

PORT OF SEATTLE
MEMORANDUM

COMMISSION AGENDA
ACTION ITEM

Item No. 4d
Date of Meeting February 24, 2015

DATE: February 17, 2015

TO: Ted Fick, Chief Executive Officer

FROM: Elizabeth Levitt, Director, Aviation Planning and Environmental
Bob Duffner, Senior Manager, Aviation Environmental

SUBJECT: Natural Resource Maintenance Interlocal Agreement with the Washington Conservation Corps

Amount of This Request: \$0 **Source of Funds:** Annual Operating Budget
or Individual Projects

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Port Commission authorization for the Chief Executive Officer to execute an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) in a form substantially as attached in Exhibit A. This ILA will provide for natural resource maintenance services totaling \$700,000 over five years in support of wetland mitigation site management at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and natural resource management at the Airport and other Port properties. No funding is associated with this authorization.

SYNOPSIS

This ILA provides the Port with the resources necessary to meet the long term natural resource maintenance requirements of the Airport's wetland mitigation program in compliance with the Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit (404) and 401 Water Quality Certification (401) for the 1997 Master Plan Update Improvement (MPU) projects as well as natural resource maintenance needs at other Airport and Seaport properties. Through this agreement, the Port will continue an established partnership with the WCC to provide natural resource maintenance services, and in doing so will provide valuable environmental work experience and develop leadership skills in young adults. The Port will provide funding, management and oversight by staff with natural resource management experience as well as prior youth corps leadership experience.

BACKGROUND

Washington Conservation Corps

The WCC is a state agency that specializes in the conservation, rehabilitation, and enhancement of the state's natural and environmental resources while providing educational opportunities and meaningful work experiences for young adults ages 18 to 25. WCC was established in 1983 and is a part of the federal AmeriCorps program. Through partnerships with local, state, and federal

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agencies, the WCC completes restoration, recreation, and other stewardship projects throughout the state.

Port of Seattle

As mitigation for impacts related to the construction of the Third Runway and other 1997 MPU projects, the Port created, restored and enhanced over 164 acres of wetlands and wetland buffers. The 401 and 404 Permits require that these wetlands and buffers meet stringent performance standards for plant survival, density and overall function for a period of 15 years. Due to the staggered construction dates of the mitigation sites this period will end between 2022 and 2027. In order to meet these requirements, the Port must perform regular plant maintenance including vegetation trimming, replacement of dead plants, weed management, soil amendment application and grazing protection.

In addition to the Airport's 1997 MPU wetland mitigation sites, there are other natural resource sites on Seaport and Aviation properties. The Port has implemented significant environmental restoration, cleanup and habitat enhancement projects as part of its capital improvement programs and ongoing operations and management of Port facilities.

Partnership History

An existing ILA with the WCC will end on April 15, 2015. During the course of this 5-year agreement, the WCC played a critical role in ensuring the ongoing success of the Airport's wetland mitigation program while providing valuable work and leadership skills to young adults. Fifty corpsmembers working within ten teams planted over 85,000 plants and provided necessary invasive weed control. Through this ILA, over \$600,000 was spent on team leadership, crew labor, plants and other planting supplies.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION AND DETAILS

Project Objectives

The objective of this agreement is to provide resources needed to completed permit required maintenance efforts on wetland mitigation sites while providing vital education and leadership opportunities to young adults.

Scope of Work

Maintenance services to be completed under this ILA may include; selective vegetation trimming, replacement plantings in areas of high mortality or low vigor, planting in areas of low density or cover, weed management, soil amendment, installation of rodent guards, troubleshooting existing irrigation systems, supporting existing monitoring efforts and other natural resource maintenance services. Under this ILA, the WCC would provide management services, labor and plants.

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Natural resource maintenance services performed under this agreement will primarily be performed at Airport wetland mitigation sites in compliance with existing permits. Due in large part to WCC support, the mitigation sites initially constructed are maturing so maintenance needs on these site will continue to decline over the period of this agreement. However, sites built in later years (Des Moines Nursery, Tye Golf Course, Williams property) will require higher levels of maintenance until they become more established. In addition to routine site maintenance, service trails to be decommissioned at the Auburn mitigation site will be re-vegetated through this ILA.

