

City of Blaine
Request for Council Action
Meeting Date: January 13, 2020

Subject: 2019 Parks Local Funding Options Bill (HB 1371/SB 5680)

Department: City Manager **Prepared By:** _____
(Digital Signature)

Agenda Location: Consent Agenda Council Action Unfinished Business

Attachments:

1. Gordon Thomas Honeywell Memo 1-8-2020
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Background/Summary:

A state legislative proposal to allow a new local funding option for parks has been reintroduced in the State House and Senate (HB 1371/SB 5680). HB 1371/SB 5680 is described in Attachment 1. The City Manager brought the bill to the attention of the City Council and it has been added to the agenda at the direction of the Mayor.

If the Council takes a position of support or opposition, the City Manager will take appropriate actions, such as advising our government affairs consultant to take action when the bill comes to a hearing and communicating our position with District 42 legislators.

Budget Implications: Current Budget New Budget Request Non-Budgetary

There are budget impacts related to taking a position on the bill.

Recommendation:

If the City Council wishes to support or oppose the proposed bill, Council should pass a motion reflecting the position. Council could also take no position on the bill.

Reviewed By:

City Manager _____ Finance Director _____ City Clerk _____
(Digital Signature) (Digital Signature) (Digital Signature)



MEMO

To: City of Blaine

From: Briahna Murray, Vice President, Gordon Thomas Honeywell Government Affairs

Date: January 8, 2020

Subject: Voter Approved Sales Tax for Local Parks

The 2020 Legislature will be considering a proposal authorizing local jurisdictions to impose a sales tax increase with voter approval to fund park improvements and maintenance. This bill was considered in 2019, did not pass, has been redrafted, and is once again being considered in 2020. Below provides background on the proposal.

Voter Approved Sales Tax for Local Parks:

Local parks agencies are dealing with tremendous growth in the number of sports participants and the need for local athletic fields has increased. Several cities rely on general fund revenues to fund park maintenance and improvements – when prioritized with public safety, transportation, and other priorities - cities do not always receive adequate funding to satisfy community requests. The intent of the legislative proposal is to establish additional statutory tools to help local parks and recreation agencies better address maintenance backlogs, preserve quality open spaces, and expand and improve athletic fields to accommodate the influx of adult and youth sports participants who are vying for use of those fields.

The 2019 local funding options bill (HB 1371/SB 5680) authorized cities, counties, metropolitan park districts, or park and recreation districts to establish a Park Benefits District (similar to a Transportation Benefit District) for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, improving, providing, and funding park maintenance and improvement within the district. The Park Benefit District would then have voter-approved sales tax and impact fee authority to generate revenue. Legislators expressed concerns about the creation of another layer of government, and concern about imposing impact fees.

The Washington Recreation & Parks Association (WRPA) worked with legislators modify the 2019 bill that removes the addition layer of governance and focuses on authorizing cities, counties, and metropolitan park districts to impose a 1/10th of 1 percent sales tax increase with voter approval to fund park improvements and maintenance.