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**November 19, 2010
WRPA Conference**



**CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS:
THE NEW NORMAL**



INTRODUCTION

GOALS OF PRESENTATION

- Consider whether public–private partnerships are **the right fit** (and to what extent) for your agency
- Understand the **nuts and bolts needed** for your agency to pursue successful partnerships
- Explore how to **overcome the challenges** – external and internal – in building partnerships
- Learn how to **cultivate** potential partners



PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- What is a partnership?
- Getting Started: Nuts and Bolts
- Attracting (the right) Partners
- Setting up for Success: Tips & Lessons Learned
- Um, Now What?



SEATTLE PARKS & RECREATION – CREATING COMMUNITY THROUGH PEOPLE, PARKS AND PROGRAMS

- We own approximately 11% of the City's total land area:
 - 400 parks and open spaces
 - 6,200 acres of park land
- We operate 26 Community Centers located in neighborhoods throughout the city.



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

- 26,000 acres
- 200 parks (from .25 acres to 3,100 acres)
- 175 miles of regional trails
- 145, 000 of conservation easements



THE KING COUNTY PARKS STORY: FROM BUDGET CRISIS TO BUSINESS PLAN

2001/2002

- Lost \$17 million in three years
- Eliminated 100 employees (~1/3 of total staff)
- Closed facilities; cut recreation programs
- Faced uncertain public opinion

Nov. 1, 2002

Seasonal closure of parks begins today

Budget constraints and I-747 will force seasonal closure of some parks King County Executive Ron Sims announced today. Twenty-four parks are scheduled to close today adding to the 20 parks that have been closed since Jan. 1, 2002. If the budget passes as proposed, all 44 parks will remain closed until March 1, 2003, at which time all but five will reopen. The five are within city boundaries and will be mothballed Jan. 1, 2003 unless they are transferred to their respective cities.

"Although we are making positive changes in how we do business in our parks, like innovative new partnerships and entrepreneurial ventures to keep them going, we still face the very real challenge of a general revenue fund strained by an antiquated tax system, annexations and incorporations and initiatives," said Sims.

*King County press release from
Nov 2002*

THE KING COUNTY PARKS STORY: FROM BUDGET CRISIS TO BUSINESS PLAN



Corporate partners
bring funds and critics
Parks seek
sponsors,
but walk
fine line



STEVE KINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES
Group Health signed a three-year contract at \$120,000 per year to have its name on the Velodrome at Marymoor Park in Redmond.

BY LISA CHU
Seattle Times foodside bureau

Visitors to King County's Marymoor Park in Redmond can walk past the Group Health Velodrome, order food at the Subway sandwich shop, surf online in Microsoft-sponsored Wi-Fi areas and read a trail map bearing the Starbucks mermaid logo.

For the past two weeks, they also could hunt for 30 two-foot, foil-covered fake burritos hidden in the park as part of a dual promotion for Chipotle Mexican Grill and the county's redesigned parks Web site.

The burrito promotion and other corporate partnerships are the brainchild of King County Parks' three-member Strategic Partnership and Enterprise Initiatives team. Its job: Come up with ideas to make money and increase the viability of county parks.

That often means teaming with a company for sponsorship — everything from big-tent performances by Cirque du Soleil to selling naming rights for parks facilities.

But is the push for revenue bringing the private sector too close to an area that traditionally has been commercial-free — the local park?

"My feeling is that this is not appropriate stuff for parks," said Michael Hobbs, a board member of the nonprofit Friends of Marymoor Park. "The park should be a place to get away from commercialism and not be an extension of the mall."

Please see » PARKS, A18

HIDDEN BURRITOS, Wi-Fi access used to increase revenue, visibility » A18

The Seattle Times
seattletimes.com

Saturday, August 19, 2006 - 12:00 AM

How King County Parks Department is increasing its revenue and visibility

STEVE KINGMAN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

Bart Nordstrom, left, and Patrick Papineau were among the winners in a recent burrito promotion by King County Parks.

Naming rights

Group Health signed a three-year contract at \$120,000 per year to have its name on the Velodrome at Marymoor Park. Microsoft signed a one-year, \$100,000 contract to provide Wi-Fi access at Marymoor and White Center parks and at the King County Aquatic Center. Aside from 15 to 20 "discreet" signs in the three parks, all advertising takes place in the virtual world when people log on, parks program manager Jessie Israel said. The county is working on renewing both contracts.

