

# THE PARKS AND GREEN SPACES LEVY CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE



FINAL REPORT



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## Executive Summary

This report was prepared by the Parks and Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee consultants, Cedar River Group, and summarizes the work of the Committee.

In November, 2000, the voters of Seattle approved the Pro Parks Levy, providing nearly \$200 million for the expansion and improvement of Seattle's parks and green spaces. During its eight-year life, the levy funded one hundred forty acquisition and



development projects throughout Seattle, added more than forty-two acres of parks and greenbelts, and leveraged more than \$28 million in funding from other sources for improvements.

The popularity of the levy projects, coupled with citizen concern about the long list of vital projects still to be funded, led many citizens to contact elected officials to urge that the Pro Parks levy be renewed. The rapid population growth that is occurring in many of Seattle's urban villages added to the urgency of the calls for renewal. Many of the areas experiencing increased density lack the parks and green spaces needed to balance that development, and the City's ability to address those needs will be severely limited without levy funding.

In response to these concerns, the City Council adopted resolution 31055, creating a twenty-eight member Parks and Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee to review existing needs and develop a potential ballot package for the Council's consideration.<sup>1</sup> The Council's Park Committee Chair further directed the Committee at its first meeting to develop a list of projects that reflects a consensus of the Committee's members; consists of projects that have reliable cost estimates; can be substantially completed during the six year life of the levy; and that do not exceed \$140 million in total funding.

The Committee has held seven meetings, conducted four community outreach workshops and one public hearing, and devoted hundreds of hours to reviewing more than three hundred and fifty potential projects identified through a review of existing Parks Department documents, neighborhood plans, and other source materials. Dozens of additional projects were nominated by citizens at outreach workshops, or by e-mail to the Committee's web page.

The Committee's research found that:

- Capital funding for Seattle Parks and Recreation will decline dramatically with the end of the current Pro Parks levy.
- Past park levies have leveraged major contributions from other sources.

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of the Council Resolution can be found in Appendix A.

- Public opinion research suggests there is strong support for a parks and green spaces levy.
- City and community planning initiatives have identified many projects that are worthy of consideration for levy funding.

The Committee screened potential projects against two threshold criteria:

- The project had to have been previously vetted through a public review process or recognized in an official City Plan.
- Evidence had to be shown that the project could be substantially completed during the six-year life of the proposed levy.

In addition, the Committee weighed the type and extent of public benefits afforded by the projects, geographic and social equity, the urgency of the project, the level of public support, potential contributions to environmental sustainability and public health, and the potential to leverage other financial resources or in-kind contributions.

### **The Committee’s Levy Proposal**

The Advisory Committee has developed a \$140 million<sup>2</sup> levy proposal that is designed to advance five principal goals:

1. Ensure that our parks facilities are safe:



The proposal provides funding to bring twenty-three substandard playgrounds into compliance with federal safety standards; to make safety improvements at Othello Park; to make critical seismic repairs at Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center and the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park; and to convert three wading pools, which may have to close to meet health standards, to spray pools.

2. Protect and enhance Seattle’s Green Legacy for future generations:

The levy proposal provides funding to acquire critical parcels in our City’s remaining greenbelts and natural areas, to continue the renewal of the Washington Park Arboretum, and to restore forests, streams and shorelines on




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<sup>2</sup> To allow for inflation, the proposal includes \$120 million in allocations in 2008 dollars.

City-owned lands. The proposal makes imaginative use of the City's mandatory investments to protect its reservoirs by providing funds to create new parks on reservoir lids at Jefferson Park and Myrtle, Maple Leaf, and West Seattle Reservoirs. When completed, these parks will add seventy-three acres of new park land. The proposal also provides funding to renovate Camp Long for environmental education and camping opportunities for families and youth groups, and funding to expand the City's network of P-Patches and community food gardens to provide people of all ages with the chance to grow their own produce.

3. Create neighborhoods that support healthy living for all ages:

In addition to upgrading twenty-three neighborhood playgrounds, the Committee's proposal includes other major investments in recreation including improvements in sports fields at lower Woodland, Genesee, and Delridge Parks to improve playing conditions and conserve water. The package includes funds to extend the Burke-Gilman and Duwamish Bicycle Trails, and construct the Thomas Street overpass to provide a trail connection between South Lake Union, Queen Anne, and the Olympic Sculpture Park. Funding for three skateboard projects is also included.



4. Provide the parks and green spaces that are essential if our City is to grow with grace:

The proposal includes \$24 million to acquire park land, facilities and trail corridors in urban villages and single-family neighborhoods which have been identified by the City as having critical deficits of parks and green spaces. In addition, funding is included to complete the development of parks in the International District, Whittier Heights and Crown Hill on property acquired through the 2000 Pro Parks Levy, and for the development of a park at Northgate.

5. Encourage community creativity in implementing the levy:

The Committee proposal allocates \$15 million for an Opportunity Fund to provide communities with the chance to submit proposals for innovative projects to address emerging needs during the life of the levy.

**Project List****Acquisition**

Park Land, Facilities, Trail Corridors	24.00
Green Spaces	6.00

**Total Acquisition** **30.00**

**Development****Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds**

Playgrounds	10.40
Reservoir Parks	6.25
Skatepark Development	1.20
Spray Parks	0.80
Neighborhood Park Improvements	10.45

**Total Neighborhood Parks** **29.10**

**Citywide Parks Owned Cultural Facilities**

Seattle Asian Art Museum	11.00
Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center	2.50

**Total Neighborhood Parks** **13.50**

**Playfields**

Lower Woodland #2	2.40
Lower Woodland #7	2.80
Delridge	3.20
Genessee #1	2.10

**Total Playfields** **10.50**

**Major Neighborhood Parks**

Arboretum	2.50
Jefferson Park	3.00
Jefferson Park Skate Park	1.00
Magnuson Park	0.50
Children's Play Garden	0.95

**Total Major Neighborhood Parks** **7.95**

**Trails, Boulevards, Green Connections**

Burke Gilman Trail	3.75
West Duwamish Trail	2.00
Kiwanis Ravine Trail	0.60
Lake to Bay Trail	1.50

**Total Trails, Boulevards, Green Connections** **7.85**

**Total Development** **68.90**

**Environmental**

Forest and Stream Restoration & Access	3.50
Shoreline Access	0.50
Community Food Gardens	2.00

**Total Environmental** **6.00**

**Total Opportunity Fund** **15.00**

**Total** **119.90**

## Policy Recommendations

In addition to the proposed funding package, the Committee wishes to submit the following policy recommendations for the Council's consideration:

1. The Committee urges the Mayor and Council to address unmet needs at parks facilities, including the community recreation centers, swimming pools, arts and cultural facilities, and senior centers by including those facilities in a future levy, perhaps in combination with Seattle Center.
2. In addition to placing the levy on the ballot, the Committee urges the Mayor and Council to consider adopting additional mechanisms to fund the creation of parks and green spaces in underserved neighborhoods, such as the creation of a Metropolitan Park District and transfers of development rights to secure park land.
3. The Committee recommends that the City take advantage of the tremendous potential to expand and enhance Seattle's parks and create green connections among neighborhoods through creative use of street rights-of-way, street ends, utility rights-of-way and other City-owned properties. This potential can only be achieved through better cooperation among City Departments.
4. The Committee recommends that the City take the initiative to address park and green space deficiencies by working with other jurisdictions to make more creative use of land that is owned by public agencies such as the Seattle School District and Port of Seattle
5. The Committee urges the Parks Department to strengthen its partnerships with nonprofits that have the potential to leverage additional resources to achieve the goals of this levy.
6. The Committee supports the issuance of revenue bonds as a mechanism to finance improvements at City golf courses, and expand their use through the creation of perimeter trails.
7. The Committee urges the City to lead the way in creating "Green Jobs" within its Park system and throughout City government.

## **Pros and Cons of Proceeding to the Ballot in November**

The City Council Resolution that established the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Citizens' Advisory Committee directed the Committee to "advise the Council on the pros and cons for moving forward with a possible ballot measure in 2008 to replace the current parks levy..." The Committee report contains a list of twelve pros and eight cons which were approved by the Committee on June 24, 2008. The reasons for proceeding in 2008 include the urgency of the safety improvements, the potential of losing critical parcels of green space, rising costs, and the lack of alternative sources of capital for park improvements or to fill gaps in underserved areas. Reasons for delay include the inherent difficulties created by the constrained time frame, the limited time for public engagement, and the likelihood that other measures will be on the ballot.

## **Recommendation to Proceed**

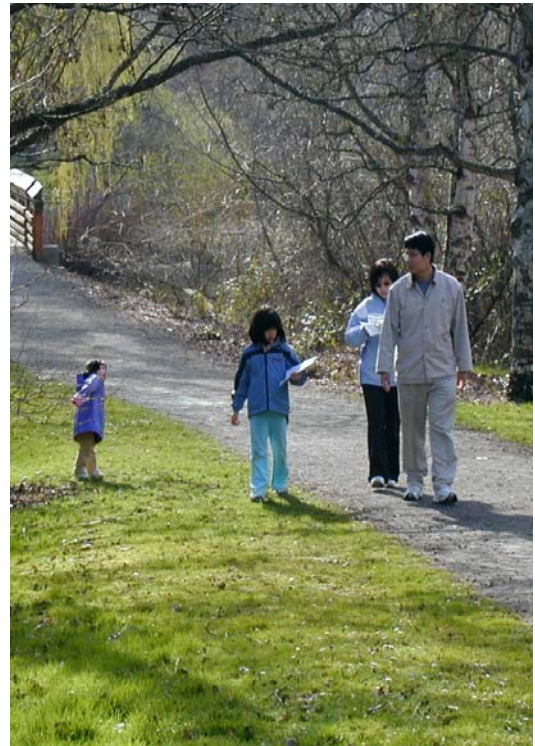
As its final action, the Committee voted by a strong majority to recommend that the Council place the measure on the ballot in November, 2008.

## I. Introduction – The Committee and Its Charge

This report was prepared by the Parks and Green Spaces Citizens' Advisory Committee consultants, Cedar River Group, and summarizes the deliberations of the committee.

