

Fall City Metropolitan Park District

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) re: Former Wells Nursery Site Park Land Acquisition Proposal

Q1- What is going on with the Park District and the former Wells Nursery site?

- A- The Park District is attempting to acquire the western 9.3 acres of the 14.3 acre sized property that was once home to Wells Farm & Nursery.

An opportunity presented itself for the Park District to apply for State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant funds that are allocated specifically for park land acquisition. The Park Commissioners agreed that pursuit of these grant funds was prudent, that the former Wells Farm & Nursery site is an excellent potential park site, and that if these grant funds are awarded to the Park District, development of this site into a community park would be beneficial to the constituents of the Park District.

Q2- Why did the Park District choose this location?

- A- A number of factors led the Park Commissioners to pursue acquisition of this site for the purpose of developing a community park. This site has a number of positive attributes including that it is:

- 1) One of the few locations within the Park District that is at least 9 acres of flat and cleared land,
- 2) Within walking distance to the heart of the town,
- 3) Outside of the Snoqualmie River and Raging River floodways,
- 4) Owned by willing sellers who are members of the community and that have expressed an interest to work with the Park District and the community to sell it the land.

Q3- Why is the Park District pursuing this land acquisition now?

- A- The opportunity to apply for this particular State RCO grant is only available once every two years. The Park District Commissioners decided to pursue this opportunity now while there are willing sellers. In addition, given the current economic conditions of the State, there are no assurances that similar grant opportunities will be available in the future.

Q4- Why is the Park District pursuing this during a period of economic recession?

- A- The State RCO grant which the Park District is pursuing is already in the system, and does not require additional or new tax dollars. Every two years the Washington State Legislature allocates funding to the Recreation and Conservation Office for distribution to local communities to enhance and improve recreation opportunities. If the Park District is not successful with its Wells site grant application, these funds will be awarded to another community elsewhere. Another benefit to pursuing this grant during an economic downturn is that the cost of real estate is lower.

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Q5- Why else is the Park District pursuing this land acquisition?

- A- In addition to the reasons identified previously, acquisition of the site is being pursued because:
- 1) There are expressed desires and needs for a community park within the Park District that cannot be met at Fall City Park or at the local elementary and middle schools,
 - 2) The site has been identified within the Park District's Comprehensive Plan as a place that would have great value as a community park and gathering location,
 - 3) There are many overall benefits of having a community park including: economic, environmental/health, and social/society, and
 - 4) The grant application is supported by many individuals and groups within the community.

Q6- Isn't existing Fall City Park and the Olive Taylor Quigley Park enough for this community?

- A- With Fall City Park being located across the Snoqualmie River via State Highway 202, it is not within a comfortable walking distance to the residential community of Fall City, is subject to seasonal flooding and subsequent clean-up, and holds cultural significance to the Snoqualmie Tribe which precludes certain improvements to the facilities.

Olive Taylor Quigley Park is a 0.5 acre roadside picnic area park and does not possess space for many recreational amenities.

Neither existing park facility within the Park District boundaries includes playground areas accessible to younger children when public school is in session, which is approximately 9 months of the year. Neither existing park facility has certain outdoor recreational opportunities that may appeal to a more mature audience as well.

Q7- Why doesn't the Park District spend money on improving the existing Fall City Park instead of purchasing and developing a new one?

- A- Fall City Park, which is owned and maintained by King County, has limitations on development and investment that can and will be made at this site. For instance:
- 1) Fall City Park is located within the floodplain of the Snoqualmie River which significantly restricts the type and amount of development that may occur at the site.
 - 2) Recent attempts to further develop the Fall City Park site by adding soccer fields were halted upon discovery of cultural artifacts from the Snoqualmie Tribe.

As a result of these issues, significant investment by the Park District at the Fall City Park site does not lend itself to be a viable option.

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Q8- What is the timeline for the State RCO grant application?

- A- The timeline for the State RCO grant (Outdoor Recreation Account, Local Parks Acquisition category) is as follows:

February 26 – Application Workshop
May 3 – Application Due (initial)
June 15 – Comprehensive Plans Due
June 7–30 – Project Review Meetings
July 30 – Technical Completion Due (final)
August 16-20 – Project Evaluations
September 8 – Evaluation Results Posted on RCO Website
October 28-29 – Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) Meeting
November 1 – RCFB Decision Posted on RCO Website
January 2011 – Grants submitted to Legislature and Governor for funding consideration
June/July 2011 – RCFB awards grants to recipients

Q9- If the Park District receives the grant and acquisition of the site is completed, what would be the timeline for developing the Wells site?

