



City of Seattle  
Edward B. Murray, Mayor

**Seattle Parks and Recreation**  
Christopher Williams, Acting Superintendent

## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** September 5, 2014, 9:30 AM, City Council Chambers

**To:** Councilmember Jean Godden, Chair  
City Council Parks, Seattle Center, Libraries and Gender Pay Equity Committee

**From:** Kim Baldwin, Seattle Parks; Andrea Dwyer, Seattle Tilth; Peter Masundire; Friends of RBUFW; Jason Henry, The Berger Partnership

**Subject: Public hearing on the Recommendation of the Director of DPD on the City Council Land Use Action for Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands Renovation**

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### **Presentation Outline:**

Project Background – *Kim Baldwin, Seattle Parks and Recreation*  
Project Design and Requested Modifications - *Jason Henry, The Berger Partnership*  
Urban Farm Operations – *Andrea Dwyer, Seattle Tilth*  
Community Voice - *Peter Masundire; Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands*

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**Requested Council Action:** Modify the development standards for urban farms at a park facility.

### **Requested Modifications to the Code (SMC Sections 23.42.051 and 23.54.030.E.3):**

In general, the code was written with residential sites in mind and we believe modifications are appropriate and necessary when applying the code to a large public park site. The following modifications to the Seattle Municipal Code are requested:

- 1. Allow installation of mechanical equipment designed for commercial use.** *Using salvaged commercial grade equipment allows Seattle Tilth to offer substantial cooking classes, demonstrations and events with durable and adequate capacity equipment.*
- 2. Allow urban farm structures total gross floor area to exceed maximum amount** (1,000 sf max. per code, 15,978 sf proposed) *currently, one existing greenhouse exceeds this threshold. The site won't be able to function to current capacity if this code applies and would fall terribly short of its potential.*
- 3. All additional height for structures for an urban farm use in a residential zone.** (12' max. per code, 21' max. proposed) *One of the greenhouses being preserved exceeds 12' in height. The compost shed with solar panels needs to be high enough to allow vehicular clearance for functional reasons. The classroom building takes advantage of natural air ventilation and light and the design proportions are appropriate for the capacity. The wash & pack building is an extension of the nearby classroom.*
- 4. Allow vehicular parking maneuvering to occur within the right-of-way.** *There is an existing curb cut at the driveway entry that is within the right-of-way. The project takes advantage of this existing curb cut and avoids impacting the adjacent steep slope.*
- 5. Allow urban farm planting to exceed maximum quantity (4,000 sf per code, 29,986 sf proposed)** *The site has the capacity to accommodate a generous amount of planting beds. If this code applies, the urban farm will fall terribly short of its potential and it will be hard to justify having an urban farm. By modifying this code, a great community benefit will be provided.*

**Project Background-General:** This community initiated project transforms a non-functional park nursery into a working urban farm and wetland restoration site. The Management and Operating Agreement between Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks), Seattle Tilth and the Friends of Rainier Beach Urban Farm and Wetlands (RBUFW) was presented to this Committee on August 16, 2012. The Committee and Full Council approved the agreement (Ord. 123967, September 2012). The urban farm has been in operation since with proven success. The proposed capital improvements will allow the farm to function at a capacity reasonable for the site.

**Project Background - Budget:** A major fundraising campaign was launched by Seattle Parks Foundation in collaboration with Friends of RBUFW and Seattle Tilth. All funding sources are listed below:

<b>Funding Sources:</b>	
Parks & Green Spaces Levy Opportunity Fund	\$500,000
DON Neighborhood Matching Fund	\$50,000
Seattle Parks Foundation (private donors)	\$965,000
Washington State Funding	\$291,000
2014 Adopted City CIP	\$300,000
<b>TOTAL Project Funds</b>	<b>\$2,106,000</b>

**Project Background - Public Involvement Process:** The involvement process for this project has been significant. Major events are listed below:

Dec. 3, 2009: Atlantic City Nursery Planning Meeting #1– Initial discussion about possible uses  
 Dec. 12 & 13, 2009: Site Visits for the community – Viewing of current conditions  
 June 30, 2010: Atlantic City Nursery Planning Meeting #2– Brainstorming for an urban farm  
 June 19, 2012: Community Design Meeting #1-background and idea gathering  
 July 28, 2012: Community Design Meeting #2-concepts and feedback  
 September 13, 2012: Community Design Meeting #3-schematic design and feedback  
 December 5, 2013: Press release/ email blast – Halt process and fundraise for full development

**Project Background - Schedule:** Construction documents are nearly complete. Permits are close to finalization. Projected construction start is approaching this winter, 2014/15.

**Project Design:** The major accomplishments of this development include the following:

- relocating the existing greenhouses and moving them outside the wetland boundaries,
- building composting bins w/ future photovoltaic options,
- building a classroom/kitchen/bathroom structure,
- creating a farm stand,
- renovating a tool shed into office space,
- revising driveway circulation and parking,
- creating a children’s garden and in-ground crop field,
- improving wetland habitat and creating a connection to Beer Sheva Park.

**Requested Modifications:**

1. Allow installation of mechanical equipment designed for commercial use.
2. Allow urban farm structures total gross floor area to exceed maximum amount
3. All additional height for structures for an urban farm use in a residential zone.
4. Allow vehicular parking maneuvering to occur within the right-of-way.
5. Allow urban farm planting to exceed maximum quantity (4,000 sf per code, 29,986 sf proposed)

**Urban Farm Operations-Commitments:**

Seattle Tilth has been managing and operating the site since late 2012. Tilth is working the fields, utilizing the greenhouses and offering a number of programs to the community.

As approved by Ordinance 123967, the Memorandum of Agreement between Seattle Tilth, Friends of RBUFW, and Parks includes the following public benefits:

1. The premises will be open during normal park hours for free public access to the urban farm. The Operators will provide a minimum of 8 hours a week in the premises for meetings, classes, workshops, and family and community events to local organizations, neighborhood groups, individuals and families throughout the term of the Agreement.
2. Tilth shall recruit community members for work parties to teach, demonstrate and implement gardening and sustainable practices.
3. Tilth shall host workshops to teach gardening and sustainable practices.
4. The programming shall include race and social justice and the urban agriculture initiatives.
5. Tilth shall host community building events such as festivals and events to celebrate community assets and/or urban farming.
6. Tilth shall pursue restoration of the wetland and wetland buffers and provide educational programming around that theme.

**Urban Farm Operations-Environmental and Social Sustainability Goals:**

The intent of this project is to transform the site into a long term working urban farm and a demonstration wetlands restoration site. This goal is to produce fresh healthy food annually for families struggling with food security, provide educational opportunities for at-risk and under-served youth in the community, offer access to and education from a rare in-city natural wetlands environment, improve wetland habitat for native wildlife, foster much needed economic development and strengthen community. The project will provide public access to the site by way of Beer Sheva Park and connection to Pritchard Wetlands and Beach Parks.

**Community Voice:**

Friends of RBUFW has supported this project and helped to provide community outreach consistently since the start of the project.