer parks and facilities, with far fewer staff and a significantly smaller budget than in 2002. Despite these changes, the County park system remains a large and invaluable regional asset. The system is comprised of over 25,000 acres of parks and open space, regional recreational facilities such as Marymoor Park and the Weyerhaeuser-King County Aquatic Center, and a system of nearly 175 miles of regional trails.

The King County Parks Futures Task Force was established in November 2006 by King County Executive Ron Sims and presented with a two-part mission: *"What should be done to preserve the County park system today?"* and *"What should be done to build the system for tomorrow?"* There is urgency to this first question in particular, as nearly sixty percent of park operations funding comes from a voter approved levy that expires at the end of 2007.

Given information we have been presented about the continued fiscal challenges facing King County, the Task Force believes it is both appropriate and necessary to seek another voter approved levy to support basic park operations. At the same time, we have significant concern about the low maintenance levels in the County park system as compared to both historical levels and that observed in city park systems. The Task Force is recommending that the next operating levy go beyond the bare-bones level of maintenance made possible under the current levy. We are also concerned about the impending loss of most of the Division's capital funding with which to preserve the park system assets and are recommending steps be taken to address that revenue loss. We are recommending a **7 cent levy for a term of 6 years to *renew* the current parks operating levy, *restore* parks maintenance levels, and *preserve* the system's basic capital funding**.

In response to the second part of our mission--to consider the future of the County park system--we are recommending a **5 cent companion levy to fund acquisition of new park and recreation assets and programs for both city and county park systems.** King County is going to grow by 280,000 more people by the year 2025. If we are to have any hope of addressing the recreational needs of this region in the future, we need to act now. Opportunities to preserve open space and trail corridors for our fast growing region are increasingly scarce. It is important that the County is able to take advantage of critical acquisition opportunities when they arise. Our proposed companion levy also recognizes that our many local city park systems are closely linked to the County system, and both are facing increased demand and usage. Three cents of the companion levy would be applied to acquire new County open space, passive parks and regional trails; one cent would be made available to cities for open space and trail acquisition and development through a matching fund application process; and 1 cent would be made available to the Woodland Park Zoo, a unique regional asset, for environmental education and conservation programming and capital purposes.

The voters of King County gave the County park system a strong vote of confidence in 2003 when the current operating levy was approved by 57%. Voter support for the system remains strong. Together, our recommended 7 cent and 5 cent levies would cost the typical household in King County an estimated $48 per year.[1] The poll of voters privately commissioned for the Task Force effort indicates a majority of County voters will support a levy package at this cost level.

The 7 cent operating levy will generate an estimated total of just over $150 million over 6 years to support the current County park system. The 5 cent levy will generate a total of about $108 million over 6 years, including: $64.7 million for County regional open space and trail acquisition and development; $21.5 million for city open space and trail acquisition and development; and $21.5 million in support for the Woodland Park Zoo.

These levies will build significantly on the legacy that is the County park system, and enhance the interconnectedness of this system with other local park systems.

We urge the County to place these companion levies on the ballot for voter approval in August this year, to ensure the continued operation and enhancement of the County park system, and enable us to expand open space and trail opportunities across the County for the benefit of today's residents and future generations.

[1] Based on an assessed home value of $400,000; the owner of a $300,000 home would pay an estimated $36 in the first year of the two levies.

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Introduction

The King County Parks Futures Task Force ("Task Force") was established in November 2006 by King County Executive Ron Sims. The Task Force was presented with a two-part mission, which may be summarized as *"What should be done to preserve the County park system today?"* and *"What should be done to build the system for tomorrow?"* There is urgency to this first question in particular, as nearly sixty percent of park operations funding comes from a voter approved levy that expires at the end of 2007.

The County park system has undergone tremendous transition over the last four years. The County's fiscal crisis required a wholesale change in the way the County Parks Division operates in order to keep the park system open. The mission of the Division has been refocused on operating regional open space and trails, a handful of regional active recreation facilities, and local rural parks. In urban areas, most local parks and pools previously held by the County have been transferred to cities or nonprofit organizations. Attendant with this new vision has been a very strong effort to reduce the tax dependence of the park system. Today, over 20 percent of the operating budget is provided by user fees and revenue from entrepreneurial efforts. A creative community partnership grants program has leveraged millions of dollars in new public recreation assets and programs operated and paid for by third parties.

The Division today operates fewer parks and facilities with far fewer staff and a significantly smaller budget than in 2002. But the system is still quite large, including over 25,000 acres of parks and open space, regional recreational facilities, and nearly 175 miles of regional trails. The park system contributes greatly to our quality of life in King County. Unfortunately, maintenance levels in the park system have also been significantly reduced since 2002 as a result of the budget reductions.

Given information we have been presented about the continued fiscal challenges facing King County, we believe it is both appropriate and necessary to seek another voter approved levy to support basic park operations. At the same time, we have significant concern about the low maintenance levels in the County park system as compared to both historical levels and that observed in city park systems. The Task Force is recommending that the next operating levy go beyond the bare-bones level of maintenance made possible under the current levy. We are also concerned about the impending loss of most of the Division's capital funding with which to preserve the park system assets.

We are therefore recommending that the new operating levy include funds to *renew the current park maintenance levy* and also include funds to *restore maintenance levels* and *preserve current system assets*. In sum, the Task Force proposes that the County place before the voters at the August 2007 primary a **6-year, 7 cent levy lid lift, with an inflation adjustor**, for **operating and capital support for current County regional parks and trails, local rural parks and the Division's community partnership grants program.**

In response to the second part of our mission--to consider the future of the County park system--we are recommending a modest companion levy to fund acquisition of new park and recreation assets and programs for both city and county park systems. King County is going to grow by 280,000 people by the year 2025. If we are to have any hope of addressing the recreational needs of this region in the future, we need to act now. Opportunities to preserve open space and trail corridors for our fast growing region are increasingly scarce. It is important that the County is able to take advantage of critical acquisition opportunities when they arise. Our proposed companion levy recognizes also that our many local city and County park systems are mutually supportive, and both are facing increased demand and usage. We are recommending a companion levy that is a **5-cent, 6-year, inflation adjusted levy lid lift**. Three cents of this levy would be applied to acquire new County open space, passive parks and regional trails; one cent would be made available to cities for open space and trail acquisitions through a matching fund application process; and 1 cent would be made available to the Woodland Park Zoo, a unique regional asset, for environmental education and conservation programming and capital purposes.

The voters of King County gave the County park system a strong vote of confidence in 2003 when the current operating levy was approved by 57%. Voter support for the system remains strong. Together, our recommended 7 cent and 5 cent levies would cost the typical household in King County an estimated $48 per year.[1] These levies will build significantly on the legacy that is the County park system, and enhance the interconnectedness of this system with other local park systems. We urge the County to place these companion levies on the ballot for voter approval in August this year, to ensure the continued operation and enhancement of the County park system, and enable us to expand open space and trail opportunities across the County for the benefit of today's residents and future generations.

Task Force Process, Timeline, and Information Base

The Task Force is the fourth task force effort to focus on King County park system funding since 2002. We are fortunate to be able to build on the work of both the Metropolitan Parks Task Force (initial report June, 2002; Phase II Report February 2003) and the Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board (initial report July 2006). The County Parks

[1] Based on an assessed home value of $400,000; for purposes of comparison, the owner of a home with an assessed value of $300,000 would pay $36 in the first year of the levies.

Futures Task Force membership is drawn in part from these prior groups, and is also complemented by new members with new perspectives.[2]

The Task Force held its first meeting on November 29, 2006, and met a total of eight times, with its last meeting on March 14, 2007. All meetings were open to the public.[3] The Task Force deliberations were informed by a wide range of information. We reviewed the recommendations of the Metropolitan Parks Task Force ("MPTF"), whose reports led to the refocusing of the County park system mission, transfer of many park assets, implementation of new ways of doing business--and the current 4.9 cent, 4-year park operating levy.[4] We also reviewed the July 2006 report of the Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board which concluded that the Division has to date expended the park levy proceeds consistent with requirements of the authorizing levy ordinance.

We were presented with considerable information about County finances generally, as well as about the Parks Division budget and park system assets (current and potential). We considered a variety of financing mechanisms and ideas to support the future operations of the park system.

Presentations from a panel of city parks directors informed us as to the interconnections between County and city park systems, and gave us valuable perspectives on the County park system.[5] Presentations from County park user groups, beneficiaries of the County's Community Partnership Grant program, Woodland Park Zoo Society representatives, and staff and board members of the Seattle Parks Foundation all further enriched our understanding of the region's various park and recreation assets and opportunities to enhance those assets.[6] A privately funded poll of King County voters was a further very valuable source of information.[7] The Task Force did not conduct any general public outreach: we look to the County Council as the appropriate entity to undertake that effort.

We were limited somewhat in our efforts by the requirement that we conclude our work by mid-March in order to enable the County Executive and County Council to complete their deliberations on our recommended levy measures in time for placement on the August 2007 primary ballot. As a result, we did not have an opportunity to broadly engage cities and other stakeholders in an extensive regional dialogue around funding new park and recreation assets. We understand that such an effort has been precedent to past regional parks and open space funding initiatives. As a result, our recommended companion levy is modest in size at 5 cents and somewhat general in scope.

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[2] Task Force Membership is set forth at **Exhibit A**.

[3] Minute of all meetings of the Parks Futures Task Force are set forth at **Exhibit B**.

[4] The MPTF recommended placing a 5.5 cent, 6-year levy before the voters in May 2003. After review, the Executive transmitted a 5 cent, 6-year levy request to the County Council. The County Council, after deliberation, ultimately submitted to the voters a 4.9 cent, 4-year levy. At the special election in May 2003, this levy was approved by 57% of the voters.

[5] See minutes of Task Force meeting of January 31, 2007 for summary of testimony from Parks Directors.

[6] See minutes of Task Force meeting of February 21 and **Exhibit L** for summary of testimony from user groups and Woodland Park Zoo Society. See minutes of Task Force meeting of March 8 and **Exhibit M** for summary of testimony from Seattle Parks Foundation.

[7] Poll results are presented at **Exhibit C**.

We were assisted in all our efforts by the County Parks Division staff and we thank them for their timely and professional response to our many questions.

The County Park System: An Overview of Its Assets, Mission, Revenues and Expenditures

To put our findings and recommendations in context, it is important to briefly review of the current situation of the County park system.

- ***Today's County Park System and the Transformation Since 2002***

The County park system includes over 180 parks totaling over 25,000 acres, together with some 175 miles of regional trails. County parks range in size from .25 acres to over 3,100 acres. The vast majority of acreage is in large regional "passive parks" and open space located in the rural area. The regional trail system links county and city parks, and also connects to trail systems in adjacent counties. Approximately half the trail system runs through urban areas of King County. The County owns and operates two pools in urban areas,[8] and two "summer-use" pools in the rural area.[9] The County also owns and operates a world-class aquatic center located in Federal Way: the Weyerhaeuser-King County Aquatic Center.

The Park System is operated by the Parks Division of the County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks (the "Division"). The Division has 157 full-time equivalent employees, and utilizes over 250 temporary staff in the spring, summer and fall to assist with capital and maintenance projects.

It is by now a familiar story that the County's General Fund (also known as the "Current Expense" or "CX" Fund) hit a serious crisis in 2002. This crisis caused the County to create the Metropolitan Parks Task Force ("MPTF") in March of 2002. The MPTF's mission was to recommend ways to keep the park system open in 2003 and beyond, and remove the system from dependence on the General Fund.

The MPTF recommended, and the County Executive and County Council subsequently endorsed, a significant narrowing of the park system mission and vision—one that was far less expensive in terms of its ongoing operating costs than the asset mix in place in 2002. That specific recommendation was for the County park system to focus on ***regional passive parks and open space and trails, a few regional active recreation facilities, and local rural park facilities***. In addition to having the benefit of being less expensive, this narrowed mission and vision is consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) adopted pursuant to State Growth Management Act. The CPPs identify

[8] These are the Evergreen Pool in North Highline and the Renton Pool located outside Renton city limits. Both these pools are slated to transfer upon annexation or incorporation of these communities.
[9] The summer use pools are the Cottage Lake Pool near Woodinville and the Vashon Pool on Vashon Island.

the County as the most appropriate provider of regional and local rural services and identify cities as the appropriate provider of local urban services. The CPPs call for all urban areas to be part of cities by 2012. Consistent with this, the MPTF recommended that the County get out of the business of providing local urban park and recreation services--by transferring local park and recreation facilities inside cities to those cities. The Division has worked hard to follow up on this recommendation: since 2002, the County's transition out of "in-city local park" service has been essentially completed.[10] However, a significant part of the urban area of King County remains outside city limits, and the County has several dozen local facilities in these areas. As annexation and incorporations will continue, the County is appropriately viewed as the *temporary steward of remaining local facilities in the urban unincorporated areas.*

In sum, the current County park system ***assets fall into three general categories***:

- ***regional parks, trails and recreation facilities***--large parks or facilities with broad geographic usage or benefit, which may be active or passive in nature, together with the trails that comprise the regional trail system. Examples include Marymoor Park, Cougar Mountain Park, Weyerhaeuser-King County Aquatic Center, and the Burke-Gilman Trail;

- ***local rural parks***--small community facilities and parks in the rural area, which again may be either active or passive; and

- ***local urban unincorporated area parks***—parks and facilities located outside cities but in the urban areas, and which are proposed for transfer to cities in the near future.

A list of all current County-owned parks and facilities is set forth at **Exhibit D.** In addition to these assets, the County operates a local grant funding program, the ***Community Partnership Grants program***, which makes grants available to community groups seeking to develop or operate recreational facilities for public use. This program is small in size ($300,000 each for capital and operations annually, from which the cost of staffing the program is also drawn), but has leveraged an estimated $20 million in public recreation assets and programs since 2004.

The budget crisis that led to the transformation of the park system continued beyond 2002. Through 2005, the General Fund budget was cut by more than $100 million and 10% of the full-time equivalent employee positions supported by the General Fund were eliminated. The cause of this crisis was the overwhelming dependence of the General Fund on property tax revenues (growth of which is capped by Initiative 747 to 1% per year plus the value of new construction) together with an economic slowdown, rapid growth in employee benefits costs and rapid growth in the cost of mandated criminal

[10] Several unincorporated urban facilities have also been transferred. **Exhibit E** includes a list of all local urban parks facilities that have been transferred since 2002.

justice functions provided by the County. In the period from 2002-2005, General Fund revenues grew at approximately 2% per year, while expenditures grew at 5-6% per year.

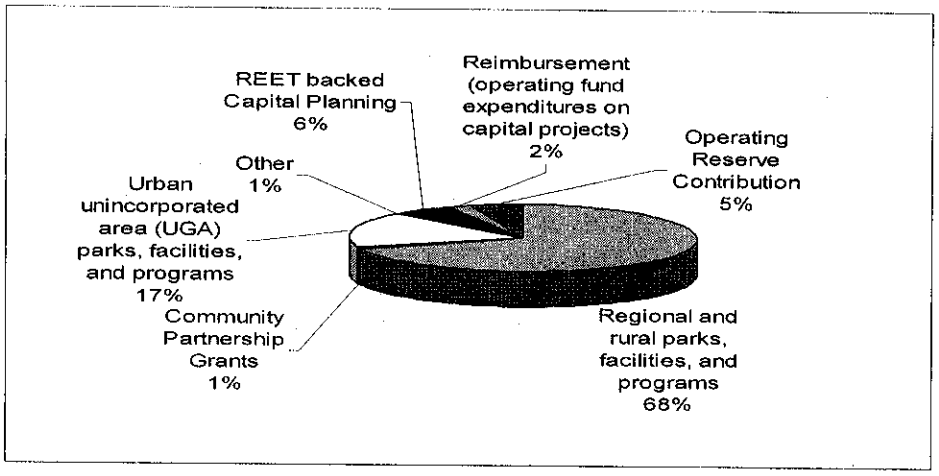
What is perhaps less clear to residents of King County now is that this budget crisis is not over. Rather, as we were told by the County's Budget Director, the "inconvenient truth" is that the cyclical gap between General Fund revenues and expenditures remains an ongoing challenge. While the County's 2006 and 2007 General Fund budgets were largely *status quo*, in the next few years the County expects to see the General Fund plunged back into growing annual deficits. The County forecasts a modest General Fund deficit in 2008 that continues to grow in 2009 and 2010. The growth in cost of services continues to outpace revenue growth. Health care funding (uncompensated care), rising costs of employee retirement programs, a growing list of capital demands, slower economic growth and energy price volatility all combine to future General Fund problems.

Parks are not a required governmental service. Parks will therefore not be given funding priority over state mandates (most notably all criminal justice functions, public health, records, licensing, elections, and property assessment) that must be paid for by the General Fund. In sum, we were told that Parks will not be able to look to the General Fund for substantial, if any, funding support after the current levy lapses at the end of this year.

- ***Operating Budget***

The most recent *actual expenditure and revenue information* available to us was for year 2005, reflected in **Figures 1 and 2**.[11] This illustrates that the vast majority of operating dollars were spent on regional parks and rural local parks. **Figure 2** shows the critical importance of the current parks levy, which provided 57% of the Division's operating support. Parks levy proceeds may be spent solely on regional parks, local rural parks,

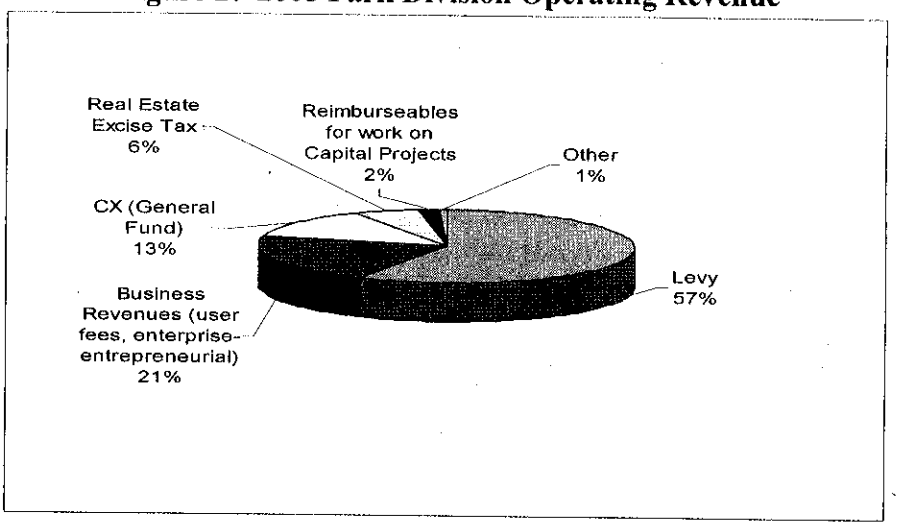
Figure 1: 2005 Park Division Operating Budget Expenditures



[11] *Budgeted* expenditures and revenue can differ significantly from *actual* expenditures and revenue. Data for 2006 is not yet completely tabulated by the County Finance and Business Operations Division.

and the Community Partnership Grants Program.[12] It is important to note that since levy proceeds allow parks to remain open, the Division is able to generate user fee and other revenue at these parks. In this sense, the levy contributes a combined total of 75% of the Division's operating support.

Figure 2: 2005 Park Division Operating Revenue



Self-generated "business revenues" from user fees and entrepreneurial efforts are the second most important source of Division operating funds, providing 21 % of the operating budget in 2005. Since 2004, business revenues have grown at an average annual rate of over 10%, after adjusting for transferred facilities: this is well in excess of the 5% annual target set in the Division's business plan.[13] Some of the successes of this program are highlighted at **Exhibit F**.

Today, the County General Fund provides less than $3 million a year for Division operations. In 2002, the General Fund was the source of nearly all Division funding. General Fund dollars received by the Division now are dedicated only to the support of local urban parks; as those parks transfer to cities, the General Fund contribution is expected to drop to $0.

In order to project the amount of operating revenues needed in future years to sustain operation and maintenance activities for current park system assets, the Task Force has reviewed and concurs with the *status quo* budget assumptions developed by the Division. These assumptions are set forth at **Exhibit G,** and result in a projected base budget requirement of $25.4 million beginning in 2008. This base budget is projected to inflate

[12] Per County Ordinance 14586, adopted March 18, 2003, which authorized placement of the current parks levy on the May 2003 ballot.

[13] The Task Force would observe that the *net* rate of return on the investment of capital and operating dollars in support of the Division's entrepreneurial efforts is probably well less than 5%: as capital dollars become scarcer, it is important to focus on the net, rather than gross revenue benefit gained from entrepreneurial efforts.

annually at a rate of 6%. The components of this base budget are shown in **Table 1**, which also notes the current source of funding for each budget category.