In mid - April 2008, the Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 31055, creating the Parks and Green Spaces Citizen's Advisory Committee to develop a potential ballot package of parks, open space, boulevards, trails, green infrastructure, and recreation projects. The resolution directs the Committee to:

- Review data and information about potential park, recreation, and open space capital projects for all ages.
- Review and comment on criteria for project selection and assist in combining projects into various options for the Council's consideration.
- Review draft project packages prepared by Council staff and consultants and provide comments and/or recommendations for Council consideration.
- Conduct outreach to the broader public to gather recommendations and comments.
- Advise the Council on the pros and cons for moving forward with a possible ballot measure in 2008 to replace the current parks levy, which expires at the end of this year.
- Prepare and submit a final report with findings to the Council by June 30, 2008.



At the first meeting of the Committee, City Council Parks Committee Chair, Tom Rasmussen, expanded upon the Committee's charge by asking the Committee to bring forward a levy package that:

- Reflects a consensus of the Committee.
- Consists of projects that have reliable cost estimates and can be substantially completed during the six-year life of the levy.
- Will have low ongoing operating and maintenance costs.
- Includes an opportunity fund to meet emerging needs.

- Does not include funding for maintenance or program operations.
- Does not exceed \$140 million.

The full text of the Council Resolution can be found in Appendix A.

Twenty-nine community leaders were appointed by the Council to serve on the Committee, representing a broad spectrum of community interests:



*Greenbelt*

- |                   |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Neal Adams        | David Miller                |
| Doug Ancona       | Adrian Morales <sup>3</sup> |
| Jerry Arbes       | Joyce Moty                  |
| Chuck Ayers       | John Nesholm                |
| Maisha Barnett    | Kathy Nyland                |
| Teresita Batayola | Beth Purcell, Chair         |
| Bruce Bentley     | Jerry Rosso                 |
| Dave Boyd         | Michael Shiosaki            |
| Bob Cundall       | Pete Spaulding              |
| Gene Duvernoy     | Catherine Stanford          |
| Bill Farmer       | Jack Tomkinson              |
| Gerry Johnson     | Jerry Tone                  |
| Brice Maryman     | Jeremy Valenta              |
| Linnea Mattson    | Maggie Walker               |
| Sharon Meeks      |                             |

Brief biographies of the Committee members can be found in Appendix B.

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<sup>3</sup> *Adrian Morales withdrew after the Committee was formed.*

## II. Committee Proceedings

### A. Committee Schedule and Work Accomplished

The Committee met seven times, held four community outreach meetings, and conducted a public hearing. A brief summary of the major tasks accomplished at each meeting is as follows:

April 30, 2008:            *Committee Meeting 1*

- a) Reviewed the Council's expectations.
- b) Adopted formal ground rules for Committee meetings and decision making.
- c) Adopted a meeting schedule.
- d) Reviewed background material provided by the consultant team regarding:
  - ⇔ Capital financing for Seattle's parks.
  - ⇔ Park planning documents.
  - ⇔ The results of public opinion research.
- e) Began discussion of potential themes and criteria to guide the selection of levy projects.

May 6, 2008:            *Committee Meeting 2*

- a) Prepared for upcoming community outreach meetings.
- b) Approved themes and funding categories for public presentation.
- c) Reviewed and revised funding criteria for levy projects.

May 12, 2008:            *Community Outreach Workshop 1 (City Hall)*

May 14, 2008:            *Community Outreach Workshop 2 (Northgate)*

May 15, 2008:            *Community Outreach Workshop 3 (Rainier)*

May 20, 2008:            *Committee Meeting 3*

- a) Reviewed the results of the community outreach workshops.
- b) Formally adopted levy themes, criteria and categories.
- c) Met in working groups to rank projects against the criteria.

June 2, 2008:            *Community Outreach Workshop 4 (Alki)*

June 3, 2008:

*Committee Meeting 4*

- a) Reviewed the results of the June 2<sup>nd</sup> community outreach meeting.
- b) Reviewed and revised proposed criteria for the opportunity fund.
- c) Reviewed potential levy funding packages and allocations by category.
- d) Met in working groups to refine project lists.

June 10, 2008:

*Committee Meeting 5*

- a) Reviewed potential packages of levy projects.
- b) Approved two packages for the June 17 public hearing

June 17, 2008:

*Public Hearing*

June 17, 2008:

*Committee Meeting 6*

- a) Reviewed levy package options.
- b) Narrowed the options to one draft option, with \$1.7 million unallocated.

June 24, 2008:

*Committee Meeting 7*

- a) Revised and adopted Opportunity Fund criteria.
- b) Revised and adopted list of pros and cons.
- c) Revised and approved final project list.
- d) Revised and approved recommendations for policy and program changes.
- e) Amended and approved Final Report.
- f) Voted to recommend placing the proposed levy on the November, 2008 ballot.



Summaries of each of the Committee meetings can be found in Appendix C.

## B. Public Outreach

Three public outreach workshops were held the week of May 12 at City Hall, Northgate Community Center and Rainier Community Center, and a fourth public workshop was held June 2<sup>nd</sup> at Alki Community Center. The goals of the workshops were to inform citizens of the potential levy and to solicit public opinion about the content of the levy proposal. A presentation described the City's financing sources for park, recreation and open space projects, the various City plans and studies that describe needs a potential levy could address, and the results of a poll commissioned by the Seattle City Council to gauge support from Seattle voters for a park and green spaces levy. Following the presentation by Committee Chair Beth Purcell and Cedar River Group staff there was a short question and answer session before the meeting participants broke into small groups to discuss three issues:

- The park, recreation and open space needs in their area and throughout the City as a whole.
- Potential projects that could address those needs.
- The criteria the Committee should use in selecting projects.



After the small groups met for approximately an hour they provided verbal summaries of their discussions to the full group.

In addition to participating in the working groups, each participant was asked to fill out a detailed survey form regarding their opinions about the content of the levy. The results were compiled by staff and distributed to the Committee members as they began discussion of the project lists. A total of 166 people signed in at the community meetings.<sup>4</sup> The City Council also provided a web page on the Council's web site which made it possible for other citizens to complete the survey form.

Specific project proposals received from workshop participants and from citizens via the web page were added to the list of projects considered by the Committee.

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<sup>4</sup> Thirty-eight people signed in at the downtown meeting, 71 at Northgate, 31 at Rainier and 26 at Alki.

## **Park, Recreation and Open Space Needs Identified in the Workshops**

There was wide-ranging, often passionate, discussion in each of the small groups regarding the needs in neighborhoods and citywide. Several types of needs emerged from the four nights of conversations. They included the following:

- Participants voiced strong concerns about the need for equitable distribution of parks and open spaces around the City. This had several different meanings for participants. First, new parks and open spaces are perceived to be especially important in neighborhoods where the growth rate and increasing density are rising rapidly. Secondly, many people believe the City should continue to provide new parks and open spaces in neighborhoods that have traditionally been underserved, such as Greenwood, Ballard, and the Rainier Valley.
- Citizens see the need to upgrade children's playgrounds throughout the City. Many are deemed unsafe.
- There was strong support for creating parks on reservoir lids. This could include expanding the park development projects that are currently underway at Jefferson Park and Myrtle reservoir, and new development projects at Maple Leaf and West Seattle reservoirs.
- There was support for P-Patches and community gardens. A number of participants suggested that it is important to seek out opportunities to expand existing garden spaces and acquire new lands for creating more local food supply options.
- Many felt it was important to finish the projects started by Pro Parks 2000.
- Green infrastructure was supported as a broad category of need that includes several components, including: green streets, especially in areas like downtown that lack space for parks, street end parks that could provide shoreline access, a tree inventory; and reforestation efforts throughout the City.
- Citizens called for restoring natural habitat, including shoreline improvements to make our waters accessible and expansion of greenbelts.
- There was strong support for developing more bike and walking trails to create green connections between neighborhoods and parks. This could be accomplished through completion of trail systems, acquisition of new "connecting" parcels, and/or signage.
- Adequate funding for operations and maintenance was a recurring theme during each meeting. Pro Parks 2000 provided funding for operations and maintenance that has now been shifted to the general City budget. There is concern about providing sufficient funds for the existing system and the ability to maintain and operate future developments and acquisitions.

- Many participants see better cooperation among City Departments as a key for creating more open space. Parks should work with Seattle Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Utilities, the Department of Planning and Development, the Seattle School District, the Port of Seattle, and others for acquisition or development of publicly-owned spaces.
- The City should provide recreation opportunities for a broad range of demographic and interest groups. Two groups that were specifically mentioned at each of the meetings were seniors and teens.
- The City lacks swimming pools. New swimming pools should be multifunctional to serve a variety of users.
- The City's golf courses are in need of improvement. Citizens suggested the City should issue bonds against the revenue it earns from golf to make the improvements.
- It is important to "take care of what we have," by investing in existing parks and facilities rather than just expanding the park system.

Complete summaries of the public meetings and the information from the survey forms can be found in Appendix D.

## **Public Hearing**

The public was also invited to comment on potential packages of levy projects at a public hearing held in conjunction with the Committee's meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 150 people attended the public hearing, with 54 speaking. Speakers were limited to two minutes each, with only 3 speakers allowed to speak on any one issue. After 3 people spoke, attendees were asked to raise their hands to indicate their support for the issue. More than three people came to show support for each of the following projects:

- Playfields - with 59 people in support of funding for playfields to allow more youth to play soccer and to support adult leagues.
- Green Seattle Partnership's - with 26 people in support of the Partnership's efforts to restore urban forests and streams.
- Seattle Asian Art Museum – with 18 people in support of the need to renovate the Museum to allow its continued use at Volunteer Park.
- Pools – with 14 people in support of funding for pools, including investments in existing pools and planning for new pools.
- Discovery Park – with 6 people in support of funding for improvements to Discovery Park.

