



SEATTLE GREEN SPACES COALITION
www.seattlegreenspacescoalition.org

October 17, 2019

Seattle City Council
600 Fourth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: Fund Seattle Natural Capital Assessment to follow up unanimous 2015 City Council Approval of SLI 75-1-A-2 2015

Dear Council Members:

We strongly urge you to fund an assessment of Seattle's natural capital, and incorporate that value into the city's asset portfolio. It follows your unanimous 2015 vote to study its advantages for the city. Our green infrastructure provides \$2-\$3 billion a year worth of benefits and savings, and helps keep our city livable, resilient, equitable and sustainable.

Earth Economics, international experts in natural capital value, state that green infrastructure is a valuable, service-delivery asset that addresses the same urban challenges as grey infrastructure. Government leaders may find it challenging to value trees and green space, but those who understand it, and take bold actions today, will provide rich rewards for us, and for future generations.

Treating our green infrastructure as an asset aligns with the city's many environmental intentions and commitments, including:

- Carbon Reduction – from Mayor Nickels' 2005 U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, to Mayor Durkan's 2018 statements
- Increasing Seattle Tree Canopy to 30% city-wide
- New Tree Ordinance, incorporating 2008 Urban Forestry Commission proposals
- Race, Justice and Social Equity
- Livability, Resilience and Sustainability

A \$50,000 appropriation will fund the consultant, whose scope will include conducting the assessment, and showing administrators and departments how to incorporate natural capital value as an asset on the city's books. That value would be used in cost-benefit analyses, improved financial reporting, resilient policy-making and project implementation.

Seattle's green assets include urban forests, wetlands & watersheds, street and private property trees, P-Patches and parks, university campuses, golf courses, and many other properties. At just 11% of Seattle's area, its 6200 acres of parks provide nearly \$500 million a year in benefits and savings, according to the 2011 Trust For Public Lands-SPR study.

So the \$2-\$3 billion value estimate for the city's natural capital is conservative. Nearly 70% of urban trees grow on non-park lands – private properties, 190 acres of city-owned green spaces, and nearly 3500 more acres of Port of Seattle, King County, college-university, Washington State and federal green spaces within the city limits.

We believe Seattle's City Council has the vision and boldness to act now. A consulting price tag of just \$50,000, for learning how to access \$2-\$3 billion worth of assets is a bargain. This work will create a strong legacy for this City Council, and pay dividends far into the future for Seattle's residents and visitors.

We urge you to approve the appropriation for this important work.

Sincerely,

Elaine Ike, Mary Fleck, Martin Westerman,
Co-founders & Director, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition info@seattlegreenspacescoalition.org

Co-signers:

REI	Marc Berejka, Director Government & Community Affairs
PCC Community Markets	Aimee M. Simpson, J.D., Dir. Product Sustainability
Seattle Audubon Society	John Brosnan, Exec. Director and Josh Morris, Urban Conservation Manager
Tilth Alliance	Melissa Spear, Executive Director
GROW	Michelle Blume, President; Joyce Moty, Vice President
Faith Action Network	Paul Benz, President
Friends of Street Ends	Karen Daubert, Chair
Interfaith Power & Light	LeeAnne Beres, Executive Director
Duwamish Tribal Council	Cecile Hansen, Chairwoman
Evergreen Carbon	Wolf Lichtenstein, Parincipal
Scope 5	Yoram Bernet, CEO
Sustainable Business Consulting	Kevin Wilhelm, CEO
Westside Interfaith Network	Mary Ann deVry, Chair
Washington Alpine Club	Elden Altizer, President
Sustainable Seattle	Em Piro, Executive Director
City Fruit	Carrie Ferrence, Executive Director
Beacon Food Forest	Carla Penderock, Community Outreach Coordinator
Ballard P-Patch	Cindy Krueger, Site Leader
Seattle Nature Alliance	Denise Dahn, Director,
TreePac	Steve Zemke, Chair,
Plant Amnesty	Jack Bautsch, Chair
Groundswell Northwest	David Boyd, Chair
Sustainable West Seattle	Stu Hennessey, Chair
Friends of Discovery Park	Phil Vogelzang & Garrett Esperum, Board Members
Delridge Neighborhoods	David Bestock, Executive Director
Development Association	Willard Brown, Board Member
West Seattle Bike Connections	Don Brubeck, Board Chair