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Three new Green City Partnerships launch in Burien, Des Moines and SeaTac with leadership from Forterra and financial support from the Port of Seattle; effort will expand community involvement in nurturing healthy urban forests throughout Puget Sound

Open houses approaching in late October and November where residents can weigh in on their priorities and learn how to get involved.

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SEATTLE — Burien, SeaTac and Des Moines are joining the ranks of nine other Green City Partnerships around Puget Sound — collaborations between regional sustainability group Forterra, city governments, community organizations, and city residents to actively care for trees in forested parks, natural areas, neighborhoods, and other spaces throughout the region. The intention is more than 9,000 thriving acres of connected forest from Everett to Tacoma.

Expansion of the Green Cities Program to these new cities is made possible by multi-year funding from the **Port of Seattle** and its **Airport Community Ecology (ACE) Fund**.

Established in 2016, the ACE Fund recognizes that communities near the airport experience more impacts from airport operations and should also experience more benefits.



“Helping the airport’s neighbor cities create a healthier and more extensive green canopy will have innumerable environmental, social, and economical benefits,” said **Port of Seattle Commission President Courtney Gregoire**. “Communities closest to the airport experience more of the impacts and as a result should experience these unique benefits. We appreciate the partnership with the cities and Forterra to focus on community and environmental health while creating a still more beautiful place to live.”

Forterra is organizing start-up of the new Green City Partnerships. Already it has completed a preliminary assessment of the extent of the tree canopy in the cities, along with other land covers such as shrubs, grass and impervious surfaces. Of particular interest is how these coverings match to places with residences, schools and community centers.

“As compared to the rest of King County, communities in South King County face severe health and income disparities” says **Michelle Connor, President and CEO of Forterra**. “This program is an opportunity to improve outcomes for public health in Des Moines, Burien, and SeaTac, since trees clean the air and encourage people to get outdoors to walk and play and spend time with one other. We’re grateful to the Port of Seattle and leaders in the communities for the chance to create new Green City Partnerships and make these vibrant cities even greater.”

Adds **Joanna Nelson de Flores, Director of Forterra’s Green Cities Program**, “I urge people to come out and tell us how they want to get involved and what spots in their community should be an early priority. Together we have the potential not only to make cities healthier and more livable, but get people working on the land, meeting their neighbors and having fun.”

WHY URBAN TREES MATTER

A large body of scientific and economic [research](#) documents the many benefits of urban trees, including:

- **Filtering** up to a third of fine particle pollutants within 300 yards of a tree.
- **Reducing rates** of asthma, cardiac disease, and strokes due to improved air quality.
- **Cooling** city streets by two to four degrees F, reducing deaths from heat and cutting energy use.
- **Protecting biodiversity**, including habitat for migrating birds and pollinators.
- **Reducing obesity levels** by increasing physical activity including walking and cycling.
- **Managing stormwater**, reducing urban flooding, and keeping pollutants out of waterways, including Puget Sound (and its threatened orcas).
- **Increasing** neighborhood property values.
- **Reducing stress** by buffering noise and bolstering mental wellbeing.

Despite their importance, urban trees are disappearing. An April 18 paper authored by two U.S. Forest Service scientists found that metropolitan areas in the U.S. are losing about 36 million trees a year. In Washington State, the loss between 2009 and 2014 is [estimated](#) at 3,350 acres. Development is playing a part, but so too [temperature increases and drought](#) because of climate change. Healthy urban trees across the U.S. store an estimated 708 million tons of carbon, or roughly 13 percent of the country’s annual CO2 emissions.

UPCOMING OPEN HOUSES + A COMMUNITY SURVEY

Forterra is eager for input from residents of SeaTac, Des Moines and Burien on what places to prioritize for early attention and how individuals, families and groups hope to get involved. Child care, food and interpretation will be provided at events. .

Community members unable to attend an open house (details on following page) can complete a short [online survey](#) by November 7th.

SeaTac Open House

Saturday, October 20th | 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Tyee High School Cafeteria (Building 200)
4424 S. 188th, SeaTac, WA 98188

Des Moines Open House

Monday, October 29th | 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Des Moines Beach Park, Building B
22030 Cliff Ave. S., Des Moines, WA 98198

Burien Open House

Wednesday, November 7 | 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Burien Library, 1st Floor Community Meeting Room
400 SW 152nd, Burien, WA 98166



ABOUT THE GREEN CITY PARTNERSHIPS

A program of regional sustainability group Forterra, [Green City Partnerships](#) bring together community members, local governments, businesses, schools and nonprofits to improve quality of life and connections to nature by restoring, planting and caring for trees in forested parks, natural areas, neighborhoods, and other spaces throughout the city.

With the addition of SeaTac, Burien and Des Moines, there are now twelve Green Cities. The others are Seattle, Tacoma, Kirkland, Redmond, Kent, Puyallup, Everett, Tukwila and Snoqualmie. Collectively, these programs:

- Serve 1.5 million people
- Have 2,305 acres currently in restoration
- Have, since 2005, mobilized more than 1.23 million volunteer hours

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 46.9 million passengers and more than 425,800 metric tons of air cargo in 2017. With a regional economic impact of more than \$22.5 billion in business revenue, Sea-Tac generates more than 151,400 jobs (87,300 direct jobs), representing over \$3.6 billion in direct earnings and more than \$442 million in state and local taxes. Thirty-four airlines serve 91 non-stop domestic and 28 international destinations including Canada, Mexico and seasonal operations.

ABOUT FORTERRA

Forterra secures the places — urban, rural and wild — that are keystones of a sustainable future for all. Our mission ranges across Washington, from iconic wild landscapes, to working farms and forests, to lands in our cities for parks, the arts, community purposes, and affordable housing. Work includes stewardship and restoration projects, often performed by volunteers. And we champion policies that marry sustainability and economic development. More at forterra.org.

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