



Park and Recreation Commission findings and recommendations

May 14, 2018

Introduction

In 2017 the Camas Parks and Recreation Commission was tasked by the Mayor and City Administrator to explore funding options for the parks and recreation system. An ad-hoc committee made up of representatives from City Council, the Commission, City and Camas school district staff, was convened to assess the long-term funding issues and recommend a solution. The goal was to address funding challenges to the year 2035.

Camas Parks and Recreation Growth Assessment Ad Hoc Committee (PRGA)

Name	Affiliation
David Gast	Parks and Recreation Commission
Jerry Acheson	City Parks and Recreation
Melissa Smith	City Council
Pete Capell	City Administrator
Randy Curtis	Parks and Recreation Commission
Steve Marshall	Camas School District Staff
Tim Hazen	Citizen

The Problem

Camas has insufficient operations and maintenance funding to support the existing park system. As we look to the future, the development of new parks, trails and facilities will be constrained by the lack of new funding.

- Over the years, the community has come to expect a high level of park, trail and open space maintenance. Current resources and staffing levels are struggling to maintain even a lower level of service.
- The escalation of City costs, particularly for operations and maintenance, exceeds available dedicated revenue. Parks and recreation funding has not grown enough to cover the increase in staffing costs and the additional acreage in the system.

- To avoid making this problem worse the city is not using its resources to build more parks and facilities until additional resources for maintenance are identified.
- Expansion of the system will require additional maintenance and operations resources.

Proposed Solution

After looking at multiple funding options, a Metropolitan Park District (MPD) is the only tool identified that can generate new operating and capital resources for the long-term support of the parks and recreation system.

What is an MPD and how would it impact the City?

An 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. An MPD may include territory located in portions of or in all of one or more cities or counties.

- The MPD is subject to compression as a junior taxing district.
- An MPD offers dedicated park and recreation funding.
- The district boundary could be contiguous with the city limits. This would allow the City Council to serve as the district board.
- The MPD would be formed by a (50% +1) vote of the citizens.
- Funds can be used for both operations, maintenance and capital projects.
- The MPD has a maximum tax rate of \$0.75/1,000 of assessed property value.
- May issue and sell warrants, short-term obligations, or general obligation bonds.

Key Considerations for City Council

The PRGA committee members halted its work on this project because they felt it was vitally important to obtain City Council direction and feedback on the MPD concept outlined in this report.

There is considerable detailed work yet to be done by city staff and the committee, including defining the taxing structure, policies and projects that would benefit from the creation of an MPD. The PRGA committee submitted a preliminary report (including resource documents) to the Parks Commission on May 14, 2018. The Commission approved moving forward with Council direction.

Listed below are some of the critical issues the Council is being asked to address:

1. Does the Council support the efforts of the Parks Commission to proceed with the additional work necessary to propose the formation of an MPD to the Camas voters?

2. The Commission recommends a vote in 2019. Are there any concerns from Council regarding timing?
3. Does the Council have any specific concerns or interests that should be addressed by the PRGA committee?

Proposed Action

Subject to receiving additional feedback and guidance from the City Council, we recommend the following steps to move forward.

1. Direct staff to refine the specifics of projects and costs, pinpoint final details of the MPD tax structure and develop a strategy for public information campaign in collaboration with the commission and the PRGA committee. This is an opportunity to inform and draw additional stakeholders into the discussion.
2. Direct staff to conduct recommended public opinion research to learn more details about support for an MPD.
3. Report findings back to City Council by the end of 2018.