

ENVISIONING SEATTLE'S GREEN FUTURE

Executive Summary
Visions and Strategies from
The Green Futures Charrette

OPEN SPACE SEATTLE 2100 NOVEMBER 2006



ttle's Green Infrastructure

INTRODUCTION

Within the next century, at least another halfmillion people will need to fit within Seattle's city limits, doubling our current population. How will the city retain its famed livability, while accommodating and attracting new residents away from sprawling suburbs? How will we achieve carbon-neutrality to reverse global climate change? How will we restore our salmon runs, and cope with the impacts of post-peak oil prices?

If Seattle is to be the vibrant, ecological city we are striving for, it will only get there through careful and visionary planning today. While implementation may be incremental, the vision must be clear, unwavering and bold. We need to know where we want to be so that we can seize opportunities to get us there. That is the premise of Open Space Seattle 2100 and the departure point for the participants of the Green Futures Charrette.

This planning endeavor enlisted the talents and skills of over 300 people, who generously invested two days to consider Seattle's green future. The extraordinary participation by professionals, citizen activists and students allowed every part of the city to be considered from multiple perspectives. Like the Olmsted Brothers did 100 years ago, our approach looked to the long-term, yet, unlike a century ago, we divided the city into its underlying, immutable topographic and watershed basins.

Though the plans herein result from a twoday charrette, they represent almost a year of careful preparation and study by our Guidance Committee and students. In several cases the visions presented are next iterations of longformed community groups' visions. As with any plan, these ideas need additional refinement, ground-truthing and public input but they are a strong and earnest beginning.

The Open Space Seattle work provides a template for developing an integrated green infrastructure for all of Seattle and propels us toward civic action. The big planning moves that all 23 teams advocated are clear:

Create integrated, connected "green infrastructure" that supports urban functions without damaging the atmosphere or water:

bikeways, green freeways, natural drainage filtration, and tree canopy cover are all part of that system.

Plan for **density and community**, by focusing development into urban nodes that contain civic spaces, local identities, walkable amenities and abundant public transit.

Strive for public and private **ecological open spaces** that restore ecological functions and promote aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity. Growing healthy, connected urban forests, restoring streams and shorelines, and setting aside earthquake and hazard zones as greenbelts are examples.

Provide **democratic access** to open space, so that all people, in all neighborhoods, can reap the benefits of a multi-faceted open space system.

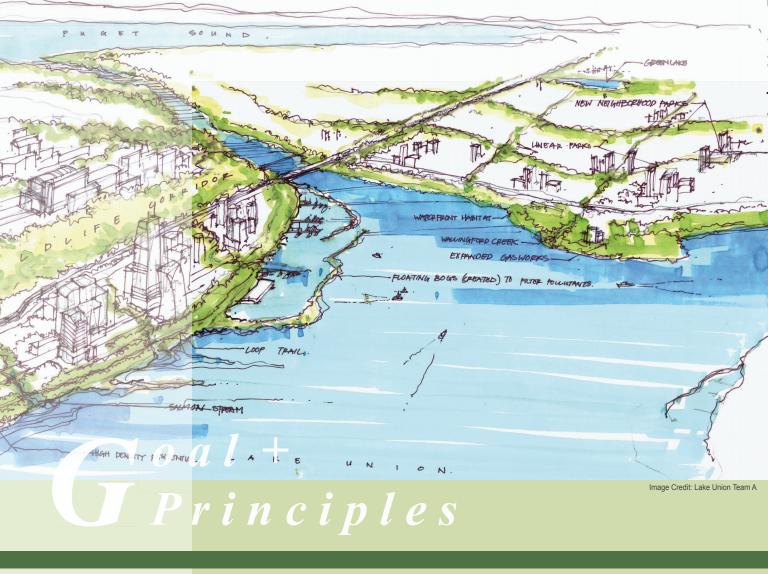
This work will only come to fruition with the memory and continued support of city officials and staff, professional planners and citizen activists to advance next phases of planning. With this bold plan for Seattle's Green Infrastructure in hand, the process of verifying and vetting the vision needs to continue, watershed by watershed. Also, the City's efforts at interdepartmental collaboration need to be broadened if we are to achieve an efficient. functioning and integrated green infrastructure. Perhaps most important, funds for acquisition, development and restoration need to be identified-perhaps through finding interagency efficiencies in existing budgets or renewal of our expiring levies-so that the visions can begin to be implemented before the opportunities escape us. And, all of this will require constant citizen advocacy and hard work.

