



King County

Ron Sims

King County Executive

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CLERK
KING COUNTY COUNCIL

2003-522

November 21, 2003

The Honorable Cynthia Sullivan
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Sullivan:

Enclosed for your review and consideration is an ordinance that would authorize a supplemental appropriation of \$6,607,152 to the Juanita Woodlands Open Space Acquisition Project. This ordinance is being proposed outside the regular quarterly supplemental budget requests to take advantage of a unique partnership opportunity offered by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR).

The WADNR owns the Juanita Woodlands Open Space, which is located in unincorporated King County west of the City of Kirkland along Juanita Drive. This wooded 36.3-acre open space is a central fixture of the Juanita community. It provides critical urban wildlife habitat and is uniquely situated to provide passive recreational access for the community. This ordinance will help King County meet important requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act that are intended to make our cities more livable and thus reduce the pressure for residential development in rural areas. Such a large open space in an urban-designated portion of King County is now a rarity, and the conversion of this site to residential development would be an irretrievable loss of such a unique urban open space.

The WSDNR is required under its trust obligations to sell the site as surplus land at an economic valuation that reflects the property's highest and best use, which in this case would be residential development. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has worked in partnership with King County and the local community organization known as the Denny Creek Neighborhood Alliance (DCNA), to delay the sale of the property on the broader market until the end of 2003 to allow for purchase by the County. The site is therefore highly threatened by residential development and this action represents the only viable alternative to that outcome. King County has worked with WADNR to develop a sole-source purchase and sale contract that will allow the County to purchase the property for \$7 million, the fair market value of the site.



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The Denny Creek Neighborhood Alliance has raised \$100,000 of a total commitment of \$500,000 that would be granted to King County to help offset the costs of acquisition. This donation is memorialized in a letter of understanding dated November 14, 2003, and attached hereto. In addition, DCNA is pursuing additional commitments of funding to help offset the purchase price. King County may be required to surplus up to 5 acres of the property, once acquired, to help offset the overall cost of the acquisition. During the upcoming 5 years, King County will allow DCNA to have the opportunity to raise an additional \$1.5 million, the estimated value of the five acres, to preserve either a portion or the entirety of the potential five-acre surplus area.

The King County Council has previously appropriated \$1 million in Conservation Futures Tax levy revenues for this acquisition in two separate open space projects (Juanita Woods Project #315151 and Holmes Point Open Space Project #315130). It is my intent to finance the balance of the Juanita open space acquisition project through the issuance of bonds, to be sold Fall 2006, backed by the Conservation Futures Tax levy. The schedule for completion of this transaction will require the property to be acquired by January 2004, and will require utilization of an inter-fund loan and bond anticipation notes until the bonds are sold.

I want to commend Councilmember Jane Hague for leading the County's multi-year effort to acquire this significant community asset by identifying its importance originally in the 2002 County budget and continuing to spearhead the acquisition. I would also like to thank the Denny Creek Neighborhood Alliance for their strong support of the preservation of the Juanita Woodlands Open Space and for their creative efforts to bring additional financial resources to the project to help ensure its success.

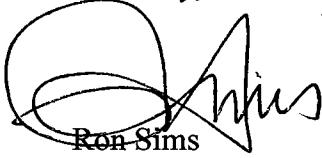
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Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please call Bob Burns, Deputy Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at (206) 263-6296.

Sincerely,



Ron Sims
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: David deCourcy, Chief of Staff

Shelley Sutton, Policy Staff Director

Mike Reed, Lead Staff, NRPOS Committee

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

Steve Call, Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB)

Debora Gay, Deputy Director, OMB

Steve Broz, Budget Supervisor, OMB

Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services (DES)

Bob Cowan, Division Director, Finance and Business Operations

Pam Bissonnette, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Bob Burns, Deputy Director, DNRP

Darryl Grigsby, Manager, Water and Resource Lands Division (WLRD), DNRP

Faith Roland, Acquisition Supervisor, Capital Projects and Open Space Acquisition
Section, WLRD, DNRP