



PARK & CEMETERY RECOMMENDATION

SUBJECT: Voted Citywide Park and Recreation Regular Levy

REQUEST: To approve a resolution to place a Citywide Park and Recreation Regular Levy on the November general election ballot.

LOCATION: Citywide

SUBMITTED BY: Park & Cemetery Board.

RECOMMENDATION: The Park & Cemetery Board recommends the City Council approve Resolution 1670-15 to send a four year Park and Recreation Regular Levy for \$0.32 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to the City of Blaine voters in November of 2015.

PREPARED BY: Alex Wenger, Community Planner II

SUMMARY

This recommendation is the conclusion of a significant effort to study the potential for acquisition of property for view preservation, parks improvements and other public facilities as directed by City Council at the end of 2014. The Park & Open Space Levy Committee was formed with 9 members representing different areas and interests of the City. These members were appointed by the Park & Cemetery Board and met 10 times from December 2014 to June 2015. The Park & Open Space Levy Committee produced their own recommendation after considering many different funding options and discussing many different projects and ideas with their friends and neighbors. Their recommendation and supporting information is provided as Attachment 1.

On June 11, 2015, the Park and Cemetery Board held a special public meeting to review the Park & Open Space Levy Committee's recommendation and were unanimously supportive of the concept of a Park and Recreation Regular Levy. The Park and Cemetery Board felt the Committee completed a comprehensive study of the many different ideas, concepts and projects and compiled a professional report.

The Park and Cemetery Board considered the Committee's recommendation for one week and discussed the concepts with community members, the majority of which were supportive of a park and recreation levy.

On June 18, 2015, the Park & Cemetery Board voted to recommend the City Council initiate a Voted Citywide Park and Recreation Regular Levy. They then carried forward the Park and Open Space Levy Committee's recommendation with a few minor changes.

The Park & Cemetery Board's recommendation includes:

- A four year levy for \$0.32 per thousand of assessed property value. This equates to an \$80 annual tax for a property assessed at \$250,000. The levy would require a simple majority to pass. These figures are unchanged from the Committee's recommendation.
- The Board's recommendation adjusts the priorities, placing the highest priority on the following projects:
 - **Peace Portal Trail**
 - This project would continue the trail along Peace Portal Drive and provide a paved multimodal path along our busiest and one of the most scenic streets in the City. This path is also part of the Blaine to Birch Bay interurban trail, referred to by the District as the Bay to Bay International Trail that would connect the two communities in the near future.
 - **Lincoln Park Improvements**
 - There are many options to improve Lincoln Park, but the general consensus is that building a playground, picnic shelter(s), play fields and multi-use courts are at the top of the list for this large undeveloped park in an area with the most potential for population growth. Parking and restrooms are also a consideration.
 - **Shoreline Access**
 - Developing shoreline access, both physical and visual, should remain a high priority for the City. While Blaine remains a charming coastal town, the vast majority of the population is cut off from the shoreline by the railroad tracks. Creating shoreline access points in Montfort Park, Ruby Street, and continuing to improve the shoreline in Marine Park is critical to connect people with the water's edge.
 - **Skate Park Phase II**
 - Teenagers and others need alternative places to play and the Skate Park provides that. While Phase I was a good start, the vast majority of the existing concrete pad is empty and the existing equipment is minimal. Phase II of the Skate Park has been on the Park Capital Improvement Plan for the last several years, but has been pushed back due to lack of funding.
 - **Peace Portal Drive Parklet Improvements**
 - There was much discussion about purchasing properties along the west side of Peace Portal Drive to preserve views, and while that remains a valid idea, the Park & Cemetery Board recommends the City focus on improving the water view parklets we already have by installing signage, benches and creating a welcoming and usable plaza at each of the existing street ends.