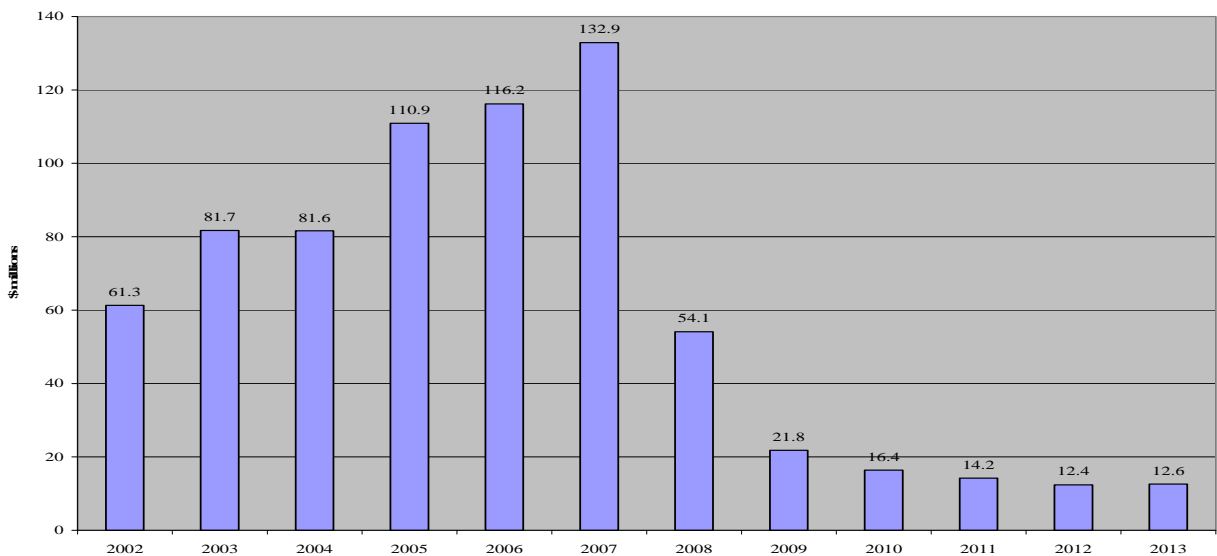
- Laurelhurst Waterway #1 – with 6 people in support of funding for enhancement of Waterway # 1 in Laurelhurst.
- Maple Leaf Reservoir Park – with 5 people in support of funding for improvements at the Maple Leaf Reservoir Park.
- International District Children’s Park – with 4 people in support of funding for this park.

### III. Committee Findings

#### A. Capital Funding for Seattle Parks and Recreation Capital Funding will Decline Dramatically with the end of the Current Pro Parks Levy

A key concern for the Committee is the precipitous decline in capital funding that will occur with the expiration of the Pro Parks levy at the end of 2008. The 2008 Six-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) anticipates that the capital funding for Seattle parks will decline from a high of \$132.9 million in 2007 to \$54.1 million in 2008 to \$12.6 million in 2013 as a result of the expiration of the 1999 Community Centers Levy in 2007, and the Pro Parks Levy this December. Additional funding will likely emerge from other less certain sources – such as private and public grants – but it is clear that the loss of levy funding will dramatically reduce the financial resources available for capital purposes.

**Parks Capital Funding, 2002-2008 Appropriations,  
2009-2013 Planned**



The Seattle Parks and Recreation Department has two main sources of funding for capital projects: cumulative reserve funds and levies. Other funding is periodically provided through councilmanic bonds, the park and recreation fund and other grants and special funds. The cumulative reserve fund is generally reserved for major maintenance. The fund is primarily supported by Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) levied on sales of real estate. The 2008 Six Year Capital Improvement Program anticipates \$93.5 million in cumulative reserve fund support for Parks major maintenance projects from 2008-2013.

The 1999 Seattle Center/Community Center Levy provided \$36 million over eight years (2000-2007) to fund construction of four new community centers and improvements at five existing centers.

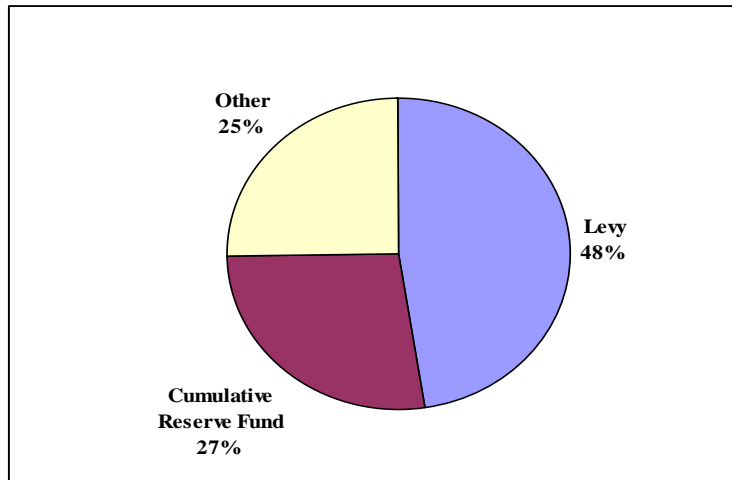
The 2000 Pro Parks Levy provided \$198.2 million over eight years (2001-2008) to improve maintenance and enhance programming of existing parks; acquire greenbelts, natural areas and other green spaces; acquire, develop and maintain new neighborhood parks, playfields, boulevards and foot and bike trails; and fund out-of-school and senior activities. The capital portions of the levy were:

- Park and Green Space Acquisition: \$26 million was allocated for neighborhood park acquisition and green space preservation.
- Park Development Projects: \$102.8 million was used for 95 park development projects.
- Opportunity Fund: \$10 million was reserved for citizen-initiated park projects.

Councilmanic bonds can be issued for particular projects as designated in the City’s Capital Improvement Program. However, these bonds must be repaid from the City’s General Fund, lease revenues or other outside revenue sources. The Parks and Recreation Fund is anticipated to provide about \$5 million in the 2008-2013 Capital Improvement Program to help with development of various neighborhood parks, especially parks that were started but not completed with funding from the 2000 Pro Parks Levy. This is one-time funding in the 2008 Parks and Recreation Fund. Beginning in 2009, these funds will be dedicated to ongoing operating and maintenance activities.

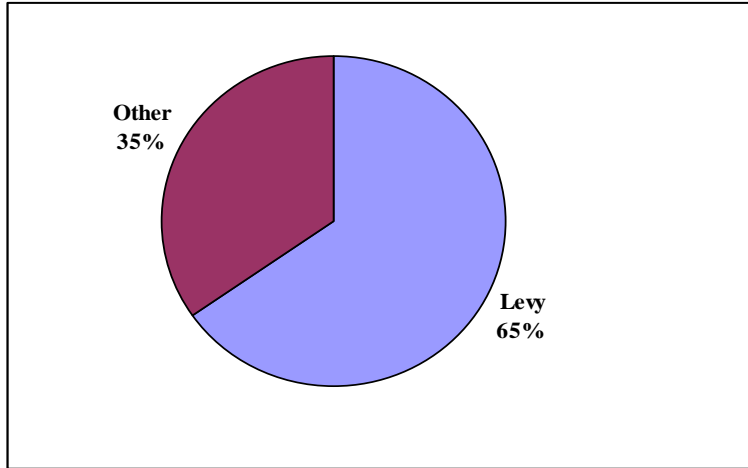
As shown in the charts below, levy funds represented 48 percent of all capital funds and cumulative reserve funds an additional 27 percent in 2006 – a year in which the community center and pro parks levies both contributed to the total.

**Sources of Capital Funding, 2006**  
**Total Capital Funding \$116.2 million**



Since cumulative reserve funds are targeted toward major maintenance, levies are the major source of funding for park acquisition, improvements and renovations – with 65 percent of such funding coming from levy sources in 2006.

**Sources of Capital Funding, 2006  
Excluding Cumulative Reserve Fund Major Maintenance Funds**



**B. Past Park Levies Have Leveraged Major Contributions from Other Sources**

The Pro Parks levy program has been enhanced by leveraging other fund resources, with the 2006 Annual Report showing 28 percent of total levy spending for acquisition and development from leveraged resources as shown in the table below.

<b>Leveraged Sources for Acquisition and Development.</b>	<b>2001 – 2006 (dollars raised in millions)</b>	<b>% of total levy spending</b>
<u>Non-City Grants</u> : Grants that reimburse the Department for Pro Parks expenditures (i.e., King County Conservation Futures Tax, private foundations and individual donations).	\$21.1	17%
<u>Other City Expenditures</u> : Funding directly from other City departments (i.e., Seattle Public Utilities) or other Seattle Parks funds (i.e., Cumulative Reserve Fund).	\$7.2	8%
<b>Subtotal – Leveraged Funding</b>	<b>\$28.3</b>	<b>23%</b>
<u>Other Project Contributions</u> : Cash, volunteer labor, professional services, materials/supplies.	\$6.5	5%

### **C. Public Opinion Research Suggests There is Strong Support for a Parks and Green Spaces Levy**

At its first meeting the Committee reviewed the results of a public opinion poll conducted for the City Council by Alison Peters Consulting from March 17, 2008 through March 22, 2008. A summary of the poll results by Ms. Peters reads as follows:

*A public opinion poll commissioned by the Seattle City Council reveals widespread support for a levy to improve and expand Seattle's parks. Two-thirds of poll respondents (67%) indicated they would support a \$140 million dollar levy to renew funding for improvements to parks, green spaces, and trails. When voters were asked if they would support a more expensive proposal (\$240 million) to fund more projects, 65% were supportive. Projects that would improve existing parks, as well as fund green space acquisition and habitat restoration were especially popular with residents throughout the City.*

*The poll also sought to test how a parks levy would fare if it appeared on the November 2008 ballot together with a \$75 million dollar proposal to refurbish the Pike Place Market or a \$6-7 billion dollar regional sales tax measure for Sound Transit. In each case, support for the parks levy remained at 64% or above, and the Market and Sound Transit also earned support from a majority of the respondents.*

