



## KING COUNTY

1200 King County Courthouse  
516 Third Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98104

### Signature Report

#### Ordinance 19922

**Proposed No.** 2025-0130.1

**Sponsors** Dembowski, von Reichbauer  
and Backus

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           \$0.2329 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

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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; repealing Ordinance 19914, Section 1, Ordinance  
 29 19914, Section 2, Ordinance 19914, Section 3, Ordinance  
 30 19914, Section 4, Ordinance 19914, Section 5, Ordinance  
 31 19914, Section 6, Ordinance 19914, Section 7, Ordinance  
 32 19914, Section 8, Ordinance 19914, Section 9, and  
 33 Ordinance 19914, Section 10; and declaring an emergency.

34 STATEMENT OF FACTS:

35 1. King County owns and operates a system of regional and local parks  
 36 and trails that consists of thirty-two thousand acres of parklands and more  
 37 than one hundred eighty-five miles of regional trails. The county provides  
 38 regional trails, regional recreational facilities, regional natural areas,  
 39 regional parks, and local parks in unincorporated areas. Examples of  
 40 regional and local county parks and trails include Marymoor park, Cougar  
 41 Mountain Regional Wildland park, Steve Cox Memorial park, Dick

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42 Thurnau Memorial park, the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center,  
 43 and the Sammamish River trail.

44 2. Parks, natural areas, and trails contribute to a high quality of life. A  
 45 robust system of parks and trails provides: physical, social, and mental  
 46 health benefits to individuals; economic opportunity through recreation  
 47 and tourism; economic growth for private businesses that must attract and  
 48 retain skilled workers; increased climate resilience; environmental benefits  
 49 like clean water and healthy habitat; and cultural resource protection  
 50 through open space conservation. King County's open space system  
 51 provides all these benefits to King County residents and businesses.

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

60 4. The 2002 Parks Business Transition Plan, adopted by the King County  
 61 council and enacted by Ordinance 14509, became the blueprint for  
 62 establishing the regional open space system we have today. Building on  
 63 that blueprint, the county has adopted open space plans, which have  
 64 provided the framework guiding King County in the acquisition, planning,

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65 development, stewardship, maintenance, and management of its complex  
66 system of parks, regional trails, and acres of open space. The latest open  
67 space plan was updated in 2022 and adopted by Ordinance 19501.

68 5. In implementing the open space plan, the parks and recreation division  
69 of the department of natural resources and parks has successfully focused  
70 its lines of business on regional parks and trails, backcountry trails, natural  
71 areas, and local parks in unincorporated King County and has  
72 implemented business practices that generate revenue from park system  
73 assets by implementing or increasing user fees and establishing corporate  
74 and community partnerships that enhance park amenities and leverage  
75 public and private dollars to improve parks and increase access to parks.

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

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88 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for  
89 2014 through 2019; and in 2019, enacted by Ordinance 18890, to provide  
90 funding for maintenance and operations as well as for open space  
91 acquisition, asset maintenance and improvement, parks and trails projects,  
92 the Woodland Park Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium, aquatic facilities, and for  
93 King County towns and cities to use for their parks and recreation for  
94 2020 through 2025. Voters approved the funding measures on all four  
95 occasions that they were on the ballot. The voter-approved levies have  
96 helped keep the open space system clean, safe, and open.

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

108 8. The 2020 through 2025 voter-approved parks, trails, and open space  
109 replacement levy provides approximately eighty-five percent of the  
110 operating budget of the parks and recreation division, with approximately

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111 fifteen percent generated through business activities and entrepreneurial  
112 efforts. King County general fund support to the parks and recreation  
113 division was eliminated as of 2011.

114 9. The community partnerships and grants program enacted by Ordinance  
115 14509 enhances parks amenities by partnering with parks and recreation  
116 organizations. Since the inception of the community partnership and grant  
117 program in 2003, more than seventy projects representing more than  
118 seventy million dollars' worth of new, enhanced, or preserved public  
119 recreation facilities have been completed, with only twenty-two million  
120 dollars of King County capital investment.

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

130 11. The Seattle Aquarium received distributions from the past voter-  
131 approved levy for capital costs for the Ocean Pavilion project to amplify  
132 the aquarium's existing global conservation efforts by bringing visitors  
133 face-to-face with tropical species native to the Coral Triangle and by

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134 housing approximately three thousand five hundred sustainably sourced  
135 tropical fish and invertebrates, including rays, sharks, mangroves, and up  
136 to thirty species of coral.