Table 1: Estimated Status Quo Operating Budget Components -- 2008

Expenditures	Amount
Regional-Rural Park Operations*	$18.5M
Community Partnership Grants*	0.3
Contribution to Operating Reserve*	1.5
Urban Local Park Expenditures**	3.6
Capital Planning***	1.5
TOTAL	**$25.4M**

* These items currently funded by parks operating levy
** Currently funded by CX Funds
***Funded by Real Estate Excise Tax

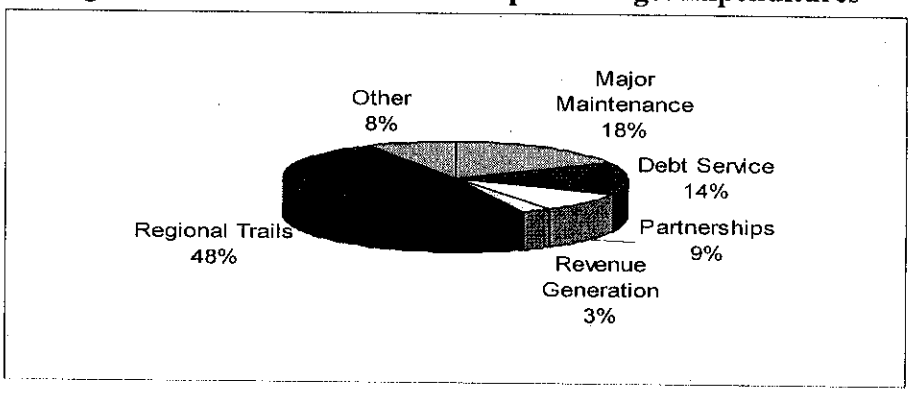
- ***Capital Budget***

The Division's capital budget is approximately the same size as its operating budget. For example, in 2006, the most recent year for which numbers are available, the capital budget was $21.5 million. The County has a long-standing policy to allocate all Real Estate Excise Tax Revenue (REET) to support county parks. REET is employed to fund both capital projects and the operating budget costs of staff that plan those capital projects (*see* **Table 1** above for capital planning costs projected in 2008).

There are two REET taxes imposed by King County, each applied to all real property sales in unincorporated King County, each at a rate of a quarter of one percent (.25%). In 2006, each of these taxes generated slightly over $11.1 million, over $22.2 million in total.

Figure 3 shows the allocation of expenditures in the Division's capital budget in 2006. Of the total $21.5 million available that year, approximately $3 million (nearly 14% of total revenues) was applied to repayment of debt issued for parks purposes. The debt

Figure 3: 2006 Parks Division Capital Budget Expenditures



service requirement is very steady from year to year (assuming no additional debt is issued). The balance of REET revenues is available to the Parks Division for capital projects. In 2005, nearly half the capital budget was expended on development, repair and rehabilitation of regional trails. The balance was expended primarily on rehabilitation of other park system assets.

Total REET revenues have grown considerably in recent years due to the boom in housing prices in King County. Looking ahead, however, the picture is far different. Two unrelated issues are expected to in combination result in the loss of 60% of the County's annual REET revenues over the next six years. The first source of revenue loss is the County's annexation initiative which seeks transition to "city- status" all remaining urban unincorporated areas, either by annexation or incorporation. This goal is consistent with the vision set forth in the Growth Management Act and the local Countywide Planning Policies. This transition will allow the County to shed expensive local urban service responsibility and thus relieve pressure on the County's General Fund. However, annexation and incorporation transfers REET tax base to cities. Approximately 60% of the REET revenues are generated in areas slated for annexation or incorporation. This transition is scheduled to be completed by 2012.

The second cause of REET loss is the anticipated slowdown in the number of housing transactions and the rate of growth in housing prices in King County. The County staff economist explained to the Task Force that he expects the housing slowdown to be the cause of approximately 40% of lost REET revenue, with annexations and incorporations causing the balance of REET revenue loss.

Over this same six year period, the County is expecting significant growth in capital needs for the current park system, most notably for repair and replacement of regional trail system bridges and trestles. There are over 75 bridges and trestles in the regional trail system and most of these need significant capital work over the next ten to fifteen years. Based on historical capital needs of the Division and the cost of bridge and trestle work, projected capital needs of the Division for the next 6 years range from $12.8 million to $17 million a year, as shown in **Table 2**. When compared to the projected REET revenue available for capital programming, there is a growing annual funding gap.

REET revenues have significantly exceeded forecast levels in recent years. Therefore, the Task Force asked the County staff economist to generate a more "optimistic" scenario for REET revenues (incorporating a more pessimistic schedule for annexations, and a more positive economic outlook for housing). We then asked staff to generate a "mid-range" forecast for REET, between the initially presented conservative forecast shown in **Exhibit H** (which is normally used for County budget purposes) and our requested "optimistic" forecast. That "mid-range" forecast, depicted in **Exhibit I**, was the basis for the estimated capital budget revenue shortfall (defined as the difference between the amount of REET available for capital after deducting required debt service payments on REET-backed bonds, as compared to the projected capital programming needs of the current park system). The resulting gap is set forth in **Table 2**, and ranges from half a

million dollars in 2008 to as high as $9 million in 2012. The question is how to fill this gap and thereby ensure the Division can continue to preserve its current assets?

Table 2: Projected Parks Capital Funding Gap, 2008-2013

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Projected Capital Funding Required for Current System	$12,756,194	$14,938,229	$15,652,937	$16,387,839	$17,148,508	$16,865,002
Projected REET available (Mid-Range Estimate)*	$12,213,021	$11,241,042	$8,722,832	$8,839,763	$8,139,828	$8,430,738
Capital Funding Gap	($543,173)	($3,697,187)	($6,930,105)	($7,548,076)	($9,008,680)	($8,434,264)

*after deducting debt service

Future County Park System Operations: Consideration of Alternatives

- ***Park Maintenance Levels***

The Task Force was told that the Parks Division can maintain *current operations levels on levy funded items* (regional parks and trails, rural parks and the Community Partnership Grant Program) over the next six years with a levy equivalent to the current authorized levy rate: 4.9 cents per $1,000 assessed value. This is a testament to the Division's ongoing efforts to restrain growth in their expenses and their commendable success in raising operating dollars through entrepreneurial efforts and user fees.

However, it is of concern to the Task Force that current maintenance levels remain significantly below 2002 levels, and well below the average maintenance levels of most city park systems. County staff estimate that in terms of the national "6-mode" park maintenance standards, the County's parks are maintained in an average range from mode 4 to mode 6 (with "6" being the lowest level of maintenance).[14] There are a few exceptions where higher maintenance is in place.[15] By comparison, County staff told us that the Bellevue or Kirkland park systems are largely at mode 1 or 2.

The MPTF had hoped that the 2004-2007 levy would facilitate a slight increase in maintenance levels, but for several reasons this did not materialize: the levy was smaller than recommended by the MPTF; the property tax base for the levy was lower than projected; entrepreneurial revenue was initially lower than projected (although it grew at rates exceeding targets); and the Division's overhead charge for central County services was higher than anticipated.

[14] Park Maintenance Standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association, 1986. These include a detailed "task description" recommended "frequency" for hundreds of park maintenance items.
[15] For example, the Weyerhaeuser-King County Aquatic Center, or the recently installed synthetic soccer fields at Marymoor Park.

The Division can continue to operate at its current bare-bones level of maintenance. However, we think to do so short changes the region's residents who have paid to acquire this extraordinary system over many years. The residents of this region deserve a system that is safe, clean, with good signage, inviting access, quality play fields and well maintained trails. Today, the difference between city and County park maintenance levels is substantial. The Task Force was told that returning to maintenance levels present just a few years ago will represent a marked improvement. The specific changes that would be secured by restoring maintenance levels to those in place before 2002 are described at **Exhibit J**. These improvements can be achieved through an investment of just over $1.8 million a year.

It should be noted that even with this additional investment, County park system maintenance levels will remain well below that of the premier city parks systems in King County. County park staff told us that an additional $3 million per year (over the $1.8 million discussed above) would bring maintenance to a level on par with the better city systems (i.e., "mode 2"). **Exhibit K** notes what those investments would or could entail.

- ***Funding Mechanism: Property Tax Levy Lid Lift and Alternatives***

As did the MPTF before us, the Task Force quickly agreed that the most likely mechanism for securing regional funding authorization for parks is through submittal of another levy lid lift, the same mechanism used for the current parks operating levy. A levy lid lift can be authorized by the voters at any election, and requires the approval of a simple majority of those voting. There is no voter turn-out requirement. The levy can be limited in purpose, and may be for any term of years (including permanent).

Unlike the MPTF, we now have an additional tool for fine-tuning a property tax levy lid lift, that was not authorized at the time the current levy measure was on the ballot. In 2003, the State Legislature approved a change in law that allows levy lid lifts to have an *inflation adjustor* placed on them, which we are told can apply to either the entire basic property tax of the jurisdiction seeking the increase, or just to the increment authorized by the lid lift. Any adjustor index may be used, but must be specified in the ballot title. The inflation adjustor allows levy receipts to exceed the 101% limit imposed by Initiative 747 each year by the indexed amount. This means it is more likely that levy proceeds will meet projected program needs over time, where inflation is a factor in the cost of providing the program. As a result, the initial levy rate may be slightly lower when using an inflation adjusted levy. There are important limits on use of this mechanism, specifically:

- The measure must be placed on the primary or general election ballot
- The lid lift cannot be for a term of more than 6-years
- Levy proceeds cannot supplant other funding

Translated to the County park system, the basic *status quo* operating costs of the Division could be supported with a 4.9 cent regular lid lift for 6 years, or, with a 4.7 cent inflation

adjusted levy over the same period. The inflation adjustor mechanism allows the levy to raise funds in an amount that match more closely from year to year the actual amounts required by the Division.

The Task Force considered a number of alternatives to a property tax lid lift for supporting park operations. Among the ideas considered and ultimately rejected were:

- further reductions in parks maintenance levels
- closure of parks
- transfers of funding from other County programs, specifically, roads and surface water management, or draining of County reserve funds
- increased funding from the General Fund
- seeking voter approval of a "REET III" tax; [16]
- greater or complete reliance on business revenues
- creation of a parks endowment

The Task Force quickly concluded that closing parks or further reducing maintenance is not appropriate, given the likely strong public opposition to such proposals. Budget challenges in County roads and surface water management programs make transfers from those programs a zero-sum transaction: other services and programs would be directly cut. County reserve funds would only very temporarily meet the current budget needs of the parks system. The County budget director told the Task Force that there is no reasonable opportunity for significant, if any, increase in General Fund monies available for parks. A REET III tax, while a powerful revenue tool, requires far more regional discussion before it can be placed before the voters: our prescribed schedule for concluding deliberations simply did not facilitate that. While remarkable to date, the business revenues of the Division are unlikely to greatly exceed targeted growth rates in the near term, particularly because: (1) capital funding to support entrepreneurial efforts will be increasingly scarce as REET revenue declines; (2) the "low hanging fruit" has been already "plucked"; (3) user fees appear to be approaching market limits in many instances; and (4) the park system asset mix is heavily weighted to properties that have little revenue generating capacity, e.g., open space and trails. Finally, in terms of potential options for operations funding, receipt of $500 million needed to size an endowment sufficient to support the Division seems unrealistic at best in the near term.

The Task Force also considered a variety of ways to address the forecasted capital funding gap resulting from reduced REET revenues. Ideas considered, and ultimately rejected, included: scaling back capital funding for the Division; reducing capital directed to entrepreneurial efforts; seeking additional support from the General Fund; transferring dollars from other County programs (roads, surface water management). It is simply not a good management practice to allow capital support to slip over time, as that increases

[16] "REET III" refers to a tax authorized under RCW which may be imposed countywide upon voter approval. It may be levied at a rate of up to 1% of the sales price of real estate. It may be used for "acquisition and maintenance of conservation areas." Unlike REET I and II, REET III is a tax on the buyer of property, not the seller.

both ongoing maintenance costs and ultimately risks even greater capital budgets as more significant deterioration to assets is allowed to occur. The Task Force was told that there is already a significant backlog of capital maintenance needs for the Division (as previously noted, particularly related to maintaining safety of the regional trail system trestles and bridges). Again, it seems highly unlikely that additional funding for parks capital could be secured from other County program revenues without directly impacting other County programs: the Task Force does not have information to identify where to make such service and program trade-offs in support of parks but to the detriment of other County operations.

In sum, the Task Force concluded that, at this time, a voter approved levy property tax measure is the most, if not the only, practicable means to secure the continued operation and capital support for the current park system assets.

Expansion of the County System: Consideration of County Plans and Regional Goals and Needs

The Task Force was given a two part mission, to consider both *how to support the current park system* after expiration of the current levy, and, to consider *how and whether to support and grow the system for the future*? Pressures on both city and county park and recreation systems will continue to increase as the region's population grows. Over 280,000 more people are expected to move to King County by the year 2025. The County park system assets are concentrated in regional open space and regional trails. We therefore looked at opportunities to grow both these asset bases. We also considered the need for more active recreation assets (which are currently a small part of the County's role and represent the most expensive type of assets to operate) and whether the Division should seek to expand its mission beyond its current scope.

- ***Open Space Acquisition Opportunities***

The County Park system includes approximately 23,000 acres of open space. In recent years, most additions to this inventory have been made possible by the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT), a countywide property tax imposed at a maximum allowable rate of 6.25 cents per $1,000 assessed value.[17] CFT revenues (approximately $15 million 2007), are shared between cities and the County, and are allocated based on annual recommendations from the CFT Citizen Oversight Committee which is advisory to the County Executive and County Council. The award of CFT funds is through a competitive process. Applicants (cities, the County, or citizen groups) must provide matching funds in at least the amount of the grant award. Projects must meet a variety of criteria, consistent with state law and County code. In 2007, approximately 723 acres of open space in the rural area will be purchased by King County with $3 million in CFT monies, and Cities will purchase approximately 530 acres of open space with $8.6 million in CFT.

[17] Due to limitations in the growth of property taxes instituted by Initiative 747, the current rate at which the CFT tax is imposed is less than the maximum allowable rate; in 2007, CFT is imposed at a rate of 5.13 cents.

The largest single transaction to preserve open space in King County in recent years is the purchase in 2005 of development rights to the Snoqualmie Forest, privately owned forest land in Northeast King County. Through bonding of CFT revenues, the County was able to buy the development rights to this 90,000 acre working forest for approximately $22.5 million. These lands will continue to be used as a working forest, but will be preserved in perpetuity as open space with public non-motorized access--at essentially no ongoing maintenance cost to King County.

Looking to the future, if we wish to preserve more open space for public use and future generations, there are many small acquisition opportunities, but nothing remaining equal or exceeding the acreage of the Snoqualmie Tree Farm. There are very few remaining large privately owned forests in King County: these are in South King County (Plum Creek Timber lands, and the White River forest, with a combined area of 76,000 acres). There are also a number of much smaller privately owned forest lands in East and South King County. The Watershed Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) process, recently concluded after several years of study and collaboration between the County, cities and Tribal governments, identified over 4,600 acres of prime salmon habitat needs along shorelines, streams and rivers in King County. "Urban greenway" opportunities abound within cities, as presented by The Trust for Public Land "Greenprint" Report (2005).

Acquisition of any of these lands for public open space purposes is dependent upon funding availability and willing landowners. The cost of these lands varies greatly depending on where the land is, and what types of property rights are purchased. For example, the 4,600 acres of priority habitat identified by the WRIA process can be acquired for an estimated $150 to $200 million. Urban greenspace or prime shore lands can cost several million dollars an acre. In contrast, the Snoqualmie Tree farm was preserved via purchase of development rights at a cost of roughly $250 an acre.

The Task Force believes that our region may forever lose the opportunity to secure for future generations any of these remaining open spaces if public dollars are not available for their purchase in the next six to ten years.

- ***Regional Trail System Planned Expansion***

Trails serve as an invaluable recreational asset as well as an alternative transportation mode in our increasingly congested region. The County's current regional trail system includes approximately 175 miles of trails, including 71 miles of paved trails and 104 miles of unpaved trails. This does not count the many miles of backcountry trails within the County's passive open space parks (such as Cougar Mountain or Taylor Mountain).

The County's 2004 adopted and updated Regional Trail System Plan[18] envisions a regional system of 300 miles of trails, linking city to city, and linking urban and rural areas. A map of the current trail system, showing remaining trail right-of-way yet to be

[18] This document is officially titled the "King County Regional Trails Inventory and Implementation Guidelines Plan."

acquired, is presented at **Map 1**. The Map shows several "missing links" in the urban trails system.

The County estimates the cost to complete the regional trail system plan is $220 million (2006 dollars). Approximately $18 million of this amount is for corridor acquisition (roughly equivalent to a 1 cent regional property tax levy for six years); the balance is for permitting and development of trails. As with open space, there may be unique windows of opportunity to acquire this right-of-way before it is lost to other use. However, at the rate of funding made available for trail purchases in the last five years, the Regional Trail system will not be completed even within the next 50 to 75 years.

The Parks Division's regional trail development priorities include completion of the urban area "missing links" and strategic rural connections, such as the Mountains–to-Sound Greenway connections. The estimated cost of this "priority package" (which does not include purchasing all remaining system right-of-way but does include right-of-way acquisition necessary to the identified priority projects[19]) is approximately $66.5 million. That translates to roughly 3.5 cents of regional property tax for a 6 year period.

- ***Active Recreation Assets***

Active recreation assets (pools, ballfields) are the most expensive assets for the County (or any park system) to operate because of the high number and high frequency of maintenance tasks and staffing required. As recommended by the MPTF and directed by the County, the Division has narrowed its focus on recreation asset operation and has not assumed operational responsibility for more of these assets since the budget crisis in 2002. The Division has sought to divest itself of as many of these active recreation responsibilities as possible and where local in nature.

For an active recreational asset to be truly "regional" in nature, it would typically involve considerable acreage—for multiple ballfields and associated amenities (parking, etc.) In the County system, there are a few such assets: the Weyerhaeuser-King County Aquatic Center and Marymoor Park are perhaps the prime examples. It would seem that the vast majority of active recreational needs are met by local facilities, owned either by cities or by King County in unincorporated areas. Given urban land values, it would be extremely expensive to acquire and develop new regional active recreational assets. However, there is a growing demand for active recreation assets, as the population grows. In recognition of this, the County has established and modestly funded the Community Partnership Grants ("CPG") Program, which as discussed above has resulted in significantly leveraging of recreational dollars for a small public investment. In all, the Task Force does not find a compelling reason for the County to expand its role in the ownership, development or operation of regional active recreational assets beyond the current asset base. However, an expansion of the CPG program seems warranted, if the operating and capital needs of current park assets can first be met.

[19] The Task Force recommendation also does not include any funding for the proposed Burlington Northern Trail, which we understand is being considered under a wholly separate negotiation and decision process.

Feedback and Input from City Parks Directors, User Groups, Woodland Park Zoo Society, Seattle Parks Foundation, and Voters

- *Cities and User Groups*

The Task Force wanted to hear from the County's regional park and recreation partners, including cities and user groups. We had two panel presentations for this purpose. The Cities Parks Directors Panel included parks directors from Seattle, Bellevue, Renton, Redmond and Woodinville. The user group panel included representatives from the Cascade Bicycle Club, the Bicycle Alliance of Washington, the Sammamish Rowing Association, the Preston Community Club, the Eastside Football Club, and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway.

From the Cities Parks Directors Panel we heard several key messages:

- City and County parks systems are synergistic. They serve the same public and demand for both systems is very high and growing. Together these systems provide the needed continuum of local and regional park and recreation assets, with the regional trail system providing an important linking function between city and County parks and trails.
- Some city park facilities are regional in nature, given their user base.
- Cities observe County park maintenance levels as generally being well below city levels. If maintenance levels were more evenly matched, the public would experience the various systems in a more seamless way.
- Trails are a top priority, in terms of what city parks directors are hearing from their residents.
- There has not been a sufficient regional dialogue associated with this Task Force for cities to support a major "legacy" effort in terms of expanding park and recreation opportunities.
- Cities are carefully watching what the County does to fund its park system. It is unclear whether cities generally will support a renewed levy for the system.

From the "User Groups Panel" we heard:

- The County's Trail System is a unique and valued regional asset that promotes healthy activities for users of all ages and interests.
- The Community Partnership Grants Program has allowed the leveraging of millions of dollars of recreational assets available to the public, and remains a critical source of support for local community groups seeking to provide these recreational opportunities for both their group members and the public.
- The Mountains-to-Sound Greenway has been supported in a variety of ways by King County; continued collaboration between the County, cities and nonprofits is necessary to the success of the Greenway.

- ***Woodland Park Zoo Society and Seattle Parks Foundation***

The Task Force was approached by the Woodland Park Zoo Society and the Seattle Parks Foundation regarding the possibility of securing funding for the Zoo and urban trails serving underserved communities as part of a proposed County parks levy package. The Task Force found their ideas compelling from the standpoint of supporting, building and promoting regional park, trail and recreation assets.