#### Key Findings:

- *The poll showed that Seattle's parks are viewed favorably by an overwhelming percentage of respondents. 93% said they had either a "very favorable" or "somewhat favorable" opinion of Seattle's parks and playgrounds, while the City's trails and green spaces in general were viewed favorably by more than 85% of survey respondents.*
- *In the initial ballot test question regarding a \$140 million dollar proposal to renew funding for local parks, 67% would support the levy (37% definitely "yes," 30% probably "yes"), 27% would oppose the levy (10% probably "no," 17% definitely "no") and 6% were undecided.*
- *In the initial ballot test question regarding a \$240 million dollar tax increase for local parks, 65% would support the levy, (36% definitely "yes," 29% probably "yes), 28% would oppose the levy (12% probably "no," 16% definitely "no") and 8% were undecided.*
- *A majority of respondents (59%) said they preferred to spend future funding to improve existing parks while 35% of the respondents favored spending levy funds to expand the parks system.*

- *When asked how a companion measure to maintain Pike Place Market would affect one's vote on a parks measure, 44% of respondents said they would support both a Pike Place Market proposal AND a measure for parks. Another 22% said they would vote for a parks levy, but not a measure for Pike Place Market. Eleven percent favored the Market over a parks measure. Fourteen percent indicated they would reject both measures. Nine percent of the respondents were undecided on this question.*
- *When asked about the impact of Sound Transit on one's support of a parks measure, 43% of respondents said they would support both a parks measure and proposal to fund Sound Transit. another 21% of respondents said they would support a parks measure but not Sound Transit. Twelve percent said they would support Sound Transit but not a parks measure. Twelve percent were against both measures and another 12% were undecided.*
- *Survey takers were the most responsive to information about how levy funds might be used to help protect water quality in creeks and streams in Seattle (84% favorable). Respondents also agreed that keeping people of all ages healthy and active was something the levy would be able to accomplish (81% favorable).*
- *The biggest concerns voiced by respondents who were undecided or opposed to the park levy were "cost" and the uncertain state of the economy.*
- *After hearing a variety of messages for and against the parks levy concept during the 16-minute survey, support for the levy renewal at \$140 million dollars remained unchanged at 67%. (39% definitely "yes" and 28% probably "yes"). Support for the levy at \$240 million dollars fell slightly from 65% to 63% (36% definitely "yes" and 27% probably "yes").<sup>5</sup>*



Details from the polling data can be found in Appendix E.

#### **D. City and Community Planning Initiatives Have Identified Many Projects That Are Worthy of Consideration for Levy Funding.**

In developing a list of potential candidate projects for consideration, the Committee's staff reviewed a wide range of planning documents, which have been subject to public review and formal consideration by the City Council. These documents included:

<sup>5</sup> Margin of error +/-4 percent.

- 2006 Parks Development Plan (*adopted by Council Resolution 30868*).
  - ⇨ 2006 Gap Analysis.
  - ⇨ Advisory Council Survey regarding capital needs at the community centers and recreation facilities.
- The 2005 Seattle Comprehensive Plan and 38 Neighborhood Plans.
- The Joint Schools/Parks Athletic Development Program (*adopted by Resolution 29681*).
- Open Space 2100 (*a Citizen planning effort endorsed by the City Council on May 15, 2006*).
- Bands of Green: A Plan for the Continuing Development of Trails, Boulevards and Linear Parks (*Seattle Parks Foundation, 2006*)
- The Green Seattle Partnership (*Created in 2004 through a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Seattle and the Cascade Land Conservancy*).
- Building for Tomorrow, Today: Seattle Parks and Recreation. Draft Strategic Action Plan: 2008 – 2012.
- The Downtown Parks Renaissance Summary.
- The Citywide Skateboard Park Plan.



Potentially eligible projects from these lists were entered in a comprehensive list of projects. Additional projects identified through the public outreach process were added as they came to the attention of the Committee members and staff. The project list can be found in Appendix F.

## **E. Three Themes for the Levy Emerged**

Three major themes emerged from the public opinion research, the characteristics of the potential projects, and Committee discussion:

### **Green Legacy**

This theme combines three big ideas. The first is that the levy provides an opportunity to build upon the park legacy established by past generations, and pass that gift to our children and grandchildren. The second is that parks, open space and natural areas are part of the City’s “green infrastructure” --- as important to everyday life as our streets, bridges, and public buildings. Opportunities for adding to the City’s green spaces are not limited to conventional parks, but could include creative ways to integrate green elements in the City’s street rights-of-way, and even its drainage and water systems. Examples of projects that are consistent with this concept include creating parks on reservoir lids and developing community gardens in utility rights-of-way.

The third element of this theme is “green connections.” Just as the original Olmsted Plan magnified the value of Seattle’s early parks by connecting them with scenic boulevards,

the Park Foundation’s “Bands of Green” plan proposes to connect parks and neighborhoods with bicycle trails and “linear parks” to create an integrated open space network which is greater than the sum of its parts.

### **Healthy Living in Healthy Communities**

This theme stresses the close relationship between a great park system and the health of people of all ages, and the importance of projects that promote active recreation and active mobility.

This theme is consistent with the goal of “providing recreation and learning opportunities to support healthy and diverse communities,” which is found in the Parks Department’s Draft Strategic Action Plan. Capital projects that would be consistent with this theme include: improvements of parks facilities that promote health and fitness; development of skateboard parks, and expansion of the City’s trail system.



### **Vibrant Neighborhoods**

This theme reflects the need to provide neighborhood parks and open spaces as part of the City’s strategy to accommodate population growth and increased density. Projects that would be consistent with this theme include acquisition and development of parks and green spaces in underserved urban villages.

It is important to note that none of these themes are mutually exclusive. There is considerable overlap in the types of projects that fit gracefully within these themes.

## **IV. Committee Recommendations**

The Committee devoted considerable attention to the creation of criteria to guide the selection of projects. Two “threshold criteria” were established, which each project must meet in order to be included in the levy. The rest of the criteria were intended to identify desirable qualities, with the expectation that those projects which met multiple criteria would be favorably viewed by the Committee. The criteria are as follows:

### **Threshold Criteria for All Projects**

- Has the project been vetted through a public review process or recognized in an adopted City plan?
- Can the project be substantially completed within six years?

## **Additional Criteria**

### Public Benefit:

- Does the proposed project address an identified community need?
- Does the project address multiple community goals?
- Will the project address a need identified in the Parks Department's gap analysis?
- What is the magnitude of the project's contribution to the neighborhood and to the well-being of the City as a whole?
- Will the project contribute to the solution of major challenges facing our community, such as climate change, the health of Puget Sound, public health concerns, and growth management?
- If the project is a development project, will it serve a wide spectrum of users?

### Equity:

- Will the project help to address existing disparities in the parks, open space and recreation resources which are available to the City's neighborhoods?
- Will the project respond to increasing population density by providing additional green spaces and parks in areas where growth is most likely to occur?
- Will the project help to address disparities in the accessibility of these resources by demographic groups?

### Urgency:

- Does the project address an immediate public safety concern?
- Is there danger that an important green space would be lost if action is not taken now?
- Is there an opportunity to expand/improve Seattle's parks and open spaces that could be lost unless we act now?

### Public Support:

- Is there evidence the project would generate voter enthusiasm and community support?

Environmental Sustainability:

- Will the project contribute to the “natural capital” of the City in a way that makes Seattle more sustainable as a community over time?
- Can the project be sustained over time within the City’s resources?

Financing & Leverage:

- Does the project have a defined scope and credible cost estimate?
- Is there a viable plan for operating and maintenance so the project can be sustained over time?
- Does the project build upon and expand the value of previous public investments?
- Will the project provide a catalyst for actions by other public agencies that magnify the value of the levy investment?
- Does the project have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources?
- Will the project generate in-kind contributions from citizen groups?
- Are there no other City funds available to fund the project?

**Project Categories**

The Committee used past levies as a starting point for determining the types of projects to include in a levy proposal. The template provided by the Pro Parks 2000 allocations was adjusted by the Committee to reflect three factors:

- Council instruction not to include funding for maintenance and operations;
- Committee members’ concerns about the critical need to acquire land for parks and green spaces in areas experiencing rapid growth; and
- Citizen opinions expressed during four community outreach meetings, and through survey forms and e-mail messages.

The Committee adopted the following project categories:

Acquisition:

- Park land, facilities and trail corridors
- Green space (natural areas and greenbelts)

Development:

- Major neighborhood parks
- Neighborhood parks and playgrounds
- Citywide park-owned cultural facilities
- Playfields
- Trails, boulevards and green connections

Environmental Restoration and Stewardship:

- Forest and stream restoration
- Shoreline access
- Community food gardens.

Opportunity Fund

## Project Selection

Following the community outreach meetings, the Committee staff analyzed the identified projects against the criteria established by the Committee. Projects which did not meet the Committee's threshold criteria were eliminated from further consideration (although they remain in the project list). More than 300 projects which met the threshold criteria were then assessed to determine which theme(s) they represented and how they matched up against the remaining criteria regarding public benefit, equity, urgency, sustainability, public support and leverage and financial viability. Spreadsheets listing this information for each project were provided to the Committee members three days prior to their May 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.



On May 20<sup>th</sup>, the Committee worked in small groups to narrow the list of projects in each category to enable the staff to assemble cost estimates and additional information on the top-rated projects. At its June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the Committee continued to hone the list of projects and directed the staff to develop two options for the levy package within the \$140 million dollar limit established by the City Council.<sup>6</sup>

## Levy Packages

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the staff provided the Committee members with two alternative packages for discussion at a special meeting of the Committee on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The Committee approved the two alternatives to be distributed for comment at the June 17<sup>th</sup> public hearing. At its June 17 meeting, the Committee made a series of decisions for a preferred alternative, requesting further research on specific projects. At its June 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Committee considered the findings of the additional research and reached agreement on a list of projects to recommend for inclusion in the levy.



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<sup>6</sup> In order to allow for inflation through the levy period, the Committee recommendations total \$120 million in 2008 dollars.

