

## **RESOLUTION No. 37498**

Refer to the voters a five-year local option tax levy for the November 3, 2020 General Election to restore recreation programs and protect parks and natural areas (Resolution)

WHEREAS, Portland's parks, natural areas, trees, and recreational opportunities improve public health, add beauty to our city, are essential public assets, and connect people to place, nature, self, and community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland's park system, which is managed by Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R), includes 11,712 total acres, 8,000 acres of which are natural areas, across 5 watersheds, over 300 park properties 14 community and art centers, 13 community pools, 1.2 million trees, and more, together serving Portlanders across the city; and

WHEREAS, Portland's residents treasure and care for this legacy, and value equitable access for all Portlanders; and

WHEREAS, in November 2019, Portland City Council held a Sustainable Future work session where PP&R shared their research into the financial trajectory of the bureau and outlined service level scenarios and potential sources for additional funding; and

WHEREAS, PP&R is not appropriately funded to deliver the service levels that the community and City Council have called for, and the bureau's reliance on fees for program and service delivery is inequitable and causes a structural funding issue that has caused service level cuts for several consecutive years, and would continue to lead to cuts in future budget years; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted this structural funding issue, with many recreation facilities and programs closed and PP&R team members losing their jobs; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has also highlighted the importance of parks and natural areas as essential community assets; and

WHEREAS, a five-year levy would help PP&R meet service level goals, community and Council expectations, and budget needs to prevent additional closures and layoffs; and

WHEREAS, equity is achieved when one's identity cannot predict the outcome, and today's park system is inequitable in its distribution of parks, playgrounds, tree canopy, and more; and

WHEREAS, the levy would better enable PP&R to center equity in their work and delivery of services; and

WHEREAS, cost is also an inequity and barrier to program access for 20% of Portlanders, but it is a larger barrier for Portlanders of color (25%), and East Portland residents (28%), and so long as PP&R relies on user fees to deliver programs, cost will continue to be a barrier; and

WHEREAS, with facilities and programs closed since early March due to COVID-19, PP&R has missed months of needed revenues that fund staff and operations in the Recreation Division, meaning that the bureau would be unable to offer recreation programming in the summer of 2021; and

WHEREAS, the levy would allow PP&R to restart recreation programming, end reliance on user fees to deliver programming, and center equity and affordability as outcomes; and

WHEREAS, safety was a barrier to park visitation for 30% of all Portlanders, but was a barrier to park visitation for 37% of Portlanders of color, and 45% of East Portland residents; and

WHEREAS, the levy would keep parks and restrooms cleaner and safer for all Portlanders, improving service in existing parks and ensuring new parks funded through System Development Charges and other non-levy sources receive appropriate service levels; and

WHEREAS, Portlanders value trees, and trees provide essential benefits by improving air quality, reducing heat island effects, decreasing heating and cooling costs, sequestering carbon, increasing property values, and more, but today, the benefits of our urban tree canopy are not equally distributed; and

WHEREAS, Portland's 8,000 acres of natural areas need additional resources to preserve habitat, improve water quality, and protect from invasive species; and

WHEREAS, the levy would provide resources to protect natural areas, improve the health and equitable distribution of our tree canopy, enable PP&R to proactively maintain existing park trees, and plant hundreds of new trees each year in parks and natural areas with low canopy; and

WHEREAS, while PP&R augments its funding by seeking grants, public-private and inter-bureau partnerships, and volunteerism, funding is still insufficient to deliver promised services and outcomes to the community, to provide an equitable and affordable parks system, and to meet rising internal costs; and

WHEREAS, if approved, the levy tax rate would be \$0.80 per \$1,000 of assessed value, about \$13 per month for a median residential property owner; and

WHEREAS, if approved, a Parks levy would raise an estimated average of \$48 million per year to restart recreation programming, improve existing parks and natural area services, expand the urban tree canopy, and more; and

WHEREAS, as outlined in Exhibits A, B, and D, an oversight committee would be appointed to review levy expenditures and would report annually to the Council, and the levy would be audited to ensure that services and programs funded by the levy are consistent with voter intent; and

