



DATE: November 1, 2021

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Janice Zahn
City Councilmember

SUBJECT: Major League Cricket proposal

At the October 25, 2021 City Council meeting, Major League Cricket (MLC) proponents provided a presentation highlighting the local demand for cricket playing facilities, and the group's interest in redeveloping and repurposing a Bellevue Utilities-owned property within Marymoor Park. The proponents would like to develop the site as a Cricket Community Park, with a cricket pitch, event area, and surrounding stadium seating, as part of an effort to secure an MLC team, the 2024 and future Cricket World Cup hosting venue, and provide a long-term training ground for cricketers in our area.

Cricket is a popular sport globally and an important multi-cultural element for many Eastside residents and workers. As Bellevue and the Eastside add more workers, including tech workers, the demand for cricket will be even greater. Many local children, as young as 7 years old to teen year, and adults play cricket in sports teams and recreational leagues at the limited cricket facilities available. This location was a cricket field many years ago and this proposal would develop a world class cricket facility on the Eastside. The proposed facility would provide an additional quality of life and a worker retention amenity. In addition, this is an economic development opportunity to host cricket fans and players with associated consumer spending at host facilities, hotels, restaurants, and other entertainment venues. The proposed community park would also support complimentary uses as soccer, ultimate frisbee and rugby fields as well as for other outdoor entertainment.

Mayor Robinson asked if the Parks and Community Services Board (Board) was already looking at the proposal. The Board had previously been presented with information on the needs for a smaller-scale cricket pitch. Those needs are being studied as part of the comprehensive Parks & Open Space System Plan update that is currently underway. After additional discussions over the last week, this proposal has a time-sensitive opportunity that waiting to evaluate as part of the parks planning would not support. We have an opportunity now to develop this amenity, given the potential of World Cup and development of a national professional league here. The City has learned that many external partners have shown an interest in the proposal and are interested in evaluating this proposal. Partners to be engaged in this effort include King County, City of Redmond, Seattle Sports Commission, Visit Bellevue, One Redmond, the Bellevue Chamber and local employers. The scope of this proposed project will involve several City of

Bellevue departments; thus it is broader than the parks project previously envisioned, and is now beyond the typical purview of the Parks & Community Services Board.

I propose the staff evaluation and recommendation return to the Council directly. I also propose to direct City staff to further explore this exciting opportunity from Major League Cricket proponents apart from the larger Parks and Open Space System Plan Update. There are major opportunities available to the city with the 2024 World Cup hosting venue and the allocation of a major league cricket team to our area. Staff's work should include a review of any associated community building, regional economic development and tourism or other public benefits that could result from the proposal, as well as review of current encumbrances on the site from grant agreements with the State Recreation and Conservation Office. Additionally, I request that at a future meeting, staff clarify the level of staff time and other resources required to support this project, and its impact on other scheduled and budgeted efforts.