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37685

Resolution

Direct Portland Parks & Recreation to prepare a resolution for City Council to consider in January 2025 to refer a five-year local option tax levy for the May 2025 General Election to fund park maintenance, deliver recreation programs, and care for natural areas, water quality, and urban forest

Adopted

Amended by Council

WHEREAS, Portland's parks, natural areas, trees, and recreational opportunities support City Council's core priorities by drawing residents and visitors to Portland; positively activating shared public spaces; adding beauty to our city; and connecting people to place, nature, self, and community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Portland's park system covers 15% of Portland's geographical footprint and includes 11,672 total acres – including 7,900 acres of natural area – across 5 watersheds; 154 developed parks; 12 community and art centers; 11 community pools; and 1.2 million park trees; and

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

WHEREAS, in November 2020, Portland voters passed a five-year local option levy (2020 Parks Levy) to support park and recreation operations; and

WHEREAS, before the 2020 Parks Levy, the bureau's reliance on fees to fund programs and services created barriers to access and caused a structural funding issue leading to regular service level cuts; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Parks Levy has successfully delivered on voter commitments including transparent annual reports, an independent audit, and an independent advisory committee that produces and presents a separate annual report; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Parks Levy has enabled Portland to keep operational community centers and pools open and programmed for the community, and increased the community member scholarship or discounted access for paid recreation and drop-in programs from approximately \$600,000 per year prior to the 2020 Parks Levy to over \$4 million in Fiscal Year 2023-24, serving nearly 18,000 people; and

Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler;](#)

[Commissioner Dan Ryan](#)

City department

[Parks & Recreation](#)

Contact

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Requested Agenda Type

Regular

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

November 20, 2024

Time Requested

10 minutes

WHEREAS, the 2020 Parks Levy has increased the City's capacity to sustain basic maintenance including litter and waste removal, restroom cleaning, asset and landscape maintenance, and care for natural areas; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Parks Levy has funded, for the first time, proactive tree inspection and holistic tree care in parks and natural areas, which maintains healthy trees and reduces tree loss; and supported an increase of 50+% in the number of trees planted citywide annually; and

WHEREAS, the 2020 Parks Levy is a critical component of the bureau's operational revenues, forecasted to provide about 40% of operating funds in its final two years (FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26); and

WHEREAS, the bureau has estimated it will fully expend all 2020 Parks Levy resources by the end of the five-year 2020 Parks Levy on June 30, 2026; and

WHEREAS, while the bureau leverages grants, public-private and other partnerships, and volunteerism, funding is still insufficient to deliver expected services to the community, to provide an equitable and affordable parks system, and to meet rising internal costs; and

WHEREAS, over the last century, Portlanders have created and maintained today's park system through a series of investments including voter-approved bonds and levies such as the 2020 Parks Levy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, Portland Parks & Recreation is directed to prepare a resolution for a ballot referral for City Council to consider no later than Spring 2025 to refer to the voters a five-year local option tax levy for the May or November 2025 General Election; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that resolution will include information about how levy funds would help Portland Parks & Recreation meet community and Council expectations, achieve service level goals, and prevent service level cuts.

Impact Statement

Purpose of Proposed Legislation and Background Information

The current 2020 Parks Local Option Levy will be expiring after Fiscal Year 2025-26. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure the new City Council is prepared to consider taking action to replace or renew the Parks Levy in 2025, with the directive supporting to consider the timing for a ballot measure for the May 2025 election.

Financial and Budgetary Impacts

This legislation itself has no financial or budgetary impacts; it is setting up a decision for the future City Council. If the future City Council decided not to refer a measure to voters to extend the operating levy and the current Parks Levy expires on June 30, 2026, the City will need to reduce its parks operational expenditures and service levels by approximately 50%.

Economic and Real Estate Development Impacts

Not applicable

Community Impacts and Community Involvement

Community boards, advisory committees, organizations, and individuals were involved in referral of the current 2020 Local Option Levy. Community members have been engaged in delivery of services during the course of this current Parks Levy, including five community members who serve on the Parks Levy Oversight Committee; Parks Board and the Urban Forestry Commission.

100% Renewable Goal

Not applicable

Financial and Budget Analysis

This action authorizes Portland Parks and Recreation to prepare a resolution for Council to consider in January to refer a five-year local option tax levy for the General Election.

This action to prepare a resolution has no fiscal impact.

Document History

Agenda	Council action
November 20, 2024 Regular Agenda City Council	Adopted As Amended Motion to amend the first "resolved" statement to replace "in January 2025" with "no later than Spring 2025" and to add "or November" after "May": Moved by Ryan and seconded by Mapps. (Aye (5) - Mapps, Rubio, Ryan, Gonzalez, Wheeler) Aye (5): Mingus Mapps, Carmen Rubio, Dan Ryan, Rene Gonzalez, Ted Wheeler