

RON STERLING, M.D.

7031A Beach Drive SW
Seattle, Washington 98136
Phone: 206-784-7842
E-mail: RonSterling@RonSterling.com

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Board of Parks Commissioners

Re: Lowman Beach Park and King County's Murray Avenue Combined Sewer Overflow Project Alternative for Siting a 2 Million Gallon Underground Tank in the Park along with many Above-Ground Facilities

Dear Commissioners:

As you already know from the briefing paper distributed for this meeting tonight, the alternative site that seems to be the most acceptable to the King County Wastewater Treatment Division's (KCWTD) for locating an underground 2 million gallon containment tank and many above-ground controls, including an above-ground diesel-powered electrical generator in, on, under and around Lowman Beach Park.

This alternative is completely unacceptable and unnecessary. It is unfortunate that the briefing paper being submitted for tonight does not update you on what the community is attempting to do in this matter and how unacceptable it is to the community to site any of the facilities, other than the earlier-planned underground diesel electrical generator under the surface of the park. In fact, any other above-ground facilities located in the park are unacceptable, even if those facilities are serving an underground tank under the street adjacent to the park.

This park has taken enough torture for a treasured small neighborhood park and should be left as undisturbed as possible. According to historical papers posted on the Seattle Parks website, this park was given to the city for the purposes of "parks and parkways." The fact that sewer facilities such as the pump station were allowed to be built in the park in the past is unforgivable. The original sin should not be grounds for continuing to sin, so to speak.

In response to KCWTD's attempt to more-or-less force alternatives onto the community, the community has responded with full force. I and others have collected signatures for petitions. You may hear from Jim Coombes tonight, who, along with Michael Harkin, another neighbor in the Lowman Beach Park neighborhood, have collected in excess of 600 signatures on a petition to keep KCWTD out of the park, period. My petition, which is located online at www.SoundAngels.org, rejects all the three alternatives outright as unsafe, underbuilt, and destructive of a treasured neighborhood. It has 106 signatures.

The idea that this park could be replaced by any other park in the area is ludicrous. Lowman Beach Park allows access to Puget Sound that even its huge cousin to the south, Lincoln Park, does not allow. Windsurfers, kiteboarders, kayakers, snorkelers, scuba divers, stand-up-paddlers, and surfers doing paddling workouts, you name it, Lowman allows that kind of access that no other park in West Seattle allows to the east boundary of the Sound in the West Seattle area. It cannot be replaced.

The idea that the park could be "reconstructed" and claim some of its former glory after such a construction project is also ludicrous. There is no way to replace the two Great Sycamores of Lowman Beach Park. There is no way to put the tennis court back in, without it being moved further south in the park and taking up even more of the park than it does now. There is no way that the gentle downward slope of the park will be duplicated, and there is no guarantee that the park will not end up elevated in some manner that makes it more distant from the beach, harder to access and less safe.

In addition, you should note that the current maintenance of the facilities in the park requires daily visits by trucks and personnel, with long periods of time when large surface hatches are open. Such maintenance services will greatly increase with the addition of any other facilities in the park. They are hazardous and unsightly.

I would ask this Board to strictly oppose any use of Lowman Beach Park for the purposes of siting any CSO tank or its facilities, underground or above-ground and ask KCWTD to find some other alternative that is feasible. That is what the community overwhelmingly wants.

It is far from clear that the three alternatives that have been offered to the community are actually the best. The vetting process for the alternatives that were explored did not properly include the community. Without enlisting the community, KCWTD excluded the very people who could help them lobby for what the community wants -- a facility that does the job, looks to the future, and does not destroy unique neighborhoods or parks in their totality.

In that regard, I am often asked what I think would be a better alternative. I often bring up for discussion the use of a small percentage of Lincoln Park for building the right underground facility in this matter. My argument, which so far has not been disputed, is that using, in the worst case scenario, one percent of Lincoln Park in the north end of the park for the purposes noted, is far better than using very close to 100 percent of Lowman Beach Park.

I am not opposed to Parks making decisions that might have minimal impacts on larger parks in the system, but I am very opposed to Parks allowing the total

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conversions of small neighborhood parks for these kinds of purposes, especially when it is unnecessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

Ron Sterling, M.D.