



The City of Covington

UPDATE



Covington Metropolitan Parks District

On July 18, 2006 the Covington City Council passed a resolution to place a ballot measure for the formation of a Covington Metropolitan Parks District on the November election.

A Metropolitan Parks District is a junior taxing district. The tax revenue of the Metropolitan Parks District can only be used for parks and recreation.

In 2006, the budget for parks and recreation was segregated from the City's General Fund into its own "Parks Fund". This fund has four main areas: Recreation, Athletics, Aquatics and Parks. The user fees that the City collects for participation in some programs covers the direct costs of the programs that are offered. Unfortunately, user fees alone do not cover the added costs associated with providing parks, facilities or overhead. In the 2006 budget, the City Council allocated a portion of the City's sales tax revenues to the Park Fund to help make up the difference, but this source is limited, as sales tax revenues are needed to pay for general governmental services that the City is legally required to provide. The recent citizen initiatives at the State level further limit the City's ability to fund parks and recreational services.



matching money will be available so that additional grants may be received. The additional funding will also mean that: Athletic fields and other park features may be constructed at the 180th/240th Community Park, the safety and function of Jenkins Creek Park can be improved, and the first phase of the Covington Aquatic Center renovation may be completed, which will add revenue generating opportunities and improve locker rooms and other elements at the Center.

In 2004, the 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



In 2002, the City began the development of a park system by acquiring properties using grants, transfers, donations and real estate excise tax. This has resulted in the acquisition of over 135 acres in parks and open spaces, the development of two neighborhood parks, the Skate Court and acquisition of the Covington Aquatic Center. A park map may be found at City Hall or by visiting the City website at: www.ci.covington.wa.us. The proposed Metropolitan Parks District will provide funding so that the existing areas will be able to be maintained into the future, existing grants will not have to be forfeited and



and consistent with the local market. Since a large percentage of participants reside outside the City limits of Covington, the City Council will be considering the implementation of resident/non-resident fees for participation in recreation and athletic programs and the Covington Aquatic Center later this year. Due to the funding shortfall, programs that were not covering all of their costs were eliminated in 2005. 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. 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 contained within the city limits of Covington, and would allow the City Council to

serve as the ex officio governing body. The rate of the Metropolitan Parks District proposed by the City and the citizen's advisory panel is .50 per \$1,000 assessed valuation. This equals \$125 per year on a \$250,000 home

The decision to have voters decide if they would like a Metropolitan Parks District has been discussed for years. The process began in 2003 with a study completed by Hebert Research on the formation of a Metropolitan Parks District. This included random surveys of Covington residents and focus group meetings. In 2004 and 2005, staff conducted research on the various funding options for parks and recreation services, ranging from doing nothing and eliminating all services to constructing everything in the 20 year plan. 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 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. A citizens group and the Parks and Forestry Commission prepared a recommendation to the City Council on the best funding option. This culminated in the City Council's adoption of the Resolution authorizing the Ballot Measure. Voters will have the opportunity to decide the fate of the Metropolitan Parks District at the November 7, 2006 election.

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

September 2006 *City of Covington*

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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 HOMEOWNERS.....
Need to Repair a Roof or
Install a New Furnace?
There is Financial Help
KING COUNTY HOUSING REPAIR PROGRAM

Provides financial assistance to low and moderate income homeowners and to landlords who rent to low-to-moderate income tenants.

Eligibility is determined by gross annual income of ALL household members

Family Size	Max Gross Income
1	\$41,700
2	\$47,700
3	\$53,650
4	\$59,600
5	\$64,350

- Maximum loan \$20,000
- 0% interest
- No monthly payments
- Repaid at the time the home is sold or title transferred

KING COUNTY HOUSING REPAIR HOTLINE
(206) 296-7640



Larry "Swede" Lindstrand - January 2006 Artist of the Month. For more information about his artwork, please see: **Lake Wilderness Enterprises** at www.photoart-byswede.photorelect.com.

Call to Artists for 2007 Gallery Season

The City of Covington opened its City Hall Art Gallery in 2004. Since that time, over 50 local artists and groups have displayed their works of art in the gallery. The Covington Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with the Covington Arts Commission, is currently accepting submissions from local and regional visual artists to exhibit their original works of art during the 2007 gallery season.

