

Minutes
2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee
June 22, 2009

Committee Members Present: Doug Dunham, Chair, Neal Adams, Cindi Barker, Bruce Bentley, Bill Brosseau, Dennis Canty, Don Harper, Terry Holme, Shanon Kearney, Cheryl Klinker, Matt Mega, Joyce Moty, Beth Purcell, Pete Spalding

Staff: Superintendent Tim Gallagher, Susan Golub, Donald Harris, Terry Roche, Michael Shiosaki, Kevin Stoops

Committee Business: The meeting agenda was approved, as were the minutes from the May 26, 2009 meeting.

Public Comments

Glenn McGilvra: Mr. McGilvra works with the Belltown Urban Park Project. He stated that architects are working on a pro bono basis to sketch out design for the expansion of the Belltown P-Patch. He would like to share these designs with the Department of Parks and Recreation. Now is the time to move forward with the P-Patch expansion. Retail land prices will go up – now it is possible to get three fourths acre of additional park land.

Carolyn Geise: Ms. Geise is a supporter of the Belltown Urban Park Project. She owns a building in Belltown and has worked with the P-Patch for 17 years. Now is a great opportunity to expand the Belltown P-Patch and build on the volunteer work that is underway. Greening Vine Street was the first green street project in downtown, begun in 1996; two pieces have been implemented. The City has not kept up with amenities for children downtown. The community has been trying to get a site for a community center for many years.

Nancy Malmgren: A relatively new idea in parks and recreation is to have places for the handicapped and disabled. There is strong support in the community for more places for special needs people to have safe places to recreate. The community is supporting a trail in Carkeek Park that would be handicap accessible. Ms. Malmgren does not know how it can be funded, but hopes there could be money in the Levy for this project.

Chris Goley: Mr. Goley is a supporter of the Belltown P-Patch and active with the Urban Parks Project. There are many people on the waiting list for gardens in the P-Patch. The idea for the expansion area at the P-Patch is for a non-traditional park, but one that is focused on urban horticulture. Great ideas are being developed.

Sabrina Whaling: Ms. Whaling is with the Special Populations Advisory Council. She supports an accessible trail in Carkeek Park.

Project Updates

Michael Shiosaki provided the Committee with an update on the status of 2008 Parks Levy projects that are in planning or are underway:

- **Lower Woodland Athletic Fields 2 and 7:** Bids to be opened on June 24;
- **Atlantic Street Play Area:** Bid to be opened June 24;
- **Brighton:** Bid package to be issued in a month;
- **Bhy Kracke:** Bid package to be issued in a month;
- **Bayview:** Bid package to be issued in a month;
- **John C. Little:** Bid package to be issued in a month;
- **Northgate Park and Ride (newly named Hubbard Homestead Park):** Out to bid in July;
- **Magnuson Trail;** Project 40% complete;
- **Jefferson Park:** Received 2 great bids – will award contract soon.

Mr. Shiosaki also provided updates on Pro Parks Levy projects that are underway:

- **Thomas C. Wales Park:** The Seattle Department of Transportation reviewed requirements for street frontage and concluded that most of the street in front of the park functions like an alley, so the requirements for curbs and gutters were waived. The SDOT review of this issue delayed the project for five months. The project will go out to bid in July.
- **John and Summit:** Out to bid in late July or early August;
- **16th and Howell:** Out to bid in late July or early August.

Both John and Summit and 16th and Howell include community garden space. Funding from the 2008 Parks Levy's P-Patch fund enabled completion of the construction documents.

Pete Spalding asked whether the City Council approved the Bell Street boulevard proposal and the transfer of funds from the Myrtle skatepark to the Delridge skatepark. Mr. Mega asked that the Committee be regularly apprised of Levy-related legislative actions. Superintendent Gallagher responded that Bell Street is scheduled for City Council consideration on June 22 [*note: the project was approved*]. The skatepark legislation will go to the Council later this summer.

Terry Holme asked about the integrity of the water proofing on the lid at Jefferson Park and whether questions about the water proofing product's failure had an impact on the bid. Michael Shiosaki responded that work at the park will start at the north reservoir, so any questions about the lid will not hold up the park work.