The Woodland Park Zoo is owned by the City of Seattle, but operated under contract by the Woodland Park Zoo Society, a private nonprofit organization. The Zoo's annual maintenance budget today is approximately $28 million; one third of this funding comes from Seattle; one third from revenues generated at the Zoo; and one third from gifts and donations. Historically, the County has recognized the Zoo as a regional asset and provided it critical capital support. In the 1970s, the County placed a $35 million bond measure before the voters, which was handily approved. That measure facilitated major upgrades in the Zoo's facilities. The Zoo now faces the loss of much of its operating support currently coming from Seattle, when the current voter-approved Seattle parks levy expires in 2008. The Zoo Society requested that the Task Force recommend adding 1 cent (generating approximately $3.1 million a year) to a County parks levy package to provide operating and capital support for the Zoo. The specific Zoo programs proposed to be funded are primarily focused on environmental education and conservation. The Zoo would like to have the capacity to both continue and expand these programs for the benefit of school-aged children across King County. The funding request is further described in **Exhibit L.**

The Seattle Parks Foundation spoke to us about their "Bands of Green" proposal, which is aimed at improving "green [street and trail] connections in the lowest-income, highest-density family city neighborhoods that are underserved by parks and open space."[20] These trail connections could in some cases connect with regional trails operated either by Seattle or the County. The Foundation specifically proposed that the Task Force include in its levy recommendations one-half cent (or approximately $1.5 million annually) as a matching fund available to *all* cities seeking to build urban trail connections in and through underserved neighborhoods. Criteria for funding, as proposed by the Foundation, "could include such elements as population density, number of school-age children, current deficits in parks, specific cultural needs, number of users of public transportation, and needed improvements in pedestrian safety." The Foundation's proposal is reproduced at **Exhibit M.**

- ***What do the Voters Want? Results of a Privately-Funded Poll***

The Task Force was very fortunate to have the benefit of information from a privately-funded poll of King County voters regarding their support for the County park system and related park and recreation issues. Alison Peters Consulting conducted the telephone poll of 600 King County voters from February 8-12, 2007. The complete poll results are

[20] See Exhibit M.

set forth at **Exhibit C**, (question-by-question poll results) with related analysis at **Exhibit N** (PowerPoint presentation). The key findings of the poll are:

- 62% of respondents say King County is doing a good or excellent job managing the parks system.
- A 7 cent operation and maintenance levy to support parks is supported by 58% of respondents.
- A combined 15 cent levy to provide money for both maintenance *and* new open space and trail acquisitions does not receive 50% approval.
- Support for a parks levy drops below 50% when the average annual cost of that levy exceeds $50 a year.
- Support for a parks levy is strongest in Seattle and East King County, weakest in South and North King County.
- Including 1 cent in a levy for the Woodland Park Zoo increases support for a county parks levy. According to the poll, some 63% of voters would support funds for the Zoo. Voter support for the Zoo is geographically broad (68% in East King County, 60% in North King County).
- Including 1 cent in a levy for city open space and trail acquisitions will also increase support for a County parks levy, but by not quite as much as including the Zoo. Some 54% of voters would support levy funds for this purpose.
- Voters strongly preferred having the opportunity to vote separately on a proposed maintenance levy and a proposed levy to buy new open space and trails. Separating the measures in this way increased voter support significantly for both measures (from 58% to 69% support for a maintenance and operations "renewal" levy, and from 44% to 54% support for an open space and trails "expansion" levy)
- A *bond measure* to support open space and trails expansion is unlikely to pass (60% approval required).

Findings and Conclusions

There are several findings and conclusions reached over the course of the Task Force deliberations that are the basis for our levy recommendations: these are presented below.

1. The County park system is integral to quality of life in the region. First and foremost, this system must be maintained and preserved.

2. The current mission, vision and business plan for the County park system remains valid. The Task Force recommends no changes to the County's focus on regional open space/passive parks and regional trails. The County should continue to maintain its regional active recreational assets. The County remains responsible for local recreation facilities in the rural area, given its role as the local government for these areas. Consistent with this mission and vision, the County

should continue to work to transfer remaining urban local parks to cities and third parties as possible. The County should continue to look for creative partnerships related to *all* its assets and programs in order to generate revenue to support the park system or reduce its ongoing operating costs.

3. Based on what we are told and our examination of alternatives, it will not be possible to maintain the current Division operations and existing park system assets without another voter approved operating levy. That levy should be submitted to the voters in August 2007, and if necessary again in November 2007, in order to ensure there is no gap in park system funding. Without the levy, or an equivalent replacement, the Division, and the park system, will have to be shut down.

4. There is strong voter support for the idea of a maintenance levy to renew the current parks operating levy.

5. Maintenance levels in King County parks should be restored to pre-2002 levels in order to: (1) maintain public support for the system; (2) protect the safety of those using the system; and (3) avoid greater costs in the future resulting from deferred maintenance.

6. The impending loss of a majority of the park system's capital funding from REET revenue declines must be addressed. It is not rational to promote enhanced maintenance levels in the park operating budget as we propose, and at the same time to allow capital support for the system to be cut by more than half. The Task Force has no quarrel with the goals of the annexation initiative. However, the Parks Division and park system should not be penalized for the County's effort to stabilize the General Fund.[21] Capital funding should be secured that can meet projected needs of the current parks system. These needs are growing over the next six years, in part due to the backlog of aging bridges and trestles in the regional trail system.

7. The Division's entrepreneurial efforts have met and exceeded gross revenue targets over the last four years. This work should be applauded and continued. However, now that capital funding employed to implement these efforts is dwindling, more attention must be paid to net revenue generated from these activities (considering both operating and capital dollars expended), rather than simply the gross revenue generated.

8. The Community Partnership Grant Program is an effective, low cost means of building public recreational assets and important community partnerships. This program should be continued and expanded if possible.

[21] Virtually all of the park assets being maintained with the REET revenue are located outside of the urban unincorporated area in which most REET revenue is being generated.

9. The population of King County will continue to grow significantly in the next 20 years. The pressure placed on existing park and recreation systems of both cities and the County will thus increase. It is imperative that we maintain and expand the park and recreation assets available to residents of the region, for today and tomorrow.

10. Expanding the County parks system can address only part of the growing demand for park and recreation opportunities. The County, out of financial necessity and as appropriate to its role as the regional government, focuses its park system on assets that are regional in nature: regional open space, passive parks and the trail system. Cities in turn focus primarily on local active recreation assets, although there are some important regional assets in city park systems.

11. The Woodland Park Zoo is a regional asset that has been substantially supported by the County's voters in the past. A contribution to the Zoo's operating and capital needs over the next several years is warranted, particularly given the expected loss of funding from Seattle after expiration in 2008 of the Seattle parks operating levy (now imposed at a rate of 35 cents per $1,000 assessed value). The environmental education and conservation programming proposed by the Zoo for use of County levy funds is focused on programs serving school age children: we expect these efforts will in turn generate future support for the region's many park systems and the environmental assets they protect.

12. The region risks losing critical opportunities if sufficient funding is unavailable for open space and trail right of way acquisitions over the next several years. The benefits of public open space are legion, in terms of public recreation, habitat preservation, and simple aesthetics. A key benefit from open space is the preservation of water quality through maintaining watersheds, stream systems and shorelines.

13. City and county trail systems are interconnected, and the benefit of each is enhanced when these systems are more strongly linked.

14. There is important regional benefit to be gained from expanding trail connections in currently underserved communities that will then link these communities to the regional trail system and other recreational opportunities along that system.

Recommendations

Based on the information provided to us and the input we have received from various stakeholders, the Task Force makes the following recommendations for future funding of the County Parks System:

- ***Two property tax levy lid lift measures should be placed on August 2007 Primary ballot:***

- *A 7¢ levy to renew the expiring maintenance levy, restore maintenance to pre-2002 levels, and preserve capital funding available to the park system; and*

- *A 5¢ levy to fund a modest expansion of parks and recreation opportunities throughout King County*

- ***Both levies should be for a term of 6-years, and should include an inflation adjustor***

- ***Passage of either levy should not be conditioned on passage of the other***

The composition of these levies is described in summary in the following tables:

7 Cent County Parks Support Levy

Replace current operating & maintenance levy	4.7¢
Restore maintenance levels to pre-2002/budget crisis	0.6¢
Preserve current park system by ensuring adequate capital dollars available--replacing declining REET revenues anticipated due to both a housing market slowdown and annexations and incorporations	1.7¢
TOTAL	7¢

5 Cent Levy to Expand Parks & Recreation Opportunities

King County Open Space and Regional Trails	3¢
City Trails and Open Space	1¢
Environmental education and conservation programming and related capital and operating support at Woodland Park Zoo	1¢
TOTAL	5¢

These two levies should be submitted as independent measures; that is, passage of one should not be conditioned on passage of the other. While we understand the critical importance of renewing maintenance funding for the park system, the Task Force takes this position based on the following points:

- The two measures are substantively different and voters should have a true choice as to which – one, both, or neither – they wish to support.
- Linkage of the two measures may confuse and / or anger voters.
- Polling suggests maximum support for both measures from de-linking them and thus maximizing voter choice.

The Task Force does however recommend that the levy ordinance(s) be crafted such that the 7 cent operating levy is automatically resubmitted to the voters in November if it fails in August. Moreover, if the 5 cent levy passes in August but the 7 cent levy does not, the 5 cent levy should not be imposed *unless and until operating dollars are secured for basic parks system operation* (through later election or other means).

The combined cost of these two levies is $48 a year for a typical household.[22] The poll of voters privately commissioned for the Task Force effort indicates a majority of voters will support a levy at this cost level.

The 7 cent operating levy will generate an estimated total of just over $150 million over 6 years to support the current park system. The 5 cent levy will generate a total of about $108 million over 6 years. Based on our proposed allocation described above, the 5 cent levy will generate: $64.7 million for County regional open space and trail acquisition and development; $21.5 million for city open space and trail acquisition and development; and $21.5 million in support for the Woodland Park Zoo. Estimated annual proceeds from both levies are set forth in **Exhibit O**.

We would emphasize our support for use of an inflation adjustor for both levies. Per state statute, this has at least three important implications for the funding package. First, the levies may be for a ***maximum term of six years***, which is a solid timeframe for planning and funding of the system. We would specifically discourage a shorter levy term. Second, the inflation adjustor allows the levy to ***start at a slightly lower rate***, requiring that fewer levy proceeds be "banked" early in the levy period to pay for later years' budgets. Third, state law requires that inflator-adjusted levies ***may not supplant current funding***. This requirement must be met by all recipients of levy funds. The Task Force defers the choice of the inflation adjustor (CPI or some other index or rate) to the County, with the intent that the adjustor selected relate to the expected growth in the cost of goods and services in our region.

- ***Components of the 7 Cent County Parks Support Levy, and Related Policy Recommendations:***

The Task Force believes it is necessary to fund a renewal to the bare-bones park system operation budget supported by the current parks levy. The Task Force further believes it is prudent to seek an increase in current maintenance levels to pre-2002 levels, in order to bring the County park system maintenance levels more on par with companion city park systems in the region.

As noted above, the Task Force finds it unacceptable to allow capital funding for the current system to be slashed at the same time that we are asking voters to support a renewal and restoration of maintenance. Therefore, we propose an increment be added to the County parks operations levy to address projected parks capital funding revenue

[22] Based on an assessed home value of $400,000; for the owner of a home assessed at $300,000, the cost would be $36 in the first year of the levies.

losses in the 2008-2013 period. This transforms the levy from a simple operating levy to a general "County park system support" levy.

The majority of the levy – 4.7 cents – is the amount required, based on the *status quo* parks budget,[23] with inflation adjustor, to maintain the system at current levels over the next six year period. A very modest boost in the levy rate of 0.6 cents will enable the Division to restore maintenance levels significantly, to pre-2002 levels.[24] This is important from the perspective both of public safety and public support for the system.

The 1.7 cent proposed addition to the levy to address loss of capital funding will hold the Division harmless from the impacts of the County's annexation initiative and the projected slowdown in the regional housing market, assuming a "mid-range" estimate for REET revenues over the next 6 years.[25] We were unable to identify other practicable means by which to fund a stable and adequate capital budget for the Division over the next six years and we are therefore compelled to include this increment of monies in the proposed County park system support levy.

If the County is able to find replacement parks capital funding from other means, we would support that in order to reduce the size of the 7 cent levy. However, we must emphasize our concern regarding the need for parks capital funding: deferral of parks capital repair and replacement projects now will simply increase such costs in the future. We would further note that identified parks capital needs far exceed the amount projected to be available over the next six years, even with the inclusion of 1.7 cents in the levy. It is therefore ***critical that REET revenues not be diverted from parks*** even if the actual REET revenues are higher than projected. The priorities we would propose for REET expenditures, if higher than projected, would be first to *double the capital allocation to the Community Partnership Grants program* and second to *fund other identified capital rehabilitation / "major maintenance" of existing system assets.*

- ***Expanding Parks & Recreation Opportunities: Rationale for the 5 Cent Levy***

The Task Force believes it is important to ask the public for funding to expand park and recreation opportunities in King County. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for this region to preserve open space and trail assets for the future. It is important that the County is able to act when these opportunities arise. The 5 cent levy is a modest increment of funding, costing the typical homeowner $20 per year.[26] However, it could make a substantial difference for the future of the region – and as we propose, will reinforce the linkages between county and city park systems and support the unique regional asset that is the Woodland Park Zoo.

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[23] See description of status quo budget at **Exhibit G**.
[24] See description in **Exhibit J**.
[25] That is, this REET estimate is not as conservative as the standard assumptions for the County budget, but not as "optimistic" as the 40% probability scenario we were provided as an alternative.
[26] Based on an assessed home value of $400,000.

As part of this 5 cent expansion levy, we are recommending a small number of specific acquisitions be funded from priorities in the current County Regional Trail System Plan and the compelling request from the Woodland Park Zoo Society. Beyond that, we are recommending funding critical *categories of assets*: County open space, to be selected as opportunities arise; and city open space and trails, selected through competitive application to the Conservation Futures Tax Citizen Oversight Committee. City open space and trails are the local companions to the core assets of the County park system.

Specifically, we are recommending allocation of ***3 cents of the levy*** be expended by King County on ***regional passive parks / open space and regional trail acquisitions***. The County should determine the precise allocation of these funds as between open space and trails, so that it can seize important acquisition opportunities that may arise during the levy period. This 3 cent portion of levy proceeds should be allocated to:

- Acquisition of property (or property interests, such as development rights) that will protect as open space additional lands, shorelines, and streams within watersheds. Appropriate public access should be secured as part of any such acquisitions.

- Expansion of the County's regional trail system in accordance with the King County Regional Trail Plan, specifically through: (1) acquisition of portions of the remaining planned regional trail corridors; and (2) development of key urban regional trail connections including but not necessarily limited to portions of :
  - the East Lake Sammamish Trail;
  - Sammamish River Trail connection to East Lake Sammamish Trail; and
  - Soos Creek Trail

  The locations of these specific projects are shown on **Map 2.**

We propose that the ***1 cent allocation to cities*** be available for ***either open space or trail projects***. We are not proposing a target allocation within this 1 cent for either category (trails or open space). Rather, we propose that this 1 cent be made generally available through competitive application to the Conservation Futures Tax Citizen Oversight Committee, whose mission should be expanded for this purpose. Consistent with the current CFT process and criteria, we recommend that:

- Cities or citizen groups may apply for funds to be expended on in-city projects.

- Funds must be fully matched (grantees must provide not less than equivalent value to the amount of the grant)

- City trail projects must support connections to the regional trail system, defined to include both County regional trails and city trails that are regional in nature, and may specifically include local trails in underserved areas linking

to city or county trails that connect to regional trails. It is our specific intent by this to encourage a strengthened network of city and county trails across the County, and to facilitate projects such as those proposed by the Seattle Parks Foundation "Bands of Green" proposal.

- City open space projects should meet existing County Conservation Futures Tax program criteria.

- Funds may not supplant existing funding.

We are recommending that the ***1 cent allocation to the Woodland Park Zoo*** be made available to the Zoo for the purposes it has identified as its highest priority needs that are of benefit regionally, specifically, expansion of the Zoo's environmental education and conservation programs and making capital improvements to Zoo facilities, including:

- Technology support, curriculum development, capital, staffing, and other tools supporting these education and conservation programs; and

- Capital improvements including green space enhancements on the Zoo grounds.

Consistent with state law for inflation adjusted levies and sound financial policy, the Zoo must demonstrate that levy funds expended do not supplant existing funding.[27]

- ***Oversight of Levy Expenditures***

To continue to promote public confidence in the County Parks Division, we recommend that the ***current Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Committee be continued or reconstituted*** in some manner and charged with periodically reviewing and confirming that the County's expenditure of levy funds is consistent with the requirements of the levy ordinances for both the application of the 7 cent support levy, and the 3 cent allocation to the County from within the 5 cent expansion levy.

Conclusion

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these recommendations. We echo the conclusions of the Metropolitan Parks Task Force and Parks Levy Citizen Oversight Board as to the important contribution the County park system makes to the region's quality of life. We encourage the County to take steps now to enable the current County park system to go beyond its minimal level of operations by increasing maintenance funding to pre-2002 levels, preserving the ability to make necessary capital investments in the current system, and seeking voter support for a modest expansion of parks and recreation assets throughout the County.

[27] The Task Force was not unanimous in its support for this Zoo funding proposal: at least one Task Force member preferred to allow the Zoo to compete for funding in a larger (2 cent) allocation to be overseen by the CFT Citizen Oversight Committee.

Parks Futures Task Force Report Appendices

Exhibits

Exhibit A	Task Force Membership
Exhibit B	Task Force Meeting Minutes
Exhibit C	February 8-12, 2007 Parks Poll Results
Exhibit D	List of Current County Parks Facilities, by Type
Exhibit E	List of County Parks and Facilities Transferred Since 2002
Exhibit F	Enterprise Revenue Program 2003-2006 Successes
Exhibit G	Status Quo Budget Assumptions
Exhibit H	REET 1 and 2 Projected Shortfall, 2006-2012, Based on Conservative Revenue Projection
Exhibit I	REET 1 and 2 Projections: Conservative, Optimistic and Mid-Range, 2006-2012
Exhibit J	Restoring Maintenance to Pre-2002 Levels: Specific Areas of Improvement
Exhibit K	Adding $3 million (1 cent on a regional levy): Maintenance Increases Funded
Exhibit L	Woodland Park Zoo Proposal for Use of County Parks Levy Funding
Exhibit M	Seattle Parks Foundation Proposal for Inclusion of One-Half Cent for City Trails in Underserved Communities
Exhibit N	Analysis of Parks Poll Results—PowerPoint Presentation to Task Force, March 8, 2007
Exhibit O	Estimated Annual and Total Levy Proceeds

Figures

Figure 1	2005 Operating Budget Expenditures
Figure 2	2005 Operating Revenues
Figure 3	Capital Budget Expenditures

Tables

Table 1	Estimated Status Quo Operating Budget Components – 2008
Table 2	Projected Capital Expenditures REET Revenues and Funding Gap, 2008 – 2013

Maps

Map 1	Current Regional Trail System and Future Planned Trail Corridors
Map 2	Recommended Trail Projects to be Funded from Portion of 5 cent Expansion Levy Proceeds

Exhibit A

King County Parks Futures Task Force Members

Gene Duvernoy, Co-Chair
Cascade Land Conservancy

Ron Sher, Co-Chair
Metrovation

Jay Arnold
Futurewise

Dick Baldwin
Windermere Real Estate

Guy Bennett
Preston Community Club

David Dicks
Cascadia Law Group

Rollin Fatland
RF & A

Harold Fowler
H.D. Fowler Company

Dustin Frederick
SEIU Local 519

Roger Hoesterey
The Trust for Public Land

Michael Hobbs
Friends of Marymoor Park

Alan Merkle
Stoel Rives LLP

Nate Miles
Eli Lilly and Company

Louise Miller
Former King County Councilmember

Steve Ohlenkamp
TCG

Peter Orser
Quadrant Corporation

Frank Paganelli
King County Conservation Voters

Kathleen (Casey) Ridihalgh
Sierra Club

Jessyn Farrell
Transportation Choices Coalition

Exhibit B

Minutes of King County Parks Future Task Force

Meeting 1
November 29, 2006

Meeting 2
December 20, 2006

Meeting 3
January 10, 2007

Meeting 4
January 31, 2007

Meeting 5
February 15, 2007

Meeting 6
February 21, 2007

Meeting 7
March 8, 2007

Meeting 8
March 14, 2007

King County Parks Future Task Force

Meeting 1
Wednesday, November 29, 2006
3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES
(as approved December 20, 2006)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Arnold, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, David Dicks, Gene Duvernoy, Michael Hobbs, Rob Johnson (attending on behalf of Jessyn Schor), Alan Merkle, Nate Miles, Louise Miller, Steve Ohlenkamp, Frank Paganelli, Kathleen Ridihalgh and Ron Sher.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Rollin Fatland, Harold Fowler, Dustin Frederick, Roger Hoesterey, Maryanne Tagney-Jones, Peter Orser and Jessyn Schor.

The meeting began at 3:38 with co-chairs, Gene Duvernoy and Ron Sher, welcoming the Task Force members and thanking them for their service. Task Force members, County staff and Karen Reed, the facilitator, introduced themselves.

Gene accepted the mission statement as a work in progress. Karen reviewed the meeting agenda and proceeded with a presentation reviewing the County park systems assets, budget, and recent financial history. Guy Bennett then presented the Citizen Oversight Board's findings relating to expenditures of levy proceeds since 2004. Guy noted that this information had also been presented to the County Council's Growth Management Committee in July. There was a brief question-and-answer discussion following Guy's presentation. Bob Cowan, director of the Office of Management and Budget, then gave a presentation on the County's fiscal status. There was a discussion amongst the Task Force members following Bob's presentation. Karen then completed her presentation.

At the end of the meeting, Task Force members asked a series of questions for staff to respond to at the next meeting. Gene asked Karen to send everyone optional dates for the next four meetings. There was a discussion among the Task Force members regarding election dates in 2007. It was noted that the May special election is not favorable due to tight transmittal deadlines to the Council and the Records and Elections Division, and further, the option of including an inflation factor in the levy ballot measure is only available in the Primary and General elections.