Other work not required by existing permits will include vegetation plantings at the former Tye Golf Course in an effort to improve upland habitat while reducing bird attractants which pose a hazard to Airport operations. Fish and wildlife habitat sites located in Elliott Bay and the Duwamish Waterway may require assistance to maintain and improve riparian and marsh vegetation conditions. Other natural resource maintenance services may be performed on Aviation and Seaport properties including those located along Elliott Bay and the Duwamish Waterway.

Schedule

The ILA will remain effective for a maximum term of five years. Approximately sixty percent of the maintenance efforts at Aviation wetland mitigation sites are scheduled to be completed in 2015-2017. Scope and magnitude of the remaining maintenance work will be determined by site progress and permitting agency review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget Status and Source of Funds

The total costs for services performed under this ILA will not exceed \$700,000. No work is guaranteed to WCC under this agreement. No budget authorization request is associated with this Commission action. The Port will authorize work under individual task orders as specific work tasks are required and funding for that work will be authorized by the Commission as part of the annual budgeting process and specific project funding mechanism. The funding source will therefore be either the Airport Development Fund (for airport projects) or the General Fund (for seaport projects).

STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

This agreement supports the Port's Century Agenda objective to be the greenest, and most energy efficient port in North America by facilitating the maintenance of Third Runway mitigation areas and other natural resources on Port property. The extensive work performed under this new agreement will continue to support the Port's highly successful mitigation efforts and provided on-the-ground assistance to the Airport's efforts towards responsible environment stewardship.

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This agreement also supports the Port's Century Agenda commitment to use our influence as an institution to promote workforce development. This agreement will create a working partnership with another state agency and provide young adults with hands-on experience and leadership opportunities in the environmental field.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

Economic Development

This ILA will allow the Port to respond in a financially responsible way to immediate environmental needs. The short-term projects provide financial benefit to the young adult participants while keeping the required costs as low as possible for our customers.

Environmental Responsibility

This ILA will provide a way to ensure the Port meets the permit requirements for construction of the Third Runway and other MPU projects. By aggressively maintaining our wetland mitigation sites over the next five years, we will ensure the sites succeed and avoid costly reestablishment. This ILA also provides the Port a mechanism to rapidly address non-mitigation natural resource concerns when fieldwork is necessary.

Community Benefits

This ILA provides a mechanism for young adults from the region to perform short-term work in the environmental field, gaining valuable hands-on experience.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

Alternative 1) – Contract with a Traditional Landscaping Firm.

Pros:

- A traditional firm will have the expertise and staffing to complete contracted tasks.

Cons:

- Foregoes the opportunity to continue our partnership with the WCC and engage in a program that supports the development of young adults through natural resource project work.
- Conventional contracting is less flexible than the ILA contracting which may interfere with the completion of the multiple, smaller, short-notice projects typically completed through our ILA.
- Cost will likely be 3-5 times higher using a traditional landscape contractor due to higher overhead, higher labor charges and higher material costs.

The cost of planned 2015 wetland maintenance efforts as performed under this alternative are estimated to be approximately \$60,000 to \$100,000. These maintenance efforts are required by the Airport permits. There are no identifiable monetary benefits associated with these efforts.

Alternative 2) – Execute an ILA with the WCC

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Pros:

- Continues a successful partnership with the WCC that has provided quality natural resource project work and on-the-job experience for young adults
- The flexible nature of the ILA service directive process allows short notice, smaller projects to be completed during the correct season
- Provides a cost-effective means to maintain regulatory required mitigation and other natural resource sites

Cons:

- Requires a slightly higher level of Port staff involvement to manage the field effort.

The cost of planned 2015 wetland maintenance efforts as performed under this alternative are estimated to be approximately \$20,000. These maintenance efforts are required by the Airport permits. There are no identifiable monetary benefits associated with these efforts. **This is the recommended alternative.**

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- Exhibit A – Interlocal Agreement between the Port of Seattle and the Washington Conservation Corps

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- The commission authorized the current ILA with WCC on April 13, 2010.