



King County

**CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2016 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS
APPLICATION FOR FUNDS**

PROJECT NAME: Thornton Creek Natural Area Addition: Little Brook

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): City of Seattle

Open Space System: Thornton Creek Natural Area

(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: approx. 0.35 acre **CFT Application Amount:** \$225,000

(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

Contact Name: Chip Nevins **Phone** 206-233-3879

Title: Acquisition Planner **Fax** 206-233-7038

Address: Property & Acquisition Services **Email** chip.nevins@seattle.gov

Seattle Parks and Recreation

800 Maynard Avenue S, Seattle, WA 98134-1337 **Date** March 18, 2015

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 .35-acre property with a house on it abuts City ownership along Little Brook, a tributary of the North Branch of Thornton Creek near SPU's Meadowbrook Ponds restoration project. 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 past two decades the City acquired substantial areas along the creek

system to preserve them in natural condition, including the adjacent property.

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 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 type="checkbox"/> D. Community separator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs |

- A. Purchasing this property will add to City ownership along this stretch of Little Brook, a tributary of the North Branch of Thornton Creek. In northeast Seattle, this area is significant riparian woodland and provides important habitat for wildlife.
- B. The purchase of this property would continue the City's effort at protecting Little Brook, a tributary that joins the North Branch of Thornton Creek just above the Meadowbrook Ponds restoration project completed by Seattle Public Utilities. Salmonid returns in the Thornton Creek system have increased greatly in response to stream protection and enhancement efforts. The Thornton Creek system has the highest hydrologic integrity of any creek system in Seattle, based on considerations such as stream length and tributaries. The system also has the greatest existing and potential diversity of fish populations in Seattle, including Chinook, sockeye, coho, steelhead, rainbow trout and resident cutthroat. The streambed is in natural condition on this property so it is a good site for habitat enhancement.
- C. The targeted site supports mature native conifers and is a neighborhood scenic resource. It is visible along 35th Avenue NE, a local arterial, and from the footpath that traverses unopened NE 117th Street to the south of the site.
- F. The targeted property is adjacent to 1.9 acres of protected riparian land along the Little Brook tributary of Thornton Creek, an iconic landscape in NE Seattle.
- G. The proposed acquisition will facilitate stream enhancement, increased floodplain retention of high flow resulting from storm water runoff coming from surrounding areas and additional passive-use recreation. Besides including a portion of Little Brook, this property includes a flat bench above the creek along 35th Avenue NE that could be a viewing area for the community.
- H. The site will facilitate use of the existing park for nature education, bird watching and nature viewing. By providing visual access to Thornton Creek, 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 real estate market in NE Seattle is red hot; developers are snapping up all underdeveloped properties. If the City does not buy the property now, it will be redeveloped and the opportunity will be lost.
- C. The owner of the property, a real estate broker, recently contacted Seattle Parks to see if we were interested in acquiring it as part of our Thornton Creek holdings before he put in on the open market. However, as with other under-developed properties, the City's experience is that owners are willing to sell, contingent on the City's ability to negotiate an acceptable value.
- 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, who have been instrumental in the restoration of the City property just to south.
- E. The targeted property is a priority of the Thornton Creek Alliance, and its acquisition is consistent with the North Neighborhood Plan and 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: \$225,000
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	\$450,000
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)	\$450,000

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	\$225,000
Total CFT Funds Previously Received This Project		
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds Currently Identified		\$225,000
Unidentified Remaining Match Need		\$0

