



Legislation Text

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Clerk 01/07/2021

A MOTION providing direction to the conservation futures advisory committee on priorities for allocating conservation futures tax levy proceeds.

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 ensure 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, 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. 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 provides: "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, Soos Creek park is located within a wildlife habitat network corridor that provides habitat for over one hundred twenty bird species, including the red tailed hawk and the great blue heron, and other animals such as black bears, cougars, bobcats, red foxes and coyotes, and

WHEREAS, Soos Creek park serves as a community separator, provides passive recreational opportunities, and provides salmon habitat and aquatic resources, and

WHEREAS, addition of forested open space properties adjacent to Soos Creek park would add to the natural corridor, would protect wildlife habitat, would bolster the park's function as a community separator and

would provide greater access to the park for residents living on its east side, and

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex 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

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex serves as a community separator and provides salmon habitat and aquatic resources, as well as habitat for deer, coyotes, river otters and bears, and

WHEREAS, addition of open space properties to the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex would protect wildlife habitat and bolster the complex's function as a community separator, and

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey Park parcels proposed for acquisition include a former Nike missile silo network, which is a site of historical significance and would provide an educational or interpretive opportunity for those enjoying passive recreation in the park, and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy proceeds for purchase of property rights in the area of the Soos Creek park and the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex for wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, a community separator, or addition to an existing open space area meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025;

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 includes the purchase or property rights for the purpose of wildlife habitat, aquatic resources, community separator function or open space system addition in or near Soos creek park, including parcel numbers 3423059062 and 3323059034, and the Spring Lake-Lake Desire park-McGarvey park open space complex, including parcel number 2523059086, in the unincorporated Fairwood community, to preserve the existing open space.

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 this priority is located, in submitting project proposals that meet this priority, as part of the 2021 conservation futures tax levy funding selection process provided for in K.C.C. 26.12.010.