



MEMO

To: Mayor Erickson and City Council
From: Nikole Coleman, Associate Planner
Date: 3/9/17
RE: Metropolitan Park District

WHAT IS A METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT?

A metropolitan park district (MPD), authorized by [Ch. 35.61 RCW](#), may be created for the management, control, improvement, maintenance, and acquisition of parks, parkways, boulevards, and recreational facilities.

WHAT CAN A METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT DO?

- Purchase, acquire and condemn lands;
- Regulate and manage: parks, parkways, boulevards, streets, avenues, aviation landings, playgrounds;
- Includes park-related activities: boats, amusements apparatus, bath houses, food stuffs or other merch, concerts or other entertainment;
- Annex territory; and
- Provide for park police, have employees, establish civil service.

FORMATION OF METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

There are two ways to initiate the formation of a park district, both of which *require* approval by *majority of voters within the proposed district*:

- By *petition* proposing creation of a MPD submitted to the county auditor of each county in which all or a portion of the proposed district is located that is signed by at least 15% of the registered voters residing in the area to be included within the proposed district. Where the petition is for creation of a district in more than one county, the petition shall be filed with the county auditor of the county having the greater area of the proposed district.
- By a *resolution* of the governing body or bodies within which the district is to be locate.
 - When proposed by local government resolution, a ballot proposition authorizing the creation of a MPD shall be submitted by resolution to the voters of the area proposed to be included in the district at any general election, or at any special election which may be called for that purpose.
 - The ballot proposition shall be submitted if the governing body of *each* city in which all or a portion of the proposed district is located, and the legislative authority of *each* county in which all or a portion of the proposed district is located within the unincorporated portion of the county, each adopts a resolution submitting the proposition to create a MPD.

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT BOARD

The resolution submitting the ballot proposition must designate the composition of the board of metropolitan park commissioners from among three alternatives:

1. Five commissioners may be elected at the same election creating the district;
2. For a district located entirely within one city, the legislative authority of the city may act as the MPD; or

3. For a district located in multiple cities or counties, each legislative authority may appoint one or more members to serve as the board via interlocal agreement, provided that:
 - When creation of the district is proposed by citizen petition, each city governing body and county legislative authority approves by resolution such designation.
 - Within six months of the date of certification of election results approving creation of the district, the size and membership of the board is determined through interlocal agreement of each city and county.
 - The interlocal agreement specifies the method for filling vacancies on the board.

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT TAXING AUTHORITY

- Two regular property tax levies available:
 - \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation (AV)
 - \$0.25 per \$1,000 assessed valuation (AV)
- They are considered one levy for the purposes of the levy limits in Ch. 84.55 RCW, but they have different rankings in the prorationing statute.
- Levy is permanent
- A MPD is a junior taxing district subject to the \$5.90 limit
 - State cap on the overall levy rate collected by all local taxing districts together, which cannot exceed \$5.90
- Commissioners can raise the tax rate without a public vote if there is capacity under the \$5.90 cap and the rate doesn't exceed the 75-cent rate
- Has the authority to seek voter approval for excess property tax levy for bonds

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT FISCAL ADMINISTRATION

- The county treasurer of the county within which all, or the major portion, of the district lies shall be the ex officio treasurer of a metropolitan park district, but shall receive no compensation other than his or her regular salary for receiving and disbursing the funds of a metropolitan park district.
- MPD may designate someone other than the county treasurer who has experience in financial or fiscal affairs to act as the district treasurer if the board has received the approval of the county treasurer to designate this person.
- If the board designates someone other than the county treasurer to act as the district treasurer, the board shall purchase a bond from a surety company operating in the state that is sufficient to protect the district from loss. (RCW 35.61.180).
- Contracts are to be by competitive bidding or small works roster (RCW 35.61.135).
- The money collected can only be used for the park district.

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT LOGISTICS

- Some or all of park services can fall under MPD responsibility. For example, initially the MPD could take over just recreational programs.
- The MPD would sign an interlocal agreement with the City of Poulsbo to carry out services.
- The City would bill for all services provided under the interlocal agreement quarterly and is reviewed and approved by the MPD Board of Commissioners.
- The City of Poulsbo and the Poulsbo MPD would be separate local governments with the same boundaries.
- Parks and Recreation Commission would continue to advise the City Council on all regulations, resolutions, plans, policies, projects and proposals relating to the city parks system, recreational facilities or open space. The MPD Board would make financial decisions for the MPD.
- Comprehensive Plan:

- Multiple MPD's have adopted long range planning documents. See the [Si View MPD](#) for a recent example. The 2016 Draft Si View MPD Comprehensive Parks Plan references the Comprehensive Plans of the jurisdictions to which it is located – North Bend, Snoqualmie and King County. However, it is not required to adopt a long-range planning document for a MPD.
- The 2016 Poulsbo Comprehensive Plan should be amended if the MPD is passed by the voters to reflect the work of the MPD.

