Seattle Parks and Recreation

Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee

Final Report

March 2014

Parks Legacy Plan

Access, Opportunity, and Sustainability

SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION

Chairs' Letter

Dear Friends,

We have had the honor to serve as Co-Chairs of the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee. As directed by City Council Resolution 31454 (May 2013), the Legacy Committee was tasked to evaluate the need for and composition of a potential ballot measure to fund operations, maintenance, development and acquisition of parks and recreation facilities, and programs. This report summarizes the work of the Committee from its first meeting in June 2013 through March 2014, and includes the Committee's final recommendation for the composition and size of a new ballot measure to provide sustainable funding for Seattle Parks and Recreation, as well as the Committee's final recommendation for a funding mechanism.

The volunteers serving on the Committee devoted our time to this work because we strongly believe in the importance of and benefits from parks and recreation. We believe in the department's values of access, opportunity, and sustainability, and we've heard widespread concurrence with these values from the community. The draft Parks Legacy Plan documents the benefits to the community brought by parks and recreation, including:

- Physical health benefits from exercise;
- Respite from the urban environment;
- Health benefits from both exercise and having contact with nature;
- Environmental and climate benefits provided by park trees and the natural features of parks;
- Economic benefits from being a livable city where business and employees want to locate;
- Enhanced revenues generated through increased tourism and property values; and
- Community benefits from offering people places to gather, meet neighbors and build relationships.

We're recommending a $57 million annual package that fixes our well-loved yet worn parks and facilities, and extends programs and services that support and enhance the lives of the people of Seattle. To fund this package, we're recommending creating a Seattle Park District consistent with certain parameters. The Committee, after meticulous discussion, concluded additional costs to taxpayers are necessary because the unfunded needs of parks are at a critical level and should be addressed as soon as possible.

We arrived at our recommendations by carefully considering the instructions established in Resolution 31454, Seattle Parks and Recreation's budget challenges, and public input from a number of sources, including a public hearing in November 2013, three public meetings held in January 2014, and hundreds of written comments. These recommendations are a starting point for City Council and the Mayor to use in developing a ballot measure, and we hope there are ample opportunities for public participation as this process continues.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Committee, Parks staff, and City staff for their tireless work and dedication to caring for Seattle's parks and recreation system. And we would like to thank the people of Seattle for sharing their passions and ideas with us.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wright Charlie Zaragoza

Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee

Final Report – March 2014

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Section 1: Background

A. Resolution 31454

In May 2013 the City Council approved Resolution 31454, creating the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee. The Resolution created the Committee to "ensure citizen participation in the development of a potential ballot measure for funding operations, maintenance, development and acquisition of parks and recreation facilities and programs." To that end, the Resolution directs the Committee to:

a. Review data and information about existing and potential park and recreation projects, maintenance and operations, and programs.
b. Review the draft Parks Legacy Plan and its findings and provide input and comment.
c. Review and comment on criteria for assessing Parks investment initiatives and options for the Mayor and Council's consideration.
d. Apply criteria and review investment initiatives prepared by City staff and provide comments and/or recommendations for Mayor and Council consideration.
e. Review pros and cons for potential funding mechanisms for implementing the investment initiatives, including consideration of the dollar amount needed to fund them and whether permanent or short-term funding is needed or appropriate, and make recommendations.
f. If a short-term funding solution is considered, then the Committee will address the pros and cons of various term lengths and make recommendations.
g. If a permanent funding solution is considered, then the Committee will address the pros and cons of appropriate funding mechanisms, including a permanent levy and a Metropolitan Park District, and make recommendations.
h. Conduct outreach to the broader public to gather recommendations and comments.
i. Advise the Mayor and City Council on the pros and cons for moving forward with a possible ballot measure in 2014 to replace the current parks levy, which expires at the end of 2014.
j. Submit a final report with findings to the Mayor and City Council by March 14, 2014.

B. Committee Members

There are 15 members on the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee, appointed by the Mayor and the City Council, and confirmed by Resolution 31454. Members are:

Barbara Wright, Co-Chair
Charlie Zaragoza, Co-Chair
Thatcher Bailey
Steve Daschle
Bill Farmer
Juli Farris
Thomas Goldstein
Jessie Israel
Diana Kincaid
Michael Maddux
Brice Maryman
Yalonda Gill Masundire
Mustapha Math
Erika Melroy
David Namura

C. Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff Working Team

Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent
Eric Friedli, Acting Deputy Superintendent
Susan Golub, Co-lead
Susanne Rockwell, Co-lead
Joel Harte, Research and Evaluation Aide

D. Seattle City Government Staff Working Team

Catherine Cornwall, City Budget Office
Mike Fong, Office of Policy and Innovation
Ben Noble, City Budget Director
Meg Moorehead, Council Central Staff
Norm Schwab, Council Central Staff
Hall Walker, Former Deputy Budget Director
Kathy Nyland, Councilmember Bagshaw's Office
Jeff Muhm, Former Budget Office staff
Ainsley Close, Former Mayor's Staff

E. Committee Proceedings

As directed by City Council Resolution 31454, the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee has been evaluating the need for and the composition of a potential ballot measure for funding operations, maintenance, development and acquisition of parks and recreation facilities and programs. Agendas, notes, and materials for each of the Committee meetings are posted on the Committee's web page: http://www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy/committee.htm

After gaining a deep understanding of Seattle Parks and Recreation, the Committee developed assessment criteria to use in evaluating projects for inclusion in a ballot measure. The Committee ranked and prioritized an initial group of 37 investment initiatives through a subcommittee process. Each of the 37 initiatives was assigned to one of three subcommittees. The "Existing" subcommittee ranked initiatives that augment or enhance an existing service or asset, the "New" subcommittee ranked initiatives that create a new service or asset, and the "Partnership" subcommittee ranked initiatives that enhance a predominately partner-run program. Each subcommittee prioritized the initiatives based on the application of the assessment criteria, public input, and input from Parks' Race and Social Justice Change Team.

After hearing from the public at the November 7, 2013 public hearing and considering public comments delivered to the Committee in a variety of ways, the full Committee merged the subcommittee priority lists into a preliminary recommendation, contained in the Committee's Interim Report.

The Committee also studied funding mechanisms. At the October 3, 2013 meeting, Hall Walker, Deputy Budget Director, and Ben Noble, at the time Director of City Council Central Staff and currently Director of the City Budget Office, briefed the Committee on a range of funding mechanism options. A panel discussion of funding mechanisms followed at the October 17, 2013 meeting, with Beth Goldberg, City Budget Director at the time, Ken Bounds, former Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Ben Noble. The Committee again discussed funding mechanism options at the December 5 and February 20 meetings.

To provide the Committee with a national context regarding sustainable funding for urban park systems, the Seattle Parks Foundation and the Associated Recreation Council sponsored a presentation by Candace Damon, a nationally renowned expert on creating vibrant, viable cities. On October 22, 2013, Ms. Damon described a range of sustainable funding options implemented in cities around the country and discussed their applicability in Seattle.

The Committee's preliminary recommendation, preliminary problem statements, and preliminary findings were contained in the Committee's Interim Report, released in January 2014. The Committee then held three public meetings to engage the community in discussion about the composition of, size of, and mechanism used in a parks-funding ballot measure. A summary of those meetings can be found at www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy/committee.htm.

