



King County

1200 King County
Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Meeting Agenda Regional Policy Committee

*Councilmembers: Pete von Reichbauer, Chair;
Rod Dembowski, Girmay Zahilay
Alternate: Sarah Perry*

*Sound Cities Association: Nancy Backus, Auburn, Vice Chair; Jay Arnold, Kirkland;
Angela Birney, Redmond; Armondo Pavone, Renton
Alternates: Dana Ralph, Kent; Debra Srebnik, Kenmore*

*City of Seattle: Cathy Moore, Alexis Mercedes Rinck
Alternates: Sara Nelson, Mark Solomon*

*Lead Staff: Miranda Leskinen (206-263-5783)
Committee Clerk: Angelica Calderon (206-477-0874)*

9:00 AM

Thursday, April 3, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

SPECIAL MEETING

Hybrid Meetings: Attend the King County Council committee meetings in person in Council Chambers (Room 1001), 516 3rd Avenue in Seattle, or through remote access. Details on how to attend and/or to provide comment remotely are listed below.

Pursuant to K.C.C. 1.24.035 A. and F., this meeting is also noticed as a meeting of the Metropolitan King County Council, whose agenda is limited to the committee business. In this meeting only the rules and procedures applicable to committees apply and not those applicable to full council meetings.

HOW TO PROVIDE PUBLIC COMMENT: The Regional Policy Committee values community input and looks forward to hearing from you on agenda items.

The Committee will accept public comment on items on today's agenda in writing. You may do so by submitting your written comments to kcccomitt@kingcounty.gov. If your comments are submitted before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting, your comments will be distributed to the committee members and appropriate staff prior to the meeting.

	<p>Sign language and interpreter services can be arranged given sufficient notice (206-848-0355). TTY Number - TTY 711.</p> <p>Council Chambers is equipped with a hearing loop, which provides a wireless signal that is picked up by a hearing aid when it is set to 'T' (Telecoil) setting.</p>	
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HOW TO WATCH/LISTEN TO THE MEETING REMOTELY: There are three ways to watch or listen to the meeting:

- 1) Stream online via this link www.kingcounty.gov/kctv or input the link web address into your web browser.
- 2) Watch King County TV on Comcast channel 22 and 322(HD) and Astound Broadband Channels 22 and 711(HD)
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Dial: 1 253 215 8782
 Webinar ID: 827 1647 4590

To help us manage the meeting, please use the Livestream or King County TV options listed above, if possible, to watch or listen to the meeting.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call**
3. **Approval of Minutes P. 4**
Minutes of March 12, 2025 meeting.



To show a PDF of the written materials for an agenda item, click on the agenda item below.

Briefing

4. [Briefing No. 2025-B0048](#) **p. 7**
 Update on Cedar Hills
Michael Gonzales, Teamsters 174
John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, (DNRP)
Chris Stubbs, Director, Solid Waste Division, (DNRP)

Discussion and Possible Action

5. [Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0070](#) **p. 8**
 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the qualified electors of King County at a special election to be held in King County on August 5, 2025, of a proposition authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a period of six consecutive years, at a total rate of not more than \$0.2351 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in the first year and

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limiting annual levy increases by the King County inflation plus population index published by the King County office of economic and financial analysis, or the chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever is greater in years two through six for the purpose of maintaining and operating King County's open space system; improving parks, recreation, access, and mobility in King County by acquiring lands and continuing to develop and support parks, recreation facilities, and regional trails; improving parks and trails in and acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts, towns and cities in King County; funding environmental education, maintenance and conservation programs at the Woodland Park Zoo; funding environmental education, maintenance and conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding development, maintenance, and programming for Seattle's Waterfront park; funding environmental and climate stewardship and education at Pacific Science Center; funding a capital project at Memorial Stadium; and funding capital improvements at public pools, for all King County residents.

Sponsors: Dembowski and Zahilay

Sherrie Hsu, Jake Tracy, and Brandi Paribello, Council staff

All versions of Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070 are before the committee for consideration.

6. [Proposed Motion No. 2025-0077](#) **p. 8**



A MOTION related to a property tax levy for 2026 through 2031 for the purpose of: maintaining and operating King County's open space system; improving parks, recreation, access, and mobility in King County by acquiring lands and continuing to develop and support parks, recreation facilities, and regional trails; improving parks and trails in and acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts, towns, and cities in King County; funding environmental education, maintenance, and conservation programs at the Woodland Park Zoo; funding environmental education, maintenance and conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding environmental and climate stewardship and education at Pacific Science Center; funding development, maintenance, and programming for Seattle's Waterfront park; funding a capital project at Memorial Stadium; and funding for capital improvements at public pools, for all King County residents.

Sponsors: Dembowski

Sherrie Hsu, Jake Tracy, and Brandi Paribello, Council staff

All versions of Proposed Motion 2025-0077 are before the committee for consideration.

Adjournment

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Meeting Minutes

Regional Policy Committee

*Councilmembers: Pete von Reichbauer, Chair;
Rod Dembowski, Girmay Zahilay
Alternate: Sarah Perry*

*Sound Cities Association: Nancy Backus, Auburn, Vice Chair;
Jay Arnold, Kirkland;
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Alternates: Sara Nelson, Mark Solomon*

*Lead Staff: Miranda Leskinen (206-263-5783)
Committee Clerk: Angelica Calderon (206-477-0874)*

3:00 PM

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

REVISED AGENDA

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1. Call to Order

Chair von Reichbauer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m

2. Roll Call

Present: 9 - Arnold, Backus, Birney, Dembowski, Moore, Pavone, von Reichbauer, Mercedes Rinck and Ralph

Excused: 1 - Zahilay

3. Approval of Minutes

Mayor Backus moved approval of the February 12, 2025 meeting minutes. There being no objections, the minutes were approved.

Discussion and Possible Action

4. Proposed Ordinance No. 2025-0073

AN ORDINANCE amending the King County Doors Open Program implementation plan, required by Ordinance 19710, Section 9; amending Ordinance 19868, Section 1, as amended, and repealing Ordinance 19868, Attachment B.

Sponsors: Balducci

Gene Paul, Council staff, briefed the Committee on the legislation and answered questions from the members. Brian Carter, Executive Director, 4Culture, also addressed the committee and answered questions from the members.

This item was expedited to the March 18, 2025 Council Agenda.

Due to the design of the legislative tracking software used to produce the proceedings, the vote on this item is misreported. The correct vote is:

Votes: Yes: 9 von Reichbauer, Dembowski, Arnold, Backus, Birney, Pavone and Rinck
 No: 0
 Excused: 2 Moore and Zahilay

A motion was made by Mayor Backus that this Ordinance be Recommended Do Pass. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Arnold, Backus, Birney, Dembowski, Pavone, von Reichbauer, Mercedes Rinck and Ralph

Excused: 3 - Moore and Zahilay

Briefing

5. Briefing No. 2025-B0037

Parks Levy Renewal Proposal Briefing

Sherrie Hsu, Jake Tracy, and Brandi Paribello, Council staff, briefed the committee and answered questions from the members.

This matter was Presented

Other Business

There was no further business to come before the committee.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____

 Clerk's Signature



King County

Regional Policy Committee

April 3, 2025

**Agenda Item No. 4
Briefing No. 2025-B0048**

Update on Cedar Hills

**No Meeting materials for this item will not be available
for the meeting.**



King County

**Metropolitan King County Council
Regional Policy Committee**

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Items:	5-6	Name:	Sherrie Hsu Jake Tracy Brandi Paribello
Proposed No.:	2025-0070.2 2025-0077.2	Date:	April 3, 2025

SUBJECT

Proposed Ordinance (PO) 2025-0070 would place on the August 5, 2025, ballot a proposition authorizing a six-year property tax levy that would generate approximately \$1.5 billion in total over the six-year period.

Proposed Motion (PM) 2025-0077 would adopt a funding allocation plan for the proposed 2026-2031 levy.

SUMMARY

Proposed Ordinance (PO) 2025-0070 would place on the August 5, 2025, ballot a proposition authorizing a six-year property tax levy that would generate approximately \$1.5 billion in total over the six-year period. In comparison, the current 2020-2025 Park Levy is expected to generate approximately \$851 million over the six-year period, based on OEFA’s August 2024 forecast.¹

The levy would support:

- King County Parks operations and maintenance;
- King County Parks capital program;
- King County cities, towns, and park districts;
- Woodland Park Zoo;
- Seattle Aquarium;
- Seattle Waterfront Park;
- Memorial Stadium; and
- Parks Levy Grants and Community Partnership Grants.

¹ The current levy generated \$115.7 million in 2020, \$253.6 million in 2021-2022, an estimated \$307.9 million in 2023-2024, and is expected to generate \$169.8 million in 2025.

The initial levy rate is proposed at 24.43 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV), with a proposed limit factor based on inflation growth² plus population growth. For the owner of a King County single-family home with a median 2024 AV of \$844,000, an initial levy rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV would cost this owner approximately \$206.19 annually (\$17.18 per month) in property tax in 2026. This would be approximately \$39.67 more per year (\$3.31 more per month) than the current levy for the same homeowner.

Proposed Motion (PM) 2025-0077 would adopt a funding allocation plan for the proposed 2026-2031 levy.

The staff report identifies policy issues for consideration by the Council and committee members.

The proposed levy was transmitted to the Council on February 11, 2025, and has been dually referred first to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee and second to the Regional Policy Committee.

PO 2025-0070, as amended, and PM 2025-0077, as amended, were passed out of the BFM Committee on March 26, 2025. See the “Summary of Adopted BFM Amendments” section of this staff report for details on the changes made between Versions 1 and 2. Attachment 18 to this staff report also provides this information with corresponding changes to the ordinance and motion shown side-by-side.

If approved by the Council, the levy proposal would be placed before voters at the August 5, 2025, election. The last regular Council meeting at which the Council could act as a non-emergency and with maximum processing time would be April 1, 2025; with minimum processing time, it would be the April 22, 2025, Council meeting. The last regular meeting at which the Council could act as an emergency would be the May 2, 2025, Council meeting.

Updates made since the March 12, 2025 staff report are in blue font.

BACKGROUND

Tax Levies and Levy Lid Lifts in Washington. State law limits a taxing district (e.g., King County) to a 1% increase in regular property taxes per year plus the value of new construction (“the standard limit factor”).³ However, state law provides a mechanism by which taxing districts can exceed this limit – a majority of voters must approve such an increase through a proposition placed on a general or special election ballot.

There are four kinds of levy lid lifts for regular property tax levies, as discussed below.⁴

² Consumer Price Index for wage earners (CPI-W) for Seattle/Tacoma/Bremerton.

³ RCW 84.55.010. The limit also allows an additional dollar amount for AV resulting from new construction and other exceptional cases.

⁴ The following discussion is based on RCW 84.55.050, WAC 458-19-045, and guidance from the Municipal Research and Services Center found at <https://mrsc.org/Home/Explore->

Single-Year Temporary Levy Lid Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The levy lid is increased by more than 1% in the first year and is subject to the standard limit factor in subsequent years. Once the number of years specified in the levy proposition have elapsed, the levy rate returns to what it would have been had the lift never been approved.
Single-Year Permanent Levy Lid Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The levy lid is increased by more than 1% in the first year and is subject to the standard limit factor in all subsequent years.
Multi-Year Temporary Levy Lid Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The levy lid lift states the levy rate for the first year. The levy rate is increased by more than 1% in each of two to six years and is subject to the standard limit factor in subsequent years. Once the number of years specified in the levy proposition have elapsed, the levy rate returns to what it would have been had the lift never been approved.
Multi-Year Permanent Levy Lid Lift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The levy lid is increased by more than 1% in each of two to six years and is subject to the standard limit factor in all subsequent years.

Levy Rate, Levy, and Limit Factor. A levy rate, levy, and limit factor are defined below.

- The *levy rate* is the rate of the property tax, set per \$1,000 AV.
- The *levy* is the total amount of property tax collected.
- The *limit factor* is the amount by which the total levy amount may not exceed in subsequent years. For a multi-year levy lid lift, the limit factor does not have to be the same for each year.

Prorationing. State law⁵ establishes a maximum aggregate property tax rate of \$5.90 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for counties, cities, fire districts, library districts, and certain other junior taxing districts. If a taxing district reaches its statutory rate limitation, that district can only collect the amount of tax revenue that would be produced by that statutory maximum levy rate.

- In other words, if the aggregate of taxing districts exceeds the \$5.90 limit, the tax district's levies would have to be reduced so that the \$5.90 aggregate collection limit is not exceeded.
- Reductions are made in accordance with a district hierarchy established under state law.⁶
- In general, countywide levies are the most senior taxing districts and would be the last to be reduced, or pro-rationed, under state law.⁷

[Topics/Finance/Revenues/Levy-Lid-Lift.aspx](#). In all cases described, levies are subject to statutory maximums as prescribed by state law.

⁵ RCW 84.52.043.

⁶ RCW 84.52.010

Supplantation Considerations. Prior to 2024, a non-supplantation limitation under state law⁸ meant that proceeds from levy lid lifts could only be used for new programs and services under the specific purpose of the levy lid lift as identified in the ballot title; and for existing programs and services, as long as levy money was used to supplement, but not supplant, existing funds. This meant that levy lid lift proceeds could not be used to support services that the county already provided. From 2015 through 2022, there was a moratorium pausing the non-supplantation restriction in counties with a population over 1.5 million – such as King County.⁹

The passage of House Bill 2044 during the 2024 legislation session eliminated this non-supplantation restriction for levies. This means that local governments can now use voter-approved levy lid lifts for ongoing expenses, in addition to new programs and services, that support the levy lid lift's specified purpose.

Property Tax Exemption. State law allows cities and counties the option to exempt eligible senior citizens, veterans with disabilities, and others with disabilities from the regular property tax increase resulting from a levy, subject to meeting eligibility criteria and receiving application approval.¹⁰

History of the Parks Levy. Prior to 2003, the King County parks system relied mainly on General Fund (then called "Current Expense Fund") moneys. In 2003, the General Fund was facing \$52 million shortfall, attributed to growth in the cost of providing services, particularly in mandated criminal justice related functions, an economic recession, and an erosion of the county's tax base. Large deficits were predicted into the foreseeable future.

2002 Business Transition Plan. In 2002, to prevent the closure of the parks system, King County convened the Metropolitan Parks Task Force, a community advisory group that was asked to help develop a business transition plan for the County's parks. Major recommendations, which were codified in Ordinance 14509, included focusing on the County's regional role; becoming more entrepreneurial, by seeking revenues from fees and sponsorships; and finding community partners.

2003 Parks Levy. In 2003, following significant reductions in General Fund support for King County's parks and open space system, King County voters approved a 4.9 cent, four-year levy to support operations and maintenance for regional and rural parks. At the same time, the County implemented other strategies from the business transition

⁷ State law currently removes regular park and recreation district property tax levies from the \$5.90 limit if levied on an island within a county with a population over two million (i.e., Vashon Island). This exemption, unless changed by state law, expires January 1, 2027. (Chapter 117, Laws of 2021)

⁸ RCW 84.55.050.

⁹ Chapter 296, Laws of 2021.

¹⁰ *Guide to Property Tax Exemptions for Seniors, Persons with Disabilities, and Disabled Veterans.* King County Department of Assessments. URL: <https://cdn.kingcounty.gov/-/media/king-county/depts/assessor/documents/guide-to-property-tax-exemptions-for-senior-disabled-and-veterans.pdf?rev=aaa4b4d03cb146b6a961b4e531565ab5&hash=479455066CC8A083AE9B12C296316E13>. Last accessed on February 13, 2025.

plan, including transferring 56 urban parks and pools to local governments by the end of 2007.

2007 Parks Levies. In August 2007, voters approved two six-year parks levies:

- Operating Levy: A 5 cent operating levy was adopted to fund maintenance and operations for regional and rural parks. This levy was projected to raise approximately \$16 million in its first year, and had inflation built in so that levy revenues would keep pace with inflationary pressures.
- Open Space & Trails Levy: A 5 cent capital levy was adopted to fund expansion of the regional parks and open space system. This levy was split into three parts:
 - 60% to King County to acquire and preserve regional trails and natural areas, including funding for community partnership projects;
 - 20% to cities for trails, parks, and open space; and
 - 20% to Woodland Park Zoo for environmental education, conservation, and capital improvement projects.

The King County Parks Division (“Parks”) continued to implement its business transition plan, transferring 31 more parks and pools to local cities between 2007 and 2012.

2013 Parks Levy. In August 2013, King County voters approved a new, 18.91 cent six-year parks levy with an annual limit factor tied to the consumer price index. The levy included 14.89 cents to continue the programs of the expiring levies and an additional 4.02 cents for new and enhanced programs.

2019 Parks Levy. In 2019, Ordinance 18890¹¹ placed on the August 2019 ballot a proposition authorizing a six-year property tax levy to support parks and open space throughout King County. The ordinance set an initial levy rate of 18.32 cents per \$1,000 of AV and is currently expected to generate approximately \$852 million over the life of the levy, to fund various projects and programs including:

- Up to \$8 million of the levy proceeds for a capital construction project at the Seattle Aquarium;
- Up to \$44 million of the levy proceeds to for pool maintenance, capital improvements and construction;
- Up to \$22 million of the levy proceeds for integrated floodplain management;
- 47% of the remaining proceeds for acquisition of open space, continued development of regional and other public trails, other capital improvement projects and major maintenance of the county’s open space system, and community partnerships and grants;
- 40% of the remaining proceeds for King County’s parks system operations and maintenance, with no more than \$10 million of this amount being used for targeted equity grants;

¹¹ [File No. 2019-0084](#)

- 8% of the remaining proceeds for distribution to the towns and cities of King County for their town or city parks system operations and capital improvement projects; and
- 5% of the remaining proceeds for environmental education, maintenance and conservation programs at the Woodland Park Zoo.

At the same time the Council passed Ordinance 18890, it also passed a companion motion, Motion 15378,¹² which adopted an allocation plan for levy moneys, as well as guidance for four new grant programs. The allocation plan for the 2020-2025 Parks Levy is Attachment C to Motion 15378.

Summary of Outreach. Community engagement and outreach materials provided by Executive staff show that Parks conducted 21 engagement events in March and April 2024, both in-person and virtual, for the proposed 2026-2031 Parks Levy. Comparatively, Parks conducted 54 in-person engagement events for the current levy. Executive staff state that, although they were not categorized as formal engagement events, the Parks Mobile Engagement Team spent several days each week in February through April of 2024 soliciting in-person feedback in parks and trails across King County. According to staff, over 4,800 people across all nine King County Council districts participated in surveys and Parks staff also met with towns and cities, parks districts, and key partners to receive additional feedback about the levy proposal.

In January 2024, Parks established the King County Parks Levy Community Advisory Committee which met nine times to provide guidance on developing the 2026-2031 Parks Levy. Based on review of current levy funding and activities, and feedback from forums and surveys, the Committee recommended funding the following priorities:

- **Safety and Belonging:** increase funding for maintenance and infrastructure; provide multi-language signing and wayfinding; collaborate, engage, and partner with local communities in a substantive and culturally appropriate way.
- **Equity:** distribute levy funds based on an assessment of community needs, gaps, and equitable outcomes; improve accessibility for people with disabilities; expand hours for parks and trails; provide multi-language signing and wayfinding.
- **Climate Resilience & Mitigation:** prioritize open space acquisition to protect existing ecosystems; fund strategic and regional trail connections that provide transportation alternatives for commuters and reduce greenhouse gas emissions; increase tree canopy, open space acquisitions, and forest stewardship in concrete “hot zones” in urban and underserved communities.
- **New Parks, Trails, & Recreation Opportunities:** focus on trail improvements and “last mile” additions to connect communities; increase grant funding for local communities; more equitably distribute pass-through funding; provide additional support for sports infrastructure and programming in underserved communities.

¹²[File No. 2019-0142](#)

ANALYSIS

Financials. Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070 would place on the August 5, 2025, ballot a proposition authorizing a six-year property tax levy that would generate approximately \$1.5 billion in total over the levy period. This is a multi-year temporary levy lid lift, meaning that funding would not continue after the six-year period expires.

Proposed Rate and Limit Factor. The initial levy rate is proposed at **24.43 cents** per \$1,000 of assessed value (AV), with a limit factor set as the combined percentage change in the prior year's Seattle consumer price index for wage earners (CPI-W) and estimated population growth in King County. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Estimated Limit Factor: Inflation Plus Population Growth

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
CPI-W (Seattle/Tacoma/Bremerton) ¹³	2.68%	2.49%	2.46%	2.41%	2.43%	2.68%
Estimated King County Pop. Growth ¹⁴	0.92%	0.93%	0.87%	0.80%	0.72%	0.92%
<i>Estimated Limit Factor</i>	<i>3.60%</i>	<i>3.41%</i>	<i>3.33%</i>	<i>3.22%</i>	<i>3.15%</i>	<i>3.20%</i>

Estimated Collections. Table 2 shows the estimated levy revenue for each year of the levy, based on the Office of Economic and Financial Analysis’s (OEFA) August 2024 forecast for levy proceeds and presuming a limit factor based on the combined percentage change in the prior year’s Seattle consumer price index for wage earners (CPI-W) and estimated population growth in King County. With these assumptions, the total projected revenue over the six-year levy period is **\$1.5 billion**.

For comparison, the current 2020-2025 levy had an initial rate of **18.32 cents** per \$1,000 AV in 2020, with a limit factor set as the combined percentage change in the prior year’s Seattle CPI-W and estimated population growth in King County. The current 2020-2025 levy is expected to generate approximately **\$851 million** over the six-year levy period, based on OEFA’s August 2024 forecast.¹⁵ This is approximately a 5% increase over the originally projected amount of \$810 million.

Table 2 also shows the estimated effective levy rate for each year of the levy period. For the current levy, the effective levy rate (which is calculated based on the limit factor, AV, and new construction) as of 2025 is 19.73 cents per \$1,000 AV.¹⁶ If, hypothetically, the current levy was extended into 2026 at a status quo continuation (applying the 2026 limit factor and AV assumptions to the 2025 levy collections), the effective rate for 2026 would have been 19.52 cents.

[The March 2025 OEFA forecast was adopted by the Forecast Council on March 17, 2025.](#) Based on the March 2025 OEFA forecast, total anticipated levy collections over six years is still \$1.5 billion. The annual estimates are shown below.

¹³ Inflation from Seattle CPI-W June Value in OEFA March 2024 Forecast.

¹⁴ Population forecast from OEFA March 2024 Forecast.

¹⁵ The current levy generated \$115.7 million in 2020, \$253.6 million in 2021-2022, an estimated \$307.9 million in 2023-2024, and is expected to generate \$169.8 million in 2025.

¹⁶ Based on August 2024 OEFA Forecast.

**Table 2. Estimated Annual Parks Levy Collections and Effective Levy Rate
(August 2024 OEFA Forecast)**

	Current Levy	Proposed 2026-2031 Levy					
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Estimated Proceeds ¹⁷	\$170 million	\$226 million	\$238 million	\$245 million	\$261 million	\$273 million	\$285 million
Estimated Effective Levy Rate ¹⁸ (per \$1000 AV)	\$0.1973	\$0.2443	\$0.24150	\$0.23896	\$0.23621	\$0.23260	\$0.22971

**Estimated Annual Parks Levy Collections and Effective Levy Rate (Adopted
March 2025 OEFA Forecast)**

	Current Levy	Proposed 2026-2031 Levy					
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Estimated Proceeds ¹⁹	\$170 million	\$220 million	\$232 million	\$246 million	\$258 million	\$271 million	\$285 million
Estimated Effective Levy Rate ²⁰ (per \$1000 AV)	\$0.1973	\$0.2443	\$0.2503	\$0.2547	\$0.2595	\$0.2614	\$0.2666

Impact to Household with Median-Valued Home. For the owner of a King County single-family home with a median AV of \$844,000 (based on 2024 assessed values²¹), an initial levy rate of **24.43 cents** per \$1,000 AV would cost this owner approximately **\$206.19** annually (\$17.18 per month) in property tax.

- For comparison, the effective levy rate of the current levy was approximately 19.43 cents per \$1,000 AV in 2024, which would cost the same homeowner approximately \$163.99 annually. For 2025, the effective levy rate of the current levy is approximately **19.73 cents** per \$1,000 AV, which would cost the same homeowner approximately **\$166.52** annually based on 2024 assessed values.
- To this homeowner, comparing the proposed 2026 rate with the effective 2025 rate, the proposed levy represents an approximate increase of \$39.67 annually (\$3.31 per month).

¹⁷ Based on August 2024 OEFA Forecast.

¹⁸ The effective levy rate is a function of assessed value, new construction, and the limit factor.

¹⁹ Based on adopted March 2025 OEFA Forecast.

²⁰ The effective levy rate is a function of assessed value, new construction, and the limit factor.

²¹ According to Executive staff, this value comes from Median Assessed Value (AV) by Levy or District data, provided by the King County Assessor's Office. The tax roll was certified by the Assessor's Office on January 27, 2025.

Prorating Considerations. Based on current prorating analysis from the OEFA's August 2024 forecast, it is not currently expected that the proposed levy would have a prorating impact on other taxing districts. In other words, levy suppression and prorating are not currently projected as an issue for the proposed levy as transmitted.

Prorating mitigation is not identified as an eligible levy expenditure in the PO. Whether or not to designate a specific reserve out of levy proceeds in the PO for any potential prorating mitigation would be a policy choice.

Based on the August 2024 OEFA forecast, assuming an initial parks levy rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV in 2026, there would be about \$1.09 of room in 2026, and between \$0.73 to \$1.09 in the next six years, before the closest district would hit the \$5.90 limit. During the 2026-2031 time frame, the closest levy district to reaching the \$5.90 limit would be Vashon Island, with about \$0.73 of room in 2027.²² This calculation includes the AFIS levy renewal passed in early 2025. The Executive is expected to transmit a proposed EMS levy renewal later in 2025; EMS levies are not subject to the \$5.90 limit.

Funding Categories Overview. This section provides an overview of the proposed levy allocations as stated in the PO, as well as the more detailed proposed investments listed in the proposed allocation plan that is Attachment 4 to this staff report. (Note that the allocation plan is not explicitly referenced in the PO and therefore is not part of the legislation; this level of detail would not be adopted by adopting the ordinance. PM 2025-0077 would adopt a funding allocation plan for the proposed 2026-2031 levy.)

Proposed Allocations as Stated in Proposed Ordinance. PO 2025-0070 would allocate levy proceeds for the following purposes, which are explicitly stated in the ordinance language:

- Up to \$42 million for Woodland Park Zoo;
- Up to \$15 million for Seattle Aquarium;
- Up to \$9 million for Friends of Waterfront Park;
- Up to \$2.5 million for Memorial Stadium;
- Up to \$30 million for Parks Capital and Open Space Grants; and
- Up to \$46 million for Aquatic Facilities Grants.

Note that the “up to” language in these allocations means that anywhere between \$0 and the maximum amount listed could be spent. The Executive’s proposed allocation plan indicates that the Executive does intend to spend the maximum for each of these categories.

Of remaining levy proceeds (approximately \$1.35 billion), PO 2025-0070 would explicitly allocate money as follows:

²² State law currently removes regular park and recreation district property tax levies from the \$5.90 limit if levied on an island within a county with a population over two million (i.e., Vashon Island). This exemption, unless changed by state law, expires January 1, 2027. (House Bill 1034, Chapter 117, Laws of 2021)

- 43% of remaining proceeds for operations and maintenance of the open space system²³ and for the Healthy Communities and Parks Grants Program;²⁴
- 48% of remaining proceeds to parks acquisition, conservation, stewardship, capital improvement, community partnerships and grants, and the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center;²⁵ and
- 9% of remaining proceeds to towns, cities, and parks districts.

Proposed Allocation Plan. Executive staff have transmitted a proposed allocation plan, which is Attachment 3 to this staff report and summarized in Table 3. Note that the proposed allocation plan is neither explicitly referenced in, nor identified as an attachment to the transmitted PO, and therefore this level of detail would not be adopted by adopting the ordinance.

Whether to amend the ordinance to adopt the proposed allocation plan, introduce a companion motion to adopt the proposed allocation plan, and/or to include additional specific allocations in the PO, is a policy choice for members to consider. For the 2020-2025 Parks Levy, the Council adopted, simultaneous to levy ordinance adoption,²⁶ a companion motion²⁷ that included the adopted current allocation plan (referred to herein as the “2020-2025 Parks Levy motion.”)

For the proposed 2026-2031 levy, a proposed companion motion (Proposed Motion 2025-0077) has been introduced. Proposed Motion 2025-0077 would adopt a funding allocation plan attached to the motion. While the attachment to the motion is currently the Executive’s proposed allocation plan, members may choose to amend the allocation plan; this would be a policy choice.

The Proposed Motion would stipulate that the amounts in the allocation plan may be modified when deemed advisable or necessary in the judgment of the Council, through adoption of an appropriations ordinance. If the Executive wished to make changes to allocations within the allocation plan, a report would be required to be submitted to the Council detailing the proposed changes. This process mirrors what was adopted in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy Motion. These processes are also policy choices.

²³ Defined in Section 1 as “the system that includes parks, trails, natural areas, resource lands, and structures or buildings owned or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the parks and recreation division of the department of natural resources.”

²⁴ No more than \$30M to Healthy Community and Parks Grants, formerly known as Targeted Equity Grants.

²⁵ Executive staff state that inclusion of the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in this category is an error, and that it was intended to be an off-the-top allocation of up to \$22 million.

²⁶ Ordinance 18890.

²⁷ Motion 15378.

Table 3. Executive Proposed Allocation Plan for 2026-2031 Parks Levy

Parks Levy Grants and Community Partnerships		\$117 million
	Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants	\$46 million
	Parks Capital and Open Space	\$30 million
	Healthy Communities and Parks Fund (formerly known as Targeted Equity Grants)	\$30 million
	Community Partnerships and Grants ²⁸	\$11 million
Pass-Through		\$209 million
	King County cities, towns, and park districts	\$119 million
	Woodland Park Zoo	\$42 million
	Seattle Waterfront	\$9 million
	Seattle Aquarium	\$15 million
	Memorial Stadium	\$2.5 million
	Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center ²⁹	\$22 million
King County Parks Operations and Maintenance		\$551 million
	Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery and Internal Supports	\$517 million
	Parks Patrol Expansion	\$4.3 million
	Safety Program Expansion	\$3.2 million
	Asset Management Program	\$4.1 million
	Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program	\$10.4 million
	Youth Conservation Corps Program Expansion	\$4.8 million
	Jobs & Housing Program	\$5 million
	Tribal, Indigenous, & Historic Interpretive Program	\$1.8 million
King County Parks Capital Program		\$624 million
	Climate resilience and stewardship	\$217.5 million
	Regional trails and other public trails system	\$179 million
	New park development and improvements	\$51 million
	Active recreation repair and renovation	\$177 million
Election Costs		\$1.5 million
Additional assumed costs		\$18 million
	Fixed income exemption ³⁰	\$3 million
	1% undercollection assumption ³¹	\$15 million

²⁸ Defined in Section 1 as "the program through which King County provides monies to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing, operating or maintaining a public park or recreation facility or program in King County and King County cities for public benefit."

²⁹ Executive staff state that inclusion of the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center was intended to be an off-the-top allocation of up to \$22 million; its inclusion in the PO under Section 4.E (as part of the capital distribution) was an error and was intended to be included under Section 4.D.

³⁰ As authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

³¹ According to Executive staff, the 1% undercollection assumption is a consistent rate assumed countywide with other levies. The first four years of the Parks levy has seen less than 1% of the undercollection rate. Though FY 2024 year-end reconciliation is still underway and is expected to be finalized by April 2025, FY 2024 shows a little over that rate, consistent with the trajectory in the King County 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Comparison with Current Parks Levy. Table 4 summarizes a comparison of the current 2020-2025 Parks Levy and the proposed 2026-2031 Parks Levy.

Table 4. Comparison of Current Parks Levy vs. Proposed Parks Levy Renewal

	2020-2025 Parks Levy Adopted Allocations	2020-2025 Parks Levy Actual Investment³²	Proposed 2026-2031 Parks Levy Investment (Allocation Plan³³)
Levy Rate			
Initial Levy Rate	Initial rate of 18.32 cents per \$1,000 AV in 2020; Effective rate is 19.73 cents per \$1,000 AV in 2025		Initial rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV
Total Levy Collection over 6-year period	\$810 million	\$851 million	\$1.5 billion
Estimated Annual Cost to Homeowner of Median-Valued King County Home	\$166.52 ³⁴		\$206.19 ³⁵
Pass-Through Investments			
Woodland Park Zoo	\$36 million	\$39 million	\$42 million
Seattle Aquarium	\$8 million	\$8 million	\$15 million
Seattle Waterfront	<i>Not in current levy</i>	<i>Not in current levy</i>	\$9 million
Memorial Stadium	<i>Not in current levy</i>	<i>Not in current levy</i>	\$2.5 million (in first two years)
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center	\$8 million	\$8 million	\$22 million
Cities, Towns, and Park Districts ³⁶	\$60 million	\$62 million	\$119 million
King County Parks operations and maintenance	\$277 million	\$299 million	\$551 million
King County Parks capital program			
Climate resilience, conservation, and stewardship	\$98.5 million	\$102.2 million	\$217 million
Regional and other public trails system	\$165.65 million	\$170.15 million	\$179 million
New park development and improvements	<i>Not in current levy</i>	<i>Not in current levy</i>	\$51 million
Active recreation repair and renovation	\$41.5 million	\$55.2 million	\$177 million
Grants			
Parks Capital and Open Space Grant	\$25 million	\$25 million	\$30 million
Aquatic Facilities Grant	\$36 million	\$36 million	\$46 million
Healthy Communities and Parks Grant (formerly Targeted Equity Grant)	\$10 million	\$10 million	\$30 million
Community Partnership Grants	\$9.57 million	\$9.8 million	\$11 million
Open Space River Corridors Grant	\$22 million	\$22 million	<i>Not continued</i>

³² Based on current levy forecast within the August 2024 OEFA forecast. FY 2024 expenditures are expected to be finalized by April 2025. FY 2025 expenditures are expected to be finalized by April 2026.

³³ Note that the proposed allocation plan is not explicitly referenced in the proposed ordinance, and therefore this level of detail would not be adopted by adopting the ordinance.

³⁴ Based on effective 2025 levy rate and 2024 median assessed value.

³⁵ Based on proposed 2026 levy rate and 2024 median assessed value.

³⁶ Park Districts were not included in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy.

Operations and Maintenance. After off-the-top distributions for educational and civic venues, two grant programs, and election costs, the PO specifies that 43% of the remainder of Parks Levy moneys would be used for:

- Operations and maintenance of the County’s Open Space System, and
- Healthy Community and Parks Grants program, which is referred to as the Target Equity Grant program in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy.

The PO would set a maximum of \$30 million that could be expended on the Healthy Community and Parks Grants program, with no minimum spending amount specified. Further details on this program can be found in the Grant Programs section of this staff report.

The PO and its attachments do not provide any further specificity on how funding in this category would be spent. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive intends to spend the maximum-allowed \$30 million on the Healthy Communities and Grants Program, leaving an estimated \$550.6 million for operations and maintenance of the County’s open space system. This represents a roughly 84% increase in funding for this category compared to current forecasts for the 2020-2025 levy.

[Update for 3/26 BFM staff report:](#) In response to inquiry from Councilmembers, Central staff requested from Executive staff an analysis of how much of the increase in operations and maintenance costs were due to maintaining current service levels, compared with inflation or new capacity. Executive staff provided, and Council staff shared with members, a document that was included in the 3/12 staff reports as Attachment 4 (Inflation Analysis).

Under that prior analysis, the \$550.6 million request for maintenance and operations included:

- \$302 million for current service levels
- \$33 million for inflationary costs
- \$182 million to increase the capacity of the parks system
- \$33.6 million for new and expanded programs

On March 19, Council staff were informed that the previously provided analysis was incorrect. According to Executive staff, \$302 million reflects the total operations during the 2020-2025 levy, and the \$33 million inflationary impact was calculated incorrectly based on that number and therefore does not account for annual increases in the next levy period.

Executive staff provided Council staff with updated numbers, which are summarized below and detailed at length in the “Answers to Councilmember Questions from 3/12 BFM” section of the staff report. Under the new analysis, Executive state that Parks would need **\$466.6 million** over the 2026-2031 levy period to maintain current levels of service, accounting for inflation.

\$466.6 million	To maintain current levels of service from 2026-2031, including accounting for inflation
\$50.2 million	To increase capacity of parks system
\$33.6 million	For new and expanded programs
\$550 million	Total Maintenance and Operations Request

Additionally, in the responses to Councilmember questions raised in the 2/26 BFM meeting, which Council staff shared at the 3/12 BFM meeting, Executive staff provided an estimate that they expect to fund 150-170 FTE during the 2026-2031 levy with this requested amount.

Council staff followed up to inquire how these additional positions correspond with the requested funding. According to Executive staff, the 150 FTE includes 85 positions to increase the capacity of the parks system, 27 positions for new and expanded programs, conversion of 28 TLT to FTE, and 10 Youth Conservation Corps intern positions.

85 positions	85 FTE, corresponds to \$50.2 million request to increase capacity
27 positions	27 FTE, corresponds to \$33.6 million request for new and expanded programs
28 positions	TLT to FTE conversions
10 positions	Youth Conservation Corps intern positions
150 positions	Total Additional Positions

For reference, the Parks operating budget for 2025 was \$70 million, which included 345 FTE and 28 TLT. In 2020, at the start of the current levy, the operating budget was \$43 million, which included 253 FTE and 1 TLT. According to Executive staff, Parks has been growing the workforce by about 8% per year for a total of 47% over the course of 2020-2025 levy.

The following subsections break down the Executive’s planned spending on operations and maintenance as contained in the proposed allocation plan.

Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery, and Internal Supports. The vast majority (\$517 million or 93%) of operations and maintenance funding would go towards maintaining the current King County open space system. The allocation plan states that this money would cover the system’s day-to-day operational needs, including but not limited to personnel, supplies, services, fleet, equipment, and administrative costs.

The \$517 million in this category also includes \$2.4 million that would be split between the King County Fair, Washington State University 4-H Program, and King County

Search and Rescue operations. These three programs are currently funded by Parks Levy dollars. The Parks Levy Operations Financial Plan,³⁷ which was transmitted with the PO but not formally attached to the levy ordinance, provides the following breakdown of funding for these programs:

- King County Search and Rescue - \$1.2 million (double what was initially planned for the 2020-2025 investment, but level funding with that which began in the 2023-2024 biennial budget)³⁸
- WSU Cooperative / 4-H - \$906,000 (level funding with current)

The amount going to the King County Fair is not explicitly stated, but subtracting the \$2.4 million listed in the proposed allocation plan for these programs from the numbers above would leave \$300,000 for the King County Fair. For comparison, the allocation plan adopted by the 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion set aside \$300,000 for the Fair over the life of that levy.