Concessions

Subway sandwich stands in Marymoor Park and at the King County Aquatic Center bring in about \$5,000 a month for parks. The county recently also brought in the Redmond-based Blazing Bagels to Marymoor.

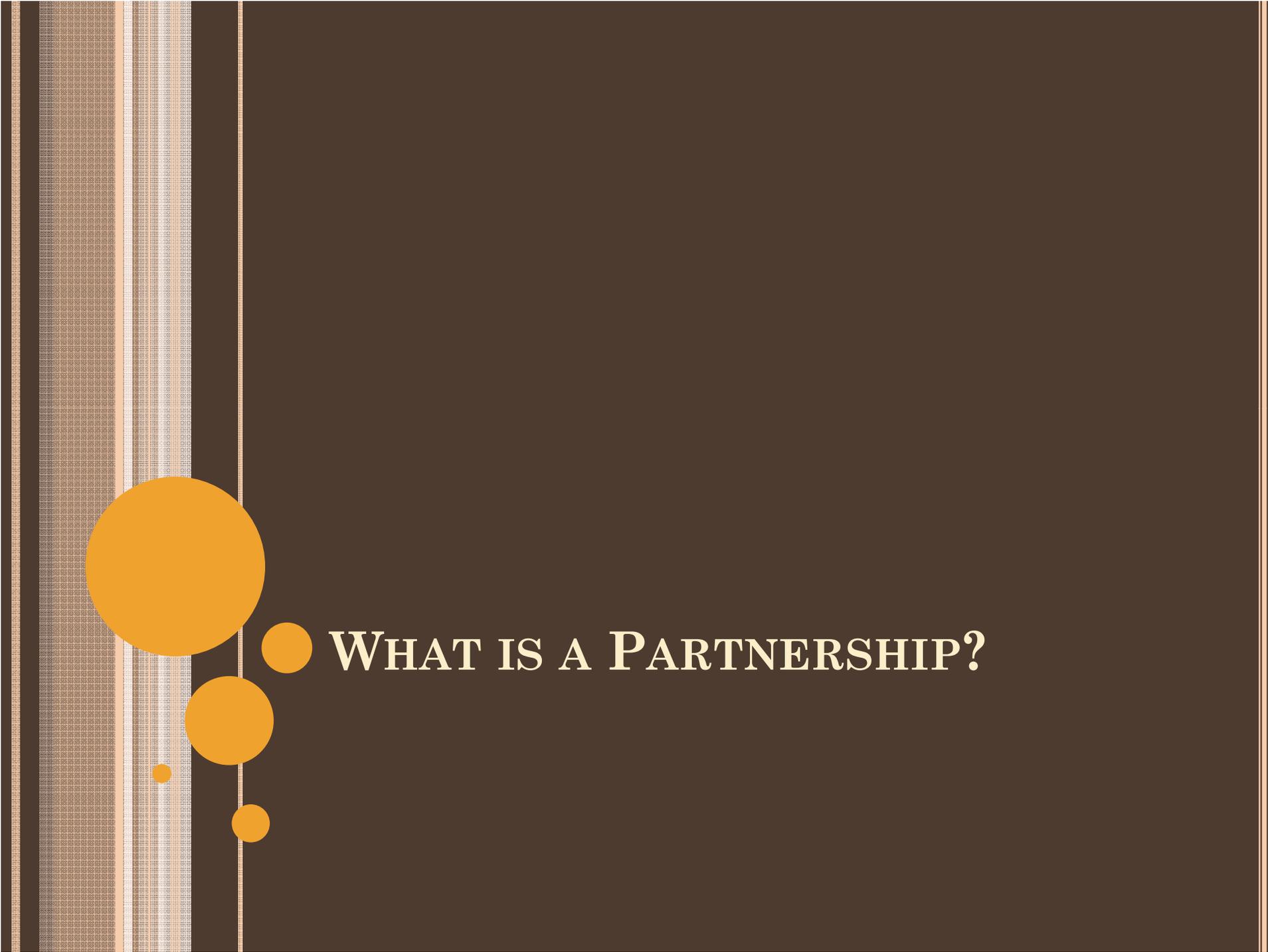
New amenities

Starbucks paid \$250,000 to sponsor 17 new kiosks offering trail maps. The kiosks, made of

2003 – present (and beyond)

- Refocused mission
- Passed 2 operating levies (2003, 2007)
- Eliminated reliance on general fund
- Growing and diversified sources of revenue
- Developed partnerships to maintain, operate and enhance parks, trails, and other amenities





WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

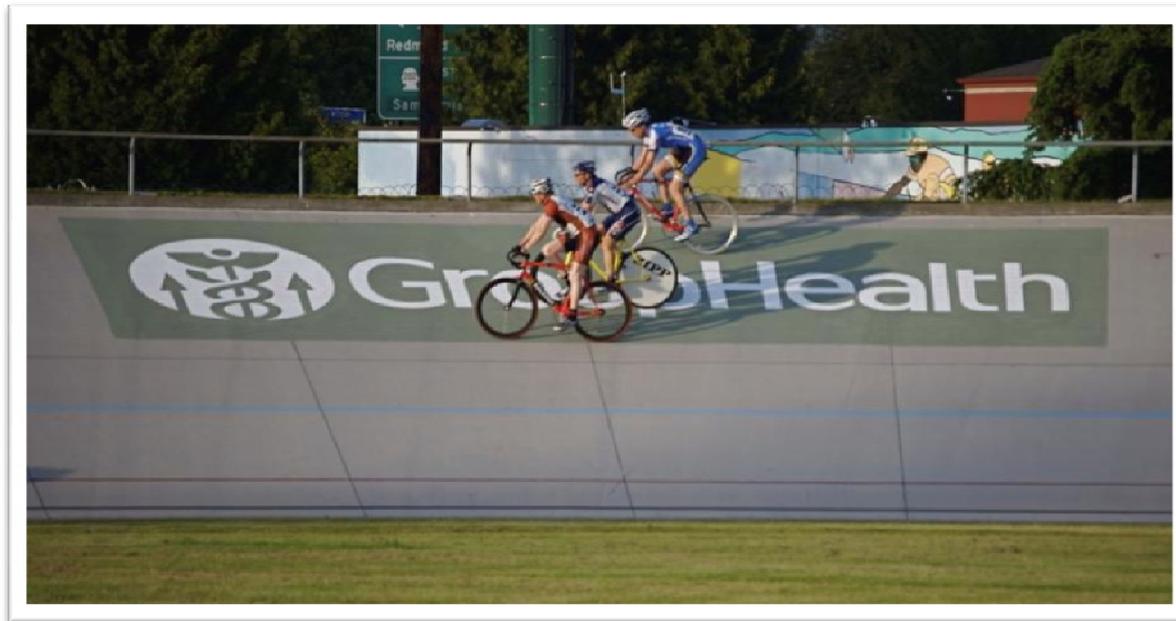
PARTNERSHIPS ARE ...

- *“...a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities...” (Miriam-Webster Dictionary)*
- Community vs. Corporate
(both will considered for this presentation)
- Informal vs. Formal
(the focus of the presentation is on a more systematic approach to formal partnerships)



EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS: CORPORATE

- Concessions
- Naming Rights
- Event Sponsorships
- Gifts/Grants
- Marketing/Advertising
- Lease/Use Agreements



GroupHealth held naming rights at Marymoor velodrome

EXAMPLES OF PARTNERSHIPS: COMMUNITY



- Recreational Programs
- Volunteer Programs
- Special Use Agreements
- Land Conservation

Eastside Audubon helps maintain nature trails in Marymoor Park & offers environmental education programs.



BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS

- Diversify sources of revenue
- Develop new amenities *(w/out significantly increasing on-going operations costs)*
- Broaden sense of ownership *(enhance network of supporters vested in parks)*
- Protect from economic downturns & government budget crises



