DENVER CITY COUNCIL

Proclamation

Proclamation No. 24-1788
Honoring The Greenway Foundation

WHEREAS, prior to 1974, the South Platte River in Denver was abandoned, polluted, neglected, and unfit for human contact, adding to the catastrophic damage involving the 1,000-year flood of 1965; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, then-Mayor Bill McNichols appointed State Senator Joe Shoemaker as the Chairman of the Platte River Development Committee (PRDC) and charged him with initiating the reclamation of the South Platte River (River); and

WHEREAS, in 1976, the PRDC evolved into The Greenway Foundation (TGF), a 501c3 nonprofit focused on stewarding public and private contributions towards TGF's mission to revitalize, restore, and reclaim the South Platte River as an environmental, recreational, cultural, scientific, and historical amenity for the City of Denver and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, in 1982, The Greenway Foundation launched an environmental education program, now known as SPREE (South Platte River Environmental Education) in partnership with Denver Public Schools creating a curriculum to bring students of all ages to the River; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, in partnership with Mayor Wellington Webb, TGF launched "Punt the Creek," later evolving into "Venice on the Creek" — bringing a tourism boating attraction to the section of Cherry Creek in Lower Downtown from Lawrence St. to Confluence Park; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, TGF and 18 public, private, political, and philanthropic partners engaged with the United States Army Corps of Engineers for over 15 years to allow Chatfield Reservoir to store an additional 20,600-acre-feet of critically needed water storage, including 2,100-acre-feet of an environmental pool to provide much needed additional stream flow opportunities for the River below the Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, from 2007 to 2010, three master plans were created for the South Platte River Greenway in Denver — the River North Greenway Master Plan, the River South Greenway Master Plan, and the River Vision Implementation Plan — resulting in additional environmental, recreational, flood control and water quality enhancements to the River; and

WHEREAS, as of 2017, investments in and along the South Platte River and its tributaries have led to an increase of $18 billion dollars in increased adjacent property value, equating to an additional $64 million dollars of additional annual funding to the City and County of Denver and $100 million of additional annual funding to for Denver Public Schools; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, after engagement with Adams County, the City and County of Denver, the Mile High Flood District and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Denver received over $380 Million of funding from USACE for three Ecosystem Restoration projects along Denver's South Platte River and a Flood Protection/Containment project along Weir Gulch in west Denver, the single largest appropriation for Denver's urban waterways in the city's history; and

WHEREAS, over the last 50 years, The Greenway Foundation has helped create over 100 miles of recreational greenways, restored river and wildlife habitat, and riverfront development, including community parks, continuous biking and hiking paths, and whitewater boating areas, as well as residential, commercial, and entertainment venues such as sport arenas, museums, an amusement park, and more; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, The Greenway Foundation continued to educate over 6,000 of Denver's youth annually through its SPREE Excursions, SPREE Camps, Greenway Leadership Corp., and River Ranger programs; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, The Greenway Foundation continued to engage neighborhoods and communities throughout Denver with the River and brought over 10,000 participants to Denver's waterways through free community events including CROSSCURRENTS, Family Fishing Day, Stewardship Days and numerous family events.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE DENVER CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. That the Denver City Council honors The Greenway Foundation for its work over the last 50 years and supports its ongoing efforts towards a cleaner, safer, more accessible river for all through equitable community engagement, education, and stewardship.

Section 2. That the Clerk and Recorder of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to The Greenway Foundation.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL December 16, 2024

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PRESIDENT