



King County

**CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2015 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**

PROJECT NAME: La Villa Meadows Natural Area on Thornton Creek Addition

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): City of Seattle

Open Space System: Thornton Creek Watershed
(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: .39 acre **CFT Application Amount:** \$300,000
(Size in acres and Proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal) *(Dollar Amount of CFT grant requested)*

Type of Acquisition(s): **Fee Title** **Conservation Easement** **Other:**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Address: Property & Acquisition Services **Fax** 233-7038
Seattle Parks and Recreation

800 Maynard Avenue S, Seattle, WA 98134-1337 **Date** March 13, 2014

PROJECT SUMMARY:

(In the space below, provide a brief, but comprehensive description of the project including goals and significance of this project)



Goal:

The goal of this project is to acquire a strategic property on Thornton Creek. The targeted property is a .39-acre inholding with a house on it. The owner and the Seattle Parks Department have a signed agreement and will close later this year. The City is requesting \$300,000 in CFT proceeds to purchase the site.

Background:

Thornton Creek is a salmon-bearing stream that drains northeast Seattle and flows into Lake Washington at Matthews Beach Park. The Thornton Creek Natural Area comprises the north and south branches of the creek, plus several tributary streams. During the 1990s as part of the Open Space and Trails Bond Program the City

acquired several substantial areas along the creek system and preserve them in natural condition, including the rest of LaVilla natural area on Thornton Creek on the South Branch of Thornton Creek.

In recent years, the City has protected more than 15 additional acres along several stream reaches through property acquisitions, transfers of jurisdiction, and voluntary conservation. Nevertheless, opportunities continue to arise for the acquisition of private properties that are in relatively natural condition and that would allow significant enhancement of stream habitat.

1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Please review the attached evaluation criteria. For the **proposed acquisition parcel(s)**, please (1) mark only those criteria that apply, and (2) thoroughly, yet succinctly describe **in the space below** how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. Historic/cultural resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Scenic resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G. Park/open space or natural corridor add. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> D. Community separator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs |

- A. Purchasing this property will consolidate City ownership of a stretch of the South Branch of Thornton Creek. In the context of northeast Seattle, this area is a significant riparian woodland and provides important habitat for wildlife.
- B. Cutthroat trout are resident in this reach of the South Branch. Since Seattle Public Utilities replaced the culvert under Lake City Way NE during the summer of 2002, spawning Coho salmon also are now able to enter the reach. The lower reaches of the creek also support sockeye and steelhead, which now will be able to re-populate the upper creek.
- C. The property is located to the east of Lake City Way. The natural area is a neighborhood scenic resource.
- D. The property, coupled with the other Parks properties along this stretch of Thornton Creek provides a needed buffer between the single family neighborhood and busy Lake City Way.
- E. The property is adjacent to what used to be the La Villa Dairy, which was started in 1922, one of the first businesses in Northeast Seattle. The original dairy building still stands on Fischer Lane, to the north of the property. Ole Blindheim's son, Alvin Blindheim, sheds further light on the dairy in a 1994 interview:



"The La Villa Dairy was started close to the lake, on the Hammer Ranch (near present day 105th Street and Sand Point Way). My father had about 30 head of cattle there. My father swam in Lake Washington at what was then called La Villa Station, near 98th Street and the Gilman Trail. The dairy business ran into problems by the lake: TB got into the herd, and cows were struck by trains. My Dad and his partner decided to move their dairy to an upland site, but they kept the La Villa name."

- F. The targeted property is the last remaining inholding within the La Villa Natural Area on Thornton Creek, an undeveloped natural held for its natural resource values. This addition will facilitate stream enhancement and increased floodplain retention of high flow resulting from storm water runoff coming from surrounding areas.
- G. Current City holdings in La Villa Meadows Natural Area total 3.9 acres. The proposed acquisition will add to this total and also will accommodate additional passive-use recreation. Because of the connectivity and access to existing park property that is made possible by this acquisition, the site provides a far greater resource value than would be provided by purchase of an isolated property of this size.
- H. The site will facilitate use of the existing park for nature education, bird-watching, and other passive recreation activities. It will also facilitate voluntary stewardship and conservation activities, which have recreation value as well as value for resource protection.

