

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

John Floberg, Chair • John Small, Vice-Chair

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October 28, 2013

Council Member Tim Burgess
Budget Committee Chair
Seattle City Council
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Urban Forest Stewardship Plan 2014 Budget Key Funding Areas

Dear Councilmember Burgess:

The Urban Forestry Commission has worked with the Mayor's Office, City Council, City staff, and residents of Seattle to develop and move forward Seattle's Urban Forest. Now, as you consider the 2014 budget, it is time to provide funding for key elements of the newly adopted Urban Forest Stewardship Plan (UFSP). We have identified key elements from the UFSP that deserve continued or increased funding. Below is the Commission's funding recommendation including a brief background on the benefits of these programs.

Green Seattle Partnership: additional \$1.5 M (total budget of \$3.5M)

The Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) is the innovative 20-year effort to restore Seattle's forested parklands. The GSP has become one of the largest and most successful programs of its kind in the country, primarily because of the amazing level of volunteerism demonstrated by Seattle residents, and the commitment of community leaders, agencies, non-profits, companies, and City government.

Over the past seven years \$31M have been invested in our forests through the GSP effort and more than 800 acres are currently undergoing restoration. The investment includes \$11M in City funding, but most importantly, it includes investment from the community. Seattle residents have volunteered an outstanding 600,000 hours to restore our forests (a value of \$11.6M), and our non-profit partners such as Forterra, EarthCorps, Nature Consortium, and Seattle Goodwill among others, have brought over \$9M to

the table. City funds have fueled at least a 2:1 match from the community. Increasing funding for the GSP will have the most significant impact on restoring and growing our urban forest.

Street Tree and Parks Maintenance: additional \$1M

The Commission believes it's important to address the much needed improvement to city-wide maintenance cycles for public trees. As mentioned on Table 6 of the UFSP, SDOT's and Parks' current pruning cycles are far from the 5-7 year industry standard, with 13.4 and 18 year pruning cycles respectively. This improved maintenance cycle will also provide safety benefits of improving sight distances and clear zones at intersections.

reLeaf's Tree Ambassador Program: increase funding \$60,000

Seattle (SPU and SDOT) has formed a strong partnership with Forterra that has trained volunteers to plan and lead the planting of trees and landscape renewal within our right-of-way through guided volunteer events. 2013 accomplishments include 8 tree walks, 2 street tree mulching events, 4 landscape renewal work parties, 2 workshops, and engagement of over 300 people. This program also strives to create an ethic of stewardship and informs the public on actions to improve the health of the urban forest. Through 2013 reLeaf's Tree Ambassador Program has been partially funded through a federal grant. The Commission recommends funding to double the support from Forterra with the objective of extending the stewardship of urban trees.

reLeaf's Trees for Neighborhoods: increase program \$100,000

The Commission believes this program is vital to increasing both awareness and true interest in growing our urban forest. An event this October indicates the program success as reLeaf hosted their tree planting workshops and tree give-away events at the UW Center for Urban Horticulture. Several workshops occurred simultaneously where people were learning about the various tree species available, how to plant the trees, and how to maintain them over time. Approximately 300 people came through on just one Saturday event with some 220 households taking home just over 600 trees. They even had a section to introduce little kids to the urban forest. These types of events show a lot of promise for engaging the community. We are recommending at least a .5 FTE be added to the program as well as additional support for program costs.

DPD's Site Inspectors: Increase staff \$200,000

Monitoring and maintaining existing trees that are part of our development regulations including the expansion of our Green Factor code requires additional field support if we are to retain resident support and confidence in these rules. The Commission is increasingly receiving comments from residents across the city regarding lack of enforcement of permitted projects. We request funding for approximately 2 FTE inspection staff to review field conditions for new and preserved trees minimizing resident complaints and ensuring required implementation.

City Fruit: \$50,000

Next year, they are hoping to expand their program from maintaining fruit trees in 8 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. The Commission has requested City Fruit provide a business plan as the prerequisite to receiving funding.

Sincerely,



John Floberg, Chair



Peg Staeheli

cc: Mayor Mike McGinn, Council President Clark, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Conlin, Councilmember Godden, Councilmember Harrell, Councilmember Licata, Councilmember Rasmussen, Councilmember O'Brien, Christopher Williams, Peter Hahn, Ray Hoffman, Diane Sugimura, Jill Simmons, Susan Sanchez, Nancy Ahern, Barbara Gray, Marshall Foster, Darren Morgan, Nolan Rundquist, Rich Gustav, Doug Critchfield, Mark Mead, Miles Mayhew, Jana Dilley, Brennon Staley, Joanna Nelson de Flores, Andrea Mojzak, Meg Moorehead, Eric McConaghy

Sandra Pinto de Bader, Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator
City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability & Environment
PO Box 94729 Seattle, WA 98124-4729 Tel: 206-684-3194 Fax: 206-684-3013
www.seattle.gov/UrbanForestryCommission