



Dear Partners of the Vashon Park District,

With the recent failure of the VPD Maintenance and Operations levy, I want to keep you all in the loop about next steps we are considering for a second attempt in November. You probably know that a November failure would result in no levy funding effective January 1, 2020, so it is important that we understand and respond appropriately to the reason(s) for the April failure. Levy funds represent 80% of the District's revenue.

As a recap, the reason we asked voters in April to approve a levy of \$0.52 per \$1,000 of assessed property value was in response to the feedback we received from our 2016 Community Survey. Respondents wanted the District to offer more in recreation programming, so we committed \$100,000 per year toward that goal. Respondents ranked permanent restrooms at all parks as a high priority, so we included that in our Capital Projects Plan. That Plan also consists of \$1.5 million in District funding to address \$4 million in equipment and deteriorating asset concerns. That funding is over and above what we considered in potential grant awards – assuming we were awarded them all.

VPD was approved for a levy rate of \$0.50 cents per \$1,000 in 2015, but our rate has eroded to \$0.40891 due to escalating increases in property values over the past four years (the erosion factor is complicated, but I'm happy to explain if you're interested!). The VPD Board is considering a levy ask of \$0.40891 in November. Feedback from the "no" voters in April was that they simply cannot take another property tax increase, despite the April increase amounting to less than 1% of their total property taxes. Staying at our present rate communicates a simple message: "We heard you. It is our intent to not increase taxes."

It is also our intent to continue providing the best service possible to you – our honored partners in the Vashon Parks community. There will be cutbacks to our plan, to be sure, but we do not anticipate cutbacks to current operations. We anticipate cutbacks as follows:

- Cut new recreation programming planning from \$100,000 to \$50,000 per year
- Eliminate staff wage increases to no more than cost of living between 2020 – 2023
- Cut Capital Project funding and equipment purchase needs from \$1.5 million to \$200,000 – only that which is of highest priority. All else simply has to wait. Even grant funding would be difficult, as grants do not cover A&E and often requires matching funds.

Please know that we welcome any feedback, questions, and insights you may have as we navigate next steps in our planning. It is always an honor to hear from you all! And it continues to be our honor to serve you.

Elaine Ott-Rocheford
Executive Director