



Staff Report

June 7, 2021 Council Workshop Meeting

Lacamas Park Trail Bridge

Presenter: Trang Lam, Parks and Recreation Director

Time Estimate: 15 minutes

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BACKGROUND: In the summer of 2020, concerns had been raised by some citizens and Council Members regarding people jumping from the trail bridge that crosses the Lacamas Lake – Round Lake canal at Lacamas Park. At the August 3, 2020 Council Workshop on this topic, Council discussed three mitigation options, but requested that the Parks and Recreation Commission (P&R Commission) review these options, and others as appropriate, and provide a recommendation to Council on next steps.

SUMMARY: At the April 28, 2021 P&R Commission meeting, Staff shared the initial three mitigation options that were discussed with Council in the prior year and solicited new ideas. The three options discussed with Council last year were:

- Maintain status quo – No additional mitigation to be implemented at this location.
- Post a general warning sign – For this option, Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA) warned that posting signage may create a duty or perception of enforcement that might not otherwise exist; and the Police Department warned that the signage would likely generate calls to Police or other departments with complaints or request for enforcement.
- Install fencing and/or other improvements – Considerations for this option included cost, aesthetics, safety, and timing.

In addition to discussing the three options above in depth, the P&R Commission also discuss various other ideas such as education programs, life jackets, and redirecting swimmers to more appropriate swim locations. ***The P&R Commission is recommending the following to Council:***

- Warning and Education Signage – Create signage that provides a level of warning, but not enforcement, to help users be aware and cautious recreating around bodies of water, and educational information on being safe around and in bodies of water.

Staff has explored this recommendation further and have found the following information for Council's consideration:

- Clark County (County) Signage – The County currently has water safety information on their webpage, County’s Public Health publishes articles, and there is signage at popular swim areas.
 - County Public Work’s swim and water safety information can be found here - <https://clark.wa.gov/public-works/swimming#water%20safety>
 - County’s Swimming Safety brochure can be found here - <https://clark.wa.gov/sites/default/files/dept/files/public-works/Parks/swimsafetyenglish.pdf>
 - May 24, 2021 County Public Health publication on swim safety this summer - <https://clark.wa.gov/public-health/take-steps-stay-safe-while-swimming-and-recreating-lakes-rivers-and-pools>
 - County’s signage at popular swim areas: Example of signage below. The language on sign may vary depending on location and age of sign.



Figure 1: Example of Clark County Signage

- Seattle Children’s Hospital, Drowning Prevention and Water Safety – Seattle Children’s Hospital is a partner with Washington State Drowning Prevention Network. Their key messages are - “Know the water. Know your limits. Wear a life jacket.” More water safety

information can be found on their webpage - <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/prevention/drowning-prevention/>

- Clark County Sheriff's Marine Patrol branch – In addition to information on their webpage for boating safety, the Sheriff's office works with county and city parks to provide free life jacket loaner stations near popular bodies of water. Heritage Park has been a location where the City has partnered with the Sheriff's office to set up a life jacket loaner station. The Sheriff's office plans to install a second life jacket loaner station at the city-owned boat launch off Leadbetter Road on Lacamas Lake's north shore.

During research for the additional information above, Staff has also learned through conversations with other jurisdictions that signage alone does not change behavior. Best practice has been to have temporary and/or permanent signage along with a robust educational campaign. ***This best practice aligns with the core intent of the P&R Commission's recommendation. Staff recommends that we create a Pilot Project which would include temporary signage and an education campaign in Camas.*** If this approach is desired by Council, Staff would pursue scoping out the project and determining the best approach to implement sometime this summer. The Pilot Project would be evaluated in the Fall and strengthened for the following year.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS:

What are the desired results and outcomes for this agenda item?

Presenting P&R Commission's recommendation, some additional signage information that staff has research, and have Council confirm that the P&R Commission's recommendation is satisfactory to allow Staff to continue exploring this path and implement.

What's the data? What does the data tell us?

Many jurisdictions have similar concerns and have implemented various versions of signage and education. Per Staff's research and conversations with other jurisdictions, signage alone does not change behavior. It should be coupled with an educational campaign.

How have communities been engaged? Are there opportunities to expand engagement?

Only Council and P&R Commission have been engaged in discussing this safety concern and mitigation options. No broader engagement has occurred. With the proposed Pilot Project, we can survey the community to determine efficacy and ask for ideas to strengthen the approach the following year.

Who will benefit from, or be burdened by this agenda item?

The entire community will benefit, particularly children and families that recreate near our bodies of water.

What are the strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences?

Staff still needs to fully develop and scope the Pilot Project and will be developing strategies to mitigate any unintended consequences as part of project planning.

Does this agenda item have a differential impact on underserved populations, people living with disabilities, and/or communities of color? Please provide available data to illustrate this impact.

No impacts are evident at this time, but if we discover any during our project planning phase, we will work on strategies to mitigate them.

Will this agenda item improve ADA accessibilities for people with disabilities?

No

What potential hurdles exists in implementing this proposal (include both operational and political)?

The City should consider WCIA's comment on the possibility of creating perceived duty and/or enforcement, and the Police's comment on additional calls the City may receive. The signage will be a minimal cost to the Pilot Project. The education campaign will require some graphic design, copy writing and on-going staff time (at least through the summer and fall) to implement the engagement with the community and measure effectiveness. P&R Department is concern that we do not have the staff capacity to fully implement the education campaign portion of the Pilot Project, and the City may not have capacity from the Police or other departments to respond to calls directly related to the new signage.

How will you ensure accountabilities, communicate, and evaluate results?

We propose to survey the community to determine efficacy and ask for ideas to strengthen the Pilot Project for the following year.

How does this item support a comprehensive plan goal, policy or other adopted resolution?

The Pilot Project support Goal 2 and Objective 2H in the 2014 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive (PROS) Plan:

Goal 2: Provide active and passive recreation opportunities to serve the community's need.

Objective 2H: Encourage, support, and, where possible, initiate activities, to preserve, conserve or improve the shorelines of the Columbia and Washougal Rivers, Lacamas Creek, and Lacamas, and Fallen Leaf Lakes.

BUDGET IMPACT: P&R Department's budget will not be impacted. As noted above, the signage and graphics cost will be minimal; however the impact will be with staff capacity.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approving the Pilot Project. Staff to complete project planning and work with the P&R Commission to implement.