## **Recommended Levy Projects**

### **Acquisition**

Park Land, Facilities, Trail Corridors	24.00
Green Spaces	6.00

**Total Acquisition** **30.00**

### **Development**

#### **Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds**

Playgrounds	10.40
Reservoir Parks	6.25
Skatepark Development	1.20
Spray Parks	0.80
Neighborhood Park Improvements	10.45

**Total Neighborhood Parks** **29.10**

#### **Citywide Parks Owned Cultural Facilities**

Seattle Asian Art Museum	11.00
Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center	2.50

**Total Neighborhood Parks** **13.50**

#### **Playfields**

Lower Woodland #2	2.40
Lower Woodland #7	2.80
Delridge	3.20
Genessee #1	2.10

**Total Playfields** **10.50**

#### **Major Neighborhood Parks**

Arboretum	2.50
Jefferson Park	3.00
Jefferson Park Skate Park	1.00
Magnuson Park	0.50
Children's Play Garden	0.95

**Total Major Neighborhood Parks** **7.95**

#### **Trails, Boulevards, Green Connections**

Burke Gilman Trail	3.75
West Duwamish Trail	2.00
Kiwanis Ravine Trail	0.60
Lake to Bay Trail	1.50

**Total Trails, Boulevards, Green Connections** **7.85**

**Total Development** **68.90**

### **Environmental**

Forest and Stream Restoration & Access	3.50
Shoreline Access	0.50
Community Food Garden	2.00

**Total Environmental** **6.00**

**Total Opportunity Fund** **15.00**

**Total** **119.90**

## **Acquisition Projects - \$30 million**

### **Park Land, Facilities or Trail Corridors in Urban Villages and Single Family Neighborhoods - \$24 million**

#### **Description:**

This project will allow for the purchase of land in areas of the Seattle that have been identified by the Seattle Parks and Recreation as having most deficit in its 2006 Development Plan and Gap Analysis.

#### Urban Villages:

To increase open space in urban villages, this project focuses on those areas where the amount of available open space does not meet City standards in 50 percent or more of the village. Open space could be increased either by acquiring property for new parks, facilities or trail corridors and/or by buying property to expand existing parks, facilities or trail corridors. The 17 urban villages which do not meet City standards in 50 percent or more of the village area are:

- 12th Avenue Urban Center Village
- Ballard Urban Village
- Belltown Urban Center Village
- Bitter Lake Hub Urban Village
- Capitol Hill Urban Center Village
- Chinatown-International District Urban Center Village
- Commercial Core Urban Center Village
- Denny Triangle Urban Center Village
- First Hill Urban Center Village
- Fremont Hub Urban Village
- Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Residential Urban Village
- Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village
- North Rainier Hub Urban Village
- Ravenna Urban Center Village
- University Urban Center Village
- West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village
- Westwood-Highland Residential Urban Village

#### Single Family Areas:

To increase open space in single family areas that do not meet City open space standards, this project allows for the acquisition of property for new parks, facilities or trail corridors. Single family areas that are deficient in open space are:

- Wedgewood Neighborhood NE of Dahl Playfield
- Beach Drive Northwest of Morgan Junction

## Committee Findings

Themes: This project will increase Seattle's green legacy, promote healthy living, and contribute to the vibrancy of our most dense and underserved neighborhoods.

### Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These areas have been recognized as having deficits of open space in the 2006 Parks Development Plan and Gap Analysis.
- Time frame: Additional property can be acquired within the six year time frame.

### Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need, responding to a need identified in the Parks Department's gap analysis, serving a wide spectrum of users and addressing growth management issues.
- Equity: This project addresses existing disparities in the parks, open space and recreation resources and responds to increasing density.
- Urgency: This project is urgent because of the need to act now to acquire open space in light of rising density and potentially increasing prices.
- Support: The public outreach efforts indicated strong support for projects that address the needs of our increasing dense urban villages and neighborhoods.
- Environmental Sustainability: This project will contribute to Seattle's natural capital.
- Financing & Leverage: Acquisition funding in previous levies has been successfully matched with other public and private funds. There are not other City funds available for these acquisitions.



## Gaps in Usable Open Space Citywide

**LEGEND**

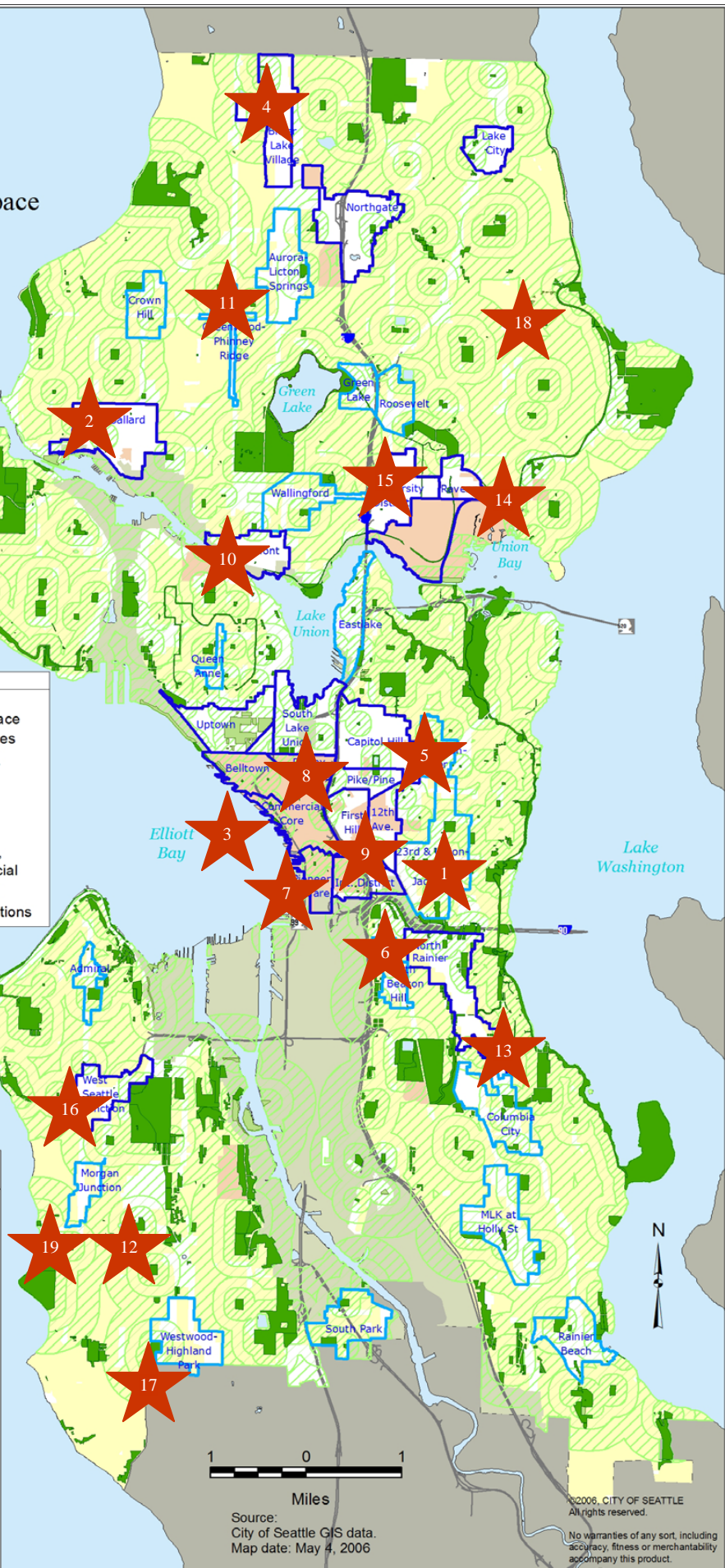
- City of Seattle Parks
- Non-City Park/Open Space
- Residential Urban Villages
- Urban Center Villages & Hub Urban Villages

**Zoning**

- Single Family
- Multi-Family, Residential/Commercial, Neighborhood/Commercial
- Manufacturing/Industrial
- Downtown, Major Institutions

**Service Area Criteria for Usable Open Space (UOS)**

- 1/8 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 10,000 SF  
 - UOS of 10,000 SF or more for Urban Centers and Hub Urban Villages accessible within 1/8 mile
- 1/4 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 10,000 SF  
 - UOS of 10,000 SF or more for Residential Urban Villages, depending on population density, accessible within 1/8 to 1/4 mile
- 1/2 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 1/2 Acre  
 - UOS of 1/2 Acre or more for Single Family areas accessible within 1/2 mile



### Proposed Urban Center Village Acquisitions Legend:

1. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave
2. Ballard
3. Belltown
4. Bitter Lake Hub
5. Capital Hill
6. Chinatown Int'l District
7. Commercial Core
8. Denny Triangle
9. First Hill
10. Fremont Hub
11. Greenwood Phinney Ridge Residential
12. Morgan Junction Residential
13. North Rainier Hub
14. Ravenna
15. University
16. West Seattle Junction
17. Westwood Highland Residential
18. Wedgewood Neighborhood
19. Beach Drive

Source: City of Seattle GIS data. Map date: May 4, 2006

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Cost Estimates:

The Committee recognizes that, given the high price of property in Seattle, it may not be possible to purchase property in each of the deficit areas. The amount of funding - \$24 million - proposed for this project is based, in part, on the analysis of property values in 16 of the urban villages developed by City Council staff.

