



November 20, 2015

City Council Members  
City of Bainbridge Island  
280 Madison Avenue North  
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Re: Suzuki Property RFP Response

Dear City Council Members,

The Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District is pleased to submit this proposal to develop a park on the Suzuki parcel. The Suzuki parcel is one of the last large, undeveloped parcels near downtown Winslow. It has high aquifer recharge value and contains mature trees and diverse flora. In this proposal, we will preserve open space, maintain the existing wildlife corridor, and provide the community a planning process to determine which amenities the public desires.

As property values rise across the Puget Sound region, acquiring and preserving open space will become both more difficult and more important. The Suzuki property is an ideal candidate for preservation because it is already owned by the public. No new bonds or taxes will be needed to preserve this land.

With the economy growing and tax revenues rising, now is the time to preserve this parcel. Future generations will praise the decision to preserve this open space at the heart of our island, just as the current generation praises and benefits from decisions to preserve properties like the Grand Forest and the Gazzam Lake Preserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk B. Robinson".

Kirk B. Robinson, Chair  
Board of Commissioners  
Bainbridge Island Metropolitan  
Park & Recreation District

✓ cc: Douglas Schulze, City Manager

## Project Vision

As requested by several members of our community The Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District is proposing that the Suzuki parcel be permanently conserved as open-space and made available to the public as a park. The amenities included in this park will be designed in accordance with these tenets:

- Preserve public land and open spaces.
- Provide trails to improve non-motorized access to Winslow.
- Provide a unique recreational opportunity for Bainbridge Island residents that are not already available in other parks.

We have highlighted trails as its own tenet because the central location of this parcel makes it an ideal location to connect trails leading into Sakai, Woodward, and the Grand Forest into the Bainbridge High School campus and central Winslow.

## Park Design

Once the property is transferred to The Park District, the actual design of the park will begin with a set of community outreach meetings, similar to the process that will be used to design the park on the Sakai property. This will ensure that the park meets the need of the community. Early suggestions from citizens have included outdoor classroom areas that would create new educational opportunities for students at the nearby middle and intermediate schools.

The area of the property to the northeast is a monoculture that needs to be thinned to allow light to penetrate. This would be an ideal area for uses that need cleared or thinned spaces. The trails in the property would be designed to integrate into a connecting trail linking 305 to the Grand Forest area by way of the Aquatic Center. The property itself would connect the service road opening onto New Brooklyn with the trail built along Sportsman's Club Road.

## Ecological Value of the Suzuki Property

Preserving this parcel is important because the Suzuki property lies near or contains areas of high aquifer recharge. Deborah Rudnick, a certified ecologist and chair of the BI Watershed Council recently wrote in an open letter:

"This aquifer recharge map that the City has in their files is not particularly highly resolved, however, from what I can see, it suggests that the Suzuki property is part of an area of extremely high recharge on the island- there are only a few areas that have recharge rates as high as this (>20" per year). If this is true, this ecological value is important and should be part of the discussion about the conservation values of this property."

## Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

This proposal directly furthers a majority of the Guiding Principles approved by the Planning Commission in the 2016 Update to the Comprehensive Plan, including:

*Principle #1: Preserve the special character of the Island, which includes the small town atmosphere of downtown Winslow, forested areas, meadows, farms, marine views, scenic, and winding roads that support all forms of transportation.* – Preserving this parcel will preserve a large forested area and make it possible to build trails connecting existing trails to Winslow and enhance non-motorized opportunities.

*Principle #2: Protect the water resources of the island* – This proposal protects open space near an area of high aquifer recharge.

*Principle #5: Recognize that the island's environmental resources are finite and must be maintained at a sustainable level*

*Principle #6: Meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.* – Preserving this land in public hands ensures that the land will be available for future public amenities. This is an important consideration given the proximity of the site to four schools.

### **Development team**

The property would be managed, developed, and maintained by The Park District. The Park District has extensive experience in designing and maintaining parks throughout Bainbridge Island.

### **Project Schedule**

After the Disposition and Development Agreement has been approved, the Park District will hold community outreach and planning meetings within 90 days of acquiring the property. Further development schedules will depend on priorities selected by the community.

### **Financial Terms**

The Park District proposes that property be transferred to the Park District. The RFP's proposal that full-market value be paid for the property is appropriate when the parcel is being transferred from public to private hands. The Park District proposes a transfer because the Park District and City of Bainbridge Island operate from the same base of taxpayers. A payment for the property would only shift the taxation burden from one authority to another -- the taxpayers in Bainbridge Island would see the same tax bill.

Transferring the property preserves public use of the entire property and is consistent with the RFP's suggestion that consideration be given for the "value of public benefits." The City of Bainbridge Island and the Park District have a history of successfully transferring park properties to the Park District.