



# Covington Residents to Vote on Creation of a Metropolitan Parks District - November 7, 2006

Voters in the City of Covington will soon be facing a decision on whether to implement a long term funding source for the preservation and expansion of the City's Parks and Recreation Department and related capital facilities. The November 7, 2006 General Election ballot will contain a Proposition that would create what is known as a Metropolitan Parks District (MPD), separate from the City itself. This new entity would have the authority to levy a real property tax of up to \$0.50 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation on real property to fund ongoing Parks Department operations and the construction and

maintenance of parks properties, buildings, fields and facilities. The monies raised by the MPD can be spent only for parks and recreation. The MPD boundaries would be identical to the boundaries of the City itself.

In addition, revenues from the MPD will enable the City to improve existing undeveloped or underdeveloped park properties. Specifically, the construction of athletic fields on the vacant park land at 180th Ave. SE and SE 240th Street, trail improvement and repairs to Jenkins Creek Park and phase one of the Covington Aquatics Center at Tahoma renovation can be funded from the rev-

enues generated by MPD assessment.

The Metropolitan Parks District will allow for the continuation of the existing athletics and aquatic activities and restoration and improvement of the recreation programs previously cut. In 2004, the Covington Parks and Recreation Department began offering recreation programs ranging from dance classes, music, art, athletics, fitness and special community events like the Holiday Tree Lighting. The fees charged to participants were examined and adjusted as needed, keeping prices as low as possible and consistent with the local market. Due to the funding short-

fall, programs that were not covering all of their costs were eliminated in 2005. Without the new revenues of the Metropolitan Parks District, the City will be unable to offer the services that were currently offered past this year.

The proposed Covington Metropolitan Parks District will be wholly contained within the city limits of Covington, and would allow the City Council to serve as the ex officio governing body. The levy rate for the Metropolitan Parks District proposed by the City and the citizen's advisory panel is .50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation. This

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# SE 256th St/164th Ave SE Street Improvement Project

Work continues on the SE 256th Street/164th Avenue SE Street Improvement project. Over the last couple of months, the contractor has installed over 26,000 lineal feet of underground utility conduit, plus the vaults and junction boxes that will provide maintenance access to these systems after the wires are installed next year. Work on the utilities continues on SE 256th Street and soon will begin on 164th Avenue SE. Included in this work are some of the tubes that will have illumination poles inserted near the end of the project. The 26,000 feet of conduits represents only about 25% of the total underground conduit work, so while this is impressive progress for the contractor, they are only part way completed with the installation. Also, approximately 2,500 lineal feet of storm drainpipe has been installed along with the assorted catch basins and manholes. Much of the drain pipe installed consists of the 24 to 36 inch diameter trunk that will convey flows from about SE 251st Street to the large stormwater pond located within The Reserve subdivision.

School started on September 5 and students and parents should have received a brief News Release from the Kent School District regarding the transportation operations at Kentwood High School. This news release details some specifics regarding a trial park-and-shuttle service from St. John the Baptist Church located on 156th Avenue SE. One major change the school District has made is to re-direct some of the busses around the busy intersection of SE 256th Street and 164th Avenue SE. This will help to reduce congestion at this major intersection while the contractor continues to make progress towards the roundabout. Anything parents, students, and commuters can do to adjust their route or schedule to avoid the area would be greatly appreciated.

Looking ahead to the next several months, the contractor will continue with the same type of work that has been going on since July. Installation of underground utilities, storm drainage, retaining walls, and grading operations will be the normal activities for the next few months. Work on the new 12-inch and 16-inch diameter water mains will also be commencing.

Storm drainage is an important part of any major street construction project. Most arterial streets in the Covington area (and the Puget Sound in general) were originally constructed years before regulations regarding storm drainage were in place. In fact, the first drainage ordinance was passed by King County in 1979. Regulations have been updated and strengthened several times, with King County and the Washington State Department of Ecology revising their stormwater regulations in 2005. Until the 1979 regulations, drainage facilities for roadways were only designed to get precipitation off the road surface into a suitable ditch or pipe for conveyance to the natural waterway serving the area. For this project, the natural drainage system is Little Soos and Big Soos Creeks, which drain into the Green/Duwamish River system and eventually into the Puget Sound. This stream system is a viable and active fishery for Coho, Chum, and Chinook salmon, Bull Trout, and Steelhead. At present, Chinook and Bull Trout are listed as Threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act. Prior to these listings, however, stormwater regulations required that developers and municipalities install stormwater flow control and treatment facilities for all new projects.