- A- Other than the Park District being in the position to close the sale of the land acquisition within 60 days of when the funds become available in June/July of 2011, there is no set deadline for developing the site. The RCO grant application is for land acquisition only, however minor improvements such as provisions for an improved perimeter fence and removal of items considered unsafe in a public facility are included with the grant funding request. It is anticipated that some of these tasks would take place within one year of the land transaction.

It is anticipated that the task of creating a Master Site Plan will take over one year, and possibly several more, to develop. Implementation of the adopted Master Site Plan is anticipated to take several more years to occur and would only be done as funds allow.

Q10- Why does the Park District Comprehensive Plan indicate that the Wells site will be developed within the next 6 years?

- A- The Capital Improvement Plan is a ‘wish list’ of projects that the District would like to accomplish within the next 6 years if funding were available. This plan indicates that several of the projects associated with the Well site require funds from sources other than local funding, such as donations and other grants, in order for them to occur. If these outside funds do not materialize, the projects would not become implemented within the 6 year timeframe, and thus the timeline would need to be revised accordingly.

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Q11- How would this land acquisition be paid?

- A- If the State RCO grant is awarded to the Park District, the Park District would pay 50% of the total cost and the State would pay 50% of the total cost.

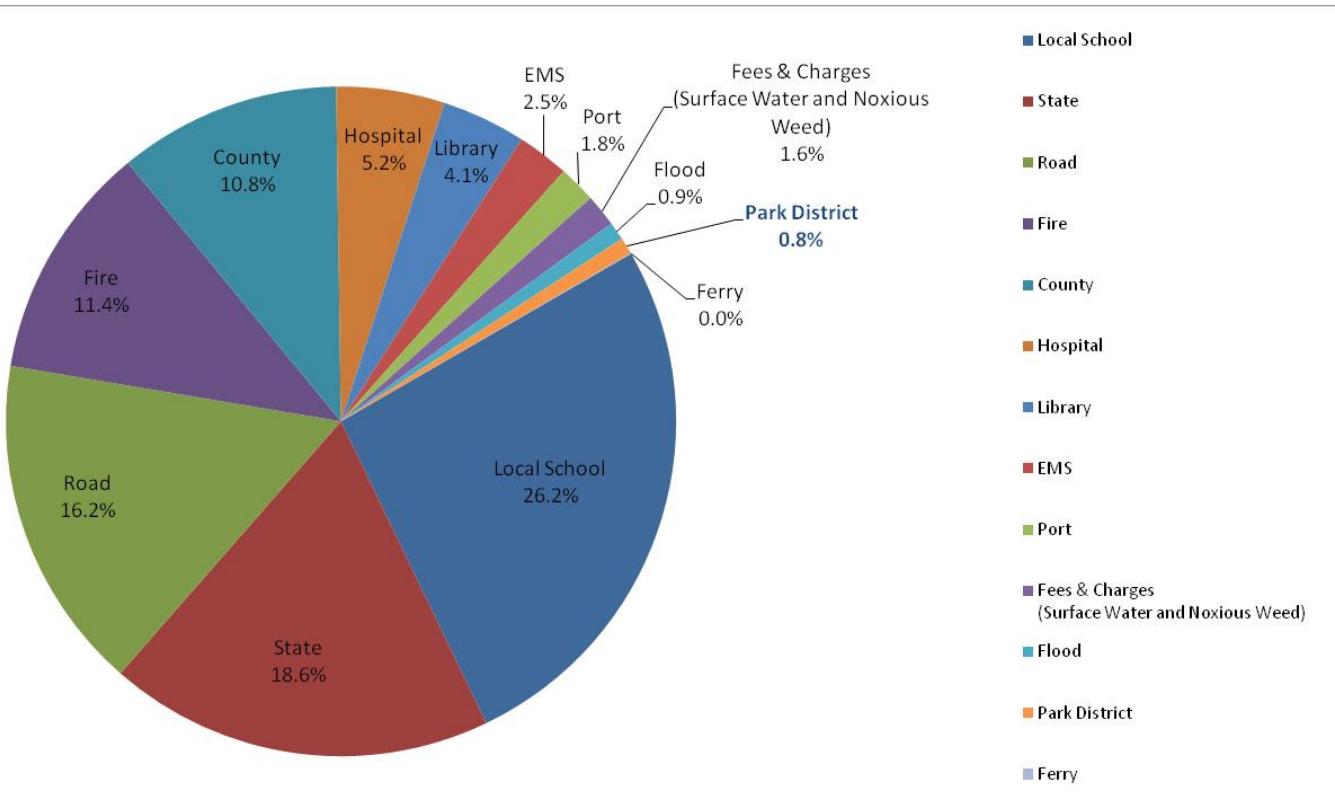
Q12- How would the Park District pay for its share? And how much would this cost me?

