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Clerk 02/28/2017

A MOTION providing direction to the conservation futures citizen oversight committee on priorities for allocating conservation futures tax levy funds.

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.010 declares that it is in the best interest of the state to maintain, preserve, conserve and otherwise continue in existence adequate open space lands for the production of food, fiber and forest crops and to ensure the use and enjoyment of natural resources and scenic beauty for the economic and social well-being of the state and its citizens, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.210 authorizes the county to acquire property rights "to protect, preserve, maintain, improve, restore, limit the future use of, or other otherwise conserve, selected open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timber land," and

WHEREAS, property rights acquired under this authorization are defined as conservation futures, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.230 authorizes the use of a property tax levy to fund the acquisition of conservation futures and the maintenance and operation of acquired properties, and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.34.240 authorizes counties to establish a special conservation futures fund to which the levy proceeds are credited, and

WHEREAS, King County has established a conservation futures tax levy and fund, and

WHEREAS, King County is required to establish a process to help ensure, over time, that the distribution of the tax levy is throughout the county, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. chapter 26.12 establishes an annual process for distribution of the tax levy to acquire open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat and trail rights-of-way, and

WHEREAS, the process includes a citizen oversight committee that makes project and funding allocation recommendations for each project to the executive, and

WHEREAS, the executive makes project and funding recommendations as part of the budget process, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.010 allows the council to adopt a motion providing direction to the conservation futures citizen oversight committee on priorities for evaluating project applications, and

WHEREAS, K.C.C. 26.12.025 establishes criteria for conservation futures project selection, which provides: "wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve; salmon habitat and aquatic resources; scenic resources; community separator; historic or cultural resources; urban passive-use natural area or greenbelt; park or open space system addition; and transfer of development rights program implementation. Additional criteria may include: passive recreation; education/interpretive opportunity; threat of loss of open space resources; ownership complexity; partnerships; stewardship and maintenance; and any other criteria consistent with RCW 84.34.020," and

WHEREAS, the North Lake-Hylebos watershed area and its surroundings in and near the city of Federal Way provide discharge to Hylebos creek, and

WHEREAS, this area has been naturally revegetated with second growth timber, which provides shade protection to North Lake and the East Hylebos Waterway, as well as valuable habitat, and

WHEREAS, this area has provided a passive recreation and open space resource for residents of King County for nearly fifty years, and

WHEREAS, the loss of open space in this area would have impacts on the North Lake-Hylebos watershed and the habitat it provides, and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy funds for purchase of property rights in the North Lake-Hylebos watershed and surrounding areas for wildlife habitat, urban passive-use natural area or open space system addition meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025 for project selection, and

WHEREAS, the Juanita and Inglewood-Finn Hill neighborhoods and their surroundings in and near the city of Kirkland include a number of parks and open space areas, including Saint Edward State Park, Big Finn Hill Park, O.O. Denny Park, Juanita Woodlands Park, Juanita Beach Park and Juanita Heights Park, that would benefit from additional trails and open space connections to provide habitat corridors as well as pedestrian and bicycling connectivity between parks and neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the addition of trails and open space connections in this area would provide for the preservation of tree canopy and indigenous vegetation in urban areas, as well as the establishment of natural greenways through developed areas that will support local wildlife migration and open space linkages, and

WHEREAS, the loss of open space in this area would limit connectivity between a network of state, county and local parks and open spaces and affect local vegetation and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy funds for purchase of property rights for trails and open space connections in the Juanita and Inglewood-Finn Hill neighborhoods and surrounding areas for wildlife habitat or open space system addition meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025 for project selection, and

WHEREAS, the Woodinville Wine Country and its surroundings in and near the Sammamish River valley include regional trails and multi-use corridors, including the Sammamish River Trail and the Eastside Rail Corridor, protected farmland and open space areas that would benefit from additional trails and open space connections to provide habitat corridors as well as pedestrian and bicycling connectivity between parks, trails and community destinations; and

WHEREAS, the addition of trails and open space connections in this area would provide for the preservation of farmland and green spaces, as well as the protection of natural wildlife corridors between existing open spaces and the Sammamish river, and

WHEREAS, the loss of open space in this area would limit connectivity between a network of regional trails, protected farmland, riparian corridors and open spaces and affect local vegetation and wildlife, and

WHEREAS, use of conservation future tax levy funds for purchase of property rights for trails and open

space connections in the Woodinville Wine Country area for wildlife habitat or open space system addition meets the criteria in K.C.C. 26.12.025 for project selection;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures citizen oversight committee's consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process, one or more projects that includes the purchase of property rights for the purpose of wildlife habitat, urban passive-use natural area or open space system addition in or near the North Lake-Hylebos watershed, to preserve the existing open space and stands of trees.

B. The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures citizen oversight committee's consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process, one or more projects that includes the purchase of property rights for the purpose of trail or open space connections, wildlife habitat or open space system addition in or near the Juanita and Inglewood-Finn Hill neighborhoods, to provide connectivity between the network of state, county and local parks and open spaces.

C. The council establishes as a priority for the conservation futures citizen oversight committee's consideration during the annual project selection and funding recommendation process, one or more projects that includes the purchase of property rights for the purpose of trail or open space connections, wildlife habitat or open space system addition in or near the Woodinville Wine Country area, to provide connectivity between the Sammamish river, existing regional trails and multiuse corridors, open spaces and neighborhood destinations.

D. The department of natural resources and parks, water and land resources division, is requested to work with landowners and jurisdictions in which properties reflecting these priorities are located, in submitting project proposals that meet this priority, as part of the 2017 conservation futures tax levy funds selection process provided for in K.C.C. 26.12.010.