But will all of this effort be worth it for us and our progeny?

We believe it will. As one young citizen wrote after seeing the Open Space Seattle 2100 work, "This is the Seattle I want for my future." For that to occur, we need to start planting the seeds now.

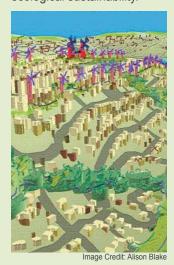
Nancy Rottle and Brice Maryman Co-Directors, Open Space Seattle 2100 University of Washington Department of Landscape Architecture





PLAN GOAL

To create a bold integrated Open Space Plan with implementation strategies for Seattle's next hundred years, which will enhance the health and well-being of both our cultural and natural environments. This vision of a regenerative green infrastructure will strive to create a healthy, beautiful Seattle while maximizing our economic, social and ecological sustainability.





GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR OPEN SPACE PLANS

The following principles were developed over three months by the OSS 2100 Guidance Committee and were endorsed by the Seattle City Council on May 15, 2006.

1. REGIONAL RESPONSIVENESS

Consider Seattle's role as an ecological, economic, and cultural crossroads; its location in one of the world's great estuaries and between two dramatic mountain ranges; its critical position as a threshold to two major watersheds (Cedar and Green/Duwamish); and its relationship to salt and fresh water bodies throughout the city.

2. INTEGRATED + MULTI-FUNCTIONAL

Integrate a variety of types of open space within a unifying, coherent structure. Incorporate considerations for streets, creeks, parks, habitat, urban forests, trails, drainage, shorelines, commercial and civic spaces, back yards and buildings. Consider layering multiple functions and uses within green spaces to create high-functioning, high value open spaces.

3. EQUITY + ACCESSIBILITY

Within a network of open spaces provide equitable access for all persons to a variety of outdoor and recreational experiences. Distribute appropriate open space types to every neighborhood, in order to address the needs of diverse population groups. Prioritize public access to water.

4. CONNECTIVITY/COHERENCE

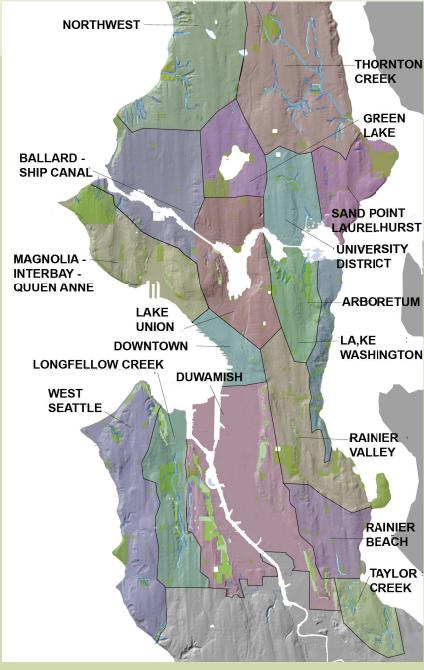
Create a wholly connected system that facilitates non-motorized movement, enhances habitat through connectivity, links diverse neighborhoods, and is easy to navigate and understand. Connect these in-city amenities to surrounding communities, trails and public lands.