P-Patch Program Update

SuJ'n Chon, Hazel Bhang Barnett and Rich MacDonald from the Department of Neighborhoods (DoN) presented an update on the Levy's P-Patch Program. The briefing was a follow-up to the presentation made by Ms. Chon and Mr. MacDonald on May 26, 2009.

Ms. Chon noted that DoN staff heard the message that the Committee wants an overview for the entire \$2 million Levy allocation to the P-Patch Program. It was a good exercise for staff to create the complete framework for spending all \$2 million. The presentation tonight will show how the proposed spending package meets the priorities for the Program and which neighborhoods are targeted for future spending. Changes from the May presentation include a

revision of some project numbers to better reflect required staff investment in the projects, and the addition of a \$265,000 project for Seattle Public Utility property in West Seattle.

There is a 2,000 person waiting list for existing garden spots. DoN is asking for support from the Committee for the Project Framework and the list of projects (Attachment A).

Rich MacDonald walked the Committee through the strategic framework DoN established to prioritize new projects. They first identified attributes for priority neighborhoods, and then looked at new sites within those neighborhoods. Census maps provided information for the following attributes to assist in priority neighborhood identification:

- Gardens per population;
- Gardens per language group;
- Gardens per low income individuals; and
- Gardens in low income and senior housing areas.

Additional criteria included neighborhoods with feasible sites already identified and with community organizing in place, as these are crucial to getting projects moving. Further, points were given to areas within Urban Villages, those aligned with the Mayor's revitalization focus on South Park or Southeast Seattle, and areas with relatively limited food access as documented by the Sound Food Report.

Within the priority neighborhoods, sites were analyzed based on a number of criteria, including sun exposure, access, size, public ownership and availability of water. Projects have been identified at 18 sites. The total package cost is \$963,000.

Neal Adams asked Mr. MacDonald to describe what a high priority project would look like, so that he could better visualize the concepts Mr. MacDonald was describing. Mr. MacDonald began with a priority neighborhood, stating that the Bitter Lake/Broadview neighborhood ranked high. It currently is underserved by the P-Patch Program and ranked high in having a low income population, low income and/or senior housing, and has a site identified by community members. There is a low income high rise housing development near the proposed site, and residents of the building want to participate in a community garden. The neighborhood is an Urban Village, the site has good sun exposure and the property is in public ownership.

Dennis Canty noted that projects are recommended in most of the priority neighborhoods. What uses have been identified for the remainder of the Program money? Mr. MacDonald stated that the remainder of the funding will go for the priority neighborhoods with no projects in this first list and maybe for expansion of existing projects or to provide more than one site per priority neighborhood, as some of the identified sites are very small.

Doug Dunham noted that not many of the sites on the list are to be purchased. Is the idea that the next round of projects would include property acquisition? Mr. MacDonald stated that the goal is to spend as much of the funding as possible on development rather than on acquisition. The City Council and the Department of Neighborhoods has given the project this charge. For the next round, there is potential for projects in street right-of-way and on additional public parcels.

The utility pump station at Barton Street is one example of a good potential purchase as the price is \$260,000 for 12,000 square feet – a great opportunity to get a large parcel at a good price.

Don Harper noted that the map of priority sites had nothing identified for Belltown; however, Belltown is a neighborhood with a P-Patch and with strong community support for additional garden space. Mr. MacDonald responded that Belltown did not score as a priority neighborhood, and that the project the community is interested in is private property that would need to be purchased for a lot of money. Mr. Harper responded that 30 percent of the funds in the P-Patch Program are designated for acquisition; therefore, couldn't it be possible to leverage community fund-raising and Levy money to purchase the property adjacent to the Belltown P-Patch, as citizens have requested? Mr. Harper also asked Mr. MacDonald to explain how the remaining funds, beyond the \$963,000 of the proposal before the Committee now, is to be spent. SuJ'n Chon responded that the next round of funding will include projects in priority neighborhoods with no currently identified projects.

Pete Spalding asked why there were no projects proposed for the North Delridge and Highland Park neighborhoods in West Seattle, noting that citizens have expressed interest in having community gardens in these areas and have proposed specific sites. Mr. MacDonald responded that these neighborhoods did not score highly in the initial prioritization of neighborhoods.