After the public meetings, the Committee finalized their recommendations at the February 27 meeting. The Committee made minor changes to three investment initiatives, recommended fully funding the complete package, and recommended the package be funded by a metropolitan park district adopted in conjunction with an interlocal agreement between the City and the Park District governing board.

Section 2: Problem Statements

In evaluating the need for a potential ballot measure, the Committee recognized several problems facing Seattle Parks and Recreation through a detailed look at the department's operations, discussions with staff, tours of parks, and extensive public comment:

- Poor economic times forced decisions to forgo maintenance, creating a backlog of major maintenance projects and causing buildings to deteriorate. There is simply not enough funding for major repairs to reverse the trend;
- Inadequate funding led to shorter hours at many community centers, making it difficult to meet public expectations and equitably serve the public;
- Routine maintenance of both parks and facilities isn't up to the high standards set by the people of Seattle;
- Changing demographics are changing how people recreate, putting pressure on the department to adapt;
- The City's General Fund has proven unable to support basic departmental functions and services given the City's limited ability to increase general fund revenues; and
- The department hasn't had the resources to effectively support partnerships that benefit the public while saving taxpayer money.

Additionally, in 2007, after the Washington Supreme Court ruled 2001's Initiative 747 unconstitutional, the Washington State Legislature limited property tax revenue growth to one percent annually. This constrains property tax revenue increases and does not allow for property tax revenues to keep pace with inflation, squeezing Seattle's General Fund between competing interests and demands within the city. Funding for Seattle Parks and Recreation tends to be a lower priority for budget decision-makers than is funding for public safety and human health services. This situation could become worse in the future, and the public could be asked to vote more often on additional funding for public services.

Tackling these problems will require a comprehensive strategy that supports and holds the department accountable while investing in areas that will benefit the people of Seattle the most. Accomplishing that strategy requires the department to be innovative, nimble, and bold. The Committee's recommended solutions to these problems are found in Section 4: Findings.

A. Problem Statement: Significant Major Maintenance Backlog

Respondents to the 2012 Parks Legacy Plan survey allocated $64.20 of a hypothetical $100 Parks budget to routine and major maintenance, with major maintenance allocated $28.80 out of $100. Clearly, people in Seattle want to see their parks and facilities maintained to a high standard. Voters have also made significant investments in new parks and facilities over the past 30 years through levies and bond measures. Over time, however, major maintenance needs have outstripped funding—leaving the City unable to match Seattle voters' high standards for park and facility quality. If this trend continues, not

only will the total cost of the maintenance backlog increase, but the cost of individual projects will also increase as assets deteriorate over time.

Major maintenance refers to one-time, large-scale maintenance needs at both parks and facilities. Boiler replacements, roof replacements, electrical upgrades, and even facility replacements are examples of major maintenance projects. The list of unfunded but needed major maintenance projects—the backlog—continues to grow, and now totals $267 million spread across nearly 300 projects. The backlog has grown mostly because of two reasons: a large number of older facilities and assets reaching the end of their life cycles, and insufficient funding. In fact, reliable funding will be needed into the future to responsibly address asset management as major maintenance projects are added on an ongoing basis.

Seattle Parks and Recreation operates 465 parks, 26 community centers, ten pools, four golf courses, and much more. Forward Thrust, the 1968 bond package, funded the largest expansion of the park system in Seattle history, and built more than 70 new parks and facilities, including the Seattle Aquarium. Most of those facilities and assets have now operated for 30 years or more—about the length of time during which needs become apparent and require upgrades and repairs. Many projects that should have already been completed were placed on hold because of insufficient funding, causing assets needing repair to degrade further and eventually cost more to repair or replace.

Major maintenance projects are usually funded with Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET), a highly variable revenue stream derived from a tax on property sales and new building construction. For example, annual City revenue from taxes on property sales and new building construction rose to $70 million during last decade's construction boom, but fell to $20 million 18 months later as Seattle entered the recession. The City also chooses how to allocate REET funds among departments each year—adding to REET's instability as a funding source. This funding source is inconsistent and prevents the department from fully addressing major maintenance needs as they arise.

A further impediment is the lack of a coordinated, computer-based "smart" asset management system. Parks' current system can't coordinate work orders, preventive scheduled maintenance, and major maintenance. Without data on the age, condition, life cycle, and location of each asset, and the capability to process and cross-reference that data, Parks can't strategically address the $267 million backlog or make the most efficient use of staff time.

Seattle voters have invested in a high-quality, large-scale parks and recreation system. Yet the department's asset management program hasn't had the stable funding necessary to maintain the system to the standards set by the people of Seattle—leading to the $267 million backlog and the slow deterioration of some of Seattle's most-beloved parks and facilities.

B. Problem Statement: Lack of Funding for Basic Services

Seattle Parks and Recreation places a high priority on providing services that benefit the community as a whole, such as operating community centers, maintaining facilities and infrastructure, and maintaining parks. These programs, however, have not had the resources to meet the public's expectations and needs.

Community Center Operations

Community centers are accessible to all, and are the foundation of low-cost recreation and activity programs that reach all corners of the community. Yet many centers don't have the resources to even hire a full-time janitor. During the recession, Parks successfully reorganized the community center operating model, reducing redundancy and increasing inter-center coordination.

These efficiency gains, however, were outweighed by reductions in resources. While Tier 1 centers are open 70 hours per week—an adequate amount—each of eight Tier 2b centers are open to the public about 25 hours per week. Centers have worked to stretch those limitations, however, spreading resources and straining staff capacity to increase hours. This is unsustainable—the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) donated $450,000 in both 2012 and 2013 to fund 11 needed assistant recreation coordinator positions, a generous gift that can't be expected to continue.

Community center hours open to the public per week, 2010-2013				
Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Hours open to public per week	1,402	1,238	1,115	1,140

Routine Park Maintenance

Park maintenance programs, because of a lack of adequate staff capacity and funding, are not ensuring the highest quality of use for the public while preventing asset deterioration. The past few years—along with significant increases in developed parkland funded by two voter-approved levies—saw budget pressures force the department's maintenance division to reduce trash pickups, mowing, and weeding with 42 positions eliminated and 70 reduced to less-than-full-time. While it was necessary to reduce the department's maintenance capacity for a short period of time, over the long-term, parks need to be maintained to the high level of service that the people of Seattle invested in. Trash should be picked up, restrooms should be cleaned, and grass should be mowed.

Additionally, the department simply does not have the capacity to scale up maintenance programs in order to keep up with summer's peak park use season. A tree crew was also eliminated in 2011 in response to City budget reductions, reducing Parks' ability to perform preventive tree maintenance to once every 50 years, significantly less than the industry standard of once every 14 years.

Facility Maintenance

Long-term facility maintenance programs are not currently able to ensure high quality-of-use for the public or to prevent asset deterioration. Staff are unable to perform preventive maintenance projects because they play a reactive role, responding to roof repairs, electrical failures, and other urgent needs. The lack of a coordinated asset management technology system also makes it difficult to efficiently synchronize facility maintenance work orders with larger capital replacement projects.

This reactive role comes at the expense of scheduled, planned maintenance tasks that prolong facilities' lives and usefulness. For example, recessionary budget pressures cut paint crew staffing in half, increasing the usual 8-10 year interval between paintings to a 14-year interval. Some tasks can be reduced or put off for a year or two—and during the recession, many were. Continuing to maintain facilities to a lower

standard, however, will eventually result in lower-quality facilities, and will make future improvements more difficult and expensive.