**Property Values in Urban Villages**

Urban Village	Size/Cost of Site (Cost in \$000)		
	10,000 Sq. Ft.	15,000 Sq. Ft.	20,000 Sq. Ft.
12th Avenue Urban Center Village	\$1,630	\$2,445	\$3,260
Ballard Urban Village	\$930	\$1,395	\$1,860
Belltown Urban Center Village	\$2,310	\$3,465	\$4,620
Bitter Lake Hub Urban Village	\$580	\$870	\$1,160
Capitol Hill Urban Center Village	\$2,320	\$3,480	\$4,640
Chinatown-International District Urban Center Village	\$2,520	\$3,780	\$5,040
Denny Triangle Urban Center Village	\$4,380	\$6,570	\$8,760
First Hill Urban Center Village	\$2,160	\$3,240	\$4,320
Fremont Hub Urban Village	\$1,130	\$1,695	\$2,260
Greenwood-Phinney Ridge Residential Urban Village	\$980	\$1,470	\$1,960
Morgan Junction Residential Urban Village	\$1,170	\$1,755	\$2,340
North Rainier Hub Urban Village	\$910	\$1,365	\$1,820
Ravenna Urban Center Village	\$970	\$1,455	\$1,940
University Urban Center Village	\$1,200	\$1,800	\$2,400
West Seattle Junction Hub Urban Village	\$950	\$1,425	\$1,900
Westwood-Highland Residential Urban Village	\$620	\$930	\$1,240
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$24,760</b>	<b>\$37,140</b>	<b>\$49,520</b>
<i>Levy Funding Needed Assuming a 75% leverage rate</i>	<i>\$14,150</i>	<i>\$21,220</i>	<i>\$28,300</i>

**Green Space (Natural Areas and Greenbelts) \$6 million**

**Description:**

Acquisitions to fill gaps in the existing public ownership and preserve continuity within the City's designated Greenspaces (greenbelts and natural areas). Acquisitions will target critical properties in the following areas, and in other designated areas:



- East Duwamish Greenbelt
- NE Queen Anne Greenbelt
- Thornton Creek
- Duwamish Head Greenbelt
- West Duwamish Greenbelt
- Ravenna Woods
- Arroyos Natural Area

## Committee Findings

Themes: This project will increase Seattle’s green legacy and contribute to the vibrancy of Seattle’s neighborhoods.

### Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These acquisitions are continuations of projects that were identified and included in the 1989 Open Space Bond Issue and the 2000 PRO Parks Levy. These greenbelts and natural areas were also identified as important open spaces in various neighborhood plans.
- Time frame: Additional property can be acquired within the six year time frame.

### Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need, addressing growth management and the health of our waterways, and serving a wide spectrum of users.
- Equity: This project responds to increasing density by providing additional green space.
- Urgency: This project is urgent because of the need to act now to acquire open space in light of rising density and potentially increasing prices.
- Support: The public outreach efforts indicated strong support for projects that would add to the city’s green spaces.
- Environmental Sustainability: This project will contribute to Seattle’s natural capital.
- Financing & Leverage: Acquisition funding in previous levies has been successfully matched with other public and private funds. Green space projects are eligible for King County Conservation Futures and other matching funds. There are no other City funds available for these acquisitions or to use as matching funds.

### Cost Estimates:

The Committee recognizes that, given the high price of property in Seattle, it may not be possible to purchase property in each of the identified greenbelts. The allocation of \$5 million is expected to be leveraged with King County Conservation Futures and other matching funds.

**Development Projects - \$68.9 million**

**Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds - \$29.10 million**

**Description:**



Projects include critical improvements to 23 neighborhood playgrounds to bring them up to safety standards, development of parks at 3 reservoirs, development of skateparks and spray parks, and development of 8 specific neighborhood parks.

*Play Area Renovation \$10.4 million* – This project will improve and bring up to safety standards playgrounds throughout the City, including the following projects identified in a 2008 audit that do not meet federal playground safety standards and, in some cases, ADA requirements

Atlantic St.	\$350,000
Bayview	\$250,000
Beacon Hill	\$180,000
Bhy Kracke	\$150,000
Brighton	\$450,000
Fairmount	\$170,000
Gas Works	\$1,400,000
Golden Gardens	\$500,000
International District	\$500,000
John C. Little	\$300,000
Laurelhurst PF	\$400,000
Lawton	\$300,000
Maple Leaf	\$450,000
Matthews Beach	\$450,000
Montlake	\$550,000
Northacres	\$550,000
Rainier PF	\$600,000
Ross PG	\$450,000
Roxhill Park	\$450,000
Sandel PG	\$350,000
Seward Park	\$450,000
Volunteer Park	\$800,000
W Woodland	\$350,000

*Reservoir Park Development \$6.25 million* – Planning, design and initial park development on new reservoir lids and/or acquire land to extend the reservoir parks. Parks that will be developed and their budgets in this project are listed below. Development of Jefferson Park (\$4 million) on top of the reservoir is included in the major parks category below.

Maple Leaf	\$3,000,000
West Seattle	\$3,000,000
Myrtle Skatedot	\$250,000



*Skateboard Park Development \$1.2 million* – This project will develop new skateparks in accordance with the Skatepark Task Force recommendations and priorities. Skateparks to be developed as part of this project are listed below. Additional skateparks are supported at Myrtle Park (Skatedot \$250,000) and at Jefferson (district skatepark \$1 million.).

Judkins	\$600,000
Roxhill Park	\$600,000

*Spray Parks \$.8 million* – This project will convert the wading pool at Georgetown and two other wading pools to spray parks. This will prevent closure of wading pools that may result from new requirements that the pools be treated and tested and will reduce operating costs incurred by staffing wading pools. Spray park projects are:

Georgetown Wading Pool	\$400,000
Two additional wading pools	\$400,000

*Neighborhood Parks \$10.45 million* – This project will make improvements at eight neighborhood parks, some of which were acquired with Pro Parks levy funding. The parks, a brief description of the project scope and the funding for each is outlined below.

*Northgate Urban Center Park* \$2,500,000  
 Development of new park in a rapidly growing urban center. Total cost is \$5 million. This would fund the first phase of the project.

*Hing Hay Park* \$3,000,000  
 Renovation of existing Hing Hay Park and development of park on adjacent land acquired with Pro Parks acquisition funding.

*7<sup>th</sup> Elect Church Site* \$800,000  
 Development of park in Whittier Heights on land acquired with Pro Parks acquisition funding.

*Crown Hill Elementary* \$1,200,000  
Development of park on land being acquired with Pro Parks acquisition funding.

*Cedar Park* \$500,000  
Re-development of a neighborhood park in northeast Seattle on land acquired from the school district.

*Chinook Beach Park* \$100,000  
Completion of Chinook Beach Park in the Rainier Beach area - a south Lake Washington site where juvenile Chinook salmon will rear. This project will remove invasive locusts and clematis and replant the south end of the site.

*Marra-Desimone Park* \$1,100,000  
Development of the park, which includes the Marra Farm, in South Park in accordance with long-range development plan. The site is Seattle's largest site for urban gardening.

*Camp Long* \$1,000,000  
This project will renovate the kitchen and upgrade other aspects of the facility to ensure its continued use as an environmental learning center.

*Othello Park* \$250,000  
This project will provide safety and lighting improvements to Othello Park.

## **Committee Findings**

*Themes:* This project will contribute to the vibrancy of Seattle's neighborhoods and provide opportunities for healthy living in healthy communities.

### Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These projects are the result of a wide array of planning efforts by Seattle Parks and Recreation and the community. Plans include the neighborhood plans, park development plans, the Draft Strategic Action Plan, Playground Audit, and the City of Seattle Capital Improvement Program.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the six-year time frame.



### Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need, addressing growth management, and serving a wide spectrum of users.

- Equity: This project responds to increasing density by providing additional green space.
- Urgency: The play area projects and Othello are in response to safety issues.
- Support: The public outreach efforts indicated strong support for neighborhood projects and the survey indicated strong support for investments in existing parks.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects will in the case of the playgrounds and spray pools reduce on-going operating and maintenance costs.
- Financing & Leverage: Most of these projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and all build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and many will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from Seattle Parks and Recreation sources including the 2008 playground audit and park long-range plans, the Skate Park Task Force report.

**Citywide Parks Owned Cultural Facilities - \$13.50 million**

Projects include critical safety improvements to the Volunteer Park Seattle Asian Art Museum and the Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center.

*Volunteer Park Seattle Asian Art Museum \$11 million* - The largest single project in the proposed levy is for seismic and HVAC improvements to the Seattle Asian Art Museum at Volunteer Park. The project is critical to prevent closure of the museum to the public and to maintain safe operation of this historic, landmark structure at one of Seattle’s oldest parks. This project will pay for approximately 50 percent of the total anticipated costs of the renovations.

*Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center \$2.5 million* – This project will make seismic improvements to the Langston Hughes Performing Art Center which is housed in what was formerly the Jewish Synagogue of Chevra Bikur Cholim. The building is listed in the National Registry as a historical landmark and is in urgent need of improvement. The Center became a program of Seattle Parks and Recreation in 1972 and has been an essential gathering place for an African American canon of work.

**Committee Findings**

Themes: These projects will contribute to the vibrancy of Seattle’s neighborhoods.



Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: Ordinance Number 122590 authorized a Memorandum of Agreement between the City and the Seattle Asian Art Museum regarding the City and the Museum's responsibilities for improvements to the Museum and Langston Hughes has recently been reviewed by Seattle Parks and Recreation.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the 6-year time frame.

Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need and serving a wide spectrum of users.
- Equity: Langston Hughes provides an important cultural resource in an underserved area.
- Urgency: Both projects respond to urgent safety issues and, particularly in the case of the Seattle Asian Art Museum, will help avoid closure of this historic structure.
- Support: The public hearing indicated strong support for the Seattle Asian Art Museum project.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and all build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from Seattle Parks and Recreation sources. The estimate for the Seattle Asian Art Museum is from the design work authorized by Ordinance 122590.

**Playfields - \$10.50 million**

**Description**

This project improves playfields by converting already lit sand fields to synthetic surfaces and, in some cases, providing improved lighting. Specific projects and their budgets are:



Lower Woodland #2 Renovate this lit sand field to provide a synthetic turf.	\$2,400,000
Lower Woodland # 7 Renovate this lit sand field to provide a synthetic turf and more energy efficient lighting.	\$2,800,000
Delridge Renovate this lit sand field to provide a synthetic turf.	3,200,000
Genessee #1 Renovate this lit sand field to provide a synthetic turf.	2,100,000

**Committee Findings**

*Themes:* This project will provide opportunities for healthy living in healthy communities.

*Threshold Criteria:*

- Plan: These projects are the result of planning through the Joint Schools/Parks Athletic Development Program.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the 6-year time frame.

*Criteria:*

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need and serving a wide spectrum of users.
- Equity: The project improves access to field users who are currently unable to schedule play or join teams as a result of Seattle’s limited fields.
- Support: The public hearing indicated strong support for these projects.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and all build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from Seattle Parks and Recreation Six Year Ballfield and Lighting Plan.