BENEFITS OF A METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

- Dedicated funding source instead of the need to compete with other services for money.
- Tax collections could not be spent on other City of Poulsbo expenses.
- Potential revenue from MPD: \$0.50 per \$1,000 AV = \$743,977

OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Shelton MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council Resolution - Approved in 2010 with nearly 52% • Property tax levy of up to \$0.55 per \$1,000 AV • City Council serves as Park District Board
Peninsula MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved by voters in 2004 with 55% • Unincorporated Pierce County west of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge and east of the Purdy Bridge (excluding the City of Gig Harbor). • Elected Park Commission, Executive Director • MPD funds the Parks and Recreation Department • Started with 12 acres and currently manages 595 acres of park land
Key Peninsula MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved by voters in 2004 with 60% • Unincorporated Pierce County from the Purdy Bridge to the Mason County Line, north from Devil's Head to the Kitsap County Line • Elected Board of Commissioners, Executive Director
Olympia MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved in 2015 with 60% • Municipal boundaries of the City of Olympia • \$0.52 per \$1,000 of AV • City Council serves as Park District Board • Oversight will be provided by a 5-person Olympia MPD Citizen Advisory Committee
Seattle MPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved in 2014 with 53% • Municipal boundaries of the City of Seattle • Maintains a Parks and Rec Department and formed MPD • Maintains a Parks Commission and added a 15 person MPD oversight Board • Interlocal Agreement signed between City and MPD • MPD does not hire its own staff, City Parks Department staffs the MPD
University Place	Proposal defeated by nearly 65% in 2016
Mason County	Proposal defeated by nearly 65% in 2016
Ferndale	Proposal defeated by nearly 60% in 2015
Skamania County	Proposal defeated by nearly 60% in 2014

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PARKS

- Quality of life in a community increases the attractiveness of a job by 33 percent. Workers attracted to an area are then positioned to put money back into the local economy through housing and taxes, which then contribute to parks.¹
- The National Association of Home Builders found that 65 percent of home shoppers surveyed felt that parks would seriously influence them to move to a community.¹
- A study in Active Living Research estimated that the average household living half a mile from open space would be willing to pay \$4,104 more for a home to live a quarter mile closer to the open space.²
- The presence of a greenbelt in a Boulder neighborhood was found to add approximately \$500,000 in property tax revenue annually.¹
- Riverwalk Park in San Antonio, created for \$425,000, is lined with outdoor cafes, shops, bars, art galleries, and hotels, and has overtaken the Alamo as the most popular attraction for the city's \$3.5-billion tourism industry.¹
- In 2013, local and regional public park agencies generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity and support almost 1 million jobs. Combined with studies on the state and national park systems, public parks are responsible for roughly \$200 billion in economic activity each year, touching all 50 states and the District of Columbia.³

ELECTED OFFICIALS ROLE IN POTENTIAL CAMPAIGN

- [RCW 42.17A.555](#):
 - Does not restrict the right of any individual to express his or her own personal views concerning, supporting, or opposing any candidate or ballot proposition, if such expression does not involve a use of the facilities of a public office or agency.
 - Does not prevent a public office or agency from (a) making facilities available on a nondiscriminatory, equal access basis for political uses or (b) making an objective and fair presentation of facts relevant to a ballot proposition, if such action is part of the normal and regular conduct of the office or agency.

	PERMITTED	NOT PERMITTED
Local Elected Legislative Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May collectively vote to support or oppose a ballot measure at a properly noticed public meeting, where opponents of the measure are given an equal opportunity to express views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall not pressure or coerce agency management to participate in campaign activities. • Shall not explicitly include passage of a ballot measure in the agency’s annual goals.
Local Government Elected Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May engage in political activities on his/her own time, if no public equipment, vehicle or facility is used. • An elected official may use his or her title, but should clarify that he/she is speaking on his/her own behalf, and not on behalf of the agency. If the elected legislative body has adopted a resolution, the official can then speak on behalf of the agency. • May attend any function or event at any time during the day and voice his or her opinion about a candidate or ballot proposition if they are not being compensated and are not using any public equipment, vehicle or other facility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall not direct agency staff to perform tasks to support or oppose campaign activities or ballot measures. • Shall not use public facilities or resources to engage in political activities.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

- Simple majority (50% +1) needed for approval
- SEPA - Categorically Exempt per [WAC 197-11-800\(16\)](#)
- Feasibility of cost studies not required
- Public hearing is not required for formation of MPD
- Ballot requirements:
 - Approve or disapprove formation of MPD
 - Choose and describe the composition of the initial board
 - Choose name for the district

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT STEPS

- Form Exploratory Committee
- Continue discussions with Parks and Recreation Commission
- Determine the taxing capacity for MPD in Poulsbo
- Review goals for park services and outline how the MPD will assist in accomplishing
- Confirm geographic boundaries
- Draft resolution for City Council to move forward

¹ American Planning Association “How Cities Use Parks for Economic Development.” 2002.

² Active Living Research. “Economic Benefits of Communities that Support Physical Activity.” May 2010.

³ National Recreation and Park Association. “The Economic Impact of Local Parks.” 2015