C. Problem Statement: Changing Demographics

Innovative, cutting edge, state-of-the-art—these may not be the first adjectives used to describe a large City agency like Seattle Parks and Recreation, but they are qualities Parks must embody in order to meet future needs. As presented in the draft Parks Legacy Plan, changes in Seattle's population and emerging trends in recreation will require innovation and transformation at Parks.

Seattle, like many cities, has a growing, increasingly diverse population:

Population growth and density

While Seattle's population growth slowed in the latter part of the last decade, the City's population continues to grow and will continue to grow into the foreseeable future. Increased density adds pressure to the City's parks and recreation system to accommodate more people. Much of this density will concentrate in apartments and condominiums, which have no open space of their own—adding an even larger burden to the system. Increased density also reduces the availability of land for purchase and drives land prices up.

Age distribution

Young adults: Seattle's population has a higher percentage of people aged 20-34 than the rest of the state or the U.S as a whole—30% of the population. Younger people tend to recreate more in general, are more interested in team sports, and participate more in fitness activities. As long as Seattle's emphasis on higher education remains strong, young adults will remain a large proportion of the population. This places a larger burden on parks, facilities, and athletic fields, which are deteriorating as Parks' major maintenance backlog grows. Is Parks poised to provide services to this growing segment of the population?

The percentage of people over 65 in King County is 11%, lower than the national average. However, their share of the total population is projected to grow, reaching 20% by 2040. Recreation trends studies show older adults participate in fitness-oriented activities and walking. Are Parks facilities and staff aligned to meet the needs of our older adults?

Seattle's percentage of families with children is smaller than in the state or the U.S. as a whole—19% of the population. However, this segment of the population uses parks and recreation programs most extensively. With limited resources, how can we balance the competing demands for space in our community centers?

Ethnicities

Seattle's diversity increased over the past ten years. The Latino population has grown over the past decade, and both immigrants and refugees continue coming to Seattle, increasing cultural diversity and the need for culturally relevant programs. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated in its 2011 five-year American Community Survey that there are about 105,000 foreign-born individuals living in Seattle. The

2012 Parks Legacy Survey showed people of color place a higher value on using parks to socialize with family and neighbors, and also use community centers, playgrounds, athletic fields, recreation programs and picnic areas more than whites do. How do these findings stand up to Parks' limited capacity for outreach to historically underrepresented communities and ability to provide culturally focused programs, such as the Women of the World Swims?

D. Problem Statement: Role of General Fund

Approximately two-thirds of Parks' 2013 revenue came from the City's General Fund. The General Fund is a stable funding source that supports ongoing, basic needs—or should. The state-imposed limit on property tax revenue growth to 1% per year has slowly chipped away the General Fund's ability to fully fund the public's park and recreation needs. Voters invested millions in open spaces and buildings over the past decade, but Parks' General Fund revenue hasn't increased nearly enough to keep up with the system's increasing size and quality. In fact, the City's recent General Fund tax growth has been much lower than in previous post-recession periods.

The 1% growth limit's most significant consequence is its impact on basic departmental functions. General Fund revenues haven't kept pace with inflation or the system's expansion, forcing the department to reduce park and facility maintenance, cut staffing at community centers, and leave partnership and grant money on the table.

Other revenue sources play an important role in Parks' budgeting. Revenue from fees, rentals, and concessions contribute to diversifying Parks' revenue base and supplementing the General Fund. However, Parks' commitment to access and equity results in low fees for programs for children and for programs that benefit the community as a whole.

The General Fund supports basic, core City services. During a recession, when tax revenues dry up, the City prioritizes public safety and human services for General Fund support. Parks and recreation services are, understandably, lower priorities.

Other City departments have found they are unable to fully fund their operations and maintenance through the General Fund, and have asked voters to impose levies to fund such basic functions. In 2012, Seattle voters passed a seven-year, $122.6 million levy to fund library operations and maintenance. In 2006, voters passed a nine-year, $365 million transportation levy, known as Bridging the Gap, to reduce the maintenance backlog and provide basic transportation services like paving and repairing streets, performing seismic upgrades to bridges, and improving safety.

E. Problem Statement: Leveraging Funds through Partnerships

Partnerships may diversify sources of revenue, help to develop new amenities, broaden the community's sense of ownership of Parks assets, enhance a network of supporters vested in parks, and protect the organization from future economic downturns and government budget crises. While a partnership

approach is not right for all circumstances, there are many opportunities to leverage this approach with a new funding package.

Seattle is full of organizations, non-profits, and people working to achieve many of the same goals as Parks. There are groups working to educate youth and families about nature and the environment, non-profits that teach at-risk youth about healthy eating and wellness, a bevy of groups working to conserve and maintain plots of land both large and small, and more—Seattle is full of civic-minded people looking to make a difference. Partnerships benefit the public while saving taxpayer dollars by pulling in hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours each year, helping to fund improvements to parks and facilities, and even managing some facilities.

The demand for parks and recreation services in Seattle outstrips the department's General Fund support, and key partners need to be able to fill gaps in service. For example, the Woodland Park Zoo and the Aquarium are both located on Parks property, and were once operated by Parks. They now are operated by non-profits that can use nimble fundraising and staffing strategies. There's an opportunity for Parks to fully leverage such partnerships to meet the high demand for parks and recreation services, but the department isn't able to quickly respond to and support these groups, or provide needed seed resources to get projects off the ground. Resources are needed to leverage and manage public private partnerships to respond to new ideas and opportunities, protect existing resources for access for all, and manage an expanding body of work. Several of the recommended investment initiatives embrace partnerships; for these initiatives to succeed, Parks and the community at large should be open to innovation.

F. Problem Statement: Continued Expectation and Support for Increasing Parks' Assets

The public expects Parks to continue to increase both the scope and quality of the City's parks and recreation system, which is especially important given Seattle's population growth and increasing density. It's also important that Parks remove private encroachments onto public park land; a long-standing policy directive to protect and preserve park lands by preventing unauthorized non-park uses and eliminating encroachments has long been in effect, but incremental cuts to Parks' property management unit sapped its ability to protect public park property. It's important both to grow the system to accommodate population and demographic changes, and to protect and reclaim the parks already enjoyed by the public.

Section 3: Public Input

Parks developed a comprehensive public involvement process which included a project website, extensive community and media outreach, briefings with city councilmembers, community leaders, city departments, and the Associated Recreation Council. Press releases announcing all Committee meetings went to 400 local news outlets, multiple neighborhood blogs, the City's official minority media list, and the department's Parkways blog. Eighty-five individuals signed up to speak at the November public hearing, and an over 1,000 people participated by emailing, writing, or speaking at a Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee meeting or a public meeting. The Race and Social Justice Change Team worked closely with the Citizens' Advisory Committee and reached out to 24 historically underrepresented groups.

Public input helped shape this report's problem statements, findings, and specific project details, and the Legacy Committee is grateful for the robust oral and written public comments.

A public input summary can be found in Appendix A: Public Process Summary.

Section 4: Findings

The Legacy Committee examined Seattle Parks and Recreation's operations through numerous briefings and by touring existing facilities. They listened to the public's needs, wants, and concerns. The Co-Chairs also met with City officials and Seattle City Staff. In doing so, we identified a number of problems currently facing the department, and problems facing the department in the future.

The Legacy Committee found the following issues:

- There is a significant major maintenance backlog of deteriorating assets that need renovation,
- There is a lack of funding for basic services,
- There is a set of new demands and different tastes from Seattle's changing demographics, and
- There is an opportunity to leverage funds through partnerships.

