

RESOLUTION NO. 01-23-23-2

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ROUTE 53 GREENWAY LAND ALTERNATIVE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO CREATE A GREENWAY CORRIDOR AND TRANSFER JURISDICTION TO THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES—2023

WHEREAS, In August of 2019, the Illinois State Highway Toll Authority declared that it was not in the Tollway's interest to lead further development of the Illinois Route 53 Corridor project, located in Lake County, Illinois, and terminated the ongoing study and contracts related to the project due to lack of regional support; and

WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leverage the transformative power of exceptional regional planning and transfer the land within the antiquated Route 53 Corridor to the Department of Natural Resources to create an open space corridor plan, that yields multiple benefits for people, community health, flood remediation, recreation, and natural resource protection; and

WHEREAS, Lake County has more threatened species, endangered species, and biodiversity than any other County in Illinois and the creation of a greenway would combat the loss of biodiversity and secure habitat for an abundance of wildlife, allowing them to thrive and adapt to a changing climate; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a greenway, state park, or trail corridor and compatible and complementary development on the antiquated Route 53 corridor would not only connect communities, parks, and preserves throughout the corridor but also expand existing public open spaces and link wetlands, habitat, sustainable agriculture, and recreational space; and

WHEREAS, In September of 2019, the Villages of Deer Park, Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Kildeer, Lake Zurich, Long Grove, and Mundelein signed a joint letter to Illinois Governor JB Pritzker expressing support for the collaboration and coordination of relevant state agencies, local Mayors, County, and State officials to study the corridor and develop a plan for the highest and best use of the land within the Route 53 expansion corridor, to ensure that the public investment that was made over the decades to purchase these parcels culminates in a public space available for community health, flood relief, flora and fauna species protection, and to transform this land into a greenway trail and environmental sanctuary, as well as other Village-specific uses for this land; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2022, the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force strongly recommended that the Illinois Department of Transportation transfer all their state-owned interests in land reserved for the now defunct Illinois Route 53 Expansion to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, reserving to the Illinois Department of Transportation the minimum easements, rights of way, or interests necessary for roadway improvement projects adjacent to state highways that are in progress or budgeted at the time of the writing and adoption of the resolution; and

WHEREAS, In December of 2022, the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force strongly recommended that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, upon the receipt of the state owned land along the Illinois Route 53 corridor from the other state agencies shall form a working group composed of similar stakeholders as the Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force tasked with determining the development and establishment of a State Park or State Trail and other open space and natural area conservation purposes on the aforementioned land and identifying funding mechanisms to assist the Department with the maintenance and staffing of this new greenway; and

WHEREAS, Regional planning authorities report a lasting 300% increase in the use of public open space since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the establishment of a greenway would help meet growing demand, facilitate equitable access to nature, and provide recreational opportunities for all residents; and the establishment of a greenway along the Illinois Route 53 corridor could aid Lake County and local units of government in achieving their net zero emission goals through one of the many ecological benefits it would provide; and

WHEREAS, Studies reveal that for every dollar invested in restoration, eight dollars flow back to the community in the form of increased property values and reduced health costs, and the creation of trails and open space within the greenway offer economic development opportunities via ecotourism and increased property values; and

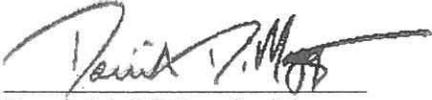
WHEREAS, During a time when homes and businesses across the country increasingly experience life-changing floods and other extreme weather event due to climate change, an Illinois Route 53 corridor greenway would fortify community resiliency by protecting, restoring, and maintaining hundreds of acres of open space as a front-line defense; and

WHEREAS, The establishment of a State Park or State Trail would complement the Lake County Forest Preserves' 100-year vision which calls for the creation of three 10,000-acre complexes that provide large-scale habitats for woodland, grassland, and wetland species, as well as amending management and development practices on our lands to improve water quality and aquatic habitat and enhance opportunities to advance existing plans and policies such as Lake County Forest Preserve's goal set by conservation partners to protect 20 percent of Lake County by 2030, and the America the Beautiful initiative to protect 30 percent of our nation's lands and waters by 2030.

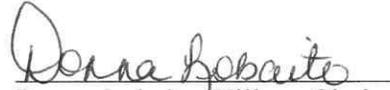
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Village Board of Trustees of the Village of Hawthorn Woods strongly support the recommendations made by Illinois Route 53 Expansion Land Alternative Use Task Force and are certain that the establishment of a State Park or State Trail along the Illinois Route 53 corridor will be critical in positioning Lake County's communities to thrive with restored and preserved natural lands, wetlands/waters, and cultural assets for generations to come; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that suitable copies of this resolution be provided to the Governor of Illinois, Members of the Illinois General Assembly, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Highway Toll

Authority, the Lake County Forest Preserves Board of Commissioners, and the Villages of Grayslake, Hawthorn Woods, Long Grove, and the Village of Mundelein.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dominick DiMaggio", written over a horizontal line.

Dominick DiMaggio, Mayor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Lobaito", written over a horizontal line.

Donna Lobaito, Village Clerk