

## 2012 King County Parks Levy Task Force

September 25, 2012 Meeting Summary  
*As approved by Task Force on October 2, 2012*

**Levy Task Force Members Present:** Shiv Batra, David Burger, Karen Daubert, Mike Deller (representing Roger Hoesterey), Donald Harris, Terry Higashiyama, Al Isaac, Mark Johnson (representing Terry Lavender), Joey Martinez, Gordon McHenry, Jr., Louise Miller (co-chair), Matthew Pruitt, Charles Ruthford, Kathy Surace-Smith (co-chair), Jim Todd, Justin Vander Pol, Jeff Watling (co-chair).

**Levy Task Force Members Absent:** Julie Colehour, Leda Chahim (representing Gene Duvernoy), Hilary Franz, Chukundi Salisbury, Sili Savusa.

**Parks and Recreation Division Staff and others present:** Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP); Bob Burns, Deputy Director, DNRP; Megan Smith, Environmental Policy Advisor, Executive Office; Kevin Brown, Director, Parks and Recreation Division; Jerry Hughs, Parks Finance Manager; Frana Milan, Parks Program Manager; Cristina Gonzalez, Parks Deputy Finance Manager; A.J. McClure, Councilmember Patterson staff; Shelley McVein, City of Bellevue; Laura Lockard, Woodland Park Zoo; Karen Reed, meeting facilitator.

### **Summary:**

Co-chair Kathy Surace-Smith convened the meeting at 4:05pm.

Co-chair Surace-Smith reviewed the agenda. Members approved the previous meeting's summary notes as presented. Karen Reed introduced the proxies for three absent Task Force members, each having given earlier and appropriate notice. During the evening's voting, Mark Johnson served as proxy for Terry Lavender; co-chair Louise Miller served as proxy for Chukundi Salisbury; Karen Daubert served as proxy for Leda Chahim.

Representatives for two organizations provided public comment. Cathi Hatch, a community volunteer and proponent for the Tateuchi Center, asked the Task Force to include funding for the center in the Task Force recommendation to the King County Executive and Council. She described the center as including various spaces for entertainment (performing arts), education and conference/meeting space. Jim Kelly, the Executive Director of 4Culture, also spoke on behalf of the Tateuchi Center, describing the connection between community arts centers and parks and recreation facilities. Laura Lockard, Associate Director of Strategic Communications and Public Affairs for the Woodland Park Zoo, introduced herself during the public comment period.

Kevin Brown re-capped the costs of continuing to fund the system as it currently stands including continuing funding all components of the current levies at current funding levels, inflated over time. He reviewed the components of the division's proposal which received consensus support from Task Force members at the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Brown then provided further information on the remaining components, including: (1) additional funding for regional open space acquisition; (2) new trail corridor development (funding for

the Lake-to-Sound and BNSF trails); (3) operations and maintenance enhancements (including funding to preserve and protect the BNSF corridor, funding support for WSU Extension's 4-H program, and additional funding for the division's volunteer program); and (4) improvements to service standards (including additional seasonal field staff and safety patrols). For each of these four items, Kevin presented: what the funding buys; why the component is important; and what happens if there is no funding.

Mr. Brown answered questions from Task Force members regarding funding components still under discussion, including questions regarding the rationale behind increased open space acquisition; how the 4-H program is connected to the division's mission and why county contribution is needed for this program; about the efficiency of contracting out for some services rather than hiring additional FTEs; whether the BNSF preserve-and-protect component includes appropriate levels of funding for permitting, encroachments, etc; whether this levy vote will bump junior taxing districts' abilities to levy; and whether there is participation by cities to develop portions of the BNSF rail corridor.

Task Force members commented on a number of items relevant to the remaining process and the potential funding components including: it is time to be bold and that there is great opportunity to acquire land in this economic time period; continuing development of regional trails has high value given their importance to the region and given the region's anticipated population growth, especially in low-income areas; the levy is an unsustainable funding mechanism for the regional parks system, which is such an important facet of the region's quality of life; that while unsustainable, the levy funding mechanism is what is available; the Lake-to-Sound trail is highly needed; the development of regional trails in these economic times may not make sense; the Task Force recommendation should be politically viable; parks facilities are especially important in a challenging economic climate; while jurisdictions have their own maintenance challenges, this region cares deeply about the quality of life and residents have a legacy of voting for initiatives to improve that quality of life.

Ms. Reed then led Task Force members through the process of voting on the four remaining division-recommended components (additional funding for acquisition and maintenance of regional open space; continued development of regional trails; increased service levels and operating and maintenance enhancements), including subcomponent parts of these components. The results of this voting process are summarized in the "*Funding Components Worksheet*" which will be distributed at the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

Ms. Reed noted that the last planned meeting will take place on October 2, 2012. The meeting was adjourned at 6:05pm.