



The City of Covington

UPDATE



## Citizens show support in continuing Parks and Recreation services

The Covington City Council conducted an Open House meeting with citizens and other interested neighbors and guests at the City Hall Council Chambers on June 20th at 7 p.m. The purpose of the Open House was to solicit comments and ideas as well as answer questions from the public regarding the future funding of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

During the Council's deliberations over the 2006 Budget, it became clear that the City had insufficient revenues to continue funding and operating a Parks Department beyond 2007 without a new source of revenue. This shortfall was estimated to be at least \$200,000 to \$250,000 each year as determined by the City's Six Year Financial Model. This deficiency existed before considering any capital expenditures for new park facilities.

A committee made up of concerned citizens, parents and Covington's Parks and Recreation Commission members formed in early 2006 to study possible revenue options that would secure not only the continued maintenance and operations of the existing park facilities and recreation programs, but new capital construction projects as well. The Parks and Forestry Commission took this recommendation to the City Council at a meeting on June 13, 2006. The Council then scheduled the Open House to then take input from the public.

Approximately 80 people attended the meeting and Open House. Attendees included parents and children currently enrolled in the City's recreation programs, coaches, and other citizens with an interest in continuing and preserving the City's Parks and Recreation opportunities.

Covington Mayor Margaret Harto encouraged members of the audience to share their thoughts, feelings, concerns, and questions with the Council. "This is an opportunity for you, as a community, to let this decision-making body know how you feel, which, in turn, will assist us in making the difficult decisions we have to make," said Harto.

The discussion was lively and centered on the recommendation that the City Council put forth a ballot measure this November creating a Metropolitan Parks District to establish a long term funding source for parks maintenance and operations.

John Watchie, a soccer coach for the sports program with Covington Parks & Recreation, testified that he has been coaching soccer in Covington for the past 4 years. Watchie stated: "I think it is our responsibility to hold together as a team and as a community and do whatever it takes to keep this thing going. I've seen other towns that have lost their community involvement and their sports programs - next they start having trouble with gangs and crime. If you think it's going to be expensive to keep the Parks and Recreation program alive and well, wait until you see how expensive it is taking care of the damage from gang members going through your neighborhoods



Children enjoying Friendship Park

and parks. We've got a responsibility as parents and as community members to do whatever it takes to make this happen and I for one am going to do whatever I've got to do to keep this program from stopping."

Covington resident Leslie Grimm noted: "We've got to give back to kids or they're not going to be there for us when we need them." Ms Grimm, who is also participating in Covington's Parks and Recreation adult softball, stated that she appreciated having this recreation opportunity available to her because there is nowhere else in the community to participate in adult sports.

Covington residents Rich and Sheryl Beck, noted they definitely would provide their support. Sheryl Beck stated: "Our children are going to be involved in the community if there are parks and recreation opportunities for them. We can plant the seed to show them what it means to take part in things to build a strong community and, if we want to have adults in the future who are interested in our community, this is an excellent opportunity for us to do that. I propose that we invest as much of ourselves as we can to set an example to show it is important to be involved in the community, to be a councilmember, to be a mayor, to be more than that - as we all have those aspirations for our children - let's invest ourselves in planting that seed now while they're young."

Chris Wright, a Covington resident and also a coach, noted that "The kids get so excited at the games, cheering each other on; you cannot put a price on that. Keeping parks and recreation in our community is an important thing."

Jim Phillips, a Covington resident whose property was recently annexed into the City, has been coaching soccer and baseball for two years. Mr. Phillips noted



April Pools Day Public Swim at the Aquatic Center.

Recreation Department. Clearly, the survival of Parks and Recreation services was of a priority to residents. 74% rated "Importance of Well-Maintained Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities" between 7 and 10 on the scale provided. The importance of the Aquatics Facility received between a 7 to 10 point vote from 63.5% of those responding. With the funding decisions laying ahead of the voters in 2006, it was extremely interesting to learn that over 82% of surveyed residents believe that their quality of parks within the City affects the home values within Covington. On the issue of additional support to balance the Parks fund, 55.9% of the respondents provided a rating between 7 and 10 indicating they would be willing to pay some additional property taxes to fund a Parks ballot measure.

On the topic of the City's budget decisions regarding the Parks Department, Citizens supported the Council's decision to segregate Parks into its own fund so that the sources of revenue and basis for expenditures could be monitored within a single fund. The Council believes that by helping Citizens to clearly see where the revenues come from and where expenditures are made, they can make informed decisions on parks and recreation ballot measures in the future.

"Always leave enough time in your life for something that makes you happy, satisfied, and even joyous. That has more of an affect on economic well-being than any other single factor." Paul Hawkins.

