

RESOLUTION -----

A resolution of the Missoula City Council approving expenditures of up to \$775,000 of 2018 Open Space Bond proceeds for the Clark Fork River Sustainable Access and Restoration Project, Open Space Reforestation Project, and Missoula Conservation Lands Trailhead Improvement Projects, as detailed in Exhibit A attached hereto.

Whereas, on June 25, 2018, the Missoula City Council passed Resolution 8276 in support of the Missoula County Commissioners placing the question of a county-wide open space general obligation bond before the voters in the 2018 general election;

Whereas, on July 9, 2018, The Missoula County Commissioners passed Resolution 2018-111 submitting to the electors of Missoula County the question of issuing general obligation bonds in the amount of up to fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000) for the purposes of conserving, enjoying, and enhancing the open-space lands in Missoula County;

Whereas, in November 2018, 63% of Missoula County voters approved the Open Space Bond measure, which authorizes the Missoula County Commissioners to use the bond monies for the purposes of “conserving, enjoying, and enhancing open-space land, to include providing public access to water and land; conserving agricultural lands, fish and wildlife habitat, and rivers, lakes, and streams; protecting scenic views; and making improvements to lands acquired or designated as open space that are accessible to the public”, with \$7,500,000 of the \$15,000,000 total bond being allocated to the City of Missoula within the Missoula Planning Region, as guided by the *Open Space Plan*;

Whereas, the Open Space Bond ballot measure authorizes the County Commissioners of Missoula County to sell and issue general obligation bonds “to pay the costs of purchasing land, easements, or other interests in land from willing landowners and of improvements and costs related to or serving lands acquired or designated as open space, including transaction and project costs and fees, all with citizen input”;

Whereas, the 2018 Missoula County Open Space Bond measure suggested up to \$1.5 million for Clark Fork River restoration and access within the Open Space planning boundaries, up to \$250,000 for reforestation on designated open-space lands, and up to \$.5 million for improving trails and trailheads across Missoula’s Open Space and Conservation Lands System;

Whereas, the pending 2019 Interlocal Agreement between the City of Missoula and the County of Missoula related to use of 2018 Open Space Bond proceeds will provide guidance on City use of open space funds;

Whereas, Chapter 12.56 of the Missoula Municipal Code, which generally governs open space, dictates that the City “may expend open space bond funds to restore and make improvements to open space lands to ensure they continue to serve the public purposes for which they were protected” so long as the proposed improvements meet the requirements of Montana Code Annotated 76-6-101, et seq., otherwise known as the “Montana Open-Space Land and Voluntary Conservation Easement Act” (MMC 12.56.045);

Whereas, the City and County have recently conducted significant public outreach through open houses, focus groups, and a statistically valid public opinion survey on Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails, and the results indicate strong support among residents for protecting natural resources such as water and air quality, habitat, and providing river access, natural areas to recreate in, and dirt and paved trails, as well as maintenance, enhancement, and stewardship of existing open space lands;

Whereas, public open spaces, trails and parks are community assets that promote social equity 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, trees on lands designated as open-space provide significant environmental and natural resources benefits, climate resiliency, improved air and water quality and other ecosystem benefits, thereby enhancing our quality of open space and community life;

Whereas, quality trails and trailheads provide education, stewardship, and protection of important resources while also providing significant benefits of health and welfare, reduction of congestion, , and access for all;

Whereas, conservation lands are generally managed as natural areas, including riparian corridors along creeks and rivers, wetlands, grasslands, open or wooded hillsides, but both large and small scale conservation lands provide for relief from the urban environment, nature connectedness, active outdoor recreation, as well as opportunity for contemplation;

Whereas, it is recognized that the provision and preservation of these important open-space lands require repairs, replacement, renovation, and stewardship to maximize the potential and value to the community and to assure goals of the Open Space Act are met;

Whereas, conservation lands, natural areas and parklands require restoration, stewardship and improvements to ensure they remain a valuable asset to be enjoyed by all citizens;

Whereas, the City, following extensive public process, has adopted numerous plans which support the benefits of a variety of open-space land types, including the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area, the 2016 Long Range and Active Transportation Plans, the 2015 Urban Forest Management Plan, the 2010 Conservation Lands Management Plan, the 2014 Parks/Open Space/Trails Asset Management Plan and the 2019 Open Space Plan ;

Whereas, the City has identified through the aforementioned adopted plans, the need to address not only protection of open-space lands, but also the long term stewardship of these open space lands;

Whereas, these projects will carry out the purposes of the 2018 Open Space Bond by providing access to water and land, conserving fish and wildlife habitat and rivers, and making improvements to lands acquired or designated as open space that are accessible to the public;

Whereas, the \$775,000 in requested Open Space Bond proceeds are leveraged at a ratio of nearly one to one with \$752,900 in matching funds as follows: Clark Fork River Sustainable Access and Restoration Project - \$225,000 request with \$25,000 in matching funds; Open Space Reforestation Project - \$250,000 request with \$159,700 in matching funds; and Missoula Conservation Lands Trailhead Improvement Projects - \$300,000 request with \$568,200 in matching funds;

Whereas, the projects received a unanimous recommendation for approval from the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board for funding up to \$775,000 at its meeting on October 8, 2019;

Whereas, the projects received a unanimous recommendation for approval from the City's Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) for funding up to \$775,000 at its meeting on October 10, 2019;

Now therefore, be it resolved that the Missoula City Council hereby approves 2018 Open Space Bond expenditures of up to: 1) \$225,000 for the Clark Fork River Sustainable Access and Restoration Project; 2) \$250,000 for the Open Space Reforestation Project; and 3) \$300,000 for the Missoula Conservation Lands Trailhead Improvement Projects;

Now therefore, be it further resolved that the Missoula City Council hereby approves the expenditure of up to \$775,000 of 2018 Open Space Bond proceeds for the Clark Fork River Sustainable Access and Restoration Project, Open Space Reforestation Project, and Missoula Conservation Lands Trailhead Improvement Projects.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this ____ day of November, 2019.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Martha L. Rehbein
Legislative Services Director/City Clerk

John Engen
Mayor

(SEAL)