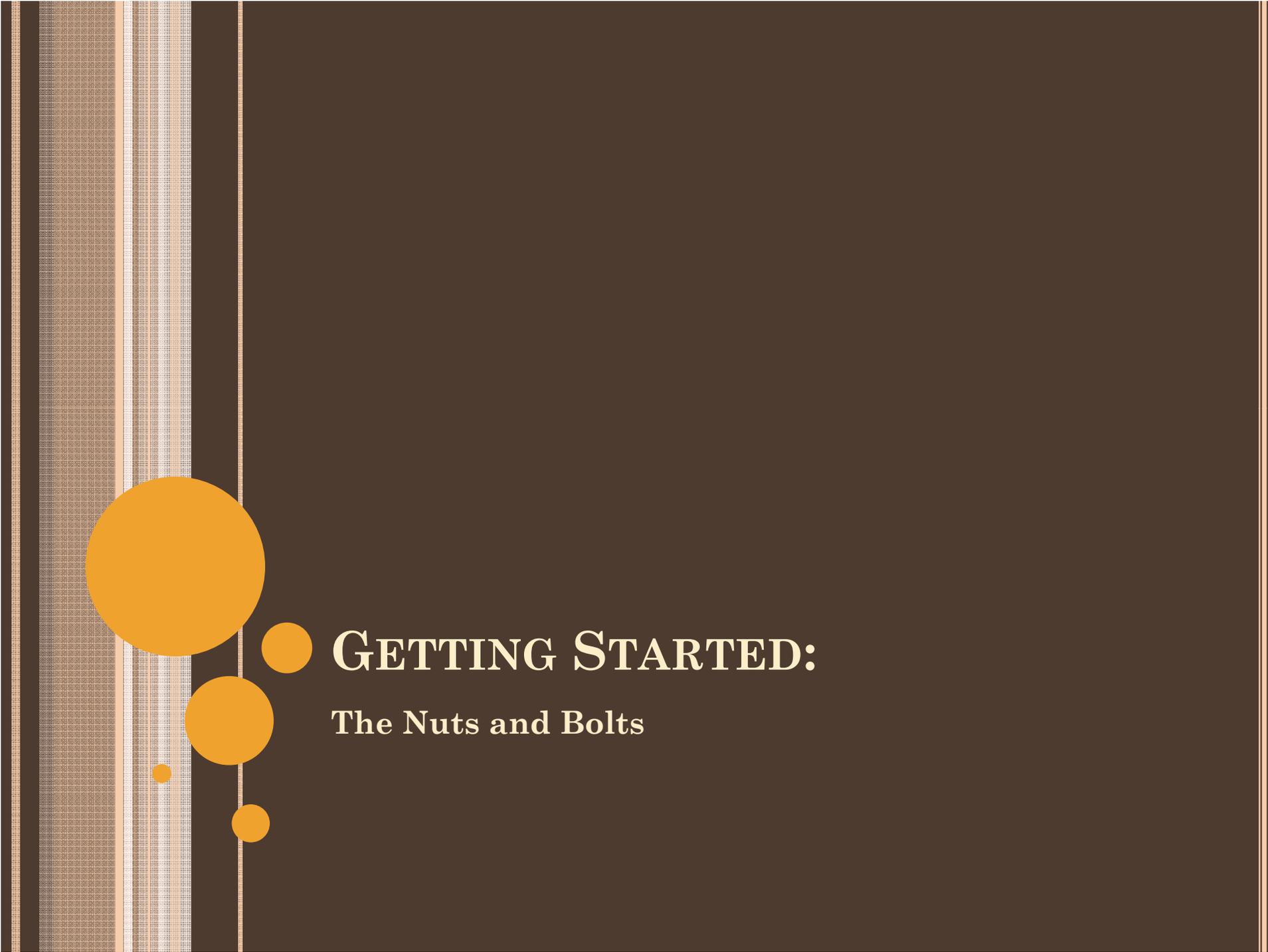
KCP rehabilitated White Center Heights Park through partnerships.

THE DOWN SIDE:

NOT ALL RAINBOWS & UNICORNS

- **Investment of staff time** needed for cultivation, implementation, stewardship
- Partner turns out to be **not the right fit**
- **Negative public perception** / loss of stakeholder support
- Anticipated revenue or other **benefits don't materialize**



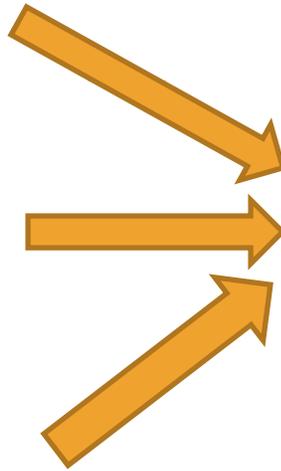


GETTING STARTED:

The Nuts and Bolts

INTERNAL CHALLENGES: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE SHIFT

- Bureaucratic
- Unfocused, no clear mission
- Not customer-service oriented
- 'Not my job' attitude
- **Fear of change**



- Nimble
- Opportunistic
- Creative
- Shared vision
- Everyone vested in agency's success
- **Getting to 'yes'**



INTERNAL CHALLENGES: STATUTORY AUTHORITY SHIFT

- Legislation
- Code Changes
- Risk Management
- Procurement Policies
- Financial Management



INTERNAL CHALLENGES: POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

- Elected leaders
- Agency leaders
- Community Leaders



*Community leaders cut the ribbon at
Seattle's new Lake Union Park.*



ATTRACTING (THE RIGHT)
PARTNERS

SELF – ASSESSMENT:

IDENTIFY WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

- Know your assets
(what's in your inventory that would interest a potential partner – for revenue, promotion/exposure, etc)
- Know your demographics
(who uses your facilities? who are “your people”)
- Know your tools – and to what extent you can offer their benefits to partners
(in-house expertise; well-established event; successful social media following; well-trafficked website)



Marymoor was perfectly situated for an outdoor concert venue.

