DRAFT

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November 17, 2022

RE: Urban Forestry Commission's Response to Trees for Seattle Parks Program

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to thank the representatives from Friends of Seattle's Olmstead Parks and Seattle Parks and Recreation that attended the November 2, 2022 meeting of the UFC and shared their vision for and progress on the Trees for Seattle Parks Program. It was an enjoyable and educational presentation; the presentation slides were beautiful and the presentation delivery was well rehearsed. The UFC is excited for the program's efforts. We agree that trees are essential for Seattle's parks and that Seattle does need to take decisive action to address the crisis of tree loss.

We were impressed by the rigorous and thoughtful approach that the Trees for Seattle Parks Program has taken toward addressing the issue of tree loss. The UFC particularly appreciated that the Trees for Seattle Parks Program recognizes the need to support newly planted trees for a 5-year period in order to ensure their survival. This increased time period for tree establishment is a best-practice for which the UFC has been advocating. Therefore, we agree with the estimate put forward by the Trees for Seattle Parks Program that it costs ~$4,000 to plant and support a tree; the majority of the cost associated with planting a tree is not due to the planting process, but rather due to the labor associated with watering the tree over a five-year period.

Given this realistic cost estimate for planting a new tree, the Trees for Seattle Parks presentation clearly showed that a funding gap remains in order to ensure that Seattle's established parks suffer no net loss of trees over the next two decades. The Mayor and Park District Board have allocated funds to plant more trees in developed parks that will meet 40% of the annual need for the next 6 years. It is exciting that the Trees for Seattle Parks Program is committed to raising the remaining $1.2M annually needed to reach no net tree loss.

The presentation clearly indicated that the Trees for Seattle Parks Program has spent time to ensure that the program will plant more trees in the parks of most need, will consider site-specific factors that can influence tree success, will follow best practices for tree species selection, including prioritizing native trees, and will ensure the trees support and contribute to the park design and function. The UFC found the plan to create signature trees (i.e., long-living tree species) quite attractive.

The Trees for Seattle Parks team asked UFC commissioners for feedback. Suggestions raised included:
- tying the program more tightly to the job-training focus of Seattle's Urban Forestry Management Plan,
- highlighting nearby park spaces when pitching the program to potential donors in order to personalize the issue,
- reaching out to City Forest Credits, a nonprofit that provides the private sector with the opportunity to purchase carbon offsets from urban forest project or invest in certified planting projects that have health equity and environmental impacts, and

Commented [BN1]: I am not sure if this is true. There was a questions on this point, but I don't remember the answer and when i re-listened to the video it was jumping around so much it missed that question (at least on my computer play-back)

Commented [BN2R1]: If this is not part of the plan, then we should ask that this be included

- determining if the program's allocation formula, which plants 4 trees in high-need areas for every 1 tree in a low-need area, is realistic given the amount of park space available in high-need areas.

The UFC is excited to continue partnering and supporting the Trees for Seattle Parks program. At a minimum we are committed to writing a letter of support for the program and adding links to the program's website on our UFC website.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,