- A- The Park District would pay for its share with a long term bond (likely over 20 years).

An estimate of the bond's cost for a taxpayer with a \$300,000 home, would be \$11. That same owner is calculated to pay \$29 in taxes to the Park District in 2010. The current annual budget for the Park District can account for this yearly bond payment.

Q13- In general, how much does the Park District cost me?

- A- In 2010, the levy rate for the Park District was 9.63 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. As an example, for one family within the Park District, this represents 0.8% of their total property tax bill for 2010. Please see the pie chart illustrating the percentage of property tax the Park District represents to a typical home within its boundaries.



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Q14- Will the current property owners make a profit on selling this property to the Park District?

A- While this is unknown for certain, it is unlikely. The RCO requires that the acquisition of property follow the federal Uniform Real Property Acquisition procedures which require an independent professional appraisal and review appraisal to establish the true cost of the property.

This appraisal and review appraisal process would only be initiated if the Park District is notified that it was selected for the acquisition grant. The owners of the site, and the Park District, would need to agree to the price as determined by the review appraiser before the deal could be completed.

Q15- Are the current property owners affiliated with, or commissioners of, the Park District?

A- No. They are community members with voting rights as all community members, but they are not Park District Commissioners.

Q16- What types of facilities can be placed in a Local Park as allowed by the RCO grant?

A- The RCO allows the following uses in a Local Park:

- Hard court areas, such as skate parks, tennis courts, and basketball courts
- Interpretive kiosks, signs
- Parking
- Paths, trails
- Picnic shelters
- Play areas
- Playing fields
- Restrooms
- Roadways
- View areas

Q17- How will the Wells site be used and classified as part of its RCO grant application?

A- A Multi-Use Park is the preferred site use category for the RCO grant application, because it would allow both Active and Passive uses at the site. This classification was selected based upon a review of both RCO and King County Code definitions. Development of a Master Site Plan in the future will likely include elements of both Active and Passive uses and therefore this Multi-Use Park classification would be applicable.

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Q18- For the State RCO, what is the difference between an 'Active' park and a 'Passive' park?

A- The State RCO grant application identifies the following Management Priorities for managing site resources:

- Active park – developed and primarily intended for active recreational uses
- Passive park – developed and primarily intended for passive recreational uses
- Mixed-use park – developed with separate passive and active areas; or containing features in addition to other priorities such as natural or special use areas
- Natural area – managed primarily for value of resources as buffers, conservation and/or habitat protection, perhaps allowing access for hiking and nature study
- Special use area – property dedicated to a single purpose such as an athletic complex encompassing the entire site, a fairgrounds, community garden, or formal garden

Q19- For King County, what is the difference between an 'Active' park and a 'Passive' park?

A- The King County Code, Title 21A Zoning, provides the following definitions in Chapter 21A.06, Technical Terms and Land Use Definitions:

21A.06.026 Active recreation space. Active recreation space: recreation space that recognizes a higher level of public use than passive recreation space, and that will be developed for organized or intense recreation. Active recreation site includes both the active recreation uses and all necessary support services and facilities. (Ord. 14045 § 3, 2001).

21A.06.958 Recreation, active. Recreation, active: structured individual or team activity that requires the use of special facilities, courses, fields or equipment. Active recreation requires a significant level of development, use and programming. Active recreation includes, but is not limited to, organized sporting events, such as baseball, football, soccer, golf, hockey, tennis and skateboarding, and to large-scale group picnics, gatherings and social events. (Ord. 15606 § 8, 2006).

21A.06.9585 Recreation, passive. Recreation, passive: recreational activities that do not require prepared facilities like sports fields or pavilions. Passive recreational activities place minimal stress on a site's resources and are highly compatible with natural resource protection. Passive recreation include, but is not limited to, camping, hiking, wildlife viewing, observing and photographing nature, picnicking, walking, bird watching, historic and archaeological exploration, swimming, bicycling, running/jogging, climbing, horseback riding and fishing. (Ord. 15606 § 9, 2006).

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21A.06.959 Recreation facilities, passive. Recreation facilities, passive: facilities to support passive recreation that do not involve significant levels of infrastructure or development, including, but not limited to, open fields, trails, children's play equipment and picnic sites for a small number of people. (Ord. 15606 § 10, 2006).

Q20- Will this park be a sports facility or sports-oriented ballpark like the new ones at Preston?

