



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 6d

ACTION ITEM

Date of Meeting June 13, 2017

DATE: May 26, 2017

TO: Dave Soike, Interim Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Pearse Edwards, Government Relations Director
Christina Billingsley, Environmental Engagement Program Manager

SUBJECT: Sole source contract on behalf of the Airport Community Ecology Fund - Forterra's Green Cities Partnership

Amount of this request: \$450,000

Total estimated project cost: \$450,000

ACTION REQUESTED

Request that the Port of Seattle Commission exercise its authority under RCW 35.21.278 to (1) contract with a community service organization, Forterra, without regard to public bidding laws for public works and (2) authorize the Chief Executive Officer to enter into a three-year contract with Forterra from June 20, 2017, through June 20, 2020, for a total cost of \$450,000. This authority is also granted through RCW 53.19.020(5) which determines that a competitive solicitation process is not appropriate or cost-effective. This contract will allow Forterra to implement the Green Cities Partnership, which includes three objectives for long-term environmental stewardship in the target cities. The work includes a tree canopy assessment and strategic planning for local urban forestry opportunities, community engagement, and project implementation (e.g. habitat restoration work parties, environmental education events, and stakeholder outreach in the target cities).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port of Seattle Commission created the \$1,000,000 Airport Community Ecology Fund (ACE Fund) on November 22, 2016, to support projects and programs that improve ecological and environmental attributes in the cities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines. The motion noted that ACE Fund activities will include support of Des Moines Memorial Way, tree planting in communities, cooperation with environmental education programs in local schools, joint efforts with local non-profit organizations, and other community outreach activities.

Port staff has determined that entering a contract worth \$450,000 with the regional community and environmental non-profit, Forterra, would best satisfy the requirements stated in the motion. The remaining \$550,000 will be allocated to the ACE Fund Small Grants program that

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will solicit applications for environmental projects in the three communities. The small grants program application reviewers will consist of Port staff and staff from the three named cities. The balance of the broad environmental engagement by Forterra and the targeted engagement by the Port staff will achieve in the desired outcomes of the motion of environmental benefit and community engagement.

Through this contract with Forterra to implement the Green Cities Partnership (GCP) program, the Port invests in a lasting community-based urban forestry program across the cities of Burien, SeaTac, and Des Moines. Forterra's GCP program offers a comprehensive approach that improves ecological and environment improvements by blending several activities in urban forestry planning, community engagement, tree planting, and public education projects.

All activities will be in close coordination and with approval and support from the Port of Seattle, Cities, and community organizations involved in the proposed project area. Projects will be identified and prioritized through consultation and outreach to the affected communities in these three cities. Forterra will develop design plans for a multi-city assessment and evaluation of trees on parks, schools, public squares, and or habitat sites, and support community and environmental stewardship projects. A contract term of three years will provide Port staff sufficient time to evaluate outcomes of the GCP's environmental impact and community engagement strategies.

JUSTIFICATION

RCW 35.21.278 allows ports to contract with community service organizations for limited purposes and without regard to public bidding laws for public works. As a 501c3 non-profit organization, Forterra qualifies as a community service organization that provides services in the immediate airport-area communities. The Scope of Work for Forterra includes all allowable work described in the RCW: 1) drawing design plans; 2) making improvements to parks, school playgrounds, public squares, or port habitat sites; 3) installing equipment or art work; 4) providing maintenance services for a facility or facilities as a community or neighborhood project; and 5) environmental stewardship project.

In accordance with RCW 53.19.020(5), the Commission must make a reasoned determination that the competitive solicitation process would not be appropriate or cost effective to obtain the same level of services as provided by Forterra, thereby exempting procurement of the services offered by Forterra from the requirements of Chapter 53.19 RCW and delegate authority to the CEO to enter into a contract with Forterra for a three year term from June 20, 2017, through June 20, 2020, for a total cost of \$450,000 at the sole discretion of the Port to perform the scope of work.

Such considerations may include:

1. Expertise on tree canopy and urban forests: The impetus for the ACE Fund is to improve tree canopy and healthy parks in SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines. This subject area is the hallmark of the GCP. Forterra accomplishes the GCP by working collaboratively with

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governments, communities, environmental agencies, businesses, and non-profits to design robust and long-term plans and strategies for improving tree canopy in urban and suburban areas.

