



## King County

### Dow Constantine

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May 17, 2022

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

Dear Councilmember Balducci:

This letter transmits a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, adopt the King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails and Natural Areas 2022 Update (Plan). The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) requires that King County Council adopt the Plan to make the Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) eligible for grant funding.

The RCO is a state agency that manages multiple grant programs that provide funding support for outdoor recreation and the protection of wildlife habitat, forests, and farmland. Between 2016 and 2021, Parks received nearly \$3.4 million from RCO for parks, trails, and open space acquisition projects. The proposed Ordinance has no fiscal impact.

The proposed Ordinance will adopt the updated Plan as a framework to guide the acquisition, planning, development, stewardship, maintenance, and management of King County's complex system of 205 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 32,000 acres of open space. Specifically, the proposed Ordinance will update the Plan's goals, objectives, and financial information to align with the voter-approved 2020-2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy (Ordinance 18890). In addition, the Plan updates King County's current open space inventory.

In developing the 2020-2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy, DNRP completed a comprehensive public involvement effort in 2018 and 2019. DNRP incorporated that input into this Plan, along with relevant community feedback gleaned through other King County planning efforts (e.g., developing the 2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan update and preparing sub-area community needs lists). In addition, to inform this Plan, DNRP conducted customer and partner online surveys and convened focus groups to better understand community perceptions of park and trail safety. The draft Plan was available for public review per the State Environmental Policy Act between February 2 and 16, 2022. DNRP also held a virtual public information session on February 2.

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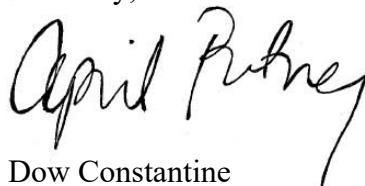
The Plan advances several of King County's key environmental initiatives, including the Land Conservation Initiative and Clean Water Healthy Habitat, by describing how Parks' efforts to protect and steward natural lands aligns with these overarching frameworks. The Plan also supports King County's long-term capital program to expand and enhance the regional trails network.

The proposed legislation furthers the healthy environment goal of the King County Strategic Plan by providing policies and practices that advance open space protection, restoration, and stewardship. These efforts result in a growing inventory of healthy forests and ecosystems that are crucial to climate resiliency. Similarly, the legislation supports the Strategic Climate Action Plan by supporting efforts to protect, sustain, and grow forests that sequester carbon, and maintain and extend a Regional Trails System offering transportation alternatives to gas-powered vehicles. The Plan furthers the King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan by emphasizing equitable access to parks and recreational opportunities across King County.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will help King County residents understand how the Parks and Recreation Division of DNRP plans, develops, stewards, and manages its complex system.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Warren Jimenez, Director of the Parks and Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4525.

Sincerely,

 for

Dow Constantine  
King County Executive

Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

Shannon Braddock, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Karan Gill, Deputy 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