



Capital Funding Request

Wards Lake Park Improvements

Capital Funding Request: The City is requesting \$250,000 to help complete improvements at Wards Lake Park (WLP). This is a multi-faceted park revitalization project that will improve safety and access for an historically underserved community in Lakewood, restore and enhance environmental systems, and increase recreational opportunities. To watch a short video on this project, [click here](#).

Project Description: WLP is located in the Northeast corner of Lakewood, less than half a mile from the Lakewood International District. The surrounding community has limited access to safe parks, recreational opportunities, and natural open space areas. The next closest park is over two miles away and requires travel along major thoroughfares that lack consistent sidewalks and crossing active, at-grade railroad tracks. The community around WLP has higher than State and Pierce County average rates of persons of color, persons identifying as Hispanic/Latino, significantly lower median household incomes, and higher rates of persons below the poverty line. The community also faces significant environmental and health disparities. The Washington State Department of Health's Environmental Health Disparities Map scored this community a 10 out of 10 for Environmental Health Disparities. This means that the community has some of the highest "potential or probability for harm from a combination of environmental and vulnerability factors" in the state.¹

The existing 26-acre park offers limited recreational amenities, invasive species have taken over wetland and forested areas, and the various trails are frequently inaccessible during the winter and spring seasons. This project will expand and improve critical wetland areas; create a 1 mile ADA accessible loop trail around the lake; enhance pedestrian safety improvements at the main entry; provide new in demand active and play amenities, including an asphalted pump-track course; develop a fenced 3-acre off-leash dog park; enhance upland forest and native oak-prairie habitat areas; and provide greater connectivity with other countywide trail corridors. The selection of these park elements were heavily informed by the community input received during the 2019 revision of the WLP Master Plan and the update of the City's Legacy Plan, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, which included a robust, multi-pronged public involvement campaign with surveys, focus groups and pop-up events.

Funding Sources	
City Funds (REET, SWM)	\$250,000
WWRP/ YAF	\$500,000
LWCF	\$960,430
State Capital Budget	\$250,000
Total Project Cost	\$1,960,430

These improvements will enhance an existing, underutilized community asset. The City firmly believes that this project will be a community catalyst encouraging neighborhood revitalization and will provide new healthy choices to the surrounding neighborhood. This project supports the "No child is left inside" movement by providing quality opportunities for youth to engage and

experience the natural world. It will also draw new visitors to this area, creating awareness of the nearby International District.

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¹ Min, Esther, et al. "The Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map: Comparing environmental health risk factors across Communities." *University of Washington Department of Environmental & Health Sciences* (2019) p.12.

Community Comparison

	International District (718.08)	Pierce County	Washington State
Persons of Color	41%	26.6%	24%
Black or African American	14.3%	6.6%	3.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.6%	1.3%	1.3%
Asian	6.8%	6.2%	8.4%
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	4.4%	1.5%	0.6%
Some other race	14.7%	3.0%	4.3%
Two or more races	7.3%	8.0%	5.7%
Hispanic/Latino	33.9%	10.6%	12.5%
Median House Income	\$41,226	\$67,868	\$70,116
Persons below poverty line	24.8%	12.2%	11.5%

Data sources: 2015, 2017, 2018 American Communities Survey, US Census Bureau