These problems can be addressed through a strategy of targeted investments in the parks and recreation system, stable funding, and departmental accountability. To address the problems identified in Section 2: Problem Statements, the Committee recommends the following:

A. Eliminate Major Maintenance Backlog

As one Committee member stated, "We need places for people to go and something for them to do when they get there." To ensure that places are safe, welcoming, and enduring—now and into the future—the Committee decided the top funding priority is Investment Initiative #1a, Fund Major Maintenance Backlog and Property Management. No organized constituency calls for mundane projects such as fixing leaky roofs or replacing outdated electrical systems, but the Committee learned through the Parks Legacy Plan survey and through staff and public testimony that taking care of what we have is the best way to protect our incredible park and recreation resources for future generations.

B. Fund Basic Services

Community Center Operations

Are community centers places for people to go for diverse programs such as hip-hop dance, computer training, yoga, and senior bridge games? Or, are they drop-in centers that provide safe places for young people to gather and hang-out? The Committee heard from older adults and teens that more programs are needed, and that community centers need more publicly available time so people can simply gather and meet. Our community centers are places where at-risk children can find a safe refuge.

This testimony and Parks' data showed the common thread is the need for more staffing, which would open the doors for longer hours and provide more programming. The Committee recommends Investment Initiative #1b, Restore Community Center Operations, which builds on the recent reorganization of center operations that allowed for better coordination between centers. This initiative would reverse recession-mandated cuts to staffing levels that hurt implementation of the reorganized operating model and reduced public access to community centers. As one staff member told the Committee Co-Chairs, "even a rubber band stretched too thin will break."

Routine Park Maintenance

As with major maintenance, there's no organized group calling for cleaner bathrooms and more frequent garbage and litter removal – it's just not the type of project people coalesce around. Yet, via the responses to the Legacy Plan survey and through Committee member park tours and experiences, we found day-to-day maintenance keeps parks welcoming and conducive to the types of healthy, community-building activities the Committee wants to see happening. Our recommendation for Investment Initiative #1d, Provide Clean, Safe, Welcoming Parks, reflects our understanding of the importance of providing safe, welcoming parks, centers, and pools.

Facility Maintenance

While routine park maintenance is day-to-day, facility maintenance preserves the long-term health of facilities through painting, electrical work, plumbing, carpentry, and other trades. Committee members, after touring a variety of parks, noted that seeing parks with an eye to their maintenance issues brings a new perspective, and brought up a feeling that "we can do better". Committee members also noted that some facilities are in great shape and others are in horrible shape, with not much in between. For example, with hundreds of people in and out of a community center each day, painting only once every

14 years is clearly not frequent enough. To remedy this situation, the Committee gives a high priority to Initiative #1c, Increase Preventive Maintenance. This initiative is closely tied to Initiative #1a, major maintenance funding, as a larger emphasis on regular facility maintenance and preventive care can reduce the need for major maintenance renovations in the future.

C. Enhance and Create New Partnerships to Leverage Funds and Expand Opportunities

Following the January 2014 public meetings, and based on the strong public support for the Green Seattle Partnership, the Committee decided to increase their recommended annual funding level for **Initiative #7, Saving Our City Forests** to $2.85 million.

Partnerships come in all shapes and sizes, and the Committee heard testimony from representatives of a diverse group of partners. What we heard showed that partnerships are often an effective way to equitably deliver more access to services, above and beyond what Parks typically can provide itself. That's why partnerships are integral to our recommendation, and permeate our recommended investment initiatives. We've recommended investing in Initiative #6, Major Projects Challenge Fund, which would match funds raised by community groups in order to pay for major improvements to Parks facilities, such as constructing new playfields, restoring and creating new habitat areas, and improving neighborhood parks. We've recommended including significant major maintenance funding for both the Aquarium and Zoo—two of Parks' key partners, in accordance with established agreements and commitments to those facilities. We've also recommended additional investments to support Green Seattle Partnership goals —the innovative, successful partnership that restores Seattle's forests one tree at a time. Additionally, we're proposing Initiative #3, Park Land Acquisition and Leverage Fund, which will provide matching funding to acquire properties identified through King County's Conservation Futures Program.

Beyond these large investments, we're also recommending leveraging resources in other ways. First, we've recommended a number of initiatives that include or enhance a volunteer component. In 2012, people volunteered almost 400,000 hours to Parks—hours spent clearing trails, pulling invasive weeds, lining athletic fields, and much more. These efforts greatly support the department's work, and should be supported. Specifically, the Legacy Committee recommends that a major partnership be identified to address the extremely expensive repairs needed for Building 2 in Magnuson Park. Building 2 is a historically significant structure is need of major reconstruction, and is also an incredible opportunity to redevelop with a partnership.

We also want to bolster recreation programs that partner with community groups to provide access and opportunity for all. We recommend investing in the Activation bundle (including central waterfront activation, urban center activation, citywide art activation, increased safety, and p-patches), which enhances Parks' ability to engage with the community and build partnerships to make sure parks are safe, fun, and clean. Parks already works with partners to activate public spaces, and additional investments will leverage even more community support and involvement in parks.

D. Create Access and Equity

Since the Committee convened in June, we have heard the need for access and equity for underrepresented groups in Parks' programs and services. We heard praise for existing programs such as the Women of the World Swims, learned of the good work accomplished at community centers through partnerships with organizations such as Neighborhood House, and heard the importance of providing both quantity and quality in terms of parks throughout the city. Further, the Committee learned Seattle's population is expected to increase, become proportionately older, and become more ethnically diverse. Seattle Parks and Recreation can wait for these changes to occur and then respond as demand for parks and programs change, or Parks can anticipate change and proactively adjust to greet the future when it arrives. Improved outreach, more access to community centers, and keeping programs affordable are all approaches that anticipate the future.

The Committee heard frequently and with great passion the need for culturally-attuned programs such as women-only swims, and the importance of keeping programs affordable for immigrants and refugees. The high prioritization of Initiative #2a, Recreation Opportunities for All, reflects both the city's changing demographics and Parks' current lack of staff capacity to perform needed outreach (for example, we learned how limited community center staffing—at times there is only one staff person in a center—can be a significant barrier to community outreach, as staff can't leave the facility to meet with people).

The Committee recommendations reflect what we've heard about the need to create access and equity for all. Below are a few examples:

Investment Initiative #2a, Recreation Opportunities for All
The Committee increased funding for this initiative from $315,000 to $465,000 in order to expand the reach of the program, and we recommend that some of the funding be provided to partners who may be better positioned to reach underrepresented populations.

Investment Initiative #1b, Restore Community Center Operations
As noted previously in this report, the funding for community center operations will both increase programming capacity and open center doors for more un-programmed hours. This recommendation reflects what we heard at the November 7 public hearing: community centers are a great place to hang out.

Healthy, Active, and Engaged
The Committee recommendations place programming for people—older adults (Initiative #2d), teens (Initiative #2b), those with disabilities (Initiative #2c); and partnerships with community groups to get people physically active (Initiative #13)—as a high priority. These programs, through initiatives such as the senior Food and Fitness Program and the Late Night program for teens, provide needed access and opportunities for underrepresented populations.

During the January 2014 public meetings, the Committee heard compelling testimony from members of the public who noted that initiatives #2c and #2d should not receive drastically less funding than initiatives #2a and #2b do. In light of these public calls for equity, the Committee chose to increase the funding for programs for people with disabilities (#2c) and for older adults (#2d).