Parks Patrol Expansion. King County Parks currently has a service level agreement with the King County Sheriff's Office (KCSO) to provide a Parks Patrol Program through which two KCSO deputies are assigned full time to the King County parks system. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would spend \$4.3 million over the life of the levy to expand the program. Executive staff state that the expansion would include increased enforcement and education related to parks rules by adding two additional deputies over the levy period. They further state that the proposed expansion of this program would help to continue to address safety issues, provide quick response times, and consistent communication for concerns raised by staff or the public about the parks system.

Safety Program Expansion. According to Executive staff, Parks' safety program currently supports personnel, equipment, and training to implement a modern, comprehensive safety program for the division. Goals of the Safety Program include accident and injury prevention, ensuring compliance with safety regulations, and promoting a proactive and team-oriented safety-first culture. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would spend \$3.2 million over the life of the levy to expand the program. Executive staff state that this expansion would enable Parks to invest funds into planning, training, comprehensive workplace and practice evaluations, targeted safety program and initiative development, and procedures.

Asset Management Program. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would spend \$4.1 million on an asset management program. [The proposal would expand Parks' existing asset management program. Funding for this program would provide staffing and resources required to operate, maintain and enhance the asset management system which includes a complete inventory of physical park assets. Executive staff state that the expanded program would require an additional 4 FTEs. The expansion of the work program would include:](#)

³⁷ Attachment 9 to this staff report.

³⁸ [Executive staff state that the \\$600,000 figure in the Operations Financial Plan is incorrect.](#)

- A focus on performing ongoing asset condition inspections along with creating and implementing preventative maintenance programs based on asset life cycle data.
- Collecting new asset data, updating existing data, managing system upgrades, troubleshooting system problems, training parks staff on how to use the system, documenting standard operating procedures, and implementing system enhancement.

Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program. According to Executive staff, the Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program incorporates the department's enforcement of land use guidelines to comply with the permit system requirements in K.C.C 14.30. The proposed funding would support property services, permitting for use of Parks property, and enforcement of the Parks Land Use Guidelines,³⁹ which Parks does not currently have resources to do. The Parks Land Use Guidelines require the Parks to review and make recommendations on Special Use Permit applications requesting use of Parks' property for non-park purposes.

Youth Conservation Corps Program Expansion. The 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion directed the Executive to develop a plan to implement Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) beginning in 2020. The YCC is currently active as a summer internship program and, according to its website,⁴⁰ youth interns participate in the following activities:

- Engage in discussions about the intersections of race and the environment;
- Lead conversations with other interns on self-selected topics;
- Develop and build-upon career skills such as writing, public speaking, and interviewing;
- Become familiar with land management practices and the multiple facets of a park agency;
- Network with Parks staff, community leaders, and environmental professionals;
- Explore solutions to problems impacting human and environmental health; and
- Participate in workshops about local environmental challenges.

The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would maintain an expanded YCC program by investing an \$4.8 million over the life of the levy. In the current six-year levy period, the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Program is funded at \$2.4M for the annual summer internship program that provides environmental learning opportunities for ten high school-aged youth. In FY 2024, the program received additional funding (\$750k) through a Flood Control District grant to expand the program to include twenty additional internship opportunities, two staff members and program related supplies. The expansion proposal, which adds \$2.4M to the existing funding, for a total of \$4.8M, would maintain the continuity of the current program expansion when the grant funds sunset in 2025.

³⁹ King County Parks: Land Use Guidelines October 2020. Last accessed February 19, 2025. https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ls05t2bj3gk7tybd3xax7/KCP_Land_Use_Guidelines.pdf?rlkey=fqg5q6u3fnf71a7q688ed12xl&e=2&dl=0

⁴⁰ King County Parks: Youth Conservation Corps. Last accessed February 15, 2025. <https://kcpyouthcorps.org/>

Jobs and Housing Program. The Jobs and Housing Program was established by the Council in the COVID 7 budget⁴¹ passed in 2021, using Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery (CLFR) dollars. This initiative was intended to support a jobs and rehousing program for individuals experiencing homelessness. Funding was housed in the Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget (PSB).

The Jobs and Housing Program began operations in 2021 and provided temporary jobs, career preparation, and housing and support services within King County and other local organizations. These temporary jobs lasted up to one year and included paid ORCA transit pass and other transportation assistance, housing support, career support, and coaching services for one year. Of the 87 temporary jobs provided, 37 of were with King County Parks.

The 2025 Annual Budget⁴² appropriated the last of the CLFR funding for the Jobs and Housing Program, with the program intended to sunset at that time. Simultaneously, however, the budget appropriated \$851,000 to continue the Parks portion of the program, known as the Parks Beautification Program, through 2025, using solely Parks Levy moneys.

The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would use \$5 million of operations and maintenance funding to continue the Jobs and Housing program through the life of the levy. This represents roughly level annual funding with that appropriated for 2025. Executive staff have confirmed that the \$5 million only includes the “jobs” portion of the Jobs and Housing program, and that Parks is not currently responsible for housing or support services but will evaluate potential partnerships with other agencies for continued collaboration. PSB has been responsible for working with housing and service providers on this program; however, as mentioned above, PSB’s CLFR funding is expected to be exhausted in 2025.

Tribal, Indigenous, and Historic Interpretive Program. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive would use \$1.8 million in operations and maintenance funding for a new Tribal, Indigenous, and Historic Interpretive Program. The allocation plan states that this program would “support work with Tribes, indigenous organizations, and historic preservation organizations to strengthen government-to-government relationships and improve conservation and recreational planning.” Executive staff state that this program is the result of a recommendation by the Community Advisory Committee to strengthen partnerships with Tribal organizations and to collaborate with Tribes to better achieve common objectives.

They further state that the program would be developed in partnership with area tribes, indigenous organizations, and historic preservation organizations, and that resources would be invested in, but not limited to, the following:

- Improving conservation and recreational planning so that public use can be better balanced with protecting and honoring traditional cultural places;
- Supporting storytelling and interpretation that honors site-based history and context; and

⁴¹ Ordinance 19289.

⁴² Ordinance 19861.

- As appropriate, feasible, and if desired by those Parks would be working with, incorporating traditional cultural knowledge and practices in land management efforts and programs.

Capital Projects and Aquatic Center. After off-the-top distributions for educational and civic venues, two grant programs, and election costs, the PO specifies that 48% of the remainder of Parks Levy moneys would be used for:

- Acquisition, conservation, and stewardship of additional open space lands, natural areas, resource or ecological lands, rights of way for regional trails, and urban green spaces;
- Acquisition of rights of way for and development of regional and other public trails;
- Capital improvement projects and major maintenance repair or replacement of open space system infrastructure;
- The community partnerships and grants program; and
- Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

The PO and its attachments do not provide any further specificity on how much money would be appropriated to each of these categories or what projects they might entail. Executive staff state that proposed allocations are not explicitly enumerated in the ordinance as they are planning-level estimates and may change in the future.

Executive staff state that the inclusion of the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in this 48% category was an error, and that it was intended to be an off-the-top allocation of up to \$22 million for major maintenance capital investments to the Aquatic Center.

The Executive’s proposed allocation plan provides further information on the expected allocations, which are discussed below. Further details on The Community Partnerships and Grants program can be found in the Grant Programs section of this staff report.

Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center. The Executive’s proposed allocation plan states that \$22 million is expected to go to the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center over the life of the levy. Executive staff state that, as the facility is 35 years old, there are significant deferred maintenance and end of lifecycle needs that would be covered by this funding.

Climate Resilience and Stewardship. The Executive’s proposed allocation plan creates a new subcategory, “Climate Resilience and Stewardship,” that replaces the “Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation” subcategory in the adopted 2020-2025 Parks Levy allocation plan (Motion 15378) and includes several of the same spending items.

Table 5 below shows the difference between the 2020-2025 adopted allocation plan and the 2026-2031 proposed allocation plan for this subcategory.

Table 5. Comparison of Climate Resilience and Stewardship/Open Space Acquisition Funding, Current Parks Levy vs. Proposed Parks Levy Renewal

Subcategory	2020-2025 Allocation Plan (\$123.5 million)	2026-2031 Proposed Allocation Plan (\$217.5 million)⁴³
King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation	\$78 million	\$96 million
Towns and Cities Open Space	\$25 million	Now categorized as Parks Capital and Open Space Grants (\$30 million)
Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M)	\$18 million	\$20 million
Fish Passage Program	Not included	\$10 million
Climate Resilience	Not included	\$33 million
Environmental Stewardship	Not included	\$58.5 million
Water Access Acquisition on Lake Washington	\$2.5 million ⁴⁴	Not included

Each of these subcategories is discussed in more detail below.

King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation and Stewardship (\$116 million). The proposed allocation plan estimates that \$96 million would be used for King County’s acquisition and conservation of open space lands, with an additional \$20 million proposed for stewardship of lands acquired with this money.

Attachment B to the PO includes Acquisition Guidelines for Parks Levy funding used to acquire open space and natural lands⁴⁵ in coordination with the County’s Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) program. Attachment B gives the following process, which aligns with the process the Executive uses currently (but was not spelled out in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy ordinance or motion):

1. Early each calendar year, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) would set a proposed allocation for open space from levy funds for the following fiscal year.
2. Staff would generate proposals for the use of these funds, taking into account opportunities to leverage resources with funding from Conservation Futures, as well as from other local, state, and federal funding sources.

⁴³ Total does not include Parks Capital and Open Space Grants, which are proposed to move to another category.

⁴⁴ The allocation was directed to be used for properties located in proximity to the Burke-Gilman Trail. Waterfront property near the Burke-Gilman Trail in the City of Lake Forest Park was acquired.

⁴⁵ Neither of these terms is defined in the PO. In the County’s [Open Space Plan](#), “open space” is a catch-all term, of which “natural areas” is a subset meaning “ecological lands managed almost exclusively for environmental protection and enhancement.”

3. An overall proposal allocating the open space funds to specific projects would be developed and discussed with the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee (CFAC) that is responsible for developing CFT funding recommendations.
4. Taking the CFAC's recommendations into account, DNRP would develop a proposed budget for these parks levy funds.
5. The DNRP-proposed budget for parks levy funding would be reviewed by the County Executive, and ultimately County Council, as part of the overall budget process for the following year.

Executive staff have stated that the entire \$96 million is intended to be allocated through the CFT process. This is a policy choice. Council may wish to clarify exactly what funding is subject to Attachment B.

As noted in Table 5, the allocation plan for the 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion⁴⁶ also included funding for towns and cities open space. Via the 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion, the Council directed establishment of the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program, and the \$25 million was used for those purposes. The current proposal for the Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program is discussed in the Grant Programs section of this staff report.

Fish Passage Program (\$10 million). The Fish Passage Restoration Program removes barriers for salmon to reach historic spawning and rearing habitat in order to restore healthy populations. Executive staff have confirmed that the \$10 million would only be used for work on Parks-owned properties or land where Parks has easements. Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding is expected to supplement the \$10 million.

Executive staff state that the fish passage projects anticipated for the 2026-2031 levy are consistent with the Motion 15378 Report. Between 2022 and 2024, Parks completed eight projects that remedied ten fish passage barriers. The 2026-2031 Levy proposal provides funding for eight additional projects, with further fish passage projects needing completion after 2031.

Climate Resilience (\$33 million). Investments in climate resilience would include the following.

- *Parks' Forest Stewardship Program and Projects.* Parks' Forest Stewardship webpage⁴⁷ states that Parks manages over 29,000 acres of public forest land, 3,800 of which are designated as working forests. Types of stewardship actions listed there include development of stewardship plans, variable thinning management, red alder conversion, and root rot treatment.
- *Potential Stormwater Park Pilot Projects.* Stormwater parks are community facilities that both manage stormwater from a larger area and provide

⁴⁶ Motion 15738.

⁴⁷ King County Parks: Forest Stewardship. Last accessed February 15, 2025.

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/parks-recreation/king-county-parks/natural-working-lands/forest-stewardship>.

recreational opportunities.⁴⁸ Executive staff state that the locations of the pilot projects have not been identified yet, and that identifying sites would be part of a scoping and feasibility study effort that would be completed jointly between Parks Division and Water and Land Resources Division.

- *Establishment of a Climate Response Fund.* The proposed allocation plan states that this fund would support community response projects and programming. Executive staff state that projects and programming could include, but wouldn't be limited to:
 - Adding electric vehicle charging stations for both county-fleet and public vehicles at parks;
 - Converting existing Parks facilities that still run on fossil fuels to electric;
 - Adding solar panels to existing Park facilities;
 - Adding air-conditioning to publicly accessible Park facilities;
 - Urban tree planting projects; and
 - Adding splash pads, misters and/or sprinklers at parks.

Environmental Stewardship (\$58 million). The proposed allocation plan states that investments in environmental stewardship will support:

- Early actions to safeguard sites for public use following acquisition;
- Structure demolitions to deliver full ecological and recreation benefits;
- Improvements to existing maintenance facilities and acquisitions;
- Natural resource and site management planning;
- Multi-benefit river corridor projects; and
- Landscaping/restoration/mitigation site monitoring and maintenance.

Regional and Other Public Trails. The proposed allocation plan includes \$179 million in investments for regional trails and other public trails. In comparison, the 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion included \$165.7 million in investments to this category.

Table 6. Comparison of Regional and Other Public Trails Funding, Current Parks Levy vs. Proposed Parks Levy Renewal

Subcategory	2020-2025 Allocation Plan (\$165.65 million)	2026-2031 Proposed Allocation Plan (\$179 million)
Eastrail	\$50.5 million	\$65 million
Lake to Sound Trail	\$16 million	\$55 million
Green River Trail North Extension	\$6 million	\$6 million
Interurban Trail South	\$5.5 million	\$8 million
Soos Creek Trail	\$4 million	\$7 million
Other New Regional Trails		\$38 million
East Lake Sammamish Trail	\$32 million	
Capital improvements for existing regional trail system	\$18 million	

⁴⁸ Puget Sound Regional Council: Stormwater Parks. Last accessed February 15, 2025. <https://www.psrc.org/our-work/stormwater-parks>

Green to Cedar Rivers Trail North A	\$9 million	
Regional trails acquisition	\$2 million	
Foothills Trail	\$5 million	
East Lake Sammamish Trail – Redmond Light Rail Extension	\$4 million	
Wayne Golf Course Trail Connector Improvements	\$2 million	
Interurban Trail to Burke Gilman Connection	\$7.5 million	
Interurban Trail Connection	\$150,000	
Kirkland Green Loop Trail	\$2.5 million	
Missing Link of Green River Trail	\$1.5 million	

The proposed allocation plan includes the following investments:

Eastrail (\$65 million). The proposed levy would support construction of two additional segments of Eastrail, construction of an Eastrail connection to Coulon Park, paving the Central Wilburton segment, and completing design on the Eastrail to Lake to Sound Trail connection.

Eastrail is anticipated to be an uninterrupted 42-mile trail that would connect Renton, Bellevue, Kirkland, Woodinville, Snohomish, and Redmond. Approximately 16 miles are open, of which 7.5 miles are owned by King County. Trail segments currently under construction⁴⁹ are the Wilburton Trestle,⁵⁰ the I-90 Bridge Trail segment,⁵¹ and the Central Wilburton Trail Segment.⁵²

According to Executive staff, the proposed \$65 million allocation to Eastrail would support the I-90 Steel Bridge Crossing, Central Wilburton Paving, 124th to 145th Interim Trail, Coulon Park North Entrance to South Entrance, Coulon Park North Entrance to Mile Post 5, and Mile Post 5 to Ripley Lane.

Lake to Sound Trail (\$55 million). The proposed levy would support construction of two additional segments of the Lake to Sound Trail and the completion of the design to connect Lake to Sound Trail to SeaTac Airport. The Lake to Sound Trail is a multi-jurisdiction, multiple segment trail that extends 16 miles from the Cedar River at Lake Washington in Renton to Des Moines Beach Park on Puget Sound.

⁴⁹ King County Parks: Eastrail. Last accessed February 15, 2025.

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/parks-recreation/king-county-parks/capital-projects/eastrail>

⁵⁰ Construction started May 2024; anticipated opening summer 2026; costs \$37 million, of which \$20.5 million came from the 2020-2025 Parks Levy; other funding sources are Amazon, Washington State, City of Bellevue, and Kaiser Permanente.

⁵¹ Construction 2028-2030; anticipated opening 2030; costs \$49 million, of which \$2 million came from the 2020-2025 Parks Levy, along with a \$25 million federal RAISE Grant and \$12 million from Washington State's Climate Commitment Act.

⁵² Construction 2025-2026; anticipated opening 2026; costs \$2.5 million funded by Amazon.

Green River Trail Extension – North (\$6 million). The proposed levy would support construction of the Green River Trail North to Seattle. The Green River Trail is a regional trail of more than 19 paved miles from the south edge of Seattle to the City of Kent, passing through industrial lands near the Duwamish Waterway in Tukwila to the broad Green River Valley. The North extension project would extend the existing Green River Trail north from Cecil Moses Park in Tukwila, along West Marginal Place South, to the Seattle City limits near South Park.⁵³

Interurban Trail South Investments (\$8 million). The proposed levy would complete full rehabilitation of the Interurban Trail South. The Interurban Trail links Tukwila, Kent, Auburn, Algona, and Pacific along a 14-mile trail following the Interurban Rail Line.

Soos Creek Trail (\$7 million). The proposed levy would support construction of Soos Creek Trail Segment 5a and plan for future Soos Creek Trail segments. The Soos Creek Trail is a 6-mile paved trail in the East Hill area of Kent with a gentle grade for strolls, bicycle rides, and horse rides.⁵⁴

Other New Regional Trails (\$38 million). Of this amount, \$18 million would support planning, acquisition, and preliminary design for potential future trail segments and connections, including, but not limited to: Green River Trail, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Soos Creek Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

The remaining \$20 million would support emergent needs on the regional trail system, including, but not limited to: surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and intersection improvements.

New Park Development and Improvements. The proposed allocation plan includes \$51 million in investments for new park development and improvements.

Dog Parks (\$3 million). According to Executive staff, King County Parks completed a Draft Dog Park Feasibility Study in 2024. One of the prioritization criteria for locations assessed in the study was whether a community identified off-leash parks as a need in the King County Department of Local Services Community Needs Report. Based on this, feasible sites identified in that study include:

- North Shorewood Park
- Lake Geneva Park
- Skyway Park (if it aligns with the Community Center plan)

Executive staff state that King County Parks is also actively looking for potentially suitable locations on Vashon Island and in Fairwood near Petrovitsky Park.

⁵³King County Parks: Green River Trail North Extension. Last accessed February 15, 2025.
<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/parks-recreation/king-county-parks/capital-projects/green-river-trail-north-extension>

⁵⁴ King County Parks: Soos Creek Trail. Last accessed February 15, 2025.
<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/dnrp/nature-recreation/parks-recreation/king-county-parks/trails/leafline-trails/soos-creek-trail>

As background, Ordinance 19771, passed in 2024, adopted several changes to King County Code Title 7, including allowing off-leash dog parks at County parks other than Marymoor Park.

Lakeland Park North (\$10 million). This would support design and construction of a 20-acre nature park at Lakeland North Urban Park between Auburn and Federal Way including trails, nature-based play area, shelter, restroom and parking.

Skyway Park Planning and Community Center (\$13 million). This would support design, construction, and initial operational costs at Skyway Park Community Center. Approximately \$20 million in additional funding would be needed for construction and is expected to come from REET and bond financing.

Backcountry Trail: new trails (\$3 million). According to Executive staff, new trails may be created at the sites that are listed under Major Maintenance and would also be created at future sites to be acquired.

Ballfield and Sports Courts: new facilities (\$3 million). According to Executive staff, potential projects may include adding pickleball courts at existing parks, adding recreational cricket facilities at existing parks, and adding light to existing courts or fields.

Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion (\$19 million). This would support design and construction at South County Ballfields in Federal Way.

Active Recreation Repair and Renovation, and Other Park Repair and Renovation. The proposed allocation plan includes \$177 million in investments to active recreation repair and renovation, and other pair repair and renovation. In comparison, the 2020-2025 Parks Levy motion included \$41.5 million in investments to this category.

Major maintenance existing infrastructure (\$90 million). This includes:

- General Infrastructure: \$23 million
- Playground rehabilitation: \$7 million
- Play amenities rehabilitation: \$6 million
- Parks building system rehabilitation: \$8 million
- Ballfield synthetic turf replacement: \$12 million
- Pools, water access, docks rehabilitation: \$2 million
- Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation: \$6 million
- Backcountry trail rehabilitation: \$6 million
- Drainage infrastructure rehabilitation: \$12 million
- Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.): \$8 million

ADA and accessibility rehabilitation (\$12 million). According to Executive staff, these projects would be identified by the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan, which are currently in progress.

Regional trails rehabilitation (\$55 million). This would support keeping the existing regional trail system clean, safe, and open and includes, but is not limited to, repair/replacement of bridges and trestles, trail surface repairs/rehabilitation, safety updates, repairs to meet current guidelines and standards, and landscaping/mitigation maintenance and monitoring.

Marymoor Park rehabilitation:(\$16 million). This would fund rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities throughout Marymoor Park to keep the park clean, safe, and open. It also includes funding for improvements to address growing user demand including, but not limited to, signage, utilities, pedestrian facilities, buildings, roadways, velodrome rehabilitation, and concert venue updates. This program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

Sunset Park Renovation and Repair (\$4 million). According to Executive staff, the exact updates are still to be determined as part of a public engagement process, but may include, restroom renovation, parking improvements, court and field improvements, and adding additional amenities such as play area.

Grants Programs. The PO includes four grant programs that would be funded through the 2026-2031 Parks Levy. All four programs are continuations of existing grant programs, though modifications are proposed to three of the four. One program from the 2020-2025 Parks Levy, the Open Space - River Corridors Grant Program, is not proposed to continue. Table 7 below compares funding in the allocation plan of the current 2020-2025 Parks Levy and the allocation plan for the proposed 2026-2031 Parks Levy.

Table 7. Comparison of Grant Program Funding, Current Parks Levy vs. Proposed Parks Levy Renewal

Program Name	2020-2025 Allocation Plan (\$102.57 million)	2026-2031 Allocation Plan (\$117 million)
Parks Capital and Open Space Grants (PCOS)	\$25 million ⁵⁵	\$30 million
Aquatic Facilities Grants	\$36 million	\$46 million
Healthy Communities and Parks Grants ⁵⁶	\$10 million	\$30 million
Community Partnerships and Grants	\$9.57 million	\$11 million
Open Space – River Corridors Grants	\$22 million	\$0

Table 7 shows that varying levels of increases are proposed for four of the programs, the largest of which would be a tripling of funding for the Healthy Communities and Parks Grants. Executive staff state that since 2022, the Healthy Communities and Parks Program received 404 applications requesting \$50.7 million, but King County was only able to approve about a quarter of the requests, or 105 applications (\$6.53 million), due to limited funding availability. This led the Parks Levy Oversight Board to recommend an increase in total funding for this grant program in the next levy to meet current and future demand. Executive staff state that their community engagement found support for increasing grant funding generally as well.

Executive staff state that the Open Space - River Corridors Grant Program is not proposed to continue because “during this program’s request for application cycles in 2022 and 2023 in the current levy period, there were not enough applicants to use all the allocated funding. Over half of the grants awarded in this program went to King County Parks or Water and Land Resources (WLR) Division (17 of 31). Parks and WLR plan to continue open space river corridor work without the grant program in the next levy cycle under several program areas, including the Environmental Stewardship Program and the Climate Resilience Program.”

For the PCOS, Aquatic Facilities, and Healthy Communities and Parks Grant Programs, the Executive proposes new program requirements through Attachment A to the PO. Existing program requirements, including eligible entities, eligible project types, advisory committee makeup, and selection process and criteria, are currently set by Ordinance 19166 (“the 2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance”). Analysis is ongoing as to whether the 2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance would need to be repealed in order to prevent conflicts with Attachment A to the PO.

As Tables 8, 9, and 10 show, the current programs have requirements around their advisory committees, project selection criteria, and approval process that are not included in Attachment A to the PO. Executive staff state that they propose to set those

⁵⁵ Note that in the 2020-2025 Allocation Plan, this is named “Towns and Cities Open Space” under the Open Space Acquisition category.

⁵⁶ Called “Targeted Equity Grant Program” in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy.

parameters internally for the 2026-2031 levy period, and anticipate making the following changes:

1. Defining a consistent grant framework in terms of goals;
2. Establishing consistent biennial grants cycles; and
3. Providing Council notification of awards, rather than Council approval.

Further detail on Executive's staff's proposed changes can be found in the Policy Issues section of this staff report. Whether to add guidance or requirements on these topics, with or without changes to what is in the 2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance, is a policy choice.

Because Attachment A is a formal attachment to the PO, the guidelines contained therein would not be able to be changed throughout the six-year levy period. This is also a policy choice.

Details of each grant program are discussed below.

Parks Capital and Open Space (PCOS) Grants. The PCOS Grant Program was a new program under the 2020-2025 Parks Levy. The PO defines the program as one that "provides moneys to metropolitan park districts, towns, or cities located in King County to achieve capital improvement projects and major maintenance repair, or replacement of parks or recreation infrastructure."

The PO includes an off-the-top allocation of up to \$30 million for the PCOS Grant Program. The proposed allocation plan indicates that the Executive intends to spend the full \$30 million over the levy period.

Table 8. below shows the key elements of the program, as described in Attachment A to the PO, compared to the existing program under the 2020 Parks Levy Grant Ordinance. Yellow highlighting indicates areas of difference between the existing program and proposed one.

Table 8. PCOS Grant Program Requirements Comparison⁵⁷

Program Element	2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance Requirements	Proposed 2026-2031 Levy Attachment A Requirements
Eligible Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Metropolitan park districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Metropolitan park districts • Public entities that serve King County
Eligible Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital projects to develop new or existing parks/trails/open space, at any stage • Acquiring land for parks/trails/open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital projects to develop new or existing parks/trails/open space, at any stage • Acquiring land for parks/trails/open space⁵⁸
Advisory Committee	Representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities • School Districts • Nonprofit Organizations Council gives input on representatives	No advisory committee structure given
Project Selection Criteria	Criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.	No additional criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committee makes recommendations • Executive transmits grant funding ordinance biennially 	No approval process given

Adding other public entities as an eligible entity, and removing eligibility of agricultural open space, is a policy choice.

Aquatic Facilities Grants. The Aquatic Facilities Grant Program was a new program begun under the 2020-2025 Parks Levy. The PO defines the program as one that “provides moneys to publicly owned pools for: capital improvement projects, including planning, feasibility studies, preconstruction and design, and construction; and major maintenance repair or replacement projects.”

⁵⁷ Terms are summarized here; Council staff has noted inconsistency in terminology though could be rectified.

⁵⁸ Except land primarily in agricultural use.

The PO includes an off-the-top allocation of up to \$46 million for the Aquatic Facilities Grant Program. The proposed allocation plan indicates that the Executive intends to spend the full \$46 million over the life of the levy.

Table 9 shows the key elements of the program, as described in Attachment A to the PO, compared to the existing program under the 2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance. Yellow highlighting indicates areas of difference between the existing program and proposed one.

Table 9. Aquatic Facilities Grant Program Requirements Comparison

Program Element	2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance Requirements	Proposed 2026-2031 Levy Attachment A Requirements
Eligible Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Metropolitan park districts • School districts • Other public entities that own public aquatic facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Metropolitan park districts • School districts • Other public entities that own public aquatic facilities • Nonprofits that operate public aquatic facilities
Eligible Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stages of capital projects related to public aquatic facilities, including land acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All stages of capital projects related to public aquatic facilities, including land acquisition⁵⁹
Advisory Committee	Same advisory committee as PCOS Grant Program	No advisory committee structure given
Project Selection Criteria	Criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.	No additional criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committee makes recommendations • Executive transmits grant funding ordinance biennially 	No approval process given

Adding nonprofits as an eligible entity is also a policy choice. Executive staff state that nonprofit-operated aquatic facilities are present but not numerous in King County, citing Whitewater Aquatics, which runs the Evergreen Aquatic Center in White Center as one example. Executive staff state that “opening the grant program to nonprofits that operate public aquatic facilities will increase access to aquatics for King County residents.”

⁵⁹ The exact terminology used is different between the 2020 Parks Grant Ordinance and Attachment A, but they are understood to cover the same project types.

Healthy Communities and Parks Grants. The Targeted Equity Grant Program was a new program established under the 2020-2025 Parks Levy. The PO would rename this program to “Healthy Communities and Parks Grant Program” and define it as a program that “provides moneys in order to achieve equitable opportunities and access to parks and recreation for traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities, located in unincorporated King County and King County towns and cities.”

The PO includes up to \$30 million for the Healthy Communities and Parks Program, under the 43% allocation that also includes operations and maintenance of King County’s open space system. The proposed allocation plan indicates that the Executive intends to spend the full \$30 million over the life of the levy.

Table 10 shows the key elements of the program, as described in Attachment A to the PO, compared to the existing program under the 2020 Parks Levy Grant Ordinance. Yellow highlighting indicates areas of difference between the existing program and proposed one.

Table 10. Targeted Equity/Healthy Communities and Parks Grant Program Requirements Comparison⁶⁰

Program Element	2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance Requirements	Proposed 2026-2031 Levy Attachment A Requirements
Eligible Entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King County • Cities and towns • Tribal Organizations • Nonprofit organizations • Community organizations without a 501(c)(3) status partnering with a fiscal agent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and towns • Tribal Organizations • Nonprofit organizations • Community organizations without a 501(c)(3) status partnering with a fiscal agent • Metropolitan park districts
Eligible Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity Building/Outreach/Planning • Land Acquisition in specific communities of need⁶¹ • Capital projects or programs that address unmet needs in underserved areas • Projects providing access for those with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land acquisition; • Feasibility study; • Planning and design; and/or • Construction.
Advisory Committee	<p>Representatives of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities and park districts • Open Space Equity Cabinet • Nonprofit and community-based organizations <p>Council gives input on representatives</p>	<p>No advisory committee structure given</p>
Project Selection Criteria	<p>Criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.</p>	<p>No additional criteria given for weighing relative merits of applications.</p>
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory committee makes recommendations • Executive transmits grant funding ordinance annually 	<p>No approval process given</p>

King County is proposed to be removed as an eligible entity and metropolitan park districts added. Executive staff state that “King County Parks received 403 applications for this grant program over the 2020-2024 levy period. No King County agency has

⁶⁰ Terms are summarized here based on Council staff understanding of Executive intent; Council staff has noted inconsistency in terminology that could be rectified.

⁶¹ Either opportunity areas under K.C.C. 26.12 or areas determined to have been based on the Determinants of Equity.

applied. Based on this data and given the program popularity and needs identified by nonprofit organizations, 'King County' was removed as an eligible entity. Currently, Metropolitan Parks Districts (MPDs) are eligible to apply for the Aquatics Grant Program, but no other Parks Levy grant programs. This gap is noted as a missing opportunity from the Parks Levy Community Advisory Committee since MPDs are parks and recreation service providers for a largely unincorporated geographic area where King County Parks and cities/towns do not own/operate parks." Changes to eligible entities is a policy choice.

Council staff asked Executive staff whether there was an intent to change the eligible project types, or if the categories proposed in Attachment A, along with verbiage about "traditionally underserved areas and communities" in the program purpose section, are intended to capture the same range of projects contained in the 2020 Parks Levy Grants Ordinance. Executive staff state the intent is that the same types of projects be eligible as currently.

Community Partnerships and Grants. The PO would direct that an unspecified amount of money from the 48% allocation, which also includes capital projects and the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center, be used for the Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) program. The proposed allocation plan states that the Executive plans to use \$11 million for the CPG program over the life of the levy. In previous levies, the CPG program amount has not been explicitly stated in the ordinance, and this practice is continued in the PO. Whether to add a funding amount for the CPG program in the PO is a policy choice.

The CPG Program originated in 2002. The goals of the CPG program, as adopted by the Council in 2003, are:

- Address present and future regional public parks, sports, and recreation facility needs without new tax funded operations and maintenance costs;
- Empower user groups, sports associations, and other community-based organizations to leverage their commitment, passion, and resources into long-term, high quality, self-sustaining public parks, sports, and recreation facilities; and
- Develop a region-wide support network of users, organizations, and citizens, in general, whose successes are interconnected with the political, financial, and operational successes of the region's parks, sports, and recreation system.⁶²

The PO defines the CPG program as "the program through which King County provides moneys to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations, and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing, operating, or maintaining a recreation facility or public park in unincorporated King County and King County towns and cities for public benefit."

For a typical CPG project, King County contributes the use of park land, as well as a grant to support the project. The community partner contributes the additional capital

⁶² Motion 11680

and in-kind resources needed to develop or renovate the facility, and signs a lease or use agreement with the County, through which it commits to carry out the operations, maintenance, and programming for the facility for a set period of time.

King County code sets the requirements for when Council involvement is required in disbursement of a CPG grant, shown in Table 11.⁶³

Table 11. Community Partnership and Grants – Council Involvement

Private Investment Amount	Council Involvement
<\$10,000	None
\$10,000 - \$99,999	Notification 30 days prior to signing of agreement to Transportation, Economy, and Environment chair and Councilmember in whose district the project is located
>\$100,000	Council approval by ordinance

City, Town, and Park District Distributions. King County cities and towns received funding from the past three voter-approved levies. The 2020-2025 levy allocated 8% of levy proceeds to these entities. The proposed 2026-2031 Parks Levy would increase the allocation to 9% of levy proceeds and add certain park districts within King County to the allocation list. Administrative costs are set at 1% of the allocation, which is \$190,000 for cities, towns, and park districts. Executive staff state that certain parks districts were added as recipients of the annual minimum allocation based on feedback from the Community Advisory Committee. Under the current levy, these parks districts were eligible for levy moneys if the district applied for grants supported by the levy. Staff state that these parks districts are parks and recreation service providers for specific geographic areas that own and operate parks but that are not directly supported by King County Parks or city/town parks.

Table 12 provides a high-level comparison of the proposed distributions in the 2026-2031 Parks Levy and the current levy.

⁶³ K.C.C. 7.08.110

**Table 12. City, Town, and Park District Distributions,
Proposed Levy vs. Current Levy**

	2020-2025 Current Levy	2026-2031 Proposed Levy
Allocation Percentage & Dollar Amount	8% (\$60 million)	9% (\$119 million)
Annual Minimum Allocation	\$25,000 annually to each city, and an additional \$75,000 annually to each city with a population greater than 4,000.	\$100,000 to each town and city in King County, as well as Fall City Metropolitan Park District, Si View Metropolitan Park District, and Vashon Park District.
Allocation of Remainder	50% distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 50% distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.	60% would be distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 40% would be distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.

Table 13 shows the total six-year pass-through allocations for each city, town, and park district in the current levy under the current parks levy, in a status quo scenario for the proposed levy, in the Executive-proposed new levy with a split of 60% in proportion to population/40% in proportion to assessed parcel values, and a scenario in which the new levy pass-through allocation remains a 50/50 split.

Executive staff state that the rationale for changing the remainder allocation from a 50/50 split to 60/40 was to more equitably distribute the levy proceeds to communities across King County. Staff state that smaller towns and cities would still receive an increase in annual levy distributions due to the increase in minimum annual allocation to \$100,000; staff state this would offset the impacts of changing the remainder allocation formula.

Table 13. City, Town, and Park District Allocation Comparison

Jurisdiction	Current Parks Levy Allocation (6-year total, 2020-2025)	Status Quo Scenario (6-year total, 2026-2031)	Executive Proposal Allocation Formula: 60% Pop / 40% AV (6-year total, 2026-2031)	Executive Proposal w/ Current Formula 50% Pop / 50% AV (6-year total, 2026-2031)
Algona	\$210,510	\$292,097	\$736,398	\$733,755
Auburn	\$1,901,032	\$3,655,252	\$3,596,019	\$3,475,892
Beaux Arts Village	\$161,301	\$176,539	\$622,761	\$624,981
Bellevue	\$4,661,610	\$10,137,999	\$9,148,563	\$9,578,066
Black Diamond	\$734,293	\$915,363	\$900,894	\$896,850
Bothell	\$1,397,709	\$2,473,284	\$2,277,614	\$2,363,312
Burien	\$1,426,232	\$2,540,264	\$2,528,210	\$2,426,360
Carnation	\$190,045	\$244,039	\$690,645	\$688,519
Clyde Hill	\$302,846	\$508,933	\$897,611	\$937,861
Covington	\$942,767	\$1,404,931	\$1,400,041	\$1,357,677
Des Moines	\$1,109,525	\$1,796,533	\$1,795,407	\$1,726,290
Duvall	\$758,890	\$973,127	\$958,361	\$951,222
Enumclaw	\$808,935	\$1,090,648	\$1,087,137	\$1,061,844
Fall City MPD	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$600,000
Federal Way	\$2,099,470	\$4,121,249	\$4,155,022	\$3,914,533
Hunts Point	\$206,498	\$282,676	\$703,964	\$724,887
Issaquah	\$1,480,034	\$2,666,609	\$2,521,995	\$2,545,287
Kenmore	\$1,055,812	\$1,670,397	\$1,620,659	\$1,607,559
Kent	\$2,912,018	\$6,029,381	\$5,925,949	\$5,710,646
Kirkland	\$2,833,374	\$5,844,697	\$5,401,809	\$5,536,805
Lake Forest Park	\$868,282	\$1,230,015	\$1,194,994	\$1,193,029
Maple Valley	\$1,084,866	\$1,738,626	\$1,715,841	\$1,671,782
Medina	\$371,554	\$670,282	\$1,017,526	\$1,089,738
Mercer Island	\$1,424,720	\$2,536,714	\$2,286,070	\$2,423,018
Milton	\$181,778	\$224,625	\$670,605	\$670,244
Newcastle	\$896,063	\$1,295,252	\$1,244,737	\$1,254,437
Normandy Park	\$742,228	\$933,997	\$911,929	\$914,390
North Bend	\$765,516	\$988,687	\$965,495	\$965,869
Pacific	\$709,879	\$858,032	\$858,030	\$842,884
Redmond	\$2,440,512	\$4,922,128	\$4,560,158	\$4,668,396
Renton	\$2,463,220	\$4,975,455	\$4,853,794	\$4,718,591
Sammamish	\$2,138,362	\$4,212,581	\$3,923,342	\$4,000,503
SeaTac	\$1,095,634	\$1,763,912	\$1,764,761	\$1,695,584
Seattle	\$16,494,538	\$37,925,610	\$35,738,135	\$35,734,393
Shoreline	\$1,650,740	\$3,067,484	\$3,003,754	\$2,922,629
Si View MPD	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$600,000

Skykomish	\$153,082	\$157,237	\$606,904	\$606,812
Snoqualmie	\$873,949	\$1,243,323	\$1,212,419	\$1,205,556
Tukwila	\$1,087,392	\$1,744,556	\$1,663,988	\$1,677,364
Vashon PD	\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$600,000
Woodinville	\$927,672	\$1,369,483	\$1,301,957	\$1,324,310
Yarrow Point	\$221,534	\$317,986	\$736,503	\$758,125
TOTAL	\$61,784,423	\$119,000,000	\$119,000,000	\$119,000,000

Notes:

WA OFM Population: Sourced from the Washington Office of Financial Management’s April 1 population estimate for 2024. Any cities partially in other counties are allocated funding based on the portion of the population living within King County.