For consideration, applicants must submit the following:

1. Completed application. This can also be found on the City website at www.ci.covington.wa.us.
2. Resume or artist background with artist's statement.
3. Five (5) images submitted digitally on CD-ROM or e-mailed (JPEG format on CD-ROM preferred method). Please include title, medium, date made and dimensions.
4. The artist's preferred month in 2007 for displaying their artwork. The City cannot guarantee that the preferred month will be assigned.
5. A self-addressed, stamped envelope for the return of materials if desired. The City of Covington is not responsible for loss or damage of submissions.

Completed application packets must be received by the City no later than October 2, 2006 for consideration.

The Covington Arts Commission selects the artists based on the artwork submitted at the time of application. Artists will be expected to exhibit similar works of art as that presented at the time of application. Art displays are usually one-person and presented monthly.

If selected, the artist agrees to allow the Covington Arts Commission to reproduce and use a minimum of one (1) submitted image (or other provided by the artist) for promoting the exhibit, the Arts Commission, and gallery season. Submission of the application constitutes agreement to the use of the artist's materials in this way.

Artists are responsible for transporting, installing and selling artwork. Please provide contact information for interested buyers. Artists need to provide labels for each artwork, and an artist's statement. The City of Covington is not responsible for damage due to improper installation by the artist.

Artists and their work are publicized by the City of Covington Arts Commission through press releases to area media, galleries, arts commissions, and on the City's website (during gallery season).

The City of Covington Gallery is located at Covington City Hall, 16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100.

Applications may be sent by mail or delivered to: City of Covington Arts Commission, 16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100 Covington, WA 98042; or by E-mail to: David Erickson at derickson@ci.covington.wa.us on or before 5:00 p.m., October 2, 2006.

14th Annual Mayor's Day of Concern

Food Drive Helping The Hungry In Our Community

Community Volunteers are needed to help with the 14th annual Mayors Day of Concern for the Hungry on September 30, 2006. Sponsored by the Emergency Feeding Program of Seattle, donations received that day will benefit the Maple Valley Food Bank and Emergency Assistance Program.

Volunteers at local supermarkets will provide shoppers with a list of basic food items and ask shoppers to buy an item or two for the hungry and donate them on their way out. Cash donations are also accepted. You can help by volunteering for a two-hour shift or organize a team of eight or more participants (family, friends, co-workers, neighbors).

The local food banks need your assistance. They are entering a period of high demand when many families must spend their food money to

get their children ready for the school year. In the winter months, families must often choose between heat and food.

Food banks serve an increasing number of people each year. In 2005 Maple Valley Food Bank served 1,250 Covington residents!

For information or to volunteer at this event, contact:
 Maple Valley Food Bank at
 425-432-8633

For more information about Maple Valley Food Bank, visit: www.skfcf.org/maplevalleyfoodbank

Can't volunteer but still want to help? Please shop at your participating Safeway, on Saturday, September 30th and make a donation.



Photo Courtesy of Maple Valley Food Bank

Maple Valley Food Bank Volunteers Collecting Food From Local Grocery Store.

The City of Covington UPDATE

SE 256th St/164th Ave SE Street Improvement

Work on the city's largest street improvement project is progressing well. With the excellent Pacific Northwest summer weather, the contractor has been able to work without delays. The Three French Hens building has been demolished and removed. Puget Sound Energy has completed the installation of the new gas main on 164th Avenue SE. Approximately 1800 lineal feet of the underground utility trench and conduits have been installed along the north side of SE 256th Street. East of Kentwood High School, clearing and grading has begun on the south side of SE 256th Street, and some of the drainage system has been installed in this area. Modular block walls have been completed in various portions of the project. Excavation and construction of the large segmental block walls is underway on both sides of SE 256th Street, west of the new roundabout. These walls will retain the fill material that is required to widen the roadbed and support the new sidewalks and street. Also, some portions of the water system have been relocated in anticipation of grading and other work.

