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Port offers environmental grants to airport communities
Organizations encouraged to submit applications for ecology projects

SEATTLE—The Port of Seattle today launched a new \$1 million program to fund environmental projects in communities around Sea-Tac Airport. The Airport Community Ecology (ACE) Fund offers grants to organizations to improve the natural environment through projects and programs, especially planting programs to add trees and green spaces.

The ACE Fund was authorized by the Port of Seattle Commission in November 2016 in recognition that neighboring communities that experience more impacts from airport operations should also experience additional benefits. The Commission directed that the program support environmental projects and programs in the cities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines.

“This significant investment in increasing the urban tree canopy means healthier communities. Planting programs provide multiple benefits – improving water and air quality, providing cooling shade, and enhancing the character and beauty of local neighborhoods,” said Port Commissioner John Creighton. “The fund is truly built on community engagement - the Commission working with residents to find ways the airport can be a better neighbor as the region grows.”

Groups eligible to apply for grants include community organizations, chambers of commerce, service organizations, youth or athletic associations, or other non-profits located and providing services in the cities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines. Applications received by Sept. 1, 2017 will be considered for the first round of awards to be made in fall 2017. More information is available at www.portseattle.org/EcologyFund.

For every dollar requested through the grant fund, three dollars of matching funds must be provided by the applicant, per state law. This portion could include volunteer labor, donated materials, supplies, and/or professional services. A seven-member panel, consisting of Port staff and representatives from each of the three cities, will evaluate each application and make recommendations to the Port Commission for final approval.

The communities of SeaTac, Burien and Des Moines can also benefit from another part of the Ecology Fund - the Green Cities Partnership Program. The Port is partnering with Forterra, a local non-profit organization that promotes regional sustainability, in part by caring for keystone places like parks and urban forests. Forterra will help the cities start initiatives to expand and nurture urban forests, actively involving people of all ages in projects like clearing invasive plants, preparing sites for trees, and, with the help of experts, planting saplings and helping them thrive. Forterra will work closely with each city to identify places and priorities.

“Forterra is excited to partner with the Port and some of Puget Sound’s most dynamic and fast-growing communities. By creating new Green Cities programs, we have the chance to enhance the beauty and resilience not only of SeaTac, Burien and Des Moines, but the whole region,” said Gene Duvernoy, Forterra President. “The benefits of large, healthy urban forests are clear and compelling, from more graceful and livable neighborhoods, to better stormwater control, to improved wildlife habitat, to chances for neighbors to roll up their sleeves as volunteers, make new connections, and be part of solutions. We salute the Port for making this far-sighted investment in the well-being of these communities and the region as we work to link a dozen Green Cities in a connected urban forest.”

About Seattle-Tacoma International Airport

Operated by the Port of Seattle, Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA, KSEA) is ranked as the 9th busiest U.S. airport, serving nearly 45.7 million passengers and more than 366,000 metric tons of air cargo in 2016. With a regional economic impact of more than \$16.3 billion in business revenue, Sea-Tac generates 171,796 jobs (109,924 direct jobs) representing more than \$2.8 billion in direct earnings and more than \$565 million in state and local taxes. Thirty airlines serve 88 non-stop domestic and 23 international destinations.

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