

# Open Space Opportunity Fund SLI Response

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2015 ADOPTED BUDGET

STATEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENT 27-2-A-2

# SLI Request

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Form an IDT to:

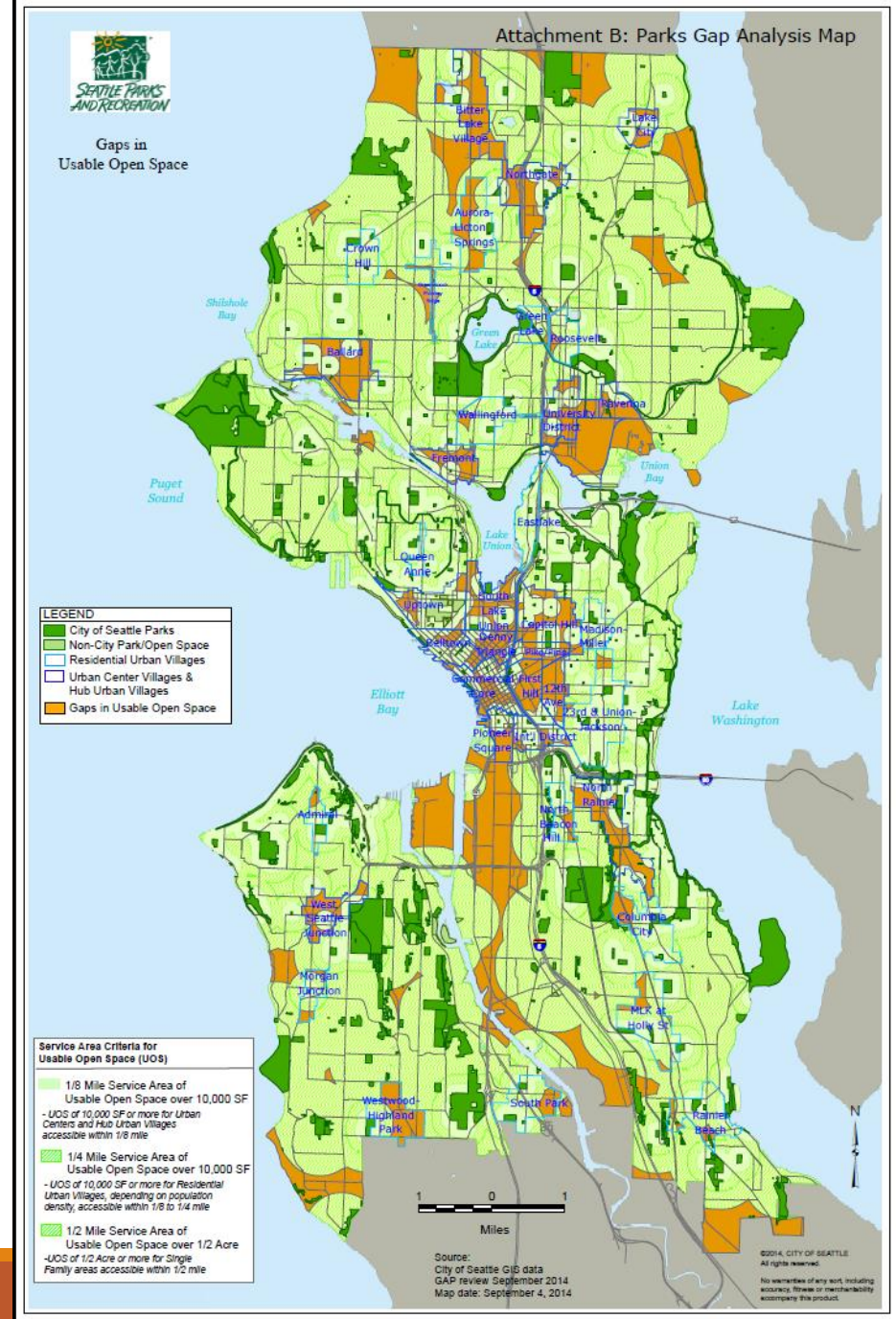
“Evaluate the concept and the need for an new Open Space Opportunity Fund”  
envisioned as a “...City-managed program that would work with community  
members or organizations to assist in the purchase or retention of surplus City  
property for use as publically accessible ‘open space’...”