For the next couple of months, work will continue with more earthwork and the installation of drainage facilities, utilities, and walls. Once the large walls are constructed, the contractor will fill these areas and then proceed with utility installation in the new road prism. Some of the larger drainage structures will be installed soon, and utility work will proceed as more areas become available for that work.

A new school year has begun, and with it, lots of traffic in the project work area. The Kent School District and the City of Covington have been working together to come up with solutions for relieving traffic congestion in the area during the construction. Parents, students, and faculty should take some extra time for arrival and departure until the traffic patterns settle out. The School District has revised some of the bus routes to avoid the intersection and has made arrangements with local churches to provide off-site parking areas with shuttle service to bring students to the school, thereby reducing the number of vehicles traveling through the intersection. Specific information regarding these revisions, and any future revisions, will be released by the School District and City in a joint news release. One item that is certain is that parking will no longer be allowed on SE 256th Street or 164th Avenue SE. Overflow parking into surrounding neighborhoods will warrant additional patrol emphasis by Covington Police, as many streets are not designed to accommodate on-street parking.

Why a roundabout?

After much research and analysis of the SE 256th Street – 164th Avenue SE intersection, the City of Covington decided to construct a roundabout, rather than reconfigure the existing traditional intersection and traffic signal. Working with private property owners and Kent School District to acquire additional right-of-way at the intersection enabled the designers to place a multi-lane roundabout that will result in less congestion and greater safety at this busy intersection, adjacent to Kentwood High School and the Foss Market.

The beginning of roundabouts dates to England in 1663. Prior to that date, there were thousands of traffic circles and rotaries throughout Europe and the eastern United States. However, their operation required that the vehicles in the traffic circles or rotary



Contractor installing segmental block wall on north side of SE 256th Street



Roundabout design at SE 256th Street and 164th Avenue SE

yield to vehicles entering, which led to severe gridlock within the rotary or traffic circle. Once the change was made to require entering vehicles to yield the efficiency and safety of roundabouts became widely acknowledged. The first roundabout in the United States was constructed in 1990 in Nevada. Today, there are approximately 1,000 roundabouts in operation in the United States, with thousands more being planned or constructed.

The advantages of roundabouts can be summarized in three words: cost, safety, and efficiency. It may be obvious that roundabouts take up more space than traditional intersections, but because there are no traffic signals, the cost to construct the intersection is less. And with no signal, the energy costs are only related to street illumination, which is provided for traditional intersections anyway.

Roundabouts are significantly safer than traditional intersections due to several factors, which are all interrelated. First, all traffic is moving through the intersection in a counter-clockwise circle, so the po-

tential for head-on or broadside collisions is eliminated. Second, because traffic is moving slower – around 15-20 miles per hour, any collisions that do occur are much less severe. Drivers are not tempted to speed towards an intersection to “beat the red light”, and because of the yield requirement and turning movement into the roundabout, drivers have more time to see and react to pedestrians, bicycles, and other vehicles. In addition, pedestrians are able to cross a single direction of traffic to a refuge island, and then cross the opposite single direction of traffic to the other side.

The concept that vehicles entering the roundabout must yield to vehicles already in the roundabout, generally allows all vehicles to go through the intersection without stopping. This operation provides a significant relief to congestion especially for intersections that have a high number of vehicles turning left. In other words, more vehicles can move through the intersection with less delay. This also means that less fuel will be consumed and less pollu-

tion generated.

Once completed, the new roundabout will be signed and striped to direct the traffic movements through the roundabout, but here is a preview to the rules of driving a roundabout:

- When approaching the roundabout, get into the correct lane early. If going straight or turning right at the intersection, then use the right lane. For those turning left or making a U-turn, use the left lane. The left lane can also be used for drivers heading straight through the intersection.
- Give trucks a wide berth, as they may use both lanes to negotiate the roundabout.
- Yield to all traffic coming from your left, even if you are entering into the outside lane.
- Do not pass or change lanes in the roundabout.
- Upon passing the street PRIOR to your desired exit, turn on your right turn signal and then exit at the desired street.

- Be wary of pedestrians and bicycles when entering or exiting the roundabout.

For more information on roundabouts, and to view a model showing the traffic movements in a roundabout, visit the project website at the address listed below.

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>.