

RESOLUTION NO. 25-2021

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE FOREST PARK, WASHINGTON, PROVIDING FOR A BALLOT PROPOSITION TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF THE CITY AT THE GENERAL ELECTION TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 4, 2025, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STATE GENERAL ELECTION, OF A PROPOSITION AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO LEVY REGULAR PROPERTY TAXES IN AN AMOUNT IN EXCESS OF THE LIMITATIONS PROVIDED IN CHAPTER 84.55 RCW FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES BEGINNING IN 2026; SETTING FORTH THE BALLOT TITLE; AND PROVIDING FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

WHEREAS, the City of Lake Forest Park is committed to providing essential public safety services, including police protection, 911 dispatch, jail services, criminal justice services such as prosecution and public defense, and mental health crisis response alternatives (together "Public Safety Services"); and

~~**WHEREAS**, the City's regular property tax levy rate is currently \$0.71 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation; which is per \$1000 of assessed value less than what is statutorily authorized; and~~

WHEREAS, chapter 84.55 RCW limits the amount of the City's regular property tax levy to 101% (or 100% plus inflation, if inflation is less than 1%) of the prior highest lawful levy amount (the "Levy Lid"), plus an additional amount for increases in assessed value from or due to new construction, construction of certain renewable energy facilities, and improvements to property and state-assessed property; and

WHEREAS, the cost of providing Public Safety Services has increased significantly over the past four years, including a 24% increase in Public Safety costs from the 2023–2024 biennium to the adopted 2025–2026 budget, driven by rising costs for 911 dispatch services, jail services, prosecution, public defense, mental health and crisis intervention programs, and police wages, ~~and benefits, and equipment~~; and

WHEREAS, the City cut nearly \$500,000 in proposed spending in the 2025–2026 budget and is operating without sufficient staff to perform necessary administrative functions; and

WHEREAS, the City has diligently pursued contracts beneficial to the City for jail and 911 dispatch services, but providers for these unique services are limited and in the case of 911 dispatch virtually singular; and

WHEREAS, the City has allocated traffic safety camera revenue to public safety expense to the extent allowed by state statute; and

WHEREAS, the City relied on approximately \$840,000 in one-time General Fund contingency funding to balance the 2025–2026 biennial budget, which will be exhausted by 2030 without a revenue enhancement or a reduction in ~~services~~Public Safety ~~Services~~; and

Commented [KA1]: Changing to “services” because Council hasn’t decided what would get cut.

WHEREAS, maintaining Public Safety Services requires the expenditure of permanent and reliable (i.e., sustainable) revenue in excess of the current Levy Lid; and

~~WHEREAS, without additional revenue, the City will be forced to reduce or eliminate critical public safety services beginning in the 2027–2029 biennium to maintain sufficient contingency and reserve fund balances; and~~

Commented [KA2]: I don’t think Council has made this decision yet, so recommend taking this out revise to give Council room for a decision later.

WHEREAS, RCW 84.55.050 provides for the levy of regular property taxes in an amount exceeding the Levy Lid if the increased levy is authorized by a ballot proposition approved by a majority of the voters at a special election held within the taxing district (a “Levy Lid Lift”), which proposition may provide that the exemption for low-income senior citizens, disabled veterans, and other people with disabilities authorized by RCW 84.36.381 will apply to the Levy Lid Lift; and

~~WHEREAS, approval of a Levy Lid Lift ballot proposition would help maintain current levels of Public Safety Services;~~

WHEREAS, to fund Public Safety Services as described in this resolution and continue that funding for a period of six years, the City Council finds that it is in the City’s best interest to present a ballot proposition to the City’s voters to increase the City’s regular property tax levy above the 1% limitation for six consecutive years; ~~and-~~

WHEREAS, when the levy lid lift expires in six years, the levy lid will revert to what it would have been if the levy lid lift never existed and the City had only taken the annual 1% increase; and

WHEREAS, the levy lid lift proposed would authorize an increase of approximately \$1.5 million in the City’s regular property tax levy by an increase of approximately \$0.32 per 1,000 of assessed valuation, to a maximum rate of \$1.0144/\$1,000, as allowed by Chapter 84.55 RCW; and increase the annual levy for the next five years in the amount of the rate of inflation (Seattle region CPI-U) for 2026-2031 not to exceed 5%; and

Commented [PH3]: Need council consensus

Commented [PH4]: Confirm rate

~~WHEREAS, the proposed levy lid lift would set the City’s property tax rate below the legal limit of \$1.60/\$1000; and~~

Commented [PH5]: Confirm

WHEREAS, the approximately \$1.5 million in additional levy funds would be accounted for separately and those funds would only be used to pay for Public Safety Services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Lake Forest Park, as follows:

Section 1. Findings and Determinations. The City Council (the "City Council") of City of Lake Forest Park, Washington (the "City"), takes note of the foregoing recitals and incorporates them into this resolution as findings and determinations of the City Council.

Section 2. Ballot Proposition Authorized. The City Council hereby finds that the best interests of the residents of Lake Forest Park requires the submission to the qualified voters of the City, at the general election to be held on November 4, 2025, of a proposition authorizing a multi-year Levy Lid Lift to support Public Safety Services.

