



**Legislative Department
Seattle City Council
Memorandum**

Date: March 8, 2011
To: Parks and Seattle Center Committee
From: Norm Schwab, Council Central Staff *Norm Schwab*
Subject: C.B. 117122 – Parks Levy First Round Opportunity Fund Projects

In 2010, the Parks Department conducted the first round of Parks and Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund applications for approximately \$7 million. The 2008 Parks Levy includes a \$15 million Opportunity Fund which the Levy Oversight Committee recommended to allocate through two funding cycles. The next cycle is planned in 2012.

C.B. 117122 appropriates \$6,966,000 for 13 development and two acquisition projects, as recommended by the Levy Oversight Committee. A copy of the criteria used by the Levy Oversight Committee is attached (Attachment 1). Equitable distribution of Opportunity Fund dollars was also a consideration. The legislation also creates new projects in the 2011-2016 Capital Improvement Program of the Parks Department, authorizes preliminary planning activities related to acquisition projects and the acquisition of two properties: 18th Ave. SW and SW Brandon St. (Puget Ridge Edible Park) and 19th & Madison Neighborhood Park. The Council Bill requires a three-fourths approval vote of the Council.

Notable among the criteria established by the Levy Oversight Committee are:

- (1) Projects that demonstrate new and creative methods to meet the community's needs for parks, green spaces and green infrastructure, and
- (2) Projects that contribute to solving major challenges facing our community, such as climate change, the health of our waterways, or growth management.

The citizen's advisory committee that helped to shape the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy placed an emphasis on these points. This was confirmed in Council Resolution 31073, a companion to the levy ballot ordinance, in part to further *Bands of Green* and *Open Space Seattle 2100*. Several projects recommended by the Levy Oversight Committee address these considerations, including but not limited to: East James Court Development, John Street Enhancement Project, McGilvra Place Green Infrastructure, Naturalizing Northgate, the Troll's Knoll, John Muir Elementary Playground Improvements, Lewis Park Reforestation, Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands, and Puget Ridge Edible Park.

Two of the recommended projects are not on Parks-owned sites: El Centro de la Raza Play Area Improvements and a portion of University Heights – South Lot Development. The use of Levy funds on these projects requires that Parks enter into agreements with the non-City entities to secure public benefit and public access. In addition, although the John Muir Elementary Play Area project is a Parks-owned site, it is managed by the Seattle Public Schools. A similar agreement will need to be executed for this project.

Several projects are located in SDOT-owned right-of-way: East James Court Development, McGilvra Place Renovation, and Troll's Knoll on Aurora Avenue N. at N. 36th Street. Because these are not Parks-owned sites, Parks will enter into agreements with SDOT to ensure that park/open space use is ensured due to the investment of Levy funds. A transfer of jurisdiction agreement will be completed for the Troll's Knoll project from SDOT to Parks.

One of the innovative projects recommended for funding is the Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetland Improvements proposed by the Friends of Atlantic City Nursery. Parks has already started a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to select a non-profit agency to operate the project once the physical redevelopment is completed by Parks. The Parks Department anticipates that there will be no operational or maintenance costs to the City; the selected non-profit agency will be responsible for these. A business plan is required as part of the response to the RFP. Parks plans to select the operator and bring an agreement to the Council for its review and approval in May 2011.

Attachment 1: Parks & Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund Project Criteria

PARKS & GREEN SPACES LEVY Opportunity Fund Project Criteria

\$7 million is available in this first funding cycle for Park Development and Acquisition Projects evaluated according to the criteria below through a selection process.

Project Proposal Letter due February 1, 2010
Project Application due April 2, 2010

The Parks & Green Spaces Levy Citizens Oversight Committee will strive towards equitable distribution of Opportunity Fund dollars. Only projects that result in a site acquisition or a completed development project will be considered for funding.

Project Requirements

1. Development projects must be on property that is accessible to the general public.
2. Project should be of a sufficient size and nature to produce tangible parks, recreation or open space benefits. For development projects, the project award range is \$200,000 up to \$750,000. For acquisition projects, the project award is up to \$1,500,000 and should be at least 10,000 sq. ft. (approximately) in size.

Initial Criteria

In general, priority will be given to projects that best meet the Initial Criteria.

3. Project has been subject to a public review process or is consistent with an approved plan, such as: a neighborhood plan, a watershed plan, a vegetation management plan, or Parks master plan.
4. Project should not result in significantly higher operation and maintenance costs for the City. *(Does not apply to acquisition projects).*
5. Project should demonstrate a high degree of neighborhood involvement and support, or demonstrated need.

Evaluation Criteria

In addition to the Initial Criteria, projects will be ranked by the following Evaluation Criteria.

6. Does the project demonstrate new and creative methods to meet the community's needs for parks, green spaces and green infrastructure? *(20 points)*
7. Is the project a unique opportunity that will be lost if action is not taken now? *(20 points)*
8. Does the project address a park, recreation or open space deficiency (as outlined in Parks 2006 Open Space Gap Analysis), or an underserved community? *(20 points)*
9. Is the project in an area experiencing growth, particularly an urban village or urban center? *Priority will be given to projects that are within an urban village boundary that is deficient in open space. (15 points)*
10. Does the project contribute to solving major challenges facing our community, such as climate change, the health of our waterways, or growth management? *(15 points)*
11. Does the project leverage other resources from other public agencies, or funding from public, private or philanthropic partners? *(10 points)*

ATTACHMENT 1