137 12. The Memorial Stadium project will create an innovative multi-  
138 purpose student and community events facility at Seattle Center. That  
139 transformative project will be led by Seattle Public Schools and the city of  
140 Seattle, providing an improved venue for local and regional sports and  
141 events.

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

150 14. King County towns and cities received funding from the past three  
151 voter-approved levies. In 2008 through 2013, towns and cities could use  
152 levy proceeds for open space and natural lands acquisition and  
153 development of town or city trail projects that supported connections to  
154 the regional trail system with distributions being contingent upon an equal  
155 or greater contribution of matching moneys from the recipient town or city  
156 for the same project. In the 2014 through 2019 and the 2020 through 2025

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157 levies, types of uses for the distribution to King County towns and cities  
 158 were broadened to provide flexibility and better meet the parks and  
 159 recreation needs of cities.

160 15. Parks levy oversight committees were established to monitor the  
 161 expenditures of the proceeds from the 2004 through 2007, 2008 through  
 162 2013, 2014 through 2019, and 2020 through 2025 levies. Annual  
 163 committee review has concluded that the county has complied with all  
 164 levy requirements.

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

177 17. King County is growing rapidly as a region. In 2024, King County's  
 178 population increased by more than thirty thousand people; over the next  
 179 ten years, the county is expected to grow by another two hundred fifty

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180 thousand people. Recent trend reports indicate that participation in  
181 outdoor recreation continues to grow, increasing by more than four  
182 percent nation-wide in 2023. More and more people are using King  
183 County parks and trails, which puts greater pressure on the system. As  
184 development increases to accommodate population growth, the risk of  
185 losing open space lands, including urban greenspaces throughout the  
186 county grows. Those valuable lands contribute to King County residents'  
187 high quality of life. The cost of land to accommodate this growth and  
188 preserve open spaces is also increasing. Today is the opportune time to  
189 address future needs of residents by investing in our parks and trails and  
190 accelerating conservation of open space.

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

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

201 19. Recognizing growth in population, increased use of parks and trails  
202 and the need to address disparities, to prepare the 2026 through 2031 levy,

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203 the parks and recreation division conducted outreach to obtain feedback on  
204 the current park system and future parks and recreation needs for all King  
205 County residents. In March and April 2024, parks and recreation division  
206 staff conducted twenty-one in-person and virtual community engagement  
207 events and hosted two online surveys across eight languages. Participants  
208 represented all geographic areas of the county including towns and cities,  
209 business, recreation, community, and environmental interests. More than  
210 four thousand eight hundred people across all nine King County Council  
211 districts participated in the surveys. Parks and recreation division staff  
212 also met with towns and cities, parks districts, and key partners to receive  
213 additional feedback about the levy.

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

222 21. From January through July 2024, parks and recreation division staff  
223 convened a Community Advisory Committee tasked with recommending  
224 how to preserve King County's open space system of parks, trails, and  
225 natural areas and resource lands after the 2019 through 2025 levy expires.

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226 The Community Advisory Committee also advised staff about how best to  
227 meet the growing parks and recreation needs in King County and the  
228 region. Representing King County Boards, cities, non-profit  
229 organizations, community and environmental interests, businesses, and  
230 sports, the Community Advisory Committee met nine times to provide  
231 guidance on developing the 2026 through 2031 levy.

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

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

243 BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

244 SECTION 1. Findings:

245 A. On April 15, 2025, the county council adopted Ordinance 19914 to submit to  
246 the voters at a special election to be held in King County on August 5, 2025, a  
247 proposition authorizing a property tax levy in excess of the levy limitation contained in  
248 chapter 84.55 RCW. Commonly referred to as the "Parks Levy," if passed by the voters,

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249 among the eligible levy expenditures would be direct distributions to cities, towns, and  
 250 municipal park districts.

251 B. Ordinance 19914, as enacted, contained an incorrect cross reference in Section  
 252 4.I.3.c. that would preclude distribution of approximately ninety-one million dollars, over  
 253 the life of the levy, to towns and cities, which is contrary to the intent of the council, and  
 254 contained an incorrect cross-reference in Section 7.B. that would result in omitting an  
 255 intended reporting requirement.

