

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

Weston Brinkley, Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores, Vice-Chair
Tom Early • Megan Herzog • Craig Johnson
Sarah Rehder • Sandra Whiting • Andrew Zellers • Steve Zemke

February 14, 2018.

Kelsey Whittaker
Seattle Public Utilities
700 5th Ave
Seattle, WA 98124

Re: Comments and Recommendations for the Planting Plan for SPU Ship Canal Water Quality Program & 3rd Avenue Water Main Project

Dear Ms. Whittaker,

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) appreciates the information shared by your team regarding the Ship Canal Water Quality Program and the Third Avenue Water Main Project, and the opportunity to provide input on the planting plans.

The UFC commends you for specifying all native shrub and groundcover species and two native tree species at the Fremont Shaft planting site, as they provide greater habitat functions than non-native plants.

The UFC suggestions for modifications to the preliminary planting plan follow and in general are focused on:

- Using trees that mature with larger canopies while providing clearance to vehicles and utilities;
- Providing greater diversity of tree species;
- Ensuring that understory plants are appropriate for site conditions including durability, low-maintenance, and provide habitat; and
- Increasing the number of native plants at some of the planting sites.

Regarding the tree species recommendations, the UFC realizes that some of the larger trees being suggested may not be possible to use if there are overhead or underground utilities that preclude them due to their eventual size. The recommended street tree substitutions are all from the SDOT approved street tree list.

11th Avenue Shaft:

1. Because SDOT has reported an overuse of maples throughout the City, the UFC recommends substituting the Acer rubrum Frank's Red with a non-maple species such as Quercus coccinea.
2. The UFC suggests substituting at least two other species that would provide more canopy cover for the Carpinus japonica, such as Fraxinus Pennsylvanica Cimzam, or similar.

Fremont Shaft:

1. Again, the UFC recommends that the Acer rubrum Bowhall and the Acer rubrum Frank's Red be substituted with non-maple species such as: one of the elms resistant to Dutch Elm disease, like Ulmus parvifolia 'Emer II'; Liriodendron tulipifera; Gingko biloba Autumn Gold; or Fagus sylvatica Rohanii.
2. The ground covers/grasses and shrubs are a mix of upland and wetland species and sun and shade loving species, which may not be suitable for site conditions. For example, Glyceria grandis is an obligate wetland plant that needs wet conditions year-round. The UFC recommends substituting a different grass species that is tolerant of drier conditions such as: Calamagrostis Canadensis or one of the native Fescues. Deschampsia cespitosa is also a wetland grass but can tolerate drier conditions if the area is to be irrigated in the summer.

3rd Avenue Shaft:

The UFC recommends substituting native conifers in the wide planting area along the ship canal trail, instead of the Quercus ilex. Suggested species are Thuja plicata or Pseudotsuga menziesii.

East Shaft:

The UFC suggests replacing some or all Acer buergerianum with a non-maple species, such as Cornus Eddie's White Wonder; Tilia cordata De Groot, or similar sized tree from the SDOT approved street tree list.

Off-site tree replacement:

As was clarified during the briefing, the City's 2 for 1 Tree Replacement Policy applies regardless of the reason why the trees are being removed. The UFC recommends the project team recalculate the number of replacement trees to be planted off-site and consider including the largest appropriate native conifers, such as Thuja plicata where room allows and not just Pinus contorta contorta.

The UFC hopes that these recommendations are useful to SPU. Thank you, again, for the opportunity to comment on the planting plans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light beige background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Weston Brinkley'.

Weston Brinkley, Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light beige background. The signature is cursive and clearly reads 'Sandra Whiting'.

Sandra Whiting

cc: Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, Council President Harrell, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Gonzalez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Mami Hara, Nathan Torgelson, Goran Sparrman, Michelle Caulfield, Keith Ward, Michael Norton, Mike Podowski, Maggie Glowacki, Art Pederson, Darren Morgan, Evan Philip, Aaron Blumenthal, Peter Lindsay

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