So exactly what is flow control and treatment of stormwater runoff, you ask? For flow control, the main concept is that as forests and wetlands are replaced with buildings, parking lots, and streets, the rate and amount of runoff directly entering the creeks increases dramatically causing erosion, scouring, and flooding. A quiet stream with clear running water and abundant aquatic fauna and flora can become a raging, muddy torrent in the winter and a dried up, denuded channel in the summer. Also, the clearing of forests adjacent to the stream increases the temperature of the stream, which reduces the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water. To curb this trend, new development is required to collect the runoff from the developed site into large holding facilities, where the water can be released slowly in an attempt to replicate Mother Nature's natural flow control that involves evaporation, transpiration,

**STREET IMPROVEMENT** – see next page



Contractor installing 30-inch storm drain on 164th Avenue SE



Storm drainage structures ready for installation on SE 256th Street

*A community newsletter produced by the City of Covington for residents and businesses.*

**October 2006** *City of Covington*

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## STREET IMPROVEMENT – from previous page

and infiltration (where precipitation enters the ground and takes days or weeks to reach the creeks). Fortunately in many parts of Covington, the underlying soils are sand and gravel and much of this runoff can be retained by allowing it to infiltrate back into the ground in large ponds, tanks, or vaults, rather than detaining the water in a pond and releasing it slowly through a pipe. For the SE 256th Street project, the contractor will be installing several large detention tanks (with filters) and also utilizing the large pond in The Reserve.

With respect to treatment, as the runoff flows overland on the developed surfaces (and specifically streets and parking lots), the water picks up pollutants like pesticides, herbicides, oils, greases, nutrients, metals, bacteria, and fine sediments. Without treatment, these would flow directly into the creeks and could have detrimental effects on the fish and their main food source, invertebrates (insects and insect larva). Typical treatment methods include constructing large ponds to allow these pollutants to settle out or be filtered prior to discharge into the creeks, filtration in special filter vaults, and infiltration through organic rich soils into the groundwater. Treatment will be achieved on this project by using the large pond in The Reserve and also with a large filter vault.

Obviously these facilities, as well as the collection facilities (catch basins, pipes, manholes, etc.,) cost a great deal of

money and take time to install. A portion of this project is funded through the City's Stormwater Utility Fund to cover a portion of the storm drainage costs. Even with all of these engineered facilities, they cannot completely cleanup the runoff or mimic the natural flow patterns. It is incumbent upon us all to do our small part to help protect the natural systems around us. A few things to remember and practice:

- Do not dump anything in catch basins or streams;
- Use fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides sparingly;
- Keep your vehicles in good running condition to avoid leaking fluids;
- Pick up after your pet to reduce the potential for bacteria to enter the stream;
- Keep natural vegetation around the streams to provide a food resource for the insects and to reduce temperatures (and increase oxygen) in the stream;

### 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>.

## City of Covington Welcomes Bob White As Interim City Manager

The Covington City Council confirmed the appointment of Bob White to the position of Interim City Manager at their August 22, 2006 Council meeting. "I am excited to assume the duties and responsibilities of Interim City Manager for the City of Covington. I understand and appreciate the community values and vision and will maintain continuity with all the ongoing projects for a seamless transition," said White.

As Interim City Manager, White will oversee all administrative affairs of the City, offer professional advice to the City Council, and provide the City staff with leadership and direction. He heads the City's Management Team and leads and supervises the activities of all City departments, agencies and offices in an effort to implement the City's Comprehensive Plan

and Vision Statement. The appointed position is effective immediately.

Bob White will remain Interim City Manager while the City Council further defines the skills and abilities desired for the City Manager position and subsequently conducts a more thorough nationwide search for a City Manager.

The City of Covington is a Council-Manager type of government.

Please join us in welcoming Bob White as Interim City Manager for the City of Covington.



Bob White



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equals \$125 per year on a \$250,000 home.

The Covington City Council commissioned surveys relating to the public's desired service levels and manner of funding Parks. A committee made up of concerned citizens, parents and Covington's Parks and Recreation Commission members formed in early 2006 to study potential Parks funding

options. The Covington Parks and Forestry Commission, staff and City Council also conducted outreach meetings with homeowner associations and service clubs, held Town Hall meetings and conducted a number of other public meetings to determine interest. In 2006, the Trust for Public Lands conducted an additional survey to determine support for a Metropolitan Parks District.

After months of study and public comment, the Parks and Forestry

Commission made the recommendation to the City Council to put the formation of a Parks District before the voters. The Council adopted this recommendation in July of 2006 and scheduled the MPD vote on the General Election ballot of November 7.

