



City Hall
601 4th Avenue E.
Olympia, WA 98501
360-753-8244

City Council

Potential Secondary School Colocation at Yelm Highway Community Park Discussion

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

On December 2, 2021, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee voted (7-1) to not recommend colocation with a school at the Yelm Highway Community Park site.

City Manager Recommendation:

Discuss the potential of entering into a partnership with the Olympia School District to locate a secondary school at the Yelm Highway Community Park.

Report

Issue:

Whether to discuss the potential to enter into a partnership with the Olympia School District to locate a secondary school at the Yelm Highway Community Park.

Staff Contact:

Paul Simmons, Parks, Arts and Recreation Director, 360.753.8462
Laura Keehan, Parks Planning & Design Manager, 360.570.5855

Presenter(s):

Paul Simmons, Parks, Arts and Recreation Director
Leonard Bauer, Community Planning and Development Director
Laura Keehan, Parks Planning & Design Manager

Background and Analysis:

In late 2018, Olympia Parks, Arts and Recreation Department (OPARD) finalized the purchase of 83 acres located at 3323 Yelm Highway for a future community park. The property is located next to a previously purchased 3.54-acre park parcel also on Yelm Highway.

The Yelm Highway Park Master Planning project was delayed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly thereafter, OPARD was approached by the Olympia School District (School District) with a request to consider allowing the School District to utilize a 20-acre portion of the park

site for a future secondary school to be constructed in ten years or more. The School District would either purchase the property outright or trade an as-yet-to-be-identified parcel for the 20-acres.

In a joint public meeting on November 16, 2020, OPARD and the School District described the concept and answered questions from the community. Following that meeting an online public survey was posted to the project's Engage Olympia webpage and was open through December 6, 2020. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) met on December 17, 2020, to review the survey results and designated a subcommittee to study the co-location proposal. At their January 21, 2021, meeting PRAC discussed eight concerns associated with the proposed co-location of a secondary school at the park site. A motion passed (4-3) to not recommend continuing to explore a partnership with the Olympia School District to locate a secondary school at the Yelm Highway Community Park site based on the eight concerns presented by the PRAC subcommittee.

Based on their familiarity with the site, Berger Partnership was hired directly by the School District to perform an analysis of the concerns raised by PRAC. The School District and Berger Partnership prepared a response to PRAC's eight concerns and presented the information to PRAC at their December 2, 2021, meeting. PRAC voted (7-1) to not recommend to Council that a secondary school be co-located at the Yelm Highway Community Park site.

At a Study Session on February 1, 2022, the City Council received information from the School District, Berger Partnership, and the PRAC Chair Maria Ruth. The Council's discussion continued during the Council's regular meeting on the same night.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Hundreds of community members have been involved in the ongoing Yelm Highway Community Park Master Plan process. Soccer players and neighbors from The Hamptons and Indian Summer neighborhoods have shown particular interest in this site.

Options:

1. Discuss pursuing a partnership with the Olympia School District to locate a secondary school at the Yelm Highway Community Park site.
2. Do not discuss pursuing a partnership with the Olympia School District to locate a secondary school at the Yelm Highway Community Park site.
3. Discuss this issue further at a future date.

Financial Impact:

Partnership with the Olympia School District at the site could result in a cash purchase and/or land swap.

Attachments:

[Engage Olympia Project Webpage](#)