October 5, 2022

Jessie Israel
(address)

Mike Treglia, PhD
(address)

Dear Jessie and Mike,

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) thanks you for your presentations on September 7th. In capturing the State of the Puget Sound Urban Canopy, Jessie introduced a detailed toolkit that supports a healthy urban tree canopy in Central Puget Sound. In Mike's presentation, 'Using Data and Partnerships to Support the NYC Urban Forest,' we gained insights into urban forestry opportunities and strategies through data analysis. The UFC was truly impressed with the level of TNC's involvement across the country on urban canopy. The presentations are inspirational to the Commission's work in advising the City of Seattle on tree protection, social equity, and climate change.

Since 2007 the City of Seattle has committed to reaching 30% citywide tree canopy coverage by 2037. In 2016 and 2021, the city obtained LiDAR data in order to accurately assess progress towards achieving the 30% target. As of 2016, Seattle had a canopy coverage of 28%. However, the 2021 findings show the city lost canopy cover across all land uses instead of gaining it. This brings us to the question Jessie raised in the presentation - how do we define the percentage number in policies, funding, or tangible actions? The UFC acknowledges the complicacy of the matter, especially at a time when the city encounters unprecedented urban development and weather abnormalities.

Mike's presentation certainly provides us with a unique perspective to explore the opportunities and limits to inform and achieve the percentage target. As Mike asked in his study, we need to know where the planting can go? What the landscape will be like? And what changes can happen? These are important questions for Seattle as even a 2% of shortage means the city is 1,072 acres behind its goal. The area is more than the size of Central Park in NYC. We don't think Seattle can get a Central Park for itself by 2037. But the UFC believes the city can, as Mike suggested, prudently implement policies and funding to protect existing trees, advance management, grow stewardship, and create incentives. The New York example in Mike's study also shows most canopy opportunities (practical canopy) exist on private property. The finding aligns with our perception in Seattle since residential areas hold 72% of the city's tree canopy. We highlight this finding since the UFC has concerns about some proposals thinking that the city can achieve the canopy cover goal by only adding trees on the public land. Though addressing the concerns needs deliberative data and study, the UFC believes it is very important to get the community's participation and care for any meaningful progress, not to mention our other goals of social equity and healthy tree diversity.

Whether it's Seattle or NYC, we have the same vision of urban forest and we share the same challenges of our time. The UFC highly appreciated your presentations as your works further bring forth the benefits of urban forestry and the critical roles of partnership and data. Please engage with the UFC often in the future and share with us your continuing works. We offer the UFC as a resource for TNC to continue to support a

healthy urban canopy in Washington. Thank you again for your presentations and your work to advance urban forestry.


Sincerely,



Josh Morris, Co-Chair                              Becca Neumann, Co-Chair



Hao Liang