

**CITY OF RENTON  
COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
PARK DONATION AND MEMORIAL POLICY**

**Policy: Memorial and Donation**

(Recommended by Park Board at 2/11/2014 meeting –Reviewed/Approved by Council 3/17/2014)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, standards and procedures for the installation and care of donated park improvements, either as a result of a cash or physical property donation. These donations may include, but are not limited to, park benches, bicycle racks, trees, picnic tables, public art, monuments (by exception only), drinking fountains, flags & flag poles, kiosks, and other types of parks and trails accessories. This policy does not apply to buildings or land\*. The City desires to encourage donations while at the same time manage aesthetic impacts and mitigate ongoing maintenance cost.

Guidelines established by this policy will apply to all donations made after the effective date of this policy. Donations made prior to the adoption of this policy shall be subject to applicable sections of this policy. This policy is also designed to provide guidelines for individuals or groups should they desire to decorate, landscape or adorn an area temporarily to commemorate the loss of a loved one, such as a tree, bench or picnic table on city owned property. (Similar to RCW 46.61.520 Roadside Memorial sign program)

Standards established by this policy will apply to purchased equipment, installation techniques, donation acknowledgements, decoration and long term care of all donations made after the adoption of this policy.

\*The development of public facilities is expected to be the result of careful planning and quality construction. In addition, public facilities are expected to be maintained to a standard acceptable to the community.

## **Section 1. Standards for Existing Donations**

1. Definition of Existing Donations:

For the purpose of this policy, existing donations are those donations installed prior to the adoption of this policy.

2. Definition of Donated Element:

Elements refer to park benches, trees, drinking fountains, kiosks, etc. that are installed in developed parks and trails.

3. Appearance and Aesthetics:

Decoration, ornamentation, and adornment of donated elements can interfere with routine maintenance and the appearance of the donated element.

Existing/approved decorations, such as plaques, should not interfere with the use of nearby public space, nor represent a hazard. Please see #4. Maintenance – on lifespan of item.

4. Materials:

No landscaping or adornment is permitted by private parties unless authorized by the Community Services Administrator or their designee on or around existing donations. Only landscaping installed by Parks Division staff is permitted.

5. Maintenance:

Donated park elements (Trees, benches, plaques, etc.) become City property. Donations made previous to the adoption of this policy are to be maintained by the City during its salvageable life span. Once the donated element, (tree, plaque, bench, etc.) is not repairable, as determined by City Parks staff, the City will attempt to notify the donor of the intention to remove the element, and give them the “New Policy” options. The City is not responsible for replacing any item.

If the donor cannot be contacted the Parks Division will photo catalog the element electronically and then dispose of it.

## **Section 2. Standards for New Donations**

1. Definition of New Donations:

New donations are those made after the adoption of this policy.

2. Acquisition or Purchase:

The City and the community have an interest in ensuring that donated elements purchased and installed be of high quality related to style, appearance, durability and ease of maintenance. The City staff will be responsible for the purchase and installation of all park elements. (Donor will cover the full cost of purchases. See #6. “Cost” below.)

3. Appearance and Aesthetics:

The City and the community have an interest in ensuring the best appearance and aesthetic quality of their public facilities. Park elements and/or their associated donation acknowledgements should reflect the character of the park or facility. All donated elements will be installed in such a manner that will not change the character of a facility or its intended use.

Accordingly no decoration, ornamentation, or adornment of donations is permitted. Plaques, in ground or attached to objects, i.e. benches, drinking fountains, etc. will no longer be allowed. A new fixed "Growing Tree" will be established as a donor recognition display at the Renton Community Center. Name and donated item will be engraved on 'Leaves or Boulders' and affixed to the Growing Tree display.

