

Making Progress on a Site for the New Vashon Library

The King County Library System (KCLS) is interested in purchasing a portion of the K2 Sports property on Vashon Island for a new library. A letter of intent was recently signed by KCLS Director Bill Ptacek and K2 Commons, which seeks to redevelop the site of the former ski manufacturing business. "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

KCLS will finalize the purchase when the King County Comprehensive Plan is amended to allow for the intended uses, which includes a public library. The K2 Commons partners anticipate locating a variety of businesses and nonprofit entities at the site, which has 160,000 square feet of space.

The K2 Sports Site

Located slightly south of the town center, the K2 Sports property is in a central location on the Island. It is in close proximity to schools and is visible from the Vashon Highway. While many tenants at the site may lease or purchase space in a large building, KCLS hopes to purchase a separate 10,000 square foot building that was formerly used as a machine shop. If purchased, the building will be renovated and developed as a new library. KCLS' architect team will develop design studies for the building, after which a community meeting will be held to gather input.

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 from the city. 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.