E. Foster Organization Change/Departmental Accountability

Seattle Parks and Recreation already has many of the basic elements needed to be a leader in its field—a large parks system with lots of variety, numerous community centers and facilities with something for everybody, and dedicated staff that truly care about the quality of parks and the well-being of the public. Any large organization, however, can become a defender of the status quo at the expense of new and

innovative ideas. To ensure the department is accountable to the public, dynamic, and able to adapt to new conditions, we recommend:

- Greater investments in convening staff at all levels to set measurable and aspirational benchmarks that tell us, as a department and as citizens, that we have achieved success;
- Funding for program audits;
- Funding for development of high performing teams throughout the department to deliver more effectively on mission;
- Regular reporting on the department's efforts to implement the ballot measure;
- Added communications capacity to connect with people the same way they connect with each other, via the internet and social media;
- A survey of the public every two years to assess how well program implementation is meeting community needs;
- A survey every two years to assess the health and vitality of the department's employee culture, an essential ingredient to staff's ability to deliver on mission; and
- A review of benchmarks from other park and recreation agencies to assist in creating performance measures.

We recommend Initiative #21, Performance Monitoring and Strategic Management, which represents about 3.2% of the total package size and would fund the recommendations above. Inclusion of this initiative in the package will ensure that Parks will be spending money in the future more wisely.

It is essential that department accountability include an on-going, robust public process. In this regard, the Committee recommends two items in the interlocal agreement which would be approved concurrently by the City Council with approval of a park district: a Citizens' Oversight Committee and an on-going, robust citizen participation process. These items are fully described in Finding I, Recommended Funding Mechanism.

F. Prepare for a Funding Package

It will be critical to provide the needed professional resources to be ready to deliver on any successful funding package. It is recommended that the Mayor and Council provide additional assistance with management, budgeting, finance, personnel, and contracting in late 2014 to prepare the Department for these additional programs and activities.

G. Seek Other Revenue Sources

It is recommended that the City continue to seek other non-traditional revenue generating sources. Other cities use closely-aligned revenue sources, e.g. public utility funding, user fees, development fees, etc. to increase park and recreation resources.

H. Recommended Investment Initiatives

The recommended initiatives presented below reflect the rigorous process described in Section 1.E Committee Proceedings.[1]

The following table contains the Committee's recommended investment initiatives, in priority order:

#	Investment Initiative	Program Category	Annual Costs ($K)	Cumulative Total Cost ($K)
1	**Core Investments in Parks and Recreation**			
	a. Fund Major Maintenance Backlog and Property Management	Fix it First	**$19,965**	
	b. Restore Community Center Operations	Programs for People	**$2,600**	*$26,263*
	c. Increase Preventive Maintenance	Maintaining Parks and Facilities	**$1,448**	
	d. Provide Clean, Safe, Welcoming Parks	Maintaining Parks and Facilities	**$2,250**	
2	**Healthy, Active, and Engaged**			
	a. Recreation Opportunities for All ($465)			
	b. Better Programs for Young People—Seattle's Future ($554)	Programs for People	**$1,459**	*$27,722*
	c. Meeting the Needs of People with Disabilities ($170)			
	d. More Programs for Older Adults ($270)			
3	**Park Land Acquisition and Leverage Fund**	Building for the Future	**$3,000**	*$30,722*
4	**Aquarium Major Maintenance**	Fix it First	**$1,200**	*$31,922*
5	**Zoo Major Maintenance**	Fix it First	**$2,000**	*$33,922*
6	**Major Projects Challenge Fund**	Building for the Future	**$5,000**	*$38,922*
7	**Saving Our City Forests**	Maintaining Parks and Facilities	**$2,850**	*$41,772*
8	**Maintain Seattle's New Waterfront Park**	Building for the Future	**$3,197**	*$44,969*
9	**Energize Urban Center and Neighborhood Parks**			
	a. Activate the New Seattle Waterfront Park ($313)	Building for the Future		
	b. Activate Urban Center Parks ($250)	Maintaining Parks and Facilities		
	c. Put the Arts in Parks ($340)	Programs for People	**$1,753**	*$46,722*
	d. Make Parks Safer ($550)	Maintaining Parks and Facilities		
	e. Rejuvenate Our P-Patches ($200)	Building for the Future		
	f. Improve Dog Off-leash Areas ($100)	Programs for People		
10	**Develop and Maintain 15 New Parks**			
	a. Develop and Maintain Smith Cove Park ($897)	Building for the Future	**$2,297**	*$49,019*
	b. Maintain 14 New Parks at Land-Banked Sites ($1,400)			
11	**Community Response Fund**	Building for the Future	**$600**	*$49,619*
12	**Activating and Connecting to Greenways**	Building for the Future	**$320**	*$49,939*
13	**Get Moving Fund**	Programs for People	**$980**	*$50,919*
14	**Neighborhood Park Enhancements**	Building for the Future	**$500**	*$51,419*
15	**Customer Service and Technology**	Programs for People	**$850**	*$52,269*
16	**Expand Environmental Learning Partnerships**	Programs for People	**$220**	*$52,489*
17	**Environmental Sustainability Fund**	Fix it First	**$1,500**	*$53,989*
18	**Management Plans For Regional and Center City Parks**	Fix it First	**$240**	*$54,229*
19	**New Outdoor Pool for South Seattle**	Building for the Future	**$1,162**	*$55,391*
20	**Athletic Field Turf Maintenance**	Maintaining Parks and Facilities	**$200**	*$55,591*
21	**Performance Monitoring and Strategic Management**		**$1,840**	*$57,431*

[1] The Committee recommended funding this $57.4 million package with an 11-1 vote at the February 27 meeting.

I. Recommended Funding Mechanism

The strategies outlined in Section 4: Findings require a long-term, stable, sustainable funding source. We considered two mechanisms to support long-term maintenance and operations: a property tax levy and the creation of a park district.

Property tax levies fund a number of Seattle government services in a way that is simple for voters to understand. On the ballot, a levy informs voters what the levy rate will be, and usually contains a list of the projects or services included, which, to voters, increases accountability, as they weigh in every six or eight years on whether the levy should be renewed and what projects should be included. Levies, however, are not usually dependable, long-term funding sources that pay for long-term, sustained needs.

A park district is a separate City taxing authority. If enacted by the voters, such a ballot measure would create a new taxing jurisdiction, with the same boundaries as the City, and create a governing board that could levy up to 75 cents per $1,000 of assessed value.

The Committee has concluded that only a park district can sufficiently provide the sustainable, long-term funding necessary to address the problems identified in Section 2: Problem Statements. As a separate taxing authority, a park district would have no impact on the City's levy capacity. This unused capacity could be used for other important City needs. Because policymakers are reluctant to use the City's full capacity, passage of a park district would increase the chances that Parks receives the funding necessary to sustain the legacy of Seattle's park and recreation system.

Throughout the Committee's process, members were concerned about the possibility of park district funding supplanting Seattle Parks and Recreation's General Fund support allocated through the normal budget process. Committee members strongly expressed that the City should not be allowed to substitute park district funding for annual General Fund contributions to Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Some are concerned a park district would not be accountable to the people and would have powers above and beyond City rules, laws, and ethics. The Committee worked to address those concerns, and developed a list items requiring of greater accountability and public involvement.