WHEREAS, PP&R is committed to working with local government partners with existing

property tax levies, including the Portland Children's Levy, Metro, and the Oregon Historical Society, to reduce financial impacts to their levies caused by compression under Oregon property tax law; and

WHEREAS, if this levy is not approved by voters, this measure would not change the annual tax rates; and

WHEREAS, if this levy is not approved by voters, fewer park services would be provided; and

WHEREAS, over the last century, Portlanders have created and maintained today's park system through a series of capital investments, including voter-approved bonds and levies such as the last Portland Parks & Recreation levy, which was passed by voters in 2002 and expired in 2007;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council submits an Act, attached hereto as Exhibit B, entitled: "A Measure directing a five year local option ad valorem property tax levy within the City of Portland at a rate of \$0.80 per \$1,000 of assessed value, outside certain constitutional limitations, commencing in fiscal year 2021-22, for parks and recreation purposes," and hereby submits to the legal voters of the City of Portland, Oregon, for their adoption or rejection at the General Election in the City of Portland, Multnomah County, Clackamas County, and Washington County, to be held on November 3, 2020. Each voter who votes upon said proposed measure shall vote "yes" or "no" in the space indicated for such vote on the City ballot at said election; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council submits the ballot title, question, and summary for the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot, as shown in the attached Exhibit C; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the Auditor to publish the ballot title as shown in Exhibit C in accordance with City Code; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council directs the Auditor to submit the explanatory statement attached as Exhibit D to the Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington County elections offices for publication in each county's voters' pamphlet; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is directed to forward to the Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington County elections offices all material necessary to place this measure on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, upon passage of this levy by Portland voters, Council will make an appropriation in the annual budget from the Parks Local Option Levy Fund to the Children's Investment Fund for changes in revenue caused by compression from the Parks Local Option Levy under Oregon property tax law.

Adopted by the Council: July 22, 2020

Mayor Wheeler

Prepared by: [Robert Taylor](#), [Sarah Huggins](#)

Date Prepared: [7/13/2020](#)

**Mary Hull Caballero**

Auditor of the City of Portland

By *Keelan McClymont*  
Deputy

**616**  
 Agenda No.  
**RESOLUTION NO. 37498**  
 Title

Refer to the voters a five-year local option tax levy for the November 3, 2020 General Election to restore recreation programs and protect parks and natural areas (Resolution)

<b>INTRODUCED BY</b> Commissioner/Auditor: <b>Mayor Wheeler</b>	CLERK USE: DATE FILED <u>July 14, 2020</u>
<b>COMMISSIONER APPROVAL</b> Mayor—Finance & Administration – Wheeler	<div style="text-align: right;">           Mary Hull Caballero            Auditor of the City of Portland         </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;">           By: <u><i>Keelan McClymont</i></u>            Deputy         </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <b>ACTION TAKEN:</b> </div>
Position 1/Utilities - Fritz	
Position 2/Works - Vacant	
Position 3/Affairs - Hardesty	
Position 4/Safety - Eudaly	
<b>BUREAU APPROVAL</b> Bureau: <b>Parks &amp; Recreation</b> Bureau Head: <b>Adena Long</b>	
Prepared by: <b>Sarah Huggins</b> Date Prepared: <b>7/13/2020</b>	
Impact Statement Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends Budget <input type="checkbox"/>	
Portland Policy Document If "Yes" requires City Policy paragraph stated in document. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>City Auditor Office Approval:</b> required for Code Ordinances	
<b>City Attorney Approval:</b> required for contract, code, easement, franchise, charter, Comp Plan <i>Rob Taylor</i>	
Council Meeting Date <b>7/22/2020</b>	

<b>AGENDA</b>
<b>TIME CERTAIN</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Start time: <u>2 pm</u></b> <b>Total amount of time needed: <u>90 m</u></b> (for presentation, testimony and discussion)
<b>CONSENT</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>REGULAR</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Total amount of time needed: _____</b> (for presentation, testimony and discussion)

FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:	
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz	✓	
2. Vacant		
3. Hardesty		
4. Eudaly	✓	
Wheeler	✓	