



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	October 7, 2009
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Federal Way City Council adopts resolution opposing I-1033

Citing permanent damage to its ability to provide fundamental core services for the residents of Federal Way, the City Council on Sept. 15 voted unanimously to oppose Initiative 1033.

If passed, Initiative 1033 would limit growth in state revenues deposited in funds subject to the state expenditures limit and would limit growth in the county and city revenues deposited into the county and city current expense fund.

The City Council held a public hearing on Sept. 1 where both sides had a chance to present on the initiative. After the hearing, Deputy Mayor Faison asked for a motion to direct staff to write a resolution opposing the initiative. He said he hoped the Council’s actions would spell out exactly what the impacts would be to the City and its ability to function in the future:

I-1033 would:

- Increase the City's revenue shortfall from \$15 million by 2015 to \$17.3 million.
- Limit the City's ability to restore services it cut in 2009 due to the recession.
- Permanently reduce general fund revenues
- Limit the ability to make public improvements
- Limit the ability to deal with unanticipated costs such as emergencies or economic opportunities
- Delay several programs/projects such as restoring Federal Way’s annual street resurfacing program and implementing the park capital improvement plan

The six Council members present at the meeting (Mayor Jack Dovey was absent) spoke passionately about their opposition to I-1033.

“We as leaders can’t stand by and watch the house burning,” said **Councilmember Jim Ferrell**. He added, “This would be a step backward. It would tie the hands of our elected representatives and it would really hurt the people.”

Councilmember Dini Duclos said the initiative really hurts cities “like Federal Way that have been extremely conservative with their budgets.” If the initiative passes, “I’m afraid we won’t be able to provide the vital services that the citizens tax themselves to get...so, I would encourage people to look very seriously at this issue.”

“We would be irresponsible if we didn’t take a stand on this issue,” said **Councilmember Linda Kochmar**.

As chair of the City’s Finance, Economic Development and Regional Affairs Committee, **Councilmember Mike Park** said he personally felt every one of the “hard decisions” the City had to make to balance the budget in 2009 in the face of declining revenue. The hard decisions included program cuts and layoffs. He noted that “we are looking at another gap by the end of the year” and that there will most likely be other hard choices ahead. “We are experiencing tremendous financial challenges already...I am unable to support this initiative,” he said.

“I have serious concerns about this initiative,” said **Councilmember Jeanne Burbidge**. Because of the way the initiative limits movement between funds in the capital and general fund budgets, the effect will be that we won’t “be able to maintain infrastructure. And we would see a declining source of revenue across the board.” She went on to say that the City would not be able to maintain roads, parks, buildings and facilities at a level she feels that responsible Councilmembers would like.

“I too have serious, serious concerns about this initiative,” said **Deputy Mayor Eric Faison**. “Almost 70% of our general fund budget goes to pay for public safety and transportation. All of those funds, they are all subject to this initiative.

Deputy Mayor Faison went on to say that the initiative would severely limit, even actively discourage the City’s ability to attract sorely needed economic development. Under this initiative, “...generating new revenues from economic development would have the effect of reducing our property tax so that our revenues *don’t* grow—which seems counterintuitive.”

Faison said the initiative undercuts incentives for the City to bring new business to town and to increase the quality of life for residents.

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