

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

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October 9, 2019.

Seattle Park District Board/Seattle City Council
City Hall
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Funding levels for the Green Seattle Partnership

Dear Seattle Park District Board,

The Urban Forest Commission (UFC) did a review of the Mayor's proposed 2020 budget and noticed what appeared to be a substantial reduction in Seattle Parks and Recreation's Green Seattle Partnership program budget for both 2019 and 2020.

The UFC has requested a briefing from SPR's program staff to get clarification, but felt it was crucial to bring this issue up during City Council's budget deliberations.

The UFC believes cutting funding for the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) is problematic for the following reasons:

1. If the program is to deliver its goal to restore 2,500 acres by 2025 consistent funding is key. The program is barely over the midpoint of its goal and the majority of the remaining acres are the most challenging and costly to restore. Acres that are on steep slope can't be worked on by volunteers and require professional crews' involvement.
2. The reason for what appears to be an \$880,000 program reduction in the Mayor's proposed budget is "a waning in the need for Capital dollars for restoration." This assertion is not supported by the recently updated GSP Strategic Plan which was shared with the UFC last year.
3. The GSP is the poster child for leveraging community involvement and non-profit partnerships. Seattle residents have invested over one million hours volunteering to restore our forested parklands since the program's inception. Reducing program funding runs contrary to the program's momentum, would send the wrong message to the community, and could jeopardize this valuable leverage.
4. This program is one of the few urban forestry programs in the City that has complete and relevant data on its work which has allowed it to become a successful program to

date that has been replicated by many municipalities in the region. Changing course within an established plan inhibits effective future program management.

The UFC respectfully recommends restoring original Parks District funding levels to the Green Seattle Partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'W. Brinley'.

Weston Brinley, Chair

cc: Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, Jesus Aguirre, Jessica Finn Coven, Patrick Merriam, Michelle Caulfield, Aly Pennucci, Urban Forestry Management Team, Urban Forestry Core Team, Aaron Blumenthal, Amanda Hohlfeld

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