GREEN FUTURES CHARRETTE STUDY AREAS

Seattle divides into topographic watershed areas, delineated by major ridgelines in the city. Green Futures Charrette participants worked within the study areas shown on this map to develop long-range and near-term proposals for their watershed. Twenty-two teams tackled these eighteen watershed study areas, with an additional team working along Madison Street.

Teams based their ideas on existing site conditions, completed city and neighborhood plans, predicted population figures, anticipated changes in transportation modes, climate disruption and other potential natural hazard impacts. UW student team leaders refined, extended and illustrated their teams' ideas, mapped them using GIS software and created the pages found on the accompanying CD as records of their teams' extraordinary and visionary work.





5. QUALITY, BEAUTY, IDENTITY + **ROOTEDNESS**

Use Seattle's many natural strengths to create an exemplary, signature open space system. Build on intrinsic qualities, both natural and cultural; reflect, respond to and interpret geographic, ecological, aesthetic and cultural contexts; address emotional and spiritual needs; and inspire a deep connection to place.

6. ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION + INTEGRITY

Expand the quantity and quality of natural systems in the city: Provide quality habitat for all appropriate species, with a special emphasis on the waters' edge. Design for hydrological health (water temperature, water quality, water regimes, stormwater), and consider appropriate water and resource conservation strategies. Connect to regional ecosystems in order to achieve integrity. resiliency and biodiversity in the face of climate change.

7. HEALTH + SAFETY

Continue to make the city a safe and healthful place to live. Reduce the risk of natural hazards (slides, flooding, earthquake, soil and water contamination) while reclaiming and treating previously toxic sites. Provide multiple opportunities for exercise, physical activity, and a connection to nature to be integrated into daily lives

8. FEASIBILITY, FLEXIBILITY + **STEWARDSHIP**

While visionary, the plan should be lasting and feasible, with a complementary set of nearterm implementation strategies that include mechanisms for both public and private investment that are achievable in incremental steps and adaptable over time. (e.g. codes, funding sources and incentives). It should be maintainable, inspiring shared stewardship between public agencies, private businesses, and individual citizens to foster pride, purpose and community.





"Neighborsheds": Rainier Beach Charrette Team

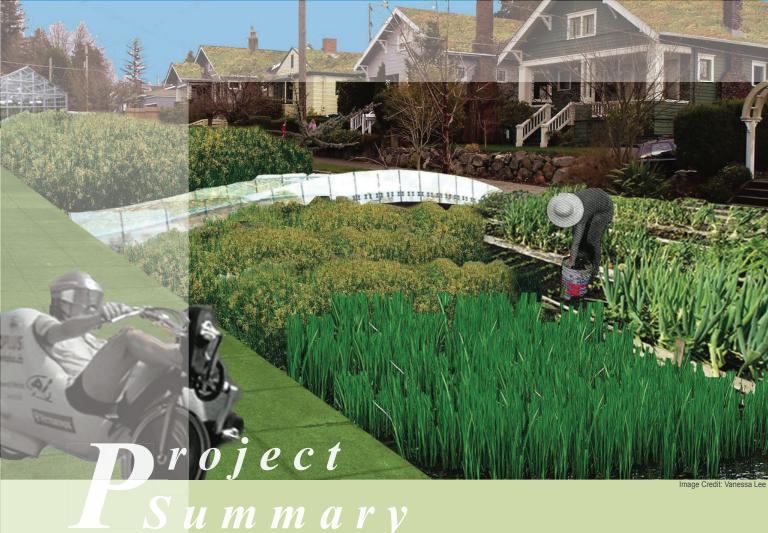




Image Credit: Steve Hartson + Rainier Valley Team A



Image Credit: Steve Hartson

In the early days of February 2006, over 300 of Seattle's citizens participated in the Green Futures Charrette to create a long-range vision for Seattle's open space network. Over the course of two full days, twenty-three charrette teams composed of planners,

designers, environmentalists, city officials developers, artists, and open space advocates envisioned livable, ecologically-healthy and socially-robust urban watersheds and neighborhoods for the city's sustainable future.

Teams saw Seattle as a dense, magnet city that would accommodate twice Seattle's current population. Each team focused on a distinct watershed-based study area, crossing neighborhood boundaries to weave green infrastructure between communities. Taken together, the plans reach from the city limits to the downtown core, creating a

comprehensive network of parks, civic spaces, streets, trails, shorelines, creeks, natural drainage features and urban forests. This collaborative vision provides social and ecological conduits from the city's ridgelines to its shorelines, and proposes a wealth of green spaces for all of Seattle's future citizens to enjoy.

Developing Visions for Seattle's Living Lattice Charrette teams worked on two time scales, first envisioning what their study area's open space layout might be a full century from now and then proposing 20-year plans with near-term priorities and implementation strategies. Every team was given a set of predicted future scenarios i.e., over a million people living within the city limits, changing climatic

conditions and water supply regimes, elevated oil prices, and new transportation modes.

To assist in these visioning exercises, graduate and undergraduate students in the UW Landscape Architecture studios served as co-team leaders with professionals on each study area team. After the charrette, these students refined and digitized their teams' plans using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software. These same students developed ideas seeded in the charrette process and illustrated them in the contexts of their charrette teams'



Image Credits: Steve Hartson

proposals. The refined visions for each watershed area can be found in the full report on the CD included in this executive summary.

Focusing and Preparing for the Discourse

While visionary, this work was not done in an uninformed vacuum. Rather, careful **research**, broad **public input**, multiple **public education events** and **a year of intense process and participation** firmly grounded the charrette work in real conditions,

existing planning, and environmental science. We first identified issues, needs, and existing work through focus groups with city and non-profit representatives. We then invited professionals, city staff and officials,

non-profit and citizen advocates to serve on the project's advisory committees. involving over 100 individuals representing over 50 organizations and agencies. This body crafted Goals and Guiding Principles for the charrette, advised us on the charrette process, and reviewed

our preliminary research and the resulting charrette products.

Students in the UW Landscape Architecture department provided preparation for the charrette by researching ecological urban patterns, open space issues and benefits, challenges presented by global

climate change and dramatically rising "peak oil" prices. They conducted a focus group with representatives of minority

and underserved populations, while others gathered and created an annotated bibliography of almost a hundred relevant existing plans, compiled available Seattle map resources, and created an interactive digital map that delineated the city's watershed and topographic study areas for the charrette.

Concurrently, students developed components of a **Green Futures Toolkit**, which can be found online at **www.open2100.org**. This document became a resource for participants during the Green Futures Charrette, and includes case studies on exemplary open space systems, typologies of outdoor spaces, and successful funding mechanisms.

In our design studios, student pairs became experts on their respective study areas by producing maps and compiling background information for their charrette team's planning process, and leading team tours of their study areas. "Opportunity Maps" synthesized existing GIS data such as habitat areas, parks, buried streams, drainage systems, critical and sensitive areas bike trails and designated urban hubs and villages.

To further inform the discourse, we also co-sponsored several **public lectures**. Mark Childs presented research on civic open space, arguing for multiuse, multi-benefit public infrastructure; Mike Houck relayed Portland's strategies for urban ecology and livability, and Robert Garcia addressed social equity issues related to urban parks. In addition to these outside experts, a panel of seven local researchers and professionals addressed Seattle-specific

considerations for habitat, open space patterns, global climate change, scenario building, transportation and green development. In a rousing speech, Patrick Condon gave the keynote lecture on urban green

infrastructure,
presenting
model
strategies
for dense,
hydrologicallystable
communities
in British
Columbia.

Lessons and Results from the Green Futures Design



Image Credit: Steve Hartson

The creativity, commitment and breadth of the charrette teams' proposals provided rich fodder for developing a **rubric of strategies** to achieve ecological, equitable, and functional green infrastructure. We have mined the twenty-three teams' work to find the richest common themes and strategies that can inform policy and planning for Seattle and other cities around the world. These are described on pages 10-11.

