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(Date)

Michelle Caulfield

Office of Sustainability and Environment

RE: Green New Deal

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to extend its gratitude to the Office of Sustainability & Environment for its ongoing work in support of Seattle's Urban Forest. Specifically, the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) appreciates the opportunity to connect with the members of Seattle's Green New Deal (GND) team to better understand the group's goals and strategies including carrying forward the Equity and Environment Initiative. The UFC commends the team's focus on racial justice and acknowledgment of the urban forest's role in environmental justice work, including reducing disproportionate air pollution in BIPOC communities, mitigating the heat island effect, providing equitable access to nature, and reducing the life expectancy disparity in Seattle. The UFC is interested in collaborating with the GND team to work towards larger impacts like closing the canopy cover gap.

The UFC would also appreciate the GND team sharing their thoughts and findings on the following items as they work through implementing the GND strategies.

1. What sentiments have communities expressed around increased access to trees and nature contributing to gentrification? Are there strategies that residents would like to see to help alleviate the impact and concerns of gentrification?
2. What are other cities doing for the Green New Deal, especially other cities in King County, and are there opportunities for Seattle to tie into a larger system of strategies?
3. The city's urban forest is both a resource for carbon sequestration and for mitigating the impacts of pollution and climate change, such as the heat island effect. Tracking changes to the urban forest is key to understanding this resource and Seattle's carbon footprint. Currently, there is insufficient data to track changes to the urban forest. The UFC is interested in seeing the carbon footprint trends of the city include the loss and gains within the urban forest.

The UFC will be reaching out to build a relationship with the GND Oversight Board and explore how the groups can support each other's goals. Comparing current emissions trends with target levels highlights the need to focus on and pull together resources to make the necessary changes to protect Seattle's residents and the environment. The UFC is inspired to see the work the GND team has done and is excited to keep the momentum going.