

February 21, 2019

The Honorable Rod Dembowski
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
C O U R T H O U S E

Dear Councilmember Dembowski:

This letter transmits an ordinance for a measure to be placed on the August 6, 2019, primary election ballot. The measure replaces the current parks levy which expires at the end of 2019, and enables King County's parks and trails system to remain clean, safe and open and makes strategic investments as our region grows.

The legislation brings this ballot measure to King County voters, authorizing a property tax levy lid lift for the purposes of maintaining and operating King County's parks system, acquiring open space, developing regional trails and increasing access to parks and recreation for all King County residents. It also provides funding to King County cities for local parks and trail development and operations, to the Woodland Park Zoo for environmental and education programs and to the Seattle Aquarium for its new Ocean Pavilion.

Specifically, the ordinance will accomplish the following through the replacement levy measure:

- Take care of King County's extensive system of 200 parks, 175 miles of regional trails and 28,000 acres of open space;
- Grow, connect and steward regional open space natural lands and urban green spaces, linking habitat and providing recreation opportunities;
- Continue to develop the Regional Trails System (RTS) and improve mobility by completing essential trail connections and maintaining existing trails; and
- Make parks and recreation opportunities more accessible for all King County residents to enjoy.

The legislation also furthers the goals of key County plans and initiatives as follows:

- The legislation furthers the King County Strategic Plan goals of Healthy Environment, Mobility and Health and Human Services by acquiring and connecting open space for

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preservation, increasing mobility options with the RTS development and improving the health of our communities by providing better access to parks and recreation.

- The legislation furthers the King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative goals of investing upstream and where needs are greatest and in community partnerships by investing capital, operating and programming dollars in parks that serve communities of opportunity and creating a targeted Equity Grant Program to organize, build capacity and/or apply for grants to increase access to and use of green space and public recreation facilities for underserved communities.
- The legislation furthers the Strategic Climate Action Plan goal to manage and restore parks and other natural lands in ways that maximize biological carbon storage and increase resilience to changing climate conditions by acquiring and stewarding healthy forests and open space.

In developing the legislation, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) engaged numerous stakeholder groups including parks user groups, King County cities and community groups. An online customer satisfaction survey was also completed by close to 2,000 residents. DNRP incorporated this stakeholder input into the legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of this ordinance. This important legislation will help King County preserve and protect our existing parks and trails system which King County residents have already invested in, and make strategic investments to meet our region's future needs. Attached are the King County Parks Capital Program and Parks Operating Financial Plan for reference.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kathryn Terry, Acting Division Director of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4526.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers
ATTN: Carolyn Busch, Chief of Staff
Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Kathryn Terry, Acting Division Director, Parks and Recreation Division, DNRP