

More parks, trails and open spaces

are on the way in the coming years for many King County families and many of our most culturally-vibrant communities that do not have easy access to healthy green spaces.

While King County is well known for its outdoor possibilities – mountains, forests, farmlands, streams and rivers, world-class trails, lakes both large and small, and the Puget Sound – about 500,000 King County residents are not within walking distance to green space, parks or trails that are so important to our quality of life.

A better way to invest in green space

We are a group of 21 residents representing local community organizations – known as the King County Open Space Equity Cabinet – working to fix that historic inequity. In a new report, we recommend changes in how King County government invests in open space so that every community in every city can experience the health and quality of life benefits of green spaces.

King County Executive Dow Constantine agrees with our recommendations and is proposing new legislation to improve how the County and cities spend open space dollars to not only save our last, best places, but also to prioritize investing in green spaces that can be enjoyed by those who need it most.



An authentic equity-based approach

The changes will support a Land Conservation Initiative (LCI) launched by the Executive in 2018 to both improve access to green spaces in underserved communities and preserve 65,000 acres of remaining vital and at-risk farmlands, forestlands, river corridors, open space lands and trail corridors. The County wants to save these important landscapes within 30 years – before it's too late or the lands become too expensive.

The Open Space Equity Cabinet was created as part of the LCI to bring an authentic community-driven and equity-based approach into how the region invests in saving open spaces, ending disparities in open space access, and allowing all communities to share in the health and well-being benefits these open spaces provide.



"The Open Space Equity Cabinet truly embodies the spirit of community. Together, we have developed a path forward to begin to address critical open space needs and health disparities within our communities. These Open Space investments will help to build resiliency in the face of climate change and environmental injustice."

- **Lylianna Allala**, Co-chair of the King County Open Space Equity Cabinet



#GreenSpace4All

Health and well-being benefits of open space

Spending time in open spaces has proven and profound mental and physical health benefits for our children and families. Living in a household with ready access to parks, trails, and open space provides daily and weekly opportunities for physical activity and social interaction across cultures.

Health studies show that if we spend time regularly in outdoor open space we will experience reduced blood pressure and cholesterol levels, lower levels of stress and depression, and a reduced likelihood of obesity and diabetes, especially for our children. Also, our communities are the most vulnerable to a changing climate. Equitable distribution of greenspace will lessen climate impacts in our neighborhoods.

Speeding up work to save open space and improve access

The Executive's proposed legislation builds on the decades-long success of the County's Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) levy by speeding up protection of the region's open spaces.

The legislation does not increase property taxes. Instead the County will borrow more against future revenues from the existing annual CFT funding stream. That means that this year up to an additional \$35 million in funding would be used for ready-to-go acquisitions to speed up protection and creation of new parks and open space in our communities.

As endorsed by the Open Space Equity Cabinet, the legislation also ensures that equity and social justice are front and center and always considered as part of how open space investments are prioritized for CFT funding.



Join us!

To have a voice in creating new or improved parks and green spaces in your neighborhood, go to the Open Space Equity Cabinet website (kingcounty.gov/osec) and:

- Join the Open Space Equity Cabinet email list.
- Email county staff and let them know you are interested in adding parks and green spaces in your community.
- Help us put into effect the Community Engagement Action Plan.
- Learn more about the Land Conservation Initiative.

kingcounty.gov/osec