

A look at Key Peninsula Parks accomplishments

By Rick Sorrels, KP News

The property tax levy on the November ballot would provide operations and maintenance funds for Key Pen Parks.

The voters created the Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District in 2004, which replaced Key Peninsula Parks and Recreation District that dissolved in 2005.

The change was spurred by new state legislation that authorized metropolitan park districts. The old district was funded only by a 1/10 of one cent per dollar sales tax, commonly referred to as Zoo Trek funds. Volunteer help was the norm to accomplish anything.

The new metropolitan park district also can collect funds through a property tax levy.

The Zoo Trek funds still provide about \$110,000 per year. Property taxes have provided about \$650,000 each year since 2008, but are expected to drop to nothing next year due to priorities in disbursement set by law.

The only assets of the old park district

were Volunteer Park with its baseball diamonds — built by volunteer help, as its name suggests — and the 1.75-acre parcel of raw land in Home, obtained by Pierce County through a condemnation action, now become Home Park.

The new park district paid the former district \$30,600 for the two properties so that the old parks district could close its books with a zero balance.

A parks survey in 2007 identified that Key Peninsula residents wanted Key Pen Parks to concentrate most heavily on land acquisition and development of trails.

According to Key Pen Parks Executive Director Scott Gallacher, since 2008, Key Pen Parks has done the following:

- Invested \$465,000 in improvements to Volunteer Park (only \$140,000 of which came out of the budget, the remainder from grants).
- Spent \$200,000 to develop Home Park.
- Acquired Rocky Creek Conservation Area (244 acres) through a lease that costs \$1 per year.

• Acquired a Taylor Bay (39 acres with 600 feet of shoreline) through \$1.35 million in grants, with nothing spent from the parks budget.

• Acquired Minter Creek property (5 acres) costing \$181,000, with only \$90,500 from the parks budget.

• Acquired the 360 Trails property (360 acres) on a no-cost 50-year lease from DNR. The property is valued at \$6.4 million.

• Acquired Maple Hollow (58 acres with 1,400 feet of beach) on a no-cost 50-year lease. The property is valued at \$1.5 million. Improvements costing \$188,000 were completed, with two-thirds coming from grants.

• Acquired Key Central Forest (480 acres) on a no-cost 50-year lease from DNR. The property is valued at \$3.5 million.

• Acquired Ketchum Property (5 acres) purchased for \$50,000 as a trailhead to Key Central Forest, that had no road access.

• Acquired Gateway Park (39 acres on SR-302), adjacent to 360 Trails. Purchased

for \$800,000, with one-half coming from grants.

Key Pen Parks now owns or controls 1,233 acres of park land with more than 10 miles of trails.

Pierce County had offered to transfer Purdy Spit and Devil's Head to Key Pen Parks, but the commissioners rejected the offer because of liability issues or hidden costs for which no funds were available in the foreseeable future.

“The 2007 Comprehensive Plan tasked us with acquiring land, especially land with access to water,” Gallacher said.

“Future emphasis will be on developing these lands. With a total budget of less than \$1 million per year for everything (maintenance, operations, capital investment, et cetera.), we believe that we have done rather well.”

A dissenting voice comes from Bob Richardson, who resides next to the Minter Creek park property.

“The parks district should never have

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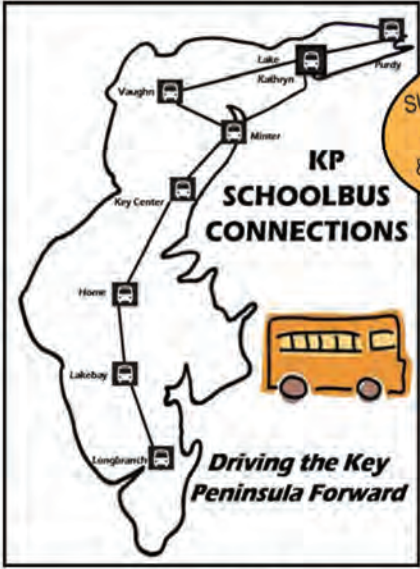
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the KPCS/Food Bank and on-line: www.kpcouncil.org

Local agencies, groups bring Project Homeless Connect to the Key

By Scott Turner, KP News

On Friday, Aug. 9, a coalition of Pierce County organizations will host an event called Project Homeless Connect at the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints on the Key Peninsula.

The coalition includes Key Peninsula Community Services, South Sound Outreach and the Coalition to End Homelessness, with support from the Peninsula Emergency Preparedness Coalition (PEP-C).

According to Roberta Marsh, director of South Sound Outreach, the free event will include medical, dental and vision care clinics; veterans support; income tax preparation; housing access; haircuts; ID replacement and more.

Similar events have taken place at the Tacoma Dome and in Spanaway and Sumner.

"We selected Key Peninsula for this event because there is a high rate of need and there are more barriers to receiving services here," Marsh said. "We also know that there's a higher number of vets living in the area."

The event is for anyone who's experienced homelessness or has significant needs, she added.

Marsh anticipates an attendance of 150-200 people. "Since this is our first event on the Peninsula, we're just really planning for what our partners think will come. We serve 1,700 at Tacoma Dome. We've always had a van that transports folks from out here to the dome, but we usually only get one bus full, so we hope that by having the event out here, more people will be able to come," she said.

Key Peninsula Community Services is

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purchased the Minter Creek property. It is inappropriate for a park," Richardson said. "There are no plans to develop this property. It's long and narrow, in the middle of (zoned) R-10 residential land. We neighbors are being plagued with break-ins and thefts by people using this as an access to our private lands."

Gallacher said the park commissioners chose to purchase that land.

"We are unable to sell it due to deed

Services available

Project Homeless Connect will take place Friday, Aug. 9 at the LDS Church, 12521 134th Ave., KPN

Time: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Services will be available until 5 p.m.

Services include: Medical, dental and vision care, haircuts, veterans' support, access point for housing, income tax preparation, ID replacement, food benefits and on-site childcare available. For information, contact KP Community Services at (253) 884-4440.

hosting a Key Free Clinic at the event, with Dr. Roes providing services, said KPCS Executive Director Penny Gazabat.

"We're coordinating with a lot of different agencies to bring these services to the Key Peninsula area. And it's not just for homeless, but also for folks that are struggling in other areas," Gazabat said.

Although her organization is not large enough to provide comprehensive services, through partnering, the KPCS can offer a lot more to Peninsula residents — more than they've typically received in the past, she said.

"It's a huge group effort to make this Project Homeless Connect happen. A stand-alone agency can't do this by themselves. The community needs to help us spread the word that there are very important resources being brought to us in this event," Gazabat said.

For information, contact KP Community Services at (253) 884-4440.

restrictions imposed by the grant monies used to purchase it. We will do the best we can with what we have," he said.

Key Pen Parks also has partnership and grant programs for community organizations, and a full slate of recreation programs and special events.

For details, go to keypenparks.com, or call 884-9240.

Editor's note: Next month we will report on the recent survey results, and plans to develop existing park lands.

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