

CITY OF PORT ORCHARD

Office of the Mayor

CITY HALL • 216 Prospect Street, Port Orchard, WA 98366
(360) 876-4407 • FAX (360) 895-9029

September 2, 2008

To: The Residents of McCormick Woods
From: The City of Port Orchard

RE: Annexation Update

I'm aware that many of you are concerned about the pace of the annexation effort and are of the opinion that not enough is being done quickly enough to move this process forward. As Mayor, I have shared your concerns and frustrations. Let me assure you that both myself, and the City Council are committed to making the annexation a reality sometime in early 2009.

With keeping all of you "in the loop" in mind, we have added a new section to the City's Web site, specifically designed to provide access to all the documents related to the McCormick Woods annexation process. It includes the City's annexation application materials, a complete listing and timetable of City documents available for download, and links to both the Kitsap County and the McCormick Home Owners Association Web sites. The City will update the site as new documents become available, and we anticipate it will serve as the central communication point for all parties interested in the annexation effort. You can find it by visiting www.cityofportorchard.us/MW_Annexation.htm.

At this time, I am very pleased to report that after months of negotiations, in a recent meeting between myself, Commissioner Jan Angel, Councilman John Clauson, City Development Director James Weaver, and county staff, the City, and Kitsap County successfully came to agreement on most major annexation issues, and a draft Inter-Local Agreement outlining the annexation terms is being drawn up for approval by our City Council and the County Commissioners.

There are still some key issues that need to be addressed before going forward, and we are in the process of resolving those as well. Specifically at issue is the adoption of an Impact Fee Ordinance by the City, complete with a schedule of fees, along with a satisfactory resolution of the proposed park issue, and the transportation element, which includes widening of Old Clifton Road and intersection upgrades.

We are evaluating a proposed Impact Fee schedule and awaiting input from the South Kitsap School District. Once the district provides its numbers, we will move forward to adopt Impact Fees as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan update, which we will submit to the State before the end of this year.

As far as the park issue is concerned, there are a number of options to be considered. The County has agreed to transfer both the land, and the \$643,000 it has in escrow for the park, to the City. The problem however, is that a high-quality, 65-acre park simply can't be developed for that figure. It will take substantially more, which is partly why the County hasn't moved forward on development. One option is using that money as the required match and applying for grant funding for development; or simply developing that portion of the property that can be developed for the money on hand, with additional improvements and upgrades to take place as funding becomes available.

The transportation element as outlined in the original development agreement with the County is going to be the single most difficult issue to resolve. The County wants the City to assume this obligation.

The price tag for the projects in question is approximately \$7 million. Neither the City nor the County has this money on hand, nor is it budgeted. For either of us to move that element forward will require identifying multiple funding sources in an atmosphere of diminishing availability of federal and state transportation dollars. However we are both committed to finding an equitable solution, and I'm confident that will happen.

One additional factor you need to be aware of is that recently, in the expanded Urban Growth Area portion of its updated Comprehensive Plan, the City of Bremerton identified McCormick Woods as its next annexation target. Its stand-alone Urban Growth Area contiguous to McCormick Woods legally allows this. What this means to you, is that McCormick Woods could become a part of Bremerton by a simple majority vote of its existing citizens. *Residents of McCormick Woods could have absolutely no voice - or vote - in the process of being annexed into Bremerton.*

While Bremerton will face the same financial and infrastructure issues Port Orchard has already negotiated with Kitsap County, as residents of Bremerton, your 50 percent water surcharge will remain in place. Police protection and public safety will become serious issues as well. The simple fact is Port Orchard is geographically positioned to deliver *much* shorter response times than either Bremerton or the Sheriff's Department, which Bremerton may contract with to provide law enforcement.

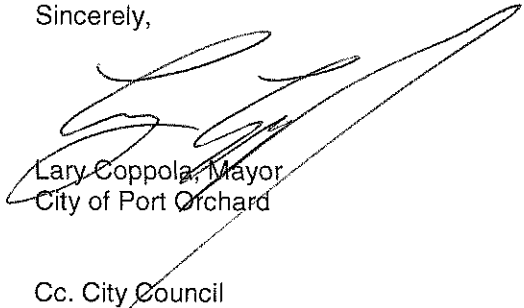
Obviously, considering Bremerton's aggressive expansionism as illustrated by the annexations of the Port of Bremerton and SKIA, you can only wonder what it must have in mind for the long term future of McCormick Woods. While Bremerton hasn't shared its intentions, I can assure you it wouldn't take such a blatant action of that magnitude without already having conceived a plan for you.

Finally, your voice will be much smaller in Bremerton than in Port Orchard, and less likely to be heard, or your opinions seriously considered when competing with Bremerton's other, more important priorities. These include the ongoing downtown redevelopment, which has already siphoned off more than \$390 million according to Bremerton's own recently published *Economic Revitalization Report*.

Port Orchard offers you the opportunity to decide your own fate – willingly vote to become part of a smaller city that welcomes you and wants you and your participation – a place where your voice will be heard and your opinion will count - or be annexed into Bremerton with no say at all in the matter. That decision is up to you.

So this brings you up to date on the status of the annexation process. As you can see, significant progress has been made, and more is on the horizon. Myself, the City Council, and Commissioner Jan Angel are all strongly committed to bringing this entire process to a positive resolution and I'm confident we'll be successful. As Mayor, I'm personally looking forward to welcoming each and every one of you as residents of Port Orchard in 2009.

Sincerely,



Larry Coppola, Mayor
City of Port Orchard

Cc. City Council