

RESOLUTION -----

A resolution of the Missoula City Council to expend up to \$450,000 of 2006 Open Space Bond proceeds to purchase 124 acres of open space land in Missoula's North Hills - called the Bluebird-North Hills Project - to protect scenic open space and wildlife habitat, provide a new public access trailhead and recreational trail, and pay transaction and project-related costs associated with the acquisition.

Whereas, the City of Missoula adopted the *Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan 2006 Update*, which provides a vision for continuing to expand upon our open space and trail systems throughout the greater Missoula Area. The 2019 draft Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan ("*Open Space Plan*"), a chapter of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Plan, carries forward that vision.;

Whereas, the *Open Space Plan* describes Missoula's North Hills as an anchor of the open space system and encourages the preservation of scenic open space, wildlife habitat, rare and unique plant communities, and protection of lands for recreation, public access and trails;

Whereas, the Bluebird-North Hills project provides significant recreational and scenic values and builds on decades of conservation work in the North Hills. The North Hills provide a scenic backdrop to the Missoula Valley and visually connect residents to the extensive wilderness areas of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem beyond;

Whereas, the property provides habitat for grassland species, include the endemic Missoula phlox, bitterroot, elk, birds of prey, and bluebirds;

Whereas, the 2018 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) survey indicated that 85% of Missoula County residents want more or better natural areas and wildlife habitat and 84% want more or better dirt trails for hiking, biking and running;

Whereas, the Grant Creek and North Reserve areas are experiencing significant residential and commercial growth. Providing a public access trailhead in this area, with new public access to hundreds of acres of protected open space, will help balance land conservation with development and growth;

Whereas, the Grant Creek Trail is located near the property and will provide non-motorized connections to the trailhead. The City and County have long term goals of extending the Grant Creek Trail to the south and complete other non-motorized connections to the east and west;

Whereas, public open spaces and trails are community assets that promote social equality and are available to all citizens regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, age, marital or familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression;

Whereas, in November 2006, Missoula County citizens voted to approve a \$10,000,000 Open Space Bond that authorizes the Missoula County Commissioners to use the bond monies to protect open space lands and acquire commuter and recreational trails throughout the County with \$5,000,000 being allocated to the City of Missoula for open space and trails within the Missoula Planning Region, as guided by the *Open Space Plan*; and

Whereas, Article II, Section 2.1 of the April 5, 2007 Interlocal Agreement between the City of Missoula and the County of Missoula Related to Open Space Acquisition and Use of Open Space Bond Proceeds (Interlocal Agreement) establishes the general purposes of the open space bond;

Whereas, this project will carry out the purposes of the 2006 open space bonds by protecting wildlife habitat, providing open space and scenic landscape; managing for growth; providing recreational trails; and paying non-personnel related transaction costs and other project related costs.

Whereas, the project received a unanimous recommendation from the City's Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) for funding up to \$450,000

Now therefore, be it resolved that the Missoula City Council hereby approves the expenditure of up to \$450,000 of 2006 Open Space Bond proceeds to purchase approximately 124 acres of open space land in Missoula's North Hills, called the Bluebird-North Hills Project, to protect scenic open space and wildlife habitat, provide a new public access trailhead and recreational trail, and pay transaction and project-related costs associated with the acquisition.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5th day of August, 2019.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Martha L. Rehbein
Legislative Services Director/City Clerk

John Engen
Mayor

(SEAL)

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