Cindi Barker expressed an interest in what will come next for the P-Patch Program, asking if a list of potential projects for a phase three or four had been developed. Matt Mega noted that what DoN presented tonight is phase one of a big picture and that there will be projects in future phases that will be selected based on the criteria DoN has established. Joyce Moty stated that a lot of work went into developing the current project list, including lots of community and volunteer work to develop P-Patches.

Beth Purcell noted that the total amount for phase one is \$963,000. She asked what projects provide the match for the \$300,000 United States Department of Agriculture Community Food Project Grant that the program received. Mr. MacDonald responded that projects at the New Holly housing development and John C. Little Park provide the match for the grant. The non-profit organization Solid Ground is the lead on the grant projects which may include educational and training programs.

Doug Dunham asked how comfortable Mr. MacDonald is with the cost estimates for the projects. Mr. MacDonald responded that there may be small variations; the larger projects included in the Program are a new model for DoN, as the Department has not usually had funds to do projects at a larger scale. Therefore, the estimates for the larger projects may change. The plan is to hire a project manager to develop cost estimates for each project.

Neal Adams asked about the community building aspect of p-patches. Mr. MacDonald responded that generally a p-patch is initiated by neighbors to a site – they ask for a garden to be developed to improve a location and provide gardening opportunities. The Neighborhood Matching Fund generally provides a grant to get the project started. The organizers bring the community together to build the garden and the group stays together as garden leadership. It is

an open system, not locked; people are invited into the garden, there are plots for neighborhood groups and seating areas for visitors.

Motion

Dennis Canty made the following motion, with Cindi Barker providing a second:

The Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee recommends approval of the \$963,000 P-Patch Program as described on Attachment A.

The motion passed unanimously.

Parks and Recreation Budget Overview

Korie Voorheis, Park and Recreation's Budget Manager, provided the Committee with a broad overview of the park system and budget. The Parks and Recreation system includes:

- 430 parks, including:
- 185 athletic fields
- 130 children's play areas
- 9 swimming beaches
- 18 fishing piers
- 5 golf courses
- 22 miles of park boulevards.

There are 26 community centers, four environmental learning centers, and ten swimming pools.

The 2009 operating budget began at \$131 million, before a \$2 million mid-year reduction. Major budget categories include:

- \$28 million for Park Cleaning and Landscaping Restoration
- \$23 million for Recreation Facilities and Programs
- \$11 million for the Seattle Aquarium (self-supporting)
- \$8 million for Golf (self-supporting)
- \$8 million for Swimming, Boating and Aquatics
- \$7 million for Planning Development and Acquisition.

The majority of the operating budget, 66%, is supported by the City's General Fund. Charges for services provide 23%, with grants, rentals, levies and other City funds making up the rest. Parks and Recreation has experienced a steady increase in General Fund support over the past five years: from \$63 million in 2005 to \$84 million in 2009 and an estimated \$83 million for 2010.

The Capital budget has been hit especially hard in the current economic downturn, as it is funded by taxes on real estate sales. The range of appropriations over the last five years goes from a high of \$32 million in real estate tax funds in 2008, to an expected low of \$9 million in 2010. The Parks and Green Spaces Levy provides much needed capital support.

Challenges facing the Department in the coming year include:

- Making required budget reductions while minimizing impact on service delivery and regular employees;
- Use of one-time fund balances and front-loading 2008 Levy spending, problems in 2011 if the economy doesn't recover;
- Meeting the needs of underserved communities (immigrants, ethnic minorities, children, elderly); and
- Aging infrastructure costing more to maintain and/or replace.

Opportunity Fund Process

Kevin Stoops, Director of Parks Planning and Development Division, presented a draft schedule for the Opportunity Fund. The Opportunity Fund is a \$15 million program in the Levy, established to allow communities to apply for funding for neighborhood projects. The Pro Parks Levy included a \$10 million Opportunity Fund. The extensive first round Pro Parks Opportunity Fund process included eight Oversight Committee meetings to establish threshold criteria and seven months to move through the application, evaluation and recommendation process. An expedited process could occur in a shorter timeframe with less extensive criteria discussions and an abbreviated review process.