The City of Covington City Council urges you to study this important issue and encourages you to vote this November 7, 2006 on a matter of great importance to the future of the Covington community.

### Recycle Old Cell Phones at City Hall

Cell phones, chargers, & batteries can be brought to City Hall for recycling. Proceeds go to the Domestic Violence Task Force to provide services to victims and children.



# The City of Covington UPDATE

## “Fire Prevention Week” Observed By the City Of Covington

October 8-14 is National Fire Prevention Week. Fire Prevention Week is designed to battle fire losses and empower citizens to take simple, but effective, steps to prevent fires from occurring and to protect themselves and their families when they do.

The 2006 Fire Prevention Week theme is “Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat”. According to the latest National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) research, cooking is the leading cause of home fires. One out of three home fires begins in the kitchen—more than any other place in the home. Cooking fires are also the leading cause of home fire-related injuries.

“Often when we’re called to a fire that started in the kitchen, the residents tell us that they only left the kitchen for a few minutes,” said Captain Larry Rabel, City of Covington Liaison, Kent Fire Department Fire District #37. “Sadly, that’s all it takes for a dangerous fire to start. We hope that Fire Prevention Week will help us reach folks in the community before they’ve suffered a damaging lesson.”

Below are some safety tips to follow when cooking:

- Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, broiling, or boiling food.



Log reproduced from NFPA’s Fire Prevention Week Web site, [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org). ©2006 NFPA

- If you must leave the room, even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.

- When you are simmering, baking, or roasting food, check it regularly, stay in the home, and use a timer to remind you.
- If you have young children, use the stove’s back burners whenever possible. Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the stove.
- When you cook, wear clothing with tight-fitting sleeves.
- Keep potholders, oven mitts, wooden utensils, paper and plastic bags, towels, and anything else that can burn, away from your stovetop.
- Clean up food and grease from burners and stovetops.

Covington residents can learn more about cooking safety and all forms of fire prevention by visiting NFPA’s official Fire Prevention Week Web site: [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org)

In recognition of Fire Prevention Week, the City of Covington urges all Covington citizens to remember the 2006 Fire Prevention Week Theme, “Prevent Cooking Fires: Watch What You Heat”. Safety from fire is important to both citizens and local firefighters who put their lives on the line with every response to fire.

## City of Covington Supports International Walk to School Month - October 2006

International Walk to School Month gives children, parents, school teachers and community leaders an opportunity to be part of a global event as they celebrate the many benefits of walking. Last year, more than 3 million walkers from around the world walked to school together for various reasons – all hoping to create communities that are safe places to walk.

Now that school is back in session, more children are walking to and from neighborhood schools – many of them during the busiest time of the day. It is vital that the safety of our children be addressed by making walking safer in our community.

International Walk to School Month is more than just getting together with



children and going for a walk to school one day or week a year. Below are just a few of its goals:

- Encourage physical fitness through walking, the easiest and most enjoyable form of exercise; teach children the skills for safe walking and identify safe routes to school.
- Raise awareness of how walkable the community is and where improvements can be made.
- Raise concern for the environment.
- Reduce crime and take back neighborhoods for people on foot.

- Reduce traffic congestion, pollution, and speed near schools.
- Share valuable time with local community leaders, parents, and children.

International Walk to School Month events promote a more walkable world – one community at a time. The City of Covington encourages all residents to take part in International Walk to School Week by teaching children about pedestrian safety and helping them become aware of the benefits and challenges that they may face on their walk to school each day.

For more information on International Walk to School Week, visit the Official Website of International Walk to School Week [www.iwalktoschool.org](http://www.iwalktoschool.org).



Photo courtesy of the International Walk to School Website

# Vote ★ Vote ★ VOTE ★ Vote ★

## City of Covington Encourages its Citizens to Vote in the November 7, 2006 King County General Election

The City of Covington encourages its citizens to participate in the King County General Election on Tuesday, November 7, 2006.

Said Mayor Margaret Harto: "I hope that all registered voters will exercise their right to vote in the upcoming General Election. It is through this process that all citizens can truly shape the future of our government."

To register to vote, please visit the King County

Elections website at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/elections/register.htm>. Voter registration forms are also available at Covington City Hall, 16720 SE 271st Street, #100, Covington. For general elections information, please visit King County Elections Information Homepage at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/elections>

For other City information, contact the City of Covington at: 253-638-1110 or visit [www.ci.covington.wa.us](http://www.ci.covington.wa.us)