2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

For the proposed acquisition parcel(s), please (1) mark all criteria that apply, and (2) thoroughly, yet succinctly describe *in the space below* how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria.

- A. Educational/interpretive opportunity
- B. Threat of loss of open space resources
- C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed
- D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project:
- E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?
- F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation

- A. Properties that are preserved along Thornton Creek provide outdoor laboratories for the Homewaters Project (<http://www.homewatersproject.org/>), which is a collaboration of students, teachers, residents, and other decision-makers who work together to understand and actively care for the Thornton Creek watershed. This, in turn, helps students to develop the habits, attitudes, skills and knowledge of stewards, citizens and leaders. Developed, led and supported by community, for community, this educational program is administratively based at North Seattle Community College.

One of the many factors that make the Thornton Creek watershed a unique and remarkable place is the fact that crammed within this small, twelve-square-mile area are 35 schools that are active in watershed cooperation and that serve a wide range of students: large schools, tiny schools - schools for those just starting, schools for the most advanced graduate students - urban schools, suburban schools - well-supported schools, poorly-supported and overcrowded schools. The property is located within one mile of four public schools, one private school and a Seattle Public Library. It is anticipated that the public and private elementary schools will use the site for field trips and service opportunities.

- B. The City has been trying to acquire this property for 2 decades and the owner was finally willing to sell. If the City does not acquire the property now, it may be another decade before the opportunity comes up again, and funding would be uncertain at that time.
- C. The City has executed a Purchase and Sale Agreements with the owner and is scheduled to close in mid-2014.
- D. The acquisition of this property implements and extends the goals of the 2000 Thornton Creek masterplan developed by Seattle Public Utilities. Seattle Parks and Seattle Public Utilities have partnered on several projects in the Thornton Creek watershed as part of their cooperative effort to protect and enhance water quality and associated natural resource values in the watershed. While Parks' green space acquisitions have been concentrated in a series of nodes along the creek system, SPU is able to complement these efforts by its jurisdiction and stormwater easement rights over the watercourses themselves. Other partnerships include Homewaters Project described above, and the Thornton Creek Alliance, which ranks this property acquisition as their top priority in the watershed.
- E. The targeted property has long been targeted for preservation by the Thornton Creek Alliance, as well as by the North Neighborhood Plan and by the Seattle Parks and Recreation Plan 2000, which states: "Acquire natural areas in stream corridors as they become available."

3. STEWARDSHIP AND MAINTENANCE

How will the property be stewarded and maintained? Does the property lend itself to volunteer stewardship opportunities? How will ongoing stewardship and maintenance efforts be funded?

Seattle Parks will maintain the park as part of the other properties along this stretch of Thornton Creek. The Thornton Creek Alliance and other community groups are also actively working on stream enhancement projects in partnership with Parks and Seattle Public Utilities. These groups will likely help to steward the new property.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT^a	CFT: \$300,000
2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT^b	PEL:

**Allowable acquisition costs (Ordinance 14714): The disbursement of funds shall be made only for capital project expenditures that include costs of acquiring real property, including interests in real property, and the following costs: the cost of related relocation of eligible occupants, cost of appraisal, cost of appraisal review, costs of title insurance, closing costs, pro rata real estate taxes, recording fees, compensating tax, hazardous waste substances reports, directly related staff costs and related legal and administrative costs, but shall not include the cost of preparing applications for conservation futures funds.*

Estimation of property value:

Briefly describe how land values have been estimated, i.e. appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means.

Estimation of property value: Appraisal by independent contract MAI appraiser

ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS (dollars)	(a range may be included)
Total property interest value	\$600,000
Title and appraisal work	
Closing, fees, taxes	
Relocation	
Hazardous waste reports	
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$600,000

MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)	DATE (Expended or Committed)	DOLLAR AMOUNT (Expended or Committed)
2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy	November 2008	\$300,000
Total CFT Funds Previously Received <i>This Project</i>		
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds <i>Currently Identified</i>		\$300,000
Unidentified Remaining Match Need		\$0

