

**The Finn Hill Park and Recreation District Endorses
Kirkland Parks Levy – Proposition 2**
Proposition Ensures the Long Term Future of O.O. Denny Park

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The Finn Hill Park and Recreation District Board of Commissioner's recently voted unanimously to endorse Proposition 2, the parks operation and maintenance levy that Kirkland residents will vote on this November. One provision of Proposition 2 would provide a permanent source of funding for the Kirkland Parks Department to take over maintenance of O.O. Denny Park, a beautiful lakefront park on Holmes Pt. Drive.

Since 2002, the Finn Hill Park and Recreation District (FHPRD) has maintained and operated O.O. Denny Park, funded by a separate levy paid by Finn Hill residents. Finn Hill voters approved that levy and created the FHPRD, after King County closed the park due to a budget crisis in 2002. The FHPRD levy expires in 2014, and would have to be renewed in order to provide continued support for the park. After annexation by Kirkland in June, 2012, Finn Hill residents have also paid general taxes to the City of Kirkland, a portion of which goes to support other parks throughout the city.

If Proposition 2 passes, the FHPRD Board of Commissioners have indicated they will vote to eliminate their separate tax levy for 2013 and beyond, and support an orderly handoff of maintenance and operation of O.O. Denny Park to the city in early 2013. The FHPRD would continue to exist through 2013 in order to invest its remaining rainy day fund in capital improvements to O.O. Denny Park, with plans to vote itself out of existence late in 2013 when those projects are complete.

"This community stepped up in the past to ensure the survival of this jewel of a park, which was threatened by King County budget cuts. With annexation complete, it is now time to ensure a permanent source of funding for management of this beautiful park asset within Kirkland's expanded boundaries", said Board Chairman Rick Smith. "Proposition 2 will ensure Kirkland Parks has the funding to take on that role permanently. In addition, Proposition 2 will provide funding for future acquisition of new park land in underserved neighborhoods in the annexation areas, such as the east side of Finn Hill. Due to the current maintenance levy, Finn Hill residents pay more for parks than any other residents within Kirkland. Proposition 2 changes that and is a fair deal for Finn Hill."

Proposition 2 will have a minimal impact on Finn Hill property taxes, which have dropped since annexation to the city. The proposed levy amount (\$0.16/\$1000 of assessed valuation) is larger than the current assessment (\$0.06/\$1000) that Finn Hill residents pay for O.O Denny Park. However, the net increase (\$0.10 per \$1000 of assessed valuation) represents only 5% of the property tax *reduction* that Finn Hill residents have realized since annexation (\$1.96 per \$1000 of assessed valuation). Even after factoring in other fees associated with living in Kirkland, the park levy would not result in an increase in taxes for Finn Hill homeowners over what they paid as King County residents.

The endorsement resolution passed by the Board of Commissioners also states that the parks system is one of Kirkland's greatest assets. Furthermore, the resolution states that the passage of Proposition 2 will help ensure a vibrant and healthy park system, which is vital the future of the city and an important contributor to our quality of life in Kirkland.

O.O. Denny Park sits on land that is owned by the City of Seattle. The land was willed to Seattle by the widow of Orville O. Denny after he died in 1916. A provision of her will stipulates that if the land ceases to be used as a park, ownership is to revert to a local charity, with the likely outcome that the land would be sold for private development. The land was formerly the Denny family's summer vacation home and was first turned into a park by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934.