Section 3. Levy Rate and Duration. If approved by a majority of voters, the City shall be authorized to levy an additional regular property tax in the amount of \$0.32 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation for levy in 2025 and collection in 2026. The Levy Lid Lift is not to exceed \$1.0144 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Commented [PH6]: Need council consensus for rate increase

This levy shall be:

- Collected annually for six (6) consecutive years, from 2026 through 2031;
- Increased each year by the annual percentage growth in the Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), not to exceed five percent (5%) annually; ~~and~~
- ~~The levy amount collected in 2026 shall become the base for purposes of calculating subsequent levies under RCW 84.55.050.~~

Commented [PH7]: Changed to 2026 per CM Lebo's email of 6/17/2025

Section 4. Use of Levy Proceeds. The additional revenue generated by this levy shall be used exclusively for Public Safety Services, including but not limited to:

- Police staffing, training, and equipment;
- 911 dispatch ~~and emergency communication services~~;
- Jail services;
- Prosecution and public defense costs; ~~and~~
- ~~Crisis intervention and mental health diversion programs; and~~
- ~~Services that reduce police response to non-criminal incidents.~~

Section 5. Exemption for Low-Income Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons. As provided under RCW 84.36.381, low-income senior citizens, disabled veterans, and other disabled persons who qualify shall be exempt from the Levy Lid Lift authorized by this resolution to the extent allowed by law. It is the intent of the City to ensure that this levy does not impose an undue burden on vulnerable residents living on fixed incomes.

Section 6. Calling of Election. The Director of Elections of King County, Washington, as *ex officio* Supervisor of Elections (the "Director of Elections"), is requested to call and conduct a special election, in the manner provided by law, to be held in the City on November 4, 2025 (the "Special Election"), for the purpose of

submitting to the City's voters, for their approval or rejection, the proposition authorizing the City to increase its regular property tax levy in 2025 for collection in 2026 by an amount greater than otherwise permitted under chapter 84.55 RCW and to use the dollar amount of such levy for the purpose of computing the limitations for the City's subsequent five levies under chapter 84.55 RCW adjusted by the rate of inflation.

Section 7. Form of Ballot Title. Pursuant to RCW 29A.36.071, the City Attorney of the City has prepared the concise description of the aforesaid proposition for the ballot title in substantially the following form:

City of Lake Forest Park
Proposition No. 1
Public Safety Services Levy Lid Lift

The City Council of the City of Lake Forest Park adopted Resolution No. 25-2021 to fund Public Safety Services.

This proposition would fund Public Safety Services defined in the Resolution including police services, 911 dispatch, jail services, and mental health crisis response by ~~increasing the City's regular property tax by \$0.32/\$1,000 assessed values setting the maximum total regular levy rate at \$1.XXXX/\$1000~~ for collection in 2026, with annual increases for five years based on ~~inflation (Seattle region CPI-U) not to exceed 5% (not to exceed the \$1.XXXX rate) - inflation, not to exceed 5%, and use the 2031 levy as the base for future levies~~. Qualifying low-income seniors, disabled veterans, and other disabled persons will be exempt under RCW 84.36.381.

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Commented [PH8]: Not a permanent levy, delete?

Commented [KA9]: This is at 72 words. Maximum is 75.

Should this proposition be approved?

- ☐ YES
☐ NO

Section 8. Authorization to Deliver Resolution to Director of Elections and Perform Other Necessary Duties. The chief administrative officer of the City (the "City Administrator") or his designee is authorized and directed to: (a) present a certified copy of this resolution to the Director of Elections no later than August 5, 2025 and (b) perform such other duties as are necessary or required by law to submit to the City's voters at the Special Election, for their approval or rejection, the proposition authorizing the City to increase its regular property tax levy in 2025 for collection in 2026 by an amount greater than otherwise permitted under chapter 84.55 RCW and to use the dollar amount of such levy for the purpose of computing the limitations for the City's subsequent levies under chapter 84.55 RCW for the succeeding five years.

Section 9. Notices Relating to Ballot Title. For purposes of receiving notice of the exact language of the ballot title required by RCW 29A.36.080, the City Council hereby designates (a) the City Administrator (Phillip Hill), telephone: 206-368-5440; email: phill@cityofflp.com; and ~~(b) the~~ the City Attorney (Kim Adams Pratt), telephone: 425-201-5111; email: Kim@MadronaLaw.com. The City Administrator is authorized to approve changes to the ballot title, as determined necessary.

Section 10. General Authorization and Ratification of Prior Acts. This resolution may be executed by the Mayor or Deputy Mayor of the City, and attested by the City Clerk in tangible medium, manual, facsimile or electronic form under any security procedure or platform, and notwithstanding any other City ordinance, resolution, rule, policy or procedure, or in any other manner evidencing its adoption. The Mayor, City Administrator, City Attorney, Finance Director of the City, and other appropriate officers of the City are individually authorized and directed to take such actions and to create, accept, execute, send, use and rely upon such documents, records and signatures (including in tangible medium, manual, facsimile or electronic form, under any security procedure or platform, and notwithstanding any other City ordinance, resolution, rule, policy or procedure) as in their judgment may be necessary or desirable to effectuate the provisions of this resolution. All actions taken prior to the effective date of this resolution in furtherance of and not inconsistent with the provisions of this resolution are ratified and confirmed in all respects.

Section 11. Severability. If a court of competent jurisdiction, all appeals having been exhausted or all appeal periods having run, holds any provision of this resolution invalid or unenforceable, then the offending provision is null and void, is separate and severable from the remaining provisions of this resolution and in no way affects the validity of the other provisions of this resolution or of the levy or collection of the regular property taxes as so authorized herein.

Section 12. Effective Date. This resolution takes effect upon its adoption.

Section 13. Corrections. The City Clerk is authorized to make necessary corrections to this resolution, including the correction of scrivener's errors, references, ordinance or resolution numbering, and ballot title formatting as required by King County Elections.

PASSED BY A MAJORITY VOTE of the members of the Lake Forest Park City Council this __ day of _____, 2025.

APPROVED:

Tom French
Mayor

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ATTEST/AUTHENTICATED:

Mathew McLean
City Clerk

FILED WITH THE CITY CLERK:
PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:
RESOLUTION NO.:

DRAFT