Unidentified remaining match need

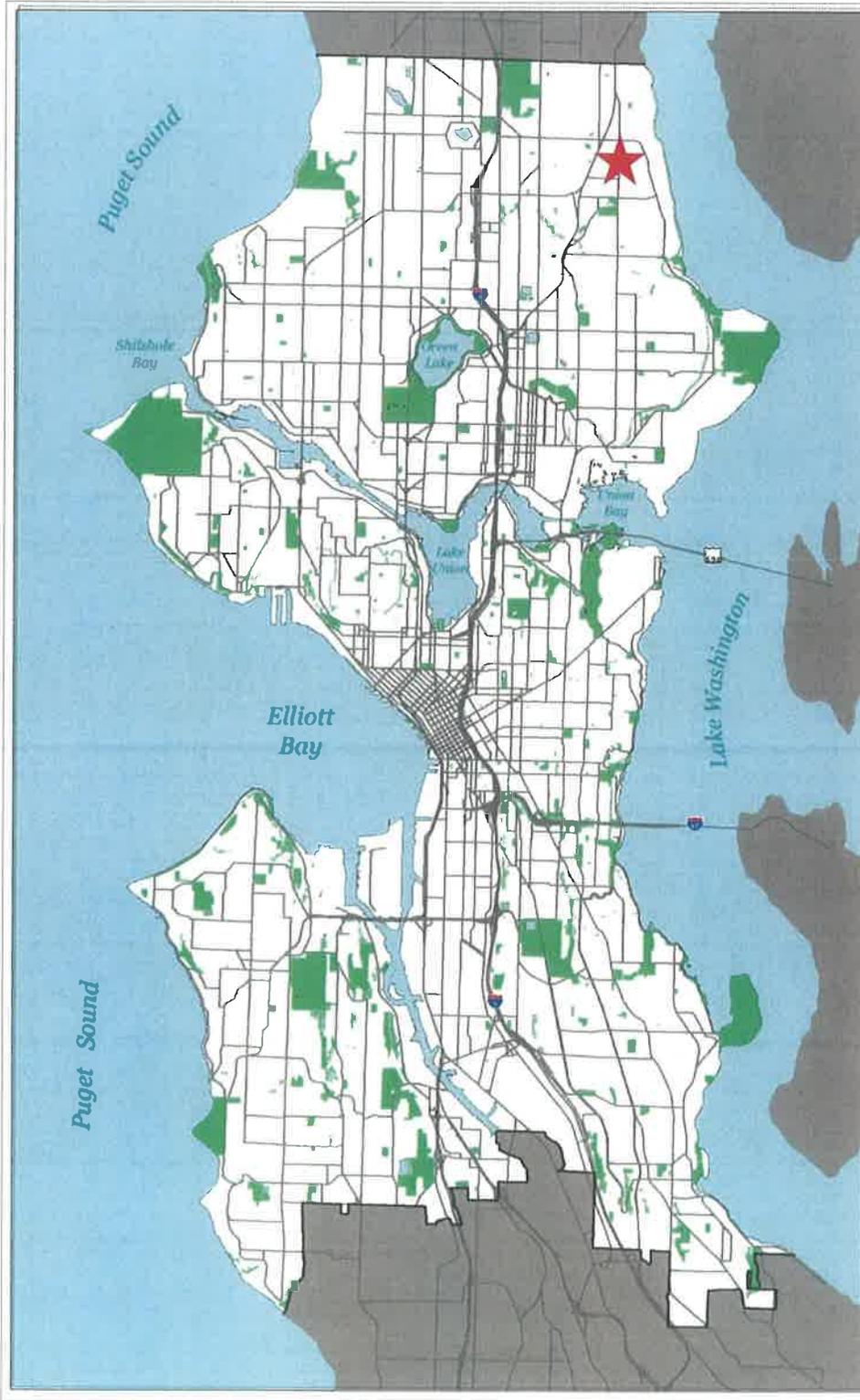
Please discuss briefly how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met:

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*)



**Thornton Creek
Natural Area
Addition**

LEGEND

- ★ Proposed Acquisition
- City Parks

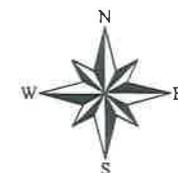


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Map date: April 9, 2009

Thornton Creek Natural Area: Little Brook

Legend

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



100 0

Feet
1 inch = 169 feet

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Orthophoto source:
MapCon, March-April 2012
Map date: January 14, 2015