Unidentified remaining match need

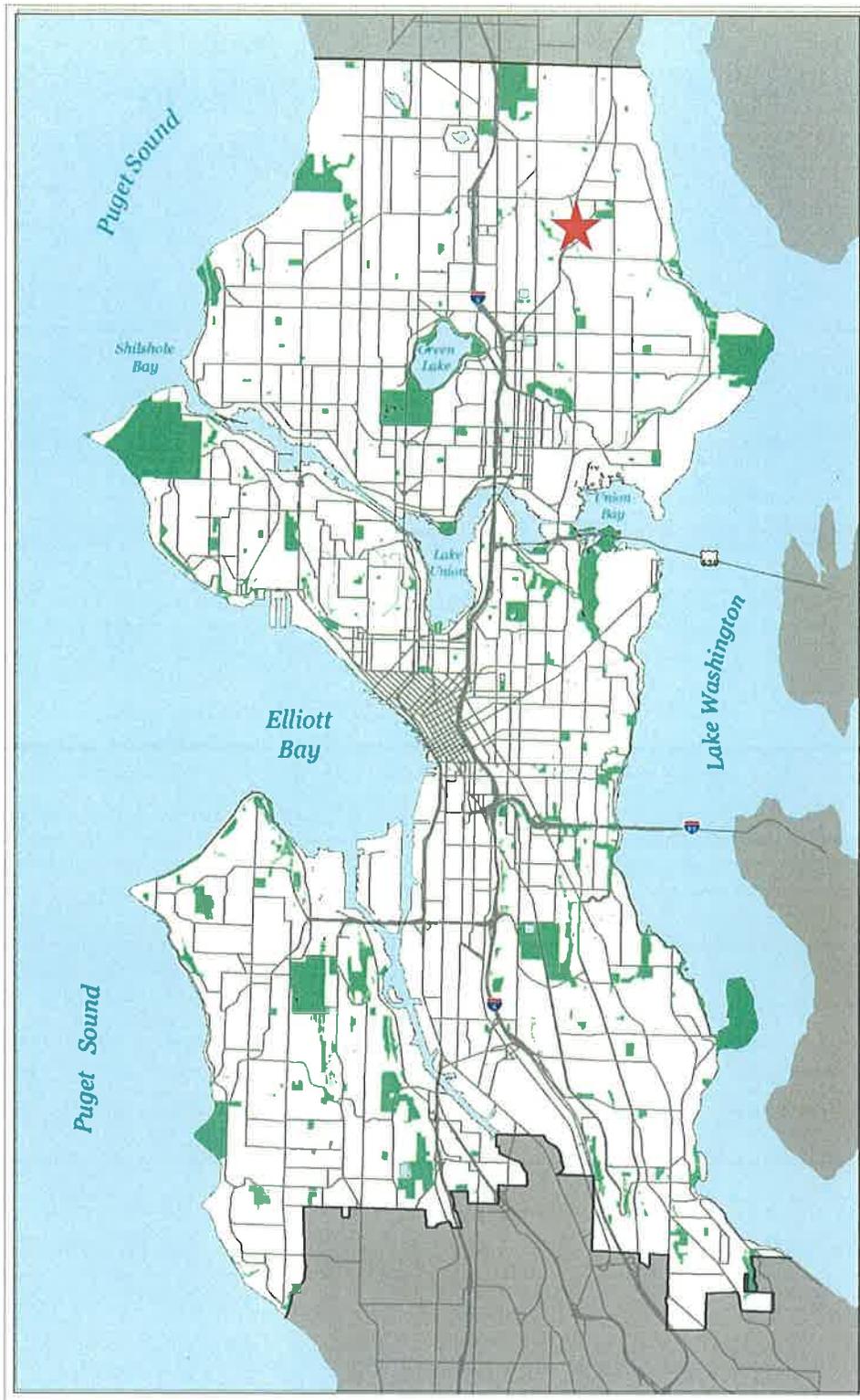
Please discuss briefly how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met:

Not applicable.

5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Brief Activity Description	Dollar Value of In-kind Contribution	Status (Completed, or Proposed in future?)	Activity Date Range (When was activity completed? or, date proposed in future)
see earlier discussions of Additional Factors and Stewardship & Maintenance	none claimed		
TOTAL			

6. ATTACHED MAPS (*Two maps are now required: 1) site map and 2) general location map; you may also include one additional map, aerial photo or site photo*)



LEGEND

- ★ Proposed Acquisition
- City Parks

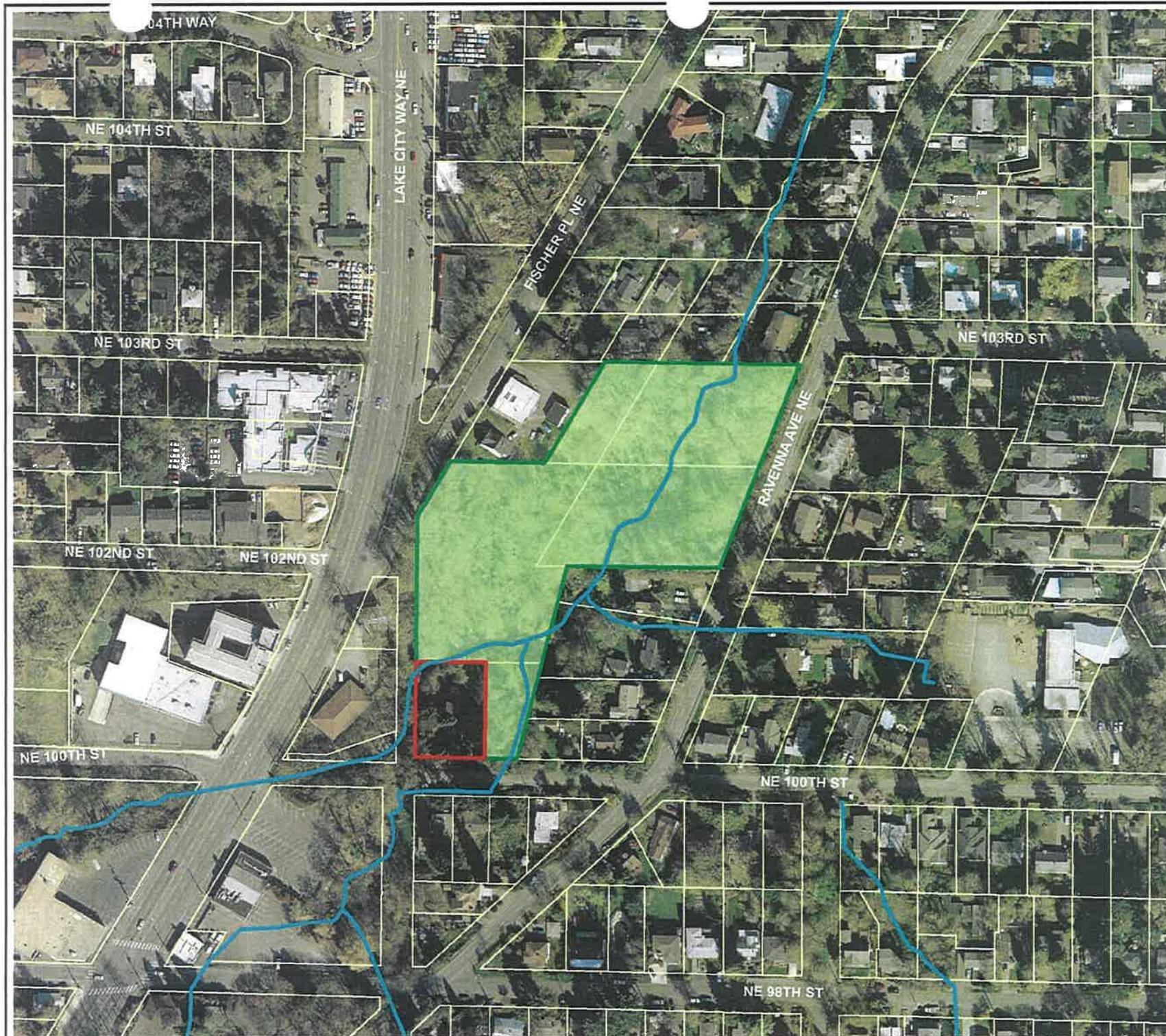


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 Map date: April 9, 2009



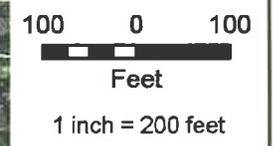
SEATTLE PARKS
AND RECREATION

Thornton Creek Natural Area: Ravenna Ave



Legend

- Thornton Creek
- Target Parcel
- Park Boundary
- Thornton Creek NA
- Parcel Boundary



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Orthophoto source:
Walker and Assoc., March 2005
Map date: March 9, 2011