KCAO Taxable AV: Based on the tax rolls as of October 2024. The calculation assumes that the ratio of both population and assessed value between the cities remains fixed throughout the duration of the levy.

Current Parks Levy Allocation: \$25K/yr to all cities and towns; \$75K/yr to all cities and towns with populations greater than 4,000; remaining disbursement according to formula (50/50 split between population and total assessed value).

Status Quo Scenario: Using same formula as "Current Parks Levy Allocation," with funds totaling \$119M.

Executive Proposal Allocation: \$100K/yr to all cities, towns, and park districts largely serving unincorporated areas; remaining disbursement according to adjusted formula (60/40 split between population and total assessed value).

Executive Proposal w/ Current Formula: Same as "Executive Proposal Allocation," using current formula for comparison (50/50 split between population and total assessed value).

Educational and Civic Venue Distributions. The Woodland Park Zoo and the Seattle Aquarium have both received distributions in past levies; the zoo in the past three levies, and the aquarium in the current levy. The 2026-2031 Parks Levy provides allocations to those venues, as well as new allocations to Friends of Waterfront Park and Memorial Stadium; Executive staff state “alignment with Parks Levy goals” as the rationale for making distributions to each of these organizations. Tables 14 and 15 below compare the allocations to the Woodland Park Zoo and the Seattle Aquarium as proposed and in the current levy.

Table 14. Woodland Park Zoo Allocation Comparison

	2020-2025 Current Levy	2026-2031 Proposed Levy
Dollar Amount Allocated	\$36 million	Up to \$42 million
Allowed Uses	Environmental education, emphasizing accessibility to traditionally underserved populations throughout the County; Horticulture and	Environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; Horticulture and maintenance of buildings and grounds; Conservation of threatened species; and Development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to

2020-2025 Current Levy		2026-2031 Proposed Levy
	maintenance of buildings and grounds; Conservation of threatened species; and Development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and habitats from climate change.	animals and habitats from climate change.

Executive staff state that additional specific use of the allocation includes community learning and engagement programs, family engagement programs, program-funded admissions and transportation for School to Zoo, volunteer engagement, education program registration and management, visitor research and program evaluation, empathy initiatives, creative services/signage, zoo keeper talks and tours (raptor program), website development and support, and information technology support of zoo programs.

Table 15. Seattle Aquarium Allocation Comparison

2020-2025 Current Levy		2026-2031 Proposed Levy
Dollar Amount Allocated	\$8 million	Up to \$15 million
Allowed Uses	Capital costs for the Ocean Pavilion project to amplify the aquarium's existing global conservation efforts.	Environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; Maintenance of buildings and grounds; Conservation of threatened species; and Development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and habitats from climate change.

According to Executive staff, more specific uses of the Seattle Aquarium allocation include supporting school groups, offering free community tickets, discounts for seniors and tribal members, summer camps, scholarships, beach naturalist program, Cedar River salmon journey program, community science program, youth ocean advocates program, Community Day events, urban kelp research, microplastic research, and symposiums around species reintroduction, habitat restoration, and ocean policy.

New in the proposed levy are the following allocations:

- Up to \$9 million for distribution to Friends of Waterfront Park, which shall be used solely for: accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; support for a clean and safe environment; free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and inclusive community partnerships; and
- Up to \$2.5 million for distribution to the Memorial Stadium project, which shall be used solely for capital costs. Seattle Public Schools (SPS), the City of Seattle, and One Roof Stadium Partnership (a consortium of Seattle Kraken, One Roof Foundation, and Climate Pledge Arena) plan for a new multiuse student and community events facility to replace the 77-year-old Memorial Stadium with a new facility for year-round athletics, education, entertainment, and a focus on expanding the ways the stadium serves students and other youth from all backgrounds. Funding from sources other than the Parks Levy include:
 - \$66.5 million from the 2022 SPS Capital Levy;
 - \$41 million from the City of Seattle; and
 - \$4 million in state funding.

One Roof Stadium Partnership will invest in, design, build, operate, and maintain the new stadium, with SPS continuing to own the stadium and maintain priority use.

Administrative costs are set at 1% of the allocation which totals \$685,000 for educational and civic venues.

When asked whether these venues were eligible for or have received proceeds from the Doors Open Levy, Executive staff stated initial research into this program confirmed that Woodland Park Zoo and the Seattle Aquarium are eligible to apply for funding via that levy, but because the funding amounts were capped at certain dollar amounts (i.e., \$1 million for these large organizations), those proceeds were deemed insufficient to supplement or replace funding from the Parks Levy.

Oversight Board. Parks levy oversight boards have been in place since the 2004-2007 Parks Levy to monitor the expenditures of levy proceeds.

The structure and nomination process of the board has not changed from the current levy and is as follows:

- Nine members with each Councilmember nominating a candidate for the board who resides in the Councilmember's district no later than March 31, 2026.

- The Executive must appoint the candidate by May 31, 2026. If the Executive does not meet that deadline, the Executive must request that the Councilmember nominate another candidate by June 30, 2026.
- All members must be confirmed by the Council.
- Members may not be elected or appointed officials of any unit of government, however individuals serving in a civic capacity on a local board or commission are eligible.

Duties of the board include reviewing and reporting on the expenditure of levy proceeds in 2026 to the Executive, the Council, and the Regional Policy Committee by December 31, 2027, and then annually thereafter. The board expires on December 31, 2032.

Exemptions. As in the current levy, the proposed levy allows exemption for low-income senior citizens, disabled veterans, and other people with disabilities from the regular property tax increase on their residences if they have been approved for an exemption under RCW 84.36.381. Taxpayers who have combined disposable income of \$84,000 or less AND meet one of the following requirements as of December 31st of the year before the taxes are due would be exempt:

- At least 61 years of age or older;
- Retired from regular gainful employment due to a disability; or
- Veteran of the armed forces of the United States receiving compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs at one of the following:
 - Combined service-connected evaluation rating of 80% or higher.
 - Total disability rating for a service-connected disability without regard to evaluation percent.

Executive staff state that exemptions are already removed from the assessed value that is assumed in the proposed levy revenue model and do not impact the total estimated revenue for the levy period at the proposed rate. The \$3 million listed in the proposed levy allocation plan is a forecast of the cost to the levy of new exemptions being added to tax rolls and/or changes in assessed value that make exempt property a larger overall share of total assessed value.

Table 16 shows the value of current property tax exemptions across King County, according to the most recent data from the King County Assessor. In total, based on assessed values (AV) for 2025, \$128.2 billion of property has an exemption and if it were taxed at the proposed levy rate of \$0.2443 per \$1,000 in AV, the exempted property would generate approximately \$31.3 million annually in levy revenue, or approximately \$188 million in revenue over the life of the proposed levy.

Table 16. Total Countywide Property Tax Exemptions, By Type

Exemption Type	Total Appraised	Total Taxable	Exempt Assessed Value	Estimated Levy Revenue Reduction from Exemption (2026)	Six-year total*
Current Use	\$3,514,574,105	\$2,308,003,056	\$1,206,571,049	\$294,765	\$1,768,592
Exempt (mostly Gov-owned)**	\$109,319,435,407	\$20,750,700	\$109,298,684,707	\$26,701,669	\$160,210,012
Senior	\$18,978,189,170	\$12,620,050,594	\$6,358,138,576	\$1,553,293	\$9,319,760
Home Improvement	\$415,554,000	\$387,141,200	\$28,412,800	\$6,941	\$41,647
Historic Property	\$979,620,500	\$336,143,782	\$643,476,718	\$157,201	\$943,208
Multi-family tax exemption	\$69,985,440	\$18,162,900	\$51,822,540	\$12,660	\$75,961
Multiple Exemptions	\$21,621,927	\$11,487,388	\$10,134,539	\$2,476	\$14,855
Non-Profit	\$10,595,600,951	\$24,685,952	\$10,570,914,999	\$2,582,475	\$15,494,847
No Exemptions	\$829,378,195,296	\$829,378,195,296	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property Exemptions	\$19,945,334,465	\$19,927,374,340	\$17,960,125	\$4,388	\$26,326
Total	\$993,218,111,261	\$865,031,995,208	\$128,186,116,053	\$31,315,868	\$187,895,209

*Six-year estimate assumes no AV growth or changes in levy rate due to inflation or population growth.

**Exempt is primarily government owned, but also includes some Multifamily Property Tax Exempt (MFTE) and non-profit exemptions.

If members wish for processing costs for tax exemptions to be an eligible use of levy proceeds, the levy ordinance would need to be amended.

Policy Issues. This section briefly summarizes key policy issues identified by Council staff for the Council’s consideration. Additional information on these topics can be found in the Analysis section of the staff report.

Levy Rate. The proposed initial levy rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV would represent an increase over the status quo rate, which would have been approximately 19.52 cents per \$1,000 AV if the current levy rate and limit factor were extended into 2026 and future years. In other words, if hypothetically, the current levy was extended into 2026 at a status quo calculation (applying the 2026 limit factor and assessed value assumptions to the 2025 levy collections), the effective rate for 2026 would have been 19.52 cents. The proposed initial levy rate for the 2026-2031 Parks Levy represents a policy choice for members.

Specificity in the Levy Ordinance. The Executive transmitted a proposed allocation plan, which gives detail on specific projects, programs, and funding amounts that are not included in the PO or its attachments. In other words, this level of specificity is not included in the legislation before the Council. As a result, the County could, at a later date, choose not to fund these projects or programs, or change the funding amounts. Depending on the level of specificity, these changes might not be immediately apparent in a budget ordinance.

Executive staff state that proposed allocations are not explicitly enumerated in the ordinance as they are planning-level estimates and may change in the future.

Whether to amend the ordinance to adopt the proposed allocation plan, introduce a companion motion to adopt an allocation plan, and/or to include additional specific allocations in the PO, is a policy choice for members to consider.

For the 2020-2025 Parks Levy, the Council adopted, simultaneous to levy ordinance adoption,⁶⁴ a companion motion⁶⁵ that included the allocation plan.

For the proposed 2026-2031 levy, a proposed companion motion (Proposed Motion 2025-0077) has been introduced. Proposed Motion 2025-0077 would adopt a funding allocation plan attached to the motion. While the attachment to the motion is currently the Executive's proposed allocation plan, members may choose to amend the allocation plan; this would be a policy choice.

The Proposed Motion would stipulate that the amounts in the allocation plan may be modified when deemed advisable or necessary in the judgment of the council, through adoption of an appropriations ordinance. If the Executive wished to make changes to allocations within the allocation plan, a report would be required to be submitted to the Council detailing the proposed changes. This process mirrors what was adopted in the 2020-2025 Parks Levy Motion. These processes are also policy choices.

Changes to Town/City/Park District Allocations. The PO would increase the minimum annual allocation for all towns and cities to \$100,000 from a population-based range of \$25,000 to \$75,000, adds certain parks districts to the list of recipients eligible for the minimum annual allocation, and changes the allocation of the remainder from a 50/50 split to 60% distributed in proportion to each town or city's population and 40% distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city. Whether to approve these changes or maintain the allocations under the current levy is a policy choice for members.

New Educational and Civic Venue Funding Recipients. Increases to funding levels for the Woodland Park Zoo and the Seattle Aquarium, as well as adding new allocations to Friends of the Waterfront Park and Memorial Stadium, are policy choices for the members.

Grant Program Changes. The PO increases funding maximums (to varying degrees) for four existing grant programs, and eliminates one existing grant program, the Open Space - River Corridors Grant Program. These changes are a policy choice.

For the PCOS, Aquatic Facilities, and Healthy Communities and Parks Grant Programs, guidance related to advisory committee structure, project selection criteria, and approval process would not be carried forward into the new levy. Executive staff state that they

⁶⁴ Ordinance 18890.

⁶⁵ Motion 15378.

intend to set these processes internally for the current levy. Executive staff provided the following anticipated changes to the current process:

1. *Defining a consistent grant framework in terms of goals*
 - i. *Ordinance 19166 legislation uses terms interchangeably and inconsistently (goals, priorities).*
2. *Establishing consistent biennial grants cycles*
 - ii. *Reduce burden for applicants (extensive requirements to apply, contract, report, etc.).*
 - iii. *Allows for larger number of grant funds available within given request for application timeframe.*
3. *Establishing a streamlined grant approval process so that grantees can receive awards sooner*
 - iv. *Provide notification of the award to Council verses legislative approval (similar to Youth and Amateur Sports Grants).*
 - v. *The legislative process can take several months which impacts distribution of funds to grantees; grantees have provided feedback that this delay is an obstacle for their organizations to begin work on key parks and recreation projects. Currently, it can take anywhere from 6-8 months from application to receipt of funds.*

Whether to formally adopt committee structure, project selection criteria, and approval processes for these three grant programs, with or without changes, is a policy choice.

For the same three programs, changes are proposed to eligible entities and projects. These changes are a policy choice.

Overall Allocations. The PO would make changes to various allocations compared to the 2020-2025 Parks Levy. These allocations could be modified or other allocations could potentially be included by members. Depending on their nature, changes to allocations could potentially necessitate reductions or changes to the estimated amounts for the currently planned programming found in the proposed allocation plan.

Attachments A and B. Attachment A (General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs) and Attachment B (Open Space, Natural Lands, and Urban Green Space Acquisition Guidelines) specify processes and eligibility criteria for use of levy proceeds for grant programs and open space acquisitions. Because these processes and criteria would be part of the levy ordinance, the County would not be able to deviate from them in the future once approved by voters. Whether to adopt these guidelines as part of the ordinance or adopt them by companion motion (if one were introduced) is a policy choice.

ANSWERS TO COUNCILMEMBER QUESTIONS FROM 3/12 BFM Meeting

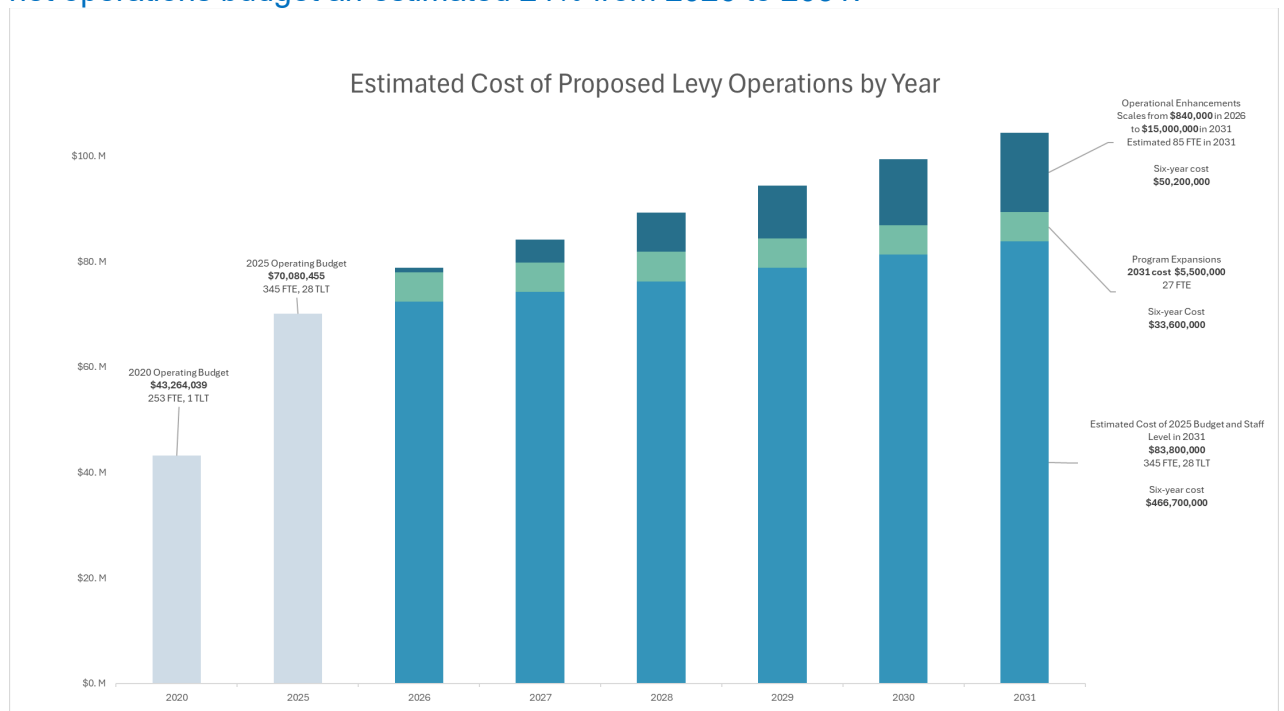
1. Woodland Park Zoo and Aquarium levy investment detail.

Please see the Zoo and Aquarium Levy Investments document (Attachment 15 to this staff report).

2. Do you have any additional information to provide to support the increase in Parks operations and maintenance? What would not be done without this increase?

The proposed increase to operations funding is necessary to maintain existing levels of service for our growing Parks system. If the current levy allocation is carried forward (\$299M over six years), that level of funding would require the division to reduce staff, which would risk a significant degradation of existing parks and make delivering planned capital projects during the levy period nearly impossible.

The ongoing portion of the 2025 adopted Parks operating budget, minus business revenue, totals about \$70M and accounts for 345 FTE positions, 28 TLT positions, and supporting costs for their work (central rates, equipment, supplies). As shown in the chart below, sustaining the current level of operational investment is projected to cost **\$466.7M** over the life of the proposed levy. In percentage terms, the proposed operating growth from first year to last would be slower than the current levy. From 2020 to 2025 the net operating budget grew 62%. The proposed levy would grow the net operations budget an estimated 24% from 2026 to 2031.



New or Expanded Programs – Beyond the existing staffing level, the proposed levy would fund 27 positions dedicated to new or expanding programs listed under the operations section of the allocation plan. Without the proposed increase in

operational funding, none of the new and expanded programs would move forward -- this would include:

- Ending the Jobs and Housing program once the current allocation of COVID relief funding is exhausted
- Not expanding the Parks patrol program or the safety program
- Not cataloging and planning for maintenance of exiting assets,
- Allowing private encroachment on Parks properties
- Not to expand popular programs like the Youth Conservation Corps.

Operational Enhancements – In addition to programs outlined above, the proposed operations funding would support up to 85 positions and associated costs for enhancing existing operations to keep pace with:

- The growth of the King County Parks system during the current levy, and
- The additional growth shown in the CIP section of the proposed allocation plan.

The focus of the operational enhancements is adding frontline staff that support the day-to-day needs of the system. In planning for the proposed levy, Parks estimated that about 60 of the 85 operational enhancement positions would be frontline staff. Over the life of the proposed 2026-2031 Parks levy, Parks estimates that the Parks system will expand by about 3,500 acres of fee-owned land. That is a faster pace than during the current levy period (about 2,400 acres from 2020-2024) because of lower CFT matching requirements that were instituted in 2024. In addition to new acres of parks-owned lands, the proposed levy would increase the operational requirements of existing parks by adding 12 miles of regional trails, a new community center, new dog parks, a new park at Lakeland North, new backcountry trails, at least one new splash pad, and new trailhead parking facilities.

Without additional staff, it will be difficult for the division to maintain these new assets and keep existing assets in working order. In sum, the division will need to continue to be reactive, rather than proactive. This will result in slower response times to public and internal inquiries. In addition, there will be a higher likelihood of facility closures and a likely increase in user complaints due to unaddressed major maintenance needs.

Parks plans to add the remaining positions in areas that support operations and capital delivery, such as project managers, contracting specialists, finance officers, and HR staff. These additions are critical to building the capacity within Parks to hire and support new operations staff, as well as deliver the capital projects in the proposed allocation plan.

Below are Executive staff responses to additional follow up questions from Council staff:

Why are the inflation number provided in February different from the numbers provided in March?

The February analysis incorrectly applied the 6% inflation growth to the 6-year total (\$299M), rather than the last year of the levy (\$70M in 2025).

As shown in [Answers to Councilmember questions from 3/12 BFM], the Parks operations costs were higher in 2025 (\$70M) than they were in 2020 (\$43M). So, the estimated costs to provide the current level of staffing for the life of the levy is \$466.7M. Please note that this level of investment would have implications to service levels, which are detailed in the [Answers to Councilmember questions from 2/26 BFM] responses.

What positions are missing from the most recent response? Where is the remainder of the 150-170 FTE referenced in [Answers to Councilmember questions from 2/26 BFM]?

The [Answers to Councilmember questions from 3/12 BFM] reference “positions,” which includes both TLTs and FTEs.

In [Answers to Councilmember questions from 3/12 BFM]: In addition to the 85 positions for “operational enhancements/increasing capacity” and the 27 positions for “new programs/new and expanded programs”, the proposal also includes 28 TLT to FTE conversions and 10 Youth Conservation Corps intern positions.

3. How would the proposed levy expand access to ballfields?

According to Executive staff:

As noted in previous council responses, several different levy allocations would support expanded access to ballfields. King County Parks provides areas to play in various forms, ranging from developed capital assets (ballfields with lights and synthetic turf) to more informal natural areas where people can throw a frisbee or kick a ball. Expanding the full range of outdoor recreation opportunities is supported by the levy, as summarized below.

Built capital assets

Staff have provided answers to previous Council questions about ballfield access, reserved hours, and improvements. Examples include investments to keep existing ballfields clean, safe, and open (general infrastructure rehab, a portion of \$23M) and investments to expand ballfields and available recreational hours (e.g., converting South County Ballfields to multi-use artificial turf fields, \$19M; investing in new ballfields and sport courts, \$3M).

Natural areas

The levy proposal continues Parks’ strong commitment to the Land Conservation Initiative by sustaining open space acquisition investments to match Conservation Futures funds. The proposed levy would continue investing at a similar level to today (\$16M/year, \$96M total). This body of work includes efforts to improve equitable access in “Opportunity Areas.” A map and more details can be found here: [Opportunity Areas Viewer](#). Ongoing conservation work in urban and rural settings provides more outdoor space for informal play and contact with nature.

Fee Assistance Program

In addition to built assets and improving equitable access through acquisitions in “Opportunity Areas,” the division just published a new Public Rule Chapter 7.08.060

allowing for the implementation of a “Parks & Recreation Facility Fee Assistance Program.” This new program is intended to remove barriers and increase access to recreation facilities for King County’s most underserved communities. Through this new public rule, Parks has the discretionary authority to waive, in whole or in part, user fees or provide or facilitate scholarships for persons or organizations that serve persons meeting an eligibility threshold of two hundred percent of the federal poverty level. This is intended to help ensure that no one is denied access to parks and recreation facilities based solely on an inability to pay.

ANSWERS TO COMMITTEE MEMBER QUESTIONS FROM 3/12 RPC Meeting

4. Is there an opportunity to create better equity in city distributions, particularly for less-funded municipalities?

According to Executive staff:

Yes. The adjustments proposed in the city distribution methodology (e.g., increasing the base annual allocation for cities with fewer than 4,000 residents; shifting the distribution formula to weight population more than assessed value) are intended to create better equity. However, there are many ways to adjust the methodology.

5. Can you provide data on allocations by zip code in the current levy?

Overall Current Distribution of Investments:

Reimbursement of Election Costs	\$736,956	
Seattle Aquarium	\$8,000,000	
Publicly Owned Pools	\$44,000,000	
Open Space River Corridors	\$22,000,000	
King County Parks Operations & Maintenance	\$308,654,547	40%
King County Parks Capital Program	\$362,669,093	47%
Cities and Towns within King County	\$61,730,909	8%
Woodland Park Zoo	\$38,581,818	5%
Total 2020-2025 Estimated Distributions	\$846,373,324	

Operating Expenses by Parks District

The document Parks Operational Investments by Geography (Attachment 15 to this staff report) shows the actual expenditures by Park District and, where possible, by facility. Zip codes associated with each Park District or facility are also provided. Please note that for the years 2020 through 2024, actual expenditures are provided. Information for Parks’ planned budget in 2025 is also provided (actuals are not yet available).

Parks districts do not correspond to Council Districts; please see the King County Parks Map All Districts (Attachment 16 to this staff report) for more detail.

Countywide Operating Expenses

Nearly two-thirds of Parks Operations and Maintenance budget supports countywide needs, and is not easily assigned to a geography. Examples include:

- **Operations:** Section administration and supervision, central maintenance facility, scheduling, programming support, volunteer program, and specialized crews (backcountry trails, noxious weeds, greenhouse, restoration).
- **Capital program:** Examples include Capital planning, land management (addressing encroachments), capital project management, playground program, etc.
- **Other business functions and agency support:** Director’s Office, marketing and communications, community engagement, administrative support, finance, human resources, policy support, etc.

Capital Projects in the Current Parks Levy by Council District

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	Multiple	Total
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center							1				1
Regional Trail Connections			2		3	2		1	1	2	11
Regional Trail Connections (Pass-through Funding)	4				1		1				6
Regional Trail Critical Crossings						3			1		4
Other Improvements to Regional Trails										2	2
Infrastructure Improvement at Existing Sites		1	2				1	1			5
Play Area Rehabilitation	1		2					1	2		6
Synthetic Turf Ballfields Replacement			3						3		6
Ballfield and Sport Court Rehab	1							2	1		4
Trailhead Access Improvement			1					1	1		3
Backcountry Trail Rehabilitation			2				1	1	3		7
Total	6	1	12	0	4	5	4	7	12	4	55

6. Is technical assistance available to cities to help prepare project proposals? How does the County provide technical assistance to help jurisdictions get requests in for funding?

According to Executive staff:

Parks Grants: King County provides technical assistance through grant-writing consultation for small nonprofits (defined as fewer than 20 full-time employees and an operating budget of less than \$4 million per year). We also have several options to help any grant applicant, including cities, with any questions they have about the application, the evaluation process, or specific questions about their proposal. The best way to take advantage of this is to attend one of our open office hours, or if those times don't work, to email ParksGrants@kingcounty.gov and request a specific time.

Parks staff will be available to answer applicant questions during office hours on:

- **Levy Grants** - Wednesdays from February 26 to April 2, 12 to 12:45 p.m.
 - [Download the calendar invitation](#) or [join a meeting in progress](#).
- **YASG** - Wednesdays from April 9 to April 30, 12 to 12:45 p.m.
 - [Download the calendar invitation](#) or [join a meeting in progress](#).

Conservation Futures Program: The Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) Program manager provides technical assistance (TA) to cities and non-profits in two ways:

- It matches applicants with appropriate consultants from a set of five county contractors.
 - These providers help applicants refine their written proposals and prepare presentations to the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee.
 - TA providers are drawn from a pool of consultants often shared by other grant programs, including Parks Levy Grants and Best Starts for Kids.
 - TA capacity is usually far greater than demand, though the project manager tries to prioritize applications that address green space equity if needed (those potentially eligible for a match waiver).
- The program manager also provides project guidance throughout the grant round, as requested by applicants.

7. Can you provide information on how shovel-readiness is prioritized for projects? What criteria does King County use to determine whether its own capital projects are shovel-ready enough to be included for funding in the parks levy? Specifically interested in the criteria used to determine that the work on the Interurban, Green River, and Soos Creek Trails is ready to be funded. If Parks is designing and moving projects forward, how does it prioritize these projects?

According to Executive staff:

The levy proposal includes a portfolio of capital projects in all different phases, from projects that have only been preliminarily scoped and still need to have feasibility studies conducted, to projects that are “shovel ready” (i.e., ready to start construction).

A project is considered shovel ready, when final design and construction documents are completed and all the required permits, approvals, and agreements are in place. If a project is shovel-ready it is a high priority to be included in the levy proposal. However, it is important to have a range of projects in different phases in the capital project levy proposal because different staff and different levels of cash flow are required at each phase. Revenue-backed appropriation covering the full cost of the project is required before a Parks Capital project can be advertised for construction. And while the County can, to a certain extent, plan on future revenue collections for those purposes, Parks receives tax revenue twice a year, and having a diverse pipeline of projects in different phases helps avoid cash flow issues.

Depending on the project complexity and scale, the planning, preliminary design, and final design phases of a capital project can take anywhere from six months to six years to complete and may cost upwards of \$10M. Parks relies on levy funds to get projects shovel ready.

The trails chosen for construction in the levy proposal are from the Regional Trail Needs Report and were evaluated for priority on the following criteria: equity, connectivity, potential use, readiness, whether we have external commitments on the project, and level of community support. The Interurban Trail South, the Green River Trail Extension, and the Soos Creek Trail Segment 5a ranked high enough using these criteria that they were included in the pool of potential projects selected for the next levy. Further elevating their priority is the fact that planning and design work on each of these projects began in the 2020-2025 levy period and Parks is committed to the completion of these projects.

ANSWERS TO COUNCILMEMBER QUESTIONS FROM 2/26 BFM Meeting

- 1. Regarding property tax exemptions, how effective has the county been in enrolling people? What is that process? Do we know how many people are being missed and is there any type of outreach or assistance available to bring more people into the program?**

A 2020 proviso report showed that in 2019, there were 1,808 applications. Approximately 94% of applications were approved. The process of applying for a property tax exemption is either through an online portal⁶⁶ or through paper copies.

According to a December 2024 report by the King County Auditor,⁶⁷ the Department of Assessments has created a comprehensive customer service strategy which includes customer communications, outreach, application support, and creating and maintaining a positive working environment for the team. The strategy includes equity goals like supporting taxpayers regardless of language, resources, or

⁶⁶ [Property Tax Exemption Portal](#)

⁶⁷ *Second Follow-up on Property Tax Exemptions: Stronger Systems Needed to Meet Demand*, pg. 3.

abilities. The King County Assessor's website provides a guide to property tax exemptions.⁶⁸

2. How close are we to the \$5.90 limit that would trigger prorationing?

Based on the August 2024 OEFA forecast, assuming an initial parks levy rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV in 2026, there would be about \$1.09 of room in 2026, and between \$0.73 to \$1.09 in the next six years, before the closest district would hit the \$5.90 limit. During the 2026-2031 time frame, the closest levy district to reaching the \$5.90 limit would be Vashon Island, with about \$0.73 of room in 2027.⁶⁹ This calculation includes the AFIS levy renewal passed in early 2025. The Executive is expected to transmit a proposed EMS levy renewal later in 2025; EMS levies are not subject to the \$5.90 limit.

3. What is included in this levy proposal related to operating support for trail safety?

According to Executive staff, Parks will soon launch its first Parks Ranger Program to help inform trail users about safe trail practices. The Levy proposal includes funding to sustain and grow Parks' Ranger and safety programs. In addition, Parks implements targeted educational campaigns about trail etiquette when needs arise, which Parks' Community Investments & Engagement team will continue to implement in the next levy.

4. Can you provide further information on the planned trail lighting investments in the CIP list (trail intersection lighting emergent needs) including locations and dollar amounts if known? Are there any other planned investments in lighting?

According to Executive staff, the proposed levy includes \$20M for emergent need projects that arise during the levy period. This includes potential lighting projects. The emergent needs programmatic project is, by design, structured to allow for flexibility as needs arise across the system. As such, locations for lighting investments in 2026-2031 are not yet identified.

Other planned investments in lighting are contingent upon the determination to extend regional trail hours beyond the current time frame of thirty minutes before sunrise and thirty minutes after sunset. This is currently under review.

6. Can you provide a list of the locations of the fish passage barrier removal projects that will be undertaken with the funding for this ordinance? How much additional money would be needed to complete work on all 50ish

⁶⁸ [Guide to Property Tax Exemptions](#)

⁶⁹ State law currently removes regular park and recreation district property tax levies from the \$5.90 limit if levied on an island within a county with a population over two million (i.e., Vashon Island). This exemption, unless changed by state law, expires January 1, 2027. (House Bill 1034, Chapter 117, Laws of 2021)

Parks fish passage barriers? What is the cost and feasibility for completing all the fish passage barrier removal projects?

According to Executive staff, the proposed upcoming fish passage projects are still in the planning stage, and so all information provided is based on planning level estimates. As estimates become firmer, it is possible more projects can be added to the 6-year workplan.

Based on current information, the proposed \$10 million would be allocated to the fish passage project listed below:

- Snoqualmie Valley Trail – Tributary to Horseshoe Lake, north of NE Carnation Farm Rd (FPS-2373)
- Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park – Red Town Trailhead at Coal Creek (FPS-2258 & FPS-1513)
- Foothills Trail – Tributary to Boise Creek (FPS-8175)
- Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area – Tributary to Newaukum Creek (FPS-13689)

These are planning level cost estimates; however, in current dollars, the total cost for each Parks fish passage project ranges from approximately \$1-5M. The most expensive projects are typically associated with regional trails and roads that cross deep ravines created by streams. On the lower end of the cost range are projects that simply remove a culvert altogether because a crossing is no longer needed. Parks estimates that the total cost to remedy all 50 of the remaining fish passage barriers would range in cost from \$100-250M in current dollars.

7. Please provide a list of participants that advised the levy proposal.

Members of the Community Advisory Committee represented the following organizations or groups:

- Backcountry Horsemen of Washington
- Eastrail Partners
- Federal Way Black Collective
- Issaquah Alps Trail Club
- King County Parks Directors – Multiple Cities
- King County Play Equity Coalition
- Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association
- Leafline Trails Coalition
- Living Well Kent
- Mountains to Sound Greenway
- Open Space Equity Cabinet
- Pacific Northwest Swim
- Parks Levy Oversight Board
- REI
- Seattle Aquarium
- Seattle Parks Foundation
- Si View Metro Parks District

- Skyway Coalition
- SnoValley Chamber of Commerce
- The Wilderness Society
- Trust for Public Land
- Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust
- White Center Community Development Association
- Woodland Park Zoo

8. What is the current allocation per city or town?

This information is provided in Table 16 of the staff report.

9. How does this proposal address unmet regional needs in parks spaces? How are historically underserved areas addressed?

According to Executive staff, During the community engagement process, which included direct engagement with the community and feedback from the Community Advisory Committee, “improving safety and belonging” was identified as a priority for underserved communities. The proposed Levy has a focus on major maintenance, much of which is targeted in underserved communities, which is a key component of making parks feel safe and welcoming.

In response to community feedback, the proposed Levy would invest significant funds for park rehabilitation and development in underserved communities, thus increasing recreational access. Sites for this work include:

- \$10M for the development of a new park near Federal Way (Lakeland North).
- \$19M to convert the existing South County Ballfields complex to synthetic turf, thus increasing access to recreational facilities in South King County.
- \$13M to complete the design and begin construction of the Skyway Community Center.
- \$4M to rehabilitate Sunset Park based on community engagement and input.
- Over \$76M is proposed to advance planning, design, and construction of regional trails connecting communities in South King County to the larger regional trail network, including Lake to Sound Trail, Green River Trail Extension North, Interurban Trail South, and Soos Creek Trail.
- As part of the “Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship” allocation category, funds are also included to be responsive to community requests to activate and improve access to parks and recreation in Opportunity Areas.

10. What is the capacity of Parks to complete these investments in six years? How many additional FTEs would be hired to complete the levy work and at what cost?

According to Executive staff:

Parks’ current workforce capacity is aligned with the needs of the 2020-2025 levy. The adopted 2025 budget appropriation funded by the current Parks Levy is 345.30 regular FTE positions across ten (10) operating sections and work units.

From 2020 to the current 2025 adopted budget, Parks' workforce increased by 47%, an average of 8% annually. In addition, Parks also employed more than 50 term-limited temporary positions to support critical services and projects within day-to-day operations.

In order to deliver the 2026-2031 levy proposal, which was developed to address the unmet needs identified by the advisory committee, Parks expects that a similar level of growth would be required in the Division's workforce during the next levy period. To support the expanded work program for the division, Parks estimates growing its workforce by approximately 45 to 50% (150 to 170 FTEs). Similar to our current levy period, this represents an increase of approximately 8% annually. Note that some workforce growth is necessary to simply catch up with needed maintenance and stewardship of existing assets. Additional hiring would ramp up during the levy period to strategically match system growth and capital project delivery needs. The expansion of the workforce would cost approximately \$200M over six years (fully loaded).

Information on the 150 to 170 FTEs included in the proposed Parks Levy is detailed below. Specific job classifications would be determined in coordination with the Department of Human Resources and resourcing levels would ultimately depend on the adopted scope of work for the Division.

- **More than half (75 to 90 FTE) would directly support Operations and Maintenance needs.**
 - More than 50 FTE would be Park Specialists, working in 250 King County parks every day to catch up and keep up with O&M and system needs. This is in addition to 175 miles of regional trails and 250 miles of backcountry trails that need to be maintained on a regular basis.

The remaining would provide more specialized Operations support: Skilled trades, cultural resources, project management, equipment operations, carpentry, painting, plumbing, electrical, utilities, equipment operators, irrigation, facilities, etc.
- **Approximately 25 FTE would support strategic program expansions and enhancements.** These investments would enhance safety, belonging, programs, and property management (e.g., Safety Program, Parks Patrol, Skyway CC Operations, asset management, encroachments, expansion of the Youth Conservation Corps and Jobs & Housing Program, etc.). Examples of funded positions include PPM III personnel for the Safety Program, additional KCSO deputies, instructors and coordinators for the Skyway Community Center, education specialists and interns for the Youth Conservation Corps program, Parks Specialists I positions for the Jobs and Housing program, a PPM IV position for the indigenous interpretive program, engineers and functional analysts for the asset management program, agents and surveyors for the encroachment program, and a Parks Specialist II position for the expansion of the forestry program.

- **Approximately 25 to 30 FTE to support capital project delivery.** Includes project managers, engineers, contract specialists, legal support, permitting, and agency coordination. This would include 13 conversions of existing TLTs to FTEs.
- **Approximately 25 FTE to support a growing agency and inventory.** Commensurate staffing and resources needed to deliver programs and support a growing division. This would include finance, human resources, administrative, FLEET, and other services.

The Parks Levy Oversight Board, an independent body that assesses Parks' performance, continues to affirm annually that "the Division has complied with the requirements of Ordinance 18890, including Motion 15378 and its associated Attachment C, and is on track to implement the Parks Levy."⁷⁰ As described above, it is reasonable to assert that Parks has the capacity to continue growing and delivering levy commitments in the next levy period with the same high performance as currently demonstrated.

ANSWERS TO COUNCILMEMBER QUESTIONS FROM 2/12 BFM Meeting (Briefing from Executive Staff)

1. Can you provide a detailed list of proposed investments?

This information is provided in Attachment 4 to this staff report.

