



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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COUNTY AND CITY WORKING TOGETHER ON PATH FORWARD WITH PARKS AND REC

Officials met to discuss short-term challenges and long-term opportunities to collaborate in delivering parks and recreation services valued by wider community

JEFFERSON COUNTY/PORT TOWNSEND – Leadership from Jefferson County and City of Port Townsend met this week to discuss Jefferson County’s current budget challenges and to understand and explore options for addressing the need to reduce County parks and recreation reliance on the County’s General Fund in 2026 and beyond, including the possibility of having to close the County-operated Rec Center next year within the County-managed Community Center in uptown Port Townsend.

While spurred by the County’s near-term budget challenge, this week’s meeting helped County and City officials share and better understand the current operational and funding constraints in supporting the parks and recreation amenities and programs beloved by community members. The meeting was also an opportunity to reflect on and learn from the history of similar challenges faced by both agencies.

The Board of County Commissioners is currently weighing a range of options and difficult choices as the County Commissioners work through the budget process and aim to approve a 2026 County budget on December 22. With limited time, implementation of an immediate partnership solution is not practical prior to County budget adoption, yet the County and City have committed to working together over the coming few months to explore longer-term solutions, partnerships, and efficiencies to deliver the services the public desires as represented in the Jefferson County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan and the forthcoming update to the City’s PROS Plan. Residents of unincorporated Jefferson County and incorporated Jefferson County (i.e., within City limits) have been clear over many years that community centers, parks, recreation, and open space are deeply valued. County and City officials aim to develop a fiscally sustainable model that supports a regional vision.

Jefferson County District 1 Commissioner Heather Dudley-Nollette says: “We face hard choices ahead, with a December 15 Board of County Commissioners workshop and a December 22 vote on the budget. Longer-term, knowing how important our parks and recreation system and community centers are to all residents, we are optimistic that collaboration with the City of Port Townsend, partnerships in our community, and creative ideas will win the day and allow us to invest responsibly and sustainably in parks and recreation into the future.”

City Manager John Mauro says: “My team and I are committed to working with our Jefferson County colleagues to think beyond our own City parks system and consider the regional nature of our wider

system and how working together can create efficiencies, stability, and benefits for generations of residents. It's an all-hands-on-deck opportunity for our community as well, given how so many of us value, love, and use both City and County parks systems."

Jefferson County and City of Port Townsend officials will be meeting over the next few months to draw together the most recent data and information regarding assets and cost of service to help elected officials and the public better understand the challenges ahead and to size up the overall goal of fiscal sustainability for the City and County parks and recreation systems.

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Information and agendas of the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners:

<https://media.avcaptureall.cloud/?customerGuid=3ed8575e-418b-477c-9d71-d1443ecc9589&target=foo&view=list&tabs=past|today|upcoming>

The County's current PROS Plan: <https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/DocumentCenter/View/18148/2022-Jeff-Co-PROS-Plan?bidId=>

The County's current parks, recreation, and open space public review draft in the Comprehensive Plan update:

<https://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/1799/2025-Parks-and-Rec-Planning>

The City's current PROS Plan:

<https://weblink.cityofpt.us/weblink/0/edoc/194378/2020%20Parks%20Recreation%20and%20Open%20Space%20Plan.pdf>

The City's current Comprehensive Plan update, including PROS Plan: <https://www.pt2045planning.org/>

Engaging in the City's PROS Plan update and implementation via the City's Parks, Recreation, Trees, and Trails Advisory Board: <https://cityofpt.us/bc/page/parks-recreation-trees-and-trails-advisory-board-0>