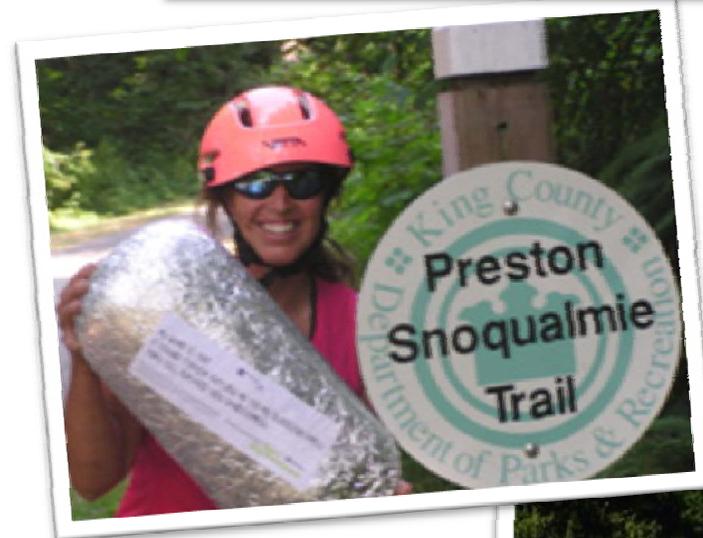


SELF – ASSESSMENT:

DEFINE WHAT YOU NEED FROM A PARTNER

- Direct revenue
- Programming
- Promotion/
Exposure
- Efficiencies

FIND CHIP? Chipotle



KCP teamed up with Chipotle on a promotional campaign that earned \$2m in media exposure.



PARTNER ASSESSMENT: EVALUATE THE RETURN

- How much will this cost us to implement?
(human resources, financial resources, opportunity costs, indirect costs)
- How soon will we recoup what we put in
(how much capital \$ needs to be spent for how much future operations revenue?)
- How much risk are we assuming?
(does the partner have the capacity to succeed?)



KCP invested in an event area, now used by Cirque du Soleil & others.

PARTNER ASSESSMENT: EVALUATE THE RETURN

Return on Investment Rules of Thumb:

- Advertising/Events
→ Immediate ROI
- Small projects
→ 12 - 24 months
- Medium projects
→ 12 - 48 months
- Large projects
→ 12-120 months



KCP invested in an event area, now used by Cirque du Soleil & others.

FORMALIZING THE PARTNERSHIP: ELEMENTS OF A CONTRACTUAL RELATIONSHIP

- Risk assumption
- Work plan
- Milestones / Deliverables
- Time frame
- How and when to pull the plug
- Duration of contractual relationship



SRA has a long-term contract with KCP for building a boathouse and operating rowing programs.

RED FLAGS AND GREY AREAS

- “Public forum” (opening access for all public speech) vs. “Limited public forum” (granting access for some public speech)
- Association and public perception: are you comfortable in hitching your car to that train?
(p’ships can have major political, financial, and image implications for your agency)



The background features a dark brown color with several vertical stripes on the left side. These stripes include a thin gold line, a wider textured gold band, and another thin gold line. To the right of these stripes, there are five orange circles of varying sizes arranged in a vertical, slightly curved pattern. The text is positioned to the right of these circles.

**SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS:
TIPS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

GETTING PEOPLE ON BOARD

*Educate your stakeholders
(internal, external)*

- Sharing the vision
- Understanding expectations
- Respecting transparency
- Communicating the value added



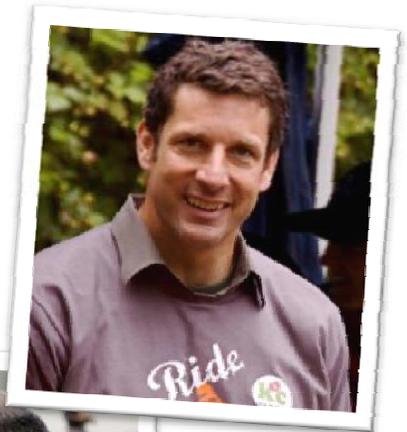
Rowers at Green Lake



GETTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE ON THE BUS

Professional staff with diverse skills:

- Communications/outreach
- Business development
- Financial analysis
- Gov't regulations, protocols, policies
- Contracts



FACILITATING PROCUREMENT

HAVE AN IDEA? WE WANT TO HEAR IT.