Parks initial proposal for the Committee to consider is to conduct two rounds of the Opportunity Fund, one in 2010, and a second round in 2012. If there are project savings, there would be a potential third round in 2014, as savings automatically go into the Opportunity Fund.

Doug Dunham stated that some Committee members were appointed to initial one-year terms, so some of the experienced members may not be on the Committee after this year. It might be better to work on the criteria early rather than late, in case the Committee loses the "old" members.

Matt Mega spoke in favor of an expedited process, as long as there is enough time for public input. Kevin Stoops noted that implicit in an expedited process is considerable up-front work, including workshops where staff help community members with applications. In addition, work on the criteria could occur up-front, so that citizens would know early whether their projects fit the criteria. The Pro Parks criteria were very specific, which helped identify projects.

Don Harper stated he supports the longer Pro Parks model. He suggested coordinating the Opportunity Fund schedule with the Department of Neighborhoods Small and Simple grant process, as people often use the Small and Simple grant to develop ideas.

Terry Holme spoke in favor of the Pro Parks model as it gave time for the community to be educated and involved. He liked the formal public hearing before the Oversight Committee that occurred. Also, the expedited schedule showed work during July and August, difficult months for public involvement.

Regarding Opportunity Fund criteria, Matt Mega asked if some of the criteria used for the Pro Parks Opportunity Fund criteria could be used for the new Levy. Doug Dunham replied that the Committee would want to review the previous criteria, but he thinks some will apply. Other decisions for the Committee to make are the threshold limits: how much to allocate in each round and what is the minimum award. Superintendent Gallagher noted there might be three rounds: \$7.5 million in 2010; another \$7.5 million in 2012; and any remaining surplus in the overall Levy in 2014.

Committee Business

Committee leadership: Doug Dunham stated that his position as Chair of the Committee, and Joyce Moty's as Vice-Chair, are hold-overs from the Pro Parks Levy Oversight Committee. The new members have not had the opportunity to elect a chair. He would like this to be on the Committee's agenda for another meeting.

Tours: Committee members expressed interest in a tour of Levy project sites, specifically noting an interest in seeing Jefferson Park and Marra Farm.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00.

Attachment A

Summary of Strategic Framework

The P-Patch program staff and management developed a two step framework. The first step analyzes and prioritizes neighborhood areas based on a set of attributes. The second step analyzes possible sites based on a set of criteria for acquiring, developing and/or managing the specific sites.

Step One: Establishing Neighborhood Priorities. Using “Community Reporting Areas”, P-Patch program developed a framework of seven key neighborhood-level attributes. They are divided into two categories: Highest Priority and High Priority.

Highest Priorities -- 2 points:

1. Area is currently underserved by P-Patch program (gardening space in relation to population density and/or existing P-Patch waitlists).
2. Area is a neighborhood specifically called out in the Parks Levy (namely Queen Anne, Ballard, West Seattle, and Rainier Valley).
3. Area has relatively high percentages of historically and currently underserved populations, including low-income, seniors, immigrants and refugees.
4. Area has feasible site(s) already identified and community organizing in place.

Higher Priorities -- 1 point:

5. Area contains designated urban village(s) under the Seattle Comprehensive Plan.
6. Area aligns with Mayoral revitalization focus on Southeast Seattle and South Park.
7. Area has relatively limited food access as documented by the Sound Food Report.

Tools Used to Establish Neighborhood Priorities. The following data sources were used in conjunction with the framework:

- Census Maps showing:
 - P-Patch Gardens in relation to Population Density
 - Language Groupings: Spanish, Vietnamese, E. African, etc.
 - Households with 200% of Poverty Level and Below
 - Affordable housing and senior housing locations
- P-Patch Community Gardening Program database and waitlists
- Sound Food Report: a relatively recent UW analysis of food deserts in the city.

