



# News Release

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

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## THPRD Board of Directors Approves Sending Local Option Levy to Voters in May

**January 11, 2024:** The THPRD Board of Directors voted unanimously last night to place a local option levy before district voters at the May 21, 2024, election. The board followed the recommendation coming from the district's Levy Task Force, which analyzed the district's operational needs and determined a local option levy was needed to maintain THPRD service levels. Resolution 2024-02, which the board passed, directs staff to place a local option levy before the voters to fund district operations at \$0.50 per \$1,000 in assessed value for five-years. The levy will maintain district operations and fund the development of a new registration system. Passage of the levy will allow THPRD to:

- **Maintain park maintenance levels** – ensuring garbage collection, restroom cleanings, and park and trail maintenance is maintained at current service levels. Without the support of a levy, the district will need to scale back maintenance levels. Many restrooms throughout the district would be closed or cleaned less frequently. Parks and trails would see significantly reduced service with garbage collection reduced greatly throughout the district.
- **Preserve staffing levels** – the levy will allow the district to retain up to 50 full-time positions and 200+ part-time positions that serve the community in a variety of ways from park and trail maintenance, class instructors for programs such as aquatics, sports, arts, and more.
- **Preserve the district's childcare programs** – the levy will ensure the district's afterschool care and preschool programs continue.
- **Maintain facilities and service hours** – the levy will allow the district to keep three swimming pools open and two splash pads as well as maintain service hours at facilities. Without the levy, operational hours at facilities would be reduced and some facilities would have to close.
- **Maintain programs and events** – the levy will allow the district to continue to offer programs such as Mobile Recreation, Camp Rivendale and free community events such as the district's Concerts in the Park.

"We really appreciate the work of the volunteers on the district's Levy Task Force who gave us a very clear, unanimous message: it was time for THPRD to ask voters to consider investing in maintaining THPRD services," said Alfredo Moreno, THPRD Board President. "The reality is property taxes haven't been able to keep up with inflation and the annual expenses of operating the district. Without the support of an operating levy, we will need to close facilities, lay off staff, and reduce park and trail maintenance to levels that caused great concern for the board and task force members. That's why we think it is so important to inform the public about the significant budget shortfall the district is facing and how an operating levy can make the difference in ensuring we are able to maintain existing service levels."

If approved, the local option levy would increase taxes on the average home in the district by about \$12.68 per month or \$152.12 per year. The funding would go to maintain district operations and fill a projected \$16 million dollar shortfall in the district's annual operating budget.

"Serving on the district's Levy Task Force gave me the opportunity to better understand the financial situation," said Margaret Robinson, Levy Task Force Member. "It is clear to me that the district has gone as long as it can, and now it is time to ask district voters to invest in maintaining THPRD as we know and

love it. On the task force we learned how inflation, labor market pressures, unfunded state mandates, and the three percent property tax growth limitation have all combined to make balancing the district's budget within existing resources impossible.”

The THPRD Board of Directors has directed staff to file the necessary paperwork with Washington County to place the levy on the May 21, 2024 primary election ballot. To learn more about the proposed local option levy visit <https://www.thprd.org/district-information/localoptionlevy>.

## **About THPRD**

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 270,000 residents in the greater Beaverton area. The district provides year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Offerings include thousands of widely diverse classes, 100+ park sites with active recreational amenities, about 70 miles of trails, eight swim centers, six recreation centers, and 1,500 acres of natural areas.