

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE: King Conservation District Assessment DEPARTMENT: City Council PRESENTED BY: Councilmember Gustafson

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

The Suburban Cities Association Policy Issues Committee will be meeting on September 13 to vote on a recommendation to the SCA Board on the King Conservation District assessment issue. The attached policy paper was prepared by a PIC subcommittee for submission to the full PIC. If Council wishes to provide guidance to the City PIC representatives (Mayor Ransom – member, Councilmember Gustafson – alternate) they should do so at the September 11 meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council provide direction to Mayor Ransom and Councilmember Gustafson on this issue.

Approved By: City Manager  City Attorney ____

Attachment: A. SCA PIC Policy Issue paper

Briefing for SCA Public Issues Committee
on the
King Conservation District Assessment Re-authorization
September 13, 2006

Issue:

The King Conservation District has requested approval by the King County Council to re-authorize the existing special assessment of \$10 per parcel, which was approved in 2006, for a 5-year period and has proposed a new assessment allocation of funding.

Background:

The King Conservation District (KCD) is a special purpose district within King County that is allowed by State law to assess up to \$10 per parcel to fund the KCD programs. Prior to 2006 the KCD assessment was \$5 per parcel. In 2005, the King County Council approved a one-year assessment of \$10 per parcel for 2006. The KCD is now requesting re-authorization of the \$10 per parcel assessment along with changes as to how the funding would be allocated. The estimated total revenue to be generated in 2007 by the \$10 per parcel assessment is \$5.87 million. The revenue from the new 2007 assessment is proposed to be allocated to the following programs in the KCD work program:

Stakeholder/Partnership Program	2007 Allocation of Funding
Member Jurisdiction Partnerships	\$1,725,291
WRIA Forum Partnerships	\$1,811,556
Conservation Partnerships Grants/Contracts	\$478,071
Other King Conservation District Programs & Services	\$1,783,274
Total	\$5,798,192

The existing 2006 assessment was allocated to the following programs in the KCD work program:

Stakeholder/Partnership Program	2006 Allocation of Funding
Member Jurisdiction Partnerships	\$1,112,523
WRIA Forum Partnerships	\$3,337,570
Conservation Partnerships Grants/Contracts	\$0
Other King Conservation District Programs & Services	\$1,112,523
Total	\$5,562,616*

*The difference between 2006 and 2007 total allocations are due to estimated revenue amounts and change revenue due to the increase in the number of parcels within the County.

The changes in the 2007 assessment from the 2006 assessment is as follows:

- 50% increase in funding to the County and cities that are members of the King Conservation District.
- \$440,000 dedicated to implementation of the Conservation District Strategic Initiatives related to salmon recovery, sustainable agriculture and response monitoring.
- \$478,071 dedicated to a new competitive grant program, which will allow non-profit groups and local governments to apply for funds to implement projects related to salmon recovery, sustainable agriculture and response monitoring.

- A 12.5% increase in funding for the Conservation District activities due to the increased workload that has resulted from the passage of the County's new Critical Areas Ordinance and partially replaces contact funds for this purpose that used to come from King County. This funding is primarily used to help property owners with the development of a farm plan that protects water quality and salmon habitat.
- A 54% reduction in the WRIA Forum funding that is used to fund projects identified in the WRIA 7, 8 and 9 Salmon Habitat Plans that were ratified by the County and cities in 2006.

In summary, the 2006 KCD \$10 per parcel assessment was allocated with WRIA Forums getting \$6, Member Jurisdictions getting \$2 and the KCD also getting \$2 (6-2-2). The proposed 2007 KCD \$10 per parcel assessment would be allocated with the WRIA Forums getting \$3, Member Jurisdiction getting \$3, the KCD getting \$3 and a new competitive grants program getting \$1 (3-3-3-1).

Policy Issues:

1. The 54% (over \$1.5 million) reduction of funding to the WRIA Forums will significantly reduce the WRIA Forums ability to implement the already priority projects that have been identified for implementation and ratified by the County and the cities within each of the WRIA's by their approval of the Salmon Habitat Plans developed for WRIA's 7, 8 and 9. The WRIA Forums could submit project to the KCD as part of their new competitive grants program, but it would create additional work, another layer of review, and unnecessary bureaucracy. Each jurisdiction that is a member of the KCD could use their 50% increase in funding to fund projects identified in the WRIA Salmon Habitat Plans, but there is no guarantee that jurisdictions would do that and again it creates additional work, another layer of review, and unnecessary bureaucracy.

The jurisdictions within the WRIA worked together over the last six years to produce the WRIA Salmon Habitat Plans and implement projects in response to the Endangered Species Act listing of Chinook salmon and bull trout. These plans are an integral part of a Salmon Recovery Plan for the Puget Sound Evolutionary Significant Unit that is being developed by NOAA Fisheries and the USFW Services, in coordination with Shared Strategy. The KCD funding is important to show the federal agencies that the actions identified within the WRIA plans will be implemented over a reasonable time period.

The WRIA Forums are ramping up implementation of the ratified WRIA Salmon Habitat Plans and the reduction in funding will hurt this effort. The reduction in funding could result in the need for individual jurisdictions to contribute more to the implementation of the WRIA plans, slow down or stop project implementation. It also may have an impact on the new 9-year interlocal agreement being developed to fund the administrative and project management costs associated with implementing the WRIA plans. Jurisdictions may not approve a new WRIA interlocal agreement, if there is reduced funding to implement projects due to the concern that the funding shortfall may have to be made up by the jurisdictions that are part of the new WRIA interlocal agreement.

2. The total proposed allocation distribution provides a lot of funding for salmon recovery, but it would be distributed so broadly that the regions ability to address

the significant habitat improvements that are necessary to increase salmon population, distribution and diversity would be decreased.

3. Each member jurisdiction would get a 50% increase in the funding that they could submit non-competitive grant applications to the KCD for projects that meet the KCD funding criteria. This may be beneficial to individual jurisdictions to fund other programs and efforts. The increase in funding to medium and small cities is not very much and may not be enough to do anything of value. In addition, there is still the administrative work of getting approval of a grant by the KCD, the legislative approval of an agreement with the KCD for the grant and, reporting that offsets the benefits of the incremental increase in funding.
4. The KCD assessment has to be approved by the King County Council, which can only approve or reject the KCD proposed \$10 per parcel assessment and assessment allocation. The County Council cannot change how the KCD assessment is allocated.

Options:

The following are options that the SCA can consider:

1. Support the re-authorization of the proposed KCD \$10 per parcel assessment and the proposed assessment allocations (3-3-3-1).
2. Support the re-authorization of the proposed KCD \$10 per parcel assessment, but not the proposed assessment allocation. Support the assessment allocations that was approved in 2006, or develop an alternative assessment allocation.
3. De-annex from the King Conservation District and be removed from the district assessment.

Recommendation:

Recommend that the SCA support the proposed King Conservation District \$10 per parcel assessment re-authorization, but not the proposed assessment allocation of 3-3-3-1. Recommend that the SCA request the King County Council to reject the proposed KCD assessment and funding allocation plan, unless the King Conservation District revises the proposal to include an assessment allocation that is similar to the 2006 assessment allocation of (6-2-2).