2. Was the proposed increase in funding for grant programs due to the proposals not being able to meet demand?

According to Executive staff, yes, this was due to the proposals not being able to meet demand. The Parks Levy Oversight Board found that since 2022, the Communities and Parks Fund has received 404 applications requesting \$50.7 million. King County was only able to approve about a quarter of the requests, or 105 applications (\$6.53 million), due to limited funding availability. This led the Parks Levy Oversight Board to recommend an increase in total funding for this grant program in the next levy to meet current and future demand. Additionally, feedback through many of the engagement activities from partners, community advisory committee, the public, and the Parks Levy Oversight Board, identified that an increase in Parks grant programs would be beneficial. The Open Space - River Corridors Grant Program is not proposed to continue due to lack of demand.

3. What was the rationale for changing from 50%/50% to 60%/40% in the towns/cities allocation formula?

According to Executive staff, the adjusted formula for towns/cities (60%/40%) was changed to more equitably distribute the levy proceeds to communities across King County. Smaller towns and cities would still receive an increase in annual levy

⁷⁰ "King County Parks Levy Oversight Board 2023 Annual Report," Oct. 24, 2024.

distributions by receiving a minimum of \$100,000/year, which would offset the impacts by changing the existing formula.

4. Please provide a breakdown of the actuals spent in each category of the current parks levy over the 2020-2025 period, shown side-by-side with proposed allocation plan?

This information is provided in Table 4 of this staff report.

5. For each area of the allocation plan where it is possible, can you provide what portion of the increase is inflation, what is the result of new projects, etc.?

This information is provided in Attachment 4 to this staff report. [\[3/26 – the information in previous Attachment 4 was incorrect. See answers to 3/12 BFM Questions for updated information.\]](#)

6. How does the fish passage work align with the scoping motion? How much more will there be to do if the work funded under the levy is all completed?

According to Executive staff, the fish passage projects proposed in the 2026-2031 Levy are consistent with the Motion 15378 Report. Between 2022-2024, Parks completed eight projects that remedied ten fish passage barriers. The 2026-2031 Levy proposal provides funding for eight additional projects, with further fish passage projects needing completion after 2031.

Since the 2021 Report, the Countywide Fish Passage Restoration Program has generated a capital work plan that targets fish passage work at County-owned barriers prioritized based on benefits for salmon and kokanee. Moving past 2031, Parks plans to continue to remedy Parks' barriers that block salmon access to meaningful upstream habitat (which is represented by about 50 known barriers on Parks-owned parcels).

7. Can you provide a breakdown of non-Parks Levy funding for the Skyway community center, whether the project is fully funded, and when completion is expected?

According to Executive staff, the total estimated planning level cost for the community center is \$40 million:

- Existing funding: \$8 million (from 2021-2022 King County budget)
- Proposed 2026-2031 levy funding: \$13 million
- REET 2 funding: \$19 million (may include some level of debt financing)

The estimated completion and opening year is 2030. Budget requests for this project would follow standard review and approval processes.

8. Can you provide the details of any cricket-specific investments planned?

According to Executive staff, the \$3M *Ballfield and Sports Courts (new facilities)* line item under “New Park Development Improvements” heading is intended to provide funding to develop new facilities in our existing parks. Specific projects have not yet been identified for this line item, as a community engagement process would be used to inform projects. Facilities to support recreational cricket could be funded using this line item.

Additionally, South County Ballfields would be converted to multi-use artificial turf fields. An assessment will be done to determine what types of uses would be beneficial to have at these fields (i.e. lacrosse, cricket, soccer, etc.).

SCHEDULE AND NEXT STEPS

Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070 was transmitted to the Council on February 11, 2025, and has been dually referred first to the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee and second to the Regional Policy Committee.

The BFM and RPC chairs have agreed to the schedule below:

Action	Committee/ Council	Date	Amendment Deadlines
<i>Transmittal</i>		2/11/25	
<i>Exec Staff Briefing</i>	<i>BFM</i>	2/12/25	
<i>Discussion only</i>	<i>BFM</i>	2/26/25	
<i>Discussion only</i>	<i>BFM</i>	3/12/25	
<i>Briefing (Legislation still in BFM control)</i>	<i>RPC</i>	3/12/25	
<i>Discussion and Possible Action</i>	<i>BFM</i>	3/26/25	<i>Striker direction: March 19</i> <i>Striker distribution: March 21</i> <i>Line AMD direction: March 24</i>
<i>Discussion and Possible Action</i>	<i>Special RPC</i>	4/3/25	<i>Striker direction: March 28</i> <i>Striker distribution: March 31</i> <i>Line AMD direction: April 1</i>
<i>Final Action</i>	<i>Full Council</i>	4/15/25	
<i>Final Action (with courtesy delay)</i>	<i>Full Council</i>	4/22/25 ¹	

Following action by the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee and Regional Policy Committee, the legislation would then go to Full Council for final approval. The following

are key full Council meeting deadlines⁷¹ to place this measure on the August 5, 2025, ballot:

- Last regular Council meeting assuming maximum processing time: April 1, 2025.
- Last regular Council meeting assuming minimum processing time (requires Executive to sign on same day): April 22, 2025.
- Last special Council meeting to pass the ordinance as an emergency: May 2, 2025.
- Deadline for King County Elections to receive effective ordinance: May 2, 2025.

SUMMARY OF BFM ADOPTED AMENDMENTS

On March 26, 2025, the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee passed PO 2025-0070, as amended, and PM 2025-0077, as amended.

PO 2025-0070.2 (as passed BFM) would reduce the initial levy rate in 2026 to **23.51 cents** per \$1,000 AV.

- With this initial levy rate, based on the March 2025 OEFA forecast, the levy would generate approximately \$1.45 billion⁷² over the six-year levy period.
- Executive staff indicate that they expect \$6 million in interest revenue; with an assumed \$6 million in interest revenue, estimated total levy proceeds would be \$1.46 billion.⁷³
- This would be approximately \$56 million less than estimated proceeds under the Executive's proposed initial rate of 24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV (\$1.51 billion).
- Under S1, the cost to the owner of a median-valued home in King County would be approximately \$198.42 annually in 2026, which is approximately \$7.77 less than the annual cost to the same homeowner under the Executive's proposal (\$206.19 annually).

The following table summarizes the estimated levy collections, effective levy rate, and impact to the owner of a median-valued home based on the levy rate in the Executive's proposal (Version 1) and the proposal that passed out of BFM (Version 2) on March 26, 2025.

⁷¹ Council Clerk's memorandum on Deadlines for Adoption of Ballot Measures in 2025 (Attachment 12 to this staff report).

⁷² Based on adopted March 2025 OEFA forecast.

⁷³ Precise numbers based on March 2025 OEFA forecast: \$1,449,721,927 in levy proceeds; with \$6 million in assumed interest revenue, the total revenue would be \$1,455,721,927.

Estimated Annual Parks Levy Collections, Effective Levy Rate, and Impact to Owner of Median-Valued Home

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	Total six-year levy proceeds	Impact to owner of median valued home ⁷⁴
Current 2020-2025 Parks Levy									
Estimated Proceeds ⁷⁵	\$170 million								\$166.52 Annual
Estimated Effective Levy Rate ⁷⁶ (per \$1,000 AV)	\$0.1973	n/a						\$851 million	\$13.88 Monthly
Proposed 2026-2031 Levy: Version 1 Executive Proposal (24.43 cents per \$1,000 AV)									
Estimated Proceeds	n/a	\$220 million	\$232 million	\$246 million	\$258 million	\$271 million	\$285 million	\$1.51 billion	\$206.19 Annual
Estimated Effective Levy Rate		\$0.2443	\$0.2503	\$0.2547	\$0.2595	\$0.2614	\$0.2666	n/a	\$17.18 Monthly
Proposed 2026-2031 Levy: Version 2 Passed BFM 3/26 (23.51 cents per \$1,000 AV)									
Estimated Proceeds	n/a	\$212 million	\$223 million	\$236 million	\$248 million	\$261 million	\$274 million	\$1.45 billion ⁷⁷	\$198.42 Annual
Estimated Effective Levy Rate		\$0.2351	\$0.2408	\$0.2451	\$0.2497	\$0.2516	\$0.2565	n/a	\$16.53 Monthly

The following is a list of changes made in PO 2025.0070.2 and PM 2025-0077.2, compared with the Executive’s proposal. Attachment 18 to this staff report also provides this information with corresponding changes to the ordinance and motion shown side-by-side.

⁷⁴ Based on the assessed value of a median valued home in 2024, which is \$844,000 according to the King County Assessor’s Office.

⁷⁵ Based on adopted March 2025 OEFA Forecast.

⁷⁶ The effective levy rate is per \$1,000 of Assessed Value and is a function of assessed value, new construction, and the limit factor.

⁷⁷ This does not include interest revenue. Executive staff indicate that they expect \$6 million interest revenue. With an assumed \$6 million in interest revenue, estimated total levy proceeds would be \$1.46 billion.

Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070.2. PO 2025-0070.2 (as passed BFM) would make the following changes in the ordinance:

- Reduce the levy rate to 23.51 cents.
- Add up to \$10 million in councilmanic Get Active/Stay Active grant funding for youth or amateur sports facilities and activities.
- Add a new Ballfield Access and Preservation grant program, with up to \$13.5 million in funding.
- Add Pacific Science Center as an educational and civic venue, with up to \$6 million in funding for environmental and climate stewardship and education.
- Make Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center an off-the-top allocation of up to \$22 million, rather than an unspecified amount of the capital allocation.
- Make the Community Partnerships and Grants program and Healthy Communities and Parks grant programs off-the-top allocations, rather than subsets of the capital and operating allocations, respectively.
- Add that Community Partnerships and grants is up to \$12.5 million (amount unspecified in Executive proposed).
- Make the following changes to Executive-proposed off-the-top allocation amounts:
 - Healthy Communities and Parks grants – *at least* \$30 million (Executive proposed *up to* \$30 million).
 - Parks Capital and Open Space grants – up to \$25 million (Executive proposed up to \$30 million)
 - Woodland Park Zoo – up to \$40 million (Executive proposed up to \$42 million)
 - Seattle Aquarium – up to \$12 million (Executive proposed up to \$15 million)
 - Seattle Waterfront Park – up to \$6 million. (Executive proposed up to \$9 million)
- Clarify the recipient for Memorial Stadium funding.
- Re-balance percentage allocations based off of new levy rate and off-the-top allocation amounts.
- Specify that money in the capital allocation can also be used for town and city park system infrastructure, and for recreation facilities owned or operated by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
- Changes the formula by which city, town and park district funding amounts are calculated, as shown in the tables below.

	2020-2025 Current Levy	2026-2031 Executive Proposal	Striker Proposal
Allocation Percentage & Dollar Amount	8% (\$60 million)	9% (\$119 million)	10% (\$119 million)
Annual Minimum Allocation	\$25,000 annually to each city, and an additional \$75,000 annually to each city with a population greater than 4,000.	\$100,000 to each town and city in King County, as well as Fall City Metropolitan Park District, Si View Metropolitan Park District, and Vashon Park District.	\$30,000 to each town and city in King County, as well as Fall City Metropolitan Park District, Si View Metropolitan Park District, and Vashon Park District. Additional \$90K annually

			for jurisdictions over 4,000 people (\$120K annual base) Additional \$20K annually for jurisdictions located in Opportunity Areas (as defined in K.C.C. 26.12.003.J.1 ⁷⁸)
Allocation of Remainder	50% distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 50% distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.	60% would be distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 40% would be distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.	60% would be distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 40% would be distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.

Jurisdiction	Opportunity Areas	Current Parks Levy Allocation	Current Levy Per Person Allocation	Executive Proposal Allocation	Executive Proposal Per Person Allocation	Striker Proposal Allocation	Striker Proposal Per Person Allocation
Skykomish	no	\$153,082	\$928	\$606,904	\$3,678	\$186,895	\$1,133
Beaux Arts Village	no	\$161,301	\$512	\$622,761	\$1,977	\$202,732	\$644
Hunts Point	no	\$206,498	\$449	\$703,964	\$1,530	\$219,487	\$477
Yarrow Point	no	\$221,534	\$195	\$736,503	\$649	\$241,086	\$212
Milton	no	\$181,778	\$111	\$670,605	\$410	\$271,331	\$166
Carnation	no	\$190,045	\$84	\$690,645	\$307	\$306,193	\$136
Medina	no	\$371,554	\$127	\$1,017,526	\$348	\$348,792	\$119
Clyde Hill	no	\$302,846	\$98	\$897,611	\$290	\$368,218	\$119
Algona	yes	\$210,510	\$63	\$736,398	\$221	\$498,578	\$149
Normandy Park	no	\$742,228	\$108	\$911,929	\$133	\$1,027,069	\$150
Black Diamond	no	\$734,293	\$102	\$900,894	\$125	\$1,040,508	\$145
Pacific	yes	\$709,879	\$98	\$858,030	\$119	\$1,164,903	\$161
North Bend	no	\$765,516	\$93	\$965,495	\$117	\$1,205,028	\$146
Duvall	no	\$758,890	\$86	\$958,361	\$109	\$1,167,222	\$133
Enumclaw	yes	\$808,935	\$61	\$1,087,137	\$81	\$1,410,597	\$106

⁷⁸ These are defined as areas that: (1) are located in a census tract in which the median household income is in the lowest one-third for median household income for census tracts in King County; (2) are located in a ZIP code in which hospitalization rates for asthma, diabetes and heart disease are in the highest one-third for ZIP codes in King County; and (3) are within the Urban Growth Boundary and do not have a publicly owned and accessible park or open space within one-quarter mile of a residence, or are outside the Urban Growth Boundary and do not have a publicly owned and accessible park or open space within two miles of a residence.

Jurisdiction	Opportunity Areas	Current Parks Levy Allocation	Current Levy Per Person Allocation	Executive Proposal Allocation	Executive Proposal Per Person Allocation	Striker Proposal Allocation	Striker Proposal Per Person Allocation
Lake Forest Park	no	\$868,282	\$63	\$1,194,994	\$87	\$1,309,453	\$96
Newcastle	no	\$896,063	\$65	\$1,244,737	\$91	\$1,316,081	\$96
Woodinville	no	\$927,672	\$67	\$1,301,957	\$94	\$1,367,873	\$98
Snoqualmie	no	\$873,949	\$60	\$1,212,419	\$83	\$1,402,927	\$97
Covington	no	\$942,767	\$43	\$1,400,041	\$64	\$1,612,837	\$73
Tukwila	yes	\$1,087,392	\$47	\$1,663,988	\$73	\$1,779,514	\$78
Kenmore	no	\$1,055,812	\$43	\$1,620,659	\$67	\$1,702,895	\$70
Mercer Island	no	\$1,424,720	\$55	\$2,286,070	\$89	\$1,742,253	\$67
Maple Valley	no	\$1,084,866	\$37	\$1,715,841	\$59	\$1,870,596	\$64
Bothell	no	\$1,397,709	\$46	\$2,277,614	\$75	\$1,976,982	\$65
SeaTac	yes	\$1,095,634	\$33	\$1,764,761	\$54	\$2,229,945	\$68
Des Moines	yes	\$1,109,525	\$33	\$1,795,407	\$54	\$2,487,815	\$74
Issaquah	no	\$1,480,034	\$36	\$2,521,995	\$61	\$2,639,536	\$64
Burien	yes	\$1,426,232	\$27	\$2,528,210	\$48	\$3,083,326	\$58
Shoreline	no	\$1,650,740	\$27	\$3,003,754	\$49	\$3,230,457	\$52
Sammamish	no	\$2,138,362	\$31	\$3,923,342	\$57	\$3,435,441	\$50
Auburn	yes	\$1,901,032	\$24	\$3,596,019	\$46	\$3,925,070	\$50
Redmond	no	\$2,440,512	\$30	\$4,560,158	\$57	\$4,208,887	\$53
Kirkland	no	\$2,833,374	\$29	\$5,401,809	\$56	\$4,786,409	\$49
Federal Way	yes	\$2,099,470	\$20	\$4,155,022	\$41	\$5,158,309	\$50
Renton	yes	\$2,463,220	\$23	\$4,853,794	\$45	\$5,554,558	\$51
Kent	yes	\$2,912,018	\$21	\$5,925,949	\$42	\$6,789,388	\$48
Bellevue	no	\$4,661,610	\$30	\$9,148,563	\$59	\$9,257,627	\$60
Seattle	yes	\$16,494,538	\$21	\$35,738,135	\$45	\$35,933,182	\$45
Fall City MPD		\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$0	\$180,000	\$0
Si View MPD		\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$0	\$180,000	\$0
Vashon PD		\$0	\$0	\$600,000	\$0	\$180,000	\$0
Total		\$61,784,423		\$119,000,000		\$119,000,000	

- Remove Attachment A (Grant Program Requirements) and Attachment B (Acquisition Guidelines). These are separately proposed to be added to PM 2025-0077.
- State that the annual oversight committee report shall include information on funding by Council district.
- Streamline and clarify definitions and terminology used.
- Make technical changes and clarifying changes to match Executive intent.

Proposed Motion 2025-0077.2. PM 2025-0077.2 (as passed BFM) would make the following changes in the motion:

In the body of the motion:

- State that the county should consider using bond financing for capital projects, and direct the executive to study this possibility.
- State that it is the intent of the council that the Skyway Community Center be completed and operational within the period of the levy.
- Request the Executive to undertake community engagement related to Preston Mill Park phase 3, and submit a report.
- Request the Executive to develop a plan to allow alcohol sales in King County parks, and allow alcohol sales in the stands at the stadium at Steve Cox Park no later than May 31, 2025.
- Request the Executive to review permitting standards for vendors, to evaluate and recommend strategies to encourage food vendors to locate in parks, and streamline permitting processes for vendors, and submit a report and proposed ordinance.
- Request the Executive to set aside three parking spaces at each of the ten most highly utilized recreation or multiuse parks for electric vehicle charging and associate equipment
- Request the Executive to keep the lights on at urban unincorporated area parks until at least 10 p.m.
- Request the Executive to develop and implement a policy allowing for unscheduled activities at all active recreation facilities in urban unincorporated areas.

Insert a new version of Attachment A, the allocation plan, with the following changes:

- Reduce the undercollection assumption from \$15M to \$7.5M.
- From the \$46M allocation to Aquatic Facilities Grant Program, new allocations are made to:
 - \$5M to the City of Shoreline.
 - \$2.5M to the City of Kirkland.
 - \$5M to the City of Bellevue.
 - \$2M to Whitewater Aquatics Management to be used for capital projects at, and operations and maintenance of, the Evergreen Aquatic Center.
 - \$500K to Cottage Lake Pool to be used for repairs and rehabilitation.Funding for these projects would go back into the competitive grant program if projects are not shovel ready by 2029.
- Create new category of Ballfields and Sport Courts, combining existing ballfield categories and adding a new grant program. Total of \$60M including:
 - \$13.5M for Ballfield Access and Preservation Grants.
 - \$3M for New Ballfield and Sports Courts.
 - The Parks division would be directed to assess potential sites for cricket fields in the Snoqualmie Valley.
 - \$25.5M for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion:
 - \$19 million to be allocated to South County Ballfields to be used for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion.

- \$2.5 million to be allocated to Garfield High School to be used for the Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf installation project.
 - \$1 million to be allocated to Tukwila Community Center to be used for the conversion of field to turf at the Tukwila Community Center Upland Campus.
 - \$3 million to be allocated Des Moines Steven J Underwood Field Renovation to transform three existing worn and dedicated grass softball fields into multi-purpose year-round artificial turf softball and soccer fields.
 - \$6M for Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation.
 - Specify that this includes bleacher replacement at Big Finn Hill park
 - \$12M for Ballfield synthetic turf replacement.
- Under the Grants and Community Partnerships category, make the following changes:
 - Reduce Parks Capital and Open Space Grants \$30M to \$25M.
 - Increase Community Partnerships and Grants from \$11M to \$12.5M and from this amount allocate \$3M to Starfire Sports and \$1M for equine recreation grants.
 - Allocate \$10M to Get Active/Stay Active - Youth and Amateur Sports Councilmanic Grants.
 - Eliminate Educational and Civic Venue category and move allocations to Grants and Community Partnerships category, then make the following allocations:
 - Reduce allocation to Woodland Park Zoo \$42M to \$40M.
 - Reduce allocation to Seattle Aquarium \$15M to \$12M.
 - Reduce allocation to Seattle Waterfront \$9M to \$6M
 - Maintain Memorial Stadium allocation.
 - Add \$6M allocation to Pacific Science Center for environmental and climate stewardship and education, capital, or operations.
- Under the King County Operations and Maintenance category:
 - Reduce Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery and Internal Supports from \$517M to \$464M.
 - Merge Park Patrol Expansion (\$4.3M) and Safety Program Expansion (\$3.2M) - rename to Safety and Security Program and allocate \$5M total.
 - Reduce Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program from \$10.4M to \$5M
 - Rename Jobs and Housing Program to Parks Beautification Program, add to footnote 4 that this is just for jobs.
- Under the Climate Resilience, Conservation, and Stewardship category:
 - Reduce Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M) from \$20M to \$10M.
 - Increase Fish Passage Program from \$10M to \$20M
 - Reduce Climate Resilience from \$33M to \$25M. Direct that, of this total:
 - \$5M of this total be used for a district climate resilience grant program evenly divided between council districts, per year.
 - At least \$250,000 be allocated for street trees in White Center.
 - Up to \$1 million be allocated for a surface level cooling feature for children at Steve Cox Park
 - \$700,000 be allocated for capital preconstruction costs for a climate-resilient community center in the Georgetown area.

- Reduce Environmental Stewardship from \$58.5M to \$30M.
- Increase Other New Regional Trails from \$38M to \$41M and make the following allocations:
 - \$5M for Interurban Trail North.
 - \$10M for Kirkland Green Loop.
 - \$5M for Kent Regional Trails.
 - \$2M for Georgetown to South Park Trail.
 - \$1M for Maple Valley Pedestrian overpass/trail connection.
 - Of existing funding, \$3M for Snoqualmie Valley Trail.
- Under the New Park Development and Improvements category:
 - Add \$350K to develop Korean American Hanwoori Garden in Federal Way.
 - Reduce Dog Parks from \$3M to \$2.5M
 - Add \$500K for Fall City Community Center.
 - Add \$1M for City of Bothell McAuliffe Skate Park
 - Remove Backcountry Trails subcategory.
 - Add \$19M for new Water Access on Lake Washington subcategory and make the following allocations:
 - \$15M for Lakepoint Regional Park
 - \$4M for City of Lake Forest Park
- Under the Active Recreation Repair and Renovation and Other Park Repair and Renovation category:
 - Note that Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure includes completion of the picnic shelter and replacement of the mill shed at Preston Mill Park.
 - State that capital major maintenance programs should prioritize reopening closed restroom facilities and ensuring that all facility restrooms remain clean, safe, and open.
 - Reduce General infrastructure from \$23M to \$20M and make the following allocations:
 - \$200,000 for a digital reader board at Steve Cox Park
 - \$400,000 for handwashing stations in King County parks with playgrounds
 - Increase Water access and docks rehabilitation from \$2M to \$8M and make the following allocations:
 - \$5M Sail Sand Point
 - \$1M Tukwila community center riverside campus renewal and canoe launch.
 - The remaining moneys for repairs and rehabilitation of existing docks and/or boat ramps at Cottage Lake, Lake Joy, Lake Geneva, and Five Mile Lake.
 - Include new trails in the Backcountry Trails subcategory, without change to total investment.
 - Reduce Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.) from \$8M to \$5M.

Insert Attachment B, General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs, which was previously attached to PO 2025-0070, and make the following changes:

- Changes eligible entities to match grant programs as they exist today:

- In Parks Capital and Open Space Grants, remove “public entities that serve unincorporated King County.”
- In Aquatic Facilities grants, remove “nonprofit organizations.”
- Add guidelines for Ballfield Access and Preservation grants:
 - Eligible entities are: cities and towns; park districts; school districts.
 - Eligible projects are: construction of or improvements to public ballfields, at any phase of capital development, and operations and maintenance.
- Streamline and clarify terminology in accordance with changes proposed in the striker to PO 2025-0070.

Insert Attachment C, Open Space Acquisition Guidelines, which was previously attached to PO 2025-0070.

INVITED

- John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks
- Warren Jimenez, Division Director, Parks and Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070.1 and its attachments (Executive transmittal)
2. [Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070.2 \(Passed by the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee\)](#)
3. Parks Levy Executive-Proposed Allocation Plan for 2026-2031
4. King County Parks Anticipated CIP Project Investments List
5. Transmittal Letter
6. Fiscal Note
7. Park Levy Sub-fund Financial Plan
8. Parks Capital Program
9. Parks Levy Operations Financial Plan
10. King County Parks Map of Project Highlights
11. King County Parks Engagement and Outreach Summary
12. Deadlines for Adoption of Ballot Measures in 2025
13. [Parks Operational Investments by Geography \(Current Levy\)](#)
14. [Parks Map All Districts](#)
15. [Zoo and Aquarium Levy Investments](#)
16. Proposed Motion 2025-0077.1 and its attachments (Executive proposal)
17. [Proposed Motion 2025-0077.2 and its attachments \(Passed by the Budget and Fiscal Management Committee\)](#)
18. [Version 2 Changes Summary](#)



KING COUNTY

Signature Report

Ordinance

ATTACHMENT 1

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Proposed No. 2025-0070.1

Sponsors Dembowski and Zahilay

1 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
2 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
3 held in King County on August 5, 2025, of a proposition
4 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy
5 limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a period of
6 six consecutive years, at a total rate of not more than
7 \$0.2443 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in
8 the first year and limiting annual levy increases by the King
9 County inflation plus population index published by the
10 King County office of economic and financial analysis, or
11 the chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever is greater in
12 years two through six for the purpose of maintaining and
13 operating King County's open space system; improving
14 parks, recreation, access and mobility in the King County
15 open space system by acquiring lands and continuing to
16 develop regional trails; improving parks and trails in and
17 acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts, towns and
18 cities in King County; funding environmental education,
19 maintenance and conservation programs at the Woodland

20 Park Zoo; funding environmental education, maintenance
21 and conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium;
22 funding development, maintenance, and programming for
23 Seattle Waterfront park; and funding for capital
24 improvements at publicly owned pools, for all King County
25 residents.

26 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

27 1. King County owns and operates a system of regional and local parks
28 and trails that consists of thirty-two thousand acres of parklands and more
29 than one hundred eighty-five miles of regional trails. The county provides
30 regional trails, regional recreational facilities, regional natural areas,
31 regional parks, and local parks in unincorporated areas. Examples of
32 regional and local county parks and trails include Marymoor park, Cougar
33 Mountain Regional Wildland park, Steve Cox Memorial park, Dick
34 Thurnau Memorial park, the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center,
35 and the Sammamish River trail.

36 2. Parks, natural areas, and trails contribute to a high quality of life. A
37 robust system of parks and trails provides: physical, social, and mental
38 health benefits to individuals; economic opportunity through recreation
39 and tourism; economic growth for private businesses that must attract and
40 retain skilled workers; increased climate resilience; environmental benefits
41 like clean water and healthy habitat and cultural resource protection

42 through open space conservation. King County's open space system
43 provides all these benefits to King County residents and businesses.

44 3. The 2002 Parks Business Transition Plan, adopted by the King County
45 council and enacted by Ordinance 14509, became the blueprint for
46 establishing the regional open space system we have today. Building on
47 that blueprint, the county has adopted open space plans, which have
48 provided the framework guiding King County in the acquisition, planning,
49 development, stewardship, maintenance, and management of its complex
50 system of parks, regional trails, and acres of open space. The latest open
51 space plan was updated in 2022 and adopted by Ordinance 19501.

52 4. In implementing the open space plan, the parks and recreation division
53 of the department of natural resources and parks has successfully focused
54 its lines of business on regional parks and trails, backcountry trails, natural
55 lands, and local parks in unincorporated King County and has
56 implemented business practices that generate revenue from park system
57 assets by implementing or increasing user fees and establishing corporate
58 and community partnerships that enhance park amenities and leverage
59 public and private dollars to improve parks and increase access to parks.

60 5. Consistent with the recommendations of past parks-related task forces
61 and community advisory committees, the county has sought voter-
62 approved levies on four prior occasions: in 2003, enacted by Ordinance
63 14586, to provide maintenance and operating funding for the parks and
64 recreation division for 2004 through 2007; in 2007, enacted by Ordinance

65 15759, to provide funding for maintenance and operations as well as
66 funding for open space acquisition, regional trail development, the
67 Woodland Park Zoo and for King County towns and cities for use in their
68 open space acquisition and trail projects for 2008 through 2013; in 2013,
69 enacted by Ordinance 17568, to provide funding for maintenance and
70 operations as well as for open space acquisition, asset maintenance and
71 improvement, parks and trails projects, the Woodland Park Zoo and for
72 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for
73 2014 through 2019; and in 2019, enacted by Ordinance 18890, to provide
74 funding for maintenance and operations as well as for open space
75 acquisition, asset maintenance and improvement, parks and trails projects,
76 the Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium, aquatic facilities, and for
77 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for
78 2020 through 2025. Voters approved the funding measures on all four
79 occasions that they were on the ballot. The voter-approved levies have
80 helped keep the open space system clean, safe, and open.

81 6. Tribal nations are co-managers with the county in managing our shared
82 public lands, waters, and resources. The county recognizes that this
83 relationship is informed and guided by the treaty rights which many tribes
84 exercise within King County. The department of natural resources and
85 parks has undertaken many actions with tribes as comanagers in an effort
86 to foster mutual respect, and establish regular and meaningful
87 communication, cooperation, and consultation with tribal officials in

88 developing and executing state and King County policies that have tribal
89 implications. The county has an ongoing goal to strengthen the
90 government-to-government relationship with tribes that share territory
91 with and have interests in King County

92 7. The 2020 through 2025 voter-approved parks, trails, and open space
93 replacement levy provides approximately eighty-five percent of the
94 operating budget of the parks and recreation division, with approximately
95 fifteen percent generated through business activities and entrepreneurial
96 efforts. King County general fund support to the parks and recreation
97 division was eliminated as of 2011.

98 8. The community partnerships and grants program enacted by Ordinance
99 14509 enhances parks amenities by partnering with parks and recreation
100 organizations. Since the inception of the community partnership and grant
101 program in 2003, more than seventy projects representing more than
102 seventy million dollars' worth of new, enhanced, or preserved public
103 recreation facilities have been completed, with only twenty-two million
104 dollars of King County capital investment.

105 9. The Woodland Park Zoo received distributions from the past three
106 voter-approved levies to supplement zoo operating revenue for education
107 and conservation programs, horticulture and maintenance, and capital
108 improvements. Levy proceeds distributed to the zoo provided
109 environmental education, programming and transportation focusing on
110 accessibility for underserved areas, supported thousands of students-

111 annually, and benefitted residents throughout King County. Levy
112 proceeds also provided conservation and animal care for threatened
113 Pacific Northwest species.

114 10. The Seattle Aquarium received distributions from the past voter-
115 approved levy for capital costs for the Ocean Pavilion project to amplify
116 the aquarium's existing global conservation efforts by bringing visitors
117 face-to-face with tropical species native to the Coral Triangle and by
118 housing approximately three thousand five hundred sustainably sourced
119 tropical fish and invertebrates, including rays, sharks, mangroves, and up
120 to 30 species of coral.

121 11. The removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct provided an unprecedented
122 opportunity to create new green space in the heart of Seattle. The
123 resulting waterfront park is a twenty-acre public space stretching from
124 Belltown to Pioneer Square, providing the entire region lasting economic,
125 social, and environmental benefits. Seattle Waterfront park will link
126 iconic attractions including Olympic Sculpture park, Pike Place Market,
127 the Seattle Aquarium, the Colman Dock ferry terminal, Pioneer Square,
128 stadiums, and surrounding neighborhoods.

129 12. The Memorial Stadium project will create an innovative multi-
130 purpose student and community events facility at Seattle Center. That
131 transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the city of
132 Seattle, providing an improved venue for local and regional sports and
133 events.

134 13. King County towns and cities received funding from the past three
135 voter-approved levies. In 2008 through 2013, towns and cities could use
136 levy proceeds for open space and natural lands acquisition and
137 development of town or city trail projects that supported connections to
138 the regional trail system with distributions being contingent upon an equal
139 or greater contribution of matching moneys from the recipient town or city
140 for the same project. In the 2014 through 2019 and the 2020 through 2025
141 levies, types of uses for the distribution to King County towns and cities
142 were broadened to provide flexibility and better meet the parks and
143 recreation needs of cities.

144 14. Parks levy oversight committees were established to monitor the
145 expenditures of the proceeds from the 2004 through 2007, 2008 through
146 2013, 2014 through 2019, and 2020 through 2025 levies. Annual
147 committee review has concluded that the county has complied with all
148 levy requirements.

149 15. During the 2008 through 2013, 2014 through 2019, and 2020 through
150 2025 levy periods, the process for developing, reviewing, and
151 recommending potential conservation futures tax and parks levy
152 acquisition projects has maximized acquisitions for open space, natural
153 lands, and regional trail rights of way due to the similar objectives for the
154 conservation futures tax and parks levy acquisition programs. Parks levy
155 open space funding distributed to King County is a critical component of
156 match for county applications for conservation futures tax funding. The

157 process for conservation futures tax outlined in K.C.C. 26.12.010
158 maintains transparency, accessibility, and consistency of the distribution
159 of conservation futures tax and parks levy acquisition funds for the public,
160 stakeholder groups, government agencies, and officials.

161 16. King County is growing rapidly as a region. In 2024, King County's
162 population increased by more than thirty thousand people; over the next
163 ten years, the county is expected to grow by another two hundred fifty
164 thousand people. Recent trend reports indicate that participation in
165 outdoor recreation continues to grow, increasing by more than four
166 percent nation-wide in 2023. More and more people are using King
167 County parks and trails, which puts greater pressure on the system. As
168 development increases to accommodate population growth, the risk of
169 losing natural lands and green spaces throughout the county grows. Those
170 valuable lands contribute to King County residents' high quality of life.
171 The cost of land to accommodate this growth and preserve open spaces is
172 also increasing. Today is the opportune time to address future needs of
173 residents by investing in our parks and trails and accelerating conservation
174 of open space.

175 17. In King County, many communities have experienced a history of
176 inequitable and limited regional investments in parks, recreation, and open
177 space, limiting the ability of residents to lead healthy lives.
178 Approximately five hundred thousand King County residents live without
179 ready access to, parks, recreation, and open spaces. There is a need to

180 address disparities in access to parks, recreation, and open space for
181 traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with
182 disabilities. This proposal provides an opportunity to address parks and
183 recreation needs of these traditionally underserved areas and communities,
184 including people with disabilities.

185 18. Recognizing growth in population, increased use of parks and trails
186 and the need to address disparities to prepare the 2026 through 2031 levy,
187 the parks and recreation division conducted outreach to obtain feedback on
188 the current park system and future parks and recreation needs for all King
189 County residents. In March and April 2024, parks and recreation division
190 staff conducted twenty-one in-person and virtual community engagement
191 events and hosted two online surveys across eight languages. Participants
192 represented all geographic areas of the county including towns and cities,
193 business, recreation, community, and environmental interests. More than
194 four thousand eight hundred people across all nine King County Council
195 districts participated in the surveys. Parks and recreation division staff also
196 met with towns and cities, parks districts, and key partners to receive
197 additional feedback about the levy.

198 19. Feedback from engagement events, online surveys, and meetings
199 showed support for the King County open space system and defined
200 measures of success. Four themes emerged as top priorities: safety and
201 belonging; new parks, trails, recreation, and infrastructure; equity,
202 representation, inclusion, and access; and maintenance, repairs, and

203 staffing. Feedback supported funding for King County towns' and cities'
204 parks and recreation programs; expansion of the regional trails system;
205 and natural lands conservation.

206 20. From January through July 2024, parks and recreation division staff
207 convened a Community Advisory Committee tasked with recommending
208 how to preserve King County's system of parks, trails, and open space
209 after the 2019 through 2025 levy expires. The Community Advisory
210 Committee also advised staff about how best to meet the growing parks
211 and recreation needs in King County and the region. Representing King
212 County Boards, cities, non-profit organizations, community and
213 environmental interests, businesses, and sports, the Community Advisory
214 Committee met nine times to provide guidance on developing the 2026
215 through 2031 levy.

216 21. The King County executive took into consideration information
217 obtained from this engagement, the region's growing population, increased
218 use of parks and trails across King County, and the lack of parks,
219 recreation, and open space in some communities, and has put forth this
220 proposal that acknowledges the changing landscape and the need to grow
221 the open space system to keep up with regional demand. This proposal is
222 also consistent with the goals and priorities of past levy task forces.

223 22. This proposal would exempt low-income senior citizens, disabled
224 veterans, and other people with disabilities from the regular property tax
225 increase on their residences resulting from a levy authorized by this

226 ordinance if they have been approved for an exemption under RCW
227 84.36.381.

228 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

229 SECTION 1. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this
230 ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

231 A. "Aquatic facilities grants program" means the program through which King
232 County provides moneys to publicly owned pools for: capital improvement projects,
233 including planning, feasibility studies, preconstruction and design, and construction; and
234 major maintenance repair or replacement projects.

235 B. "Community partnerships and grants program" means the program through
236 which King County provides moneys to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations,
237 and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing,
238 operating, or maintaining a recreation facility or public park in unincorporated King
239 County and King County towns and cities for public benefit.

240 C. "Conservation" means protection of natural and resource lands from
241 development through fee or easement acquisition, restoration of natural functions, and
242 administration of incentives for landowners that voluntarily preserve open space.

243 D. "Conservation futures tax program" means the program defined in K.C.C.
244 chapter 26.12.

245 E. "Educational and civic venues" means the Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle
246 Aquarium, Seattle Waterfront park, and Memorial Stadium.

247 F. "Healthy community and parks grants program" means the program through
248 which King County provides moneys in order to achieve equitable opportunities and

249 access to parks and recreation for traditionally underserved areas and communities,
250 including people with disabilities, located in unincorporated King County and King
251 County towns and cities.

252 G. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
253 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with state
254 law.

255 H. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy,
256 any interest earnings on the moneys, and the proceeds of any interim financing following
257 authorization of the levy.

258 I. "Limit factor" means the most recent published King County office of
259 economic and financial analysis King County inflation plus population index, or the
260 limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW, whichever is greater.

261 J. "Open space system" means the system that includes parks, trails, natural
262 areas, resource lands, and structures or buildings owned or otherwise under the
263 jurisdiction of the parks and recreation division of the department of natural resources.

264 K. "Parks capital and open space grants program" means the program through
265 which King County provides moneys to metropolitan park districts, towns, or cities
266 located in King County to achieve capital improvement projects and major maintenance
267 repair, or replacement of parks or recreation infrastructure.

268 L. "Parks district" means the active metropolitan park districts under chapter
269 35.61 RCW and parks and recreation service areas under chapter 36.68 RCW in King
270 County.

