



MEMORANDUM

TO: BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

FROM: NICOLE OLIVER, PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

CC: MAYOR SETH FLEETWOOD

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION TO SUBMIT TO THE VOTERS A PROPERTY TAX LEVY TO ACQUIRE, IMPROVE, DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN GREENWAYS, OPEN SPACE, WILDLIFE HABITAT AND CORRIDORS, URBAN TREES, PARKS, PARK FACILITIES AND TRAILS (GREENWAYS V)

DATE: 06/26/2023

With great foresight, in 1990 our community initiated a grassroots led Greenway Program that levied additional property taxes to raise funds to “acquire, develop and maintain greenways, open space sites, parks, park facilities and trails.” Three subsequent levies were approved by voters in 1997, 2006 and 2016, and the proposed resolution is for a fifth levy to continue this program for another ten years at a reduced levy rate of \$.40/\$1,000 of assessed value.

By the end of 2023, the program will have brought in over \$102 million, with 3,200 acres purchased, plus 2,400 acres of recreational trails on Galbraith Mountain, 87 trail miles and multiple park and trail development projects including Cordata Park, Squalicum Creek Park, Whatcom Falls Woburn trailhead, Boulevard Restroom, Hundred Acre Woods Master Plan, and many other projects.

In addition, Greenways has also supported the maintenance and stewardship of Bellingham’s park system, including trail resurfacing, bridge replacements, re-roofing projects, volunteer work parties and community gardens.

The Greenways V Levy Committee drafted the resolution to send a fifth Greenways property tax levy to the voters in November. The fifth Greenways Levy adds a new component to help improve our park system’s climate resiliency, including energy efficiency upgrades, urban forestry management, invasive species removal, expanded neighborhood trail development, and additional restoration and community garden projects.

The ballot language is due to the Whatcom County Auditor by August 1.