



Date: June 3, 2010

To: Board of Parks Commissioners

From: Kevin B. Stoops, Director, Planning and Development Division

Subject: Lowman Beach Park
King County's Murray Avenue Combined Sewer Overflow Project

Requested Board Action

No action is necessary. This is a briefing for informational purposes at this time.

Project Background

Lowman Beach Park is located on Beach Drive SW in West Seattle. It is a small park of 4.2 acres of which 2.6 acres are tidelands. The park features an open lawn, a swing set, a tennis court and a pocket beach fronting a large intertidal beach on Puget Sound. King County operates the Murray Avenue pump station at Lowman Beach Park. The pump station is below ground but there are hatches and vents in the park's lawn area to provide access and ventilation for the facility.

King County is in the process of undertaking improvements to sewage storage, conveyance and pumping systems to control combined sewer overflows (CSO) that result from stormwater entering the regional sanitary sewer system. State law allows no more than one overflow event per location per year.

Overflows to Puget Sound occur from the Murray Avenue pump station several times each year, primarily when wet winter storms cause flows to exceed the capacity of the West Seattle interceptor. Sewers tributary to the pump station meet at the pump station, necessitating a focus on improvements in or adjacent to the park. The alternatives under consideration by King County include:

- Development of a 2 million gallon storage tank in the park;
- Development of a 2 million gallon storage tank on private property across Beach Drive from the park; and
- Installation of 2 million gallons of pipeline storage in Murray and Beach Avenues SW.

Building a storage tank in the park, along with associated mechanical rooms and odor control equipment, would occupy most of the park. If the pipeline alternative is pursued, equipment rooms and odor control facilities may still be needed in the park.

Attached is a graphic of the build the tank in the park alternative. It is likely to be the preferred alternative due to cost, loss of housing and traffic issues associated with the other alternatives. Parks staff has indicated to King County that this magnitude of work would be considered a taking of parkland and that full compensation would need to be provided. Staff has outlined the principles of the "Initiative 42" legislation that precludes non-park uses of parkland and requires replacement of parkland with similar property in the vicinity.

Public Involvement Process

King County held a public meeting on their Murray Basin alternatives in early April and will hold a second meeting on June 19.

Issues

There has been considerable public opposition voiced to the use of Lowman Beach Park for the CSO project. Impacts during construction and in the long run have been cited, as well as a loss of the existing park features due to the construction. As noted above, Parks staff has indicated that the CSO facility in the park constitutes a taking of parkland that will necessitate compensation, if not replacement.

Environmental Sustainability

While it is important for King County to address the public need for clean water, achievement of this objective should not come at a sacrifice to the public need for recreational open space and access to Puget Sound.

Schedule

King County intends to identify a preferred alternative by November 2010, assuming that Washington Department of Ecology will accept a longer facility plan selection process. Environmental review and design would occur in 2011-12. Construction would follow in 2013.

Additional Information

For more information, please contact Kevin Stoops by phone at 206 684-7053 or e-mail at kevin.stoops@seattle.gov. Cheryl Eastberg is the Parks planner assigned to this issue; she may be reached by phone at 206 386-4381, or e-mail at cheryl.eastberg@seattle.gov.

Attachment