**Major Neighborhood Parks - \$7.95 million**

**Description:**

Projects include improvements at the Washington Park Arboretum, Magnuson Park and Jefferson Park; and support for the creation a new play garden for severely handicapped children.

*Jefferson Park Development \$4 million* – This funding will provide approximately one-third of the total funding needed to complete the Park’s master plan. The project is divided into two parts:

Jefferson Park Master Plan	\$3,000,000
Jefferson Park Skate Park	\$1,000,000

*Washington Park Arboretum \$2.5 million* - Implementation of the Arboretum master plan including: Pacific Connections Garden, trails, and other master plan improvements.

*Magnuson Park \$0.5 million* – This project will further the re-development of Magnuson Park providing support for the addition of a bicycle pathway to the 65<sup>th</sup> Street entrance and additional shoreline improvements.

*Children's Play Garden \$0.95 million* – This project supports a garden being developed for severely handicapped children. The funding would create the working garden portion of this play garden.

**Committee Findings**

Themes: These projects will contribute to the vibrancy of Seattle’s neighborhoods and provide opportunities for healthy living in healthy communities.

Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These projects are the result of a wide array of planning efforts by Seattle Parks and Recreation and the community. Plans include the neighborhood plans, park development plans, the Draft Strategic Action Plan, and the City of Seattle Capital Improvement Program.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the 6-year time frame.

Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing a community need and serving a wide spectrum of users.
- Equity: The Play Garden provides access to a group that has limited public play facilities.
- Support: The public outreach efforts indicated strong support for these projects.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are all sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and all build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from Seattle Parks and Recreation sources including the master plans for Magnuson, Jefferson, and the Washington Park Arboretum. The estimates for the Children’s Play Garden is from the current design.

**Trails, Boulevards and Green Connections - \$7.85 million**

**Description**

This project improves pedestrian and bike trails and provides connections to our parks and green spaces. Projects include:

Burke Gilman Trail Complete Burke-Gilman Trail through Ballard to Golden Gardens; add safe connections to neighborhoods.	\$3,750,000
West Duwamish Trail Create a linear park, bike and pedestrian trail improvements along the Duwamish River.	\$2,000,000
Kiwanis Ravine Trail Create nature trails and viewing areas in Kiwanis Ravine natural area	\$600,000
Lake to Bay Trail Construct bike/pedestrian overpass trail from Myrtle Edwards Park to Queen Anne as the first phase of a trail to Lake Union Park. The trail was formerly known as the Potlatch Trail.	\$1,500,000

## Committee Findings

*Themes:* This project will provide opportunities for healthy living in healthy communities and, in the case of the Kiwanis Ravine, add to the City's green legacy.

### Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These projects are included in the City Bike Match Plan and in the Bands of Green.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the six-year time frame.

### Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by addressing multiple goals, serving a wide spectrum of users, and addresses a public health concern.
- Support: The public outreach indicated strong support for green connections and trails.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

### Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from Seattle Department of Transportation Planning documents.



# Gaps in Usable Open Space Citywide

**LEGEND**

- City of Seattle Parks
- Non-City Park/Open Space
- Residential Urban Villages
- Urban Center Villages & Hub Urban Villages

**Zoning**

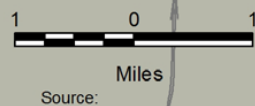
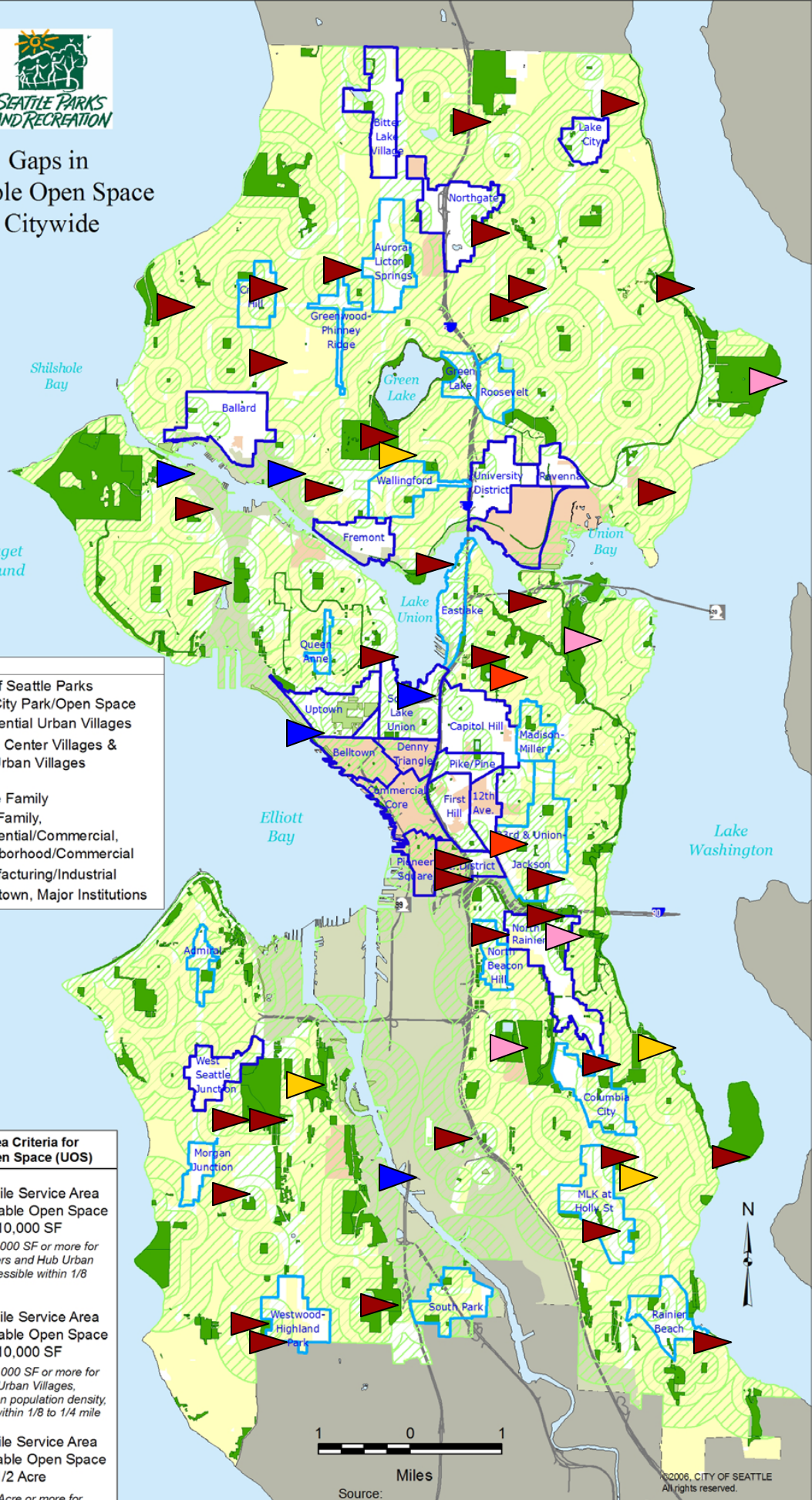
- Single Family
- Multi-Family, Residential/Commercial, Neighborhood/Commercial
- Manufacturing/Industrial
- Downtown, Major Institutions

**Service Area Criteria for Usable Open Space (UOS)**

- 1/8 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 10,000 SF  
- UOS of 10,000 SF or more for Urban Centers and Hub Urban Villages accessible within 1/8 mile
- 1/4 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 10,000 SF  
- UOS of 10,000 SF or more for Residential Urban Villages, depending on population density, accessible within 1/8 to 1/4 mile
- 1/2 Mile Service Area of Usable Open Space over 1/2 Acre  
- UOS of 1/2 Acre or more for

**Development Project Legend**

- Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds
- Major Neighborhood Parks
- Playfields
- Trails, Boulevards and Green Connections
- Citywide Parks Owned Cultural Facilities



## **Environmental Restoration - \$6.0 million**

### **Forest and Stream Restoration - \$3.5 million**

This project will restore urban forests and stream corridors identified as high priorities by the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP). The GSP is an alliance between the City of Seattle, Cascade Land Conservancy and neighborhood volunteers to re-establish and maintain healthy urban forests. This project will fund restoration of approximately 130 acres in the following areas:

- West Duwamish Greenbelt
- Longfellow Creek
- Ravenna Park
- Burke Gilman Trail
- Cheasty Greenspace

### **Committee Findings**

*Themes:* This project adds to the City's green legacy.

#### *Threshold Criteria:*

- Plan: These projects are a result of the Green Seattle Partnership.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the six-year time frame.

#### *Criteria:*

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by contributing to the health of our parks, open spaces, and waterways.
- Support: The public outreach and survey indicated strong support for stream and forest restoration. The current program includes substantial involvement of volunteers.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and build upon and expand the value of previous public investments. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. All projects have an active neighborhood Forest Steward and funding for all will be highly leveraged by volunteer hours as well as private and/or public funding sources. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are from the Green Seattle Partnership and based upon previous reforestation projects (i.e. the cost per acre).

**Shoreline Access - \$0.5 million**

Develop existing city-owned street ends to provide publicly accessible shoreline. Projects will include site preparation work, including removal of invasive species and grading, and development activities including viewing platforms, stairs or pathways, signage, benches and landscaping. Potential project locations include the following list, but may include other sites as appropriate:

- NE 135<sup>th</sup> Street
- NE 130<sup>th</sup> Street
- McGraw Street
- 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW
- Fidalgo Street
- 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue S
- 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue S
- Spokane Street (under West Seattle Bridge)
- Riverside Drive

**Committee Findings**

Themes: This project adds to the City's green legacy and will contribute to the vibrancy of Seattle's neighborhoods.

Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: The street end projects were identified in City Council resolution #29370 and the accompanying Shoreline Street End Policies in 1996. These projects are currently included in the Draft Shoreline Street End Master Plan, 2008.
- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the 6-year time frame.

Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by providing access to our rivers and lakes, and encouraging pedestrian, bike and water craft use. The project will serve a wide spectrum of users.