271 M. "Town or city parks system" means any building or other structure related to
272 parks or recreation; operations and maintenance of parks, trails, and open space such as
273 natural areas, resource or ecological lands, and other parks or recreation property owned
274 or otherwise under the jurisdiction of a town or city within King County.

275 SECTION 2. Levy submittal to voters. To provide necessary moneys for the
276 purposes identified in section 4 of this ordinance, the King County council shall submit to
277 the qualified electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy
278 in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive
279 years, with collection commencing in 2026, at a rate not to exceed \$0.2443 per one
280 thousand dollars of assessed value in the first year of the levy period. The dollar amount
281 of the levy in the first year shall be the base upon which the levy amounts in year two
282 through six shall be calculated. In accordance with RCW 84.55.050, this levy shall be a
283 regular property tax levy subject to the limit factor.

284 SECTION 3. Deposit of levy proceeds. The levy proceeds shall be deposited
285 into a dedicated subfund of the parks and recreation fund, or its successor.

286 SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures. If approved by the qualified electors of the
287 county, levy proceeds shall be used for the following purposes:

288 A. Costs incurred by the county that are attributable to the parks, recreation,
289 trails, and open space levy elections;

290 B. Distributions to educational and civic venues, limited to the following
291 facilities:

292 1. Up to forty-two million dollars for distribution to the Woodland Park
293 Zoological Society which shall be used solely for: environmental education with an

294 emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities, including
295 people with disabilities; horticulture and maintenance of buildings and grounds;
296 conservation of threatened species; and development of conservation and education
297 strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and habitats from climate change;

298 2. Up to fifteen million dollars for distribution to the Seattle Aquarium which
299 shall be used solely for: environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to
300 traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities;
301 maintenance of buildings and grounds; conservation of threatened species; and
302 development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and
303 habitats from climate change;

304 3. Up to nine million dollars for distribution to Friends of Waterfront Park,
305 which shall be used solely for: accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and
306 communities, including people with disabilities; support for a clean and safe
307 environment; free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and
308 inclusive community partnerships; and

309 4. Up to two million five-hundred thousand dollars for distribution to the
310 Memorial Stadium project, which shall be used solely for capital costs;

311 C. Up to thirty million dollars for the parks capital and open space grants
312 program;

313 D. Up to forty-six million dollars for the aquatic facilities grant program; and

314 E. The remainder for the following purposes:

315 1. Forty-three percent of levy proceeds for maintenance and operations of King
316 County's open space system and the healthy community and parks grants program, but no

317 more than thirty million dollars may be used for the healthy community and parks grants
318 program;

319 2. Forty-eight percent of levy proceeds for:

320 a. Acquisition, conservation, and stewardship of additional open space lands,
321 natural areas, resource or ecological lands, rights of way for regional trails, and urban
322 green spaces;

323 b. Acquisition of rights of way for and development of regional and other
324 public trails;

325 c. Capital improvement projects and major maintenance repair or replacement
326 of open space system infrastructure;

327 d. Community partnerships and grants program; and

328 e. Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center;

329 3. Nine percent of levy proceeds for distribution to towns, cities, and parks
330 districts in King County for their town or city parks system operations and capital
331 improvement projects, of which amount:

332 a. One-hundred thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each town,
333 city, and the following parks districts that predominantly serve unincorporated King
334 County: Fall City Metropolitan Park District, Si View Metropolitan Park District, and
335 Vashon Park District; and

336 b. Of the remainder, sixty percent shall be distributed in proportion to each
337 town or city's population and forty percent shall be distributed in proportion to the
338 assessed value of parcels within each town or city;

339 4. Of the levy proceeds in subsections B., C., D., E.2.d., and E.3. of this section,
340 a portion shall be retained by the county to be used for expenditures related to
341 administration of the distribution of levy proceeds. Eligible administrative expenditures
342 shall include all costs and charges to the parks and recreation division or the county
343 associated with or attributable to the purposes listed in subsections B., C., D., E.2.d., and
344 E.3. of this section as well as sections 6 and 7 of this ordinance.

345 SECTION 5. Call for special election. In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,
346 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
347 the primary election on August 5, 2025, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
348 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
349 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
350 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
351 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
352 shall certify that proposition to the King County director of elections in substantially the
353 following form, with such additions, deletions or modifications as may be required for
354 the proposition listed below by the prosecuting attorney:

355 King County

356 Proposition No. 1

357 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy

358 The King County council passed Ordinance _____ concerning
359 replacement of an expiring parks levy. If approved, this proposition
360 would fund county, city, park district, and town parks; open space, trails,
361 recreation, public pools, and educational and civic venues. It would

362 reauthorize an additional six-year property tax beginning in 2026 at
363 \$0.2443 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, use the 2026 levy amount to
364 compute annual increases in 2027-2031 by the King County inflation plus
365 population index or the chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever is
366 greater, exempting qualifying seniors, veterans, and disabled persons per
367 RCW 84.36.381. Should this proposition be:
368 Approved? _
369 Rejected? _
370 **SECTION 6. Distributions.** Each distribution of levy proceeds to a King County
371 town or city, park district, the Woodland Park Zoological Society or its successor, the
372 Seattle Aquarium or its successor, the Seattle Waterfront park, and Memorial Stadium
373 project partners or their successor for the eligible purposes identified in section 4 of this
374 ordinance shall be subject to the execution of a contract between the county and each
375 entity for the same purposes. Distribution of levy proceeds shall be subject to the
376 execution of a contract for: publicly owned pool capital improvement projects, major
377 maintenance repair, replacement projects or aquatics programming; capital improvement
378 projects and major maintenance repair or replacement projects to parks or recreation
379 infrastructure in metropolitan park districts, towns or cities; and acquisition, conservation
380 and stewardship of additional natural areas, resource or ecological lands, rights of way
381 for regional trails and urban green spaces. General requirements for levy grant programs
382 are included in Attachment A to this ordinance. Distribution of levy proceeds to King
383 County for open space acquisition purposes shall be in accordance with the annual
384 conservation futures tax process for the development, review and recommendation to the

385 King County council as set for in the open space and natural lands acquisition process,
386 which is included in Attachment B to this ordinance.

387 **SECTION 7. Parks levy oversight board established.**

388 A. If the proposition in section 5 of this ordinance is approved by the qualified
389 electors of King County, a parks levy oversight board shall be appointed by the
390 executive. The board shall consist of nine members. Each councilmember shall
391 nominate a candidate for the board who resides in the councilmember's district no later
392 than March 31, 2026. If the executive does not appoint by May 31, 2026, the person
393 nominated by a councilmember, the executive must request that the councilmember
394 should by June 30, 2026, nominate another candidate for appointment. Members shall be
395 confirmed by the council. Members may not be elected or appointed officials of any unit
396 of government, except that individuals serving in a civic capacity on a local board or
397 commission would be eligible to serve on the parks levy oversight board.

398 B. The board shall review the allocation of levy proceeds and progress on
399 achieving the purposes of this proposition. On or before December 31, 2027, the board
400 shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and the
401 regional policy committee on the expenditure of levy proceeds for 2026. Thereafter, the
402 board shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and
403 the regional policy committee annually. Any report to the King County council under
404 this section shall be made in the form of a paper original and an electronic copy with the
405 clerk of the council, who shall retain the original and provide an electronic copy to all
406 councilmembers. The board expires December 31, 2032.

407 **SECTION 8. Exemption.** The additional regular property taxes authorized by
408 this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW
409 84.36.381.

410 **SECTION 9. Ratification.** Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the
411 King County council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the
412 election on August 5, 2025, and any other acts consistent with the authority and before
413 the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

414 **SECTION 10. Severability.** If any provision of this ordinance or its application

415 o any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
416 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs Open Space, Natural Lands, and Urban Green Space Acquisition Guidelines, B. Open Space, Natural Lands, and Urban Green Space Acquisition Guidelines

General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs

Any project funded by parks levy proceeds must allow for regular public access. To receive parks levy funds for eligible projects, the eligible entities will be required to enter into contracts with King County.

1. Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the parks capital and open space grant program to:

1. Develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities; and/or
2. Acquire park land.

Eligible Entities

1. King County cities and towns;
2. Metropolitan park districts geographically located in King County; and/or
3. Public entities that serve unincorporated King County.

Eligible Projects

Parks levy funding received for capital projects to develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities are for the following purposes:

1. Feasibility study;
2. Planning and design; and/or
3. Construction.

Lands acquired using parks levy funding are for the following purposes:

1. Active recreational uses (e.g., athletic fields, sports courts, ballfield turf projects, etc.);
 2. Passive recreational uses (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, birdwatching, etc.);
 3. Local trails; and/or
 4. Open space lands, except if the land is primarily in agricultural use. Agriculture can be one of multiple uses allowed on lands funded by parks levy proceeds (e.g., community garden, p-patch), as long as the primary use allows public recreation and access.
-

2. Aquatic Facilities Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the aquatic facilities grant program, which provides funding opportunities to develop new and/or improve existing aquatic facilities in King County.

Eligible Entities

1. King County towns and cities;
2. Metropolitan park districts;
3. Public Schools districts;
4. Nonprofits that operate public aquatic facilities; and/or

5. Other public entities that own public aquatic facilities.

Eligible Projects

Parks levy funding received by eligible entities to develop new and/or improve existing aquatics facilities are for the following purposes:

1. Land acquisition;
 2. Feasibility study;
 3. Planning and design; and/or
 4. Construction.
-

3. Healthy Communities and Parks Fund Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the Healthy Communities and Parks Fund grant program, which provides funding opportunities to increase access to and use of parks, open space and public recreation facilities in traditionally underserved areas and communities, as well as to build internal capacities of community-based partners who provide recreation to these areas and communities.

Funding is for the following purposes:

1. Develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities; and/or
2. Provide programs focusing on recreation, sports, play, and physical activity.

Eligible Entities

1. Non-profit organizations;
2. Small or emerging community organizations without a 501c3 status, through a partnership with a fiscal agent;
3. Tribes or tribal organizations serving residents of King County;
4. King County towns and cities; and/or
5. Metropolitan park districts.

Eligible Projects

Parks levy funding received by eligible entities to develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities are for the following purposes:

1. Land acquisition;
2. Feasibility study;
3. Planning and design; and/or
4. Construction.

Parks levy funding received by eligible entities to provide programs are to be focused on recreational programming (e.g., swim programs, youth sports leagues, etc.).

Open Space, Natural Lands, and Urban Green Space Acquisition Guidelines

The overall approach for funding allocation and coordination with the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) program for the acquisition of open space and natural lands through the countywide parks levy is as follows:

1. Early each calendar year, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) will set a proposed allocation for open space from levy funds for the following fiscal year.
2. Staff will generate proposals for the use of these funds, taking into account opportunities to leverage resources with funding from Conservation Futures, as well as from other local, state, and federal funding sources.
3. An overall proposal allocating the open space funds to specific projects will be developed and discussed with the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee (CFAC) that is responsible for developing CFT funding recommendations. These discussions are expected to occur in the spring, the same timeframe during which the CFAC annually reviews CFT project proposals. This will create an opportunity for the CFAC to provide an advisory recommendation regarding allocation of these parks levy funds.
4. Taking the CFAC's recommendations into account, DNRP will develop a proposed budget for these parks levy funds.
5. The DNRP proposed budget for parks levy funding will be reviewed by the County Executive, and ultimately County Council, as part of the overall budget process for the following year.



KING COUNTY

Signature Report

Ordinance

ATTACHMENT 2

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Proposed No. 2025-0070.2

Sponsors Dembowski and Zahilay

1 AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the
2 qualified electors of King County at a special election to be
3 held in King County on August 5, 2025, of a proposition
4 authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy
5 limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a period of
6 six consecutive years, at a total rate of not more than
7 \$0.2351 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in
8 the first year and limiting annual levy increases by the King
9 County inflation plus population index published by the
10 King County office of economic and financial analysis, or
11 the chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever is greater in
12 years two through six for the purpose of maintaining and
13 operating King County's open space system; improving
14 parks, recreation, access, and mobility in King County by
15 acquiring lands and continuing to develop and support
16 parks, recreation facilities, and regional trails; improving
17 parks and trails in and acquiring lands by metropolitan
18 parks districts, towns and cities in King County; funding
19 environmental education, maintenance and conservation

20 programs at the Woodland Park Zoo; funding
21 environmental education, maintenance and conservation
22 programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding development,
23 maintenance, and programming for Seattle's Waterfront
24 park; funding environmental and climate stewardship and
25 education at Pacific Science Center; funding a capital
26 project at Memorial Stadium; and funding capital
27 improvements at public pools, for all King County
28 residents.

29 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

30 1. King County owns and operates a system of regional and local parks
31 and trails that consists of thirty-two thousand acres of parklands and more
32 than one hundred eighty-five miles of regional trails. The county provides
33 regional trails, regional recreational facilities, regional natural areas,
34 regional parks, and local parks in unincorporated areas. Examples of
35 regional and local county parks and trails include Marymoor park, Cougar
36 Mountain Regional Wildland park, Steve Cox Memorial park, Dick
37 Thurnau Memorial park, the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center,
38 and the Sammamish River trail.

39 2. Parks, natural areas, and trails contribute to a high quality of life. A
40 robust system of parks and trails provides: physical, social, and mental
41 health benefits to individuals; economic opportunity through recreation
42 and tourism; economic growth for private businesses that must attract and

43 retain skilled workers; increased climate resilience; environmental benefits
44 like clean water and healthy habitat; and cultural resource protection
45 through open space conservation. King County's open space system
46 provides all these benefits to King County residents and businesses.

47 3. Provision of urban green space, through parks or other investments
48 such as street trees, is particularly important to achieve the benefits listed
49 above. The addition of trees and plants to concrete-dominated urban areas
50 can help reduce the higher ambient temperatures in those areas, which are
51 anticipated to worsen as anthropogenic climate change progresses. That
52 contributes to health and quality of life for nearby residents, in addition to
53 providing additional capacity to sequester planet-warming greenhouse
54 gases.

55 4. The 2002 Parks Business Transition Plan, adopted by the King County
56 council and enacted by Ordinance 14509, became the blueprint for
57 establishing the regional open space system we have today. Building on
58 that blueprint, the county has adopted open space plans, which have
59 provided the framework guiding King County in the acquisition, planning,
60 development, stewardship, maintenance, and management of its complex
61 system of parks, regional trails, and acres of open space. The latest open
62 space plan was updated in 2022 and adopted by Ordinance 19501.

63 5. In implementing the open space plan, the parks and recreation division
64 of the department of natural resources and parks has successfully focused
65 its lines of business on regional parks and trails, backcountry trails, natural

66 areas, and local parks in unincorporated King County and has
67 implemented business practices that generate revenue from park system
68 assets by implementing or increasing user fees and establishing corporate
69 and community partnerships that enhance park amenities and leverage
70 public and private dollars to improve parks and increase access to parks.

71 6. Consistent with the recommendations of past parks-related task forces
72 and community advisory committees, the county has sought voter-
73 approved levies on four prior occasions: in 2003, enacted by Ordinance
74 14586, to provide maintenance and operating funding for the parks and
75 recreation division for 2004 through 2007; in 2007, enacted by Ordinance
76 15759, to provide funding for maintenance and operations as well as
77 funding for open space acquisition, regional trail development, the
78 Woodland Park Zoo and for King County towns and cities for use in their
79 open space acquisition and trail projects for 2008 through 2013; in 2013,
80 enacted by Ordinance 17568, to provide funding for maintenance and
81 operations as well as for open space acquisition, asset maintenance and
82 improvement, parks and trails projects, the Woodland Park Zoo and for
83 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for
84 2014 through 2019; and in 2019, enacted by Ordinance 18890, to provide
85 funding for maintenance and operations as well as for open space
86 acquisition, asset maintenance and improvement, parks and trails projects,
87 the Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium, aquatic facilities, and for
88 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for

89 2020 through 2025. Voters approved the funding measures on all four
90 occasions that they were on the ballot. The voter-approved levies have
91 helped keep the open space system clean, safe, and open.

92 7. Tribal nations are comanagers with the county in managing our shared
93 public lands, waters, and resources. The county recognizes that this
94 relationship is informed and guided by the treaty rights, which many tribes
95 exercise within King County. The department of natural resources and
96 parks has undertaken many actions with tribes as comanagers in an effort
97 to foster mutual respect, and establish regular and meaningful
98 communication, cooperation, and consultation with tribal officials in
99 developing and executing state and King County policies that have tribal
100 implications. The county has an ongoing goal to strengthen the
101 government-to-government relationship with tribes that share territory
102 with and have interests in King County

103 8. The 2020 through 2025 voter-approved parks, trails, and open space
104 replacement levy provides approximately eighty-five percent of the
105 operating budget of the parks and recreation division, with approximately
106 fifteen percent generated through business activities and entrepreneurial
107 efforts. King County general fund support to the parks and recreation
108 division was eliminated as of 2011.

109 9. The community partnerships and grants program enacted by Ordinance
110 14509 enhances parks amenities by partnering with parks and recreation
111 organizations. Since the inception of the community partnership and grant

112 program in 2003, more than seventy projects representing more than
113 seventy million dollars' worth of new, enhanced, or preserved public
114 recreation facilities have been completed, with only twenty-two million
115 dollars of King County capital investment.

116 10. The Woodland Park Zoo received distributions from the past three
117 voter-approved levies to supplement zoo operating revenue for education
118 and conservation programs, horticulture and maintenance, and capital
119 improvements. Levy proceeds distributed to the zoo provided
120 environmental education, programming and transportation focusing on
121 accessibility for underserved areas, supported thousands of students-
122 annually, and benefitted residents throughout King County. Levy
123 proceeds also provided conservation and animal care for threatened
124 Pacific Northwest species.

125 11. The Seattle Aquarium received distributions from the past voter-
126 approved levy for capital costs for the Ocean Pavilion project to amplify
127 the aquarium's existing global conservation efforts by bringing visitors
128 face-to-face with tropical species native to the Coral Triangle and by
129 housing approximately three thousand five hundred sustainably sourced
130 tropical fish and invertebrates, including rays, sharks, mangroves, and up
131 to thirty species of coral.

132 12. The Memorial Stadium project will create an innovative multi-
133 purpose student and community events facility at Seattle Center. That
134 transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the city of

135 Seattle, providing an improved venue for local and regional sports and
136 events.

137 13. The removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct provided an unprecedented
138 opportunity to create new green space in the heart of Seattle. The
139 resulting waterfront park is a twenty-acre public space stretching from
140 Belltown to Pioneer Square, providing the entire region lasting economic,
141 social, and environmental benefits. Seattle's Waterfront park will link
142 iconic attractions including Olympic Sculpture park, Pike Place Market,
143 the Seattle Aquarium, the Colman Dock ferry terminal, Pioneer Square,
144 stadiums, and surrounding neighborhoods.

145 14. King County towns and cities received funding from the past three
146 voter-approved levies. In 2008 through 2013, towns and cities could use
147 levy proceeds for open space and natural lands acquisition and
148 development of town or city trail projects that supported connections to
149 the regional trail system with distributions being contingent upon an equal
150 or greater contribution of matching moneys from the recipient town or city
151 for the same project. In the 2014 through 2019 and the 2020 through 2025
152 levies, types of uses for the distribution to King County towns and cities
153 were broadened to provide flexibility and better meet the parks and
154 recreation needs of cities.

155 15. Parks levy oversight committees were established to monitor the
156 expenditures of the proceeds from the 2004 through 2007, 2008 through
157 2013, 2014 through 2019, and 2020 through 2025 levies. Annual

158 committee review has concluded that the county has complied with all
159 levy requirements.

160 16. During the 2008 through 2013, 2014 through 2019, and 2020 through
161 2025 levy periods, the process for developing, reviewing, and
162 recommending potential conservation futures tax and parks levy
163 acquisition projects has maximized acquisitions for open space, natural
164 lands, and regional trail rights of way due to the similar objectives for the
165 conservation futures tax and parks levy acquisition programs. Parks levy
166 open space funding distributed to King County is a critical component of
167 match for county applications for conservation futures tax funding. The
168 process for conservation futures tax outlined in K.C.C. 26.12.010
169 maintains transparency, accessibility, and consistency of the distribution
170 of conservation futures tax and parks levy acquisition funds for the public,
171 stakeholder groups, government agencies, and officials.

172 17. King County is growing rapidly as a region. In 2024, King County's
173 population increased by more than thirty thousand people; over the next
174 ten years, the county is expected to grow by another two hundred fifty
175 thousand people. Recent trend reports indicate that participation in
176 outdoor recreation continues to grow, increasing by more than four
177 percent nation-wide in 2023. More and more people are using King
178 County parks and trails, which puts greater pressure on the system. As
179 development increases to accommodate population growth, the risk of
180 losing open space lands, including urban greenspaces throughout the

181 county grows. Those valuable lands contribute to King County residents'
182 high quality of life. The cost of land to accommodate this growth and
183 preserve open spaces is also increasing. Today is the opportune time to
184 address future needs of residents by investing in our parks and trails and
185 accelerating conservation of open space.

186 18. In King County, many communities have experienced a history of
187 inequitable and limited regional investments in parks, recreation, and open
188 space, limiting the ability of residents to lead healthy lives.

189 Approximately five hundred thousand King County residents live without
190 ready access to parks, recreation, and open spaces. There is a need to
191 address disparities in access to parks, recreation, and open space for
192 traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with
193 disabilities. This ordinance provides an opportunity to address parks and
194 recreation needs of these traditionally underserved areas and communities,
195 including people with disabilities.

196 19. Recognizing growth in population, increased use of parks and trails
197 and the need to address disparities, to prepare the 2026 through 2031 levy,
198 the parks and recreation division conducted outreach to obtain feedback on
199 the current park system and future parks and recreation needs for all King
200 County residents. In March and April 2024, parks and recreation division
201 staff conducted twenty-one in-person and virtual community engagement
202 events and hosted two online surveys across eight languages. Participants
203 represented all geographic areas of the county including towns and cities,

204 business, recreation, community, and environmental interests. More than
205 four thousand eight hundred people across all nine King County Council
206 districts participated in the surveys. Parks and recreation division staff
207 also met with towns and cities, parks districts, and key partners to receive
208 additional feedback about the levy.

209 20. Feedback from engagement events, online surveys, and meetings
210 showed support for the King County open space system and defined
211 measures of success. Four themes emerged as top priorities: safety and
212 belonging; new parks, trails, recreation, and infrastructure; equity,
213 representation, inclusion, and access; and maintenance, repairs, and
214 staffing. Feedback supported funding for King County towns' and cities'
215 parks and recreation programs; expansion of the regional trails system;
216 and natural lands conservation.

217 21. From January through July 2024, parks and recreation division staff
218 convened a Community Advisory Committee tasked with recommending
219 how to preserve King County's open space system of parks, trails, and
220 natural areas and resource lands after the 2019 through 2025 levy expires.
221 The Community Advisory Committee also advised staff about how best to
222 meet the growing parks and recreation needs in King County and the
223 region. Representing King County Boards, cities, non-profit
224 organizations, community and environmental interests, businesses, and
225 sports, the Community Advisory Committee met nine times to provide
226 guidance on developing the 2026 through 2031 levy.

227 22. The King County executive took into consideration information
228 obtained from this engagement, the region's growing population, increased
229 use of parks and trails across King County, and the lack of parks,
230 recreation, and open space in some communities, and has put forth this
231 ordinance that acknowledges the changing landscape and the need to grow
232 the open space system to keep up with regional demand. This ordinance is
233 also consistent with the goals and priorities of past levy task forces.

234 23. This proposal would exempt low-income seniors, disabled veterans,
235 and other people with disabilities from the regular property tax increase on
236 their residences resulting from a levy authorized by this ordinance if they
237 have been approved for an exemption under RCW 84.36.381.

238 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

239 SECTION 1. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this
240 ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise. For those definitions herein that
241 contain terms not defined but include a reference to the 2022 Open Space Plan adopted
242 by Ordinance 19501, or the provisions of the Growth Management Act, chapter 36.70A
243 RCW , then the definition or categorization found in the referenced document shall apply.

244 A. "Aquatic facilities grants program" means the program through which King
245 County provides moneys to publicly owned pools for: capital improvement projects,
246 including planning, feasibility studies, preconstruction and design, and construction; and
247 major maintenance repair or replacement projects.

248 B. "Ballfield access and preservation grant program" means the program through
249 which King County provides moneys to eligible entities to increase public access to
250 ballfields.

251 C. "Community partnerships and grants program" means the program through
252 which King County provides moneys to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations,
253 and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing,
254 operating, or maintaining a recreation facility or public park in unincorporated King
255 County and King County towns and cities for public benefit.

256 D. "Conservation" means protection of natural areas, as defined in the county's
257 open space plan, natural resource lands, categorized in RCW 36.70A.170, from
258 development through fee or easement acquisition, restoration of natural functions, and
259 administration of incentives for landowners that voluntarily preserve open space.

260 E. "Conservation futures tax program" means the program defined in K.C.C.
261 chapter 26.12.

262 F. "Educational and civic venues" means the Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle
263 Aquarium, Memorial Stadium, Seattle's Waterfront park, and Pacific Science Center.

264 G. "Get active/stay active grant program" means the program through which the
265 King County council provides councilmanic grant awards for youth or amateur sport
266 activities or facilities.

267 H. "Healthy community and parks grants program" means the program through
268 which King County provides moneys to eligible entities in order to achieve equitable
269 opportunities and access to parks and recreation for traditionally underserved areas and

270 communities, including people with disabilities, located in unincorporated King County
271 and King County towns and cities.

272 I. "Levy" means the levy of regular property taxes for the specific purposes and
273 term provided in this ordinance and authorized by the electorate in accordance with state
274 law.

275 J. "Levy proceeds" means the principal amount of moneys raised by the levy, any
276 interest earnings on the moneys, and the proceeds of any interim financing following
277 authorization of the levy.

278 K. "Limit factor" means the most recent published King County office of
279 economic and financial analysis King County inflation plus population index, or the
280 limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW, whichever is greater.

281 L. "Open space system" means the categories of King County's open space
282 system of parks, including recreation and multiuse sites, regional trails, natural areas, and
283 natural resource lands. "Open space system" also includes structures or buildings owned
284 or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the parks and recreation division of the department
285 of natural resources.

286 M. "Open space" means any land defined as part of the open space system or a
287 parks district, town, or city parks system.

288 N. "Parks capital and open space grants program" means the program through
289 which King County provides moneys to metropolitan park districts, towns, or cities
290 located in King County to acquire open space and invest in capital improvement projects
291 and major maintenance repair or replacement of parks or recreation infrastructure.

292 O. "Parks district" means the active metropolitan park districts under chapter
293 35.61 RCW and parks and recreation service areas under chapter 36.68 RCW in King
294 County.

295 P. "Town or city parks system" means any building or other structure related to
296 parks or recreation; parks, trails, natural areas, natural resource lands, and other parks or
297 recreation property owned or otherwise under the jurisdiction of a town or city within
298 King County.

299 **SECTION 2. Levy submittal to voters.** To provide necessary moneys for the
300 purposes identified in section 4 of this ordinance, the King County council shall submit to
301 the qualified electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy
302 in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive
303 years, with collection commencing in 2026, at a rate not to exceed \$0.2351 per one
304 thousand dollars of assessed value in the first year of the levy period. The dollar amount
305 of the levy in the first year shall be the base upon which the levy amounts in year two
306 through six shall be calculated. In accordance with RCW 84.55.050, this levy shall be a
307 regular property tax levy subject to the limit factor.

308 **SECTION 3. Deposit of levy proceeds.** The levy proceeds shall be deposited
309 into a dedicated subfund of the parks and recreation fund, or its successor.

310 **SECTION 4. Eligible expenditures.** If approved by the qualified electors of the
311 county, levy proceeds shall be used for the following purposes:

312 A. Costs incurred by the county that are attributable to the special election called
313 for in section 5 of this ordinance as well as future parks, recreation, trails, and open space
314 levy elections;

315 B. Distributions to educational and civic venues, limited to the following
316 facilities:

317 1. Up to forty million dollars for distribution to the Woodland Park Zoological
318 Society which shall be used solely for: environmental education with an emphasis on
319 accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with
320 disabilities; horticulture and maintenance of buildings and grounds; conservation of
321 threatened species; and development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate
322 impacts to animals and habitats from climate change;

323 2. Up to twelve million dollars for distribution to the Seattle Aquarium which
324 shall be used solely for: environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to
325 traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities;
326 maintenance of buildings and grounds; conservation of threatened species; and
327 development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and
328 habitats from climate change;

329 3. Up to two million five-hundred thousand dollars for distribution to the city of
330 Seattle, which shall be used solely for capital costs for the Memorial Stadium project;

331 4. Up to six million for distribution to the Pacific Science Center, which shall be
332 used solely for capital or operations and maintenance purposes relating to environmental
333 and climate stewardship and education; and

334 5. Up to six million dollars for distribution to the 501(c)(3) organization,
335 registered with the Washington secretary of state under number 1133863 and known as
336 Friends of Waterfront Park or its successor 501(c)(3) organization registered with the
337 Washington secretary of state, which shall be used solely at Seattle's Waterfront park, and

338 which shall be used solely for: accessibility to the park for traditionally underserved
339 areas and communities, including people with disabilities; support for a clean and safe
340 environment; free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and
341 development of inclusive community partnerships;

342 C. Up to twenty-five million dollars to eligible entities for the parks capital and
343 open space grants program;

344 D. Up to sixty-eight million dollars for aquatic facilities, limited to the following:

345 1. Up to forty-six million dollars for the aquatic facilities grant program; and

346 2. Up to twenty-two million dollars for the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic
347 Center for major maintenance capital projects;

348 E. Up to ten million dollars for the Get Active/Stay Active grant program, to be
349 divided evenly among the nine council districts;

350 F. At least thirty million dollars for distribution to eligible entities for the healthy
351 communities and parks grant program;

352 G. Up to twelve million five-hundred thousand dollars for distribution to eligible
353 entities for the community partnerships and grants program;

354 H. Up to thirteen million five-hundred thousand dollars for distribution to eligible
355 entities for the ballfield access and preservation grant program;

356 I. The remainder of levy proceeds for the following purposes:

357 1. forty percent of levy proceeds for maintenance and operations of King
358 County's open space system;

359 2. fifty percent of levy proceeds for:

360 a. Acquisition, conservation, and stewardship of additional open space,
361 including urban greenspaces, natural areas, natural resource lands, and rights of way for
362 regional trails;

363 b. Acquisition of rights of way for and development of regional and other
364 publicly owned trails; and

365 c. Capital improvement projects and major maintenance repair or replacement
366 of open space system infrastructure, town and city parks system infrastructure, and
367 recreation facilities owned or operated by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization;

368 3. Ten percent of levy proceeds for distribution to towns, cities, and parks
369 districts in King County for their town or city parks system operations and capital
370 improvement projects, of which amount:

371 a. Thirty thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each town and city,
372 and to each of the following parks districts that predominantly serve unincorporated King
373 County: Fall City Metropolitan Park District; Si View Metropolitan Park District; and
374 Vashon Park District;

375 b. An additional ninety thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each
376 town and city with a population over four thousand;

377 c. An additional twenty thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each
378 town and city containing one or more parcels defined as an opportunity areas under
379 K.C.C 26.12.003.J.1.; and

380 d. Of the remainder of levy proceeds, after the distributions made in
381 accordance with subsection E.3.a., b., and c. of this section, sixty percent shall be

382 distributed in proportion to each town or city's population and forty percent shall be
383 distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city; and

384 4. Of the levy proceeds distributed to entities other than King County, a portion
385 shall be retained by the county to be used for expenditures related to administration of the
386 distribution of levy proceeds. Eligible administrative expenditures shall include all costs
387 and charges to the parks and recreation division or the county associated with or
388 attributable to the purposes listed in this section as well as sections 6 and 7 of this
389 ordinance.

390 **SECTION 5. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321,
391 the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with
392 the primary election on August 5, 2025, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular
393 property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director
394 of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state
395 constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the
396 said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council
397 shall certify that proposition to the King County director of elections in substantially the
398 following form, with such additions, deletions or modifications as may be required for
399 the proposition listed below by the prosecuting attorney:

400 King County

401 Proposition No. 1

402 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy

403 The King County council adopted Ordinance _____ replacing the expiring parks levy.

404 If approved, this proposition supports county, city, park district, and town parks, open

405 space, and trails; recreation; public pools; and educational and civic venues. It authorizes
406 an additional six-year property tax beginning in 2026 at \$0.2351 per \$1,000 of assessed
407 valuation, uses the 2026 levy amount to compute annual increases in 2027-2031 by the
408 King County inflation plus population index or chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever
409 is greater, and exempts qualifying seniors, veterans, and disabled persons under RCW
410 84.36.381. Should this proposition be:

411 Approved? _

412 Rejected? _

413 **SECTION 6. Distributions.** Before distribution of levy proceeds to an entity
414 other than King County, the receiving entity and the county shall have fully executed a
415 contract setting forth the terms and conditions, including the applicable eligible purpose
416 or purposes identified in section 4 of this ordinance, under which the entity is receiving a
417 distribution of levy proceeds.

418 **SECTION 7. Parks levy oversight board established.**

419 A. If the proposition in section 5 of this ordinance is approved by the qualified
420 electors of King County, a parks levy oversight board shall be appointed by the
421 executive. The board shall consist of nine members. By March 31, 2026, each
422 councilmember shall nominate a candidate for the board who resides in the
423 councilmember's district. If, by March 31, 2026, the executive does not appoint the
424 person nominated by a councilmember, the executive must request that the
425 councilmember should, by June 30, 2026, nominate another candidate for appointment.
426 Members shall be confirmed by the council. Members may not be elected or appointed

427 officials of any unit of government, except that individuals serving in a civic capacity on
428 a local board or commission would be eligible to serve on the parks levy oversight board.

429 B. The board shall review the allocation of levy proceeds and progress on
430 achieving the purposes of this proposition. On or before December 31, 2027, the board
431 shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and the
432 regional policy committee on the expenditure of levy proceeds for 2026. Thereafter, the
433 board shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and
434 the regional policy committee annually. Each report shall include an accounting of levy
435 spending by King County council district. Any report to the King County council under
436 this section shall be electronically filed with the clerk of the council, who will retain an
437 electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief
438 of staff, and the chief policy officer. The board expires December 31, 2032.

439 SECTION 8. Exemption. The additional regular property taxes authorized by
440 this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW
441 84.36.381.

442 SECTION 9. Ratification. Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the
443 King County council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the
444 election on August 5, 2025, and any other acts consistent with the authority and before
445 the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

446 SECTION 10. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application

447 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the
448 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, _____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: None

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)	
Election Costs	\$1,500,000
Additional Assumed Costs	\$18,000,000
Fixed income exemption ¹	\$3,000,000
1% undercollection assumption	\$15,000,000
Woodland Park Zoo	\$42,000,000
Seattle Aquarium	\$15,000,000
Seattle Waterfront²	\$9,000,000
Memorial Stadium³	\$2,500,000
Pools	\$22,000,000
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center	\$22,000,000
Grants and Community Partnerships	\$117,000,000
Healthy Communities and Parks Fund (formerly named Targeted Equity Grants)	\$30,000,000
Cities - Capital Projects & Acquisitions	\$30,000,000
Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants	\$46,000,000
Community Partnerships and Grants	\$11,000,000
King County Cities, Towns, and Park Districts	\$119,000,000
King County Operations and Maintenance⁴	\$550,600,000
Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery and Internal Supports	\$517,000,000
Parks Patrol Expansion	\$4,300,000
Safety Program Expansion	\$3,200,000
Asset Management Program	\$4,100,000
Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program	\$10,400,000
Youth Conservation Corps Program Expansion	\$4,800,000
Jobs & Housing Program	\$5,000,000
Tribal, Indigenous, & Historic Interpretive Program	\$1,800,000
Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship	\$217,500,000
King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation	\$96,000,000
Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M)	\$20,000,000
Fish Passage Program ⁵	\$10,000,000
Climate Resilience ⁶	\$33,000,000
Environmental Stewardship ⁷	\$58,500,000
Regional and Other Public Trails System⁸	\$179,000,000
Eastrail	\$65,000,000
Lake to Sound Trail	\$55,000,000
Green River Trail Extension - North	\$6,000,000
Interurban Trail South investments	\$8,000,000
Soos Creek Trail	\$7,000,000
Other New Regional Trails ⁹	\$38,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements¹³	\$51,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements	
Dog Parks	\$3,000,000
Lakeland Park North	\$10,000,000
Skyway Park Planning and Community Center	\$13,000,000
Backcountry Trails (new trails)	\$3,000,000
Ballfield and Sports Courts (new facilities)	\$3,000,000
Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion	\$19,000,000
Active Recreation Repair and Renovation and Other Park Repair and Renovation	\$177,000,000
Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure¹⁰	
General infrastructure	\$23,000,000

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)

<i>Playground rehabilitation</i>	\$7,000,000
<i>Park amenities rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Parks building system rehabilitation</i>	\$8,000,000
<i>Ballfield synthetic turf replacement</i>	\$12,000,000
<i>Pools, water access, docks rehabilitation</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Backcountry Trail rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Drainage infrastructure rehabilitation</i>	\$12,000,000
<i>Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.)</i>	\$8,000,000
ADA and Accessibility Rehabilitation	\$12,000,000
Regional Trails Rehabilitation¹¹	\$55,000,000
Marymoor Park Rehabilitation¹²	\$16,000,000
Sunset Park Renovation and Repair	\$4,000,000

1. As authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

2. New levy investment that support accessibility for traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; maintenance and operations of facilities and grounds; offering free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and inclusive community partnerships.

3. This allocation will fund the renovation of the Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center. This transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle, providing an improved multi-purpose venue for local and regional sports and events.

4. Of this allocation, 93% funds the day-to-day operational needs to maintain the park system (personnel, supplies, services, fleet, equipment, administrative costs, etc.). \$2.4M shall be allocated for the King County Fair, Washington State University 4-H Program, and King County Search and Rescue operations. Additional funding to be allocated for critical programs and services to manage the growing parks system and enhance safety and belonging for park users. These programs include the expansion of the service level agreement with King County Sheriff's Office to fund the Parks Patrol Program; the expansion of the Parks Safety Program for ongoing implementation of safety related elements within the park system, i.e., regulatory compliance and trainings for onsite staff; and expansion of the Youth Conservation Corps summer internship program.

New investments include:

- Funding for the continuity of the Jobs and Housing Program due to sunseting of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery (CLFR) funding in 2024.
- Funding for the enforcement of Parks Land Use Guidelines on park lands and regional trail segments to protect capital investments, open space acquisitions, and new properties and easements in support of environmental preservation.
- Funding to support work with Tribes, indigenous organizations, and historic preservation organizations to strengthen government-to-government relationships, and improve conservation and recreational planning.

5. The Fish Passage Program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

6. Climate resilience investments will support Parks' forest stewardship program and projects; potential stormwater park pilot projects; and establish a climate response fund intended to support community response projects and programming as identified.