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 2
Wednesday, December 20, 2006

MINUTES
(as approved January 10, 2007)

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy, Jay Arnold, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, Rollin Fatland, Harold Fowler, Dustin Frederick, Roger Hoesterey, , Rob Johnson (attending on behalf of Jessyn Schor), Alan Merkle, Nate Miles, Steve Ohlenkamp, Frank Paganelli

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: David Dicks, Maryanne Tagney-Jones, Peter Orser, Jessyn Schor, Louise Miller, Kathleen Ridihalgh, Michael Hobbs

Co-Chair Ron Sher convened the meeting at 3:38. Task Force members, and Karen Reed, facilitator, introduced themselves.

The minutes of meeting 1 were approved as submitted.

Ron Sher and Karen reviewed the goals for the meeting, which are to re-cap the presentation from Meeting 1; respond to Task Force member questions raised at Meeting 1; allow the Task Force to discuss the basic levy renewal options; and present information about options for acquisition of new park assets.

Karen then presented the PowerPoint re-capping Meeting 1. In response to questions raised at Meeting 1, Margaret Anthony, Parks Operations Manager, presented information about what it would mean to return parks maintenance levels to pre-2002 levels, as well examples of comparative park maintenance levels between the County system and some local systems. Tom Teigen, Business Plan Implementation Manager, then presented information about the activities of the entrepreneurial staff team efforts in recent years including growth in user fees and entrepreneurial revenues and the limits on future growth of these revenues. Bob Cowan, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, spoke to the concept of creating a ferry district that will be under consideration by the County Council this spring. Karen spoke to the questions of what would happen if the levy was not renewed, and why it is would be difficult for surface water management or road levy monies would be diverted to fund part of the park system budget, as well as reasons the Division has not sought to grow its recreational programming. The Task Force raised a number of further questions to which staff will respond to at the next meeting.

Ron Sher then led the Task Force in a discussion as to their preferences and ideas regarding renewal of the basic parks operating levy. As to timing, the group agreed that August 2007 appears the preferable date for the election, but that November 2007 should remain a possibility. It was noted that while there is no validation requirement for an operating levy, the EMS levy renewal will be on the ballot in August 2007. The group

then discussed the preferred amount of a renewal levy. There was preliminary consensus to support a levy in the range of 7 cents with an inflation adjustor to allow Parks maintenance levels to be returned to pre-2002 levels and in some way address the near term loss of capital money from REET. Task Force members requested additional information about the REET revenue loss and options for addressing it. Some members expressed concern about making a decision on the operating levy without first reviewing system expansion options. Some members expressed interest in securing a privately funded poll to determine voter preferences.

Given the very few minutes remaining in the meeting, the group decided not to have staff present the PowerPoint about system acquisition options but to bring that back at the next meeting.

There was no public comment offered.

The next meeting date of Wednesday January 10 was confirmed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 3
Wednesday, January 10, 2007

MINUTES
(as approved January 31, 2007)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy, Jay Arnold, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, Rollin Fatland, Dustin Frederick, Steve Ohlenkamp, Jessyn Schor, Louise Miller, Maryanne Tagney-Jones, David Dicks, Michael Hobbs

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT: Peter Orser, Kathleen Ridihalgh, Harold Fowler Alan Merkle, Nate Miles, Frank Paganelli, Roger Hoesterey

Co-Chair Gene Duvernoy convened the meeting at 3:40. Task Force members, and staff at the table introduced themselves.

The minutes of meeting 2 were approved as submitted.

Gene Duvernoy and Karen Reed, facilitator, reviewed the goals for the meeting, which are to respond to Task Force member questions raised at Meeting 2; allow the Task Force to discuss the basic levy renewal options; and present information about options for acquisition of new park assets.

Gene noted that there is a near-term need to complete a poll of voters; work on the poll including gathering the necessary funding is proceeding separately from the Task Force.

Staff presented answers to questions raised at Meeting 2, including a summary of national standards of maintenance at County parks today, cost recovery at baseball fields, and the impacts of the annexation initiative on Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues. Chris Bushnell, County Economist, gave a brief presentation on how the forecast of REET revenues is derived. Karen noted that staff has again reviewed the REET revenue forecast and capital expenditures estimate, at the request of the Task Force. Upon review, REET revenues and parks capital needs are both expected to be slightly greater than presented at the first Task Force Meeting. If the capital funding gap is to be funded by a 6-year property tax levy, the amount required remains in the range of 1 to 2 cents / $1,000 assessed value. Continuing in response to Task Force questions from the last meeting, net operating revenue from entrepreneurial efforts was presented, as well as an assessment of the ability to recover money from wetlands mitigation banking. It was noted that the Emergency Medical Services Levy will be on the August primary ballot in 2007; it is currently imposed at a rate of $0.25 / $1,000 assessed value.

Gene Duvernoy then led the Task Force in a discussion as to their preferences and ideas regarding renewal of the basic parks operating levy. Karen re-capped the discussion from the previous meeting which concluded in preliminary consensus for a renewal levy of approximately 7 cents, with an inflation adjustor, on the August ballot, sized to allow an

increase in maintenance levels to pre-2002 and to address at least some portion of the anticipated parks capital funding gap. Guy Bennett noted he was not certain it was necessary to enhance maintenance levels. Louise Miller in response expressed her concerns about appearance and safety of parks due to declining maintenance levels.

After further discussion, Gene directed Karen to bring back to the next Task Force meeting a 2 page document summarizing the consensus of the task force on the key levy renewal parameters, including a pro and con statement on each parameter. In addition, the Task Force requested a summary half page document as to what could be accomplished on maintenance levels if an additional 1 cent were added to the levy, i.e., raising it to 8 cents.

Michael Hobbs asked if restrictions could be written into the levy to ensure that if REET revenues did not drop as much as anticipated, that a minimum amount could still be dedicated to capital improvements. Karen confirmed this could be requested and written into the County Council ordinance if the Council chose. Jay Arnold asked that the poll include a question about public perception of parks maintenance levels. Guy Bennett noted that the levy rate should be 6.9 cents, rather than 7.

Karen and staff then presented a PowerPoint on options and pricing of potential new assets for the park system and potentially including city park system assets as well. Robert Foxworthy, Trails Manager, responded to a variety of questions about the current and proposed trail system. Louise Miller asked about the price of buying all remaining desired right-of-way for the system. Robert responded that the cost is approximately $18 million; Louise requested a map showing where these acquisitions are proposed. Ron Sher noted that it would be important to ensure that as acquisition opportunities arise that money is available; development can occur at any time, but acquisition opportunities may be lost. Karen concluded the presentation with an overview of open space acquisition opportunities and pricing.

Louise Miller noted her priorities would be acquiring trail corridor, funding the local match portion of identified Watershed Resource Inventory Areas, and funding development rights purchase price for major forests should those opportunities arise. Steve Ohlenkamp noted that other regional facilities, such as the zoo, might be included in the levy.

Gene Duvernoy expressed concern about the lack of decision making criteria for the Task Force and asked Karen to prepare some for the Task Force to review and adopt at its next meeting.

Karen noted the importance of inviting the cities and other stakeholders to provide comment to the Task Force. It was tentatively agreed that this should occur on the February 15. Karen then noted that additional meetings will likely be necessary to complete the Task Force work, and that the work needs to be concluded early in March in order to ensure that a levy can be placed on the August ballot. The Task Force agreed to two additional meetings and Karen will follow up to find the most workable dates for all.

There was no public comment offered.

The next meeting date of Wednesday, January 31 was confirmed.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 4
Wednesday, January 31, 2007

MINUTES
(As approved February 15, 2007)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy, Jay Arnold, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, Rollin Fatland, Dustin Frederick, Jessyn Schor, Louise Miller, Michael Hobbs. Kathleen Ridihalgh, Frank Paganelli, Roger Hoesterey

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT: Maryanne Tagney-Jones Peter Orser, David Dicks, Harold Fowler, Alan Merkle, Nate Miles, Steve Ohlenkamp

Co-Chair Ron Sher convened the meeting at 3:37. Task Force members, and staff and members of the public attending introduced themselves.

The minutes of meeting 3 were approved as submitted.

Ron Sher invited the city parks directors to give their presentations.

Patrick Foran, Parks Director, City of Bellevue complemented the County parks staff for their excellent service. He noted that many cities provide regional park and recreation facilities. Use of both city and county systems is increasing. The County system is important to relieving pressure on the City systems. Bellevue would like the County to work more collaboratively in planning with cities on regional park systems. There is some concern by some Bellevue councilmembers that the current levy was to be a "one-time" thing; some of them ask what is the current and future vision of the County system? There is also concern by some councilmembers regarding other County proposals to seek regional funding for rural improvements, such as the flood control district. The City does not have a position on the idea of a "legacy" levy; there is insufficient data on that idea. There is concern about how that might compete with local parks levy and bond measures. The City would probably want a 1 for 1 return on its dollars if this idea were pursued, and would want the money passed through without County Council approval.

Ken Bounds, Parks Director, City of Seattle, said that the Seattle City Council has not yet discussed this issue. In his view, the trails and open space of the County system complement the City system; City residents enjoy these regional assets. But if there is an operations levy, the City will likely want a piece of that this time, even if it did not last time. If there is a legacy levy, the Cities must be a part of it, like the 1989 open space bond effort. That was a very big effort. Seattle is very focused on transportation issues, so this will not be a big priority. Also, many Seattle assets are regional, like the Center, and would be candidates for either operating or legacy funding.

Terry Higashiyama, Parks Director, City of Renton, noted that her Council has yet to discuss this issue. Trails poll very highly with Renton residents. Transportation issues in

general are a priority. She noted that the City's Gene Coulon Park is a regional asset. The City also has some trails that are regional in nature. There are problematic gaps between the City and County trail systems, and it would be good to get more consistent signage and usage rules between these systems.

Lane Youngblood, Parks Director, City of Woodinville, noted that her City Council also has not talked about this issue. The Sammamish River Trail, a county asset, is very complementary to city park assets. Her council is concerned about regional levies paying for rural assets. Parks have an important relationship to economic development which should be promoted. Maintenance levels are also important to the public. Not clear if the City would support a legacy levy. There is a need to capture these opportunities. How is the Greenprint study integrated into the legacy idea? The opposition to the Burlington North Trail idea may be a challenge for any legacy levy.

Craig Larsen, Parks Director, City of Redmond, also noted that his City Council has not yet discussed this issue. He thanked the Task Force for their efforts and complimented the County Parks staff for doing a "great job and working very well with cities." He noted that demand for park and recreation services is very high. If the County system weakens, local systems are soon overloaded. The systems are complementary, although there remain some anomalous assets in the County system that make it hard to explain to the voters why they should support both city and County systems. In terms of the operating levy, Mr. Larsen encouraged the Task Force to set a levy level adequate to support the system over the entire levy term. He said he personally likes the idea of a legacy levy, that it is important for the region. Trails are "number 1" on city lists, including connections between the County trail system and city trail systems. The Bear Creek open space corridor would be a prime place for something like this. He noted that the 1989 open space bond campaign had a major regional collaborative effort building up to it between cities and the County to develop a list of local projects that were then embraced regionally.

In response to questions, Patrick Foran noted that the need for regional recreation programs is increasing but the County's role here is restricted and that may require us to re-think how the City and County park systems related.

Craig Larsen agreed that non-traditional sports are growing very fast increasing the demand for sports fields. Ken Bounds agreed but noted users would much rather stay close to home for the fields.

Terry Higashiyama noted the need for better restroom and benches on regional trails, and encouraged the County to mark the locations of these facilities on trail maps.

In response to a question from Louise Miller, Lane Youngblood agreed that many Woodinville residents probably think Cottage Lake Park is a city park.

Ken Bounds noted that there is in his view insufficient time to build a regional legacy levy campaign including the cities. Patrick Foran agreed that there is not sufficient time

for a city-county legacy campaign, although acquisitions of this sort are important to growth management and the region's future.

Ken Bounds noted that in absence of a financial crisis or a larger regionally vetted plan, the operations renewal levy will not be exciting. If there is a legacy levy, Seattle will want to be included in it. He also noted that the City just funded trail connections in its recent transportation measure. Craig Larsen agreed that the cities will want to see specific city projects identified in a legacy levy and there is not sufficient time to accomplish this. He noted that the County would, if it chose to go to the voters this year, essentially have to bypass cities to accomplish this and take a general vision straight to the voters. He encouraged the Task Force and the County to talk to cities about the proposal that is ultimately developed. Ken Bounds agreed that the County should talk to the cities about any park levy proposal.

Ron Sher and the Task Force thanked the city parks directors for their excellent and informative presentations. The parks directors' panel was adjourned and the directors left the meeting.

Dick Baldwin asked what happens after the next operating levy expires? Is there a plan to find a permanent funding source for parks? Karen Reed noted that there is not an apparent alternative, since the County's current expense fund is so strapped.

Roger Hoesterey offered that he would like to see the Task Force recommend addressing the need for longer-term system funding. In the overall County budget, the Division's expenses are very small. If the County can't fund the system, perhaps the County should move out of active regional park operations entirely and reduce the system's cost significantly. The system remaining after such a move would also be more coherent. Louise Miller noted that counties generally have major funding problems.

Guy Bennett suggested that the levy include an increased amount of funding for the Community Grants Program which allows us to leverage limited assets.

Ron Sher asked about the idea of going to the voters in August? Where are the Task Force members on that issue? Gene Duvernoy noted that the polling that has yet to be done should provide important information in helping the Task Force resolve this question. Rollin Fatland noted that the polling may suggest we proceed, even understanding we will not have endorsements from the Cities if we do. Jessyn Schor agreed with the idea of an August levy. Jay Arnold expressed concern about asking for more operating dollars on the eve of multi-billion dollar transportation measures. Guy Bennett expected voters would turn down a companion legacy measure in August.

Karen Reed briefly listed the additional packet materials that were not addressed at the meeting. In response to her question the Task Force agreed it did not want to hear from a panel of system users at the next meeting but to instead focus on the poll results and defer the system user feedback to a later meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 5
Wednesday, February 15, 2007

MINUTES
(As approved February 21, 2007)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, Rollin Fatland, Dustin Frederick, Peter Orser, Michael Hobbs. Frank Paganelli, Harold Fowler, Steve Ohlenkamp

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT: Jay Arnold, Maryanne Tagney-Jones, David Dicks, Alan Merkle, Nate Miles, Jessyn Schor, Kathleen Ridihalgh, Roger Hoesterey, Louise Miller

Co-Chair Gene Duvernoy convened the meeting at 3:35.

The minutes of meeting 4 were approved as submitted.

Gene noted that the major item on the agenda was to hear results of the privately funded poll of King County voters. He thanked the organizations that contributed to funding the poll.

Alison Peters, pollster, presented the poll results. She noted that in her view the poll sample more closely approximates the persons likely to vote in the August 2007 election than the previous poll from January 2006 conducted by a different polling firm. In the new poll, 58% of respondents supported a 7 cent parks maintenance ballot measure, when first asked. 44% supported a 15 cent operation and capital (additional acquisitions) measure. Alison summarized the poll top lines and noted several areas where cross-tabs could be helpful. reviewed in detail the other poll results. In response to a question as to her "bottom line assessment," Alison said there appears to be a $50/year cap on willingness to support parks; that the issues of an operations and new acquisitions poll should be placed on separate ballots rather than combined, and that the combined total should not exceed 12 cents, probably 7 cents for maintenance and 5 cents for new acquisitions. Gene Duvernoy noted that this is only one data point in the Task Force deliberations, which must also consider what is best for the County and the County park system. Ron Sher noted that it is also important to submit something that will succeed at the polls. Alison will prepare a written report, including analysis of crosstabs, in the next week or so and that will be provided to the Task Force.

Karen Reed, facilitator, reviewed with the group a series of proposed Task Force "consensus points" related to the operations and maintenance levy. The group agreed that a 7 cent levy seems most appropriate; of the same scope as the current levy; for a 6 year term; with an inflation adjustor; and should be submitted at the August 2007 election. There is further consensus that such levy should include funds for enhanced maintenance to pre-2002 maintenance levels, as well as funding to cover the anticipated

shortfall in capital funding from loss of Real Estate Excise Tax Dollars (REET). The group agreed that it would revisit later the question of whether to add an additional 1 cent to the levy for greater enhancement of maintenance.

Karen then reviewed some remaining issues related to the amount and application of the Division's capital program. The 7 cent levy with capital funding component assumes that REET will not be diverted to other County purposes; that the Community Partnership Grant (CPG) program will remain at current levels ($300K operating and $300K capital); that approximately $500K per year would be available to support entrepreneurial efforts). Guy Bennett noted his interest in seeing the CPG program funding increased. After discussion it was agreed that if REET revenues are higher than anticipated, the excess should be directed to leveraging recreation and other parks projects through CPG program grants.

Karen then reviewed proposed decision criteria that the Task Force could apply in deciding whether to propose a new acquisitions levy, and what should be acquired with the proceeds of such a levy. Noting that the scheduled meeting time had run, Gene Duvernoy asked Karen to bring back a number of funding packages for a new acquisitions levy for the Task Force to consider at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 6

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

MINUTES
(as approved February 28, 2007)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy, Dick Baldwin, Guy Bennett, Michael Hobbs, Frank Paganelli, Harold Fowler, Steve Ohlenkamp Louise Miller, Jay Arnold, Nate Miles, Jessyn Schor

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT: Maryanne Tagney-Jones, David Dicks, Alan Merkle, Kathleen Ridihalgh, Roger Hoesterey, Rollin Fatland, Dustin Frederick, Peter Orser

Co-Chair Ron Sher convened the meeting at 3:40.

The minutes of meeting 5 were approved as submitted.

Ron Sher invited the panel of parks user groups to make their presentations.

Chuck Ayers, Cascade Bicycle Club, spoke in support of the County regional trail system. He noted that trails have varied use, as commuter routes, exercise and recreation facilities. Urban area trails are important to promote trail use generally. Trails are not a substitute for streets that accommodate bicycles.

Louise McGrody, Bicycle Alliance of Washington spoke in support of the County regional trail system. She noted that trails can serve multiple levels and types of users from young children, to avid long-distance cyclists. Trails are important commuter connections and community connections. Trail connections to other counties have been built as a result of the County system. There are gaps in trails now that should be completed and maintenance remains an important issue.

Steve Isaac, Sammamish Rowing Association spoke in support of the County's community partnership grant program. He noted that due to the generous support of the County, the Rowing Association recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. The Association has programs for both adults and children. Several of the youth rowers have received college scholarships and competed nationally. They have observed improved scholastics from youth members. The Association is all volunteer, but for three paid staff. The Association's current main focus is building a new boathouse. The County's Community Partnership Grant program has helped the Association greatly over the years.

Dariel Noris, Preston Community Club, spoke in support of the County's community partnership grant program. The Community Club coalesced originally around opposition to proposed development. Their current focus is to develop a large park in the Preston

area with a community center and athletic field complex. They have worked with other community groups and King County. Many volunteer hours have helped make the community vision a reality, together with funding from the King County Community Partnership Grant program.

Nancy Keith, Executive Director of the Mountains to Sound Greenway spoke to the role King County has played in realizing the Greenway vision over the years. King County helped purchase Rattlesnake Ridge, the first major forest land included as part of the Greenway. King County biosolids applications on some forestlands in the Greenway generate revenue which in turn has been used to purchase more forest lands. Trails are also part of the Greenway goals. It is important, she noted, to maintain public open spaces and that neighboring landowners collaborate in this effort.

Ken Karlberg, Eastside Football Club, spoke in support of the Community Partnerships Grant Program. He described the Club's eastside soccer field project in Preston Park, made possible by CPG and Youth Sports Facilities Grants from King County. Local non profit agencies have also helped. The Club has over 600 youth members, in ages from 8 to 16, with 36 soccer teams.

Ron Sher thanked the panel, and invited representatives from the Woodland Park Zoo Society to come to the table for their presentation.

Lynn Claudon introduced Bruce Bohmke, Deputy Director for the Zoo Society and Dave Towne, former Director of the Zoo. Mr. Towne spoke to the original support for the Zoo from the countywide Forward Thrust program in the 1960s. That program funded both local city and regional facilities via a series of countywide ballot measures. In the 1970's money was sought to re-develop and upgrade the zoo: the County Council put a $35 million bond issue on the ballot, which was approved by the voters. Today, the Zoo is expanding its conservation and education mission. The Zoo property is owned by the City of Seattle, but managed under a contract by the Zoo Society. The Society is responsible for covering the funding gap not paid by the City. The Zoo is requesting that the Task Force recommend adding 1-cent to its levy package(s) to support Zoo operations.

Mr. Towne noted that the Zoo attracts users from around the County and around the world. The Zoo undertakes a variety of offsite educational programs. The current Zoo budget is approximately $28 million; one-third of this comes from public funding; one-third from revenues generated at the Zoo, and one-third from gifts and donations.

The City of Seattle parks levy expires in 2008 and there is concern about replacement funding, Mr. Towne noted. In response to a question as to why the Zoo is seeking one cent, he noted the sunset of the City parks levy and that the uses would be programmatic, that is, to pay for costs of conservation and education programs. He noted that Mayor Nickels has indicated he won't seek to replace the expiring Parks levy.

Nate Miles noted that including the Zoo in a County parks levy directly addresses his concern about reaching out to communities of color who do not use trails or open space assets of the County Park System.

Dave Towne noted that there are multiple facilities in the region, other than the Zoo, geared to environmental education, including Bellevue's Mercer Slough Environmental project. Gene Duvernoy asked if the Zoo could use capital funding rather than operating funding? Lynn Claudon said the Zoo would respond to the Task Force with this information.

Ron Sher thanked the Zoo representatives for their presentation.