Recommendation:

The Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee recommends a Seattle Park District with the following elements included in an interlocal agreement adopted by the City Council by ordinance at the same time as the Council adopts the ordinance putting the Park District on the ballot.[2]

1. District Boundaries. Park District boundaries will mirror the boundaries of the City of Seattle as they currently exist or as they may exist following future annexations.

[2] The Committee recommended formation of a park district with an 11-1 vote at the February 27 meeting.

2. Park District governing board. The Seattle City Council will be the Park District governing board. City councilmembers will not receive any additional compensation as members of the Park District governing board.

3. Compliance with City rules and laws. The Park District governing board would contract via interlocal agreement with the City making Seattle Parks and Recreation Department (Parks) the sole provider of park and recreation services for the Park District. As a City department, Parks is required to comply with City laws, ethics rules and labor contracts.

4. Citizens' Oversight Committee. In the interlocal agreement between the Park District and the City, the District would require the City to form a Citizens' Oversight Committee to provide advice and oversight for District services. The committee would include four members of the Park Board PLUS seven additional community members. The Superintendent of Parks and Recreation would appoint the Chair of the Oversight Committee.

   A. Oversight Committee terms for Park Board members will coincide with their Park Board terms. The 7 other members will serve 3-year terms that begin in April.

   B. The Oversight Committee will advise the Mayor, City Council, Park Board and department on District-funded spending and activities, including:

      1. Making recommendations to the Superintendent on annual allocation of the Major Projects Challenge Fund.

      2. Reviewing the annual District report including assessment of performance measures and reporting to the Superintendent and Park Board on implementation issues, concerns and needed adjustments in services or spending.

      3. Holding public meetings and making recommendations to the Superintendent as input to each 6-year update to the District spending plan.

   C. The oversight committee will hold regularly-scheduled public meetings.

5. Ownership. Park lands purchased by Seattle Parks and Recreation with Park District funds are and will remain the property of the City of Seattle. Any new or replacement land, facilities, and equipment created or developed with Park District funds will become the property of the City of Seattle. Selling City-owned park land or facilities, whether they were bought with City or Park District funds, would be subject to Initiative 42 restrictions on the sale of park property.

6. Condemnation. If condemnation of property is needed to perform Park District services, Parks will follow City condemnation procedures.

7. Relationship to City Budgeting. The Mayor would direct the development and implementation of Parks' budgets and work programs. City Council would approve Parks budgets and provide oversight. The Park District Board would approve a final Park District budget showing how Park District revenues would fund part of the Parks' budget.

8. Continued City Funding of Parks. The City will continue to use City revenues to fund Parks and will continue to allocate 2014 levels (at least $89 million/year, adjusted annually for inflation) of General Fund revenues to support Parks' services and facilities unless the City Council by a ¾ vote determines that a natural disaster or exigent economic circumstances prevent the Council from maintaining this level of General Fund support. Parks' charter revenues (10% of certain City fines and fees) will continue to be allocated solely to park and recreation purposes as provided in Article XI Section 3 of the City Charter.

9. Initial Tax Rate and Spending Levels. For the first 6 years, the District intends to collect no more than $58 million/year, adjusted for inflationary costs. If the levy had been in effect in 2014, the amount would translate into an estimated tax rate of $0.45 per $1,000 of the value of assessed property. This would be a $181 assessment for the owner of a house valued at $400,000. Park District revenues in the first six years would be spent to accomplish the Prioritized List of Investment Initiatives as proposed by the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee and amended by the Mayor and Council.
10. Spending Beyond Year 6. Parks will conduct a community-oriented process to determine spending priorities every 6-8 years through the life of the Park District. The Park District governing board, after considering the recommendations from the public process and the Citizens' Oversight Committee, would determine the spending levels and updated Prioritized List of Investment Initiatives for years 7 through 12 as part of the 2021 budget process. This process of adjusting the spending levels (with annual inflation adjustments) and a revised list of investment initiatives would continue for the life of the Park District.
11. Dissolving the Park District. While not required by State law, the Park District governing board will dissolve the District if there is a majority vote of the people of Seattle calling for its dissolution.
12. Civic Engagement. In addition to the public review and accountability process provided by the Citizens' Oversight Committee, Seattle Parks and Recreation shall conduct an on-going, robust civic engagement strategy. Public feedback and participation in Park District decision-making is essential.

We recommend including the above parameters in an interlocal agreement between the City and the Park District governing board.

J. Move Forward With a Ballot Measure

One of the charges given to the Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee by Resolution 31454 is to "advise the Mayor and City Council on the pros and cons for moving forward with a possible ballot measure in 2014 to replace the current parks levy, which expires at the end of 2014."

Two central facts became clear to the Committee during our work: Seattle Parks and Recreation offers a well-loved array of parks and programs, and economic circumstances have stretched Parks' ability to serve the community and maintain facilities at a consistently high level. The city is also changing demographically and the park and recreation system needs to reflect these changes to ensure access and equity citywide. There are community opportunities to involve partnerships in new, exciting, and beneficial ways, which will require a new way of doing business. Finally, there are numerous physical, economical, health, community, and environmental benefits to parks and recreation facilities. To be a truly great city, we need a great park system. The problem statements included in this report speak clearly to the needs.

As the Committee has heard and learned through the experience of the recent recession, the City's General Fund cannot be relied upon to support parks and recreation at a level that meets the needs of the community and preserves the legacy our community has supported and loved for over a hundred years. The Committee recommends moving forward with a ballot measure, and further recommends that Council concurrently adopt both the ballot measure ordinance and an ordinance to officially express Council's intent to enter into the interlocal agreement.

Section 5: Next Steps

March

Legislation and Final Committee Report to City Council and the Mayor

- March 6 – PLCAC final meeting - consensus on final Committee report
- March 12 – Delivery date for final Committee report to the Mayor and City Council
- March 17 – Council Select Committee meeting
- March 18 – Latest date for Mayor to transmit proposed legislation to Council
- March 31 – Council Select Committee meeting

April

- April 7 – Council Select Committee meeting - public hearing
- April 14 – Council Select Committee meeting
- April 21 – Council Select Committee meeting

May

- May 5 – Deadline for passage by Council to submit a measure for the August 5, 2014 ballot.

Appendix A: Public Process Summary

June 2013 - February 2014

This summary is a high-level outline of the public process and comments received to date. All written input received was distributed directly to committee members.

A. Opportunities for Input

Key dates:

- June 2013: Second draft of Parks Legacy Plan released with proposed recommendations based on public comments received from April to May
- June 2013: Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee (PLCAC) began meeting
- June 2013: March 2014 - Opportunity for public comment at each PLCAC meeting and via email or US mail
- November 7, 2013: Public hearing on proposed investment initiatives
- January 23, 25, and 30, 2014: Citywide public meetings

B. Public Involvement

Parks developed a comprehensive public involvement process which included a project website, extensive community and media outreach, and briefings with city councilmembers, community leaders, city departments, and the Associated Recreation Council.

C. Race and Social Justice (RSJI)

Parks' Race and Social Justice Change Team worked closely with the Citizens' Advisory Committee. They conducted outreach with 24 historically underrepresented groups and met with 16 of those in "backyard" settings to gather input on the Parks Legacy Plan and individual investment initiatives. The Change Team submitted a report to the PLCAC, posted on the Legacy Plan webpage, outlining their recommendations for proposed investment initiatives with RSJI implications.

The RSJI Change Team briefed the full Citizens' Advisory Committee and attended subcommittee meetings to discuss their recommendations.

Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) highlights:

2012 Parks Legacy Survey

- The survey was translated into and administered in nine languages in partnership with the Department of Neighborhoods' Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POELs).
- Parks received 115 responses from members of historically underrepresented communities (HUCs) and 107 responses from teens.

Parks Legacy Plan and Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee Public Meetings

- Fliers were translated into nine languages, translators were on hand at meetings, and food, childcare and transportation assistance was provided by the Associated Recreation Council.
- Meetings were publicized through City's minority media list.
- Parks partnered with Neighborhood House for additional outreach, increasing public input and meeting attendance.
- Parks Legacy Plan held a dedicated meeting for historically underrepresented communities (HUCs).

PLCAC Meetings and Public Hearing

- Fliers were translated into nine languages.
- Parks' Change Team engaged 16 groups in "backyard" meetings, briefed the PLCAC, and submitted recommendations.

D. Outreach for PLCAC Meetings and Public Hearing

Press releases announcing all Committee meetings went to 400 local news outlets, multiple neighborhood blogs, the City's official minority media list, and the department's Parkways blog.

Outreach included:

- An invitation to underrepresented communities, emphasizing the importance of hearing from them, was translated into 7 languages and posted on the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs' ethnic media page.
- Twitter posts to Parks' 12,500 followers.
- Posts on 54 Parks-affiliated Facebook pages. Email invitations and updates sent to 450 interested parties and everyone that signed in legibly to a Parks Legacy meeting or event.
- An email update sent to Parks staff.
- Flyers passed out at Washington Wellness Fair, Maple Leaf Park opening, and Building 30 opening event.
- A continually updated Parks Legacy Plan website, which received 6,575 page views since April 2013.

Coverage included:

- A KUOW story on major maintenance needs at Green Lake Park.
- A Seattle Times series on the Parks Legacy Plan.
- An NPR story on the major maintenance backlog.
- A Seattle Channel program on the Parks Legacy Plan.
- Coverage from local city blogs, including the West Seattle Blog, My Ballard, Queen Anne News and Capitol Hill Seattle, publicizing the PLCAC meetings, the public hearing, and comments.

E. Results

To paraphrase a former Parks superintendent, *"Seattleites love their parks; they just love them in different ways."*

Legacy Plan Outreach

2012 Parks Legacy Use and Opinion Survey - 3,457 respondents

- Sept-Oct 2012
- Statistically valid phone survey and other survey tools were administered to gather information on use and awareness of Parks facilities and programs.
- Public responses helped frame the Draft Parks Legacy Plan.

Parks Legacy Plan Public Meetings – 300 people signed in

- May 2013
- Hosted 6 meetings citywide, one of which was focused on historically underrepresented communities (HUC).
- Public input from these meetings helped develop the Legacy Plan draft goals and investment initiatives.

Full summaries of the 2012 Parks Legacy Use and Opinion Survey and the Parks Legacy Plan public meetings can be found in the Parks Legacy Plan.

Citizens' Advisory Committee Meetings and Outreach

Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee (PLCAC) Meetings and Public Hearing – 1,000 respondents

- June 2013 - Feb 2014
- Public input was taken at each PLCAC meeting, by email and regular mail.
- One meeting was a dedicated public hearing.
- Public input resulted in the addition of investment initiatives, the re-prioritization of investment initiatives, and changes in funding amounts of investment initiatives.

Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee Public Meetings – 250 attendees

- January 2014
- Hosted 3 meetings citywide
- Public input was taken on the prioritized list of investment initiatives, funding amount, and funding mechanism for an August ballot measure.

What we've heard - Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee public meetings - full notes available at www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy/committee.htm.

1. *Prioritized list of investment initiatives:*
   The major areas of concern were mostly focused on wanting Lifelong Recreation funding to be a higher priority and to have more fiscal balance within the Healthy, Active, and Engaged Initiative (#2). Additionally, participants wanted more emphasis on Programs for People and less emphasis on Building for the Future. There was strong sentiment that addressing and significantly reducing, if not eliminating, the maintenance backlog should be a priority, and an emphasis on taking care of what have first, before tackling other issues.

2. *Preferred funding amount:*
   Meeting participants were very supportive of funding for Parks, with long-term financial stability a top priority.

3. *Preferred funding mechanism:*
   There did not seem to be a correlation between support for the preferred funding amount and preferred funding mechanism. Most participants expressed support for a short-term levy and were concerned about some aspects of a Park District. Accountability and citizen oversight were most concerning.

What we've heard - email comment tally

Comments made at the public hearing, via email, or at the committee meetings predominantly fell into one of 19 categories listed below. Please note the majority of people that spoke at meetings or the public hearing also submitted written or emailed comments—some more than once—so there is some overcounting in the figures reported. Some individuals spoke or wrote to more than one topic.

The tallies and short summaries below reflect the written and email comments' main topic or concern, and do not attempt to capture every point made in each individual comment submitted.

Beacon Hill – 6 comments

Beacon Hill playfield is used extensively by the elementary school and is a mud pit. This field and Cleveland High School need to have synthetic turf and lighting.

Community centers and programming – 16 comments

Support for funding to make community centers and programming more accessible and inclusive. This is a cultural and social justice imperative. Increasing scholarship funding opportunities through the creation of a citywide scholarship fund in partnership with the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), with higher allocation to centers in higher poverty neighborhoods. Support for funding programming investment initiatives.

Environmental education – 9 comments

Support for environmental education initiatives. This should be higher up on the priority list, with higher funding amounts.

Green Seattle Partnership – 65 comments

Strong support for this investment initiative. GSP is one of the most cost-efficient organizations and organizes, educates, and supports so many volunteers who accomplish so much to the benefit of the entire city.

Greenways – 8 comments

Support for safe routes to parks that provide environments for families to safely walk and bike to city parks. Many proponents felt strongly that this funding should solely support Seattle Parks and Recreation efforts.

Lake City Community Center – 10 comments

Comments focused on Lake City CC being operated by the North Seattle Chamber of Commerce as less than a full-service facility with limited programming, and a request for a new full-service community center in this neighborhood.

Lifelong Recreation – 32 comments

Comments focused on wanting Lifelong Recreation funding to be a higher priority and to have more fiscal balance with other Programs for People initiatives.

Magnolia Playfield (and other playfields) – 180 comments

95% of these email comments supported improved drainage and synthetic turf to be installed at Magnolia's south playfield, at Magnuson playfield additions, and at Smith Cove playfields.

Magnuson – 9 comments

Majority of comments supported implementation of Magnuson's Strategic Master Plan, community center improvements, walking trail and circulation plan, facility renovations, and a maintenance plan. The Magnuson Park Advisory Committee submitted an initiative proposal that encompassed several projects important to the diverse user groups there.

Maintenance – 12 comments

Many proponents spoke to numerous investment initiatives, but also emphasized that Parks should fix what we have first and then deal with other matters. Eliminating the maintenance deficiency should be the first order of business.

Metropolitan Park District (MPD) vs. Levy – 47 comments

Several individuals spoke to either their support or disapproval of a levy or a Park District. Those opposed to a Park District expressed concerns about:

- A loss of accountability because a Park District cannot be repealed by voters;
- A loss of accountability because the Park District does not provide a regular means for people to provide input into what projects are to be funded; and
- The lack of certainty provided to voters because the levy rate is not approved by voters, but is set by the Park District Board.

Those in favor of a Park District expressed support because:

- A Park District is a long-term sustainable funding source, appropriate for funding programs and operations and long-term funding needs, such as the major maintenance backlog; and
- The size of the projects proposed for funding is more than could be funded with a levy because of the overall city levy capacity and the many competing needs for levy funding.

