

Olympia Metropolitan Parks District Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is a Park District?

A park district, also called a metropolitan park district, is a taxing district created for the management, control, improvement, maintenance and acquisition of parks, boulevards, and recreational facilities.

What would the Olympia Metropolitan Park District (OMPD) boundaries be?

Park district boundaries will mirror the boundaries of the City of Olympia as they currently exist or as they may exist following future annexations.

Who will govern the park district?

The Olympia City Council will be the park district governing board. The City could adopt an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to sign an interlocal agreement (ILA) with the District should its creation be approved by the voters. That ILA describes the responsibilities of Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation for providing the services funded by the park district.

What is an Inter-Local Agreement (ILA)?

It is an agreement that directs Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation (Parks) to implement projects and use the funds collected through the park district as they are described in the ILA.

Can the ILA be changed or terminated?

Yes. If adopted, the ILA could be amended or terminated in the future by the City and/or the District.

Can the park district be dissolved by the voters?

No. Only the Park District Board can dissolve the District. Under state law a petition by 10% of the voters from the last general election can prompt the Park District Board to consider dissolving the District.

Does the Levy for the District sunset?

No the levy is permanent.

Can park funds be allocated to cover other city needs?

State law limits park district funds to parks and recreation purposes as described in RCW 35.61.

The park district is an independent taxing authority. Do they have to comply with labor contracts and other city laws?

Assuming Parks would be the sole provider of services for the park district, as a City department, Parks is required to comply with City ordinances and labor contracts.

Who will own the open space and park facilities?

Park and recreation land, facilities, and equipment preserved and maintained with park district funds are and will remain the property of the City of Olympia. Under a proposed ILA, any new or replacement land, facilities, and equipment created or developed with park district funds would become the property of the City of Olympia.

Can property just be taken and condemned?

If condemnation of property is needed to perform park district services, Parks will follow City and State law regarding condemnation procedures.

Who will decide Parks' annual budget?

The City Manager will direct the development of Parks' budget and work programs. City Council will approve Parks' budgets and provide oversight. The Park District Board would approve a final park district budget showing how park district revenues would fund part of the Parks' budget.

Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation currently receives funding from the City's General Fund. Will that funding go away?

The City would continue to use City revenues to fund Parks. The City Council would decide how much general fund money to appropriate for the Parks Department.

What would the tax rate be for the Olympia Metropolitan Park District?

The Finance Committee is recommending a rate of \$0.54 per \$1,000 assessed value. So on a \$250,000 home that would cost \$135 a year.

Is there a limit to how much the park district can collect?

Yes, the OMPD can collect up to 75 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value annually. To collect more than 75 cents per \$1,000 requires a vote of the people. Metropolitan Park Districts are junior taxing districts and under some circumstances the rate could be prorated.

Is there a ramp-up period for the park district?

Depending on when the OMPD is established the taxes would be received the following year. There is concern regarding timing of a November election date – the Board would have to establish the boundaries, hold a public hearing establishing the rate and the budget by November 30th.