Ron Sher noted that the key questions remaining before the Task Force are: is there consensus for a 7 cent renewal/ongoing support levy? Should the renewal levy and the new acquisitions levy be submitted on a combined ballot or companion ballot? What new acquisitions should be funded: County trails? Open Space? City park or trail assets? Zoo costs?

Karen Reed reviewed costs associated with acquisition of addition County trails and open space, and presented six sample "new acquisition" packages ranging in size from a 3 cent levy to a 5 cent levy. Gene Duvernoy noted that any acquisitions from such a levy would need to be vetted through a subsequent public process.

Nate Miles asked whether any development rights purchased with money from the levy could be re-sold and re-invested in parks asset sin the future. Bob Burns replied that this could be possible.

Michael Hobbs asked whether cities really needed money for trail systems? Gene Duvernoy spoke to the value of connecting city trail systems to the King County trail system.

Steve Ohlenkamp raised a concern about making final decisions at the meeting, given that several Task Force members were not present.

Regarding any money allocated to cities, Gene Duvernoy noted that this should be a matching fund, and should probably be expanded beyond simply city trails to city open space corridors as well. It was further noted that public support is stronger for open space than for trails. Gene Duvernoy noted that the new acquisitions money could be allocate through expansion of the current Conservation Futures Tax allocation process.

Nate Miles noted that the County trail system is not well integrated into communities of color. He suggested a 3 cent new acquisitions levy that would include 1 cent for the Zoo, 1 cent for County open space, and 1 cent for County trails. Steve Ohlenkamp noted that the levy should perhaps be smaller rather than larger.

The Task Force discussed several ways in which new acquisitions money could be allocated to support expansion of the County regional trail system, open space acquisitions, city park systems and the Zoo. Gene Duvernoy noted that there seemed to be general consensus for 1 cent allocation to open space allocation and 2 cents to trails, but that beyond that, there is not yet consensus. Dick Baldwin stated his concern with including the Zoo in the levy as a complicating factor.

The group agreed that an additional meeting after March 8 would be necessary. They asked Karen to find a time that would be workable for the group, and to poll Task Force members as to their preferences on the remaining issues before the Task Force.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 7

Wednesday, March 8, 2007

MINUTES
(as approved March 14, 2007)

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Michael Hobbs, Frank Paganelli, Steve Ohlenkamp, Rollin Fatland, Louise Miller, Jay Arnold, Nate Miles, Jessyn Schor, Kathleen Ridihalgh, Dustin Frederick

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT: Gene Duvernoy, Guy Bennett, Dick Baldwin Maryanne Tagney-Jones, David Dicks, Alan Merkle, Roger Hoesterey, Peter Orser

Co-Chair Ron Sher convened the meeting at 3:40.

Mr. Sher stated that the main purpose of the meeting is to reach consensus on a levy proposal. He deferred action on the minutes to allow members time to review them.

Mr. Sher invited representatives from the Seattle Parks Foundation to address the Task Force. Chris Towne, Doug Walker, Karen Daubert and Woody Wheeler gave a brief presentation on the Foundation's "bands of green" proposal, which is aimed at developing bicycle and pedestrian trails, boulevards and "linear parks" in Seattle. The group asked the Task Force include ½ cent in the parks levy to fund urban trails throughout King County, specifically, trails that would be located in low income, high density neighborhoods underserved by parks and open space. The group suggested that the levy funds have a matching requirement, and that the funds be made available to cities or citizen groups, and that the trails should be part of an adopted trail or park plan as a pre-condition for funding.

Mr. Sher invited Lynn Claudon to address the Task Force on behalf of the Woodland Park Zoo Society. Ms. Claudon presented a revised proposal for probable use of any levy funds allocated to the Zoo. The Zoo proposes that levy funds would be used primarily for environmental and conservation education programs. Some funds would be directed to improve green space at the Zoo, and upgrade technology and related materials for environmental and conservation education programs.

Alison Peters, pollster, presented a report on the poll results. Among the conclusions she presented were: a 15 cent levy is unlikely to be approved by voters; a 7 cent maintenance levy is likely to be approved; both a new acquisitions and maintenance levy are more likely to pass if they are presented as separate companion ballots, rather than merged into a single ballot; adding funding for the Zoo moderately enhances support for the levy; adding funding for city trails also improves support but to a lesser extent than the Zoo.

Mr. Sher asked the group if it could support the idea of two levies, rather than one. There was consensus from Task Force members for two levies, both to appear on the August ballot.

Mr. Sher then directed the group's attention to the Task Force co-chairs proposal for the levy package. After discussion, there was consensus that a 7 cent County parks maintenance and REET replacement levy should be submitted, together with a "new acquisitions" 5 cent levy that would include: three cents (undifferentiated) for County open space and regional trails; one cent for city open space and trails, with criteria to allow funding for ideas such as presented by the Seattle Parks Foundation for urban trails; and one cent for the Woodland Park Zoo for the purposes described by Ms. Claudon. It was further agreed that the Conservation Futures Citizen Oversight Committee should be employed to make recommendations for allocations of the one cent directed to city open space and trail connections. One task force member did not concur with the idea of allocating levy funding to the Zoo, as being to unrelated to the other aspects of the levy; he would prefer that the funding for city trails and open space instead be increased and that the Zoo be allowed to compete for this funding. Karen Reed will write up the consensus proposal and circulate it to the Task Force members before the next Task Force meeting. Karen noted that the proposed combinations of funding to be included in the levies will need to be reviewed by legal counsel to ensure compliance with the requirement that a ballot measure only include a single subject.

The minutes were approved as submitted.

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

King County Parks Future Task Force
Meeting 8

Wednesday, March 14, 2007

DRAFT MINUTES

TASK FORCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Ron Sher, Gene Duvernoy Michael Hobbs, Steve Ohlenkamp, Rollin Fatland, Jay Arnold, Jessyn Schor, , Dustin Frederick, David Dicks, Guy Bennett

TASK FORCE MEMBERS ABSENT:, Dick Baldwin Louise Miller, Maryanne Tagney-Jones, Nate Miles, Alan Merkle, Frank Paganelli, Roger Hoesterey, Peter Orser, Kathleen Ridihalgh

Co-Chair Gene Duvernoy convened the meeting at 3:40.

Karen Reed noted the need for a clarification in the minutes regarding the minority Task Force opinion on parks funding; as so clarified the minutes were approved.

Gene asked Karen to review the consensus proposal summary document. Revisions were requested to clarify that access to open space lands should be as appropriate to the particular acreage; add a reference to the King County Trails plan; clarify the matching fund requirement (1: 1, award to match). As so clarified, the document was approved.

The task force report must be completed by March 23 for timely transmittal to the County Council; once a draft is written, Karen will forward it to the task force members for review. Karen will keep the committee members informed as to the Council's schedule for deliberation.

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Exhibit C

KING COUNTY VOTER POLL

HELLO. My name is _____ and I'm calling from APC, a public opinion research company in Washington State. May I please speak with _____? I'm calling to ask you some questions about some issues facing voters in King County and I'd like you to participate.

IF NECESSARY: Your responses are confidential and we're not selling anything.

1. First, can you confirm that you are registered to vote at this address?

Yes	100%
No	0%

2. Record gender

Male	45%
Female	55%

3. What is your age?

18-24	1%
25-29	1%
30-34	2%
35-39	6%
40-44	6%
45-49	9%
50-54	16%
55-59	14%
60-64	13%
65+	28%
(Refused)	3%

4. In order to ensure that we have a representative sample, please tell me if you consider yourself a Democrat, an Independent, a Republican or something else.

If (Democrat/Republican), ask: Are you a strong or not strong (Democrat/Republican)?

If Independent, ask: Do you lean more toward the Democrats or more toward the Republicans?

Strong Democrat	26%
Not Strong Democrat	6%
Independent, Lean Democrat	11%
Independent	15%
Independent, Lean Republican	7%
Not Strong Republican	7%
Strong Republican	21%
Something Else	4%
(DON'T READ) DK	3%

5. Next, do you think things in King County are headed in the right direction or do things feel like they're off on the wrong track?

Right direction	38%
Wrong track	44%
(DON'T READ) DK	18%

6. How would you rate the financial health of the King County government - excellent, good, only fair or poor?

Excellent	3%
Good	39%
Only fair	37%
Poor	11%
(DON'T READ) DK	10%

7. We're going to switch gears a bit and talk more about King County regional parks and trails. The parks system includes over twenty-four thousand acres of park, recreation and open space and over 175 miles of trails, Marymoor Park, a regional aquatics center and approximately 100 athletic fields. In general, would you say King County is doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job, managing and maintaining the parks system?

Excellent	11%
Good	51%
Only fair	26%
Poor	6%
(DON'T READ) DK	6%

8. As you may know, King County residents passed an operating levy four years ago that pays for basic operations and maintenance of the parks and trails system. Later this year, voters will be asked to renew the levy. Let me read you a summary of the potential measure.

"This proposition would fund continued and increased operation and maintenance of King County's regional parks, trails and open space (for example, Marymoor Park; Cougar Mountain; portions of Burke Gilman Trail), rural parks, and recreation facilities, and fund recreation grant programs. It would authorize King County to exceed regular property tax limitations and levy an additional regular property tax of 7 cents per $1,000 of assessed valuation for six consecutive years with collection beginning in 2008."

If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject this measure? GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (approve/reject) the measure or probably (approve/reject) the measure?

Definitely approve	31%	58%
Probably approve	27%	
Probably reject	14%	37%
Definitely reject	23%	
(DON'T READ) DK	5%	

9. Now, instead of the levy renewal I just asked you about, King County might decide to increase the amount of the levy to enhance the system beyond basic maintenance. Let me read you a summary of the potential measure.

"This proposition would fund maintenance of King County's parks, recreation, open space, and trails system (for example, Marymoor Park, Cougar Mountain, and parts of Burke Gilman Trail) and contribute funds towards the acquisition of up to 100,000 acres of natural areas in the County and the creation of an additional 100 miles of regional pedestrian and bike trails. It would authorize King County to exceed regular property tax limitations and levy an additional regular property tax of 15 cents per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation for six consecutive years, with collection beginning in 2008.

If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject this measure? GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (approve/reject) the measure or probably (approve/reject) the measure?

Definitely approve	20%	44%
Probably approve	24%	
Probably reject	18%	49%
Definitely reject	31%	
(DON'T READ) DK	7%	

10. With the current levy, the owner of a $400,000 home in King County pays about $20 dollars a year. If you knew that increasing the levy would cost the owner of a $400,000 home _____, would you vote to approve or reject the measure?

	DEF. APPROVE	PROB. APPROVE	PROB. REJECT	DEF. REJECT	(DON'T READ) DK
A. 66 dollars a year	23%	28%	15%	31%	4%
B. 60 dollars a year	23%	26%	15%	30%	6%
C. 48 dollars a year	32%	25%	10%	28%	6%
D. 40 dollars a year	37%	23%	9%	27%	5%
E. 31 dollars a year	40%	23%	8%	25%	5%

11. If the County decides to ask voters to increase the amount of the levy, the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle will request $3 million dollars each year or approximately 1 cent per 1,000 of assessed valuation. The Zoo does currently not receive any county funding. Knowing this, do you support or oppose allocating $3 million dollars a year toward operations, maintenance and educational programs for the Zoo? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (support/oppose) or probably (support/oppose) money for the Zoo?

Definitely support	37%	63%
Probably support	26%	
Probably oppose	11%	31%
Definitely oppose	20%	
(DON'T READ) DK	6%	

12. Does funding for the Zoo make you more or less likely to approve an increase in the County parks levy? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Is that much (more/less) likely or somewhat (more/less) likely?

Much more likely	15%	38%
Somewhat more likely	23%	
Somewhat less likely	18%	36%
Much less likely	18%	
(DON'T READ) No impact	21%	
(DON'T READ) DK	6%	

13. And would you support or oppose allocating $3 million dollars a year from the County parks levy to help local cities acquire more open space and trails within city boundaries? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (support/oppose) or probably (support/oppose) money for the cities?

Definitely support	28%	54%
Probably support	26%	
Probably oppose	16%	41%
Definitely oppose	25%	
(DON'T READ) DK	6%	

14. If King County decided to expand the scope and cost of the levy as I've just described, they could choose between two approaches. In the (first/next) approach, voters would vote on (ROTATE): one combined 15 cent levy that would fund both basic maintenance on the existing system and expanding the system by adding more trails and protecting more open space OR two separate levies in which operations would be funded by eight cents and capital expansion would be funded by the other seven cents for a total of 15 cents.

Regardless of whether you support or oppose to expand the scope of the parks levy, do you prefer to vote on one joint levy or two separate levies?

Joint levy	35%
Separate levy	55%
(DON'T READ) Either	5%
(DON'T READ) DK	6%

15. Even though there is no difference in cost, some people say the County should pursue the joint levy because it is easier for voters to understand. Other people say the County should pursue two separate levies because voters should be able to cast a separate vote for maintenance and a separate vote for capital expansion. Now that you know more, do you prefer to vote on one joint levy or two separate levies?

Joint levy	32%
Separate levy	62%
(DON'T READ) Either	3%
(DON'T READ) DK	4%

Let's assume the County places two separate measures on the ballot: one for expansion and one for maintenance. (READ AND ROTATE) If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject _____?

16a. An eight cent maintenance levy? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (approve/reject) the measure or probably (approve/reject) the measure?

Definitely approve	37%	69%
Probably approve	32%	
Probably reject	8%	25%
Definitely reject	17%	
(DON'T READ) DK	5%	

16b. And a seven cent expansion levy? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (approve/reject) the measure or probably (approve/reject) the measure?

Definitely approve	27% (SKIP TO 18)	54%
Probably approve	27% (SKIP TO 18)	
Probably reject	16% (ASK NEXT Q)	39%
Definitely reject	23% (ASK NEXT Q)	
(DON'T READ) DK	6% (SKIP TO 18)	

17. Do you plan to reject the expansion levy because (READ AND ROTATE):

You don't trust King County to spend the new money responsibly	39%
You would rather spend your tax dollars on other things, such as schools, emergency services, or transportation	28%
Passing the levy would more than triple the tax you are paying to fund County parks	12%
We already have enough parks and trails in King County	12%
It includes money for the Zoo, but not for other parks outside of Seattle	2%
(DON'T READ) None	7%
(DON'T READ) DK	1%

18. There is one additional possibility and I would like to get your reaction to it. In this scenario, voters would be asked to renew the existing operations levy and then voters would vote on a bond measure that would be used to fund the capital expansion plan we've been discussing. You have already heard a summary of the levy renewal so let me quickly read you a summary of the bond measure.

Proposition 2: "This proposition would authorize the County to issue its general obligation bonds in the principal amount not to exceed $125 million dollars to provide funds for the acquisition, development, renovation, and improvement of public green spaces, green belts, open space, parks and trails in King County.

If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject this measure? GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Would you definitely (approve/reject) the measure or probably (approve/reject) the measure?

Definitely approve	21%	50%
Probably approve	29%	
Probably reject	17%	40%
Definitely reject	23%	
(DON'T READ) DK	10%	

19. I'm going to read two statements and I'd like you to tell me which of the statements comes closest to the way you truly feel about how to fund a proposed expansion of the King County parks system. (READ AND ROTATE and ADD AN OPTION FOR 'NEITHER' THAT IS NOT READ)

Capital expansion should be funded by a short-term levy. While the levy option requires only 50% approval to pass, voters must vote to renew the levy every 6 or 8 years	35%
Capital expansion should be funded by a long-term bond. While the bond option requires 60% approval to pass, the tax is collected during the 30 year period without needing a renewal. Over time, the bonds also raise more money	49%
Neither	16%

20. Next, I'm going to read you a list of the four main services provided by King County parks, which would be the main ways that money from this proposed ballot measure would be used. After I read them all, please tell me which one you think is the most important as a use of additional funding for King County Parks. (READ AND ROTATE)

Protecting more open space and natural areas	36%
Providing more bicycle and pedestrian trails	18%
Providing more regional parks	17%
Providing more community parks in rural King County	15%
(DON'T READ) ALL	5%
(DON'T READ) None	7%
(DON'T READ) DK	3%

21. Back in 2003, the Parks Department declared that they were committed to a new way of doing business. They implemented user fees, raised new revenue from sponsorships and special events such as the Concert Series at Marymoor Park and Cirque du Soleil (SERK DUH SO-LAY), and developed private-public partnerships to reduce costs. Overall, have you been satisfied or dissatisfied with the County's efforts to reduce cost and improve efficiencies or have you not noticed any difference since 2003?

Satisfied	28%
Dissatisfied	11%
Not noticed any difference	53%
(DON'T READ) DK	8%

22. Now, I'm going to read you a list of specific projects or benefits for King County residents that might result from expanded funding of the regional parks, recreation, open space and trail system. As I read each one, please tell me how important it is to you: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important. (READ AND ROTATE)

ROTATE	EXTREMELY IMP.	VERY IMP.	SWT. IMP.	NOT IMP.	(DON'T READ) DK
( )A. Protecting wildlife habitat	24%	39%	25%	11%	1%
( )B. Protecting creeks where salmon live	29%	40%	23%	8%	0%
( )C. Providing more access points and expanded parking at each of the parks, open space and trails in our regional system	6%	19%	50%	24%	2%
( )D. Preserving more open space	19%	33%	29%	18%	1%
( )E. Improving and completing trails so commuters can bike and walk to work	14%	27%	36%	22%	2%
( )F. Protecting water quality in Puget Sound	36%	43%	14%	6%	1%
( )G. Linking communities and local parks all over the county with trails for walking and biking	10%	20%	43%	25%	2%
( )H. Open space acquisition in the cities	12%	26%	34%	26%	2%
( )I. Purchasing the development rights to more forest land throughout the region	12%	22%	33%	28%	4%
( )J. Acquiring and improving land for another 100 miles of trails in King County	7%	21%	38%	32%	3%
( )K. Protecting water quality in creeks and lakes	32%	44%	17%	5%	1%
( )L. Funding ongoing operations at the Zoo	9%	30%	41%	19%	1%
( )M. Linking the Burke Gilman trail with other County trails and parks	7%	18%	43%	29%	3%
( )N. Supporting the Zoo in their role to educate our children about wildlife conservation and our environment	14%	31%	36%	17%	2%
( )O. New naturalistic exhibits at the Zoo	6%	21%	45%	25%	3%

23. Regardless of whether or not you plan to approve an expansion of the County parks system, which of the following do you think is the best reason to support this proposal? Expansion _____. (READ AND ROTATE, RECORD ONE ANSWER ONLY)

( )A. Will build community by connecting cities with a trail-to-trail system all over the County	8%
( )B. Will leave a legacy of healthy parks and beautiful places for the next generation of children and families to enjoy	29%
( )C. Will give the Zoo the dedicated and stable funds they deserve for serving the entire region, not just Seattle	9%
( )D. Will permanently protect areas threatened by development	17%
( )E. Will protect water quality in Puget Sound, as well as salmon in our creeks and lakes	37%

24A. Finally, you may have heard about the County's interest in acquiring the Burlington Northern Rail Line between Renton and Woodinville. Have you heard about this issue?

Yes ---------- 73% (CONTINUE)
No ---------- 27% (SKIP TO Q25)

24B. The County would like to develop a 47-mile trail along the corridor, as well as other transportation uses. If you knew that none of the money raised by this levy would be spent on this project and that other revenues are being sought to finance the purchase of the line, are you more or less likely to support the levies we've been talking about? (GET ANSWER, THEN ASK): Is that much (more/less) likely or somewhat (more/less) likely?

Much more likely ---------- 13%
Somewhat more likely ---------- 24%
\ / **37%**

Somewhat less likely ---------- 16%
Much less likely ---------- 16%
\ / **36%**
(DON'T READ) No impact ---------- 24%
(DON'T READ) DK ---------- 7%

OK. We're just about finished. Now I'd like to ask you the following questions for comparison purposes only.

25. How often do you visit or use a park, open space or recreation area in your neighborhood?

Almost every day ---------- 9%
Several times a week ---------- 18%
Several times a month ---------- 30%
Several times a year ---------- 23%
Almost never ---------- 15%
Never ---------- 5%
(DON'T READ) DK ---------- 0%

26. How often do you visit or use a park, open space or recreation area in King County, but not in your neighborhood?

Almost every day ---------- 1%
Several times a week ---------- 5%
Several times a month ---------- 20%
Several times a year ---------- 40%
Almost never ---------- 26%
Never ---------- 7%
(DON'T READ) DK ---------- 1%

27. Do you have children under 18 living in your household?

Yes ---------- 25%
No ---------- 74%
(Refused) ---------- 1%

That's all we have. Thank you very much for participating!

