



SEATTLE GREEN SPACES COALITION
www.seattlegreenspacescoalition.org

November 27, 2019

Mayor Jenny Durkan
600 4th Avenue, 7th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mayor Durkan,

We support your commitment to accelerate Seattle's response to climate change.

Seattle's green spaces keep Seattle livable, resilient, sustainable and equitable. We estimate that within Seattle's 84 square miles of water and land area, natural capital provides more than \$3 billion a year in benefits and savings – including erosion control, recreation space, property value enhancement, habitats, pollinator corridors, urban agriculture space, oxygen production, carbon sink, and more. With Seattle now harboring the 6th worst traffic congestion in the U.S., and one of America's 10 worst heat islands, stewarding and growing our natural capital is crucial for mitigating the effects of climate change.

Toward that end, SGSC asks that you take two actions:

1. State clearly that your administration will transfer the 30 acres of Myers Parcels forest & wetlands to the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department in 2020, as Mayor Murray's administration committed to do on July 13, 2016, and
2. Support the natural capital assessment. When we discussed this concept with you during your mayoral campaign (at KEXP Gathering Space and elsewhere) you called the idea "brilliant." The City Council unanimously voted to study natural capital in November 2015 (SLI 75-1-A-2 2015), and now they have appropriated \$35, in the 2020 budget to fund a consultant to begin the work with Seattle city departments and agencies.

Since 2013, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition has worked to repurpose surplus city land for public benefit. We've successfully partnered with people and organizations across Seattle and King County to achieve that goal. We helped preserve a 5.6-acre parcel of surplus Seattle Public Utilities forest and wetland as the Five Acre Wood for Lake Forest Park; transform a surplus City Light substation in West Seattle into an environmental learning space for Seattle's STEM schools; and win the city's approval in 2016 to transfer nearly 30 acres of Myers Parcels from Facilities & Administrative Services to Seattle Parks & Recreation.

1. For the Myers Parcels forest and wetland: Mayor Murray declared on July 13, 2016, that Seattle will dedicate the four-acre northernmost portion for fire training, and expanding the City's Joint Training Facility, and retain the remainder as "land banked" property for open space and/or recreation purposes. The Parcels' Hamm Creek feeds clean water into the polluted Duwamish River, and its green space provides significant environmental benefits to the city.

More than a dozen organizations, representing thousands of Seattleites, advocated for this transfer – including ECOSS, Highland Park Action Committee, Delridge Neighborhood Development Assoc., Duwamish Alive!, Sustainable Seattle, TreePac, the Duwamish Tribal Council, White Center Community

Development Assoc. and others; communities in Top Hat, Greenbridge, South Park and more, and hundreds more individuals who signed petitions. These thousands of your constituents want your administration to clearly state that the transfer will be completed, as Mayor Murray pledged.

2 For the natural capital assessment: more than two dozen organizations – including REI, PCC Natural Markets, Tilth Alliance, the Faith Action Network, Duwamish Tribal Council, Seattle Audubon Society, Sustainable Seattle and others, that represent over 10,000 of your constituents, have advocated for this since the City Council’s 2015 vote. They want to see our city treat its natural capital as an asset, and account for, protect and steward it. Your administration’s support for this enterprise will align with your commitment, and help speed Seattle toward mitigating the effects of climate change, and perhaps create a ripple effect of other cities following suit.

“Valuing natural capital is fundamental to measuring sustainability,” say Fenichel et al. (U.S.N.A.S)). Earth Economics asserts that green infrastructure addresses the same urban challenges as grey infrastructure, and is an equally valuable service-delivery asset. “Leaders who understand this, and take bold actions today, will provide rich rewards for us, and for future generations.”

Please let SGSC know how we can support you in taking these actions.

Sincerely,

Elaine Ike, Mary Fleck, Martin Westerman,
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