2. Support by target community and cities: The cities of Sea-Tac, Burien, and Des Moines are familiar with the organization and consider the GCP program reputable. Numerous community members in target cities are familiar with and volunteer with the program. According to Port staff research, there would likely be widespread support in the local area for a Port-Forterra collaboration.
3. Exceptional success across region: The GCP program has been successfully implemented in nine different cities across Washington, including Tukwila and Kent. Forterra’s successful work with GCP in Tukwila and Kent indicate the experience needed to navigate the complex demography and political environments of South King County. No other organization has been able to implement such a broad-reaching and robust stewardship program across municipalities in the state.
4. Alignment with city needs: Port staff researched the desired outcomes cities would like to see from the ACE Fund. These values strongly align with deliverables of a typical GCP, and offer many easy starting points for work (invasive species removal, greenways development, native species replanting, landscaping and urban renewal, tree banking).
5. Des Moines Memorial Way support: The only project explicitly called out in the motion is to support the Des Moines Memorial Way tree planting project. Des Moines Memorial Way serves all three cities and Forterra will develop a strategic plan to help various agencies and jurisdictions get started on enhancing this complex and long-standing community asset.
6. Unique capacity to work with small and large visions: Due to Forterra’s robust community involvement process, small, community-generated ideas or projects will be identified. In addition, the organization values long-term and broad stewardship outcomes. This organizational capacity enables Forterra to work on a portfolio of projects that support both a breadth and depth of impact in communities.
7. Legacy of rigor and high-impact: Forterra’s legacy as a strong environmental champion in our region builds trust with target communities about the Port’s commitment in pursuing projects yielding a measureable and high-impact benefit that “improves ecological attributes” within each city. Forterra’s reputable Green Cities Partnership is beneficial to the Port as a “third party validator.”
8. Pro-equity program development: Forterra uniquely uses a proactive equity lens in its program development and implementation. The program specifically includes community engagement activities that are inclusive and accessible to all community members in airport-areas. Forterra’s many years of this work in Tukwila would be an asset.

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9. Lack of Port staff capacity: To accomplish broad environmental improvements across all three target cities, Port staff alone cannot adequately administer large investments in new stewardship projects, city coordination, and the breadth and depth of community engagement processes needed. Forterra’s program includes all of these skillsets and can achieve Airport Community Ecology Fund goals in a quicker and more efficient way than if Port sought to do this project on its own. Forterra’s unique success with this level of detail and community engagement will ensure community buy-in on Fund and Green Cities Partnership investments.

Port staff, as noted below, under subsection “1” does have the capacity to engage and support a “Small Grants Program” in cooperation with the three cities that will distribute the majority of ACE Fund money.

DETAILS

On Nov. 22, 2016, the Port of Seattle Commission created the ACE Fund to support projects and programs that improve ecological and environmental attributes in the cities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines. A sum of \$1 million has been allocated to this fund. The creation of the ACE Fund aligns with the Century Agenda’s commitment to: steward our environment responsibly, partner with surrounding communities, and promote social responsibility. The ACE Fund will be implemented using a “two-pronged” approach:

1. Launch the “ACE Fund Small Grants Program” that will be administered by Port staff to solicit grant proposals from local community organizations, chambers of commerce, service organizations, community, youth or athletic association or other association located and providing services in the immediate neighborhood. Port staff will conduct robust community outreach and engagement to encourage applications to the fund, evaluate applications using auditable metrics and criteria, and distribute funds to approved group projects.

A seven-member panel, consisting of four Port staff and one representative from each of the three cities, will review and vote on each application on a quarterly basis. Small grants will be awarded quarterly in pilot increments of \$2000 and \$5000. This number may be adjusted as the program grows in popularity, applicant data and feedback is collected, and the pilot awards cycle is complete. Throughout the existence of the ACE Fund, funding will be equitably distributed based on quality and quantity of applications received across participating jurisdictions. The majority of allocated ACE funds will be distributed through this program.

2. Fund Forterra to implement the Green Cities Partnership program across SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines. The mission of the GCP is to steward our region’s urban parks,

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forested areas, and community spaces using a holistic portfolio of solutions that links community, economic development, and conservation.

The outcome, goals and objectives of the motion align with Forterra’s long-sighted vision of creating healthy, vibrant, and livable communities. Healthy urban forests have the power to strengthen neighborhoods, provide safe access to nature, and offer numerous valuable “green services” such as clean air, clean water, noise buffer, stormwater retention, and shade which provides homes with natural cooling during hot weather. Without a comprehensive and coordinated effort to support trees in all landscapes that make up the urban forests, communities are at risk of losing the many benefits provided.

