

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUESTING THAT THE WHATCOM COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND STAFF  
PURSUE PUBLIC ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAILS  
ON ALL COUNTY-OWNED LAND AND EASEMENTS**

**WHEREAS**, trails offer Whatcom County residents recreational opportunities that improve the quality of life, health, and wellness for communities; and

**WHEREAS**, trails in Whatcom County drive tourism and are a source of community recreation and economic growth; and

**WHEREAS**, expanding Whatcom County's trail system to include trail access opportunities on flood control, landslide mitigation, watershed management and other public works facilities could better serve areas of Whatcom currently without access to the many economic and health benefits that come from recreational and nonmotorized trail opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 23, 2016, the Whatcom County Council approved [Resolution 2016-005](#), adopting the 2016 [Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan](#); and

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Open Space (CPROS) Plan outlines goals and policies to protect the environment, preserve historic lands, and encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, natural resources, and parks; and

**WHEREAS**, Policy 4G-2 of the Whatcom County CPROS Plan adopts a level of service standard for trails equivalent to 0.6 miles per 1,000 people; and

**WHEREAS**, Policy 9C-11 of the Whatcom County CPROS Plan encourages the consideration of public access for trail purposes on publicly funded dikes, levees, or revetments; and

**WHEREAS**, the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department is currently drafting updates to the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, an update to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan is currently underway and provides an opportunity to establish a priority on trails construction on county-owned properties and easements; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 20, 2023, the Whatcom County Council adopted the [Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Whatcom County Facilities \(Ordinance 2023-035\)](#), which identifies approximately 74 additional miles of trails to serve the people of Whatcom County; and

**WHEREAS**, County-owned land and County-owned flood control, landslide mitigation, and watershed management sites, such as the 124 acres of floodplain land recently acquired by the County near Acme, WA ([Ordinance 2023-033](#)), offer trail opportunities in desirable and naturally aesthetic areas; and

**WHEREAS**, fully leveraging the many diverse opportunities of County-owned land is crucial for developing equitable trail access in areas that lack adequate trail opportunities; and

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**WHEREAS**, there are requirements and guidelines for trail construction, including those listed in [Whatcom County Code Chapter 16.16](#) and the [Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Trail Classifications and Design Parameters](#); and

**WHEREAS**, the construction of trails on flood control, landslide mitigation, watershed management, and other county facilities may deviate from those standards in order to protect the primary purpose of the facility.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Whatcom County Council requests that the County Executive and their staff

- Include goals in the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan and the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan to expand trail access on flood control, landslide mitigation, watershed management, and other county facilities,
- Identify existing flood control and landslide mitigation facilities where trail access can address equitable access to recreation and non-motorized trail opportunities,
- Establish a policy related to any use restrictions and/or alternative design standards for trails located on flood control, landslide mitigation, or other public works facilities, and
- Review and prioritize potential recreational and nonmotorized trail opportunities for each and every County property or easement acquisition for any purpose.

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL  
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

\_\_\_\_\_  
Barry Buchanan, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

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Karen Frakes (by email 11/15/2023/ch)

Civil Deputy Prosecutor