If the City Council decides to pass a Resolution placing the Metropolitan Parks District measure on the ballot, Covington voters will soon have the opportunity to determine if parks and recreation services and facilities, along with the benefits that they provide, will be continued into the future.

For more information on programs or parks or to receive a program guide, please contact the Parks and Recreation Department at (425) 413-7665.



Youth soccer

that he coaches 5 and 6 year olds, most of whom have not been involved in sports before, and teaches them how to throw a baseball or kick a soccer ball. Mr. Phillips asked that the Council bring forward whatever ballot measure is necessary to keep the programs going. He said, "I have heard some great success stories about the City's Parks and Recreation Department. Our kids are important, let's just keep them playing."

In the fall of 2006, the Covington City Council commissioned Hebert Research of Bellevue, Washington to conduct a survey of residents which occurred between the dates of January 27th and 31st of 2006. The survey provided feedback regarding many different components of life in the City. One of the major areas of focus in the survey was on the operations and funding of the City's Parks and

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16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100, Covington, WA 98042

Tel: 253.638.1110 Fax: 253.638.1122 Website: www.ci.covington.wa.us

Mayor  
Margaret Harto

Mayor Pro Tem  
Bud Sizemore

Council Members  
Don Henning, Mark Lanza,  
Marilla Mhoon, James A. Scott,  
Jeff Wagner

# The City of Covington UPDATE



Covington Mayor Margaret Harto welcomes everyone at the groundbreaking ceremony.

## SE 256th Street/164th Ave. S.E. Street Improvement Project

### INTRODUCTION

Since incorporation, the City of Covington has experienced rapid growth with new homes and commercial buildings sprouting up throughout the City. This development boom has created the need for public works infrastructure improvements. Not only does a private developer provide for the infrastructure needed for that specific development, but mitigation is required based on the impacts that development will have on existing infrastructure. Mitigation comes in the form of street frontage and drainage improvements; wetland preservation; extension and improvements to utilities; payment of impacts fees for schools, emergency services, parks; and other. It is the collection of impact fees, taxes, and outside funding sources that enables the City to embark on major improvements such as the SE 256th Street/164th Avenue SE Street Investment Project. This may be the single largest project the City ever undertakes. The official groundbreaking ceremony for this project was held on May 25, 2006. Construction is anticipated to begin in and will continue into late 2008. Since incorporation, the City of Covington has experienced rapid growth with new homes and commercial buildings sprouting up throughout the City. The total cost for this project, including engineering and administration, right-of-way auction, permitting, and construction, is \$9,225,840. Nearly \$2 Million on right of way purchases, and the design engineering/construction administration cost of \$1,485,400 is about 16% of the construction cost which is well below the accepted industry cap of 25%.

At the same time the Covington Water District will be constructing \$1.3 Million water line in the limits of the project and there is a great deal of other utility company work, to include a new gas main, that will be done during this projects construction period. At the time of this article the City has no cost of construction information to share with the reader.



Puget Sound Energy, Fire District 37, Mayor Pro Tem, Mayor, TIB Board, School Board, Public Works Trust Fund Board, Water District and RW Scott perform groundbreaking with traditional gold shovels.

Obviously by combining all of these projects together, we have achieved economies of scale and reduced the overall costs of the project. Had we designed and built these improvements as five or six distinct capital projects instead of one project, we could have spent as much as \$2.3 Million in Design and Construction Management costs and still be within the industry guidelines. These efforts have saved the tax payer nearly \$800,000 in Design and Construction Management cost.

The Project includes reconstruction and street widening of SE 256th Street from 155th Ave SE to 170th Place SE and 164th Avenue SE from SE 251st Street to SE 264th Street. The existing main intersection traffic signal will be replaced with a two-lane roundabout. In addition to providing a safer method for children to cross this very busy street, the roundabout will reduce traffic congestion and increase public safety at this very busy intersection. Signalized intersections will be installed at the two main entrances into Kentwood High School allowing for safer turning movements and further reducing congestion in these areas. The entire roadway will be reconstructed to create a 5-lane arterial on SE 256th Street with bike lanes, turn lanes, curbs, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting. A similar 3-lane arterial will be constructed on 164th Avenue SE. A significant amount of utility work will also be completed including installation of new water mains and fire hydrants, drainage systems, and undergrounding of all overhead utilities.

