



**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF SEATTLE – KING COUNTY**

June 19, 2014

**LWVS-KC RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROPOSITION 1,  
THE METROPOLITAN PARKS DISTRICT**

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County voted unanimously to recommend that the public vote NO on Seattle Proposition 1, the Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) measure, which is appearing on the August primary ballot.

The League's recommendation is based upon several of its long-held "good government" positions. The League has a long history of supporting parks and open space that contribute to healthy neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life as well as Seattle's reputation as a great place to live. At the same time, the League believes that representative government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens. The League supports measures that ensure accountability and adequate citizen participation and oversight.

This proposition is not merely a funding mechanism for parks. It also will fundamentally change the oversight relationship between the parks department, the mayor and the city council. The MPD measure establishes a completely separate governmental entity, similar to a school board that simply shares the boundaries of the city. The MPD cannot be dissolved by a vote of the people.

The League supports the clear separation of powers. The primary role of the city council should be legislative, not administrative. The parks have historically been administered by the mayor's office. Proposition 1 grants the Seattle City Council administrative authority over the city's parks.

The League supports home rule, the concept that the city should have control over those matters which are of strictly local concern. The MPD is a state entity, a junior taxing district with wide powers pursuant to State statute, RCW35.61. Many of these powers are in opposition to city ordinances. An inter-local agreement (ILA) between the city council and the governing body of the MPD addresses this but may not be enforceable.

The MPD will have the authority to levy a property tax of up to 75¢ per \$1000 assessed value without a vote of the people. The MPD measure provides no mechanism for an external performance and/or financial audit. The Oversight Committee proposed in the ILA can review only an annual report prepared by Department of Parks and Recreation for the Seattle Park District and the city. It cannot perform or commission a full performance and/or financial audit.

For all of these reasons, the Board of Directors has recommended a NO vote on this measure.

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