

The Vashon Park District will be returning to voters on November 5 to renew its Maintenance and Operations Levy. You may recall we ran a levy ballot measure in April, and it did not pass, despite 54% approval where 60% was required. This levy is not in addition to the existing levy; it is a renewal as is required every 4 – 6 years. The present levy expires at the end of 2019 and is required to fund the Park District from 2020 – 2023. Without it, there are no other funding alternatives.

We heard you in April, Vashon voters! We sharpened our pencils and reduced the rate from 52 cents to 45 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value (the last voter-approved levy was at 50 cents in 2016). There are no bells and whistles in this 45 cent rate! This levy is simply for general maintenance and operations plus a small number of critical asset-preservation projects that must be addressed. We have removed \$1.3 million in capital projects from this next 4 year levy cycle; eliminated staff wage increases; and cut the anticipated recreation and event programming budget in half.

What do you get for 45 cents?

- Expanded recreational programming despite the smaller budget, including sailing and skate camps, swimming programs, Ski School, Concerts in the Park, and new community events;
- Continued recreational services presently enjoyed at all Vashon parks and facilities;
- A \$400,000 reserve for cash flow management and emergency funds to maintain our fiscal responsibility commitment;
- High priority maintenance and asset-preservation needs addressed.

The April levy asked for 52 cents. This levy asks for 45 cents. What was removed from the April levy?

The following will not be part of the new levy but are still in the Strategic Plan:

- Recreation and event programming totaling \$100,000
- Staff wage increases
- Permanent restrooms at most parks
- Replacement of the 43 year old pool deck, tile and drainage, electrical repairs
- Replacement of the Tramp Harbor pier
- Pt Robinson lead paint removal/septic replacement
- Invasive plant eradication
- Road and parking lot pothole repairs
- Inspiration Point wall repair

King County Parks passed a levy measure in August. Does VPD receive funds from the King County Parks levy?

No. The VPD is a separate, stand-alone Park District and receives zero funding from King County for maintenance and operations.

Is there room for both the newly proposed Hospital District and the Park District?

A Hospital District and Park District can co-exist under the present allowances. A Hospital District is higher in the tax structure order, so it is possible the rate they choose could lower the Park District's levy rate and funding. Voters do not approve a Hospital District's levy rate -- the Hospital District's Board does, but the decision would be subject to public input.

How fiscally stable is the Vashon Park District?

In 2013, the Washington State Accountability Audit found that the "District's financial condition puts it at risk of not being able to meet financial obligations and maintain current service levels." At that time, VPD's percent of debt to revenue was 37.3%. **Today, VPD is debt-free. The most recent audit in**

December, 2018 stated, "District operations complied with applicable state laws, regulations, and its own policies, and provided adequate controls over the safeguarding of public resources."

If the Park District levy fails, will King County or the Vashon Island Land Trust take over? No. If VPD were to dissolve, the District can name a successor taxing district, but the County has stated it is not safe to assume they would accept it. The Vashon Island Land Trust is not a taxing district.

Can facilities such as the skate park and community swimming pool be funded with private money rather than the Park District?

VPD is very grateful for the generous fundraising efforts of its user groups, but we cannot rely on private funds to operate and maintain those facilities.

Can grants pay for the Park District's capital improvement needs?

VPD has successfully obtained grants for capital improvement projects, but grants are highly competitive and usually require matching funds, which comes from levy dollars. Grants are not available for maintenance-related needs such as structural repairs and equipment purchases.

Is there something in it for everyone?

Do you attend after-hour meetings at the School District? VPD staff provides after-hour access to the School District facilities. Do you attend Drama Dock theater productions? Drama Dock rehearses in VPD facilities. Do you live next to and enjoy undeveloped open space around you? VPD owns 530 acres of property on Vashon, many of which are undeveloped. Visitors to Vashon parks, lodging facilities, and athletic events provide income to island businesses. VPD sponsors the Food Bank's Picnics in the Park and Strawberry Festival. VPD owns the Concerts in the Park series. The Farmer's Market is held at the Village Green – a VPD park. You may not use the parks and facilities, but it is quite likely your life is touched by the presence of the Vashon Park District.

For further information, please contact me at eott@vashonparks.org or 206-463-9602.