FROM SAMPLE

A. Record Region Using Zip Code

Seattle	34%
North County	16%
South County	26%
East County	25%

B. Vote Propensity

3 of 4 voter	35%
4 of 4 voter	65%

Exhibit D

King County Parks Division
List of Current County Parks Facilities
Non-Levy Funded

LOCAL IN-CITY (INCORPORATED AREA) PARKS	ACREAGE
Inglewood Wetlands	17.16
Maplewood Park	44.61
May Creek Park - County	47.29
Site 1 Duwamish	2.58
Sunset Playfield	13.93
Swamp Creek Park	40.42
West Hill Park	7.65
TOTAL:	**194.30**
LOCAL UGA (URBAN GROWTH AREA) PARKS	**ACREAGE**
132nd Square Park	9.76
Arbor Lake Park	8.54
Bingaman Pond Natural Area	16.72
Bryn Mawr Park	4.81
Camelot Park	18.08
Cascade Park	10.94
East Norway Hill Park	25.97
Edith Moulton Park	26.71
Evergreen Athletic Field	15.77
Evergreen Pool Site	2.08
Five Mile Lake Park	31.94
Green Tree Park	1.47
Hamm Creek Natural Area	3.59
Hazel Valley Park	2.86
Hilltop Park	7.36
Honeydew Park	0.15
Juanita Heights Park	3.23
Juanita Triangle Park	0.48

LOCAL UGA (URBAN GROWTH AREA) PARKS	ACREAGE
Juanita Woodlands Park	36.24
Kingsgate Park	7.20
Klahanie Park	64.11
Lake Geneva Park	18.64
Lakewood Park	29.49
Lewis Creek Natural Area	7.71
Maplewood Heights Park	19.16
Meerwood Park	1.76
North Green River Park	141.37
North Meridian Park	35.33
North Shorewood Park	6.26
Novelty Hill Little League Fields	6.63
Park Orchard Park	6.31
Puget Sound Park	5.00
Redmond Ridge Park	10.00
Renton Pool Site	0.88
Salmon Creek Park	4.58
Sierra Heights Park	8.26
Skyway Park	23.08
South County Ballfields	24.60
Southern Heights Park	3.27
Timberlake Park	23.87
Tollgate Farm	357.07
Trilogy Equestrian Park	25.95
White Center Heights Park	5.57
White Center Park	11.55
White Center Pond Natural Area	9.43
Windsor Vista Park	4.83
TOTAL:	**1,088.62**

Exhibit D

Attachment A to ordinance

List of King County Parks Facilities

March 2007

Regional Trails

North

Burke Gilman Trail (1)

East

East Lake Sammamish Trail (3)
Klahanie Trail (3)
Redmond Watershed Trail (3)
Snoqualmie Valley Trail (3)
East Plateau Trail (3)
Preston Snoqualmie Trail (3)
Sammamish River Trail (1, 3)
West Lake Sammamish Trail (3)

South

Cedar River Trail (9)
Enumclaw Plateau Trail (9)
Green River to Cedar River Trail (9)
Maple Valley Lake Wilderness Trail (9)
Cedar River to Lake Sammamish Trail (3, 9)
Green River Trail (5, 7)
Lake Youngs Trail and Connector Trail (9)
Soos Creek Trail (9)

Regional Active Facilities

North

Big Finn Hill (6)

East

Marymoor Park (3)
Tolt River John McDonald Park (3)

South

Petrovitsky Park (9)
King County Aquatic Center (7)

Regional Passive Parks

East

Cougar Mountain Wildland Park (9)
Duthie Hill Park (3)
Grand Ridge Park (3)
Preston/Mitchell Hill Corridor (3)
Rattlesnake Ridge (shared with State) (3)
Soaring Eagle Park (3)
Squak Mountain/Squak/Tiger Corridor (9)
Three Forks Natural Area (3)

South

Maury Island Marine Park (8)
McGarvey Park Open Space (9)
Spring Lake/Lake Desire Corridor (9)

Rural Parks and Facilities

North

Cottage Lake Park (3)
Cottage Lake Pool (3)
Northshore Little League Ballfield (3)
Sixty Acres North Park (3)

East

Canyon Creek Natural Area (3)
Estebo Park (3)
Fall City Quigley Park (3)
Lake Joy Park (3)
Ravenhill Open Space (3)
Duvall Park (3)
Fall City Community Park (3)
Fall City West Park (3)
Preston Community Center (3)

South

Cedar Downs Site (9)
Dockton Park (8)
Lake Francis Park (9)
Maple Valley Heights Park (9)
Mount Peak Park (9)
Vashon Pool (8)
Coalfield Park (9)
Gracie Hansen Community Center (9)
Levdansky Park (9)
May Valley Park (9)
Ravensdale Park (9)
Whitney Bridge Park (9)

Passive Natural Area Parks

North

Bassett Pond Park (3)
Bear Creek Waterways (3)
Evans Crest Natural Area (3)
Upper Bear Creek Natural Area (3)
Bear Creek Park (3)
Cold Creek Natural Area (3)
Sammamish River Farm (3)

East

Carnation Marsh (3)
Evans Creek Park (3)
Griffin Creek Park Natural Area (3)
Issaquah Creek Natural Area (9)
Little Si Park (3)
Moss Lake Natural Area (3)
Patterson Creek Park Natural Area (3)
Ring Hill Park (3)
Tollgate Farm (3)
Chinook Bend Habitat Resource Area (3)
Fall City Natural Area (3)
Hazel Wolf Wetlands (3)
Kathryn C. Lewis Park (3)
Middle Fork Snoq. Park Natural Area (3)
Nowak Park (3)
Raging River Natural Area (3)
Stillwater Park (3)
Tolt River Natural Area (3)

South

Auburn Narrows Park (9)
Belmondo Reach (9)
Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area (9)
BN Peninsula Natural Area (9)
Black Diamond Natural Area (9)
Cedar Grove Road Natural Area
Christiansen Pond (8)
Crowe Marsh Natural Area (9)
Dockton Forest Lease Site (8)
Ellis Creek Natural Area (8)
Green River Farm (7)
Hatchery Natural Area (9)
Hyde Lake Park (9)
Island Center Forest Natural Area (8)
Kanaskat Natural Area (9)
Landsburg Reach (9)
Log Cabin Reach Natural Area (9)
Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area (9)
Maple Ridge Highlands Open Space (9)
May Valley Natural Area (9)
Mullen Slough Natural Area (7)
Paradise Valley Natural Area (8)
Piner Point Natural Area (8)
Ravensdale Retreat Natural Area (9)
Bass Lake Natural Area (9)
Big Bend Park (9)
Cavanaugh Pond (9)
Cedar Grove Natural Area (9)
Cemetary Reach Natural Area (9)
Covington Natural Area (7)
Dockton Forest (8)
Dorre Don Reach Natural Area (9)
Flaming Geyser Natural Area (9)
Green River Natural Area (9)
Horseneck Farm (7)
Island Center Forest (8)
Jones Reach Natural Area (9)
Lake Desire Site 2 (9)
Little Soos Creek Wetlands (9)
Lower Lions Reach Natural Area (9)
Lower Peterson Creek Corridor (9)
Marjorie R. Stanley Natural Area (8)
Middle Issaquah Creek Natural Area (9)
Neely Bridge Park (9)
Peterson Lake Park Natural Area (9)
Porter Levee (9)
Rainbow Bend Natural Area (9)

Ricardi Reach (9)
South 277th Farm (7)
Sugarloaf Mountain Site (9)
Taylor Reach Natural Area (9)
Wetland 79 Natural Area (9)

Rock Creek Natural Area (9)

Taylor Mountain Forest (9)
Wetland 14 Natural Area (9)

Exhibit E

King County Parks and Recreation Division
Transferred Sites 2002-2007

Transferred Sites

Year: 2007

Site Name	Site Type
Enumclaw Fairgrounds	Park Complex
Enumclaw Sportsman's Park	Park Site

Year: 2006

Site Name	Site Type
Slough House Park	Park Site

Year: 2005

Site Name	Site Type
Coal Creek Park	Park Site
Lake Heights Park	Park Site
Lake Sawyer	Park Site
Sammamish Farm	Farm Site
Three Forks (portion)	Park Site

Year: 2004

Site Name	Site Type
Des Moines Creek Park - SeaTac	Park Site
Enumclaw Golf Course	Park Site
Grandview Park	Park Site
Hylebos Wetlands	Park Site
South Park Farm	Farm Site
Tahoma (Covington) Pool Site	Pool Site

Year: 2003

Site Name	Site Type
Auburn Pool Site	Pool Site
Beaver Lake Park	Park Site
Bridle Crest Trail Site - Redmond	Trail Site Regional
East Auburn Athletic Fields	Park Site
Enumclaw Pool Site	Pool Site
Fort Dent Park	Park Site
Jenkins Creek Park	Park Site
Kenneth Jones (Federal Way) Pool Site	Pool Site
Kent Pool Site	Pool Site
Lake Wilderness Park	Park Site
Mount Rainier (Des Moines) Pool Site	Pool Site
O O Denny Park	Park Site
Redmond Pool Site	Pool Site
Robert Morris Earthworks Park	Park Site
Shamrock Park	Park Site
Si View Park	Park Site
South Central (Tukwila) Pool Site	Pool Site

Exhibit F

King County Parks Division Enterprise Revenue
2003-2006 Successes

$610,000 5 year naming right for **Group Health** Velodrome

$100,000 1 year naming right for **MSN** Wi-Fi Hotspots

$300,000 3 year title sponsorship of **US Bank** Concerts at Marymoor

$250,000 1 year trails project with **Starbucks**

$550,000 bi-annual lease agreement with **Cirque du Soleil** & related **parking** revenue

Average **$5,000** a month for two **Subway** restaurants

$25,000 annual beverage agreement with **Pepsi**

$12,000 annually from small **concessions**

$105,000 annually from **gravel** agreement

$400,000 annually from **parking** at Marymoor

$90,000 annually from **cell towers** and other utility agreements

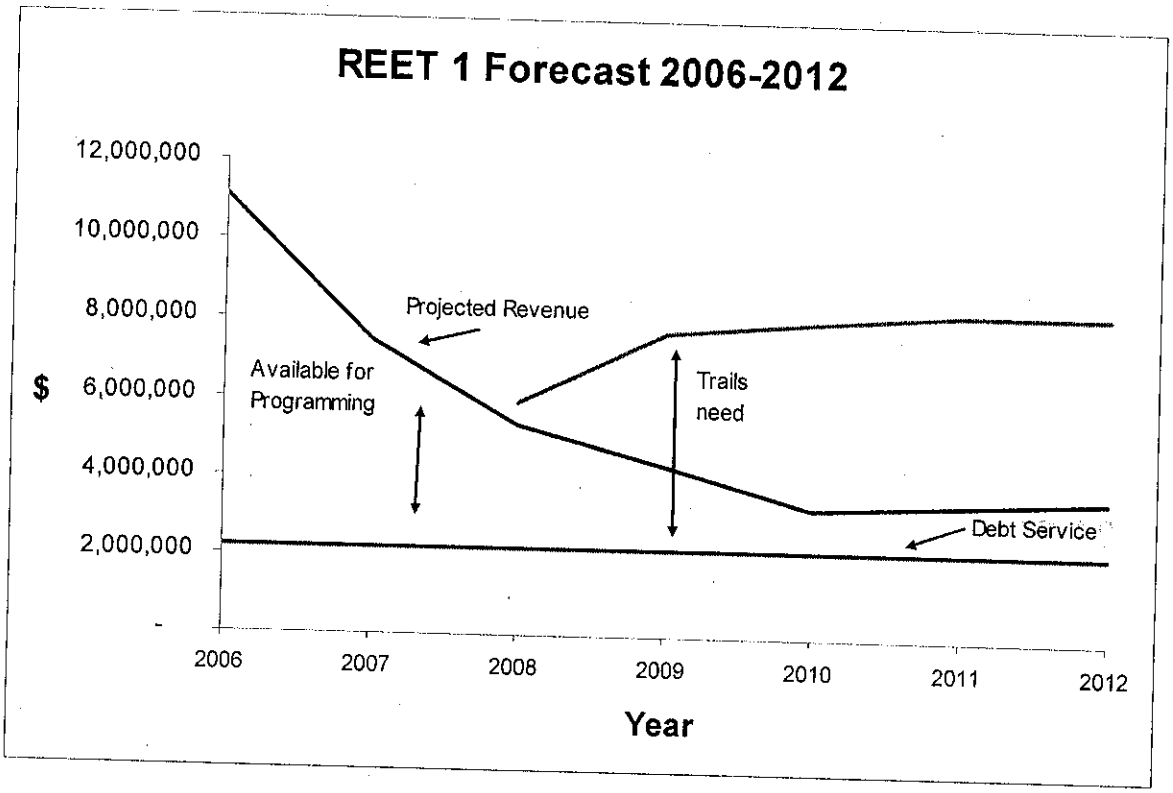
Exhibit G

Status Quo Parks Operating Budget – Key Assumptions

- Same asset base, with small increments of trails, open space added annually
- Urban local parks transferring to cities over next 3-5 years
- Same maintenance levels (except as an increase may be explicitly funded)
- Community Partnership Grant (CPG) program at same level
- Same policy on operating reserve: one month operating budget
- Levy pays for the same things: regional parks, rural parks, CPG—and not local urban parks on slate for transfer to cities upon annexation
- Burlington Northern Trail – acquisition/maintenance NOT included
- General operating inflation: 6%
- Annual growth of business revenues: 5%
- Greenhouse program funded by means other than levy, parks revenues
- All REET in excess of debt service requirements remains dedicated to parks capital, including transfer to support capital program staff costs.
- Division retains FTEs associated with Fairgrounds. (The facility was transferred but not the annual fair program).
- Levy election cost funded from means other than Division operating budget.

Exhibit H

REET 1 & REET 2 Projected Shortfall Based on Conservative Revenue Projections



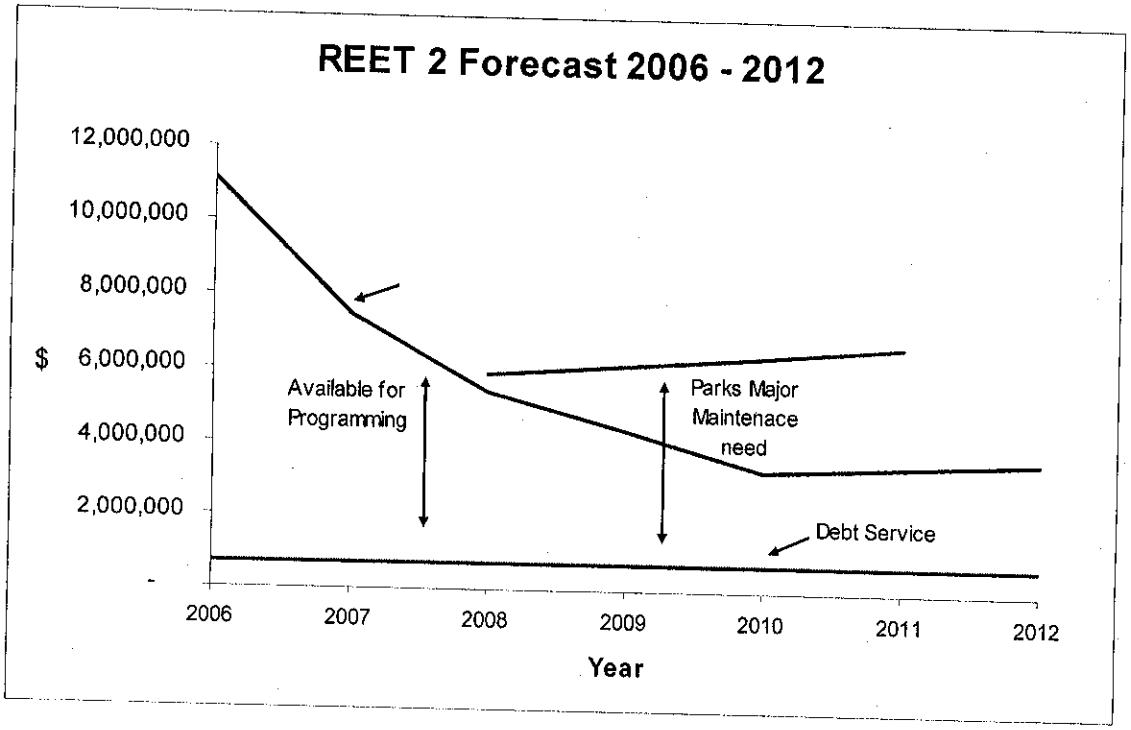
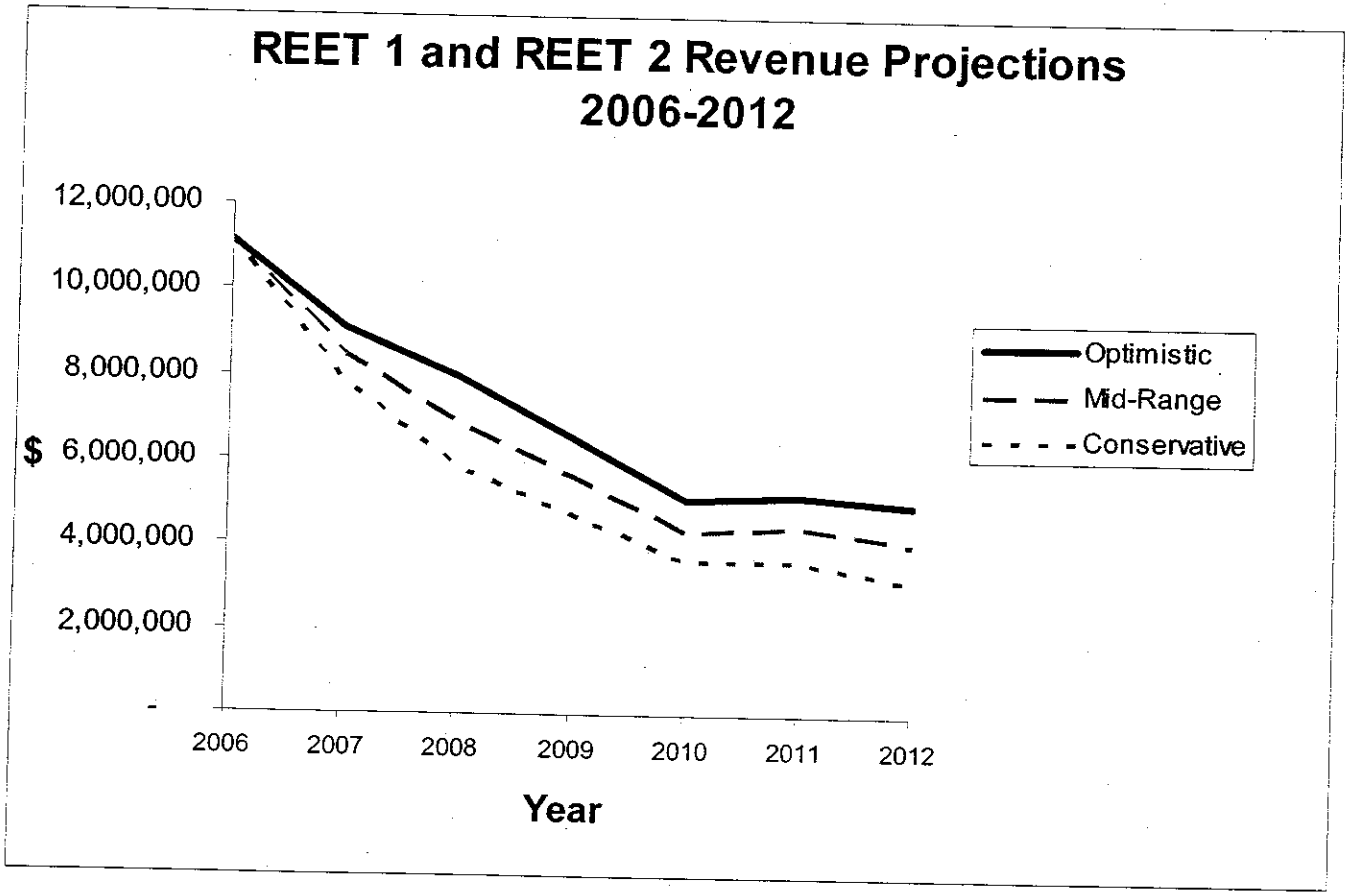


Exhibit I

REET 1 and REET 2 Revenue Projections
Optimistic, Mid-Range and Conservative Forecasts 2006-2012



Note:
1. REET 1 and REET 2 revenue projections are identical; each tax is imposed at the same rate of 0.25%.

Exhibit J

Restoring King County Park System Maintenance to Pre-2002 Levels

Estimated Cost: 0.6 cents on countywide levy (approximately $1.8M/year)

Division maintenance was substantially reduced in order to balance the Parks Division budget in 2003. Maintenance of parks is a staff intensive effort. For each key maintenance task noted, the percentage of increase listed reflects the *percentage of increase in staff hours* that will be applied. For example, the Division is currently doing *no* repair or maintenance on back-county trails, so the additional funding would enable the Division to again perform this task at levels that were performed prior to 2002 budget cuts, an increase of 100%.

I. Regional Passive Parks

- Back-country Trails – development, repair and maintenance } 100% increase
- Restore Restoration Program including:
  - Removal of more varieties of noxious weeds and invasives
  - Plantings of native species and follow-up care
  - Brush mowing
- Illegal dumping and encampment removals

} 20% increase

II. Regional Trails

- Vegetation management adjacent to bridges and trestles
- Drainage facility (ditches and culverts) maintenance
- Trail site lines maintenance
- Trail safety
  - Maintain paved shoulders and unpaved trails

} 75% increase

III. Regional Active Parks

- Mowing and edging
- Landscaping at park entries
- Restroom cleaning
- Ballfield maintenance
- Parks security
- Special events/entrepreneurial focus – new to mission since 2002

} 30% increase

Exhibit K

1 CENT MAINTENANCE ADD TO LEVY
Enables Parks to provide a Mode 2 Equivalence*
January 31, 2007

- **REGIONAL TRAILS and ALL PARK SITES** **$ 855,000**
  Improve safety, ADA access, root damage on paved and unpaved trails, repair asphalt damage and restore gravel surfaces throughout. Pavement cleaning and repairs on park roads and parking lots.

