

RESOLUTION NO. 2023-21

A RESOLUTION OF THE BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL ENCOURAGING THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE CITY TO VOTE "YES" ON CITY OF BELLINGHAM PROPOSITION 2023-02, THE GREENWAYS 5 LEVY, AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 7, 2023

WHEREAS, the voters of the City have approved four Greenways levies since 1990 to provide funding to acquire property and make improvements to parks, open space, natural areas, and trails throughout the City; and

WHEREAS, Greenways have become an essential part of the Bellingham landscape and outdoor culture by securing over 3,000 acres of public access to mountains, shorelines, and forests through its acquisition program; and

WHEREAS, important landmarks, recreational opportunities, and habitat are protected in Greenways acquisitions of Galbraith Mountain, Locust Beach, Woodstock Farm, Hundred Acre Wood, The Pier at Little Squalicum Park; and

WHEREAS, development of public spaces is an important component to the Greenways program and recent projects funded by Greenways include Squalicum Creek Park, Waypoint Park, and Cordata Park; and

WHEREAS, Greenways funds have been used to develop or improve more than 23 miles of trails along Whatcom Creek, South Bay, the Interurban, Railroad Trail, Connelly Creek Nature Area, and other areas throughout Bellingham; and

WHEREAS, since the creation of the Greenways program, the Greenways Advisory Committee has provided dedicated citizen oversight of the use of Greenways levy funds, ensuring well-informed decision making, accountability, and maintenance of public trust; and

WHEREAS, the City Council previously adopted the 2020 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, demonstrating the ongoing need and public support for dedicated funding to create and preserve a healthy, equitable, inclusive, and resilient open space, park, trail, and recreation system; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also adopted the 2022 Greenways Strategic Plan identifying needed greenway, park, and trail expansion and development projects and additional land acquisition needs for parks, open space, and critical trail connections to expand the Greenways system; and

WHEREAS, acquisition of trail corridors, open space, and natural areas are intended to account for roughly a third of the funds brought in by the proposed Greenways 5 levy; and

WHEREAS, development projects intended to be funded by the proposed Greenways 5 levy are Salish Landing, Boulevard Park shoreline enhancement, Hundred Acre Wood restoration, East Bakerview Park, and Sunset Pond trail loop; and

WHEREAS, stewardship and maintenance of existing parks, open space, natural areas, and trails is supported by the Greenways levy; and

WHEREAS, the Greenways levy funds community work parties, school stewardship programs, and other park volunteer programs responsible for bringing the community together at parks, trails, community gardens, and restoration sites; and

WHEREAS, numerous citizens, local organizations, and civic leaders have expressed support for the continuation of the Greenways levy; and

WHEREAS, the adverse effects of climate change are apparent and growing, and the Greenways program mitigates climate change impacts and increases community climate resilience in support of the City's adopted Climate Protection Action Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes the value of Greenways funds being an eligible source for responding to threats posed by climate change; and

WHEREAS, the City Council also recognizes the need to provide funds for the maintenance, development, and acquisition of the City's existing and future greenways, open space sites, parks, park facilities, and trails; and

WHEREAS, the City Council recognizes that the uninterrupted continuation of the Greenways levy is important, will allow the City to maintain and improve the Greenways Program, and is in the best interest of all community members; and

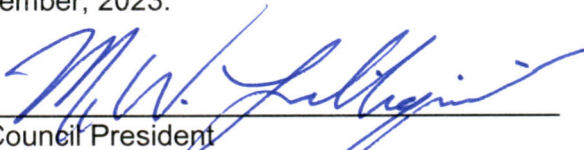
WHEREAS, the Greenways IV levy expires at the end of 2023, and voters must decide how to shape the future of the City's Greenways system and whether to continue the legacy of funding Greenways; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a public hearing on September 25, 2023, to provide members of the Council and the public an opportunity to express their views on City of Bellingham Proposition 2023-02, the Greenways 5 levy, as required by RCW 42.17A.555; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

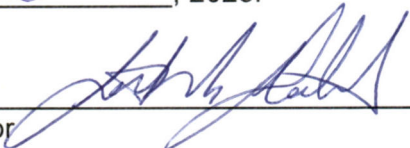
The Bellingham City Council encourages the qualified electors of the City to vote "yes" on City of Bellingham Proposition 2023-02, the Greenways 5 levy, at the general election to be held on November 7, 2023.

PASSED by the Council this 25th day of September, 2023.



Council President

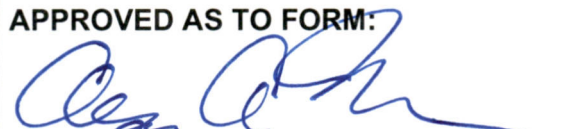
APPROVED by me this 11 day of October, 2023.



Mayor

ATTEST: 

Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


Office of the City Attorney