256 C. In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321, in order to submit a levy proposition to  
 257 the voters at the special election to be held in King County on August 5, 2025, an  
 258 effective ordinance must be presented to the county's elections department no later than  
 259 May 2, 2025.

260 D. In order to meet that deadline, the council must take action on this ordinance  
 261 on an emergency basis to ensure that the voters have the opportunity to consider the  
 262 correct and intended levy proposal at the August special election. If the levy proposal is  
 263 passed by the voters, the proceeds from the levy will continue and expand support of not  
 264 only the King County's open space system, but also the parks, trails, open space, and  
 265 recreational programs of all the county's cities and towns, and some municipal park  
 266 districts, as well as making investments in environmental education, the Woodland Park  
 267 Zoo, the Seattle Aquarium, Seattle's Waterfront park, the Pacific Science Center, and the  
 268 construction of a revitalized Memorial Stadium.

269 E. This ordinance repeals and replaces Ordinance 19914. Except for the  
 270 correction of the cross-references in the subsections that are now Section 5.I.3. and

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271 Section 8.B. of this ordinance, and the additions of this Findings section, the repeal  
272 section, and the emergency declaration, this ordinance is identical to Ordinance 19914.

273 SECTION 2. Definitions. The definitions in this section apply throughout this  
274 ordinance unless the context clearly requires otherwise. For those definitions herein that  
275 contain terms not defined but include a reference to the 2022 Open Space Plan adopted  
276 by Ordinance 19501, or the provisions of the Growth Management Act, chapter 36.70A  
277 RCW, then the definition or categorization found in the referenced document shall apply.

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

282 B. "Ballfield access and preservation grant program" means the program through  
283 which King County provides moneys to eligible entities to increase public access to  
284 ballfields.

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

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

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294 E. "Conservation futures tax program" means the program defined in K.C.C.  
295 chapter 26.12.

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

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

301 H. "Healthy community and parks grants program" means the program through  
302 which King County provides moneys to eligible entities in order to achieve equitable  
303 opportunities and access to parks and recreation for traditionally underserved areas and  
304 communities, including people with disabilities, located in unincorporated King County  
305 and King County towns and cities.

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

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

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

315 L. "Open space system" means the categories of King County's open space  
316 system of parks, including recreation and multiuse sites, regional trails, natural areas, and

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317 natural resource lands. "Open space system" also includes structures or buildings owned  
 318 or otherwise under the jurisdiction of the parks and recreation division of the department  
 319 of natural resources.

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

322 N. "Parks district" means the active metropolitan park districts under chapter  
 323 35.61 RCW and parks and recreation service areas under chapter 36.68 RCW in King  
 324 County.

325 O. "Town or city parks system" means any building or other structure related to  
 326 parks or recreation; parks, trails, natural areas, natural resource lands, and other parks or  
 327 recreation property owned or otherwise under the jurisdiction of a town or city within  
 328 King County.

329 **SECTION 3. Levy submittal to voters.** To provide necessary moneys for the  
 330 purposes identified in section 5 of this ordinance, the King County council shall submit to  
 331 the qualified electors of the county a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy  
 332 in excess of the levy limitation contained in chapter 84.55 RCW for six consecutive  
 333 years, with collection commencing in 2026, at a rate not to exceed \$0.2329 per one  
 334 thousand dollars of assessed value in the first year of the levy period. The dollar amount  
 335 of the levy in the first year shall be the base upon which the levy amounts in year two  
 336 through six shall be calculated. In accordance with RCW 84.55.050, this levy shall be a  
 337 regular property tax levy subject to the limit factor.

338 **SECTION 4. Deposit of levy proceeds.** The levy proceeds shall be deposited  
 339 into a dedicated subfund of the parks and recreation fund, or its successor.