7. Environmental stewardship investments will support early actions to safeguard sites for public use following acquisition; structure demolitions to deliver full ecological and recreation benefits; improvements to existing maintenance facilities and acquisitions; natural resource and site management planning; multi-benefit river corridor projects; and landscaping/restoration/mitigation site monitoring and maintenance.

8. This allocation provides funding for Regional and Other Public Trails System including:

- Construction of two additional segments of Lake to Sound Trail and the completion of the design to connect Lake to Sound Trail to SeaTac Airport.
- Construction of two additional segments of Eastrail, an Eastrail connection to Coulon Park, paves Central Wilburton segment, and completes design on Eastrail to Lake to Sound Trail connection.
- Construction of the Green River Trail North to Seattle.
- Complete full rehabilitation of the Interurban Trail South.
- Construction of Soos Creek Trail Segment 5a and planning for future Soos Creek Trail segments.

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)

9. Of this allocation, \$18M will fund a combination of planning, acquisitions, and preliminary design for potential future trail segments and connections including, but not limited to, Green River Trail, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Soos Creek Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

\$20M of this funding will be used for emergent needs on the regional trail system including, but not limited to, surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and intersection improvements.

10. Capital major maintenance programs keep parks clean, safe, and open and include, but are not limited to: rehabilitation of play areas, park buildings, existing synthetic turf fields, pools, docks, ballfields, sports courts, backcountry trails, drainage infrastructure, restrooms, picnic shelters, signage, as well as coordination with other agencies who have infrastructure on parks property (e.g., Sound Transit, WSDOT). A portion of this funding is also intended to respond to emergent projects identified by Park users associated with existing facilities. These programs are expected supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

11. Funding for new park development and improvements includes Skyway Park Community Center that will support design, construction, and initial operational costs. Additional funding for construction (approximately \$20M) will be needed and is expected to be funded with a combination of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) and bond financing. Funding allocated for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion is for design and construction at South County Ballfields in Federal Way.

12. This program keeps the existing regional trail system clean, safe, and open and includes, but is not limited to, repair/replacement of bridges and trestles, trail surface repairs/rehabilitation, safety updates, repairs to meet current guidelines and standards, and landscaping/mitigation maintenance and monitoring.

13. This allocation will fund rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities throughout Marymoor Park to keep the park clean, safe, and open. It also includes funding for improvements to address growing user demand including, but not limited to, signage, utilities, pedestrian facilities, buildings, roadways, velodrome rehabilitation, and concert venue updates. This program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

Parks Capital Program 2026-2031 Levy Investments

Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure (\$177M)

General infrastructure (\$23M)

- Parking lot repair and rehabilitation projects at several parks including, Dockton Park, Preston Athletic Fields, Petrovitsky Park, Coalfield Park, and Steve Cox Memorial Park.
- Pathway repair and rehabilitation projects at several parks including Dockton Park, Tolt MacDonald Park, Five Mile Lake.
- Rehabilitation of the Bike Park at Dick Thurnau Park.

Playground rehabilitation (\$7M)

- Preston Athletic Fields
- Lake Geneva Park
- Redmond Ridge Park
- Big Finn Hill Park (2–5-year-old)
- Soos Creek Park (Gary Grant Park)
- Steve Cox Memorial Park

Park amenities rehabilitation (\$6M)

- North Shorewood Park amenities rehabilitation
- Countywide picnic table replacements
- Countywide kiosk and wayfinding signage rehabilitation
- Restroom Building Improvements (rehabilitation, replacement, or additions)
 - Tolt MacDonald Park
 - Cottage Lake Park
 - Dockton Park
 - Redmond Ridge Park
- Additional projects to be identified by future condition assessments and emergent needs

Parks building system rehabilitation (\$8M)

- Tolt MacDonald Park Yurt replacements
- Urgent repairs and rehabilitation (e.g., HVAC, windows, flooring, kitchen facilities, roofs) from in 2024 facility assessment report for the following buildings:
 - Steve Cox Park Community Center (i.e., Log Cabin)
 - Grace Hansen Community Center
 - Preston Community Center
 - Clise Mansion
- Additional projects to be identified by future condition assessment and emergent needs

Ballfield synthetic turf replacement (\$12M)

- Ravensdale Park (Multipurpose Fields 2 & 3)
- Marymoor Park Soccer Fields (1 – 4) and Ballfields (1 & 2)
- Jim Ellis Memorial Regional Park Soccer Fields 1 & 2
- Big Finn Hill Park Multi-Purpose Field
- Steve Cox Memorial Park Multipurpose Fields 2 & 3 and Mel Olsen Stadium Ballfield 1

Pools, water access, docks rehabilitation (\$2M)

- Cottage Lake Pool repairs and rehabilitation
- Repairs and rehabilitation of existing docks and/or boat ramps at:
 - Cottage Lake
 - Lake Joy
 - Lake Geneva
 - Five Mile Lake
- Additional projects to be identified by future condition assessment and emergent needs

Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation (\$6M)

- Ballfield fencing replacement projects
 - Ravensdale Park
 - Tolt MacDonald park
 - Steve Cox Park
 - Petrovitsky Park
- Countywide aluminum bleachers replacement (to meet current safety standards)
- Ballfield light pole replacement

Backcountry Trail rehabilitation (\$6M)

- Frog Holler Forest
- Black Diamond Open Space
- Ring Hill Forest
- Taylor Mountain Forest
- Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area
- North Green River Park (Titus Pit)
- Glendale Forest
- Union Hill Forest
- Auburn Narrows Natural Area

Drainage infrastructure rehabilitation (\$12M)

- Rehabilitation and/or replacement of non-fish bearing drainage culverts at:
 - Skyway Park
 - Black Diamond Open Space
 - Five Mile Lake

- Maury Island Marine Park
- Additional projects to be identified by future condition assessment and emergent needs

Other agency projects (\$8M)

Other public agencies frequently construct and/or impact assets on parks property. The funds in this program would be used for coordination and collaboration with these other agencies on projects that affect parks property. Some examples of current projects where King County Parks is working with other agencies include:

- Sound Transit: Downtown Redmond Light Rail Extension project which affects and connects directly to Marymoor Park
- WSDOT Projects including:
- I-405, SR 522 Vicinity to SR 527 Express Toll Lanes Improvement Project which involves building two bridges over the West Sammamish River Trail near Bothell and reconstructing the trail.
- State Route 18 Widening project which involves project elements and impacts affecting Taylor Mountain Natural Area and Preston Mill Park.
- City of Kenmore: State Route 522 Cat Whisker Creek Fish Passage project which affects the Burke Gilman Trail in the City of Kenmore.
- King County Water and Land Resources Division: Lower Frew Levee Setback Project which is located in and affects Tolt MacDonald Park and the Snoqualmie Vally Trail.
- King County Road Services Division: Replacement of the Boise X Connection Bridge #3055A which affects the Foothills Trail.

ADA and Accessibility Rehabilitation (\$12M)

Projects to be identified by the ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan currently in-progress

Regional Trails Rehabilitation (\$55M)

- Bridge and Trestle Rehabilitation and Replacement Projects
 - Cedar River Trail (Bridge 2266-5)
 - Sammamish River Trail Site (2156-8)
 - Soos Creek Park And Trail (2250-5)
 - Snoqualmie Valley Trail Site (Boxley Bridge 2178-45)
 - Preston Snoqualmie Trail #3 (2277-2)
- Countywide on-going Trail Rehabilitation programs
 - pavement restriping program
 - access control repairs and replacement
 - pavement repair, overlay, and root barrier
- Countywide intersection lighting program at priority locations for safety
- Site Management Plan development
 - Burke Gilman Trail
 - Sammamish River Trail
- Additional projects to be identified by emergent needs

Marymoor Park Rehabilitation (\$16M)

Updates to critical infrastructure are including, but not limited to,

- Improved wayfinding signage
- Utilities including water, sewer, electrical, fiber
- Pedestrian facilities including dedicated pathways and safe roadway crossings
- Roadway including rehabilitation and safety improvements for traffic flow and parking
- Velodrome rehabilitation
- Concert venue improvements and updates
- Restrooms improvements
- Building rehabilitation (may also be funded partially from the Building system rehabilitation program)

Sunset Park Renovation and Repair (\$4M)

The exact updates are still to be determined as part of a public engagement process, but may include, restroom renovation, parking improvements, court and field improvements, adding additional amenities such as play area.

New Park Development and Improvements (\$51M)

Dog Parks (\$3M)

- North Shorewood Park
- Lake Geneva Park
- Skyway Park (if it aligns with the Community Center plan)

Lakeland Park North (\$10M)

Design and construction of a 20-acre nature park at Lakeland North Urban Park between Auburn and Federal Way including trails, nature-based play area, shelter, restroom and parking.

Skyway Park Planning and Community Center (\$13M)

Total estimated Planning Level Project Cost (i.e., includes design, permitting, construction) for the community center is \$40M. The funding plan is as follows.

Existing Funding (approximately):	\$ 8 M (from 2021/2022 King County Budget)
Proposed 2026-2031 Levy Funds:	\$13 M
<u>REET 2 funding:</u>	<u>\$19 M</u> (may include some level of debt financing)
Total:	\$40 M

Backcountry Trails (new trails) (\$3M)

New trails may be created at the sites listed above under Major Maintenance and would also be created at future sites to be acquired.

Ballfield and Sports Courts (new facilities) (\$3M)

Potential projects may include:

- Adding pickleball courts at existing parks
- Adding recreational cricket facilities at existing parks
- Adding light to existing courts or fields

Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion (\$19M)

South County Ballfields

Regional and Other Public Trails System (\$179M)

Eastrail (\$65M)

- I-90 Steel Bridge Crossing (Bellevue): Design and Construct
- Central Wilburton Paving (Bellevue): Design and Construct
- 124th to 145th Interim Trail (Woodinville): Design and Construct
- Coulon Park North Entrance to South Entrance (Renton): Design and Construct
- Coulon Park North Entrance to Mile Post 5 (Renton/Bellevue): Design and Construct
- Mile Post 5 to Ripley Lane (Renton/Bellevue): Design to be shovel ready for 2032

Lake to Sound Trail (\$55M)

- Segment D: Design and construct (1.67 miles in Renton)
- Segment E: Design and construct (0.68 miles in Renton)
- Segment F1: Design and construct (0.93 miles in Tukwila)
- Segment F2: Design be shovel ready for 2032 (1.68 Tukwila to SeaTac)
- Segment G: Design to be shovel ready for 2032 (connects Lake to Sound to Eastrail at Coulon)

Green River Trail Extension - North (\$6M)

Establishes a safe and continuous trail north from Cecil Moses Park in Tukwila along West Marginal Place South to the Seattle City limits.

Interurban Trail South investments (\$8M)

Funding completes the major rehabilitation of entire corridor.

Soos Creek Trail (\$7M)

- Construct Segment 5A of Soos Creek Trail at the north end of Lake Youngs.
- Begins planning and design for future trail connections (Soos Creek – Lake Meridian – Jenkins Creek)

Other New Regional Trails (\$38M)

- Planning and preliminary design for future trail connections Green River Trail, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Soos Creek Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail.
- Emergent needs on the regional trail system including, but not limited to, surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and intersection improvements. This is also where improvements for extended trail hours could be funded from if it moves forward.



King County

Dow Constantine
 King County Executive
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 TTY Relay: 711
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February 11, 2025

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

Dear Councilmember Zahilay:

I am pleased to transmit to you a proposed Ordinance that would, if enacted, place a measure on the August 5, 2025, primary election ballot to reauthorize the King County's Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy (Parks Levy). The current Parks Levy expires at the end of 2025. If approved by King County voters, a renewed Parks Levy would enable King County's parks and trails system to remain clean, safe, and open while making strategic investments as our region grows.

The proposed ballot measure asks King County voters to authorize a property tax levy lid lift to maintain and operate King County's parks system, acquire open space, develop regional trails, and increase access to parks and recreation for all King County residents. If passed, it would also provide funding to King County cities, towns, and park districts for local parks, trail development, and operations, as well as to the Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle Aquarium, and Seattle Waterfront Park for environmental and education programs. As proposed, the renewed Parks Levy would increase the property tax rate to 24.43 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value, generating approximately \$1.5 billion over the six-year period (2026-2031). Compared to the current levy, this would represent an approximately \$3.44 increase per month for homeowners of a median value home based on 2024 home values.

In developing the legislation, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) convened a Parks Levy Community Advisory Committee and undertook a robust community engagement process that included 21 community events and meetings with many interested parties. DNRP briefed each King County Councilmember office and offered briefings to all cities in the County. Online surveys in eight languages were completed by more than 4,800 community members. DNRP incorporated this community and partner input into the legislation and levy planning.

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay

February 11, 2025

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The proposed renewed levy measure will support:

- Continued care of King County’s extensive system of more than 200 parks, 185 miles of regional trails, and 32,000 acres of open space;
- Growth, connection, and stewardship of regional open space natural lands and urban green spaces, which increases climate resilience, habitat connectivity, and recreation opportunities;
- Further development of the regional trails system and improved mobility through completion of essential trail connections and maintaining existing trails; and
- Making parks and recreation opportunities more accessible for all who live, work, or play in King County.

The proposed legislation continues to invest upstream where needs are greatest. It supports community partnerships through capital, operating, and programming dollars for parks that serve communities of opportunity. The proposed renewed levy also continues and expands the Healthy Communities and Parks grant program to build capacity and increase access to green space and public recreation opportunities in underserved areas.

The proposed legislation furthers the Strategic Climate Action Plan goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by managing and restoring parks and other natural lands to maximize biological carbon storage. Through investments in natural lands conservation, forest stewardship, and other capital projects, the proposed legislation will increase community resilience to a changing climate.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposed Ordinance. This important legislation will help King County preserve and protect our existing parks and trails system, build upon and maximize the benefits of levy investments to date, and strategically address our region’s current and future needs. Attached to this letter are the King County Parks Levy Proposed Allocation Plan, as well as the King County Parks Capital Program and Parks Operating Financial Plan for reference.

If your staff have questions, please contact Warren Jimenez, Division Director of the Parks and Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks, at 206-477-4526.

Sincerely,



for

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

The Honorable Girmay Zahilay

February 11, 2025

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Enclosure

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Stephanie Cirkovich, Chief of Staff, King County Council

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

Karan Gill, Chief of Staff, Office of the Executive

Penny Lipsou, Council Relations Director, Office of the Executive

John Taylor, Director, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)

Warren Jimenez, Division Director, Parks and Recreation Division, DNRP

2025 FISCAL NOTE

Ordinance/Motior 2025-XXXX
 Title: 2026-2031 Parks Levy Renewal
 Affected Agency and/or Agencies: Parks and Recreation Division, Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP)
 Note Prepared By: Andrea Smith, Parks and Recreation Division, DNRP
 Date Prepared: February 4, 2025
 Note Reviewed By: Elka Peterson Horner, Office of Performance, Strategy, and Budget
 Date Reviewed: February 10, 2025

Description of request:

AN ORDINANCE providing for the submission to the qualified electors of King County at a special election to be held in King County on August 5, 2025, a proposition authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for a period of six consecutive years, at a total rate of not more than \$0.2443 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation in the first year and limiting annual levy increases to local inflation and population growth in the five succeeding years.

Revenue to:

Agency	Fund Code	Revenue Source	2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031
Parks Levy Collection Sub-Fund/Parks and Recreation	1455	Property Tax Levy Lid Lift (Net) ^{1,2}	\$462,000,000	\$505,000,000	\$554,000,000
TOTAL			\$462,000,000	\$505,000,000	\$554,000,000

Expenditures from:

Allocation Category	Fund Code	Department	2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031
Reimbursement of Election Costs ³	1455	DNRP	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0
Woodland Park Zoo ⁴	1455	DNRP	\$14,000,000	\$14,000,000	\$14,000,000
Seattle Aquarium ⁵	1455	DNRP	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
Seattle Waterfront ⁶	1455	DNRP	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Memorial Stadium ⁷	1455	DNRP	\$2,500,000	\$0	\$0
Healthy Communities & Parks Fund (formerly TEG) ⁸	1451	DNRP	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000
Parks Levy Grants and Community Partnership Grants (CPG) ⁸	3581	DNRP	\$29,000,000	\$29,000,000	\$29,000,000
King County Cities, Towns, and Park Districts ⁹	1455	DNRP	\$40,000,000	\$40,000,000	\$39,000,000
King County Parks Operations & Maintenance ¹⁰	1451	DNRP	\$164,000,000	\$189,000,000	\$216,000,000
King County Parks Capital Program ¹¹	3581	DNRP	\$193,000,000	\$215,000,000	\$238,000,000
TOTAL			\$462,000,000	\$505,000,000	\$554,000,000

Expenditures by Categories

	2026-2027	2028-2029	2030-2031
Reimbursement of Election Costs	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0
Wages/Benefits ¹²	\$98,000,000	\$113,000,000	\$130,000,000
Supplies/Services ¹²	\$76,000,000	\$86,000,000	\$96,000,000
Capital Outlay	\$222,000,000	\$244,000,000	\$267,000,000
Other Transfers ¹³	\$64,500,000	\$62,000,000	\$61,000,000
TOTAL		\$462,000,000	\$505,000,000

Does this legislation require a budget supplemental? Yes/No Yes, if the proposed ballot measure is approved by voters.

Notes and Assumptions:

- The levy period covers 2026 through 2031. The fiscal note shows a levy rate of 24.43¢ per \$1,000 assessed value (AV) in the first year, 2026. Subsequent revenue is calculated as prior year collections multiplied by the limit factor, plus revenue from new construction built during the year. Forecast assumptions for assessed value, new construction, local inflation (CPI-W), and population growth are from the August 2024 Office of Economic and Financial Analysis (OEFA) and PSB projections.
- Total revenues are net levy proceeds. Gross levy proceeds are total revenues estimated to be generated with a 24.43¢ levy rate, before undercollection and exemption assumptions are applied. Assumed exemptions/undercollection are the exemption of qualifying households per RCW 84.36.381, and a one percent undercollection rate assumed countywide for property taxes.
- Election costs will be paid by the General Fund in 2025 and reimbursed from levy proceeds in 2026 if the ballot is approved.
- Distribution to the Woodland Park Zoo shall be no more than \$42M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

5. Distribution to the Seattle Aquarium shall be no more than \$15M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

6. Distribution to the Seattle Waterfront shall be no more than \$9M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

7. Distribution to the Memorial Stadium shall be no more than \$2.5M over the first two years of the levy (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds). The allocation will fund the renovation of the Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center. This transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle, providing an improved multi-purpose venue for local and regional sports and events.

8. Funding for the three (3) Levy Grant Programs and Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) over the six years is as follows:

\$30M - Healthy Community and Parks Fund (formerly Targeted Equity Grants)

\$30M – Capital Projects & Acquisitions (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds)

\$46M – Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds)

\$11M - Community Partnerships and Grants refers to "the program through which King County provides monies to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing, operating or maintaining a public park or recreation facility or program in King County and King County cities for public benefit" (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds)

9. 9% of the remaining revenue is distributed to the towns and cities in King County (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

10. 43% of the remaining revenue funds King County Parks operations and maintenance, 4-H Program support, KC Fair, and King County Search and Rescue operations. This includes assumed exemptions and undercollections.

11. 48% of the remaining revenue is allocated to the Capital Improvement Program to fund the following capital portfolios:

Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship (\$218M)

Regional and Other Public Trails (\$179M)

Active Recreation Repair and Renovation (\$177M)

New Park Development and Improvements (\$51M)

It also includes \$22M for Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

2026-2031 Parks Levy Renewal Financial Plan
Parks Levy Collection Sub-Fund/000001455

Category	2021-2022 Actuals	2023-2024 Adopted Budget	2026-2027 Projected	2028-2029 Projected	2030-2031 Projected
Beginning Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	-
Revenues					
2026-2031 Levy Proceeds (Gross)	-	-	462,000,000	505,000,000	554,000,000
Assumed Exemptions/Undercollection	-	-	(6,000,000)	(6,000,000)	(6,000,000)
Total Revenues	-	-	456,000,000	499,000,000	548,000,000
Expenditures					
Reimbursement of Election Costs	-	-	1,500,000	-	-
Woodland Park Zoo	-	-	14,000,000	14,000,000	14,000,000
Seattle Aquarium	-	-	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Seattle Waterfront	-	-	3,000,000	3,000,000	3,000,000
Memorial Stadium	-	-	2,500,000	-	-
Healthy Communities & Parks Fund (formerly TEG)	-	-	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
Parks Levy Grants and Community Partnership Grants (CPG)	-	-	29,000,000	29,000,000	29,000,000
King County Cities, Towns, and Park Districts	-	-	40,000,000	40,000,000	39,000,000
King County Parks Operations & Maintenance	-	-	158,000,000	183,000,000	210,000,000
King County Parks Capital Program	-	-	193,000,000	215,000,000	238,000,000
Total Expenditures	-	-	456,000,000	499,000,000	548,000,000
Estimated Underexpenditures					
Other Fund Transactions					
Total Other Fund Transactions	-	-	-	-	-
Ending Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves					
Total Reserves	-	-	-	-	-
Reserve Shortfall	-	-	-	-	-
Ending Undesignated Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	-

Financial Plan Notes

This is a new sub-fund within Parks and Recreation 1450. Accordingly, there are no 2021-2022 Actuals or 2023-2024 Adopted Budget.

This 2026-2031 levy lid lift will replace the 2020-2025 levy lid lift which is collected in sub-fund 1454.

Outyear revenue and expenditure inflation assumptions are consistent with figures provided by the Office of Performance, Strategy and Budget (PSB) and/or the Office of Economic and Financial Analysis (OEFA).

Revenues Notes:

- Levy rate of 24.43¢ per \$1,000 assessed value (AV) in the first year. Subsequent revenue is calculated as prior year collections multiplied by the limit factor, plus revenue from new construction built during the year. Forecast assumptions for assessed value, new construction, local inflation (CPI-W), and population growth are from the August 2024 OEFA and PSB projections.
- Limit factor is the percentage rate annual collections are allowed to grow. For this proposal, it is the combined percentage change in the Seattle consumer price index for wage earners (CPI-W) and estimated population growth in King County. Specific rates are outlined in the table below.
- Gross levy proceeds are total revenues estimated to be generated with a 24.43¢ levy rate, before undercollection and exemption assumptions are applied.
- Assumed Exemptions/Undercollection means the exemption of qualifying households per RCW 84.36.381, and a one percent undercollection rate assumed countywide for property taxes.
- Total revenues are net levy proceeds.

Expenditure Notes:

- Figures shown are rounded to the nearest million dollars, as a result percentages presented in this plan may not be precise as described below. Actual distributions will follow the percentages listed below.
- Election costs will be paid by the General Fund in 2025 and reimbursed from levy proceeds in 2026 if the ballot is approved.
- Distribution to the Woodland Park Zoo shall be no more than \$42M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).
- Distribution to the Seattle Aquarium shall be no more than \$15M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).
- Distribution to the Seattle Waterfront shall be no more than \$9M over the six years (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).
- Distribution to the Memorial Stadium shall be no more than \$2.5M over the first two years of the levy (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

- Funding for the three (3) Levy Grant Programs and Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) over the six years is as follows:

\$30M - Healthy Community and Parks Fund (formerly Targeted Equity Grants)

\$30M – Capital Projects & Acquisitions (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds)

\$46M – Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds)

\$11M - Community Partnerships and Grants refers to "the program through which King County provides monies to recreation-oriented groups, sports associations and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of developing, operating or maintaining a public park or recreation facility or program in King County and King County cities for public benefit" (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

- 9% of the remaining revenue is distributed to the towns and cities in King County (the county shall retain a small amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds).

- 43% of the remaining revenue funds King County Parks operations and maintenance, 4-H Program support, KC Fair, and King County Search and Rescue operations.

- 48% of the remaining revenue is allocated to the Capital Improvement Program for continued and expanded regional trail development; open space acquisition and stewardship; community partnerships and grants; and recreation repair and renovation, including playgrounds, ballfields, and backcountry trails. This also includes \$22M for Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

Reserve Notes:

- The purpose of this fund is to distribute levy proceeds to various organizations. There are no reserves for this fund.

This plan was updated by Andrea V. Smith on February 4, 2025 and Elka Peterson Horner on February 10, 2025.

2026-2031 Parks Levy Renewal - Allocation of Levy Proceeds

	2026 Estimated	2027 Estimated	2028 Estimated
King County Levy Proceeds ¹	108,000,000	114,000,000	119,000,000
Total Funding	\$108,000,000	\$114,000,000	\$119,000,000
Regional and Other Public Trails System ²	26,000,000	27,000,000	29,000,000
Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship ³	31,000,000	34,000,000	35,000,000
Active Recreation Repair and Renovation ⁴	29,000,000	30,000,000	33,000,000
Levy Grants and Community Partnerships Grants ⁵	14,500,000	14,500,000	14,500,000
New Park Development and Improvements ⁶	7,000,000	8,000,000	8,000,000
Total Allocations	\$107,500,000	\$113,500,000	\$119,500,000

Notes

1. Section 4.E.2 of the proposed ordinance allocates 48% of remaining levy proceeds for a series of eligible uses and describes the planned projects within the subcategories. The allocation of funding for these projects is based on project readiness, additional funding opportunities from future grants or work with partner agencies, changing conditions, and other factors.

2. Regional Trails System refers to the "acquisition and development of rights of ways for regional trails" including the Lake to Sound Corridor (\$65 million), Lake to Sound Trail (\$55M), Interurban Trail South (\$8M), Soos Creek Trail (\$7M), and a combination of planning, acquisitions, and preliminary design for potential future trail segments including the Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail (\$18M). A regional trails system including, but not limited to, surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and other trail-related infrastructure.

3. Open Space Acquisition refers to the distribution of levy proceeds to King County and King County cities for the acquisition of open space lands, natural areas, resource or ecological lands and urban green spaces", in accordance with the acquisition guidelines in Attachment A of the proposed ordinance. Climate resilience investments will include stormwater park pilot projects; and establish a climate response fund intended to support community resilience. Stewardship investments will support early actions to safeguard sites for public use following acquisition, including site benefits; improvements to existing maintenance facilities and acquisitions; natural resource and site management; and landscaping/restoration/mitigation site monitoring and maintenance. Fish Passage projects are also funded through REET funding.

4. Active Recreation Repair and Renovation refers to "major maintenance repair, replacement and improvement projects that keep parks clean, safe, and open such as, rehabilitation of playgrounds, ballfields, sports courts, backcountry trails, drainage infrastructure, restrooms, picnic shelters, signage, and other infrastructure on parks property (e.g., Sound Transit, Washington State Department of Transportation). Projects identified by Park users associated with existing facilities. These programs are expected to be funded through the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

5. Funding for the three (3) Levy Grant Programs over the six years is as follows:
\$30M - Healthy Community and Parks Fund (formerly Targeted Equity Grants); \$30M – Capital Projects & Programs Fund distributed in accordance with Attachment B of the proposed ordinance.

\$11M is allocated to the Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) program. CPG refers to "the program that provides grants to neighborhood-oriented groups, sports associations and community-based organizations to undertake any combination of capital facility or program in King County and King County cities for public benefit" (the county shall retain a 50% distribution of levy proceeds).

6. Funding for new park development and improvements includes Skyway Park Community Center that is currently under construction. Additional funding for construction (approximately \$20M) will be needed and is expected to be funded via the 2025-2026 levy. Funding for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion is for design and construction at South County Ballfield.

to the Parks Capital Portfolio

2029 Estimated	2030 Estimated	2031 Estimated	2026-2031 Total
125,000,000	131,000,000	136,000,000	733,000,000
\$125,000,000	\$131,000,000	\$136,000,000	\$733,000,000
31,000,000	32,000,000	34,000,000	179,000,000
37,000,000	39,000,000	41,000,000	217,000,000
35,000,000	35,000,000	37,000,000	199,000,000
14,500,000	14,500,000	14,500,000	87,000,000
9,000,000	9,000,000	10,000,000	51,000,000
\$126,500,000	\$129,500,000	\$136,500,000	\$733,000,000

ible uses. This document illustrates the allocation of the eligible projects is subject to change based on factors such as project conditions, emergent needs, and strategic goals.

' Proposed projects and estimated funding include: Eastside Rail Green River Trail Extension North (\$6M), as well as investments to and connections including, but not limited to, Green River Trail, An additional \$20M will fund emergent needs on the regional trail l intersection improvements.

ies for the "acquisition, conservation and stewardship of additional with the open space, natural lands and urban green space support Parks' forest stewardship program and projects; potential response projects and programming as identified. Environmental n; structure demolitions to deliver full ecological and recreation management planning; multi-benefit river corridor projects; and nded and expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax

ovement of parks system infrastructure". Proposed program areas clay areas, park buildings, existing synthetic turf fields, pools, docks, , as well as coordination with other agencies who have A portion of this funding is also intended to respond to emergent ; supplemented with REET funding. This includes \$22M for

↳ Acquisitions; and \$46M – Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants to be

m through which King County provides monies to recreation-
n of developing, operating or maintaining a public park or recreation
all amount to be used for expenditures related to administration and

will support design, construction, and initial operational costs.
with a combination of REET and bond financing. Funding allocated
ields in Federal Way.

Financial Plan
Parks and Recreation Operating Fund/000

Category	2023-2024 Actuals	2025 Adopted
Beginning Fund Balance	19,355,065	28,096,719
Revenues		
King County Parks Levy Proceeds	115,159,287	68,791,754
Federal Shared Revenues	518,185	-
Business Revenue	13,436,272	7,909,683
Parks Open Space and Trails Levy Revenue	-	1,226,878
Parks Open Space and Zoo Levy Revenue	-	29,893
Interest Earnings and Other Miscellaneous	588,709	96,000
Total Revenues	129,702,453	78,054,208
Expenditures		
Parks Operations & Maintenance	124,772,839	84,327,582
Healthy Communities & Parks Fund (formerly TEG)	6,932,741	1,941,243
WSU Cooperative / 4-H	289,427	151,000
King County Search and Rescue	240,738	200,000
Total Expenditures	132,235,745	86,619,825
Estimated Underexpenditures		
Other Fund Transactions		
Total Other Fund Transactions		
Ending Fund Balance	16,821,773	19,531,102
Reserves		
Cash Flow Reserve	16,529,468	5,413,739
Rainy Day Reserves		
Targeted Equity Grants Carry Forward	2,449,871	
Total Reserves	18,979,339	5,413,739
Reserve Shortfall	-	-
Ending Undesignated Fund Balance	-	14,117,363

Financial Plan Notes

2023-2024 Actuals reflects preliminary year-end data for 2024 as reported in the GL-10 report 2/5/2025.

Revenues Notes:

- The 2020-2025 King County Parks Levy expires at the end of 2025. Revenue estimates beyond 2025 are b

- Business revenue includes user fees and entrepreneurial efforts to support the park system and reduce three percent annually.

- Miscellaneous revenue includes interest earnings, delinquent levy proceeds from the previous levy term, 2031 has been proposed at 1% for expenditures related to administration and distribution of levy proceeds

Expenditure Notes:

- Parks will continue to contribute \$151,000 funding, on a reimbursement basis, to the Washington State L in King County and \$200,000 funding on a reimbursement basis, to King County Search and Rescue Associ

Reserve Notes (see next page):

- The Cash Flow Reserve is set to three-months of budgeted expenditures, in compliance with Motion 1376 collected in the second quarter of each year. This reserve stabilizes the fund's cash balance from dipping t October.

- The Rainy Day Reserve is set to 90 days of expenditures at the end of the levy period, in compliance with Management Policy.

This plan was updated by Andrea V. Smith February 5, 2025 and Elka Peterson Horner on February 10, 2025

001451

2026-2027 Projected	2028-2029 Projected	2030-2031 Projected
8,914,050	23,095,331	30,308,221
164,355,080	184,353,338	204,767,098
-	-	-
8,146,973	8,391,383	8,643,124
-	-	-
-	-	-
100,800	105,840	111,132
172,602,853	192,850,561	213,521,354
147,919,572	175,135,671	194,528,743
10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000
302,000	302,000	302,000
200,000	200,000	200,000
158,421,572	185,637,671	205,030,743
-	-	-
23,095,331	30,308,221	38,798,832
19,802,697	23,204,709	25,628,843
		25,277,763
3,000,000	4,500,000	1,500,000
22,802,697	27,704,709	52,406,606
-	-	-
292,635	2,603,512	-

ased on a 24.43 cent proposed levy renewal option.

he burden on taxpayers. Starting in 2026, the target is to grow by

and a levy administration fee. A levy administration fee for 2026-
i).

University Cooperative Extension in order to operate the 4-H program
ation for its operations.

i4, because the main revenue for this fund is a property tax which is
elow zero before the property tax payments are made in April and

otion 13764 and the King County Comprehensive Financial

5.

**2026
-2031**

KING COUNTY PARKS LEVY



LEGEND

- Backcountry Trail + Forestry
- Bridge & Trestle
- Existing Regional Trail
- Fish Passage
- Forestry
- Infrastructure Rehab
- Regional Trail Improvement
- Play Area
- Site with Major Capital Investment
- Synthetic Turf Replacement
- Seattle Aquarium & Waterfront Park
- Woodland Park Zoo

King County
PARKS
Your Big Backyard

For visualization purposes only—locations and details are approximate.



\$119M in pass-through funds to cities, towns, and parks districts
RPC MTG Materials



\$46M for Aquatic Facilities Grants



\$30M for Healthy Communities and Parks Fund Grant



\$30M for City Capital and Open Space Grant

\$11M in Community Partnerships and Grant Program



\$12M in ADA and Accessibility Rehabilitation


2026-2031 King County Parks Levy Outreach Summary



King County Parks conducted community outreach and engagement in March and April 2024 for the 2026–2031 King County Parks Levy. Over 4,800 people from all 9 King County Council Districts provided feedback (see “2026–2031 King County Parks Levy Results” document for details).


To create an equitable community feedback process, we identified key audiences and promoted in the following ways:

Key Audiences




King County Parks Partners

Local cities, non-profits, community organizations, organizations who have received Parks grants, and others who currently work with King County Parks



All County Residents

Everyone who lives, works, and/or recreates in King County



Residents in Opportunity Areas

“Opportunity Areas” are neighborhoods with the lowest incomes, highest chronic health problems, and lack of access to nearby green spaces/parks

To get diverse community input to inform the upcoming 2026-2031 Parks Levy, King County Parks conducted 21 in-person and virtual community engagement events and hosted 2 online surveys (partner-focused and general public).

ENGAGEMENT TOUCHPOINT	KCP PARTNERS	ALL COUNTY RESIDENTS	RESIDENTS OF OPPORTUNITY AREAS
Partner Survey	✓		
Public Survey		✓	✓
Virtual Community Meetings	✓	✓	✓
In-person, Opportunity Area events			✓

Promotional Efforts



Advertising and outreach materials in 8 of the top languages for King County: English, Spanish, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Arabic, Somali



165+ partners received link to partner survey and multi-lingual partner toolkit to share public engagements with their networks



400,000+ people reached through social media advertising
7,679 links clicked to surveys or to sign up for virtual community meetings



3 multi-lingual media partnerships: Runta News, Rainier Avenue Radio, & El Rey Radio



22,710 people opened emails
2,327 links clicked to surveys or to sign up for virtual community meetings



36,000 postcards mailed to residents in select Opportunities Areas throughout King County (106 people scanned QR code to complete survey)

70 signs with survey link posted in 25 parks and trails throughout King County with emphasis on Opportunity Areas (108 scanned QR code to complete survey)



Who Participated

Over 4,800 people total

4,530 participants

Public Survey

53% of respondents are female

73% of respondents are White

49% of their households make \$100K+ per year

417 participants completed the survey in the non-English languages listed above

In-Person and Online Events

Over 290 participants

79% of in-person engagements took place with priority populations in Opportunity Areas

At least 56% of the respondents were BIPOC

The highest volume engagements were with Iraqi immigrants and refugees, Spanish speakers, and BIPOC youth

46 organizations

Partner Survey

73% of respondents serve over 500 community members per year

Over Half of respondents are environmental or advocacy organizations, or local government agencies

Respondents provide services mainly in English (89%) & Spanish (32%)



King County

MEMORANDUM

December 2, 2024

TO: All Councilmembers
All Council Staff

FM: Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

RE: Deadlines for Adoption of Ballot Measures in 2025

The deadlines for adoption of ballot measures for 2025 elections are in the table below. This schedule is predicated on the Council meeting as set out in the current Council Rule 4 (KCC 1.24.035), including first 4 Tuesdays a month as well as no Council meetings being held during the December 2024 recess (Dec. 11, 2024, through Jan. 2, 2025), the second week of April 2025 (April 7-11), or in the first two weeks of August 2025 (Aug. 4-15)

2025 Election Dates

	<u>2/11¹</u>	<u>4/22¹</u>	<u>8/5²</u>	<u>11/4³</u>
Last regular council meeting with maximum processing time (25 days)	11/12/24	1/21/25	4/1/25	7/8/25
Last regular council meeting with minimum processing time (10 days)	12/3/24 ⁴	2/11/25 ⁴	4/22/25 ⁴	7/22/25
Last regular council meeting to pass as emergency	12/10/24	2/18/25	4/22/25	7/23/25
Last special council meeting to pass as emergency	12/13/24	2/21/25	5/2/25	8/5/25
Election Division deadline for receiving effective ordinance	12/13/24	2/21/25	5/2/25	8/5/25

1. Based on effective ordinance filed with Elections 60 days before the election. RCW 29A.04.321

2. Based on effective ordinance filed with Elections no later than the Friday, which in 2025 is May 9, immediately before the first day of regular candidate filing, which in 2025 is May 12, the Monday two weeks before Memorial Day. RCW 29A.24.050; RCW 29A.04.321

3. Based on effective ordinance filed with Elections no later than the primary, which in 2025 is August 5. RCW 29A.04.321.

