

Solutions

Owen Wozniak, Trust for Public Land

More public support to community-based organizations

Pros

- Engages the community
- Responds to needs at a neighborhood scale
- Often delivers a lot of value for the money

Cons

- Program quality and capacity of CBO's may vary or fluctuate
- Tends to reward higher capacity organizations and partnerships, sometimes exacerbating inequities
- Not as directly accountable to the voters as government staff
- Difficult to sustain, politically and organizationally
- Very difficult to address system issues through this approach, e.g. improving connectivity

An East Multnomah County parks district

Pros

- Tax base independent of other municipal governments
- Elected board dedicated to parks
- Good track record nationally
- The “gold standard” of parks programming and parks provision

Cons

- Requires establishing a new governing body and tax base
- Opens many questions of governance viz. existing park assets
- Does not “move the needles” on resources unless the tax rate is also higher than status quo
- Tax rate is permanent; the level of voter tax tolerance effectively locks in a district’s potential to provide a given level of service – if current tax tolerance is low, the potential of a district to improve upon status quo is limited

A joint East Multnomah – Clackamas County parks district

Pros

- Economies of scale geographically
- Could create a more diverse portfolio of programs and facilities

- Could boost regional connectivity and improve economic competitiveness of East Multnomah County

Cons

- Less local control - accountability is spread over a larger area
- Would require voters in both counties to approve
- Major political hurdles at both the city and county levels would have to be cleared before citizens could even vote on such a proposal
- Same permanent tax rate issues as above apply here

Stronger city parks departments

Pros

- Builds on what exists
- High level of local control
- Minimizes cross-jurisdictional political hurdles
- Clearest route to political success

Cons

- Parks must compete with fire, public safety
- Quality will vary from city to city
- Does not address the scale question – are East County jurisdictions big enough to meaningfully program their assets?

No new or stronger programs – keep things how they are

Pros

- No new taxes or fees
- Recognizes that East County is actually doing pretty well given the minimal level of investment

Cons

- No new programs or facilities
- Missed opportunities to leverage private and other public resources
- Long term public health, livability, and economic competitiveness concerns outweigh short term savings

An East County Parks Conservancy

Pros

- Private organization can raise funds and build corporate partnerships
- Can scale up as track record develops – start with one park and move up from there
- Can innovate with programming and use event revenue as a way to fund park O&M and nonrevenue generating programs
- Can manage specific parks

Cons

- Fund raising will compete with existing NGOs/charities
- Potential to exacerbate inequities as certain neighborhoods or parks benefit
- Most successful parks conservancies operate at a larger scale

Other Private Sector Partnerships – Are these being fully exploited?

Such as:

- Health insurers and hospitals
- Tourism and active sports sectors
- Major employers

Can include:

- Concessions
- Public Access Agreements
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Adopt-A-Park