



Legislation Text

File #: 2002-0134, **Version:** 2

Clerk 03/14/2002

A MOTION requesting the executive to examine and identify, in consultation with the King County district court, possible areas for expansion of the court's work crew program to include program alternatives that could provide for certain maintenance services to temporarily closed parks.

WHEREAS, King County faces continuing current expense fund deficits, on the order of fifty million dollars for 2003, because of declining revenues and increasing governmental expenses, and

WHEREAS, addressing the continuing deficits have led to the elimination of a number of King County programs and services in 2002 and similar reductions are projected for 2003. King County began the winter closure of forty-four parks on January 1, 2002 in response to budget cuts caused by a shortfall in general fund tax revenue, and

WHEREAS, These King County parks will be closed during 2002 for the months of January, February, November and December. The closed parks are located throughout much of the urban area of King County. During the closure, all facilities at the parks will be closed, including restrooms, and some amenities will be removed, such as swings. All activities at the parks have been cancelled, including games and practices on athletic fields, and

WHEREAS, On February 25, the King County executive announced that twenty of these parks will remain closed throughout the year. The closed parks are located throughout much of the urban unincorporated area of King County, and

WHEREAS, In addition, mid-year budget reductions were announced that will eliminate the annual

Heritage Festival at Marymoor Park, playground and pre-school programs and further decrease maintenance of parks countywide. Park user fees are also proposed to be increased ten to twenty percent, and

WHEREAS, The council required, as part of addressing escalating costs, that the district court develop plans for alternative sentencing to dentention. The district court has identified the efficacy of expanding offender work crews as a sanction and a way for offenders to reduce their fines. Additionally, the court identified that their existing pilot work crews provided needed services to the community that maintain facilities and saved taxpayer dollars, and

WHEREAS, The district court has identified hundreds of offenders with driving offenses that are currently using valuable court and jail time that would otherwise be eligible for work crew, and

WHEREAS, The district court pilot work crew program provided services that collected trash, mowed and weeded, and provided a variety of other maintenance services to local governments that parallel what is needed for those parks closed as a consequence of budget restraints, and

WHEREAS, The district court has identified that the expansion of the work crew program would save current expense monies in the district court, the jail, prosecutor, public defense and other taxpayers' moneys for law enforcement, and

WHEREAS, The council has identified that resources are not otherwise available for closed parks;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the council of King County:

The executive is requested to examine and identify, in consultation with the King County district court, possible areas for expansion of the court's work crew program to include program alternatives that could provide for certain maintenance services to temporarily closed parks. The executive and the district court are further requested to recommend to the council as soon as possible, but no later than July 15, 2002, any proposals to address expansion of the work crew program that could provide such alternative services for parks maintenance.