

City of Missoula, Montana
Item to be referred to City Council Committee

Committee: Committee of the Whole

Agenda item title: Resolution Regarding Open Space Funding

Date: June 15, 2018 (Update 6/19/18)

Sponsor: Mayor John Engen

Prepared by: Donna Gaukler

Ward(s) affected: Ward 1, Ward 2, Ward 3, Ward 4, Ward 5, Ward 6

Action Requested:

Adopt a Resolution in support of a County-wide General Obligation Open Space Bond to preserve open space county-wide and a City-wide Mill Levy to provide responsible stewardship to open space and conservation lands owned by the City.

Recommended Motion: I move the Committee adopt-

A resolution of the Missoula City Council in support of the Missoula County Commissioners holding a public hearing and pending the hearing, placing the question of a county-wide open space general obligation bond before the voters in the 2018 general election; and further the Council requests the Mayor and his staff work with counsel and others regarding the necessary steps to place the question of a mill levy for the purpose of conservation and responsible stewardship of open space and conservation lands, before the voters in the 2018 general election.

Timeline:

Referred to committee: 6/15/2018
Committee discussion: 6/20/2018
City Council Adoption: 6/25/2018

Background and Alternatives Explored:

Missoula residents place significant value on open space, conservation lands, and trails. It is our open spaces, from large scale preserves and open view sheds, riparian areas and parklands, to greenways and trails that define our place and our people. Our community has a history of preserving these special places via open space bonds. It has been 12 years since the 2006 County-City Open Space General Obligation Bond and the funds are nearly depleted. Yet, much work remains.

Additionally, it has become a high priority within our community to responsibly steward these valuable places. Unfortunately, there are very limited tools for funding stewardship other than through shared responsibility via mechanisms such as a voted upon mill levy.

Financial Implications:

Proposed County Wide General Obligation Open Space Bond is \$15M, with the total split evenly between the City and the County, as was the case with the 2006 Open Space Bond. The estimated cost to a \$265,000 home, per assessed market value by the Department of Revenue, is \$17.84. Cost per \$100K home is \$6.73 and per \$200K home is \$13.46.

Proposed City-Wide Conservation and Responsible Stewardship Perpetual Mill Levy is 4 mills, or approximately \$500,000. The estimated cost to a \$265,000 home, per assessed market value by the Department of Revenue, is \$14.31. Cost per \$100K home is \$5.40 and per \$200K home is \$10.80.

The current conservation lands management plan calls for \$142/acre of land for large preserves, and cost per acre is greater (\$2500-\$4500+/acre), for heavily use outdoor recreation open space, including trailheads. Based on these figures and current lands that fall the Parks and Recreation Department Conservation Lands Management Program and Plan, the necessary budget for appropriate stewardship is approximately \$654,000.

Cost of City-wide special election to be held in conjunction with the November 6, 2018, General Election is approximately \$30,000

Links:

Resolution Supporting Open Space/Conservation Lands Funding via County GO Bond and City-only Mill Levy

Exhibit A to Resolution

Open Space Advisory Committee Letter

Rivers & Cornerstone Map

1980-2017 Open Space Project Map