



Legislation Text

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Clerk 06/17/2021

A MOTION relating to the acquisition of parcels along SE Renton Maple Valley Road.

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.010 "declares that it is in the best interest of the state to maintain, preserve, conserve and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands for the production of food, fiber and forest crops and to assure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens," and

WHEREAS, parks, natural areas and trails contribute to a high quality of life, and a robust system of parks and trails provides physical, social and mental health benefits to individuals and environmental benefits and cultural resource protection through open space conservation, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.210 authorizes the county to acquire property rights "to protect, preserve, maintain, improve, restore, limit the future use of, or other otherwise conserve, selected open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timber land," and

WHEREAS, property right acquired under this authorization are defined as conservation futures, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.230 authorizes the use of a property tax levy to fund the acquisition of conservation futures and the maintenance and operation of acquired properties, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.240 authorizes counties to establish a special conservation futures fund to which the levy proceeds are credited, and

WHEREAS, King County has established a conservation futures tax levy and fund, and

WHEREAS, King County is required to establish a process to help ensure, over time, that the

distribution of the tax levy is throughout the county, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 2.16.045 states that the water and land resources division of the department of natural resources and parks is responsible for planning, site selection, financing, acquisition, project budget management and purchasing fee and less than fee interests for the county park, open space, trails, agriculture, forestry and other natural resources acquisition programs, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. chapter 26.12 establishes an annual process for distribution of the tax levy to acquire open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat and trail rights-of-way, and

WHEREAS, the process includes an advisory committee that makes project and funding allocation recommendations for each project to the executive, and

WHEREAS, the executive makes project and funding recommendations as part of the budget process, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.010 allows the council to adopt a motion providing direction to the conservation futures advisory committee on priorities for evaluating project applications, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.025 establishes criteria for conservation futures project selection, which are "wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve; salmon habitat and aquatic resources; scenic resources; community separator; historic or cultural resources; urban passive-use natural area or greenbelt; park, open space or natural corridor addition; and passive recreation opportunity in an area with unmet needs; and projects that seek to redress historic disparities in access to or health benefits of open space in opportunity areas. Additional criteria may include: educational or interpretive opportunity; impact to open space resources; feasibility, including ownership complexity, a willing seller or sellers or community support; partnerships; if the property identified in an adopted comprehensive plan, park open space, habitat, cultural resource or community plan; transfer of development rights participation; stewardship and maintenance; regional significance; adopted financial policies; and any other criteria consistent with chapter 84.34 RCW," and Motion 15513 gives additional detail on project eligibility criteria, and

WHEREAS, the SE Renton Maple Valley Road properties provide a community separator by buffering the Maple Valley Heights residential neighborhood from the Maplewood Heights and Maple Hills residential neighborhoods, as well as from the noise of SE Renton Maple Valley Road, and

WHEREAS, acquisition of the SE Renton Maple Valley Road properties would add to a park, open space and natural corridor by connecting the Cedar Grove natural area to the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex, which consists of over nine hundred twenty-five acres of contiguous protected open space in an area that contains over five miles of recreational trails and provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, and

WHEREAS, the SE Renton Maple Valley Road properties provide a scenic resource by providing a view of the valley carved by the Cedar river, and

WHEREAS, failing to acquire the SE Renton Maple Valley Road properties would have an impact to open space resources and further development of these parcels would preclude use of that property for open space purposes and could negatively affect the quality of the surrounding properties for open space use, and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures advisory committee's consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process one or more projects that include the purchase or property rights for the purpose of open space corridor addition, community separator, wildlife habitat and scenic resources along SE Renton Maple Valley Road, including parcel numbers 1923069026, 1923069013, 1923069011, 2423059020, 1923069016 and 1923069017.

B. The department of natural resources and parks, water and land resources division, is requested to work with landowners and jurisdictions in which properties reflecting the priority is located, in submitting project proposals that meet the priority, as part of the 2022 conservation futures tax levy funding selection process provided for in K.C.C. 26.12.010.