# Policy Review & Analysis

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- 1. Review of current resources for property acquisition for open space purposes**
  - Limited to only park district funding - \$2 million a year.
- 2. Review of current policies and procedures for surplus [excess] property**
  - Includes review by all City departments.
  - If deemed excess to City needs, includes extensive public engagement process.
  - Policies and procedures were adopted by City Council.
- 3. Review of acquisition policies for the Parks and Recreation Department or other City Departments that acquire property for public use or enjoyment.**
  - With limited resources available for both acquisition and new maintenance, Parks focuses on the highest need areas.
  - Guided by Gap Analysis and Comprehensive Plan.
  - Urban Villages, large enough properties to make maintenance cost effective, good geographic features.

# Parks' Gap Analysis



# Policy Review & Analysis

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- 4. Review of how or whether current City goals related to Urban Forest Stewardship and the Climate Action Plan are considered when the City acquires or determines to surplus property.**
  - Urban Forest Stewardship Plan would be better advanced by supporting the 2-for-1 tree replacement policy and improving maintenance on existing trees.
  - Climate Action Plan:
    - Given the cost of property, carbon sequestration is not the most effective means of reducing greenhouse gases.
    - SPU already reviews surplus properties for suitability for green stormwater infrastructure.
  
- 5. Review the open space standards of the City's Comprehensive Plan and quantify the need for additional resources to acquire open space to meet the standards.**
  - Current per capita goals are not attainable, DRP and DPD estimate the cost to attain at \$20-30 billion.
  - A new Comprehensive Plan is being developed which recognizes problems with earlier goals and sets ambitious goals that will ensure that all residents have equitable access to open space, and are achievable and maintainable with current and projected funding sources.

# Policy Review & Analysis

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6. **Identify new and innovative funding, ownership and management strategies for retaining surplus property as open space.**
  - **Nationwide, the most successful approach has been preservation efforts led by community-based organizations funded by grants and donations**
    - Require a very high level of community involvement.
    - The City could potentially offer support to an organization like this by offering it the first opportunity to purchase surplus properties well-suited to open space.
    - Provide a structure to ensure long term maintenance and upkeep of the properties.
  - **Other Options:**
    - **Public Development Authority – lacks revenue, potentially high cost for the City, duplicates purpose of Parks Department**
    - **Delayed Authorization Ordinance – provides time to community groups, but could have negative race and social justice implications**
    - **Open Space Toolkit** - could include examples of how community-based organizations have organized, resources to find grant opportunities and things to consider when engaging in the process. This could help community members organize and build organizations to support their goals.

# Policy Review & Analysis

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- 7. Identify any legal barriers to the City funding a program which would assist in the purchase or retention of surplus City property by community members or organizations for use as publically accessible open spaces, natural areas, P-Patches or similar uses.**
  - **Gift of Public Funds**
  - **Accountancy Act**
  - **Okeson-Lane Court Decisions**
  - **City Light Authority to Mitigate Environmental Impacts**

# IDT Recommendation

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The IDT evaluated the concept and need for an Open Space Opportunity Fund and did not recommend the creation of such a fund. The IDT chose to not recommend for two primary reasons:

1. Concerns about feasibility:
  - Resources – no funding identified
  - Ownership and long-term maintenance
  - Race and Social Justice Equity
  - Conflict with other uses for surplus property
2. Existing, Council-adopted surplus and acquisition policies provide ample opportunity for public involvement and City re-purposing as open space: After analyzing the existing surplus policies and Parks acquisition policies, the IDT found that there was significant public outreach in current policies. Additionally, the analysis showed a comprehensive consideration of uses, particularly by Parks.