### PROGRESS UPDATE

The City's engineering consultant, Gray & Osborne, Inc., has been busily setting horizontal and vertical control for the survey staking. The contractor has begun mobilizing to the site with equipment, ordering materials in preparation of the work, and obtaining permitting to remove the former Three French Hens building. Work has begun on clearing along the edges of the corridors, installing construction signs and silt fencing for erosion control, and existing underground utilities have been marked in the field. The contractor will begin installing the new water line in coordination with



Covington Water District and excavation for the joint utility trench. Installation of the new 16-inch diameter water main will enable the water district to provide water to its current and future customers, including adequate fire flow for Fire District 37 which serves the City of Covington. At the same time, Puget Sound Energy will begin installing the new gas lines to serve its customers. The joint utility trench will enable all the "dry" utility companies (TV, phone, and power) to upgrade service in the area and provide a more reliable service to its customers. The City of Covington will install a 24"-30" diameter stormwater trunk main on the east side of 164th Ave. SE. The stormwater trunk line is part of the \$12,700 project cost.

### PROJECT LOOK AHEAD

Underground utility work is anticipated to take at least a year. Clearing and grading at the new road edges, including wall and slope construction will proceed as much as possible while the utility work progresses.

### SOUNDING BOARD

Monthly news articles will provide information on the SE 256th Street/164th Avenue SE project including schedule, milestones reached, and other items specific to the project. More importantly, the City is going to use this project to inform the general public on how capital projects are born, what issues are involved, and how they are constructed. Each month, these articles will address questions that have come up during the previous months, provide facts about various aspects of the project, and provide the citizens with a full understanding of Capital Investment Projects (CIPs) and public works infrastructure development.

The following question is probably foremost on many people's minds: *Why does it take two years to complete a major road reconstruction project?*

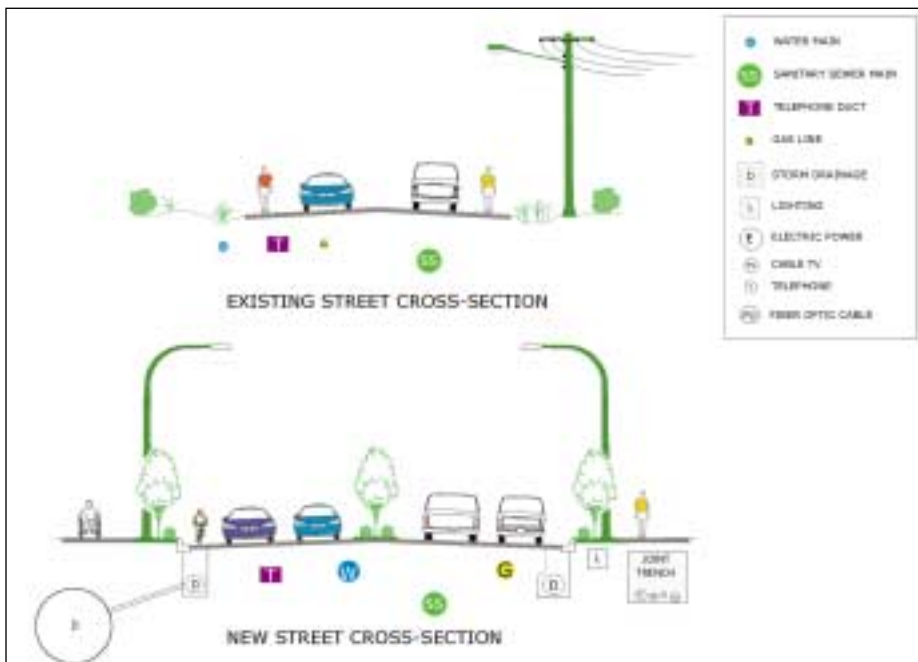
There are many tasks that must be completed prior to finishing a road reconstruction project. During the first year of the 256th/164th project, the contractor will begin transference/installation of the underground utilities, with some grading of the road cross section. All of the overhead utilities (power, TV cable, phone, and other communication lines) will be placed underground in a common trench. The area for the trench must be cleared, the trench dug and then each individual utility company will install their own conduits, junction boxes, and vaults prior to the contractor burying the conduits. Then wires must be pulled through the conduits and the utility companies will then transfer their respective utility and service connections from the old wires to the new wires – hopefully with only minor service disruptions. Also, a new natural gas line, water main, and stormwater trunk line, catch basins and drainage pipes will be installed. Only after these components are installed can the actual "road" construction begin. That's when you will begin to see finish grades on the perimeter of the road and curbs. Paving will begin after the curbs are installed, with landscaping, sidewalks, illumination, signing, etc., coming last. All of this, of course has to be done

**STREET IMPROVEMENT** – see next page

# The City of Covington UPDATE

## STREET IMPROVEMENTS – from previous page

while maintaining access to all properties, working around the schools' schedules, dodging inclement weather, and other delays. Many of the tasks cannot be started and completed within the 2\_ months of summer vacation, so disruptions in traffic during the school year are unavoidable. The complexity of the project does not allow a detailed schedule with specific dates for completion of the various items of work. Coordination with the Kent School District, Covington Water District, Puget Sound Energy, Qwest Communications, Soos Creek Sewer District, and Comcast will be required when working on those aspects of the project. In addition, certain components for the project (e.g., signal controllers, light poles, etc.) require months of lead time from order to receipt, and these dates are somewhat unpredictable.



