



proud past, promising future

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC WORKS**

**Parks Advisory Board Recommendation to the
Clark County Board of Councilors**

FROM: Kelly Puntaney, Co-Chair
Jay Chester, Co-Chair

DATE: September 27, 2017

SUBJECT: Year 2017 Legacy Lands/Conservation Futures Proposals

RECOMMENDATION: Approve twelve Legacy Lands acquisition proposals and issue \$9 million in Conservation Futures Revenue Bonds

INTRODUCTION

Every four to seven years, Clark County solicits Legacy Lands acquisition proposals funded, in whole or in part, with Conservation Futures funds. Previous solicitations have occurred in 1987, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2004 and 2010.

Clark County Code section 3.24.040 stipulates that an evaluation and site selection committee shall be appointed by the Board of County Councilors to review eligible proposals and recommend acquisitions for consideration. This year the Council designated the Parks Advisory Board (PAB) as the advisory committee through which the proposals are vetted.

BACKGROUND

Eligible entities submitted twelve proposals in 2017, including:

- One from the City of Camas;
- One from the City of La Center;
- One from the City of Washougal;
- Three from the Columbia Land Trust; and
- Six from Clark County, one of them in partnership with the City of Ridgefield.

On July 26, 2017, the Board of County Councilors held a work session regarding the proposals and referred the proposals and funding options to the Parks Advisory Board

(PAB) for review and recommendation. Council further requested that some project grouping and associated financial scenarios be included in the PAB recommendation back to the Council.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

At the July 26, 2017, Council work session staff:

- Provided a brief orientation on the Legacy Lands Program and Conservation Futures Fund;
- Presented an overview of the proposals;
- Discussed funding options; and
- Solicited direction on the review process to vet the project list and establish priorities.

The Parks Advisory Board (PAB) met on August 2 and August 11 to consider the proposals. Staff provided a variety of written background information to PAB in advance of the August 2 meeting. At the August 2 meeting staff introduced each proposal. Proposal sponsors then presented more detailed information. The sponsor presentations were followed by a question and answer session between PAB and proposal sponsors. Review criteria considered by PAB included:

- Conformity with adopted plans;
- Existing and potential recreational value;
- Enhance the value of abutting and proximate parks and conservation lands;
- Agriculture and forest resource value;
- Protected habitat and species value;
- Available access;
- Threat/non-availability in five years; and
- Partnership contributions.

A preliminary proposal ranking was compiled by PAB at the August 2 meeting with clarification of individual PAB rankings completed by August 9.

Based on the ranking, staff presented four project grouping and associated financial scenarios at the August 11 meeting, consistent with Council request. Scenarios included:

- Scenario 1: Pursue all twelve projects and issue \$9 million in revenue bonds;
- Scenario 2: Pursue the top nine projects and issue \$5 million in revenue bonds;
- Scenario 3: Pursue the most urgent projects (seven projects) and issue \$4 million in revenue bonds; and
- Scenario 4: Pay as we go. No bonding (This would only allow pursuit of one large project and two small projects in the next few years).

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PAB finds that all proposals:

- Respond to evaluation criteria;
- Meet the legislative purpose of the Conservation Futures Program per RCW 84.34;
- Are consistent with the objectives of the Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan;
- Have significant value for wildlife, water quality, recreation, farm, forest and/or other conservation benefits;
- Support high-quality recreational features/opportunities;
- Cover a wide geographic scope; and
- Include significant non-conservation futures cost sharing.

Due to the high quality of proposals and findings above, PAB strongly recommends that the Council support Scenario 1, to pursue all twelve projects and issue \$9 million in revenue bonds. PAB also forwards Scenarios 2 and 3 for Council consideration, consistent with Council request. PAB does not forward Scenario 4 for Council consideration because PAB concludes the opportunity to pursue several highly ranked proposals would be lost, if a bonding scenario is not considered.

Enclosures:

Summary of Project Grouping Scenarios 1-3

Cash Flow Analysis of Scenarios 1-3 assuming 1% annual growth in Conservation Futures property tax

Cash Flow Analysis of Scenarios 1-3 assuming 0% annual growth in Conservation Futures property tax

Signed and dated this 8th day of September, 2017:

Kelly Puntaney, Co-Chair
Clark County Parks Advisory Board
9/8/2017

Jay Chester, Co-Chair
Clark County Parks Advisory Board
9/8/2017