



TO: Mayor Selby and Members of the Olympia City Council  
Chair Nejati and Members of the Olympia Planning Commission

FROM: Maria Ruth, Chair  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC)

DATE: September 26, 2022

SUBJECT: Preliminary 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)  
PRAC Recommendation to the Planning Commission and City Council

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a recommendation on the Parks, Arts and Recreation Capital Projects chapter of the *Preliminary 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan* (CFP).

At both its August and September meetings, PRAC members discussed the draft CFP. We have found the capital projects to align with the capital investments outlined in the 2022-2028 *Parks, Arts & Recreation Plan* and **voted unanimously to approve the Parks Chapter of the 2023-2028 Preliminary Capital Facilities Plan (CFP).**

#### **Accessible and Radically Inclusive Parks:**

We are pleased to see funding in this plan for ADA improvements to eliminate and reduce physical barriers from existing parks (Bigelow Park, LBA Park, Percival Landing, Squaxin Park, and Yauger Park).

We are grateful and encouraged to see that PRAC's continued advocacy for parks that are not only *accessible to* but also *inclusive of* members of our community who identity as mobility challenged and/or neurodiverse has had an impact. This draft CFP includes funding for design and construction of the City's first fully inclusive playground at Squaxin Park; funding for Yelm Highway Community Park Design & Permitting, which includes an inclusive playground; funding for Lions Park Sprayground construction, which includes accessible sidewalks and parking lot improvements.

PRAC enthusiastically support continuing efforts by OPARD to improve existing parks and design new parks to be "radically inclusive" to quote Parks Planning and Maintenance Director, Sylvana Niehuser.

#### **Armory Creative Campus:**

We are pleased to see funding allocated for design and essential safety improvements at the Armory Creative Campus. PRAC members had the opportunity to attend the public tours of the building in 2022 and are very excited by the potential of this historic structure to support the arts community in Olympia and beyond.

**Long Term Needs & Financial Planning:**

This section of the CFP addresses future capital projects expected to occur in 7-10 years, so 2028-2041. PRAC members expressed concern about the stability of future parks funding levels given the sunset of the two 0.5% portions of the Non-Voted Utility Taxes (NVUT) at the end of December 2025 and 2029. This source of Parks funding typically generates over \$800,000 each year and is a significant source of funding for parkland acquisition and development.

Additionally, the possibility of reduced General Fund in light of the proposed funding strategies currently under consideration for the Regional Fire Authority could result in a potential loss of \$990,000 to Parks funding from a reallocation of property tax revenue for the RFA. While General Funds are traditionally dedicated to OPARD's operational budget, PRAC would appreciate maintaining the integrity of OPARD's current funding and avoiding potential scenarios in which funds are supplanted from other revenue sources (e.g. OMPD) to mitigate the loss of General Fund revenue.

Olympia parks still face a \$7.2-million maintenance backlog. The Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) portion of the CFP shows the standard \$750,000 annual allocation for maintenance (\$1.2 million for 2023 only) and \$4.7 million from CAMP funding. Even with this level of regular funding, OPARD's own performance measures indicate a Facilities Condition Index rating in the "critical" level (the level below "poor"). This rating does not reflect negatively on the work of the devoted and hard-working Park staff, but on the recent acquisition and development of parkland requiring more intensive maintenance efforts (e.g. ballfields).

Full support of current funding levels is essential for OPARD to continue their ambitious efforts to provide Olympia with the best park system possible.

Thank you for taking the time to consider our recommendation during your CFP review process. Please feel free to contact me by telephone at (360) 350-8583 or by email at [mruth@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:mruth@ci.olympia.wa.us) if you would like to discuss PRAC's recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Maria Ruth".

Maria Ruth, Chair  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee