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Mr. David Kimmett
Program /Projects Manager
Natural Resource Lands
Parks and Recreation
KCS-NR-0700

David.kimmett@kingcounty.gov
201 South Jackson
St., Suite 700Seattle, WA 98109-3855

Re: grant application, Equestrian Trail Course, Vashon Island

Dear Mr. Kimmett,

This is a letter requesting grant support for Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association's effort to create a public training and competitive trail course for equestrians at Paradise Ridge Park on Vashon Island. You suggested I submit this letter when we spoke at the meetings regarding the Mountain Bicycle Trail Course to be installed in Dockton Park on Maury Island.

The trail course, which would be a permanent installation over approximately ¾ acre, has a total cost of \$75,000 (\$15,000 consultation and design, \$60,000 construction for materials and any labor which cannot be done by volunteers). VMIHA, a 501c3 on the island which has been supporting equestrian activities for over 30 years, has committed to raise 20% of the total (\$15,000) and asks King County Parks and Recreation to consider a grant for the remaining \$60,000. (See the addendum for VMIHA's history of contributions to the park in money and volunteer labor since the 1980's.)

The Trail Course would be open to all as a training course for safe riding in the island's woods and roadsides, as well as a venue for competitive events. All "disciplines" of riders—trail riders, dressage, western, event riders and gamers--benefit from safety-training their horses to handle the uneven terrain and footing and problem-solving in different settings that can be found in a trail course. Safe and competent handling of horses on well-designed-and-constructed courses has also become a popular "sporting" and spectator event in the US in recent years. Money collected from entrance fees can help offset future maintenance costs, a practice VMIHA has employed to develop and maintain Paradise Ridge Park's other equine facilities.

Paradise Ridge Park's 43 acres and its equestrian facilities is heavily used by horseback riders as well as walkers and bikers (non-motorized), for recreation but it is also a major site for equitation (skill, knowledge and safety) training. Youth and adult groups and individuals use the park to further their ability to ride safely in any conditions. The youth equitation clubs on the island are 4-H (Rock Riders) and US Pony Club (Olympus Pony Club); both have been active parts of the horse community for decades. In addition, young riders who choose not to belong to organized clubs regularly study at Paradise Ridge Park with individual instructors. Adult riders of all ages (we have experienced people riding into their 80's) include pleasure riders, drivers of horse-or-pony drawn carts, cross-country and stadium jumper riders, and dressage riders. Riding horses on the island number more than 600 at any

given time, so we have a lot of riders using our park and trails. Living on an island means that island riders must own a trailer and pay a heavy ferry toll to ride or compete elsewhere, so local facilities are very important to us.

The site, Paradise Ridge Park, is a former NIKE missile site which has been owned by Vashon Park District since 1983 and its facilities have been developed over the last 30 years by citizens working in concert with the District. This is the only public equestrian-centered facility on the island. All the other riding areas on the island involve trails through the woods, some easy and well-maintained but many steep and rocky. Paradise Ridge's trail course can provide the opportunity for riders—experienced as well as new—to improve their skills and those of their horses in more challenging riding areas.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Wanda Moore
VMIHA member
Char Phillips, President
Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association

ADDENDUM:

What is Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association?

VMIHA was created in 1985 (as the Vashon Saddle Club, renamed in 1990s) at the request of Vashon Park District to serve as an umbrella group for communication and cooperation with the District. As such, it strives to serve all equestrians on the island and organizes volunteer labor and fundraising for the park. Since 1985, it has built most of the equestrian facilities at Paradise Ridge Park, which include two major arenas (including a 2010 replacement of the dressage arena with an all-weather covered arena 80'x200'), a round pen for training, and stalls for youth camps, shows and events, and they cleared trails through the hilly woods to construct over a mile of cross-country jumps. The equestrian community has raised over a half-million dollars over the years, and until the District developed its own maintenance department in the late 1990s, VMIHA and its members and clubs provided almost all of the maintenance for the equestrian facilities. The Horse Association's most recent project, known as the GreenSpace or Ponies Against Pavement, raised \$29,000 to remove areas of Nike Site pavement (driveways and parking areas) no longer in use, take out cyclone fencing, and restore the front of Paradise Ridge to long stretches of beautiful grass free of Scotch broom and blackberry. In addition to dozens of volunteers, the Horse Association has among its members and supporters landscaping and construction companies and individuals who have historically provided labor, advice and materials for park facilities.