

From: "The Open Space Council" <info@openspacestl.org>
Subject: **Protect St. Louis County Parks!**
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To: jschaper@rhtrav.com



Protect St. Louis County Parks!

Dear Fellow Park Lovers-

Last week our St. Louis County Parks were threatened with closure and possible sale to the highest bidder. We must protect these vital resources that were created to provide St. Louis County residents and visitors access to our great outdoors. Please protect your future and your children's future.

Here are some ways you can help and an estimated timeline:

1. Contact St. Louis County elected officials by phone, email, and letter or to schedule a meeting and make your voice heard. There are 7 Council Members and 1 County Executive, Charlie Dooley.
2. Sign the citizen driven petition "Save St. Louis County Parks".
3. Attend St. Louis County Council meetings as an audience member or speaker. **November 15th** is the most critical date for you to attend: County Council Chambers, 1st Floor, 41 S. Central Ave. in Clayton, MO 63105.
4. Attend the Rally to Save Our Parks at 4:30 P.M. on Nov. 15th at the County Council Chambers. Wear green, bring noise-makers, and get ready to tell the Council we won't stand for their proposal.
5. Write letters to the editor of the Post Dispatch or your local newspaper. Email letters@post-dispatch.com.
6. Share this information with friends, family, neighbors, and members of organizations you belong to and ask them to get involved.

Time Line: Arrive at least 30 minutes prior & complete a speaker card to speak. Agendas and meeting times are subject to change. Please check [here](#).

<u>Council Meeting Date</u>	<u>Meeting Time Tentative</u>	<u>Schedule/Agenda</u>
Tuesday, November 15	6PM	County Council Mtg-Public Hearing on Proposed cuts & budget. Website says all speakers will be heard.

Monday, November 21	6PM	County Council Mtg-Potential 1st Reading/vote on proposed budget.
Tuesday, November 29	6PM	County Council Mtg-Potential 2nd Reading/vote on proposed budget.
Tuesday, December 6	6PM	County Council Mtg.
Tuesday, December 13	6PM	County Council Mtg-Potential Final Reading/vote on proposed budget.
Monday, December 19	3PM	Last Meeting for 2011.

A large number of citizens have expressed disdain for the proposal to close St. Louis County public parks. Read the latest article on the growing opposition [here](#).

Here are a few recommendations that could serve to resolve the critical funding issue for St. Louis County Parks:

- **Ask the St. Louis County Council to immediately enact an ordinance that would restrict the sale or disposal of public park land** without a majority vote of the people. Many municipalities, like Kirkwood, already have a similar ordinance so should St. Louis County. Once sold, our park land may be impossible to get back.
- As proposed, the bulk of the budget cuts are disproportionately and unfairly taken from the parks department while some departments get increases. **Ask the St. Louis County Council to spread the cuts over other departments and shrink county government as a whole.**
- **Ask the St. Louis County Council to put a dedicated park sales tax on the ballot for voters in the next possible election.** This process may take 12-24 months to generate funding but could solve a long term problem.
- **Ask the St. Louis County Council to vote NOW to increase an existing dedicated park maintenance real estate tax from the current level of \$.05 to \$.07.** This does not require a vote of the people. It could provide \$4M a year but might take a minimum of 12 months to generate funding.

Concerned citizens have already stated:

- "A 2008 study shows that 15 millions people used the St. Louis County park system including historic sites. What other business in the County can claim those kinds of numbers?"
- "Parks are economic engines, pathways to building healthy communities; they enhance property values and are the field of dreams for families and children."
- "I have read the proposal to close and sell off county parks, noting the budget figures for the various departments, and how the parks budget alone is singled out for evisceration to the point of literally treating precious and irreplaceable park land as a bank of capital to fund other ongoing operations. Now we have a government in Clayton prepared to contemplate selling off parks to fund its own growth and operation."

* Please use this information as a guideline to construct your own comments to the St. Louis County Council and the County Executive. Please do not forward this correspondence to them. Many voices will be needed to reverse this course. You are encouraged to forward this email to your friends & colleagues.



*Want more information?
Contact us!

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