- **PASSIVE PARKS - NATURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM** **$1,050,000**
  Enhance routine maintenance including invasive and noxious weed removal and control, trail maintenance, garbage clean-up, and tree maintenance. Provide brush mowing, restoration plantings, care and maintenance.

- **REGIONAL ACTIVE** **$ 600,000**
  Increase efforts in mowing, edging, trimming, drainage and minor parks structural repairs as well as landscaping at park entrances and in designated areas within parks to provide visual enhancements.

- **SYSTEM WIDE TREE CREW** **$ 330,000**
  Improve the management of hazardous and marginal trees, complete assessments, prune, and provide replacement trees.

- **DOUBLE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM** **$ 165,000**
  Add one Volunteer Coordinator position to work with the Natural Resource Program. Includes supplies, tools, equipment, and transportation.

TOTAL – Annual average over a six year levy period. **$3,000,000**

OPTIONAL PROGRAMS:

- **IMPROVE TRAIL RESTROOMS AND MAINTENANCE** **$ 355,000**
  Replace sanicans with prefab restrooms (CIP element = 1.1 million) at 13 trail and open space locations.
- **PARK SAFETY AND SECURITY** **$ 600,000**
  Hire Sheriff support (4 officers) to respond to illegal encampments, illegal dumping, methlabs, trail and park patrols, park gate closures, reduce vandalism, i.e. KCAC parking lots and recent copper wire repeated thefts.

* Mode II. High level maintenance – associated with well developed parks/trails with reasonably high visitation.

Exhibit L

WOODLAND PARK ZOO

March 2007

The Zoo has 1.1 million visitors a year. Many of these visitors are families with young children, and their visit is an opportunity (sometimes the only opportunity) for them to connect with nature and animals. Many of these children begin their relationships with the animal world and their love of the outdoors in these zoo visits. As these children grow older, they continue to expand their horizons and enhance the knowledge gained at the zoo by hiking King County trails and enjoying local and regional parks.

The following are the probable uses of any funds that would come from a county wide levy:

- Funds from the levy would provide an opportunity to expand the current School-to-Zoo program to schools in King County (outside the City of Seattle). This program would reach 6,000 school children from low-income populations, including free admission tickets and transportation.

- Levy funds would support Wild Wise, Forest Explorers and Zoo Corps programs reaching 40,000 additional children.

- These funds would support interpretative programs such as Willawong Station, an interactive bird aviary.

- Funds would be used to support the horticultural work of the zoo which is an important green space in a very urban area.

- Levy funds would be used for technology that supports education programs including instructional manuals, conservation curriculum, and other tools that support classroom conservation education.

Many park and wildlife enthusiasts have been troubled by the trends documented by Richard Louv's book "Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder." The Zoo is committed to connecting children and their families to nature and wildlife.

Exhibit M

Seattle Parks Foundation Proposal

Proposal to: ***King County Parks Futures Task Force***
Concept: ***Urban Trails Opportunity Fund***
Date: ***March 8, 2007***
Presented by: ***Seattle Parks Foundation***

Proposal: To expand and enhance King County's urban trails, we propose the addition of a .05 cent King County Parks Futures allocation to improve green connections in the lowest-income, highest-density family city neighborhoods that are underserved by parks and open space. Some trails might link cities to adjacent King County trail systems, providing value-added. The funds could be administered by an opportunity fund grant program for organizations seeking to improve their cities' green connections. The criteria could be developed by this Task Force or the task could be delegated to an oversight committee. Criteria could include such elements as population density, number of school-age children, current deficits in parks, specific cultural needs, number of users of public transportation, and needed improvements in pedestrian safety.

Background: Two of the most popular parks in Seattle feature trails: Green Lake and Seward Park. Trails like these can be great equalizers, providing relaxation, recreation and exercise for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds. One only needs to walk the Seward Park loop on a sunny weekend day to experience one of the rare places where people of all walks of life and many different languages mingle. It is truly a place where human diversity meets natural diversity.

Seattle and other cities across the United States have discovered that trails are among the best-used components of park systems.

"More people use trails than any other kind of activity in the county, so if you think about a facility that's 41 miles long, that's a heck of a lot of resources." - Jenny Pate, Fairfax County,Virginia 8/06.

"Trails are the number one amenity potential homeowners cite when asked what they would like to see in a new community, ahead of public parks and outdoor pools, according to the National Association of Home Builders." – Bradley Melekian, New York Times 9/06

Cities as varied as Atlanta, Chicago, Louisville, Nashville and San Jose are vastly expanding their trail and greenway systems. These cities recognize that trails improve the following quality of life factors:

- Economic: Property values often increase and local businesses benefit from their proximity to trails.
- Environmental: Preserve open space, provides opportunities for landscaping and tree planting; builds support to preserve green space
- Exercise/Recreation: Provide venues for walking, biking, running, skating and quiet relaxation
- Safety: Permit viewing of otherwise unmonitored locations.

- Transportation – provide off-street routes and often short-cuts within the typical roadway grid system

When people have close-by, convenient access to trail systems, they generally use them. In fact, community trails promote physically active lifestyles and foster a sense of community.

The **Bands of Green** report recently released by Seattle Parks Foundation contains many examples of urban trail projects serving low-income, diverse neighborhoods.

What is it? *Bands of Green* is a plan for the continuing development of bicycle and pedestrian trails, boulevards and linear parks in Seattle. It is an updated version of the original 1990 plan prepared for Seattle Parks. Recognizing the value of Bands of Green I, and the fact that 16 years had passed, Seattle Parks Foundation hired Cedar River Associates to bring the original report up to date, and issued the new report last month.

How was it created? Cedar River Associates, led by Tom Byers, prepared this report with extensive input from Seattle Parks Department, Seattle Department of Transportation, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, Seattle Department of Planning and Development and 37 neighborhood plans coordinated by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

Why is it important? The new *Bands of Green* report comes at an opportune time. Recent efforts to curtail traffic and slow global warming, as well as health studies linking obesity to physical inactivity, point to the need for increased pedestrian and bicycle trail systems. In addition, green connections between parks can enhance urban habitat values and can improve the safety and accessibility of existing parks and green spaces. Up until now, much of the emphasis of Seattle's park and green space efforts has been placed on securing individual parks and green spaces. Bands of Green advances a plan to connect them. This is consistent with Olmsted design principles, as evidenced by the necklaces of pearls that grace many U.S. cities, including Seattle, where the necklaces are the boulevards and linear parks, and the pearls are the larger parks.

What are the report's key recommendations?

- The completion of an extensive Duwamish River Open Space System comprised of trail segments, parks and environmental restoration projects;
- The creation of a Lake to Sound Open Space Network, providing more than 20 miles of trails and boulevards along the city's inland waterways, including as a centerpiece, a Lake Union Loop Trail;
- More than 50 other trails, boulevards, and linear parks, touching every neighborhood in the city, including historically underserved neighborhoods. Included among these are many projects in low-income, high family- density neighborhoods where green space and recreational resources are often lacking.

The following are examples of Bands of Green ***Trail-related*** Projects in such neighborhoods:

THE DUWAMISH RIVER OPEN SPACE NETWORK	
Duwamish Valley Urban Forest	We recommend a major effort to plant street trees throughout the area, beginning with the trail and boulevard corridors in this plan, and extending throughout the district as quickly as possible. This initiative will have many benefits: it will improve air quality, improve the appearance of the area and help to attract high quality enterprises.
South Park Neighborhood Shoreline Park	The Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS) has taken the lead in coordinating the restoration of the shoreline in this area and their efforts deserve the City's support.
Shoreline Access/West Duwamish Trail	In return for a series of street vacations, the Port of Seattle promised the City that it would develop a series of shoreline access points on both sides of the Duwamish River. We recommend that the City monitor the Port's compliance with the agreement and work with the Port to develop these shoreline access points as promised.
East Duwamish Trail	Citizens have identified the potential for an East Duwamish trail along the all-but-abandoned rail corridor that runs parallel to East Marginal Way. A portion of the right-of-way adjoins Federal Center South, which is well landscaped and could provide both shoreline access and a resting point along the way. There may be potential for commuter use as well as recreation, since the right-of-way continues to the Boeing offices and beyond. We suggest that the City investigate the potential for acquiring this right-of-way for a trail.
SOUTHEAST SEATTLE	
Seward Park Boulevard	We suggest that the boulevard designation continue along Rainier Avenue South to Renton, to provide connections to the Cedar River Regional Trail and the open space resources of the Maple Valley. We recommend a parallel bicycle route along Waters Avenue South to Dead Horse Canyon, where a winding road descends through a natural area surrounding Taylor Creek, regarded by some as Seattle's best salmon stream, to rejoin Rainier Avenue South. The woodland trail that follows the steep waterway is one of Seattle's best-kept secrets -- an ideal wilderness hike within the City.
Chief Sealth (Beacon Hill) Trail	Chief Sealth Trail lies within City Light right-of-way and will eventually extend all the way from the E-3 bus way south to Kubota Gardens and beyond the city limits into Renton. We recommend that the City continue to place a high priority on the completion of the Chief Sealth Trail.
Martin Luther King and Rainier Boulevards	We recommend Boulevard designation for the entire length of this corridor, from Madison Boulevard to the south City limits; we (further) recommend that the City explore reducing the vehicle lanes on Rainier from four to three to provide lanes for experienced

	bicycle riders in both directions.
SOUTHWEST SEATTLE	
Longfellow Creek Trail System	We recommend that the City continue to work with the citizens of Delridge, High Point, and other nearby communities to fulfill the vision of the Longfellow Creek Trail and connecting trails to complete an integrated network of trails.
CENTRAL SEATTLE	
Yesler Parkway	In addition to Boulevard designation, we suggest: • A foot trail should be established in the right-of-way from the Dreamcatcher monument at the east end of Yesler across the old streetcar bridge to Leschi Park. • The City should implement Justina Boughton's 1989 plan for a "Yesler Greenway" extending west from I-5 to the waterfront, integrating the existing fragments of open space in that corridor to create a unified green space for the adjacent neighborhoods.
Jackson Parkway	We support the City Planning Department's proposals to enhance the character of Jackson in Pioneer Square and the International District. In addition, we suggest that the City: • Designate Jackson as a parkway, with bicycle lanes to take advantage of the relatively gentle slope and provide safe bicycle access between the Central District and the South Downtown neighborhoods. • Underground the utilities and eliminate the billboards. • Provide street trees selected to celebrate the diverse character of the communities through which it passes. • Provide design guidelines for the urban villages at 12th and 23rd to reduce the land devoted to parking, provide more coherence in design and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. • Install public art to honor the history of Jackson as the center of Seattle's jazz scene.
The Mountain-to-Sound Greenway Trail	The Mountain-to-Sound Trail passes under Mount Baker Ridge in its own tunnel and emerges in Sam Smith Park on the I-90 lid. However, it ends at the Jose Rizal Bridge. SDOT, in partnership with the Parks Department and WSDOT, is completing design on a project to extend the trail to the waterfront, and we support those plans.

Exhibit N

King County Parks Futures Research Summary

Alison Peters Consulting

March 2007

Methodology

Universe	3/4 and 4/4 voters in King County
Technique	Telephone Interviewing
Field Dates	February 8-12, 2007
Sample Size	N=600
Margin of Error	± 4% overall

2

Exhibit N

Sample Demographics

Gender:	
Male	45%
Female	55%

Age:	
Under 35	5%
35-49 years	21%
50-64 years	43%
65+	28%

Region:	
Seattle	34%
East King Co.	25%
South King Co.	26%
North King Co.	16%

Party ID:	
Democrat	32%
Independent	33%
Republican	28%
Other	7%

Children at Home:	
Yes	25%
No	74%

Local Parks User:	
At least once a month	57%
Less than once a month	43%

Regional Parks User:	
At least once a month	26%
Less than once a month	73%

3

Research Questions

- ☑ Should King County pursue a renewal of its maintenance levy? If so, at what level?
- ☑ Should King County pursue a 15 cent combined levy that provides money for both maintenance and capital improvements? If so, at what level?
- ☑ If expansion funds are sought, will 1 cent for the Zoo help the measure pass?
- ☑ If expansion funds are sought, will 1 cent for local open space acquisition help the measure pass?
- ☑ If expansion funds are sought, should King County give voters the option to approve maintenance funds separate from expansion funds?
- ☑ Is there any indication that a bond measure would have a better chance of passing than one or two levies?
- ☑ What election date gives the measures the best chance of passing?

4

Exhibit N

A Quick Lay-of-the-Land

Perception of King County Finances

Q6: "How would you rate the financial health of the King County government – excellent, good, only fair or poor?"

	Excellent	Good	Only Fair	Poor
2003	1%	14%	41%	34%
2007	3%	39%	37%	11%

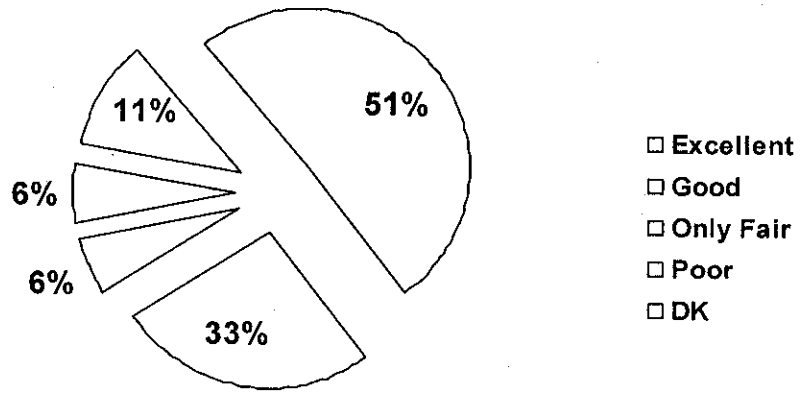
- Voters believe King County's finances are in better shape today than in 2003.
- This could mean they would be more willing to "reward" the County by expanding the services of the Parks Dept.
- This could also mean voters want King County to fund expansion without raising taxes.

6

Exhibit N

62% say King County is doing a good or excellent job managing the parks system

Q7: "In general, would you say King County is doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job managing and maintaining the parks system?"

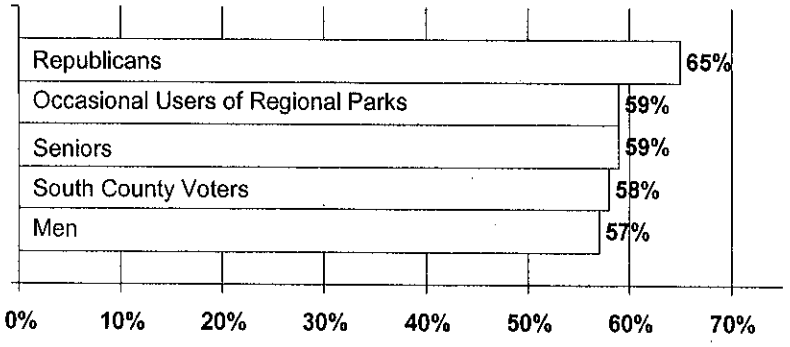


7

Subgroups that are typically anti-tax still praise King County's job performance

Q7: "In general, would you say King County is doing an excellent, good, only fair, or poor job managing and maintaining the parks system?"

% of Voters Giving King County an "Excellent" or "Good" Rating



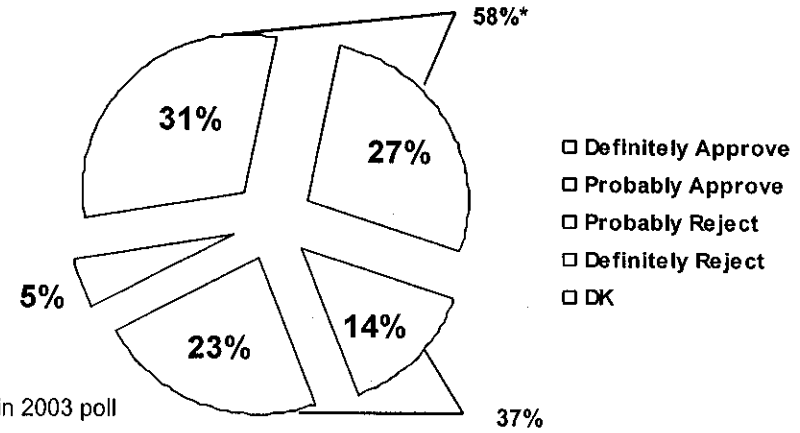
8

Research Question #1: Should King County pursue a renewal of its maintenance levy? If so, at what level?

Answer: *Yes. A 7 cent maintenance levy is likely to be approved in King County.*

A 7 cent maintenance levy passes at 58%

Q8: "In 2003, King County residents passed an operating levy that pays for basic operations and maintenance of the parks and trails system. Later this year, voters will be asked to renew the levy. If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject the levy?"



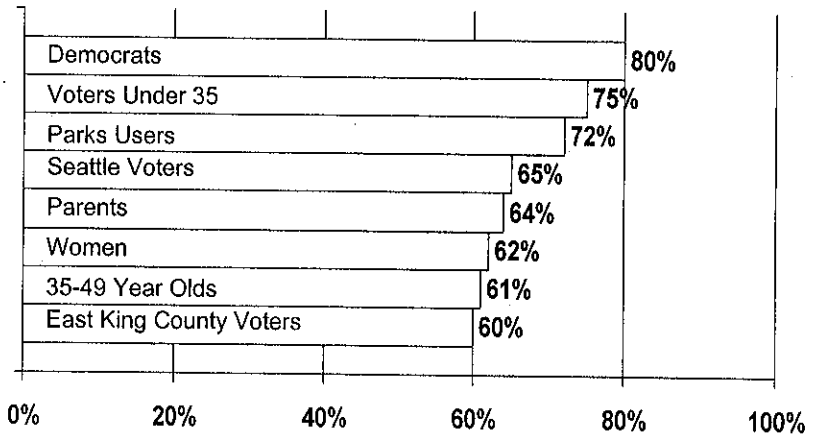
*55% in 2003 poll

10

Exhibit N

Certain subgroups would provide critical support

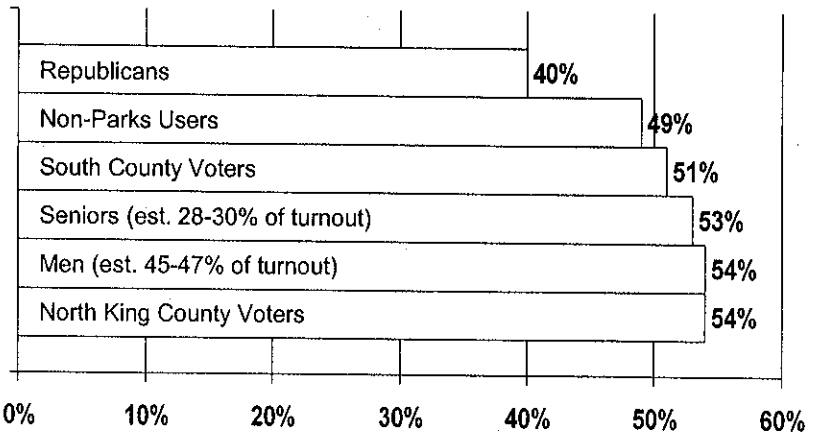
Approval Rates Among Base Supporters



11

Other subgroups would be difficult to persuade

Approval Rates Among Initial Opponents



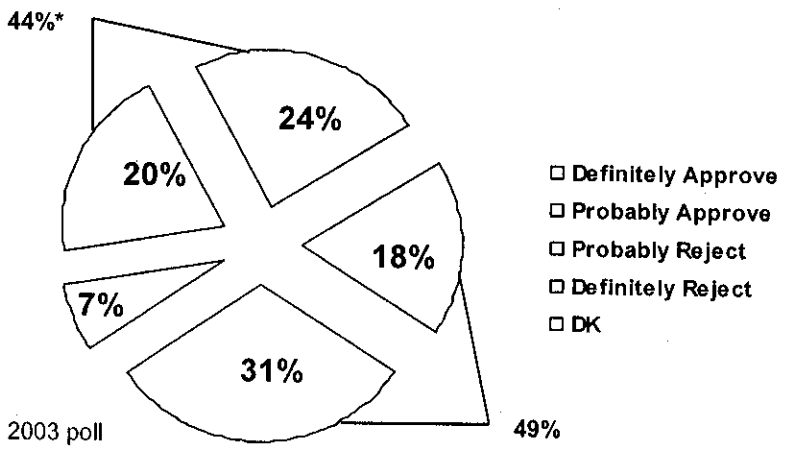
12

Research Question #2: Should King County pursue a 15 cent combined levy that provides money for both maintenance and capital improvements? If so, at what level?

Answer: *No. A 15 cent levy has very little chance of passing. Instead, we recommend a separate companion levy to fund capital improvements.*

A 15 cent maintenance + expansion package does not receive 50% approval

Q9: "Instead of the levy renewal, King County might decide to increase the amount of the levy to enhance the system beyond basic maintenance. If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject this measure?"



*44% in 2003 poll

14

The total cost of maintenance + expansion should be under $50 a year

"If you knew that increasing the cost of the levy would cost the owner of a $400,000 home __, would you vote to approve or reject the measure?

