

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Approval of Proposed Policy Position regarding King County Metropolitan Parks Task Force
DEPARTMENT:	Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services
PRESENTED BY:	Wendy Barry, Director

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The Metropolitan Parks Task Force (MPTF) formed by King County Executive Sims, has requested input from cities regarding proposed options the Task Force is considering to reduce and/or avoid closure of King County Parks due to the budgetary shortfall.

The purpose of this staff report is to inform the City Council of the progress of the Task Force to date and to seek Council consensus regarding the proposed City of Shoreline Policy Position. This document will provide feedback to the Task Force as it shapes its recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The Task Force held its first meeting on April 2. The final meeting is scheduled for June 12. Two public meetings were held on May 13 in Redmond, and May 15 in Maple Valley. These public meetings were well attended and provided an opportunity for the public to share ideas and give feedback on revenue and expenditure options. At the May 15 meeting, the MPTF invited representatives from cities to provide input to the Task Force. The final meeting of the MPTF is scheduled for June 12.

The following is a summary outline of Metropolitan Parks Task Force Potential Recommendations. To accomplish the vision outlined in the recommendations, a three-year transition period is expected.

The King County Parks System of the future should be focused on acquisitions and stewardship of:

1. Resource and Ecological Lands
2. Regional Trails
3. Regional Passive Parks
4. In addition, King County should retain a limited set of regional active sports facilities to be operated out of a Parks Enterprise Fund. (Marymoor Park, Fort Dent, King County Fairgrounds and Weyerhauser-King County Aquatic Center)

5. King County has continuing responsibility for local park and recreation facilities in the unincorporated areas. However, the County should work aggressively to divest itself of facilities within the potential annexation areas of cities.
6. The County system should not include the local pools within cities, or any other local facilities within city boundaries. The Task Force supports the concept of creating a regional aquatics task force.
7. Community centers and recreation programming: King County should divest itself of its community centers and programming activities. The County should work to identify alternate service providers and operators, such as non-profit groups (YWCA, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs) or cities.
8. The County should not have a role in operating new sub-regional facilities, but could facilitate bringing parties together and perhaps make capital contributions.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The final recommendations of the Task Force have yet to be established. Fiscal impacts for Shoreline taxpayers are unknown at this time. King County Parks transferred all of its properties to the City of Shoreline after incorporation. This is largely a tax equity issue for taxpayers in the City of Shoreline. They currently pay taxes for City of Shoreline parks and recreation facilities. While County taxes are used to subsidize regional facilities, it is noteworthy that a portion of City of Shoreline taxpayers' county tax dollars are apparently used to subsidize urban services in unincorporated areas in King County.

The Task Force is reviewing use of existing County revenues to support the parks system, including the County Road Fund, Surface Water Management fees, and support of local unincorporated facilities through a local unincorporated funding source. Long-term permanent funding solutions include some level of taxpayer subsidy through three potential mechanisms: 1) Countywide levy lid lift dedicated to County parks; 2) special purpose district dedicated to City and County parks with proceeds shared appropriately with cities included in the district; and 3) sell park assets to create a permanent fund to support operation and maintenance of higher priority park assets.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council consensus and direction to the City Manager to provide input to the Metropolitan Park Task Force based on guiding principles in the Proposed Policy Position outlined in Attachment A.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: City of Shoreline Proposed Policy Position

Approved by:

City Manager  City Attorney N/A

**CITY OF SHORELINE
PROPOSED POLICY POSITION**

Attachment A

The City of Shoreline requests that any funding strategies to be considered to reduce and/or avoid closure of King County Parks should be in alignment with the following guiding principles.

- a. The County's role and identified levels of service for parks, recreation and cultural services need to be more clearly defined with emphasis on stewardship of regionally significant parks, environmental areas and trails.
- b. Shoreline shares the goal of preserving regionally significant park resources as part of the County's infrastructure. Shoreline supports the orderly transfer of non-regionally significant parks to cities.
- c. Financial constraints and sustainability should be factored into all recommendations.
- d. Recommendations for operational savings and reductions, and corresponding savings and reductions in County overhead costs, are a prudent and necessary first step, and send a strong message to the public.
 - Market and pricing analysis of revenue producing facilities and services should be considered with the goal to recover operating expenses plus administrative overhead where possible.
 - The City encourages the MPTF to look at all options, including partnerships that could provide some level of revenue while preserving regional parks, environmental areas and trails.
- e. Funding strategies and mechanisms need to be equitable to all taxpayers in King County. Shoreline taxpayers should not be asked to pay for the provision of urban services in unincorporated areas or other cities in King County.
- f. Solutions that would create or impose a new level of government or taxing districts in incorporated areas should not be considered.
- g. Shoreline supports the concept of the creation of a regional aquatics facilities task force to develop recommended strategies for provision of aquatics services in the region.
- h. Shoreline supports exploration of the creation of smaller, localized park districts throughout the unincorporated King County (i.e. South County, East County, and North County).
- i. Shoreline opposes funding solutions that impose new countywide taxes such as sales tax increases and property tax levy lifts.

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