- Support: Providing access at street ends is highly popular in neighborhoods where street ends have been restored.
- Environmental Sustainability: The project will take advantage of the “natural capital” of Seattle’s lakes and rivers. These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have defined scopes, cost estimates and build upon and expand the value of existing publicly owned land. The projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. These funds may be leveraged by volunteer hours as well as private and/or public funding sources. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

The cost estimates for these projects are based upon recent previous street end restoration and development projects.

**Community Food Gardens - \$2.0 million**

This project will expand the number of P-Patch sites in response to a large unmet demand. One new site will be acquired and three new gardens will be developed on public land. The focus will be on densely populated areas where unmet need is high as identified below. Projects may also include making small plots of public land available for market gardens. The Marra-Desimone Park in the Neighborhood Parks category includes land for urban farming. This project will be focused on the following neighborhoods, but may include others as opportunities arise:

- Ballard
- Queen Anne
- Rainier Valley
- West Seattle

**Committee Findings**

Themes: This project adds to the vibrancy of Seattle’s neighborhoods, will contribute to Seattle’s green legacy and provide for healthy living.

Threshold Criteria:

- Plan: These neighborhoods were identified in the 2006-2006 P-Patch five-year strategic plan.

- Time frame: These projects can be completed within the six-year time frame.

Criteria:

- Public Benefits: This project benefits the public by serving a wide spectrum of users and addressing public health concerns.
- Equity: This project provides for a more equitable distribution of community gardens and helps address density.
- Support: The public outreach indicated strong support for community gardens. There are 3,000 individuals on the current P-Patch waiting list.
- Environmental Sustainability: These projects are sustainable within existing City resources.
- Financing & Leverage: These projects have the potential to leverage funding from other public, private or philanthropic sources and will generate in-kind contributions from citizens groups. There are no other City funds for these projects.

Cost Estimates:

Costs are based on recent experience in acquiring and developing P-Patch sites.

## **Opportunity Fund - \$15 million**


The Opportunity Fund will provide funding for innovative projects that emerge during the life of the levy. The Committee recommends that the Levy Oversight Committee consider the following criteria to guide allocations from the Fund:

In general, priority will be given to projects that:

- Have been vetted through a public review process or are not in conflict with approved plans, such as a neighborhood plan or watershed plan.
- Address a park or open space deficiency or underserved community.
- Are in areas experiencing growth, particularly urban villages or urban centers.
- Address an immediate health or safety problem, or take advantage of an opportunity that will be lost unless action is taken.
- Contribute to solving major challenges facing our community, such as climate change, the health of our waterways, or growth management.
- Have the potential to leverage other resources through the actions of other public agencies, funding from public, private or philanthropic partners, and/or in-kind contributions of time and energy from citizen volunteers.
- Will not result in higher than usual operating costs to the City.
- Demonstrate new and creative methods to meet the community's needs for parks and green spaces.
- Demonstrate a high degree of neighborhood involvement and/or neighborhood support.

## V. Recommendations for Policy and Program Changes

In the course of the Committee's work several important policy issues emerged which the Committee believes are worthy of consideration by the Mayor and Council:

- The Committee urges the Mayor and Council to address unmet needs at parks facilities, including the community recreation centers, swimming pools, arts and cultural facilities and senior centers by including those facilities in a future levy. With a limited amount of funding potentially available in this levy, the Committee could not fund critical improvements to park facilities beyond essential life-safety improvements at Langston Hughes and the Volunteer Park Seattle Asian Art Museum, and needed upgrades at Camp Long. The Committee is aware of the critical need to improve the City's recreation centers, especially at those locations which did not receive funding in the two previous Seattle Center/Community Center levies, and the need for improvements to pools and other park facilities. We believe voters would support a future measure that combines these needs with the Seattle Center, or in another levy focused on parks facilities.
- In addition to placing the levy on the ballot, the Committee urges the Mayor and Council to consider adopting other mechanisms, such as the creation of a Metropolitan Parks District and Transfers of Development Rights, to fund the creation of parks and green spaces in underserved areas. The Committee finds that a levy of the amount proposed, while enormously valuable, will be insufficient to address the deficits of parks and green spaces in all of the City's rapidly growing neighborhoods. The creation of a Metropolitan Parks District, with the City Council serving as its governing board, has the potential to provide a permanent source of funding for parks and recreation needs. Transfer of Development Rights are being used to acquire open space in other jurisdictions.
- The Committee recommends that the City take advantage of tremendous potential to expand and enhance Seattle's parks and create green connections among neighborhoods through creative use of street ends, utility rights-of-way and other City-owned properties. This potential can only be achieved through better cooperation among City departments. The Parks Department cannot alone meet the community's need for parks, green spaces and "green infrastructure." The Mayor and City Council must insist that other departments, (such as the Department of Transportation, Seattle Public Utilities, and City Light) are proactive in helping communities address open space deficiencies, improve parks,

and create green connections. Committee members pointed to the creation of new park land on reservoirs at Cal Anderson Park and Jefferson Park as excellent examples of what can be achieved when City departments work in concert to create open space. This levy proposal includes a substantial number of projects that will require cutting across departmental silos, including more park projects on reservoir lids, the creation of bicycle trails as “green connections” between parks and neighborhoods, and the reforestation of greenbelts that are owned, in part, by City utilities.

- The Committee recommends that the City take the initiative to overcome park and green space deficiencies by working with other jurisdictions to make more creative use of land that is owned by public agencies. Past park levies have provided the resources for the Parks Department to acquire surplus land from the Seattle School District or other public agencies for Park development. The Committee believes that strategy should also be considered if this levy passes. There are also opportunities to create new neighborhood green spaces without transferring ownership of the land. A prime example is the “Gray to Green” strategy used by the City and the Seattle School District in the past to convert paved-over school yards into playgrounds and community gardens that serve the needs of students and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The Committee urges the Parks Department to strengthen its partnerships with nonprofits that have the potential to leverage additional resources to achieve the goals of this levy. The Committee suggests that the City could offer more and better recreation programs by coordinating the Parks Department’s programming with nonprofit organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs and the YMCA. In a similar vein, the Green Seattle Partnership has mobilized a tremendous amount of volunteer energy to restore the quality of Seattle’s forests and stream corridors.
- The Committee supports the issuance of revenue bonds as a mechanism to finance improvements at City golf courses, and expand their use through the creation of perimeter trails. During the public meetings, citizens stressed the need for improvements at the City’s golf courses. Others came forward to urge the City to broaden the use of the golf courses by creating perimeter trails, as recommended in the “Bands of Green” report by the Seattle Parks Foundation. These advocates proposed the City issue revenue bonds to be paid with the proceeds of golf course operations as a strategy for funding these improvements. The Committee recommends that the Council explore the feasibility of this strategy. It should be noted that the Committee has not included levy funding for the Jackson Park Trail because of the potential use of revenue bonds. If that strategy proves infeasible, the Committee believes the Jackson Park Trail could be funded through the opportunity fund created by the levy.
- The Committee urges the City to lead the way in creating “Green Jobs” within its Park system and throughout City government. Participants in the public outreach workshops suggested restructuring jobs within City departments to place greater

emphasis on environmental stewardship. Others suggested creating more job opportunities for youth and/or disadvantaged individuals to work in green projects such as reforestation and stream restoration.

## **VI. Pros and Cons of Proceeding to the Ballot in November**

The City Council Resolution that established the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Citizens' Advisory Committee directs the Committee to "advise the Council on the pros and cons for moving forward with a possible ballot measure in 2008 to replace the current parks levy..." The following list was adopted by the Committee on June 24, 2008.

### **Pros for Proceeding in 2008**

1. The levy proposal is built upon more than a decade of public process by using previous planning and vetting processes such as the neighborhood plans, watershed plans and Parks Department plans.
2. The levy will address many park, recreation and open space needs identified in the public review process for various City plans and through Committee outreach meetings
3. The proposal affords the opportunity to acquire lands that might otherwise be lost. Continued development pressures will put some properties at risk.
4. The levy will provide the funds to address safety issues at certain playgrounds and park facilities.
5. Acquisition and development costs now will be lower than waiting to initiate projects if levy is postponed.
6. The Advisory Committee that shaped the proposal represents a broad cross section of interests and perspectives and has had a chance to review and approve a proposed package of projects.
7. New levy funds would help fill the capital funding gap that will exist in '09 (and possibly longer), when the Pro Parks 2000 levy funds are no longer collected. There is already a gap with the loss of the Community Center Levy funds.
8. Timing makes a stronger case for *renewal* of the existing parks and open space levy.
9. There is evidence of strong public support in the public opinion poll commissioned by the City Council.

10. Levy funds would offset reductions in other funds used for park improvements – such as the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET). The slower economy is resulting in significantly lower REET revenues available for capital projects.
11. The City is required to match certain fund sources such as County Conservation Futures (CFT) funds. Annual CFT revenues available to Seattle average \$2.3 - \$3.7 million. Without levy funds and reduced REET funds, it will be difficult for City to provide match.
12. The Opportunity and Acquisition Funds help to alleviate issues with the expedited schedule that make it challenging to identify and vet projects not included in existing plans.

### **Cons for Proceeding in 2008**

1. The expedited time frame resulted in a compressed Committee process and abbreviated public review and comment.
2. The expedited schedule made it more challenging to fully establish or confirm all project scopes, cost estimates and the merits of all projects.
3. The lack of formal executive department support in preparing the package created a challenge in identifying and evaluating all projects, including the development of capital and operating cost estimates.
4. The proposed package may be smaller than previous Pro Parks measure as a result of being “paired” with Pike Market levy.
5. It’s unclear if the City’s elected officials will be united in their support of the measure. Traditionally, the success of bond and levy initiatives have required strong support from both the Mayor and Council.
6. The recent economic slow down, including recently reported decline in area resale home prices, may affect public support for a tax measures (although it is uncertain when economic “recovery” would occur).
7. The expedited schedule made it challenging to identify and vet “new” projects that may not be included in existing plans.
8. There is a potential that multiple tax initiatives could be placed on the November ’08 ballot (Pike Market, Sound Transit, and Parks and Open Space). There is a potential that multiple initiatives could diminish the prospects for passage of one or more of the measures.