$60 dollars a year (15 cents total)				
Total Approve %	Def. Approve	Prob. Approve	Prob. Reject	Def. Reject
49%	23%	26%	15%	30%

$48 dollars a year (12 cents total)				
Total Approve %	Def. Approve	Prob. Approve	Prob. Reject	Def. Reject
56%	32%	25%	10%	28%

At $48 a year, the expansion proposal passes among key swing groups:

- Independents at 56%
- Non-Parents at 56%
- Men at 53%
- Seniors at 51%

15

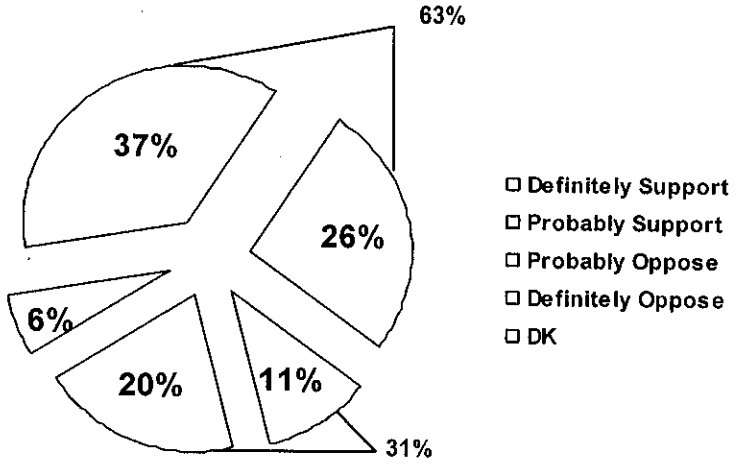
Research Question #3: If expansion funds are sought, will 1 cent for the Zoo help the measure pass?

Answer: *There is a slight positive impact to including money for the Zoo overall. Money for the Zoo will boost support in Seattle and on the Eastside but there is less impact (positive or negative) in South King County.*

Exhibit N

63% of voters would support funds for the Zoo

Q11: "Do you support or oppose allocating $3M dollars a year toward operations, maintenance, and educational programs for the Zoo?"



17

Other interesting findings regarding the Zoo

- Parents and non-parents support funding for the Zoo at the exact same level (63%).
- 65% of voters who were undecided on the expansion measure support funding for the Zoo.
- The Zoo actually creates a small net positive impact on the expansion measure. 24% of voters who initially said they would reject the expansion measure are more likely to vote yes with money for the Zoo included. In comparison, only 16% of initial supporters say they would be less likely to vote yes if the Zoo receives money from the expansion measure.
- Voters outside of Seattle support money for the Zoo. For example, 68% of voters on the Eastside and 60% of voters in North County support money for the Zoo.

18

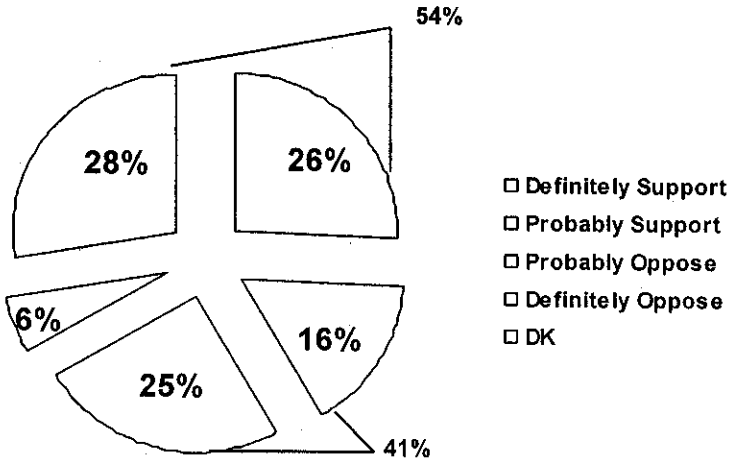
Exhibit N

Research Question #4: If expansion funds are sought, will 1 cent for local trails and open space acquisition help the measure pass?

Answer: *Money for the cities is compelling to voters throughout the County. However, a higher percentage of voters would rather see 1 cent fund the Zoo than expanding the city trails and open space system.*

54% of voters would support funds for the cities to acquire open space

Q13: "Do you support or oppose allocating $3M dollars a year to help local cities acquire open space land and trails within city boundaries?"



20

Other interesting findings regarding City trails and open space

- Voters in Seattle were more supportive of this proposal than voters in all other parts of King County!
- Support for this proposal declines sharply with age; moreover, it is much less popular among seniors over 65 than the 1 cent proposal for the Zoo.
- Regional parks users were much more supportive of this proposal than neighborhood parks users.

21

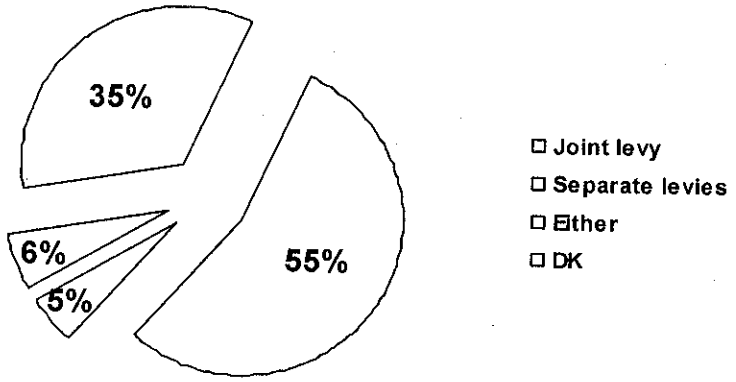
Research Question #5: If expansion funds are sought, should King County give voters the option to approve maintenance funds separate from expansion funds?

Answer: *Yes. 27% of voters who oppose expansion would approve the renewal levy. If only one levy is on the ballot, you would lose their support—and potentially lose all your operations funding as well.*

Exhibit N

Running a joint levy may put operations funding at risk; voters like keeping both measures separate

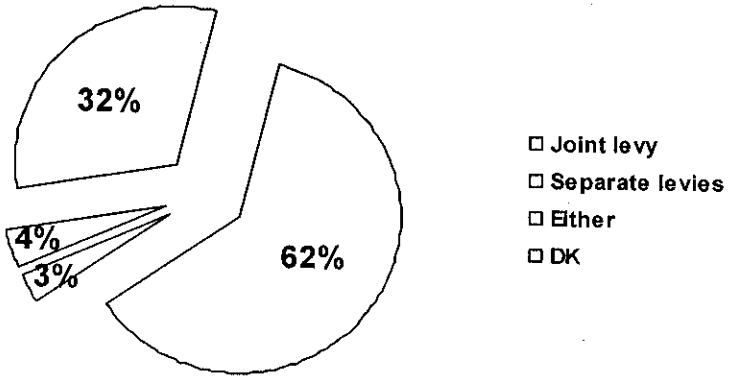
"Regardless of whether you support or oppose expanding the parks levy, do you prefer to vote on one joint levy or two separate levies?"



23

After more information is given, there is a bump in support for separate levies

"Now that you know more, do you prefer to vote on one joint levy or two separate levies?"



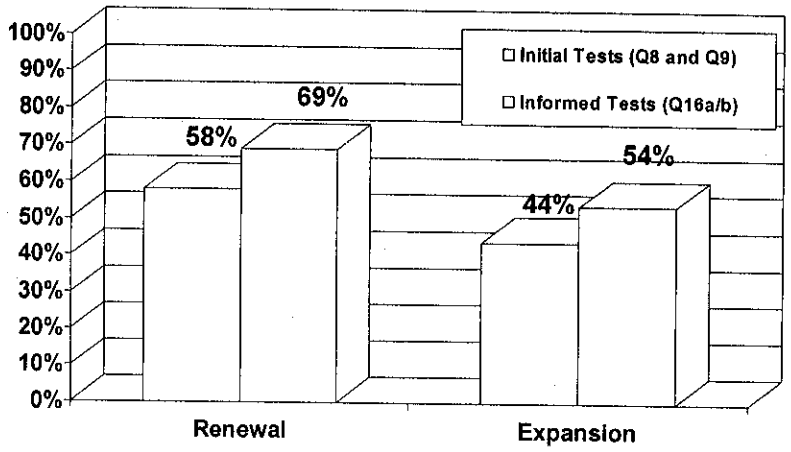
24

Other reasons to keep the renewal levy separate from an expansion measure

- 27% of voters who oppose the expansion levy would "definitely" or "probably" approve a renewal levy.
  - These are important "pickup votes" that would help the renewal pass even if these voters remained opposed to expansion.
- 58% of voters who haven't noticed the County's "new way of doing business" would still "definitely" or "probably" approve a renewal levy.
  - There might not be enough time to communicate the benefits of new partnerships, user fees, etc. Even if no progress is made here, voters are still inclined to approve the renewal.

25

After more information, support for <u>both</u> measures has increased substantially



26

Exhibit N

The maintenance levy is on solid ground with several key swing groups after more information is presented

	Seniors	South County	Men	Non-Parks Users	GOP Voters	North County
Initial Test (Q8)	53%	51%	54%	52%	40%	54%
Informed Test (Q16a)	64%	63%	67%	65%	58%	73%
% Change	+11%	+12%	+13%	+13%	+18%	+19%

27

The expansion levy also picks up key support along the way

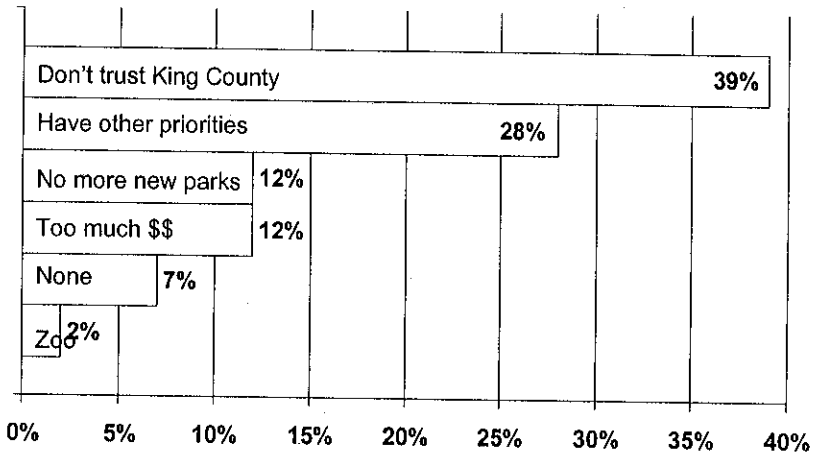
	Non-Parks Users	Men	South County	GOP Voters	North County	Seniors
Initial Test (Q9)	36%	42%	33%	20%	33%	35%
Informed Test (Q16b)	47%	52%	44%	31%	47%	50%
% Change	+9%	+10%	+11%	+11%	+14%	+15%

28

Exhibit N

Of those opposing expansion, almost 40% say they don't trust King Co.

"Do you plan to reject the levy because _____?"



29

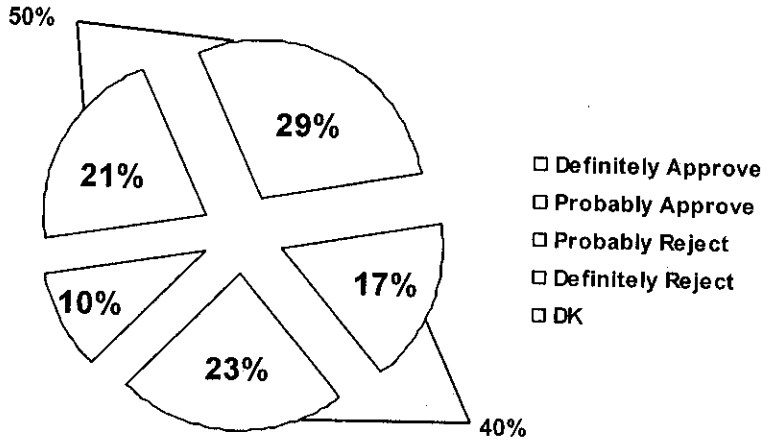
Research Question #6: Is there any indication that a bond measure would have a better chance of passing than one or two levies?

Answer: *No. Bond measures require 60% approval for passage and our test measure receives only 50% support. The only subgroups that offer 60%+ support include under 35 voters, Democrats, and avid parks users. In an off-year election, those groups aren't large enough to off-set low support from other constituencies.*

Exhibit N

A bond for capital expansion doesn't make passage any easier

"In this scenario, voters would be asked to vote on a bond measure that would be used to fund the capital plan we've been discussing. If the election were held today, would you vote to approve or reject this measure?"



31

Research Question #7: What election date gives the measures the best chance of passing?

Answer: *There are various benefits to running the measures in August—lower cost and less competition for the voters' attention. In addition, we did not find any data to support the hypothesis that a larger turn-out (in Nov. 2007) would improve the measures' chance of passing.*

Exhibit N

There is virtually no difference in support among 3/4 and 4/4 voters

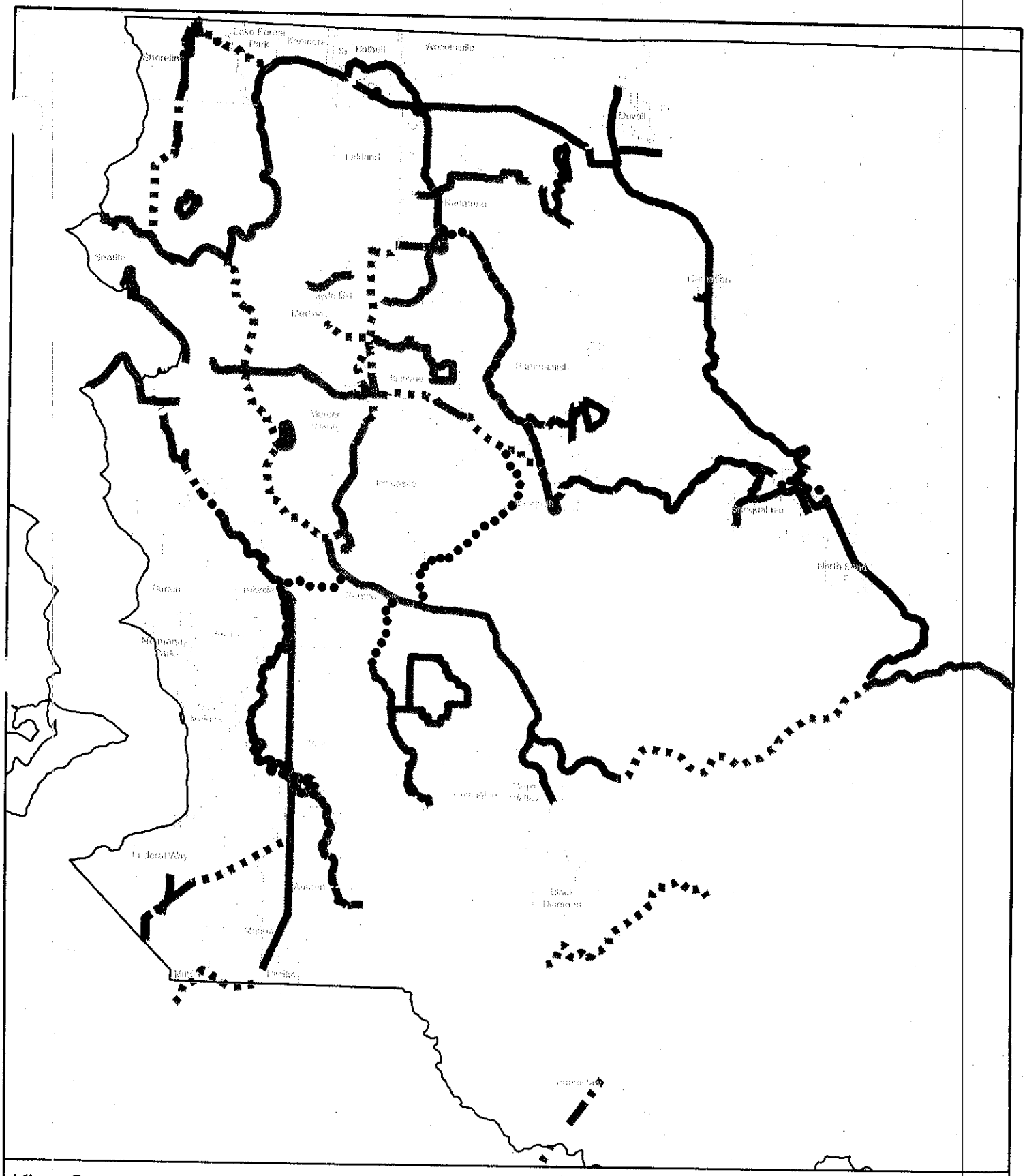
Initial Renewal (Q8)		
Total Approve %	3/4 Voters	4/4 Voters
54%	57%	59%

Initial Expansion (Q9)		
Total Approve %	3/4 Voters	4/4 Voters
44%	46%	43%

Informed Renewal (Q16a)		
Total Approve %	3/4 Voters	4/4 Voters
69%	69%	70%

Informed Expansion (Q16b)		
Total Approve %	3/4 Voters	4/4 Voters
54%	55%	54%

33



King County Regional Trail System

Regional Trail System Planning Alternatives

Existing Regional Trails + Priority 1 Trails Projects - Urban Connectors

●●●● Priority1 Trail

King County Parks Trails

Non King County Parks Trails

Proposed Non King County Parks Trails

King County Park System

Incorporated Area

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King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division
March 22, 2007

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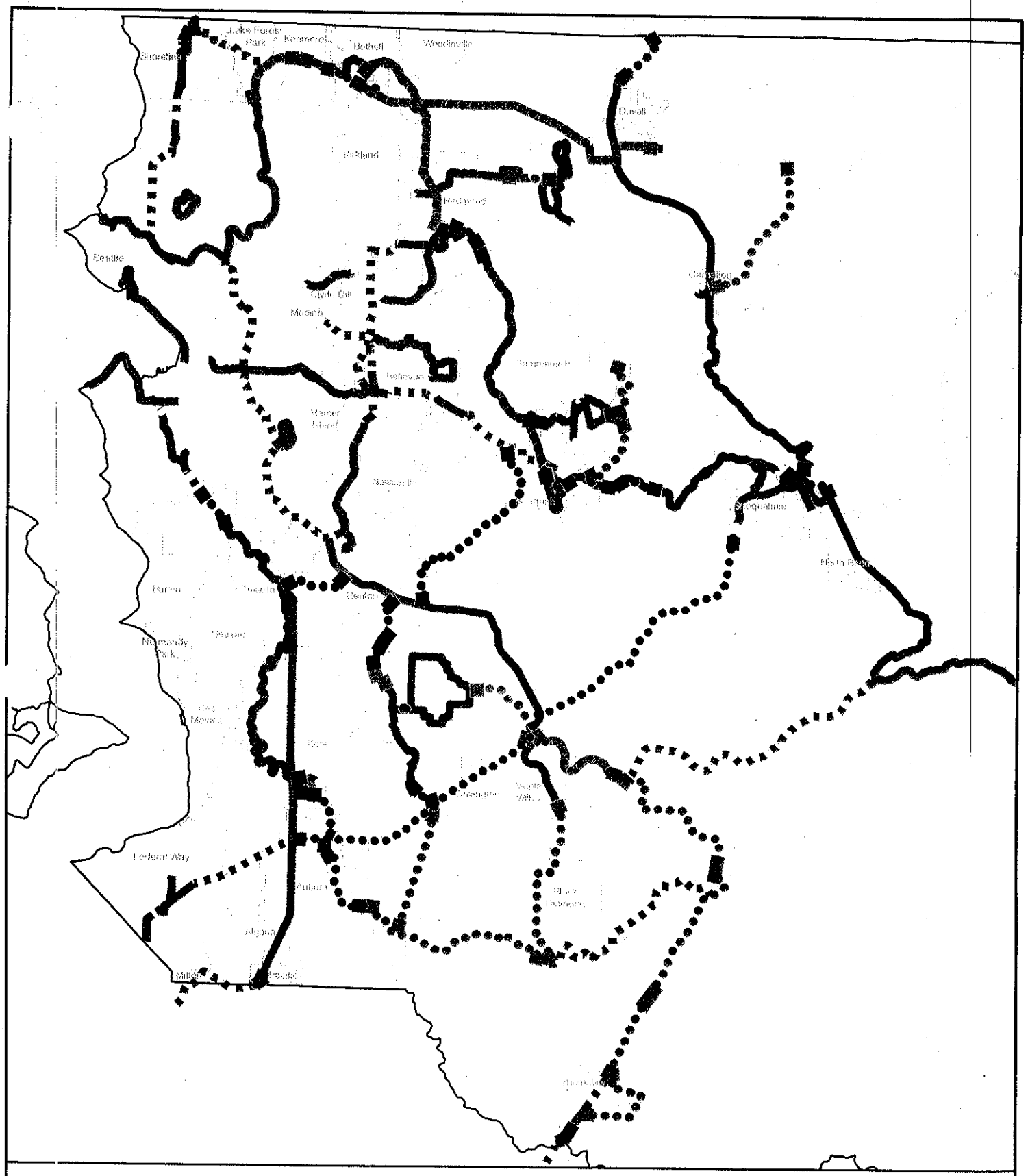

King County Regional Trail System
Regional Trail System Planning Alternatives
ɔmplete Systems

Priority1 Trail
Priority2 Trail
Rest of Trail

King County Parks Trails
Non King County Parks Trails
Proposed Non King County Parks Trails
King County Park System
Incorporated Area

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King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division
December 18, 2006

0 3 6 12 Miles

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