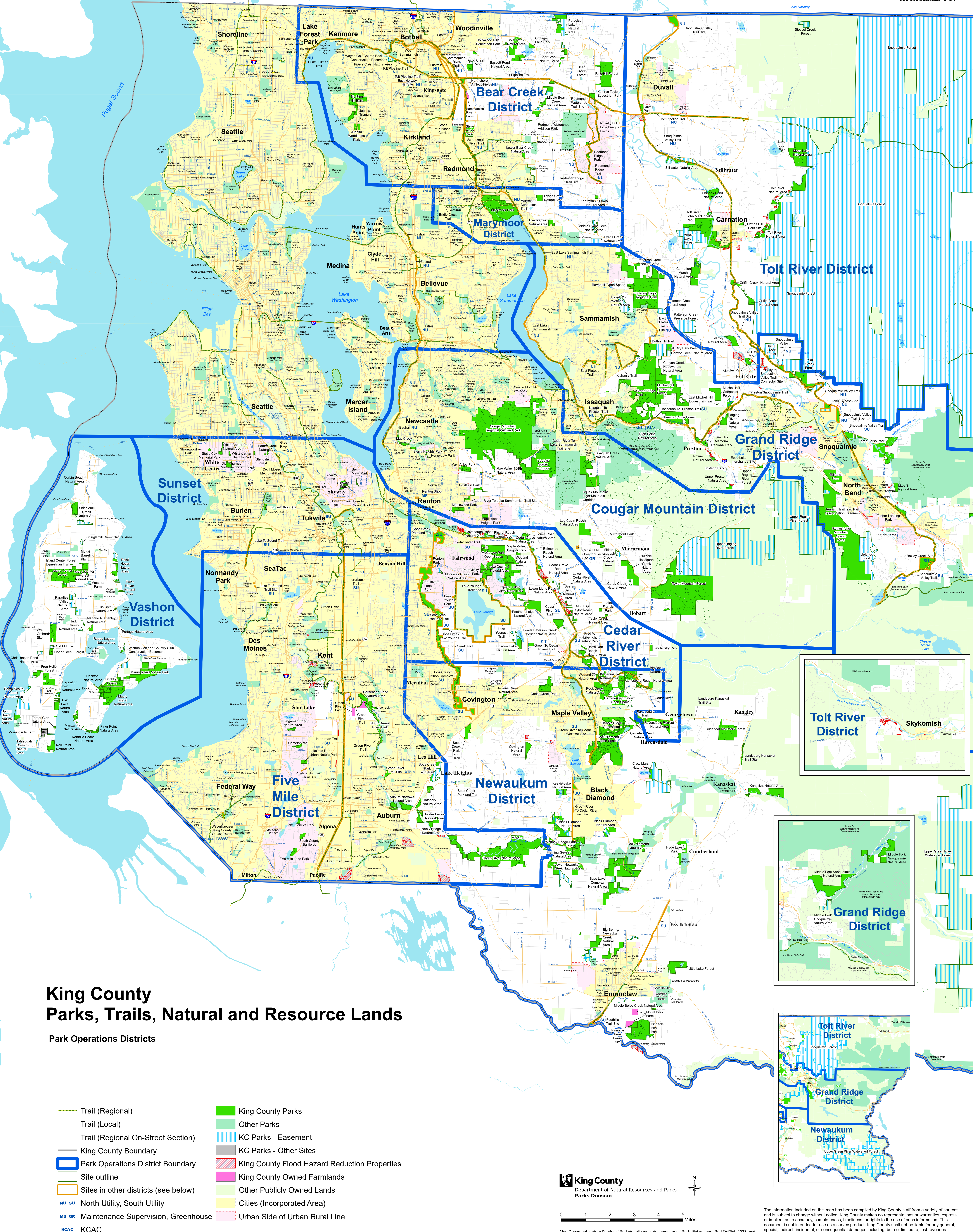
4. **This would require that the adopted ordinance be signed by the Chair, Clerk and Executive on the day of the meeting.**

Note: This schedule does not apply to Charter amendments. Because Charter § 800 provides that ordinances proposing amendments to the Charter are not subject to executive veto, such ordinances have an effective date (10 days after enactment by the Council) that differs from the effective date of an ordinance that is subject to executive veto.

King County Parks: Operational Investments by Geography (Current Levy: 2020-2025)

Note: 2020 through 2024 budget totals are actuals; 2025 budget numbers are based on planned budget (actuals not yet available)

Parks District Operations Investments (Can be assigned to a geography)									
Cost Center	Cost Center Description	2020 Actuals	2021 Actuals	2022 Actuals	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Operating Budget	Grand Total	Zip Codes
640103	NORTH UTILITY MOW CREW	1,762,080	1,697,391	1,657,025	1,894,742	2,083,064	2,075,842	11,170,143	98006, 98027, 98029, 98033, 98034, 98052, 98053, 98065, 98072, 98155
640104	SOUTH UTILITY MOW CREW	1,363,543	1,702,652	1,400,695	1,326,279	1,423,341	1,657,628	8,874,137	98001, 98022, 98027, 98032, 98038, 98042, 98045, 98047, 98058, 98148, 98188
640124	CEDAR RIVER DISTRICT	1,120,397	1,398,738	1,373,659	1,505,650	1,462,320	1,501,265	8,362,029	98038, 98051, 98052, 98055, 98058, 98059,
640125	BEAR CREEK DISTRICT	914,276	1,008,841	1,225,042	1,278,895	1,235,473	1,278,539	6,941,066	98011, 98028, 98034, 98052, 98053, 98072, 98077
640126	GRAND RIDGE DISTRICT	1,074,917	1,165,618	1,041,432	1,240,872	1,268,086	1,394,441	7,185,366	98024, 98027, 98029, 98045, 98053, 98065, 98074
640127	FIVE MILE DISTRICT	1,040,860	1,180,731	1,388,784	1,632,235	1,579,701	1,326,180	8,148,492	98001, 98003, 98030, 98058, 98092
640128	MARYMOOR MAINTENANCE	1,983,601	2,190,282	2,232,785	3,004,288	3,051,511	2,683,875	15,146,342	98052, 98053
640129	NEWAUKUM DISTRICT	1,111,139	1,086,480	1,145,088	1,438,932	1,468,278	1,377,042	7,626,958	98010, 98022, 98038, 98042, 98051, 98092
640130	COUGAR MOUNTAIN DISTRICT	1,164,385	1,105,232	1,310,443	1,292,692	1,399,038	1,268,696	7,540,487	98027, 98038, 98055, 98056, 98059, 98065
640131	SUNSET DISTRICT	1,331,817	1,462,138	1,286,713	1,478,349	1,698,321	1,618,672	8,876,010	98146, 98168, 98178
640132	TOLT RIVER DISTRICT	965,928	1,028,194	969,822	1,216,787	1,316,019	1,337,030	6,833,782	98014, 98019, 98024, 98053, 98065
640133	VASHON DISTRICT DISTRICT	-	-	962,361	1,192,285	1,028,186	1,077,861	4,260,693	98070
640301	COTTAGE LAKE POOL	27,896	49,994	49,181	70,007	63,655	73,657	334,391	98072 (Woodinville)
640306	KING COUNTY AQUATIC CENTER	2,413,748	2,497,647	2,999,217	3,533,412	3,727,936	3,758,623	18,930,584	98023 (Federal Way)
640401	ANNUAL FAIR (CHOMP)	365,467	407,753	425,486	256,106	-	-	1,454,812	98052 (Redmond)
640501	MARYMOOR BUSINESS UNIT	1,383,670	1,900,384	3,193,805	2,095,741	2,039,417	1,864,480	12,477,497	98052 (Redmond)
Parks District Operations Investments: TOTAL		18,023,724	19,882,076	22,661,540	24,457,271	24,844,346	24,293,831	134,162,787	See above
Countywide Operations Investments: TOTAL <i>Includes countywide O&M, capital, and other business functions and support necessary to manage overall open space system.</i>		22,719,778	23,366,534	27,012,519	41,860,985	41,105,778	62,325,994	218,391,589	NA - Countywide
GRAND TOTAL - KC PARKS OPERATIONS		40,743,502	43,248,610	49,674,060	66,318,256	65,950,124	86,619,825	352,554,376	



King County Parks, Trails, Natural and Resource Lands

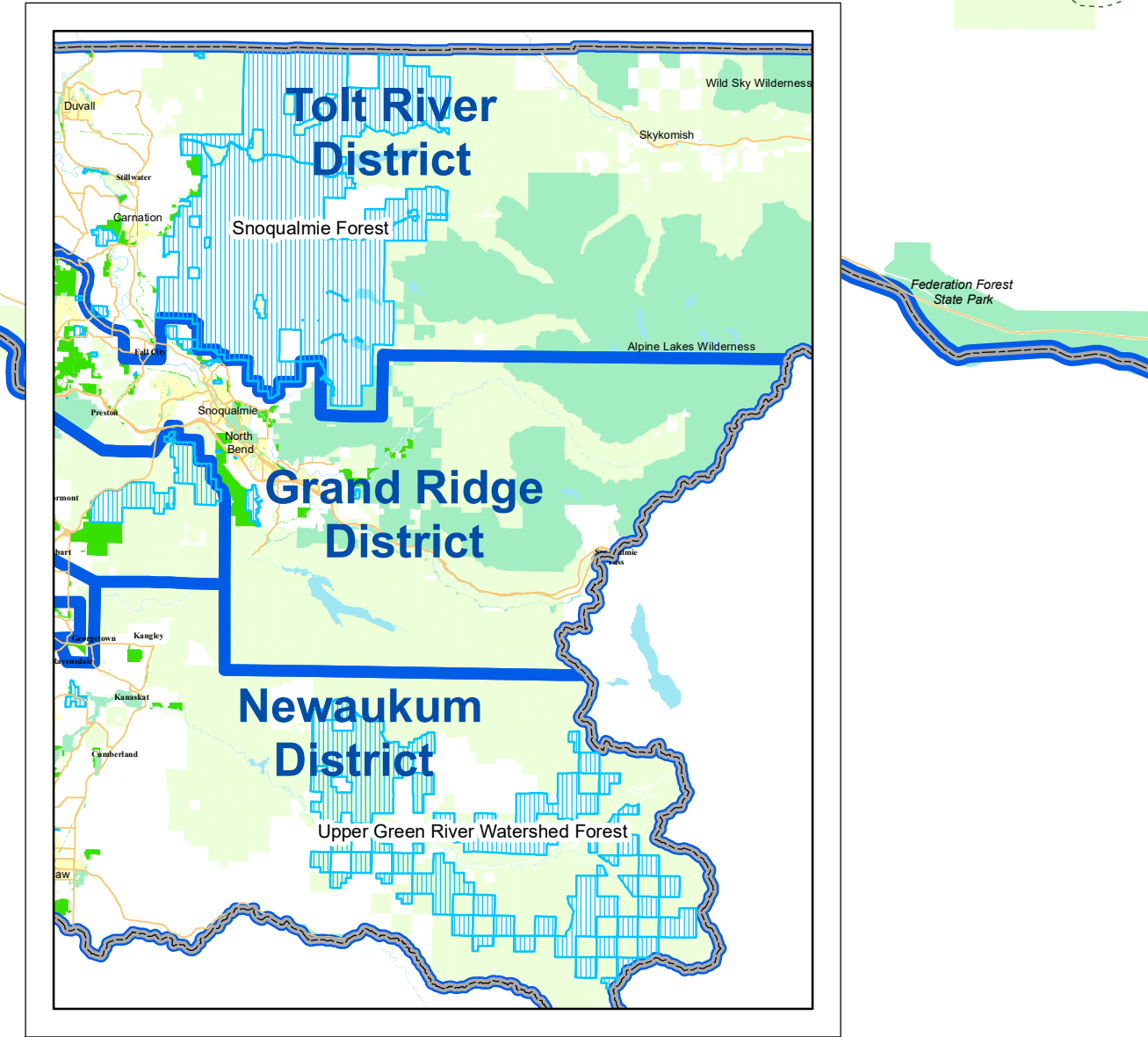
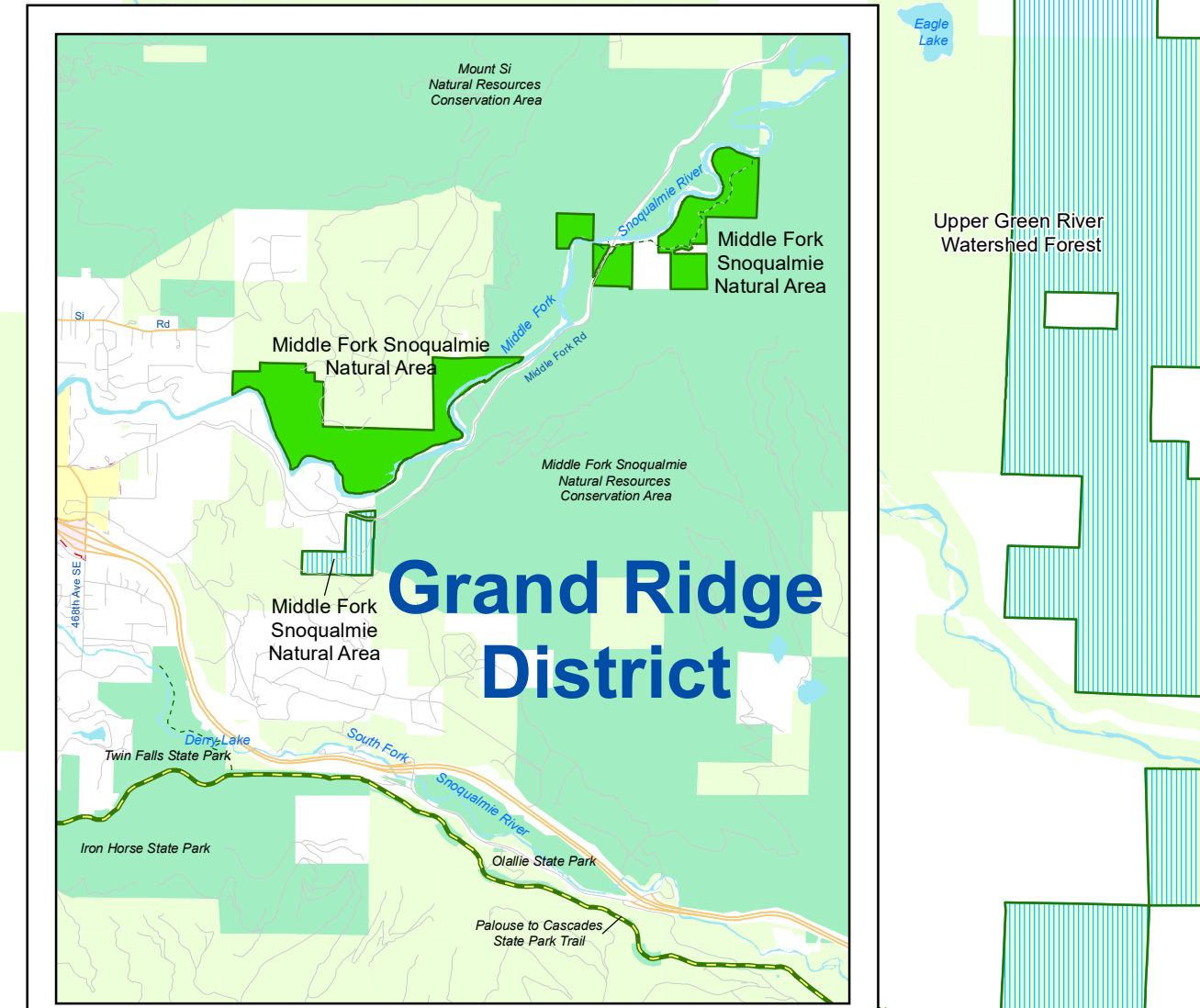
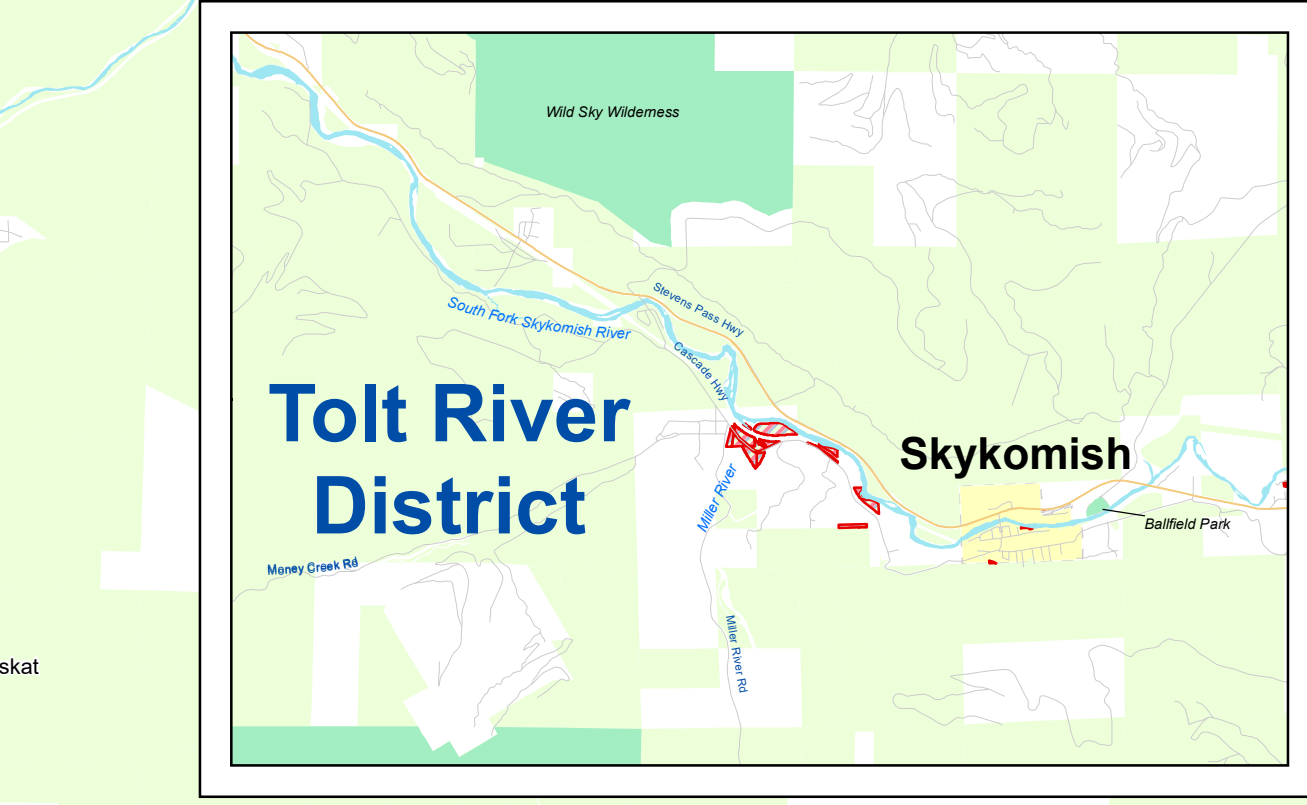
Park Operations Districts

- Trail (Regional)
- Trail (Local)
- Trail (Regional On-Street Section)
- King County Boundary
- Park Operations District Boundary
- Site outline
- Sites in other districts (see below)
- NU SU North Utility, South Utility
- MS GR Maintenance Supervision, Greenhouse
- KCAC KCAC
- King County Parks
- Other Parks
- KC Parks - Easement
- KC Parks - Other Sites
- King County Flood Hazard Reduction Properties
- King County Owned Farmlands
- Other Publicly Owned Lands
- Cities (Incorporated Area)
- Urban Side of Urban Rural Line

King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks Division



0 1 2 3 4 5 Miles



The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. This document is not intended for use as a survey product. King County shall not be liable for any general, special, indirect, incidental, or consequential damages including, but not limited to, lost revenues or lost profits resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained on this map. Any sale of this map or information on this map is prohibited except by written permission of King County.

Supplemental information on Question 1 from Batch 6 (March 12, 2025)

1. See below for the requested detailed information on the levy investments in the Woodland Park Zoo and Seattle Aquarium.

Woodland Park Zoo

Can you provide data on whether the current levy helped to increase access to these venues?

As a requirement for receiving proceeds from the King County Parks Levy the Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ) provides King County an annual report setting forth a summary of zoo operations and the service provided for the preceding year, along with a general summary of the WPZ's operations and financial accounting for all funds, including use of levy proceeds and a listing of all projects that were funded by levy proceeds.

Below is a summary of visitor data in 2023, which is the last reporting year submitted by WPZ. Please note that data for 2024 will be provided to King County no later than May 31, 2025. A copy of the most recent annual report (2023) has been provided as an attachment titled "WPZ 2023 King County Parks Levy Annual Narrative and Spending Report.pdf".

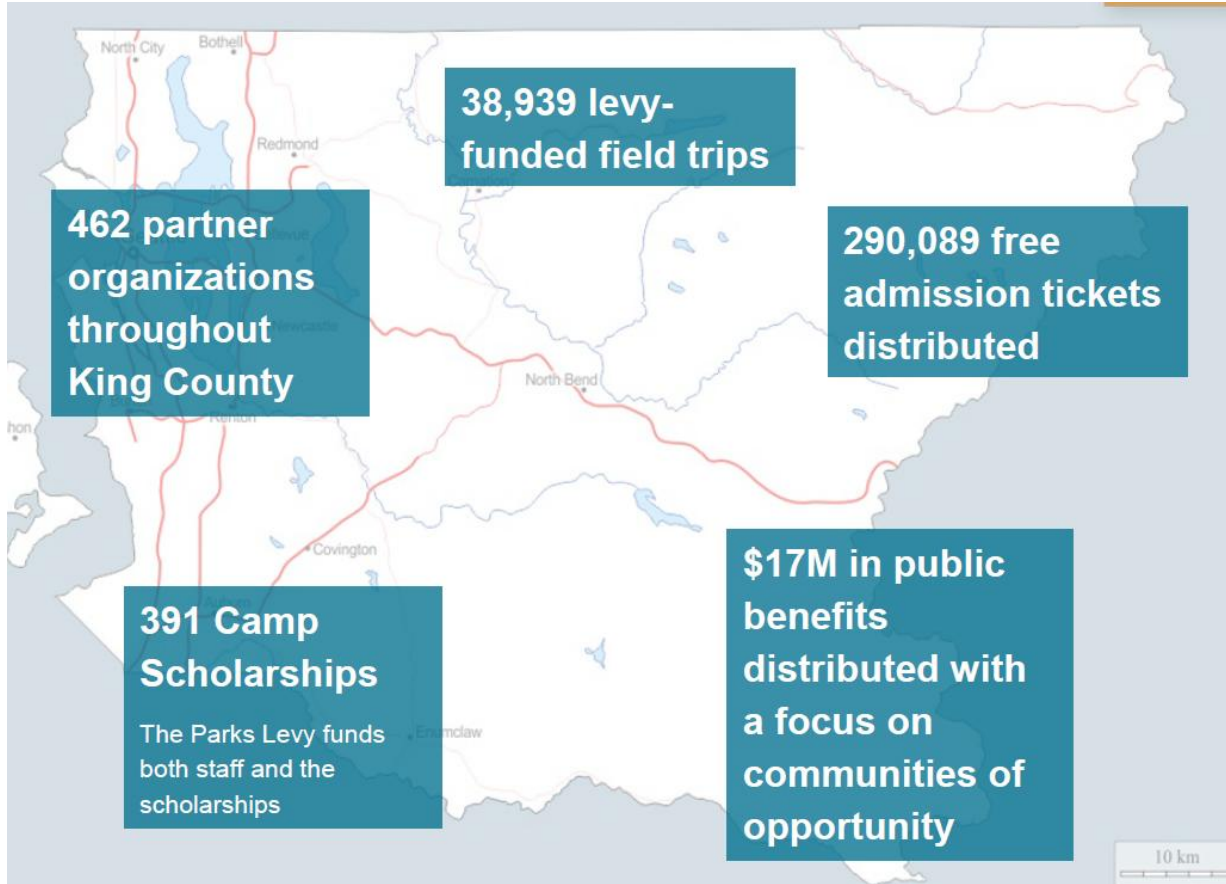
- Total attendance: 1,347,579
- Community Access Program free admission tickets distributed to community organizations across King County: 378 partners; 80,768 tickets
- Member households in King County: 20,898
- Number of students and chaperones who visited the zoo at no cost with Levy-supported free group admissions on school field trips: 18,615 (\$193,411)
- Levy – supported transportation reimbursements for school field trips: 97 Schools (\$53,212)
- King County Library Museum and Park Passes redeemed: 1,182

In addition to annual reporting requirements, the Woodland Park Zoo presents to the Parks Levy Oversight Board each year as part of the Board's review of King County expenditures of levy proceeds. More information about how WPZ spends levy proceeds can be found by reviewing the meeting materials of the Parks Levy Oversight Board:

- 2023 Review of Levy Expenditures: [Meeting 3 \(October 13, 2024\)](#)
- 2022 Review of Levy Expenditures: [Meeting 3 \(October 12, 2023\)](#)
- 2021 Review of Levy Expenditures: [Meeting 4 \(November 9, 2022\)](#)
- 2020 Review of Levy Expenditures: [Meeting 4 \(October 26, 2021\)](#)

In addition to annual reporting to King County and presentations to the Parks Levy Oversight Board, WPZ has provided additional data on how it increases access through its programming and activities.

Overview of public benefits to King County (2020-2024)



Overview of visitors (2020-2024)

	South & Central Seattle	Auburn & Federal Way	Renton & Kent	Burien, Tukwila & SeaTac
Tickets distributed:	88,715**	25,406	19,998	15,123
# of Partners:	123**	50	64	15
Partner highlight:	Treehouse	Refugee Resettlement Office	Kent Youth and Family Services	Southwest Youth and Family Services
Tickets to highlighted partner:	2,390	500	2,860	1,600
Partner's service demographics:	Essential support for youth in foster care. This demographic faces overwhelming financial and systemic barriers. 66% identify as of-color or non-white	Helping newcomers, citizens, and the working poor achieve economic self-sufficiency.	In 2022, 4% of their preschool population were homeless 66% were non- or limited English speaking 7% identified with a disability and 85% identify as of-color	95% of program participants identify as low income 90% as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color 50% as immigrant, refugee, or asylee.

* This data is from 2020-2024 but should be understood to be lower than usual because of the pandemic from 2020-2022.

** Several large organizations are headquartered in this area but have a broad service area across the county.

What is the plan going forward to increase access to these venues? How can we better address equitable access to these venues? What information do you have on this?

WPZ has informed Parks that it will continue to support the ongoing projects/activities to increase access to the community that are currently funded by levy proceeds as described above. Parks recommends a direct request to WPZ for any additional detail on the proposed future levy period,

Please provide more detail about what current levy money has been spent on and what proposed levy money would be spent on (for example, zoo annual reports).

Below is a detailed summary of levy proceeds that were spent by WPZ in the most recent annual report (2023). Proposed levy proceeds will be spent on programs and activities that align with current and future efforts towards environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities including people with disabilities, horticulture and maintenance of buildings and grounds, conservation of threatened species, and development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and habitats from climate change.

**2023 KING COUNTY LEVY SPENDING
Annual Report due May 31, 2024**

Environmental Education:

Guest and Volunteer Engagement Programs	775,192
Youth and Adult Learning Programs	689,439
Program Funded Admissions and Transportation for School to Zoo	193,411
Education Program Registration and Management, Program Development	285,089
Visitor Research and Program Evaluation	79,190
Empathy Initiatives	263,924
Creative Services/Signage	302,556
Zoo Keeper Talks and Tours, Animal Ambassador Programs	899,344
Website development and support	143,555
Information Technology Support of Zoo Programs	273,240

Subtotal, Environmental Education 3,904,938

Horticulture and Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds: 857,249

Conservation of Threatened Species:

Field Conservation Programs	154,297
Animal Care for Threatened Species	1,701,532

Subtotal, Conservation of Threatened Species 1,855,829

Development of Conservation and Education Strategies to mitigate the impacts on animals and habitats from climate change. 149,000

TOTAL KING COUNTY SPENDING 6,767,016

FUNDING RECEIVED FROM KING COUNTY FOR 2023 \$ 6,767,016

Please provide more information on who is using the programs and how aware they are of them. What visitor/usage data do you have? Where do the users come from?

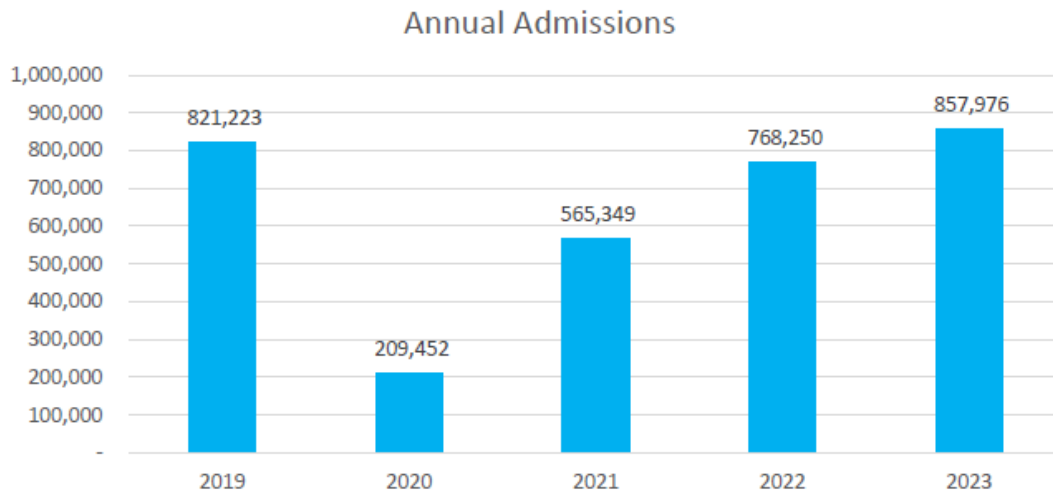
More detailed information about where users come from can be found in the most recent annual report and information provided above.

Seattle Aquarium

Can you provide data on whether the current levy helped to increase access to these venues?

As a requirement for receiving proceeds from the King County Parks Levy, the Seattle Aquarium (“Aquarium”) provides King County an annual report setting forth a summary of the operations of the Aquarium and the services provided at the Aquarium for the preceding year, along with a general summary of the Aquarium’s operations and a complete financial accounting for all funds. This includes the use of levy proceeds used in the Ocean Pavilion project which opened to the public in August 2024.

The levy commitment in the current King County Parks Levy was \$8 million solely towards the construction of the new Ocean Pavilion. Data on how these levy proceeds helped increase access to the Aquarium through this project can be found in the most recent annual report (2023) which has been provided as an attachment titled, “2023 Seattle Aquarium Summary.pdf”. This includes a summary of overall annual admissions to the Aquarium which can be found below. In 2023 the Aquarium welcomed over 850,000 guests and expect to see 1.2 million visitors in future years with the new Ocean Pavilion.



In addition to annual reporting requirements the Aquarium presents to the Parks Levy Oversight Board each year as part of the Board’s review of King County expenditures of levy proceeds. More information about how the Aquarium spends levy proceeds can be found by reviewing the meetings materials of the Parks Levy Oversight Board:

- 2023 Review of Levy Expenditures (presentation slides): [Meeting 3 \(October 13, 2024\)](#)
- 2022 Review of Levy Expenditures (meeting minutes): [Meeting 3 \(October 12, 2023\)](#)
- 2021 Review of Levy Expenditures (meeting minutes): [Meeting 4 \(November 9, 2022\)](#)
- 2020 Review of Levy Expenditures (meeting minutes): [Meeting 4 \(October 26, 2021\)](#)

- **What is the plan going forward to increase access to these venues? How can we better address equitable access to these venues? What information do you have on this?**

The future King County Parks Levy will support the Aquarium’s existing efforts to address equitable access through environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities including people with disabilities. More detailed information about these existing programs and activities can be found in the most recent annual report. Current versus estimated data of future visitors provided by the Seattle Aquarium is summarized below.

Annual numbers	Current	2026 and beyond
Budget	\$30 million	\$45 million
Attendance	800,000	1.2 million
School Groups	40,000 students	60,000+ students
School scholarships/discounts	20,000; value \$100,000	40,000+; value \$150,000
Free community tickets (distributed through 500+ community partners)	80,000+ distributed (\$960,000 value of tickets redeemed)	120,000+ distributed; \$1.4 mill. value of tickets redeemed
Discounts for seniors, tribal members, military, WIC/EBT card holders, etc.	\$700,000+ in reduced admission costs	\$1 million+ in reduced admission costs
Community program/admission tickets	24,000 tickets; \$700,000+ value	36,000+ tickets; \$1 million+ value
Summer camp attendees and scholarships	350 campers; \$10,000+ scholarships	500+ campers; \$15,000+ scholarships

- **Please provide more detail about what current levy money has been spent on and what proposed levy money would be spent on (for example, zoo annual reports).**

The current levy provided \$8 million towards the construction of the Ocean Pavilion which opened to the public in August 2024. Below is a detailed summary of levy proceeds that were used by the Aquarium in the most recent annual report (reference documents are attached, “Ocean Pavilion 2023 Financial Report - revised - 06.20.2024.pdf” and “King County Parks levy letter for 2023 OP expenditures.pdf”).

Seattle Aquarium
Ocean Pavilion Design & Construction
Expansion Costs and Uses, Summarized
As of 12/31/2023

Sources	Activity Through 12/31/2022	2023 YTD Activity	Ocean Pavilion Total to Date
Contributions	47,495,844	14,755,903	62,251,747
King County Parks Levy	5,950,657	2,049,344	8,000,001
Bank Financing		48,941,846	48,941,846
City Financing	5,218,095	(5,218,095)	-
Government Funds	3,813,000	4,049,999	7,862,999
Temporary Use of Unrestricted Reserves	-	344,019	344,019
Pending City of Seattle Reimbursement	0	-	0
City Funding Rec'd	29,907,228	-	29,907,228
Total Sources	92,384,825	64,923,016	157,307,841

Ocean Pavilion Uses

Hard Costs			
Construction & Construction Exp	57,358,004	59,337,852	116,695,856
FFE	-	453,295	453,295
1% for Art	69,835	126,680	196,515
Soft Costs			
External Project Management	2,774,543	599,756	3,374,299
Architecture, Engineering, & Exhibits	13,902,303	1,750,083	15,652,386
Permits, Fees & Entitlements	1,340,105	672,767	2,012,872
Sitework, Testing & Inspection	1,637	239,289	240,926
Insurance & Bond	58,617	272,536	331,153
Geotechnical Investigations	470,646	6,327	476,973
Commissioning	149,340	54,197	203,537
Additional Consultants	528,479	16,390	544,869
Direct project costs	76,653,509	63,529,172	140,182,681
Internal Project Management Costs	1,902,604	325,750	2,228,354
Media Content	629,774	513,384	1,143,158
External Consultants	534,108	60,092	594,200
Animal Acquisition / Life Science	1,170,888	541,315	1,712,203
Financing	-	1,686,064	1,686,064
Fundraising Costs	1,245,750	300,908	1,546,658
Owner's costs	5,483,124	3,427,512	8,910,636
Total Ocean Pavilion Uses	82,136,633	66,956,684	149,093,317
Animal Care Center Uses	8,214,525	-	8,214,525
Surplus / (Deficiency)	2,033,668	(2,033,668)	0

The proposed King County Parks Levy will change the Aquarium’s levy commitment from capital projects to supporting the Aquarium’s existing efforts towards environmental education with an emphasis on accessibility to traditionally underserved areas and communities including people with disabilities, maintenance of buildings and grounds, conservation of threatened species, and development of conservation and education strategies to mitigate impacts to animals and habitats from climate change.

Please provide more information on who is using the programs and how aware they are of them. What visitor/usage data do you have? Where do the users come from?

More detailed information about where users come from can be found in the most recent annual report and information provided above.



KING COUNTY

Signature Report

ATTACHMENT 16

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Motion

Proposed No. 2025-0077.1

Sponsors Dembowski

1 A MOTION related to a property tax levy for 2026 through
2 2031 for the purpose of: maintaining and operating King
3 County's open space system; improving parks, recreation,
4 access, and mobility in the King County open space system
5 by acquiring lands and continuing to develop regional
6 trails; improving parks and trails in and acquiring lands by
7 metropolitan parks districts, towns, and cities in King
8 County; funding environmental education, maintenance,
9 and conservation programs at the Woodland Park Zoo;
10 funding environmental education, maintenance and
11 conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding
12 development, maintenance, and programming for Seattle
13 Waterfront park; and funding for capital improvements at
14 publicly owned pools, for all King County residents.

15 WHEREAS, King County owns and operates a system of regional and local parks
16 and trails that consists of thirty-two thousand acres of parklands and more than one
17 hundred eighty-five miles of regional trails, and

18 WHEREAS, the county provides regional trails, regional recreational facilities,
19 regional natural areas, regional parks, and local parks in unincorporated areas, which are
20 parts of King County's "open space system," and

21 WHEREAS, a robust open space system contributes to a high quality of life, and

22 WHEREAS, the open space system provides: physical, social, and mental health
23 benefits to individuals; economic opportunity through recreation and tourism; economic
24 growth for private businesses that must attract and retain skilled workers; increased
25 climate resilience; environmental benefits like clean water and healthy habitat; and
26 cultural resource protection through open space conservation, and

27 WHEREAS, for the benefit of all King County residents, in February 2025, the
28 executive transmitted to the council Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070, which would submit
29 to the qualified electors of King County a property tax levy on an August 2025 special
30 election ballot for the purpose of: maintaining and operating King County's open space
31 system; improving parks, recreation, access, and mobility in the King County open space
32 system by acquiring lands and continuing to develop regional trails; improving parks and
33 trails in and acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts, towns, and cities in King
34 County; funding environmental education, maintenance, and conservation programs at
35 the Woodland Park Zoo; funding environmental education, maintenance, and
36 conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding development, maintenance, and
37 programming for Seattle Waterfront park; and funding for capital improvements at
38 publicly owned pools;

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

40 A. It is the intent of the council that levy proceeds be used for the operations,
41 projects, and programs and in such allocations, as provided in Attachment A to this
42 motion.

43 B. The moneys allocated to operations, projects, and programs listed in
44 Attachment A to this motion may be modified when deemed advisable or necessary in the
45 judgment of the council. Implementation or completion of any project or program listed
46 in Attachment A to this motion will not be required if the council determines that it has
47 become inadvisable or impractical. The council will make such a determination through
48 action on appropriations ordinances.