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340            **SECTION 5. Eligible expenditures.** If approved by the qualified electors of the  
 341 county, levy proceeds shall be used for the following purposes:

342            A. Costs incurred by the county that are attributable to the special election called  
 343 for in section 6 of this ordinance as well as future parks, recreation, trails, and open space  
 344 levy elections;

345            B. Distributions to educational and civic venues, limited to the following  
 346 facilities:

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

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

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

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

364           5. Up to six million dollars for distribution to the 501(c)(3) organization,  
365 registered with the Washington secretary of state under number 1133863 and known as  
366 Friends of Waterfront Park or its successor 501(c)(3) organization registered with the  
367 Washington secretary of state, which shall be used solely at Seattle's Waterfront park, and  
368 which shall be used solely for: accessibility to the park for traditionally underserved  
369 areas and communities, including people with disabilities; support for a clean and safe  
370 environment; free arts, culture, wellness, and recreation programming to all visitors; and  
371 development of inclusive community partnerships;

372           C. Twenty-five million twenty-five thousand dollars for a municipal parks capital  
373 and open space pass through distribution to towns and cities in King County for their  
374 town or city parks system operations and capital improvement projects. These moneys  
375 shall be distributed based on 2025 population and presence of opportunity areas as  
376 defined in K.C.C. 26.12.003.J.1., as follows:

- 377           1. Algona and Pacific – two hundred fifty thousand dollars each;
- 378           2. Enumclaw – five hundred thousand dollars;
- 379           3. Tukwila, SeaTac, Des Moines, and Burien – one million dollars each;
- 380           4. Auburn, Federal Way, Renton, and Kent – one million nine-hundred fifty  
381 thousand dollars each;
- 382           5. Seattle – two million eight-hundred thousand dollars;

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383           6. Skykomish, Beaux Arts Village, Hunts Point, Yarrow Point, Milton,  
384   Carnation, Medina, Clyde Hill, Normandy Park, Black Diamond, North Bend, and Duvall  
385   – one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars each;

386           7. Lake Forest Park, Newcastle, Woodinville, and Snoqualmie – two hundred  
387   fifty thousand dollars each;

388           8. Covington, Kenmore, Mercer Island, Maple Valley, Bothell, Issaquah,  
389   Shoreline, and Sammamish – five hundred thousand dollars each; and

390           9. Redmond, Kirkland, and Bellevue – nine hundred seventy-five thousand  
391   dollars each.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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405           1. forty percent of levy proceeds for maintenance and operations of King  
 406 County's open space system;  
 407           2. fifty percent of levy proceeds for:  
 408           a. Acquisition, conservation, and stewardship of additional open space,  
 409 including urban greenspaces, natural areas, natural resource lands, and rights of way for  
 410 regional trails;  
 411           b. Acquisition of rights of way for and development of regional and other  
 412 publicly owned trails; and  
 413           c. Capital improvement projects and major maintenance repair or replacement  
 414 of open space system infrastructure, town and city parks system infrastructure, and  
 415 recreation facilities owned or operated by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization;  
 416           3. Ten percent of levy proceeds for distribution to towns, cities, and parks  
 417 districts in King County for their town or city parks system operations and capital  
 418 improvement projects, of which amount:  
 419           a. Seventy-five thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each town and  
 420 city, and to each of the following parks districts that predominantly serve unincorporated  
 421 King County: Fall City Metropolitan Park District; Si View Metropolitan Park District;  
 422 and Vashon Park District;  
 423           b. An additional fifty-thousand dollars shall be distributed annually to each  
 424 town and city with a population of over four thousand; and  
 425           c. Of the remainder of levy proceeds, after the distributions made in  
 426 accordance with subsection I.3.a. and b. of this section, sixty percent shall be distributed

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

4. Of the levy proceeds distributed to entities other than King County, a portion shall be retained by the county to be used for expenditures related to administration of the distribution of levy proceeds. Eligible administrative expenditures shall include all costs and charges to the parks and recreation division or the county associated with or attributable to the purposes listed in this section as well as sections 7 and 8 of this ordinance.

**SECTION 6. Call for special election.** In accordance with RCW 29A.04.321, the King County council hereby calls for a special election to be held in conjunction with the primary election on August 5, 2025, to consider a proposition authorizing a regular property tax levy for the purposes described in this ordinance. The King County director of elections shall cause notice to be given of this ordinance in accordance with the state constitution and general law and to submit to the qualified electors of the county, at the said special county election, the proposition hereinafter set forth. The clerk of the council shall certify that proposition to the King County director of elections in substantially the following form, with such additions, deletions or modifications as may be required for the proposition listed below by the prosecuting attorney:

King County

Proposition No. 1

Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy

The King County council adopted Ordinance \_\_\_\_\_ replacing the expiring parks levy.

