

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

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July 17, 2013

Mayor Mike McGinn and Councilmember Richard Conlin
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: City Fruit's Status and Request for partnership with the City of Seattle

Dear Mayor McGinn and Councilmember Conlin,

The Seattle Urban Forestry Commission recommends that the City explore partnerships with the non-profit organization City Fruit to provide stewardship of fruit trees on City property. Since 2008 when City Fruit was founded, it has effectively partnered with Parks and Recreation, Neighborhoods, Human Services, SPU, OSE and SDOT to provide 45,000 pounds of fruit for human consumption, facilitate planting 200 fruit trees, and train more than 600 Seattle residents in fruit tree maintenance. City Fruit has also leveraged more than 1,400 volunteer hours from the community to maintain and map fruit trees in nine City parks and 1,000 private properties using only two part-time paid staff. Through this education, management and harvest they are able to donate fruit to food banks, senior centers, shelters and other charities, while also raising modest funds by selling fruit to local chefs to help defray costs of the harvest.

Fruit trees are very popular in Seattle, and with the proper care these trees yield multiple dividends, not the least of which is helping to build a community stewardship ethic that exemplifies the spirit of the Seattle's Urban Forest Stewardship Plan. The historic orchards around the City hearken to our shared past, and maintaining them and using their bounty can serve as a gateway to also appreciating our non-fruit-bearing trees and groves. In fact, City Fruit hopes to partner with the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) in a complementary training program for addressing fruit and non-fruit bearing forest health issues in Seattle, respectively. GSP also represents a model public-private venture between a non-profit and the City of Seattle that City Fruit hopes to emulate.

City Fruit is now seeking a more sustainable, large-scale model because there are still many more fruit trees to be maintained and annually harvested in Seattle on both public and private lands. Grant funding has helped them achieve their current success but is too episodic and inconsistent to provide a stable, long-term solution. Next year, they are hoping to expand their program from maintaining fruit trees in eight parks to 18 parks and add the number of neighborhoods harvested from three to four (adding one new neighborhood each year). In order to do this, City Fruit is seeking to fund a \$146K budget from a variety of sources, including (if possible) City funds.

We have met with City Fruit and have been impressed with their accomplishments and appreciate the value they provide to Seattle's fruit trees. Since they are now intending to greatly expand their budget and operations as well as seeking public funds to diversify their support, we recommended that they develop a business plan that would inform not only their own work, but would also help provide potential City funders with specifics regarding what the residents of Seattle would receive for their investment. In particular, we would hope that City Fruit would draw their attention to potential efficiencies and cost reductions realized in tree maintenance using their trained volunteers, versus traditional methods using contractors or City staff.

We hope you will consider partnership with City Fruit in order to more deeply engage Seattle's residents in appreciation of the urban forest.

Sincerely,



John Floberg, Chair

cc: Council President Clark, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Burgess, Councilmember Godden, Councilmember Harrell, Councilmember Licata, Councilmember Rasmussen, Councilmember O'Brien, Chistopher Williams, Bernie Argo Matsuno, Catherine Lester, Ray Hoffman, Peter Hahn, Jill Simmons, Doug Critchfield, Mark Mead, Miles Mayhew, Jana Dille, Barbara Gray, Darren Morgan, Phyllis Shulman, Sharon Lerman, Meg Moorehead, Eric McConaghy.

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