Underground Utility Cross-Section

## CONTACTS

Over the next two years, City staff will be providing monthly updates regarding this project (and other projects) through articles in this newsletter, official news releases, and the project's website: <http://www.g-o.com/covington/main.html>. Citizens are encouraged to periodically view the website for updates and to provide feedback to the City staff regarding the project. Specific comments can be addressed through the Covington Connection link on the project website, or the City's main web page at <http://ci.covington.wa.us/connection.cfm>

## Covington Police Chief Kevin Klason invites residents to spend a Night Out to fight crime

On August 1, 2006, neighborhoods throughout Covington are encouraged to join forces with thousands of communities nationwide for "National Night Out 2006." Covington Night Out, in conjunction with National Night Out Across America, was created to:

- Heighten crime prevention awareness;
- Generate support for and participation in local anti-crime efforts;
- Strengthen neighborhood spirit through crime prevention campaigns;
- Send the message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back!

In the past, many citizens of Covington have found National Night Out to be a fun time for themselves and their neighbors. Through traditional activities such as keeping outdoor lighting on in addition to hosting barbeques and enjoying live music, residents have found spending the evening outside with neighbors to be an enjoyable and effective way to promote police/community partnerships. Covington Night Out is a very effective way to get to know each other within your community and find out what is new with your neighbors!

It's easy to actively participate in Covington Night Out:

1. At 7 p.m. on Tuesday, August 1st, turn on all outside lights. Lights are a visible statement of neighborhood unity against crime.
2. Between the hours of 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. on



August 1st, join your neighbors in some planned activity outside. This might include walking around and visiting with each other. A popular and easy way to get folks involved and come out is to host a potluck or barbeque in the front yard or driveway of your home. See if you and one of your next door neighbors can "co-host" the event between your front yards.

If you are interested in registering your block as a participant in Covington Night Out or wish to have more information sent to you, please call the Covington Police Department at (253) 638-1110 Extension 2244. Chief Kevin Klason and Motorcycle Officer Chris Williams will try to stop by to answer any questions you may have about all related events in Covington.

Covington Night Out is sponsored by the Covington Police Department.



## 2006 Business Recycling Collection Event

All Covington businesses are encouraged to divert materials from the landfill by recycling and reuse. Here is an opportunity to do just that . . . . .

**What:** Covington Business Recycling Collection Event  
**When:** Wednesday, July 19, 2006, 11 am – 4 pm  
**Where:** Kent Fire Station #75 – 15635 SE 272nd Street  
**Fees:** Fees for computer monitors, TV sets, and for refrigerators/freezers/CFC units – see below

### Accepted Materials:

**Cardboard** – non-waxed or coated, flattened.

**CDs, Floppy Disks, Video Tapes** – please remove paper or plastic covers.

**Cellular Phones** – phones, batteries, chargers, adapters.

**Computers & Components** – hard drives, monitors (\$10 each – cash only), keyboards, printers, mice.

**Fluorescent Lights** – fluorescent tubes and bulbs, incandescent bulbs. Broken lights and light fixture ballasts will not be accepted.

**Plastics** – grocery bags, stretch wrap, film, bubble wrap, shrink wrap, garment bags.

**Scrap Metal** – chairs, desks, file cabinets, refrigerators/freezers/cfc units (\$25 each – cash only), telephones, fax machines, type writers, adding machines, copiers, other ferrous and non-ferrous metals. Sealed tanks and drums and metals that are insulated, rubber coated, contain chemicals, paint, or hazardous materials will not be accepted.

### Toner Cartridges

**TV Sets** – TV sets with 36 inch or smaller screens and encased in plastic (\$20 each – cash only). TV sets with larger than 36 inch screens, wood console, sets encased in wood, and big screen TV sets (\$25 each – cash only). Projection TV sets (\$30 each – cash only).

### Wood Pallets and Clean, Untreated Scrap Wood

**NOTE:** Only the types of materials listed above will be collected. No hazardous waste will be accepted. Visit [www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/](http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/business/) or call the business hazards line at (206) 296-3976 if you need assistance with hazardous materials disposal.

Funding provided by the King County Solid Waste Division.