

Proposed Changes to the Acquisition and Development Funding Framework in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program – Local Parks Category (WWRP - LP)

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) requests the public submit comments on the following proposed policy changes to the funding frameworks in the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program-Local Parks category. This policy, once adopted, would direct how the board would direct funding between acquisition and development costs in the Local Parks category. This policy decision follows legislation adopted during the 2016 legislative session. The previous allocation set by the statute was “at least fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs”; the new statutory allocation is “at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of this money to acquisition costs”.¹² The following policy options are being considered by the board:

Option	Framework	Policy Statement
1	“Strict 40/60”	Fund acquisition costs at 40% and development costs at 60%.
2	“Modified 40/60”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund acquisition costs at 40% and development costs at 60%. 2. But, fully fund any partially funded acquisition projects or project costs.* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs. <p>* Example: In this framework, the formula for any given cycle might result in 41% for acquisition costs and 59% to development costs.</p>
3	“40-40 Competitive”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund both acquisition and development costs at 40%, 2. then, fully fund any partially funded projects, 3. then, apply remaining funds to unfunded projects starting with the highest ranked project, and work straight down the ranked list. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs.
4	“Aim For 50”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund acquisition costs up to 50% but fund no partially funded acquisition projects. The remainder of funds go to development costs.* • No less than 40%, and no more than 50% of funding allocation shall go to acquisition costs. <p>* Example: In this framework, the formula for any given cycle might result in 46% for acquisition costs and 54% to development costs.</p>

Background

Following a [published review](#) of the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program ([WWRP](#)) in 2015, the governor

¹ [RCW 79A.15.050\(1\)\(b\)](#)

² [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 5. \(p.8, lines 12-15\)](#)

signed [Substitute Senate Bill 6227](#) (SSB 6227) in the spring of 2016. SSB 6227 made changes to the WWRP including how the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (board) shall allocate funds between acquisition and development project costs in the WWRP Local Parks category.

Prior to SSB 6227, the previous WWRP Local Parks statute stated the board make available “at least fifty percent of this money for acquisition costs.”³ The new law says the board shall allocate “at least forty percent but no more than fifty percent of this money to acquisition costs.”⁴

For more information on WWRP Local Parks category policies and evaluation criteria, access RCO [Manual 10a](#).

See the 2014 WWRP State Parks evaluation and funding results [here](#) (PDF page 25-64).

Excerpts from the [WWRP Review](#) related to the Local Parks category are highlighted in Attachment A below.

Decision Requested

Statute requires that the board submit a ranked list of WWRP projects to the Legislature by November 1, 2016.^{5,6} In order to identify what projects may get funded during the 2016-17 legislative session, RCO staff request a funding framework decision prior to the submittal of the ranked list. Staff requested direction on the above frameworks at the [July 13th board meeting in Bellevue \(Item 7A\)](#)

Strategic Plan Link

Developing policy to allocate funding in the WWRP addresses Goals 2 and 3 in the board’s [Strategic Plan](#).

Goal 2: We achieve a high level of accountability in managing the resources and responsibilities entrusted to us.

Goal 3: We deliver successful projects by inviting competition and by using broad public participation and feedback, monitoring, assessment, and adaptive management.

Next Steps

Staff will evaluate public comment on the options presented above, and draft a funding framework policy proposal for board decision at the October 2016 meeting.

³ [RCW 79A.15.050\(1\)\(b\)](#)

⁴ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 5. \(p.8, lines 12-15\)](#)

⁵ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 7. \(p.13, lines 12-21\)](#)

⁶ [Substitute Senate Bill 6227 Sec 10. \(p.18, lines 12-18\)](#)

Attachment A.

[WWRP Review](#) (page 9):

“F. Local Parks and State Parks Acquisition and Development Ratios. Four of the WWRP categories currently require a minimum percent of the allocation for land acquisition – State Parks (at least 50 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), Local Parks (at least 50 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), Water Access (at least 75 percent of allocation for acquisition costs), and Riparian Protection (all projects must include some acquisition component). To address the expressed need for more development projects, we recommend re-balancing the acquisition and development requirement in the local parks and state parks categories to the following:

- a. No less than 40 percent, and no more than 50 percent, of the funding shall go to projects with acquisition.

We recommend that the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board shall apply this formula as direction to look at a 60 percent set-aside for development projects, but with the flexibility to scale down to 50 percent if there are a significant number of meritorious acquisition projects. The board can choose to achieve these targets either over one funding cycle or over several funding cycles. This recommendation would require a statutory change.”

[WWRP Review](#) (page 19):

“F. Stakeholders representing local parks suggested that the current 50/50 requirement between acquisition and development projects should be revised to allow no less than 40 percent of funds be used for acquisition. This change was proposed along with provisions to strengthen, reinforce, and reaffirm existing statutory authority and flexibility for the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board to adjust these requirements up to a 50 percent acquisition threshold to meet most “pressing needs” and to support highly meritorious projects.

The rationale for this revision is that increasing density and population growth means that there is a renewed emphasis on developing quality open space and recreation opportunities for residents. Local parks and recreation directors noted that they have more funding tools at their disposal to acquire property than they do tools for development. Local parks advocated that the revision to no less than 40 percent acquisition, subject to adjustment by the board over time, would improve the overall quality of WWRP projects.”