

**CLARK COUNTY
STAFF REPORT**

DEPARTMENT/DIVISION: Environmental Services / Policy & Planning / Legacy Lands Program

DATE: March 25, 2014

REQUEST: Approve the draft resolution adopting the 2014 update to the Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan. Authorize the Director of Environmental Services Department to sign the self-certification form and submit the completed form, adopting resolution and updated plan to the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office.

CHECK ONE: Consent Hearing Chief Administrative Officer

BACKGROUND: The Washington Recreation and Conservation Office, a primary source of state grant funds and federal pass-through funds, requires project sponsors to update planning documents every six years to maintain grant eligibility. The update provides the opportunity to engage conservation partners at the front end of a six-year planning cycle. A list of short-term County and partnership opportunities help to prioritize work activities and to plan for use of the Conservation Futures Fund.

The 2014 Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan is largely a technical update of the 2004 plan:

- The vision of a county-wide system of parks, natural areas and open space, connected by a system of trails and greenways is the same.
- The high value conservation lands analysis uses up-to-date geographic system information, but largely validates the boundaries identified in the 2004 plan.
- As with the 2004 plan, the project opportunities were collaboratively identified with cities and towns in the county and other important conservation partners.
- A new element is a Conservation Areas Fund Source Manual, Appendix D of the Plan. It reviews over 30 potential funding sources that could be used by Clark County and its partners to implement conservation projects.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Clark County and the nonprofit Columbia Land Trust worked collaboratively to update the plan and invite public participation. The land trust provided funds, GIS capabilities, and a network of partner agencies and organizations that has evolved over the 18-year history of this non-profit land conservation organization. All cities and towns within the county and over 25 partner agencies and conservation fund managers revisited the county-wide conservation vision, updated GIS data used in the 2004 plan, and discussed partnership projects and funding opportunities.

BUDGET AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

The update provides a vision for preserving and enhancing a countywide system of conservation lands, including greenways, habitat, farm and forest resource lands. The project opportunities list in Appendix B of the plan includes a schedule of land acquisition and public use improvement projects, estimated costs and funding sources over the six-year planning horizon. This is a Washington Recreation and Conservation Office planning requirement in order for the county to remain eligible for state grant funds and federal pass-through funds. However, the list is non-binding. Authorization from the Board of County Commissioners will be sought at each key step in the project implementation process including:

- Submittal of grant applications and execution of grant agreements;
- Award of professional services and construction contracts consistent with the county's procurement procedures;
- Execution of interlocal agreements authorizing use of conservation futures funds for partnership projects;
- Execution of purchase and sale agreements and acceptance of Deeds.

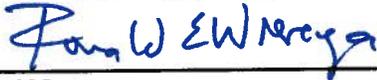
FISCAL IMPACTS:

Yes (see Fiscal Impacts Attachment) No

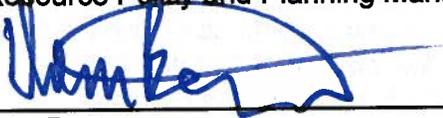
ACTION REQUESTED:

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DISTRIBUTION: Please forward a copy of the approved staff report to Environmental Services Administration.



Ron Wierenga
Resource Policy and Planning Manager



Don Benton
Environmental Services Director

(PTL/RW/bt)

Enclosures:
Draft Resolution
Self Certification Form
Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan, 2014 update



APPROVED: _____
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SR 66-14