Here are a few of the many opportunities available in our park system.

- Recreational / Adventure Activities
- Promotional Advertising
- Gifts, Grants, Endowments
- Professional / Amateur Sports Events
- Capital Projects & Real Estate
- Development
- Historic District Renovations
- Property Lease Agreements
- Eco Tourism Opportunities
- Naming Rights & Sponsorship
- Sustainable Building Projects

200 PARKS **175 MILES OF TRAILS** **26,000 ACRES OF NATURAL SPACE**

IDEAS & PARTNERS WANTED
NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE VENTURES

2010 BIG IDEAS

The Parks and Recreation Division of King County, Washington maintains and operates one of the nation's largest municipal park divisions and proudly receives more than 8 million annual visitors to its 26,000 acres of natural areas. In addition to providing over 175 miles of trails, the Parks Division manages 200 parks, including such regional treasures as Marymoor Park, Steve Cox Memorial Park, Tolt-MacDonald Park and the world-class Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

COME PARTNER WITH US...

Request for Ideas & Proposals **2010 BIG IDEAS**

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

KC Parks' annual RFP&I facilitates entering into partnerships and generates new leads.

COLLABORATING WITH LABOR INTERESTS

- Educating about concept of partnerships
- Establishing on-going communications mechanisms
- Building trust
- Including in partnership development and implementation
- Formalizing collaboration in union contract



Field crew at Cougar Mountain

SEEKING OUTSIDE HELP

- Non-profit organizations



- User groups, community-based groups



USING TECHNOLOGY

- No- and low-cost online tools
(*social media; youtube; blog*)
- Customer feedback systems
(*ex: surveymonkey*)
- Client relationship database
(*for sharing contacts among staff; building institutional history*)
- Financial management
(*generating reports, doing fiscal analyses, tracking revenue*)



Trend Report for parksfeedback.com		7/1/2006
Total Responses		41
Would you recommend to a friend? (1 - 5)		3.68
Strongly Disagree	20%	
Disagree	5%	
Neutral	5%	
Agree	28%	
Strongly Agree	43%	
For those who would NOT recommend to a friend, areas of concern:		
Vandalism / Graffiti	7%	
Dogs Off-leash	11%	
Animal Waste	19%	
Speeding (ie. bicycles)	4%	
Restroom Maintenance	0%	
Parking lot condition	7%	
Signage	7%	
Trail surface (cracks, potholes, etc.)	7%	
Pool (temperature, cleanliness, etc.)	0%	
Parking Fees	0%	
Other	37%	

TRACKING & QUANTIFYING

- **For partnerships:** knowing your numbers make you a more attractive investment (ex: demographics, level of use, etc)
- **For public accountability:** demonstrating the value of the partnership for each taxpayer dollar invested
- **For making your case:** identifying realistic revenue goals, showing progress, and requesting political/financial support from your agency, electeds





UM, NOW WHAT?

IDENTIFY THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT

Get easy wins fast:

- Establish credibility of partnership strategy
- Get 3rd party testimonials
- Partners attract more partners



“King County's 25,000-acre park system is one of the largest in the country. Injecting a measure of efficiency and self-reliance into the system was no small challenge. But it is happening. The value of this kind of creativity cannot be overstated. Parks are not a mandated county service, yet no community would be complete without one. King County's meaningful development of its parks sustains funding and keeps them a treasured public amenity.”

Seattle Times editorial page, June 16, 2006

WHEN THE 'NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS' IS NO LONGER 'NEW'

RINSE and REPEAT

- Enhance communications: up, down and out
- Review, refine, reset
- Research and innovation
- Re-up, revisit





TAKE HOME MESSAGES

PURSuing PARTNERSHIPS: IN A NUTSHELL

- What are your assets? (*What is leverageable? What are your numbers? Who is your usership base? What are the opp's for visibility?*)
- What must you work with or what needs to change? (*legislation, permitting, codes, procurement, org culture, legal, staff skills*)
- What is your story and what can you offer? (*Refine mission and brand; communicate community benefits you provide*)
- What is off the table? (*What are the non-negotiables? What is your stakeholders vision? Is this a battle worth fighting at this time?*)



QUESTIONS?

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King County Parks **Your
Big Backyard**