Off-Leash Areas – 54 comments

Support for funding to build new dog parks throughout the city and for better maintenance of these parks. Small opposition to funding for off-leash areas.

Other – 59 comments

This category encompasses letters of support from various organizations and groups for a wide range of investment initiatives, while also advocating for their respective organizations, such as: the Zoo, the Central Waterfront Committee, Friends of Olmsted Parks, and Queen Anne Boulevard.

P-Patches – 75 comments

Strong support for the Urban Food and P-Patch investment initiative, which would renovate existing p-patch gardens and develop potential new gardens.

Playfields – 13 comments

Support for maintenance improvements to playfields around the city.

Pools – 22 comments

Some proponents spoke for improvements and extended hours at Pop Mounger pool. Some made a request for a new outdoor pool in NE Seattle. Some were against an outdoor pool in North Beacon Hill; some were in support of an outdoor pool in North Beacon Hill.

Smith Cove – 6 comments

These comments were all in favor of improvements to the playfield portion of the site.

Race and Social Justice – 127 postcards

A group brought 127 signed postcards to a Legacy Committee meeting that supported integrating affordability, accessibility, and accountability into future programming at community centers and pools. The postcards provided people with the opportunity to indicate their interest in specific programming as well as their ability to pay. While responses varied, 70% of the cards indicated the ability to pay between $0 and $5 per class (of those who wrote in an amount).

Woodland Park Zoo – 44 comments

The majority of these comments expressed concern over conditions with elephants being kept captive and the sentiment that the Zoo already receives sufficient funding.

Appendix B: Recent Funding Information

A. City Levies

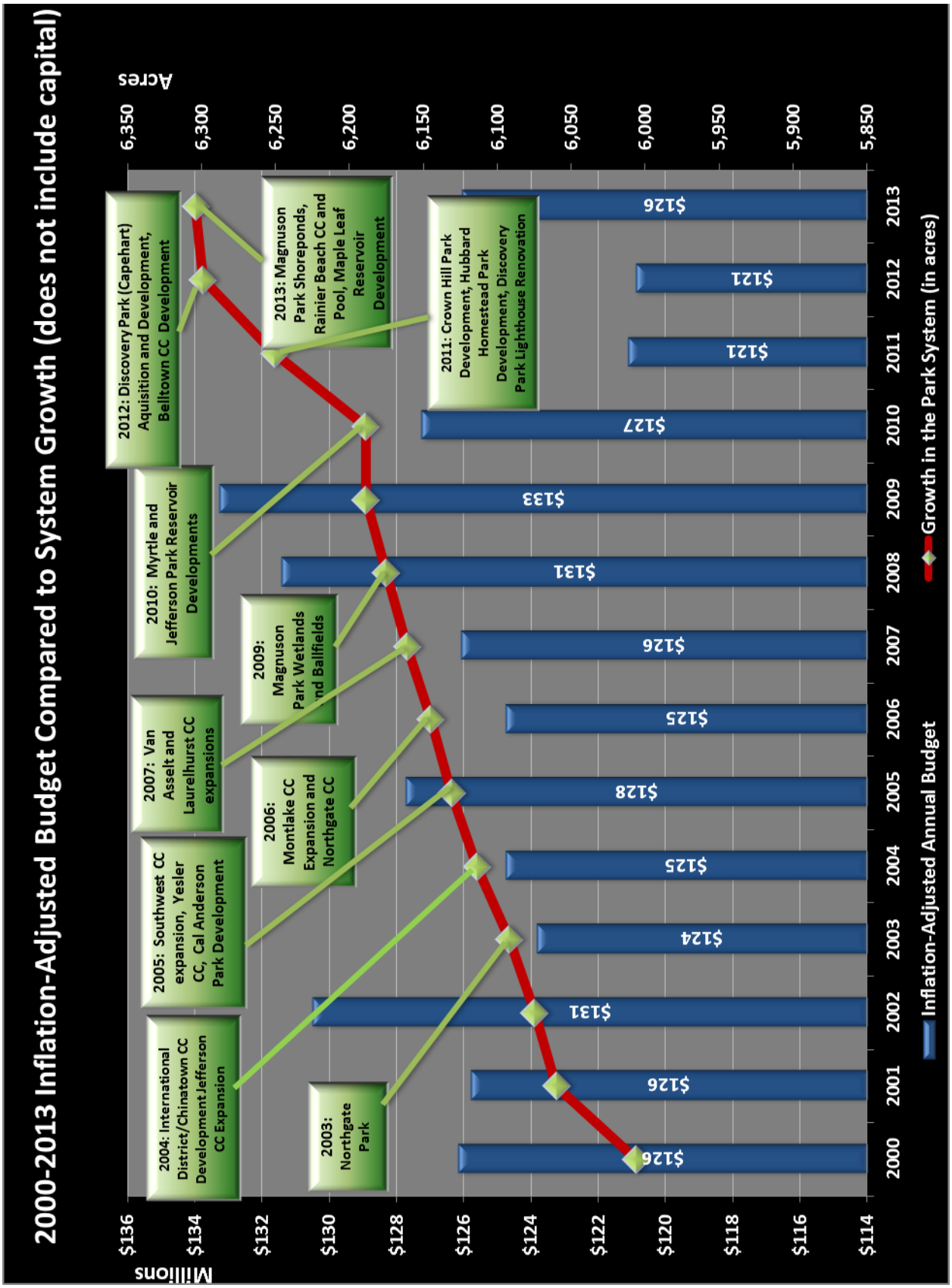
The attached table shows the City of Seattle's current property tax levies. Both the Parks and Pike Place levies will expire at the end of 2014.

Levy Collections in Dollars - 2014

Seattle Assessed Value (AV), 2014 =	128,205,753,919
General Fund	$230,931,896
Fam. & Ed	$32,746,230
Trans - BTG	$39,289,914
Pike Place	$7,812,000
Parks	$24,250,000
Housing	$20,714,286
Library	$17,170,000
Available Annual Capacity	$75,805,812
Maximum City Collection	$448,720,139

B. Funding History

The attached chart shows Seattle Parks and Recreation's budget compared to the growth of the park and recreation system itself.


2000-2013 Inflation-Adjusted Budget Compared to System Growth (does not include capital)
Millions
Acres
$136
$134
$132
$130
$128
$126
$124
$122
$120
$118
$116
$114
6,350
6,300
6,250
6,200
6,150
6,100
6,050
6,000
5,950
5,900
5,850
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
$126
$126
$131
$124
$125
$128
$125
$126
$131
$133
$127
$121
$121
$126
2004: International District/Chinatown CC Development Jefferson CC Expansion
2005: Southwest CC expansion, Yesler CC, Cal Anderson Park Development
2007: Van Asselt and Laurelhurst CC expansions
2012: Discovery Park (Capehart) Aquisition and Development, Belltown CC Development
2003: Northgate Park
2006: Montlake CC Expansion and Northgate CC
2009: Magnuson Park Wetlands nd Ballfields
2010: Myrtle and Jefferson Park Reservoir Developments
2013: Magnuson Park Shoreponds, Rainier Beach CC and Pool, Maple Leaf Reservoir Development
2011: Crown Hill Park Development, Hubbard Homestead Park Development, Discovery Park Lighthouse Renovation
Inflation-Adjusted Annual Budget
Growth in the Park System (in acres)