Step Two: Analysis of Candidate Sites. Staff developed a set of attributes to assess site feasibility in the priority areas. This assessment tool uses 10 criteria, ascribing one point for each:

1. Sun Exposure: full sun in residential area/ best available in dense urban area
2. Access/Terrain: flat terrain and material drop off
3. Size:
 - 4,000sf or greater in residential areas (for example SF 5000+ zones);
 - 2,000sf minimum in denser areas
 - Number of residents impacted
 - Best available in high priority urban zones
4. Water (existing source versus need for meter)

5. Innovative programming already exists or is in development to address community needs
6. Expansion of existing P-Patch
7. Land Ownership (publicly owned)
8. Security (neighbors able to view site)
9. Capacity to serve neighborhood priority (site may be on border of priority neighborhood)
10. Ambiance (busy street, windy)

Summary of Proposed Projects for 2009-10:

- 21 neighborhoods were identified as priorities under the Strategic Framework
- 18 priority neighborhoods have identified projects or potential projects
- Estimated costs for identified projects: \$853,000

Community Impact 2009-10

New acreage in food production added: 1.75 acre

Number of new garden plots added: 400

New gardeners added: 400

Strategic Framework for Community Gardens and P-Patches

With the support from the Levy Oversight Committee, this framework will guide allocations of the remaining Parks and Green Spaces Levy funds for the next three years. Recently, the Mayor and City Council appropriated \$1.0 million of the Levy for community gardens and P-Patches. This front end appropriation recognizes the wait list of over 1,900 families and individuals who are currently waiting for a plot. It also recognizes the growing community need as well as interest in community gardening, local food production, and food security.

Results:

District	Community Reporting Area	Score	2009-2010 Identified Projects	Estimated Costs \$853,000	Identified projects which serve but are not located in priority neighborhood	2010-12 Initial list
Ballard	Ballard	7				
Ballard	Whittier Heights	7				1
Central	Central Area/Squire Park	7	Spring St	\$ 20,000		1
Delridge	High Point	7	MacArthur Lane	\$ 10,000		
Delridge	Highland Park	8				
Delridge	North Delridge	7				
Delridge	Roxhill/Westwood	10	Barton Pump Station - SW Development--\$48,000 Acquisition & Costs \$265,000	\$313,000		
East	Capitol Hill	7	John & Summit	\$150,000		
Greater Duwamish	North Beacon Hill/Jefferson Park	7	Ferdinand Snoqualmie	\$ 60,000		
Greater Duwamish	South Park	7	Marra Farm Expansion	\$ 24,000		
Lake Union	Cascade/Eastlake	7		\$ 12,000	Eastlake Expansion	1
Lake Union	Fremont	7	Hazel Heights	\$ 20,000		
Lake Union	Wallingford	7	NE 41st & 1st Ave NE	\$ 20,000		
Northwest	Broadview/Bitter Lake	7	Bitter Lake Open Space	\$ 36,000		
Notheast	Ravenna/Bryant	7				1
Queen Anne Magnolia	Interbay	7	Manor Park	\$ 42,000		1
Queen Anne Magnolia	Queen Anne	7			Manor Park	2
Southeast	Columbia City	10	Hillman Expansion	\$ 24,000	Ferdinand Snoqualmie	1
Southeast	Rainier Beach	10	51st & S. Leo	\$ 80,000		
Southwest	Alki/Admiral	7	Ferry Ave SW	\$ 22,000		
Southwest	West Seattle Junction/Genessee Hill	7	West Seattle Christian	\$ 20,000		

Bolded Neighborhoods do not yet have identified feasible sites and will require additional site exploration.

Additional Identified Projects:

Three projects that scored highly in site criteria are not in priority neighborhoods. P-Patch hopes to implement these projects because they leverage significant additional resources. They also serve low income and immigrant families and families in low income housing. The projects are:

- 1) & 2) New Holly Youth and Family garden expansion and John C. Little Park at New Holly
 - Estimated Costs: \$60,000
 - New families gardening: 60
 - Resources leveraged - These two sites are match for a \$300,000 USDA Community Food Project Grant submitted by a consortium of public and private agencies. As part of the grant the sites may house educational and training resources that will be available to the broader community

- 3) Raised Bed Gardens partnering with three low income housing groups
 - Estimated Costs: \$50,000
 - New households gardening: These projects will include accommodations to fit smaller spaces and/or to serve populations with special needs. The forecasted new gardening space is still being determined.
 - Resources leveraged - P-Patch staff will partner with three low income housing providers who would provide a long term area for their residents to garden. This meets a need to bring gardening to populations for whom transportation to traditional P-Patch community gardens is problematic. These communities may or may not be in identified priority neighborhoods.