

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION

Resolution authorizing execution of a professional services contract with The Watershed Company to provide environmental consulting services to complete a comprehensive forest health assessment of all undeveloped open space properties managed by the Natural Resource Division, in an amount not to exceed \$103,917.00, plus all applicable taxes.

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Parks & Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Resolution provides for professional services to assess the current forest health condition of all undeveloped open space properties managed by the Natural Resource Division. The scope of services includes GIS spatial data analysis, field data collection, creation of a forest health database, development of a natural resource stewardship plan, and development of site-specific forest enhancement plans. Delivery of these services will provide essential data and planning documents that enable the Natural Resource Division to prioritize restoration efforts to maximize the environmental and community benefits of Bellevue's public forests.

RECOMMENDATION

Move to adopt Resolution No. 9785

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**Purpose & Scope of Services**

The Natural Resource Division manages approximately 2,000 acres of undeveloped forested open space properties within the City of Bellevue. These open space properties are geographically distributed throughout the City and consist of upland forests, lowland forests, steep slopes, meadows, shorelines, wetlands and riparian corridors. These properties are managed for a wide variety of community benefits including recreation, wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions such as stormwater retention, air and water filtration, and carbon sequestration.

In 2008, the Natural Resource Division recognized the need to analyze the health of these open space properties to assist in prioritizing management goals, and to help allocate resources more effectively. This led to development and implementation of several forest health assessment models that were available at the time, including the use of the Urban Forest Effects Model (UFORE) and creation of the Forest Condition Assessment Model (FCAM). These plot-based assessment models provided the Natural Resource Division with good baseline information; however, they did not provide a full comprehensive inventory of all 2,000 managed acres. Data collection also proved to be labor intensive which made follow-up sampling and monitoring unfeasible.

In 2013, the first edition of the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool (FLAT) Field Manual was published and made available for use. FLAT provides a mechanism for performing a rapid assessment of

ecological conditions of undeveloped forested land that is less labor intensive and more cost efficient compared to more traditional models. Most importantly, FLAT provides a comprehensive baseline assessment of an agency's entire open space system and can be readily adapted for monitoring progress over time. Several public agencies in the Puget Sound region have successfully used data collected through FLAT to develop forest stewardship plans, prioritize restoration funding and efforts, and monitor restoration success over time.

The purpose of this project is to use FLAT to complete a comprehensive health assessment and inventory of all open space properties managed by the Natural Resource Division. The collected data will be used to build a forest health database and develop a long-range natural resource stewardship plan that will guide the Natural Resource Division in prioritizing funding and forest enhancement efforts over the next 20-30 years. Site specific forest enhancement plans will be developed for two open space sites determined to be a high priority based on the forest health data collected through FLAT. The site-specific enhancement plans will provide a framework for all future enhancement plans and restoration efforts at all open space sites managed by the Natural Resource Division.

Firm Selection

The selection process was consistent with the City's contracting policies and State law for selecting professional service firms.

Five firms submitted proposals, which were evaluated by a review team from Parks & Community Services. The Watershed Company was chosen as the most qualified firm based on their price, knowledge, understanding and experience working on similar projects. The Watershed Company has been providing science-based environmental consulting services for 37 years, specializing in trees, wetlands, streams and rivers, shorelines and wildlife. The review team came to a consensus that Watershed's multidisciplinary team of arborists, landscape architects, planners, biologist and GIS specialist will best meet the needs of the City for assessing the current forest health condition of all undeveloped open space properties managed by the Natural Resource Division.

Deliverables & Timeline

Deliverables will include a comprehensive forest health database, a natural resource stewardship plan, and two site specific forest enhancement plans. The intent is to have the database completed by the fall of 2020 and the planning documents completed by the spring of 2021.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

Bellevue City Code Chapter 4.28 provides for the fair and equitable treatment of all persons involved in the purchasing process. Council approval is required to award the bid where the cost exceeds \$90,000.

This forest health assessment is consistent with the following Comprehensive Plan policies:

- Environment Element, EN-63: Preserve and maintain fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas and wetlands in a natural state and restore similar areas that have become degraded.

- Environment Element, EN-70: Improve wildlife habitat especially in patches and linkages by enhancing vegetation composition and structure and incorporating indigenous plant species compatible with the site.
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element, PA-31: Manage Bellevue's forest resources, including street trees, formal plantings, and self-sustained natural stands to ensure their long-term vitality.

Fiscal Impact

This agreement obligates the City to an amount up to \$103,917, plus all applicable taxes. \$50,000 will be reimbursed to the City through an approved King Conservation District grant. The remaining \$53,917 will be funded through the Parks and Community Services operating budget. There are sufficient funds available to complete this project.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt the Resolution authorizing execution of a professional services contract with The Watershed Company to provide environmental consulting services to complete a comprehensive forest health assessment of all undeveloped open space properties managed by the Natural Resource Division, in an amount not to exceed \$103,917.00, plus all applicable taxes.
2. Do not adopt the Resolution and provide alternative direction to staff.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

Proposed Resolution No. 9785

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Open Space Property Site Maps

Professional Services Agreement with The Watershed Company
King Conservation District Grant Agreement