

Letters to the Editor, Woodinville Weekly, February 18, 2013

On January 31, Snohomish County Parks and Recreation held a public meeting to present their latest design for the proposed “improvements” to Wellington Park. Their plan for the former golf course includes 7 sports fields (4 artificial turf), stadium lighting for night games, Costco-size paved parking and two large buildings. This sports complex will sit up on a hill in the middle of a Wellington neighborhood, to be accessed by a steep and winding 2 lane road that connects Route 9 to Bostian Road (another 2 lane road).

This park and all improvements are to be paid for with Brightwater mitigation funds that were supposed to compensate residents and neighborhoods in and around Brightwater for the loss of green space, habitat disruption, traffic and other issues. The county purchased the Wellington golf course for \$9.7 million in January 2012, and spent approximately \$800K to develop the current Master Plan.

The County expects to raise additional funds to complete the project (not paid for by Brightwater funds); maintenance costs for this elaborate design would be the responsibility of the County and all of us taxpayers — only partially offset by usage fees.

The County has spent in excess of \$10 million, but has yet to produce a formal needs analysis or summary of input from a majority of the community about features they would like and use in any park design. Few of us would spend over \$10 million without clearly demonstrating a need and a future use for any building project.

We have not seen estimates for maintenance of the proposed complex. Poor planning could force tax increases or a poorly maintained complex (which would be) a dangerous and unsightly addition to our neighborhood.

You cannot compensate for loss of green space, habitat disruption and traffic issues by building a sports complex that destroys green space and creates more traffic issues, in a small neighborhood on a hill.

It is condescending for Tom Tiegen to say that we should try his park design for 2 years, and then we'll like it.

This park needs to be designed with real input from the neighborhoods around Brightwater, to ensure that residents in the 4 mile radius are compensated, and the resulting park is suited to the community.

T.S.