

# Exploring Two Options for a New 10,000 Square Foot Library

The King County Library System (KCLS) continues to explore options for where to site the new 10,000 square foot Vashon Library. KCLS is intent on not compromising the size of the new library that was promised to residents as part of the 2004 Capital Bond Measure. Two site options are currently being evaluated: a portion of the former K2 Sports property and Ober Park, where the library is currently located.

## The Ober Park Site

As a result of public comment at the January 27 KCLS Board Meeting, the KCLS Board agreed to evaluate the Ober Park site once again. The site was no longer pursued after the Vashon Parks District Board passed a resolution in February 2007 stating that the Vashon Parks District would not approve an extended lease, which is necessary to expand the library at the current site. KCLS Director Bill Ptacek recently met with the newly elected chair of the Park Board to reestablish discussions. At the next KCLS Board Meeting on February 24, Ptacek will update the public on the outcome of the meeting.

## The K2 Sports Site

Although exploring the Ober Park site once again, KCLS continues to pursue negotiations and feasibility studies for a portion of the former K2 Sports property. The machine shop, located at the intersection with Vashon Highway, was selected after considering several other possible locations, which were surplus/vacant lots and existing buildings. Environmental reports on the former K2 machine shop have been received and project architects have already completed onsite visual inspections and are ready to prepare more detailed conceptual plans. The former K2 Sports property will allow KCLS to provide the community with a 10,000 square foot library with access to more than 200 parking stalls. KCLS would also own the land on the property. The building and land will be separated from the larger 110,000 square foot manufacturing facility, where the K2 Commons partners anticipate locating a variety of businesses and nonprofit entities. The K2 Commons property is in a central location on the Island, in close proximity to schools and is visible from the Vashon Highway.

KCLS is in the final steps of completing a purchase and sale agreement for the property. Although the details continue to be finalized, the seller will have an established period of time to complete several conditions. If KCLS wishes to withdraw before the established date, no earnest money will be lost and if the conditions are not met by the seller, KCLS will not lose any funding.

## 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 be able to use 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:** More than 150 Vashon residents attend a public meeting on Vashon Island, organized by KCLS to gather input on locating the library at the K2 Sports site. A week after the meeting, KCLS Board members indicate they will continue to pursue the K2 Sports site while also resuming Ober Park discussions with the new chair of the Park District.