

**King County****Dow Constantine**

King County Executive

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July 31, 2023

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

Dear Councilmember Upthegrove:

This letter transmits a report from the King County Conservation Futures Advisory Committee (Committee) with recommended funding allocations for the coming year, as required by King County Code 26.12.010.C2. The Committee's funding recommendations will be incorporated into the Executive proposed Second Omnibus later this year. Enclosed is a letter from Catherine Gockel, Chair of the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee.

The Committee reviewed applications from various cities, King County, and eligible nonprofit organizations for Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) levy funding, and applications from the County for King County Parks Levy open space acquisition funding. The report documents the Committee's recommendations for the allocations of these two funding sources.

At the time of that the Committee made its allocations, the King County Council was considering proposed Ordinance 2023-0183 which would reduce the required match from 50 percent to 25 percent of project costs to help reduce the barrier that match funding presents and accelerate the pace of acquisitions. Because the Council had not taken up this legislation at the time the Committee made its allocations, the report includes two sets of recommendations at the 25 percent and 50 percent match levels, should the Council choose to approve the reduced match requirement. The Committee recommends a total allocation of \$67 million at the status quo 50 percent match level, or \$109 million at the reduced 25 percent match level.

The report recommends funding for a wide variety of projects throughout King County to provide benefits including habitat protection, forest and farmland preservation, passive recreation opportunities, regional trail connections, and urban greenspaces. Many projects garnered community support letters and demonstrated community engagement. Seven projects are recommended for match waiver awards as they provide open space to historically underserved communities.

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July 31, 2023

Page 2

The CFT and Parks Levy open space acquisitions support the Strategic Climate Action Plan goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions/forests and agriculture by preserving forest, farms, and open spaces throughout the county, and by providing opportunities to restore forest health and plant additional trees toward the three million trees goal. In addition, the match waiver projects support the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by creating additional open spaces to serve populations that currently lack access to open space in their neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration of this report. The important work discussed in the report will preserve parks, open spaces, and natural resources throughout King County and its communities.

If your staff have questions, please contact Josh Baldi, Division Director in the Water and Land Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-9440.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers
 ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff
 Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council
Catherine Gockel, Chair, King County Conservation Futures Advisory Committee
Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive
Mina Hashemi, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive
Christie True, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
Warren Jimenez, Division Director, Parks and Recreation Division, DNRP
Josh Baldi, Division Director, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD), DNRP
Ingrid Lundin, Program Manager, WLRD, DNRP