2015 - 2016 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Ready for Notebook

Tab	Action	Option	Version
47	2	A	2

Budget Action Title: Develop guidelines and recommendations concerning the Open Space Opportunity Fund

Councilmembers: Bagshaw; Burgess; Clark; Godden; Rasmussen

Staff Analyst: Evan Clifthorne; Traci Ratzliff

Date		Total	SB	BH	SC	TR	NL	TB	JG	MO	KS
	Yes										
	No										
	Abstain										
	Absent										

Statement of Legislative Intent:

Council requests that the City Budget Office and the Department of Parks and Recreation will create an Interdepartmental Team which will include the Department of Finance and Administrative Services, the Department of Neighborhoods, the Office of Sustainability & Environment, the Legislative Department, and other appropriate departments to evaluate the concept and the need for a new Open Space Opportunity Fund.

The Open Space Opportunity Fund is envisioned as a City-managed program that would work with community members or organizations to assist in the purchase or retention of surplus City property for use as publicly accessible "open space" which will be defined here as including greenbelts, wildlife and natural areas, P-Patch sites, or similar real property.

The Council further envisions that the purchase of surplus real property through the OSOF could ultimately be supplemented with funds from those community members or organizations that express interest in or benefit from retaining the property as open space.

This evaluation should include the following:

1. Review current resources of the Parks and Recreation or other departments for property acquisition for open space purposes;

2. Review current surplus property and new property acquisition policies of the Parks and Recreation Department or other City Departments that acquire property for public use or enjoyment;

3. Review of how or whether current City goals related to Urban Forest Stewardship and the Climate Action Plan are considered when the City acquires or determines to surplus property. Should existing surplus property policies be modified to address these goals?

4. Review the open space standards of the City's Comprehensive Plan and quantify the need for additional resources to acquire open space to meet the standards.

5. Identify new and innovative funding, ownership and management strategies for retaining surplus city property as open space.

6. Identify any legal barriers to the City funding a program which would assist in the purchase or retention of surplus City property by community members or organizations for use as publically accessible open spaces, natural areas, P-Patches or similar uses.

If the evaluation leads to a recommendation to create a new Open Space Opportunity Fund, the SLI response should address the following questions:

7. What are the criteria for selecting properties to be eligible for purchase through the OSOF, and how would those properties be prioritized?

8. What policies or strategies would help to ensure administration of an OSO fund in a fair and equitable fashion throughout the city?

9. What are the options for funding the OSOF?

10. How should the appropriate level of financial contribution from community members or organizations toward the purchase of a given property be determined, and should the contribution levels be uniform or should they vary based on geographic and/or demographic conditions?

11. If some level of community contribution is required as part of the OSOF purchase of surplus property, what is the appropriate course of action if the community contribution levels are not met in a timely manner? What is an appropriate timeline for requiring any such contribution?

12. What options exist for final disposition of purchased surplus property? Should the property remain under City ownership and management, or should the property be transferred to a third party for the purpose of conserving that property as an open space or natural area? What are the pros and cons of each approach?

    a. If a third party is more appropriate, what if any restrictive covenants should run with the property? What guidelines should exist concerning the sale of the property, and with whom might potential partnerships be formed concerning the purchase and maintenance of the property?

13. How would ongoing maintenance and operations of these properties be funded or assured?

14. What options exist concerning public outreach to neighborhoods who may wish to participate in this program? What partnerships might help facilitate the implementation of those options?

15. What entity would most appropriately serve as the managing entity for the OSOF, and what staffing would be required for that entity?

Responsible Council Committee(s): Parks, Seattle Center, Libraries and Gender Pay Equity

Date Due to Council: July 31st, 2015