



## Legislation Text

---

**File #: 01301, Version: 1**

---

### **Fiscal Note**

Adoption of this resolution would result in the inclusion of \$500,000 in general obligation debt in the 2006 Capital Budget for purposes of expanding the Henry Vilas Zoo. Debt service associated with this borrowing is estimated at \$70,000 in the first year of payment, gradually declining to approximately \$52,000 in the tenth and final year. There is no anticipated impact upon the tax levy in 2005. A total of \$150,000 for zoo improvements in 2006 is contained in the current Capital Improvement Program.

### **Title**

Expressing support of the commitment of \$500,000 in general obligation debt for the new polar bear exhibit and Children's Zoo at the Henry Vilas Zoo, pending final approval in the 2006 Capital Budget.

### **Body**

Whereas, the Henry Vilas Zoo was created in 1911, when five white-tailed deer were kept at the site, and has always been free to the public as stipulated by the Vilas family when they donated the land; and

Whereas, a new, \$9 million polar bear exhibit called the "Arctic Passage" is planned for completion in 2007 that will create a natural habitat for polar bears, seals, caribou, snow owls, and cranes; create an underwater viewing area for visitors; and feature a weather station to teach visitors about global weather patterns; and

Whereas, a new, \$6 million Children's Zoo is also planned that will include year-round animal exhibits, a walk-through barn, a Swiss Family Robinson Tree House, an outdoor learning amphitheater, a train, and a "Conservation Carousel;" and

Whereas, under the terms of a 1983 agreement, the City currently pays 20% of annual operating costs and voluntarily shares in capital costs; and

Whereas, the Mayor has pledged \$500,000 in City general obligation borrowing toward the two new exhibits at the zoo, resulting in annual debt service costs to City taxpayers of approximately \$70,000; and

Whereas, the 1983 Agreement on the Operation of the Henry Vilas Zoo states that "it has been determined that the Henry Vilas Zoo has become a regional asset, drawing visitors from a wide geographic area, such that in part the expense of its operation and maintenance should be borne by a unit of government having a tax base more nearly coterminous with the zoo's user base;"

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Common Council expresses its support of the commitment of \$500,000 in general obligation debt for the new polar bear exhibit and Children's Zoo at the Henry Vilas Zoo, pending final approval in the 2006 Capital Budget.