Scope of Work

Forterra will manage the GCP with support as needed provided by Port staff representing the Aviation Environmental Division, Public Affairs Department, and the Commission Office. The GCP provides the following services:

- Objective 1 - Assess and plan: A multi-city assessment and evaluation of trees on all land types. With this information the group will work with Port of Seattle, City staff, and any other applicable partners to set canopy cover and restoration goals along with benchmarks over a determined period of time—typically 20 years. The group will estimate costs and volunteer hours needed to both restore the forested parks and natural areas and to provide neighborhood tree education, care, and planting programs for the participating jurisdictions. This work would be compiled into one overarching Community Supported Urban Forest Enhancement Plan.
- Objective 2 - Community engagement: Development of a community engagement plan and process to capture participating jurisdictions’ ideas and priorities for ecological projects and activities. The group will use a variety of models and formats to facilitate inclusive outreach and engagement and work with local partners whenever possible to maximize reach, benefit from local networks and expertise, and engender community trust.
- Objective 3 - Implement projects: To build upon and implement the priority projects identified through community engagement, Forterra offers two program models to support these projects, which can be used independently or in combination. Staff time for Forterra to develop these programs, recruit participants, facilitate coordination with partnering jurisdictions and organizations, materials, supplies, restoration crews, and program management to implement priority tree projects and activities are included in the overall proposal cost estimate.

Long-term Outcomes

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- Increased tree canopy and connectivity of a healthy and resilient urban forest across Burien, Sea Tac, and Des Moines;
- Increased ecosystem services and public benefits;
- An aware and engaged community understands the natural and cultural value and function of urban forests and actively supports their long-term maintenance and care.

Schedule

Activity

Commission authorization	June 2017
Green Cities Partnership implementation	July 2017 - July 2020

Cost Breakdown

Amount

Objective 1: Assess and Plan (forest health assessment, canopy cover and land type classification, Des Moines Memorial Drive GIS analysis and planning, community-supported forest enhancement plan, others)	\$135,000
Objective 2: Community Engagement and Community Liaison Program (inclusive Community Liaison engagement model, community open houses, small community engagement meetings, others)	\$65,000
Objective 3: Implementation (launch Forest Stewards Program, Neighborhood Trees program, educational events, volunteer work parties, and others)	\$250,000
Total	\$450,000

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1 – The alternative is to open a process to review proposals from interested parties, select and interview finalists, select a “winning” bid, enter into contract negotiations and sign a contract with the contract winner. This process is estimated to take as long as 5-6 months to complete, thereby delaying work on projects of major scope until the end of the calendar year.

Cost Implications: N/A

Pros:

- (1) Opportunity to review multiple proposals and approaches to the project.
- (2) Costs may be lower than those proposed by Forterra.

Cons:

- (1) Forterra is uniquely qualified to engage in the ACE Fund project, as described above.
- (2) Delay in project implementation.
- (3) Costs may be higher than those proposed by Forterra.

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This is not the recommended alternative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

<i>Cost Breakdown</i>	Amount
Objective 1: Assess and Plan	\$135,000
Objective 2: Community Engagement and Community Liaison Program	\$65,000
Objective 3: Implementation	\$250,000
Total	\$450,000

Annual Budget Status and Source of Funds

The program cost for the three-year contract is \$450,000. The \$1 million total amount of the ACE Fund is sourced from the tax levy and it is included in the current budget. The remainder resources will be utilized for the ACE Fund Small Grants Program.

Future Revenues and Expenses (Total cost of ownership)

Projects funded via the Airport Community Ecology Fund must meet the following criteria to demonstrate a benefit to the Port:

- Action-Oriented
- Builds Public Participation and Trust
- Accomplishes Specific Goal(s)
- Identifies Geographic Location(s) (e.g. must be in one of three jurisdictions identified in Commission motion)
- Specific Metrics
- Measurable Outcomes
- Timely
- Shows 3x Return on Port Investment

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

February 28, 2017 – The Commission was provided an update on development of the structure, scope and criteria for the Airport Community Ecology Fund.

- January 13, 2017 – The Commission amended the Airport Community Ecology Fund motion directing staff to consult with the Commission concerning the scoping and criteria related to project selection and outreach to the community. Staff will return to the Commission no later than the first quarter of 2017 with goals, eligibility for the fund, and criteria for selection of proposals.

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- January 12, 2017 – The Commission received a memo providing an update on the program’s progress and requesting guidance on engagement model, third-party partnerships, and program length.
- November 22, 2016 – The Commission approved the creation of the Airport Community Ecology Fund to support projects and programs in Sea-Tac Airport-area communities to improve ecological and environmental attributes in airport-area communities. A sum of \$1 million was allocated to the fund.