49 C. The council requests that the department of natural resources and parks report
50 to the council annually by September 30 of each year, beginning in 2026, if it anticipates
51 requesting a reallocation of moneys for projects or programs listed in Attachment A to
52 this motion in the following year. The report should be electronically filed with the clerk
53 of the council, who will retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all

54 councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the chief policy officer. The last report
55 should be filed by September 30, 2031.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. Parks Levy Executive-proposed Allocation Plan

Attachment A - Parks Levy Executive-proposed Allocation Plan

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)	
Election Costs	\$1,500,000
Additional Assumed Costs	\$18,000,000
Fixed income exemption ¹	\$3,000,000
1% undercollection assumption	\$15,000,000
Woodland Park Zoo	\$42,000,000
Seattle Aquarium	\$15,000,000
Seattle Waterfront²	\$9,000,000
Memorial Stadium³	\$2,500,000
Pools	\$22,000,000
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center	\$22,000,000
Grants and Community Partnerships	\$117,000,000
Healthy Communities and Parks Fund (formerly named Targeted Equity Grants)	\$30,000,000
Cities - Capital Projects & Acquisitions	\$30,000,000
Aquatic Facilities Capital Grants	\$46,000,000
Community Partnerships and Grants	\$11,000,000
King County Cities, Towns, and Park Districts	\$119,000,000
King County Operations and Maintenance⁴	\$550,600,000
Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery and Internal Supports	\$517,000,000
Parks Patrol Expansion	\$4,300,000
Safety Program Expansion	\$3,200,000
Asset Management Program	\$4,100,000
Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program	\$10,400,000
Youth Conservation Corps Program Expansion	\$4,800,000
Jobs & Housing Program	\$5,000,000
Tribal, Indigenous, & Historic Interpretive Program	\$1,800,000
Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship	\$217,500,000
King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation	\$96,000,000
Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M)	\$20,000,000
Fish Passage Program ⁵	\$10,000,000
Climate Resilience ⁶	\$33,000,000
Environmental Stewardship ⁷	\$58,500,000
Regional and Other Public Trails System⁸	\$179,000,000
Eastrail	\$65,000,000
Lake to Sound Trail	\$55,000,000
Green River Trail Extension - North	\$6,000,000
Interurban Trail South investments	\$8,000,000
Soos Creek Trail	\$7,000,000
Other New Regional Trails ⁹	\$38,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements¹¹	\$51,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements	
Dog Parks	\$3,000,000

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)

<i>Lakeland Park North</i>	\$10,000,000
<i>Skyway Park Planning and Community Center</i>	\$13,000,000
<i>Backcountry Trails (new trails)</i>	\$3,000,000
<i>Ballfield and Sports Courts (new facilities)</i>	\$3,000,000
<i>Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion</i>	\$19,000,000

Active Recreation Repair and Renovation and Other Park Repair and Renovation	\$177,000,000
Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure¹⁰	
<i>General infrastructure</i>	\$23,000,000
<i>Playground rehabilitation</i>	\$7,000,000
<i>Park amenities rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Parks building system rehabilitation</i>	\$8,000,000
<i>Ballfield synthetic turf replacement</i>	\$12,000,000
<i>Pools, water access, docks rehabilitation</i>	\$2,000,000
<i>Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Backcountry Trail rehabilitation</i>	\$6,000,000
<i>Drainage infrastructure rehabilitation</i>	\$12,000,000
<i>Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.)</i>	\$8,000,000
ADA and Accessibility Rehabilitation	\$12,000,000
Regional Trails Rehabilitation¹²	\$55,000,000
Marymoor Park Rehabilitation¹³	\$16,000,000
Sunset Park Renovation and Repair	\$4,000,000

1. As authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

2. New levy investment that support accessibility for traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; maintenance and operations of facilities and grounds; offering free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and inclusive community partnerships.

3. This allocation will fund the renovation of the Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center. This transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle, providing an improved multi-purpose venue for local and regional sports and events.

4. Of this allocation, 93% funds the day-to-day operational needs to maintain the park system (personnel, supplies, services, fleet, equipment, administrative costs, etc.). \$2.4M shall be allocated for the King County Fair, Washington State University 4-H Program, and King County Search and Rescue operations. Additional funding to be allocated for critical programs and services to manage the growing parks system and enhance safety and belonging for park users. These programs include the expansion of the service level agreement with King County Sheriff's Office to fund the Parks Patrol Program; the expansion of the Parks Safety Program for ongoing implementation of safety related elements within the park system, i.e., regulatory compliance and trainings for onsite staff; and expansion of the Youth Conservation Corps summer internship program.

New investments include:

- Funding for the continuity of the Jobs and Housing Program due to sunseting of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery (CLFR) funding in 2024.
- Funding for the enforcement of Parks Land Use Guidelines on park lands and regional trail segments to protect capital investments, open space acquisitions, and new properties and easements in support of environmental preservation.
- Funding to support work with Tribes, indigenous organizations, and historic preservation organizations to strengthen government-to-government relationships, and improve conservation and recreational planning.

5. The Fish Passage Program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

6. Climate resilience investments will support Parks' forest stewardship program and projects; potential stormwater park pilot projects; and establish a climate response fund intended to support community response projects and programming as identified.

Parks Levy Renewal Proposed Allocation Plan (2026-2031)

7. Environmental stewardship investments will support early actions to safeguard sites for public use following acquisition; structure demolitions to deliver full ecological and recreation benefits; improvements to existing maintenance facilities and acquisitions; natural resource and site management planning; multi-benefit river corridor projects; and landscaping/restoration/mitigation site monitoring and maintenance.

8. This allocation provides funding for Regional and Other Public Trails System including:

- Construction of two additional segments of Lake to Sound Trail and the completion of the design to connect Lake to Sound Trail to SeaTac Airport.
- Construction of two additional segments of Eastrail, an Eastrail connection to Coulon Park, paves Central Wilburton segment, and completes design on Eastrail to Lake to Sound Trail connection.
- Construction of the Green River Trail North to Seattle.
- Complete full rehabilitation of the Interurban Trail South.
- Construction of Soos Creek Trail Segment 5a and planning for future Soos Creek Trail segments.

9. Of this allocation, \$18M will fund a combination of planning, acquisitions, and preliminary design for potential future trail segments and connections including, but not limited to, Green River Trail, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Soos Creek Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail.

\$20M of this funding will be used for emergent needs on the regional trail system including, but not limited to, surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and intersection improvements.

10. Capital major maintenance programs keep parks clean, safe, and open and include, but are not limited to: rehabilitation of play areas, park buildings, existing synthetic turf fields, pools, docks, ballfields, sports courts, backcountry trails, drainage infrastructure, restrooms, picnic shelters, signage, as well as coordination with other agencies who have infrastructure on parks property (e.g., Sound Transit, WSDOT). A portion of this funding is also intended to respond to emergent projects identified by Park users associated with existing facilities. These programs are expected supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

11. Funding for new park development and improvements includes Skyway Park Community Center that will support design, construction, and initial operational costs. Additional funding for construction (approximately \$20M) will be needed and is expected to be funded with a combination of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) and bond financing. Funding allocated for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion is for design and construction at South County Ballfields in Federal Way.

12. This program keeps the existing regional trail system clean, safe, and open and includes, but is not limited to, repair/replacement of bridges and trestles, trail surface repairs/rehabilitation, safety updates, repairs to meet current guidelines and standards, and landscaping/mitigation maintenance and monitoring.

13. This allocation will fund rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities throughout Marymoor Park to keep the park clean, safe, and open. It also includes funding for improvements to address growing user demand including, but not limited to, signage, utilities, pedestrian facilities, buildings, roadways, velodrome rehabilitation, and concert venue updates. This program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.



KING COUNTY

Signature Report

ATTACHMENT 17

1200 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Motion

Proposed No. 2025-0077.2

Sponsors Dembowski

1 A MOTION related to a property tax levy for 2026 through
2 2031 for the purpose of: maintaining and operating King
3 County's open space system; improving parks, recreation,
4 access, and mobility in King County by acquiring lands and
5 continuing to develop and support parks, recreation
6 facilities, and regional trails; improving parks and trails in
7 and acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts, towns,
8 and cities in King County; funding environmental
9 education, maintenance, and conservation programs at the
10 Woodland Park Zoo; funding environmental education,
11 maintenance and conservation programs at the Seattle
12 Aquarium; funding environmental and climate stewardship
13 and education at Pacific Science Center; funding
14 development, maintenance, and programming for Seattle's
15 Waterfront park; funding a capital project at Memorial
16 Stadium; and funding for capital improvements at public
17 pools, for all King County residents.

18 WHEREAS, King County owns and operates a system of regional and local parks
19 and trails that consists of thirty-two thousand acres of parklands and more than one
20 hundred eighty-five miles of regional trails, and

21 WHEREAS, the county provides regional trails, regional recreational facilities,
22 regional natural areas, regional parks, and local parks in unincorporated areas, which are
23 parts of King County's "open space system," and

24 WHEREAS, a robust open space system contributes to a high quality of life, and

25 WHEREAS, the open space system provides: physical, social, and mental health
26 benefits to individuals; economic opportunity through recreation and tourism; economic
27 growth for private businesses that must attract and retain skilled workers; increased
28 climate resilience; environmental benefits like clean water and healthy habitat; and
29 cultural resource protection through open space conservation, and

30 WHEREAS, for the benefit of all King County residents, in February 2025, the
31 executive transmitted to the council Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070, which would submit
32 to the qualified electors of King County a property tax levy on an August 2025 special
33 election ballot for the purpose of: maintaining and operating King County's open space
34 system; improving parks, recreation, access, and mobility in King County by acquiring
35 lands and continuing to develop and support parks, recreation facilities, and regional
36 trails; improving parks and trails in and acquiring lands by metropolitan parks districts,
37 towns, and cities in King County; funding environmental education, maintenance, and
38 conservation programs at the Woodland Park Zoo; funding environmental education,
39 maintenance, and conservation programs at the Seattle Aquarium; funding environmental
40 and climate stewardship and education at Pacific Science Center; funding development,

41 maintenance, and programming for Seattle's Waterfront park; funding a capital project at
42 Memorial Stadium; and funding capital improvements at public owned pools;

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

44 A.1. It is the intent of the council that levy proceeds be used for the operations,
45 projects, and programs, and in such allocations, as provided in Attachment A to this
46 motion.

47 2. The moneys allocated to operations, projects, and programs listed in
48 Attachment A to this motion may be modified when deemed advisable or necessary in the
49 judgment of the council. Implementation or completion of any project or program listed
50 in Attachment A to this motion will not be required if the council determines that it has
51 become inadvisable or impractical. The council will make such a determination through
52 action on appropriations ordinances.

53 3. The council requests that the department of natural resources and parks report
54 to the council annually by September 30 of each year, beginning in 2026, if it anticipates
55 requesting a reallocation of moneys for projects or programs listed in Attachment A to
56 this motion in the following year. The report should be electronically filed with the clerk
57 of the council, who will retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all
58 councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the chief policy officer. The last report
59 should be filed by September 30, 2031.

60 4. In delivering capital projects identified in Attachment A to this motion,
61 whether directly or in partnership with other jurisdictions, it is the intent of the council
62 that the county should consider using its bonding authority to finance projects. The

63 executive should study whether and when bond financing is appropriate for use in these
64 projects.

65 B. It is the intent of the council that the parks capital and open space grant program,
66 aquatic facilities grant program, healthy communities and parks grant program, and the
67 ballfield access and preservation grant program be administered in accordance with the
68 guidelines in Attachment B to this motion.

69 C. It is the intent of the council that parks levy expenditures identified as "King
70 County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation" in Attachment A to this motion be
71 made in accordance with the guidelines in Attachment C to this motion, except that six
72 million dollars from the "King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation"
73 allocation, to be used for acquisition of parks and open space in unincorporated King
74 County, shall not be subject to the guidelines in Attachment C to this motion.

75 D. It is the intent of the council that the Skyway Community Center be completed
76 and fully operational within the period of this levy.

77 E. The executive should perform outreach and community engagement around
78 Preston Mill park phase three, and should submit a report to the council on that
79 engagement no later than December 31, 2029.

80 F. The executive should develop a plan to allow alcohol sales in King County
81 parks. Additionally, the executive should, by no later than May 31, 2025, begin allowing
82 alcohol sales in the stands at the stadium in Steve Cox park, as already allowed by the
83 existing state alcohol permit.

84 G. The executive should review permitting standards for vendors in parks, and
85 should evaluate and recommend strategies to encourage food vendors to locate in parks

86 and streamline permitting processes for vendors. The executive should submit a report
87 with this information, as well as a proposed ordinance with recommended code changes,
88 if any, no later than December 31, 2026.

89 H. The reports and proposed legislation identified in subsections E. and G. of this
90 motion should be electronically filed with the clerk of the council, who shall retain an
91 electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief
92 of staff, and the chief policy officer.

93 I. At the top ten most highly utilized multiuse or recreation sites in the open
94 space system, the executive should set aside a minimum of three parking spaces for
95 electric vehicle charging and associated equipment.

96 J. It is the intent of the council that at each outdoor active recreation facility in
97 the open space system, lighting should remain on until at least ten p.m. in urban
98 unincorporated areas.

99 K. In the urban unincorporated areas of King County, at each active recreation
100 facility in the open space system that requires a reservation, the executive should develop
101 and implement a policy to increase regularly scheduled free time for open play, for

102 example, that reserves at least two hours a day, three days a week, for unscheduled
103 activities on a first-come, first-served basis.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Pedroza, Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, ____.

Dow Constantine, County Executive

Attachments: A. Parks Levy Renewal Allocation Plan March 26 2025, B. General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs, C. Open Space Acquisition Guidelines

Attachment A - Parks Levy Renewal Allocation Plan March 26, 2025

Parks Levy Renewal Allocation Plan (2026-2031)	
Election Costs	\$1,500,000
Additional Assumed Costs	\$10,500,000
Fixed income exemption ¹	\$3,000,000
Undercollection assumption	\$7,500,000
Aquatic Facilities¹⁴	\$68,000,000
Aquatic Facilities Grant Program ¹⁷	\$46,000,000
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center	\$22,000,000
Ballfields and Sport Courts	\$60,000,000
Ballfield Access and Preservation Grants ¹⁷	\$13,500,000
Ballfield and Sports Courts (new facilities) ²²	\$3,000,000
Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion ²⁰	\$25,500,000
Ballfields and sports court rehabilitation ²³	\$6,000,000
Ballfield synthetic turf replacement	\$12,000,000
Grants and Community Partnerships	\$144,000,000
Healthy Communities and Parks Grants (formerly named Targeted Equity Grants) ¹⁷	\$30,000,000
Parks Capital and Open Space Grants ¹⁷	\$25,000,000
Community Partnerships and Grants ²¹	\$12,500,000
Get Active/Stay Active - Youth and Amateur Sports Grants	\$10,000,000
Woodland Park Zoo	\$40,000,000
Seattle Aquarium	\$12,000,000
Memorial Stadium ³	\$2,500,000
Pacific Science Center	\$6,000,000
Seattle's Waterfront Park ²	\$6,000,000
King County Cities, Towns, and Park Districts	\$119,000,000
King County Operations and Maintenance⁴	\$489,700,000
Operations, Maintenance, Program Delivery and Internal Supports	\$464,000,000
Safety and Security Program	\$5,000,000
Asset Management Program	\$4,100,000
Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program	\$5,000,000
Youth Conservation Corps Program Expansion	\$4,800,000
Parks Beautification Program	\$5,000,000
Tribal, Indigenous, & Historic Interpretive Program	\$1,800,000
Climate Resilience, Conservation and Stewardship	\$181,000,000
King County Open Space Acquisition/Land Conservation ¹⁵	\$96,000,000
Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M)	\$10,000,000
Fish Passage Program ⁵	\$20,000,000
Climate Resilience ⁶	\$25,000,000
Environmental Stewardship ⁷	\$30,000,000
Regional and Other Public Trails System⁸	\$182,000,000
Eastrail	\$65,000,000
Lake to Sound Trail	\$55,000,000
Green River Trail Extension - North	\$6,000,000
Interurban Trail South investments	\$8,000,000
Soos Creek Trail	\$7,000,000
Other New Regional Trails ⁹	\$41,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements¹¹	\$46,000,000
New Park Development and Improvements	
Dog Parks	\$2,500,000
Lakeland Park North	\$10,000,000
Skyway Park Planning and Community Center	\$13,000,000
Fall City Community Center	\$500,000
City of Bothell McAuliffe Skate Park	\$1,000,000
Water Access on Lake Washington ¹⁶	\$19,000,000
Active Recreation Repair and Renovation and Other Park Repair and Renovation	\$159,000,000
Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure¹⁰	
General infrastructure ^{25 26}	\$20,000,000
Playground rehabilitation ¹⁹	\$7,000,000
Park amenities rehabilitation	\$6,000,000
Parks building system rehabilitation	\$8,000,000
Water access and docks rehabilitation ¹⁸	\$8,000,000
Backcountry Trails (trails rehabilitation and new trails)	\$6,000,000
Drainage infrastructure rehabilitation	\$12,000,000
Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.)	\$5,000,000
ADA and Accessibility Rehabilitation	\$12,000,000
Regional Trails Rehabilitation ¹²	\$55,000,000
Marymoor Park Rehabilitation ¹³	\$16,000,000
Sunset Park Renovation and Repair	\$4,000,000
Total²⁴	\$1,460,700,000

1. As authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

Parks Levy Renewal Allocation Plan (2026-2031)

2. New levy investment to Friends of Waterfront Park that supports: accessibility for traditionally underserved areas and communities, including people with disabilities; maintenance and operations of facilities and grounds; offering free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and inclusive community partnerships. Any new jobs funded by this levy that are not already covered under the current Labor Harmony Agreement that Friends of Seattle Waterfront has with the Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council, should be added as part of the Labor Harmony Agreement.

3. This allocation will contribute to the renovation of the Memorial Stadium at Seattle Center. This transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the City of Seattle, providing an improved multi-purpose venue for local and regional sports and events.

4. Of this allocation, 93% funds the day-to-day operational needs to maintain the open space system (personnel, supplies, services, fleet, equipment, administrative costs, etc.). \$2.4M shall be allocated for the King County Fair, Washington State University 4-H Program, and King County Search and Rescue operations. Additional funding to be allocated for critical programs and services to manage the growing open space system and enhance safety and belonging for park users. These programs include the expansion of the service level agreement with King County Sheriff's Office to fund the Parks Patrol Program; the expansion of the Parks Safety Program for ongoing implementation of safety related elements within the open space system, i.e., regulatory compliance and trainings for onsite staff; and expansion of the Youth Conservation Corps summer internship program.

New investments include:

- Funding for the continuity of the Parks Beautification Program. Money for the Parks Beautification Program shall be used solely to support a jobs program within the Parks Division for the unhoused.
- Funding for the enforcement of Parks Land Use Guidelines on open space lands and regional trail segments to protect capital investments, open space acquisitions, and new properties and easements in support of environmental preservation.
- Funding to support work with Tribes, indigenous organizations, and historic preservation organizations to strengthen government-to-government relationships, and improve conservation and recreational planning and programs with Tribes and the organizations.

The Executive has discretion on timing of implementation of these programs.

5. The Fish Passage Program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

6. Climate resilience investments will support the Parks Division's forest stewardship program and projects; potential combined park and stormwater facility pilot projects; and establish a climate response fund intended to support community response projects and programming as identified.

From the amount allocated for climate resilience, at least \$250,000 to be allocated for planting of street trees to provide additional tree canopy and urban green space in White Center. Street tree planting should be prioritized for 16th Ave. SW and 17th Ave. SW between SW Roxbury St. and SW 100th St., and particularly in areas contiguous to planned park acquisitions.

From the amount allocated for climate resilience, up to \$1 million to be allocated for a surface-level cooling water feature for children at Steve Cox Park, located adjacent to the playground.

From the amount allocated for climate resilience, \$700,000 to be allocated for capital preconstruction costs for a new climate resilient community center to serve communities adjacent to the Duwamish River in the Georgetown area.

Of this funding, \$5 million shall be allocated for a councilmanic Climate Resilience grant program, to be evenly divided between council districts per year of the levy.

7. Environmental stewardship investments will support early actions to safeguard sites for public use following acquisition; structure demolitions to deliver full ecological and recreation benefits; improvements to existing maintenance facilities and acquisitions; natural resource and site management planning; multi-benefit river corridor projects; and landscaping/restoration/mitigation site monitoring and maintenance.

8. This allocation provides funding for Regional and Other Public Trails System including:

- Construction of two additional segments of Lake to Sound Trail and the completion of the design to connect Lake to Sound Trail to SeaTac Airport.
- Construction of two additional segments of Eastrail, an Eastrail connection to Coulon Park, paves Central Wilburton segment, and completes design on Eastrail to Lake to Sound Trail connection.
- Construction of the Green River Trail North to Seattle.
- Complete full rehabilitation of the Interurban Trail South.
- Construction of Soos Creek Trail Segment 5a and planning for future Soos Creek Trail segments.
- Other new regional trails noted in footnote 9.

9. Of this allocation to Other New Regional Trails, \$18M will fund a combination of planning, acquisitions, and preliminary design for potential future trail segments and connections including, but not limited to, Green River Trail, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Soos Creek Trail, Cedar River Trail, Green to Cedar Trail, and Snoqualmie Valley Trail (\$3M). The remainder of this funding will be used for emergent needs on the regional trail system including, but not limited to, surface improvements, lighting, access control improvements, and intersection improvements.

- \$5 million to be used for connecting the Interurban North Trail at the border of King County and Snohomish County.
- \$10 million to be used for the Kirkland Green Loop, intended to be allocated to regional partners.
- \$5 million to be allocated to the City of Kent for Kent regional trails and trail connections.
- \$2 million to be allocated for the Georgetown to South Park Trail connection to be used for construction of protected bike lanes along 14th Ave S., between South Park Bridge and S. Director St.
- \$1 million to be used for the Maple Valley SR-169 Pedestrian Bridge, to support the City of Maple Valley's work on a new pedestrian bridge over SR-169 Maple Valley Black Diamond Road at SE 258th Street

10. Capital major maintenance programs should prioritize keeping the open space system clean, safe, and open, and include, but not be limited to: reopening all closed facility restrooms and ensuring that all facility restrooms remain clean, safe, and open; and rehabilitation of play areas, park buildings, existing synthetic turf fields, pools, docks, ballfields, sports courts, backcountry trails, drainage infrastructure, restrooms, picnic shelters, signage, as well as coordination with other agencies that have infrastructure on Parks Division property (e.g., Sound Transit, WSDOT). A portion of this funding is also intended to respond to emergent projects identified by Park users associated with existing facilities. These programs are expected supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding. This amount includes completion of the picnic shelter and replacement of the mill shed at Preston Mill Park.

11. Funding for new park development and improvements includes Skyway Park Community Center that will support design, construction, and initial operational costs. Additional funding for construction (approximately \$20M) will be needed and is expected to be funded with a combination of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) and bond financing. This funding will include \$350K to develop Korean American Hanwoori Garden in Federal Way

12. This program keeps the existing regional trail system clean, safe, and open and includes, but is not limited to, repair/replacement of bridges and trestles, trail surface repairs/rehabilitation, safety updates, repairs to meet current guidelines and standards, and landscaping/mitigation maintenance and monitoring.

13. This allocation will fund rehabilitation of infrastructure and facilities throughout Marymoor Park to keep the park clean, safe, and open. It also includes funding for improvements to address growing user demand including, but not limited to, signage, utilities, pedestrian facilities, buildings, roadways, velodrome rehabilitation, and concert venue updates. This program is expected to be supplemented with Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) funding.

14. From this \$46 million allocation to Aquatic Facilities Grant Program, the following shall be allocated without being subject to the grant guidelines.

- \$5.0 million to the City of Shoreline to be used for aquatic facilities purposes.
 - \$2.5 million to the City of Kirkland to be used for aquatic facilities purposes.
 - \$5.0 million to the City of Bellevue to be used for aquatic facilities purposes.
 - \$2.0 million to the Whitewater Aquatics Management to be used for capital projects at, and operations and maintenance of, the Evergreen Aquatic Center.
 - \$500,000 to Cottage Lake Pool to be used for repairs and rehabilitation.
- Money for these specific projects would become available for competitive Aquatic Facilities Grants if the projects are not shovel ready by 2029.

15. Except for \$6 million that is to support park and open space acquisition in urban unincorporated King County, of which \$2 million is to be used in White Center, the remainder of this allocation is subject to the guidelines in Attachment C to this motion.

16. Of this \$19 million allocation to Water Access on Lake Washington, the following shall be allocated:

- \$4 million to be used for acquisitions and improvements to parks near the Burke-Gilman Trail in the City of Lake Forest Park.
- \$15 million to the Lakepointe Regional Park.

17. Except for the allocations to City of Shoreline, City of Kirkland, City of Bellevue, Whitewater Aquatics Management, and Cottage Lake Pool, set forth in footnote 14, the remainder of this program allocation is subject to Attachment B to this motion.

18. Of this \$8 million allocation to water access and dock rehabilitation:

- \$5 million to be allocated to Sail Sand Point.
 - \$1 million to be allocated to the Tukwila Community Center for the riverside campus renewal and canoe launch.
- The remainder of this allocation is for: repairs and rehabilitation of existing docks and/or boat ramps at Cottage Lake, Lake Joy, Lake Geneva, and Five Mile Lake.

19. From this allocation, the White Center Playground and Bike Area to be rehabilitated should include construction of covered play areas. All other playground rehabilitation projects should consider construction of covered play areas.

20. Of this \$25.5 million allocation to Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion:

- \$19 million to be allocated to South County Ballfields to be used for Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf Field Conversion.
- \$2.5 million to be allocated to Garfield High School to be used for the Natural Grass to Synthetic Turf installation project.
- \$1 million to be allocated to Tukwila Community Center to be used for the conversion of field to turf at the Tukwila Community Center Upland Campus.
- \$3 million to be allocated Des Moines Steven J Underwood Field Renovation to transform three existing worn and dedicated grass softball fields into multi-purpose year-round artificial turf softball and soccer fields.

21. Of this allocation to Community Grants and Partnerships:

- \$3 million to be allocated to Starfire Sports facility.
- \$1 million to be allocated for 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations for equine recreation and sports grants.

22. The Parks Division shall assess potential sites for cricket fields in the Snoqualmie Valley.

23. Includes funding for bleachers at Big Finn Hill Park.

24. \$6 million in interest is expected in addition to levy collections.

25. Of this allocation to General Infrastructure, \$200,000 to be allocated for a digital reader board on SW 102nd St. at Steve Cox park, if permissible.

26. Of this allocation to General infrastructure, \$400,000 is to be allocated for acquiring, in partnership with Public Health - Seattle & King County, portable or permanent handwashing stations for use by the public and food vendors in public parks that have playgrounds.

General Requirements for King County Parks Levy Grant Programs

Any project funded by parks levy proceeds must allow for regular public access. To receive parks levy funding for eligible projects, the eligible entities will be required to enter into contracts with King County.

1. Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the parks capital and open space grant program to:

1. Develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, natural areas, and recreation facilities; and/or
2. Acquire open space, as defined in Proposed Ordinance 2025-0070.

Eligible Entities

1. King County cities and towns; and/or
2. Metropolitan park districts geographically located in King County.

Eligible Projects

1. Parks levy funding for capital projects to develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities shall be for the following purposes:
 - a. Feasibility study;
 - b. Planning and design; and/or
 - c. Construction.
2. Lands acquired using parks levy funding shall be for the following purposes:
 - a. Active recreational uses (e.g., athletic fields, sports courts, ballfield turf projects, etc.);
 - b. Passive recreational uses (e.g., hiking, mountain biking, birdwatching, etc.);
 - c. Local trails; and/or
 - d. Open space, except not for land that is primarily in agricultural use. Agriculture can be one of multiple uses allowed on lands funded by parks levy proceeds (e.g., community garden, p- patch), as long as the primary use allows public recreation and access.

2. Aquatic Facilities Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the aquatics facilities grant program, which provides funding opportunities to develop new and/or improve existing aquatic facilities in King County.

Eligible Entities

1. King County towns and cities;
2. Metropolitan park districts;
3. Public Schools districts and/or
4. Other public entities that own public aquatic facilities

Eligible Projects

Parks levy funding to develop new and/or improve existing aquatics facilities shall be for the following purposes:

1. Land acquisition;
2. Feasibility study;
3. Planning and design; and/or
4. Construction.

3. Healthy Communities and Parks Grant Program Guidelines

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for the Healthy Communities and Parks grant program, which provides funding opportunities to increase access to and use of parks, trails, open space, and public recreation facilities, in traditionally underserved areas and communities, as well as to build programming capacities of community-based partners that provide recreation to these areas and communities.

Funding is for the following purposes:

1. Develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities; and/or
2. Provide programs focusing on recreation, amateur sports, play, and physical activity.

Eligible Entities

1. 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations;
2. Small or emerging community organizations without a 501(c)(3) status, through a partnership with a fiscal agent;
3. Tribes or tribal organizations serving residents of King County;
4. Towns and cities; and/or
5. Metropolitan park districts.

Eligible Projects

1. Parks levy funding to develop new and/or improve existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities shall be for the following purposes:
 - a. Land acquisition;
 - b. Feasibility study;
 - c. Planning and design; and/or
 - d. Construction.

2. Parks levy funding to provide programs are to be focused on recreational programming (e.g., swim programs, youth sports leagues, etc.).

4. Ballfield Access and Preservation Grants

Purpose

This provides guidelines for the use of parks levy proceeds for capital projects to increase public access to ballfields.

Eligible Entities

1. Cities and towns;
2. Park districts; and/or
3. School districts.

Eligible Projects

Parks levy funding to construct, improve, operate, or maintain ballfields shall be for the following purposes:

1. Feasibility study;
2. Planning and Design;
3. Construction; and/or
4. Operations and maintenance.

All projects receiving ballfield access and preservation grant funding must allow new or increased public access.

Open Space Acquisition Guidelines

The following sets forth the overall approach for parks levy funding for the acquisition of open space in coordination with the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) program:

1. Early each calendar year, the Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) will set a proposed allocation for open space from levy funds for the following fiscal year.
2. Staff will generate proposals for the use of these funds, taking into account opportunities to leverage resources with funding from Conservation Futures, as well as from other local, state, and federal funding sources.
3. An overall proposal allocating the parks levy funds to specific projects will be developed and discussed with the Conservation Futures Advisory Committee (CFAC) that is responsible for developing CFT funding recommendations. These discussions are expected to occur in the spring, the same timeframe during which the CFAC annually reviews CFT project proposals. This will create an opportunity for the CFAC to provide an advisory recommendation regarding allocation of these parks levy funds.
4. Taking the CFAC's recommendations into account, DNRP will develop a proposed budget for these parks levy funds.
5. The DNRP proposed budget for parks levy funding will be reviewed by the County Executive, and ultimately County Council, as part of the overall budget process for the following year.

Summary of Parks Levy Ordinance and Motion Changes Made at March 26th BFM

This document summarizes substantive changes between Version 1 (Executive proposal) and Version 2 (BFM 3.26 proposal) of the Parks Levy Ordinance and Motion, with corresponding changes shown side-by-side.

Ordinance Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0070)	Corresponding Motion Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0077) (all changes are to Attachment A, Allocation Plan, unless otherwise noted)
Overall Changes	
Reduce the levy rate by 0.92 cents, to 23.51 cents	Change total to \$1,460,700,000
Remove Attachments A and B (grant guidelines and acquisition guidelines) from ordinance.	Add Attachments B and C (grant guidelines and acquisition guidelines) to motion.
Aquatic Center	
Make Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center an off-the-top allocation of up to \$22 million, rather than an unspecified amount of the capital allocation.	No change; remains at \$22 million.
Grant Programs	
Add up to \$10 million for councilmanic get active/stay active grants	Add \$10 million for councilmanic get active/stay active grants
Add up to \$13.5 million for ballfield access and preservation grant program	Add \$13.5 million for ballfield access and preservation grants. Add guidelines to grant program guidelines document (Attachment B), similar to those for other grant programs.
Make the Community Partnerships and Grants program and Healthy Communities and Parks grant programs off-the-top allocations, rather than subsets of the capital and operating allocations, respectively.	No change needed.
Add that Community Partnerships and grants is up to \$12.5 million (amount unspecified in Executive proposed).	Change from executive-proposed \$11 million to \$12.5 million. This includes \$3 million for Starfire Sports and \$1 million for equine recreation and sports grants.
Change healthy Communities and Parks grants to <i>at least</i> \$30 million (Executive proposed <i>up to</i> \$30 million).	No change; remains at \$30 million
Parks Capital and Open Space grants – up to \$25 million (Executive proposed up to \$30 million)	Change to \$25 million (Executive proposed \$30 million)
Parks Capital and Open Space grants – (no change needed)	In Attachment B, remove “public entities that serve unincorporated King County” as an eligible entity
Aquatic Facilities Grants – no change (remains \$46 million)	Specify that, from the \$46M allocation to Aquatic Facilities Grant Program, new allocations are made to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5M to the City of Shoreline. • \$2.5M to the City of Kirkland. • \$5M to the City of Bellevue. • \$2M to Whitewater Aquatics Management to be used for capital projects at, and operations and maintenance of, the Evergreen Aquatic Center. • \$500K to Cottage Lake Pool to be used for repairs and rehabilitation. The rest of the funding would be for competitive grants subject to Attachment B guidelines. Funding for the projects above would go back into the competitive grant program if projects are not shovel ready by 2029.
Aquatic Facilities grants (no change needed)	In Attachment B, remove nonprofits as an eligible entity for competitive aquatic facilities grants.
Educational and Civic Venues	
Add Pacific Science Center as an educational and civic venue, with up to \$6 million in funding for environmental and climate stewardship and education	Add \$6 million for Pacific Science Center
Woodland Park Zoo – up to \$40 million (Executive proposed up to \$42 million)	Change to \$40 million (Executive proposed \$42 million)
Seattle Aquarium – up to \$12 million (Executive proposed up to \$15 million)	Change to \$12 million (Executive proposed \$15 million)
Seattle Waterfront Park – up to \$6 million. (Executive proposed up to \$9 million)	Change to \$6 million (Executive proposed \$9 million). Add language directing that any new jobs be added to the existing labor harmony agreement
City/Town/Park District Passthroughs	
Change percentage allocation in order to maintain the same level of funding (given overall rate change and differences in off the top distributions)	No change, total remains at \$119 million.

March 25, 2025

Ordinance Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0070)	Corresponding Motion Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0077) (all changes are to Attachment A, Allocation Plan, unless otherwise noted)
Change formula by which passthroughs are calculated: \$30,000 to each town and city in King County, as well as Fall City Metropolitan Park District, Si View Metropolitan Park District, and Vashon Park District. Additional \$90K annually for jurisdictions over 4,000 people (\$120K annual base) Additional \$20K annually for jurisdictions located in Opportunity Areas (as defined in K.C.C. 26.12.003.J.1 ¹) Then, 60% would be distributed in proportion to each town or city's population; 40% would be distributed in proportion to the assessed value of parcels within each town or city.	No change
Operations and Maintenance	
Change percentage allocation for operations and maintenance from 43% to 40% to match the reductions in the Allocation Plan.	See changes below.
	Reduce operations, maintenance, program delivery, and internal supports from \$517 million to \$464 million
	Merge Park Patrol Expansion (\$4.3M) and Safety Program Expansion (\$3.2M) - rename to Safety and Security Program and allocate \$5M total.
	Reduce Land Use Stewardship and Encroachment Program from \$10.4M to \$5M
	Rename Jobs and Housing Program to Parks Beautification Program, add to footnote 4 that this is just for jobs
Capital	
Change percentage allocation for capital to match the reductions in the Allocation Plan.	See changes below.
State that funding from this bucket can also go to cities, towns, MPDs, and 501(c)(3)s	Some of the changes below include these types of entities.
	Under the Climate Resilience, Conservation, and Stewardship category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Stewardship of Lands Acquired (O&M) from \$20M to \$10M. • Increase Fish Passage Program from \$10M to \$20M. • Reduce Climate Resilience from \$33M to \$25M. Direct that, of this total: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$5M be used for a district climate resilience grant program evenly divided between council districts, per year. ○ At least \$250k be allocated for street trees in White Center ○ Up to \$1 million be allocated for a surface-level cooling feature for children at Steve Cox Park ○ \$700k be allocated for capital preconstruction costs for a climate-resilient community center in in the Georgetown area. • Reduce Environmental Stewardship from \$58.5M to \$30M.

¹ These are defined as areas that: (1) are located in a census tract in which the median household income is in the lowest one-third for median household income for census tracts in King County; (2) are located in a ZIP code in which hospitalization rates for asthma, diabetes and heart disease are in the highest one-third for ZIP codes in King County; and (3) are within the Urban Growth Boundary and do not have a publicly owned and accessible park or open space within one-quarter mile of a residence, or are outside the Urban Growth Boundary and do not have a publicly owned and accessible park or open space within two miles of a residence.

March 25, 2025

<p align="center">Ordinance Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0070)</p>	<p align="center">Corresponding Motion Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0077) (all changes are to Attachment A, Allocation Plan, unless otherwise noted)</p>
	<p>Increase Other New Regional Trails from \$38M to \$41M and make the following allocations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5M for Interurban Trail North. • \$10M for Kirkland Green Loop. • \$5M for Kent Regional Trails. • \$2M for Georgetown to South Park Trail. • \$1M for Maple Valley Pedestrian overpass/trail connection. • Of existing funding, \$3M for Snoqualmie Valley Trail.
	<p>Under the New Park Development and Improvements category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add \$350K to develop Korean American Hanwoori Garden in Federal Way. • Reduce Dog Parks from \$3M to \$2.5M • Add \$500K for Fall City Community Center. • Add \$1M for City of Bothell McAuliffe Skate Park • Remove Backcountry Trails subcategory. • Add \$19M for new Water Access on Lake Washington subcategory and make the following allocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$15M for Lakepoint Regional Park ○ \$4M for City of Lake Forest Park
	<p>Under the Active Recreation Repair and Renovation and Other Park Repair and Renovation category:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that Major Maintenance Existing Infrastructure includes completion of the picnic shelter and replacement of the mill shed at Preston Mill Park. • State that capital major maintenance programs should prioritize reopening closed restroom facilities and ensuring that all facility restrooms remain clean, safe, and open. • Reduce General infrastructure from \$23M to \$20M and make the following allocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$200k for a digital readerboard at Steve Cox Park ○ \$400k for handwashing stations in King County parks with playgrounds. • Increase Water access and docks rehabilitation from \$2M to \$8M and make the following allocations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ \$5M Sail Sand Point ○ \$1M Tukwila community center riverside campus renewal and canoe launch. ○ The remaining moneys for repairs and rehabilitation of existing docks and/or boat ramps at Cottage Lake, Lake Joy, Lake Geneva, and Five Mile Lake. • Include new trails in the Backcountry Trails subcategory, without change to total investment. • Reduce Other agency projects (Sound Transit, WSDOT, KC Roads, etc.) from \$8M to \$5M.
<p>N/A</p>	<p>In the body of the motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State that the county should consider using bond financing for capital projects, and direct the executive to study this possibility. • State that it is the intent of the council that the Skyway Community Center be completed and operational within the period of the levy. • Request the Executive to undertake community engagement related to Preston Mill Park phase 3, and submit a report. • Request the Executive to develop a plan to allow alcohol sales in King County parks, and allow alcohol

March 25, 2025

<p style="text-align: center;">Ordinance Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0070)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Corresponding Motion Change Between Version 1 and 2 (2025-0077) (all changes are to Attachment A, Allocation Plan, unless otherwise noted)</p>
	<p>sales in the stands at the stadium at Steve Cox Park no later than May 31, 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request the Executive to review permitting standards for vendors, to evaluate and recommend strategies to encourage food vendors to locate in parks, and streamline permitting processes for vendors, and submit a report and proposed ordinance. • Request the Executive to set aside three parking spaces at each of the ten most highly utilized recreation or multiuse parks for electric vehicle charging and associate equipment • Request the Executive to keep the lights on at urban unincorporated area parks until at least 10 p.m. • Request the Executive to develop and implement a policy allowing for unscheduled activities at all active recreation facilities in urban unincorporated areas.