A- No. The intent of this facility is to develop a community park. The park may or may not include one or more ball fields. The specific layout will largely be determined by community input, which is still being received, and adherence to the King County development regulations for buffers and parking requirements.

Q21- Will there be large halogen field lights at this park?

A- No. While King County development codes may require some low-level safety lighting for walking or parking areas, it has not been suggested or requested that there be ballpark style lighting. The addition of field lights would be inconsistent with the site's use as a community park and its compatibility with the adjacent neighborhoods.

As the design of the Master Site Plan progresses, the Park District will have a better idea of specific lighting requirements. It should be noted that the relatively recently constructed Centennial Fields in the City of Snoqualmie is a park that is only open for use 'dawn-to-dusk' and does not have field or parking lot lighting.

Q22- I'm a neighbor to the site, will there be a ball field along my backyard?

A- No. Even if ball fields are part of the Master Site Plan, King County has minimum setback requirements between residential areas and ball fields that must be met.

Q23- I'm concerned about noise. Will the park be open all night?

A- No. The park will follow King County noise ordinance rules as a minimum. The community may indicate that it prefers to have a 'dawn-to-dusk' park and incorporate that planning element in the Master Site Plan.

Q24- Can the park be enclosed with fencing, landscaping, and a security gate?

A- Yes. However, the design and type of fencing and landscaping will be driven both by King County code as well as the overall budget. In general, it is widely considered that a park site that is more visible to the public is one that provides greater security than one that is obscured from view. Entrance and/or security gates to the parking lot can be closed/opened at the hours or times of operation.

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Q25- I'm concerned about the wide 'service area' shown in the grant application. What does this exhibit mean?

- A- One 'service area' exhibits shows that on a Local Level, people within a 0.5 mile radius to the site are able to conveniently walk to the site. Another 'service area' exhibit shows that the Falls Little League, of which the Fall City community is a part, extends from Snoqualmie Ridge to Ames Lake. This same exhibit shows that the Snoqualmie Valley Youth Soccer Association, of which the Fall City community is a part, extends from Duvall to North Bend.

Q26- Does this mean you are planning a park to appeal to traffic from Duvall to North Bend?

- A- The intent of the project is to create a local community park for Fall City. This does not, however, preclude use by other visitors including those from Duvall to North Bend. Conversely, our community uses their parks and all public parks are, by their definition, open to the public.

Depending upon the to be developed Master Site Plan, the allowed uses, and allowed times for activities, the site could or could not attract traffic from outside of Fall City.

Q27- How will you deal with the traffic that does come to the site?

- A- On-site parking will be provided to discourage street parking. The exact design of the on-site parking layout will be more specifically defined as the overall design progresses. The parking layout shown for the grant application is largely where the previous Wells Farm & Nursery parking was located.

Q28- Why isn't there a final design for this park?

- A- There are many steps that must be taken in the design development. The current schematic plan labeled as "Concept Layout For Discussion Only" is an exhibit for the purpose of submitting for the RCO grant application. If the grant is awarded to the Park District, and the land acquisition deal is completed, the Park District will move forward with development of a Master Site Plan with community involvement and participation. Until the Park District is notified of its status with the RCO grant and the land transaction is completed, the development of a final design would be premature.

Q29- If you are awarded this grant, will you be held to the exact design that you are submitting?

- A- No. While some grants do work in this manner, an acquisition grant for the RCO does not work in this manner. As long as the future use is consistent as a Local Park as defined by the RCO, there are many options available to the community. It is understood and expected that a number of design changes on the specific layout of the park will take place as the plan is refined.

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Q30- I am not interested in ballparks for children. What other uses can there be at the site?

- A- Many ideas are still under discussion for use by all ages. Some of those ideas include: picnic and bar-b-q areas; community garden; walking and/or bicycling paths; a playground; a tot lot; climbing walls; tennis and basketball courts; volleyball and/or badminton courts; open areas for Frisbee, etc.

While the options for recreation will be limited in part by the size of the site, the Park District will strive to design a park that reflects the diverse personalities of our community. Ideally, the Park District will be able to design a park that incorporates many functions and partners with other community-oriented groups in the area.

Q31- What are the next steps if the acquisition grant is awarded?

- A- Between November 2010 and June 2011, the owners of the site would initiate and complete the short plat process to divide the 14.3 acre site into two parcels of 9.3 acres and 5 acres in size. The appraisal process would take place in early spring. In early spring the Park District would also initiate the steps to secure a bond for its financial contribution for the acquisition of the site. Development of a Master Site Plan would take place following completion of the land transfer.