*\*The Community Services Administrator or their designee will have authority to approve 'decorations', adornments or landscaping (such as flowers, balloons, etc.) on a TEMPORARY basis – up to 30 days. Should decorations be approved, they will not interfere with the use of nearby public space, nor represent a hazard. The Parks Division staff will remove such decorations in the specified time and dispose of it.*

4. Maintenance:

Donated park elements and their associated donation acknowledgement, become City property. Accordingly, the City has the duty to maintain the donation only for the expected life cycle of the donation, as determined by City Parks staff. For example if a donated item such as a park bench, is destroyed or deteriorates, then the donated element may be removed. The City will make every practical effort to maintain or repair damaged donations and memorials. However, the City is not responsible for replacing items, including existing plaques, due to excessive damage or loss (see Section 4. Criteria for Acceptance/ #2 Donation Acknowledgements/Memorial Plaques.) If current information is on file, donor will be informed and given the opportunity to take further action, at their expense.

5. Repair:

The community has an interest in ensuring that all park elements remain in good repair. In addition, the public has an interest in ensuring that the short and long-term repair costs are reasonable. Repair parts and materials must be readily available. Donated park elements must be of high quality to ensure a long life, be resistant to the elements, wear and tear, and to acts of vandalism.

6. Cost:

The City has an interest in ensuring that the donor covers the full-cost for the purchase and installation, of donated park elements. A separate fee schedule is maintained in which the City will detail costs for donations. The City also has an interest in ensuring that on-going maintenance costs do not negatively impact the resources available for maintenance of other City park facilities. Consequently the City will assess, at the time

of purchase, the quality of material of donated park elements to minimize maintenance and reduce overall cost during their life expectancy.

### **Section 3. Procedure for Making a Donation**

The City's Community Services Department will manage all donations located on City park property, with the assistance of the Parks Maintenance operations staff. A list of potential Park elements and monetary contribution levels are listed on the "Parks Donor Recognition and Information" page.

#### **1. Application:**

The donor must contact the Community Services office to determine whether a donation/element may be accepted based upon criteria contained in this policy. If a donation/element can be accepted the donor will complete an application form. Applications are available through the mail, in person at the Community Services Administrative office, or on the City's webpage. Completed applications and payment will be made to the Community Services Department Administrative staff for review and processing. If a donation cannot be accepted due to lack of available sites for park elements either within a specific park or park system wide, the prospective donor will be given an option to either donate monetarily or to be put on a waiting list, staff will collect contact information at this time.

### **Section 4. Criteria for Acceptance**

#### **1. Park Plan:**

To accept donation of a park element for a specific park facility, a park plan or 'elements inventory' must exist, showing the available locations for park elements. If no plan exists, then a donation may be made to another park facility, a monetary contribution, or they may be put on a waiting list. If a plan exists, but does not identify a particular park element proposed for donation, the City may accept the donation under certain conditions. Under this circumstance, the donation must:

- 1) Meet a true need of the facility;
- 2) Not require the relocation of other equipment or infrastructure to accommodate the donation.

In the opinion of the City, a facility may be determined to be fully developed and the opportunity for donations would not be available.

#### **2. Donation Acknowledgements/Memorial Plaques:**

Donation acknowledgements, as approved by the City, are listed on the "Parks Donor Recognition and Information" page and purchased through the City to be affixed to the "Growing Tree". To prevent obscene, offensive or inappropriate text, the City must approve all text for donation acknowledgements.

As of the adoption of the new policy, no memorial plaques or markers will be allowed on or near donated park elements.

3. Notification:

This criteria is a requirement for both existing (at the expiration of its life-cycle period) and new donations. It shall be the responsibility of the donor to provide the Community Services Department with a current address for purposes of notification regarding their donation. For the purposes of notification the City will send a certified letter (requesting a return receipt) to the donor, notifying the donor of changes related to the status of their donation (i.e. a need to remove, relocate, or comply with conditions set forth in this policy).

**Section 5. Park Benches, Bicycle Racks, Picnic Tables, and Drinking Fountains**

Park benches, bicycle racks, picnic tables, drinking fountains, and playground components may be sited in locations recommended by Community Services Administrator/Parks Committee (comprised of Directors/Managers/Park Commissioners as appointed by Administrator), in accordance with an available site plan. Items donated must be of a product recommended by Community Services Administrator/Parks Committee. These items become City property at time of purchase.