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

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space, and trails; recreation; public pools; and educational and civic venues. It authorizes an additional six-year property tax beginning in 2026 at \$0.2329 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, uses the 2026 levy amount to compute annual increases in 2027-2031 by the King County inflation plus population index or chapter 84.55 RCW limitation, whichever is greater, and exempts qualifying seniors, veterans, and disabled persons under RCW 84.36.381. Should this proposition be:

Approved? \_

Rejected? \_

**SECTION 7. Distributions.** Before distribution of levy proceeds to an entity other than King County, the receiving entity and the county shall have fully executed a contract setting forth the terms and conditions, including the applicable eligible purpose or purposes identified in section 5 of this ordinance, under which the entity is receiving a distribution of levy proceeds.

**SECTION 8. Parks levy oversight board established.**

A. If the proposition in section 6 of this ordinance is approved by the qualified electors of King County, a parks levy oversight board shall be appointed by the executive. The board shall consist of nine members. By March 31, 2026, each councilmember shall nominate a candidate for the board who resides in the councilmember's district. If, by March 31, 2026, the executive does not appoint the person nominated by a councilmember, the executive must request that the councilmember should, by June 30, 2026, nominate another candidate for appointment. Members shall be confirmed by the council. Members may not be elected or appointed

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

B. The board shall review the allocation of levy proceeds and progress on achieving the purposes of this proposition. On or before December 31, 2027, the board shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and the regional policy committee on the expenditure of levy proceeds for 2026. Thereafter, the board shall review and report to the King County executive, the King County council and the regional policy committee annually. Each report shall include an accounting of levy spending by King County council district and ZIP Code, grouped by purposes described in section 5.B. through I.3. of this ordinance. Any report to the King County council under this section shall be electronically filed with the clerk of the council, who will retain an electronic copy and provide an electronic copy to all councilmembers, the council chief of staff, and the chief policy officer. The board expires December 31, 2032.

**SECTION 9. Exemption.** The additional regular property taxes authorized by this ordinance shall be included in any real property tax exemption authorized by RCW 84.36.381.

**SECTION 10. Ratification.** Certification of the proposition by the clerk of the King County council to the director of elections in accordance with law before the election on August 5, 2025, and any other acts consistent with the authority and before the effective date of this ordinance are hereby ratified and confirmed.

**SECTION 11.** The following are hereby repealed:

A. Ordinance 19914, Section 1;

B. Ordinance 19914, Section 2;

Ordinance 19922

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495 C. Ordinance 19914, Section 3;

496 D. Ordinance 19914, Section 4;

497 E. Ordinance 19914, Section 5;

498 F. Ordinance 19914, Section 6;

499 G. Ordinance 19914, Section 7;

500 H. Ordinance 19914, Section 8;

501 I. Ordinance 19914, Section 9; and

502 J. Ordinance 19914, Section 10.

503 SECTION 12. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or its application

504 to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the ordinance or the

505 application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

506 SECTION 13. The county council finds as a fact and declares that an emergency

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- 507 exists and that this ordinance is necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace,  
508 health or safety or for the support of county government and its existing public institutions.

Ordinance 19922 was introduced on 4/29/2025 and passed by the Metropolitan King County Council on 4/29/2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Mosqueda, Quinn, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

No: 1 - Dunn

Excused: 1 - Perry

KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Signed by:

*Girmay Zahilay*

1AEA3C5077F8485...

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

DocuSigned by:

*Melani Hay*

8DE1BB375AD3422...

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

**Attachments:** None

## Certificate Of Completion

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Cherie.Camp@kingcounty.gov

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Girmay Zahilay

girmay.zahilay@kingcounty.gov

Council Chair

Security Level: Email, Account Authentication  
(None)

## Signature

Signed by:

*Girmay Zahilay*  
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Signature Adoption: Pre-selected Style

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Melani Hay

melani.hay@kingcounty.gov

Clerk of the Council

King County Council

Security Level: Email, Account Authentication  
(None)

DocuSigned by:

*Melani Hay*  
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To contact us by email send messages to: [cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov](mailto:cipriano.dacanay@kingcounty.gov)

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