

MEMORANDUM



Bellevue Parks &
Community Services

DATE: January 5, 2021

TO: Parks & Community Services Board

FROM: Camron Parker
Parks Property & Acquisition Manager
Parks & Community Services

SUBJECT: Park Property Acquisition Program Presentation

At your January meeting, I will provide an overview of the property acquisition program for Parks & Community Services.

The presentation will include the following elements:

- History of major property acquisitions showing the growth of the park system
- Acquisition policy and strategy as expressed in the Parks & Open Space System Plan
- Funding mechanisms often used to support acquisition
- Geographic target areas for future park property acquisition

Last year (2020) was an active year for property acquisitions with additions to Mercer Slough, Weowna Park and properties on Lake Sammamish. The presentation will include more detail on these properties as case studies.

To prepare, please consider reviewing the Capital Project Objectives chapter in the Parks & Open Space System Plan. A digital copy of the plan is available here:

https://bellevuewa.gov/sites/default/files/media/pdf_document/parks-open-space-plan-2016.pdf

In summary, the Parks & Open Space System Plan includes the following policy direction:

Pgs. 22-23 (overall policy guidance for acquisition and development):

Land acquisition is highly dependent on availability and affordability. Because of increasing development pressures on remaining vacant land, suitable and affordable land will be evaluated for acquisition when available. Surveys of Bellevue residents, including the latest survey completed in September 2015, consistently indicate that Bellevue citizens place equal priority on both acquiring and preserving open space and on developing new parks and recreation facilities.

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Land is acquired and held in public ownership to ensure it is available for future park use when development and maintenance funding is committed. When development is feasible and appropriate, a master plan for the park is prepared with community input. At the time of

application for the development of the park, the project is reviewed for compliance with relevant City, State, and Federal regulations. For example, parking and traffic impacts are factors that will be evaluated as part of the development review process. When full development of newly-acquired property is not appropriate or possible in the near term, a minimal level of public access, such as trails, will be provided when feasible. Priority will be placed on acquiring land adjacent to existing parkland, along shorelines, environmentally sensitive land, or linkages that provide connections between parks and open space areas. Priority will also be placed on increasing park access for neighborhoods with limited access to parks.

Within the Capital Objectives chapter, both Community and Neighborhood Parks and Waterfront Access have sections dedicated to acquisition.

Page 52, Community and Neighborhood Parks:

For neighborhood parks, acquisition priorities will focus primarily on the areas determined to be underserved by level of service measures. For community parks, Parks & Community Services will continue to seek out large well-sited tracts of land for new community parks as well as acquiring available land adjacent to existing community parks where appropriate. For example, the acquisition of large open space parcels contiguous to Kelsey Creek Park and the Mercer Slough Nature Park expand these parks' capacity for passive recreation, wetland stewardship, preservation of wildlife habitat, and education. A strong commitment is also made to continue acquiring land adjacent to the Downtown Park, as envisioned in the park master plan.

Page 69, Waterfront Access:

Continued acquisition of waterfront property is challenging due to cost and limited opportunities. Acquisition will take time and depend on opportunity. Resources must be available to acquire key waterfront properties when they become available. Creative acquisition strategies, such as lease-backs, renting, and life estates, have been used to acquire some of the waterfront land assembled to date. The continued use of these less-than-fee techniques will be critical as the City continues to acquire these properties. More aggressive pursuit of grants and other outside revenue sources will also be needed.

If you have any questions prior to the meeting, please contact me at cparker@bellevuewa.gov or 425-452-2032.