

Achieving a 10,000 Square Foot Library at the K2 Sports Site

The King County Library System (KCLS) is pursuing the purchase of a portion of the K2 Sports property on Vashon Island for a new library. The site is desirable as it will allow KCLS to provide the community with a 10,000 square foot library with access to more than 200 parking stalls; not feasible at the current site due to an unrenovable lease. The new library will be built as part of the 2004 Capital Bond Measure, which was strongly supported by residents. A letter of intent for the K2 Sports property was signed in early Fall 2008 by KCLS Director Bill Ptacek and K2 Commons, a real estate development firm that seeks to redevelop the site of the former ski manufacturing business. The site was selected after considering nine other possible locations, most of which are surplus or vacant lots. The K2 Sports property is in a central location on the Island, in close proximity to schools and is visible from the Vashon Highway. "Many Vashon residents pointed us in this direction," said Ptacek. "The historical importance of the site is eminently suitable for a new Vashon Library."

Next Steps

A purchase and sale agreement is being finalized by KCLS staff and attorneys. When the transaction is complete, KCLS will own what was formerly a 10,000 square foot machine shop, located in the southeast corner of the K2 site. The building is separate from the larger 160,000 square foot manufacturing facility, where the K2 partners anticipate locating a variety of businesses and nonprofit entities. The redevelopment of the former manufacturing facility will be owned and managed separately from the library project. The K2 Commons developers are currently preparing the overall site for future development, which includes securing financing for the project. A new land use designation was approved by the County Council in November 2008.

KCLS also is working to complete due diligence prior to the purchase. Environmental reports have been received and project architects completed onsite visual inspections and are ready to prepare more detailed conceptual plans. Public meetings will be held starting in late January 2009.

Background

Planning for a new 10,000 square foot Vashon Library has been under way since May 2005, as part of the \$172 million Capital Bond Measure. Although KCLS owns the current 6,196 square foot library at Ober Park, the land is leased. Throughout the planning process, extensive public feedback sessions were held. It was originally hoped that a new library would be built at a different location at Ober Park and that the parks district would utilize the former library building. When this was no longer feasible due to rising construction costs and site limitations at Ober Park, planning began to expand the existing library. After the park district indicated they would not approve an extended lease, which was necessary for the expansion, KCLS was forced to explore other sites.

Timeline of Progress

- **May 2005:** KCLS staff proposes building a new library on Ober Park land owned by the Vashon Parks District and the two entities discuss exchanging land, as the parks district would like to utilize the former library building.
- **January 2006:** A consultant team, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, prepares a Master Site Plan.
- **June 2006:** A public meeting is held to begin public review of the proposed exchange of properties at Ober Park.
- **September 2006:** Due to escalating construction costs, KCLS proposes expanding the current building.
- **November 2006:** A conceptual plan for expanding the existing Vashon Library is presented at a community meeting.

- **February 2007:** More than 70 people attend a public meeting to discuss the feasibility of expanding the current building or building a new library at the existing site, which already has infrastructure in place. The Vashon Parks Board, which favors a new library at Ober Park, indicates they will not renew the existing lease.
- **March 2007:** KCLS is forced to explore other sites for a new Vashon Library.
- **February 2008:** The Vashon Community Council solicits comments from the community regarding the potential relocation of the library to the K2 Sports site on Vashon Island.
- **August 2008:** KCLS Director Bill Ptacek signs a letter of intent to purchase a portion of the K2 Sports property for a new library.
- **January 2009:** KCLS plans a public meeting for January 21 to provide information on the library location and design.