**Section 6. Trees**

Landscaping and plant selection for park facilities varies in the northwest environment. Accordingly, the size and specie of tree or trees donated shall be limited to those determined by the City's Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Manager. Trees will only be accepted for areas that have active irrigation systems in place.

**Section 7. Monuments**

Upright monuments or monuments resembling those typically found in cemeteries may not be installed at any City park facility. Exceptions to this policy are the Veteran's Memorial Park monuments and monuments installed by the City commemorating the history and/or dedication of a park facility.

**Section 8. Flags/Flag Poles**

Flags may be sited in locations approved by the Community Services Administrator/Parks Committee in accordance with an available site plan. Flags deteriorate quickly when exposed to the elements and the size of a flag is determined by the type, size and configuration of the pole on which it is to be mounted. Consequently, donated flags must be of a size and quality suitable for the site and the environment in which it is to be located. Flags may be subject to replacement, paid for by the donor at the time when City park personnel determine replacement is needed.

**Section 9. Interpretive Signs and Kiosks**

Interpretive signs/kiosks may be installed at sites that are appropriate for describing the history, geology, environment, and flora and fauna of a particular area.

Signs will be under the review of the Community Services Administrator/Parks Committee. Interpretive Signs shall be of a size that is in keeping with the character of the site. Interpretive signs shall be of a design that meets requirements for access to the disabled. Interpretive signs shall be designed in such a manner that is consistent with other interpretive signs on the site. Interpretive signs shall be constructed of materials that are of high quality, vandal resistant, and able to withstand harsh environmental conditions. No memorial plaques may be attached to Interpretive Signs or Kiosks.

**Section 10. Other Donations/ Special Requests**

There may be other donations possible, other than those expressly listed or contained within this policy, or a special request that may not meet provided criteria and presents a unique circumstance. The City may accept those donations subject to a review and approval by the Community Services Administrator/or their designee. The City Administration may, at their discretion, bring any donation proposal to the Board of Park Commissioners for review and approval.

**Section 11. Buildings, Structures, Land and Public Art**

Donated buildings, structures, land and public art are subject to full review and approval of the Board of Park Commissioners and the City Council and are not considered as part of this policy.

**Section 12. Conditions**

1. Installation:

Installation of donated park elements, will be completed by Park Maintenance Personnel. Donor acknowledgements/memorial plaques on the "Growing Tree" will be installed by Facility Staff. The installation will be scheduled at a time and date as determined by the divisions so as not to unnecessarily interfere with routine maintenance activities.

2. Removal and /or Relocation:

This section applies to both existing and new donations. The City reserves the right to remove and/or relocate donated park elements and their associated donation acknowledgments/memorial plaques, when they interfere with site safety, maintenance or construction activities. In accordance with previously stated procedure in this policy, the City will send a certified letter to each identifiable donor notifying the donor of any action related to the disposition of the donation. In certain situations, such as safety or emergency situations, the notification may be made after the action taken. In the event a donation must be permanently removed, the City will seek an alternative location consistent with this policy. If no such location can be found, in accordance with previously stated policy an "**Existing Donor**" may have a 'Leaf or Boulder' affixed to the "Growing Tree", with name and original location of donation. A "New Donor" may be offered compensation after review from the Park Team on age and condition of item.

**Section 13. Monetary Donation/ or Corporate Donation**

The Community Services Department will accept monetary donations of any size from individuals, non-profit organizations, for-profit corporations and public entities. Should these gifts be given with no specific park element, program, etc. identified, the money will be placed into a Park Donation Fund. The Community Services Administrator and Parks Committee will evaluate park needs and utilize the fund accordingly.

Donors will be recognized with a “Growing Tree” ‘Leaf or Boulder’, color and size will be determined depending on the amount of contribution.

**Section 14. Special Requests or Appeals**

The Community Services Administrator, or designee, will have the authority to approve or deny special requests submitted. Special requests are those that may not meet provided criteria or is not specifically addressed in this policy.

(Policy and available donation elements, park plan or inventory matrix to be reviewed and revised annually by Park Committee.)