



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 7a

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting February 28, 2017

DATE: February 21, 2017
TO: Dave Soike, Interim Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Pearse Edwards, Government Affairs Director
SUBJECT: Airport Community Ecology Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of Commission engagement related to the Flight Safety Corridor Program, Commissioners directed the creation of a \$1 million Airport Community Ecology Fund (ACE) on November 22, 2016, to support projects and programs that improve ecological and environmental attributes in the airport-area communities of SeaTac, Burien, and Des Moines.

Staff from multiple departments is engaged with research and development of the ACE Fund.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

As part of the deliberation on how to structure, scope and develop criteria for the ACE Fund, Port staff:

- Researched community fund models such as: participatory budgeting projects in the City of Seattle, traditional environmental grants in King County, and hybrid funding models such as the City of Seattle's Duwamish River Opportunity Fund. The focus of this research was to assess lessons learned from other funds' community engagement practices, stakeholder consultation opportunities, and outreach strategies to ensure the community engagement best practices are included in the development of the ACE Fund.
- Explored environmental partnerships as a way to ensure high-impact ecological metrics. This could include non-profit environmental organizations to help expand the program's reach and ensure the ACE Fund reflects the Port's environmental commitment.
- Identified a precedent of internal processes and experiences related to mitigation grants distributed to communities in South King County.
- Received community input at both the Flight Corridor Safety Program in SeaTac on Wednesday, February 1 and through an online open house created for this program. Comments and feedback on the ACE Fund fell into the following three categories:

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- 1) Geographic diversity: capturing where many attendees “live, work and play” to identify how and where community members spend their time. As anticipated, participants demonstrated a diverse experience: most people lived, worked, and played (terms were left for self-interpretation) across cities and political boundaries in King County.
- 2) Vision for a green and healthy community: identifying attendees’ values to inform environmental improvements in their communities.
- 3) Project priorities: Collecting information on what kind of projects community members would support. Data gleaned include desired scope and environmental issue areas important to participating and online attendees.

Process Model

Staff-drafted process models took into consideration core principles that included a.) equity across communities, b.) a metric-based structure and c.) community engagement/involvement. Staff considered and reviewed a variety of participatory models that would inform, consult and involve the population of the three communities. Our goal is to obtain community input on ACE Fund alternatives, solutions and final decisions and to keep the communities informed and engaged. This process includes:

1. Gathering information by collecting community input and partnering with stakeholders to identify issues and projects relevant to the program’s goals, projected timelines (on-going);
2. Consulting with the Port of Seattle Legal, Internal Audit and CPO departments to ensure that the program includes Port standards (on-going);
3. Establishing decision criteria, process and timelines for the program;
4. Briefing and receiving Commission feedback on final project criteria, process, partnerships and timelines (by end-March); and,
5. Distributing and reviewing applications for final approval by an internal working group (Summer 2017).

Community Partnerships

As noted in the “Fund Development” section, staff has explored the option of partnering with an environmental group to expand the program’s reach and impact. A recommended approach is a division of funding to create a robust partnership implemented between the Port and an existing environmental network.

Such a partnership would help the Port to realize two goals with airport-area communities:

- A. Improve trust and relationships
- B. Target high-impact environmental benefit

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Under this model, ACE funds could follow a split method of fund disbursement. For example, a portion of the funding could be disbursed by the Port through a community engagement process and the balance disbursed by a third-party group with environmental consultation and decision-making expertise. Finally, we intend to consult with the Port of Seattle Internal Audit team to ensure that the program includes auditable standards.

Funding Model

Staff recommends the fund be implemented over the remaining duration of the Flight Safety Corridor Program (approximately two years) with twice-yearly disbursements. The longer timeframe maintains an open dialogue with community members throughout the program. It naturally also allows for more types of groups and community members to participate in the fund and gain a better understanding of the Port’s environmental commitment. The current motion does not include a deadline for the fund to be completed.

Staff will track and update project status and report back to the community and Commission on a quarterly basis.

Next Steps

- Identify key stakeholders
- Establish funding and project criteria with key stakeholders
- Finalize process
- Commission feedback and approval

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

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.

January 12, 2017 – The Commission received a memo providing an update on the program’s progress and requesting guidance on engagement model, third-party partnership(s), and program length.

January 13, 2017 – The Commission amended the Airport 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.