

Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District Proposition No. 1

Levy Lid Lift for Parks

Official Ballot Title

The Board of Commissioners of the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District has adopted Resolution 2008-17 concerning a levy lid lift for parks purposes. If approved, this proposition would restore the 2009 regular levy rate to \$0.75/\$1,000 assessed value. The 2009 levy amount will be used to calculate subsequent levy limits. Not less than 75% of the increase will be used to acquire, develop and improve property and property interests for parks, open space, and trails, and for a citizens' advisory committee. The remainder will be used to facilitate public use of and access to District properties and to operate and maintain those properties. Should this proposition be:

Approved
Rejected

Explanatory Statement (Prepared by the Attorney for the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District, as prescribed by law.)

The Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District anticipates that the City of Bainbridge Island will transfer numerous park and open space properties to the Park District pursuant to the recommendations of the Public Lands Stewardship Committee Report.

Proposition 1 will provide additional funding to the District to support this in addition to its normal services to the community by authorizing the Board to restore the regular property tax levy rate to \$0.75/\$1,000 assessed value in 2009. That levy amount will be used to calculate levy limits under the 101% levy lid (chapter 84.55 RCW) in future years. This revenue may only be used as follows: (1) not less than 75% of the additional annual revenues will fund acquisition, development or improvement of property or property interests for parks purposes, including but not limited to parks, open space, and trails, and will support the work of a citizens' committee that will be established to make recommendations on property acquisitions; and (2) the remaining additional revenues will be used for general District purposes to facilitate public use of and access to the District's properties, and to operate and maintain its properties.

The District estimates that in 2009, this approximately \$0.167 increase (over the 2008 levy rate) would cost the owner of a \$450,000 home approximately \$75.

Statement For the Measure

The levy lift will provide necessary funds for the development and maintenance of existing parkland and athletic fields. It will also allow the community to add key parcels to the parks before they are sold to developers. The continually increasing costs of island real estate demands prudent action NOW. The window of opportunity is closing for the Park District to secure adequate fields, open space and hiking trails for future generations. A vote for the lid lift is a vote to preserve the unique nature of the island before it is lost to development.

At least 75% of levy proceeds must be used to purchase parkland and easements. A citizen's oversight committee will guide those selections.

The program wisely commits approximately 25% of levy funds to maintenance and development of existing parks and holdings. Our athletic fields will be safer for our children. Our park holdings will be more accessible and useable.

The proposed program is prudent and visionary. The Park District has a long record of efficiency in its stewardship of existing resources. The levy lift is modest, averaging only \$45 annual commitment for the typical household.

Let's move forward by voting YES for the levy lid lift.

Rebuttal to the Statement Against

The \$75 average levy increase (not \$45) is a wise and timely investment. The island's remaining open space is largely in private hands, and it will end up developed. If an artificial field is ever built, private organizations like soccer will fund it. The citizen oversight committee will ensure wise stewardship of public funds. The levy lift will allow the citizen oversight committee to purchase a few key parcels when they come up for sale.

Statement and rebuttal prepared by: Dwight Sutton, Chairperson, and Jay Kinney, member, committee for the measure. Further questions may be addressed by calling (206) 842.3011 or (206) 999.6262.

Statement Against the Measure

This is the wrong proposal at the wrong time for Bainbridge Island parks: 1) Bainbridge has ample open space. At 81 acres per thousand residents, we have double the national average and about five times the median for all cities in the United States. 2) The Parks Board won't specify how they want to spend your money. Right now, they're spending tax dollars so they can pave four acres at Battle Point with artificial turf—ground up tires and plastic grass—that may pollute Puget Sound and wear out in just seven years. 3) Inflated housing costs mean higher property taxes, already, for residents whose incomes have not kept pace. A recession is the wrong time for a tax increase. What good are parks if you can't afford the taxes to live here? 4) Parks dollars should be spent on programs for people, not buying and driving up the price of real estate.

Prioritize, and tell us what properties need to be acquired, and why, before raising taxes.

Parks are very important. But we need to send the Parks Board a strong message: NO tax dollars for artificial turf. NO discretionary funds. NO money for unneeded real estate.

Vote NO.

Rebuttal to the Statement For

The Parks District says Prop 1 costs an additional \$75 per household. Proponents say \$45. What's the real cost? Does anybody know?

Prop 1 isn't about vision. Prop 1 insufficiently funds maintenance of parkland already owned, buys unneeded property, paves parks with artificial turf, and ignores real needs, like the Senior Center.

For more open space, donate voluntarily to the Land Trust.

For fair Parks property taxes, for better parks, Vote "No" to Prop 1.

Statement and rebuttal prepared by Thomas W. Hemphill, Chairperson and Chris Van Dyk, member, No to Parks Prop. 1 Committee. Further questions may be addressed by emailing twhemphill@bainbridge.net or call (206) 854.6127.