Next Steps for Seattle's Green Infrastructure

The Green Infrastructure plans that resulted from the Green Futures Charrette (pages 8-9) provide starting points to understand where systems of connective corridors and patches for people and wildlife might cohere, on regional, city and watershed scales. These combined plans suggest locations for connected green infrastructure that functions as a system, as do

our power lines, streets, and sewer pipes. In these optimal plans, every neighborhood and watershed has access to a variety of open spaces and corridors that encourage walking, biking, exercise, and enjoyment of Seattle's living environment. Identifying these potential systems can help us to rethink how we travel, reduce carbon emissions. revitalize neighborhood centers, restore our waters, and reforest our city. The visions illustrate paths to an idealized future, one that may be essential if our children and grandchildren are to inherit the beauty and resources of our region and a city that is eminently prosperous and livable.



Image Credit: Steve Hartso



Image Credit: Steve Hartson



Image Credit: Steve Hartson





Image Credits: Steve Hartson

Treen Tinfrastructure Plan

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS: 2025 + 2100

These 20- and 100-Year Plans for Seattle's Green Infrastructure represent the combined work of all twenty-three Green Futures Charrette teams. UW student leaders created digital maps of each team's ideas for their individual study areas, which were then joined together to create these all-city plans. We then identified regional, city-wide and neighborhood linkage patterns based on the aggregates 2100 plan.

LEGEND

Existing Parks:

Parks + Community Spaces:

passive parks, active parks, pools, schools, beaches, cemetaries, playgrounds, playfields, lidded open space, civic space, community centers, farmers markets, p-patches, existing parks

Urban Centers:

Community Nodes, Urban Corridors, Hub Urban Villages, Residential Villages, Eco-villages, Industrial Areas.

Water Interventions:

Created Streams, Daylighted Streams, Created Shorelines, Reduced CSO Basins, Green Roofs, Rain Gardens, Rain Plazas, Wetlands

Habitat:

Habitat Patch/Corridors, Mini Woodlot, Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary, Urban Waterfront Habitat, Living Machine at Outfall, Estuary, Stream Riparian Areas, Lake Riparian Areas, Puget Sound Riparian Areas, Steep Slopes, Geological Mitigation Zones

Green Transport Corridors:

Pedestrian-Bicycle Street, Mass Transit Corridors, Green Streets

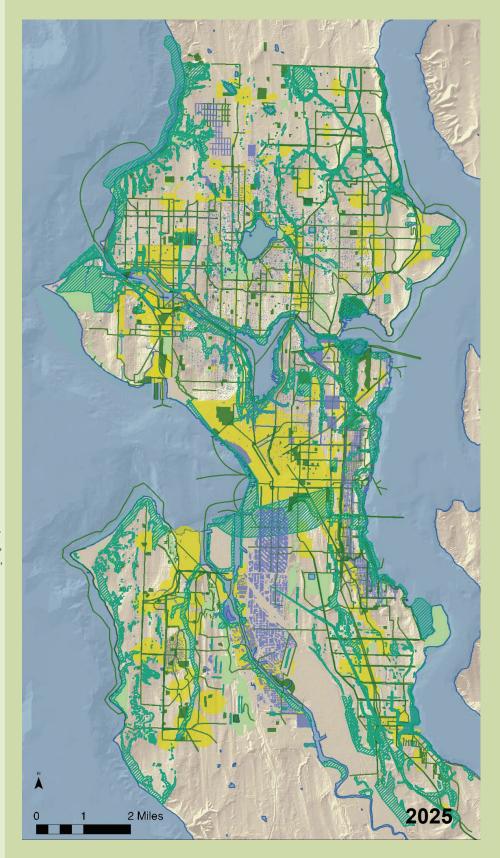




Image Credit: Nathan Brightbill

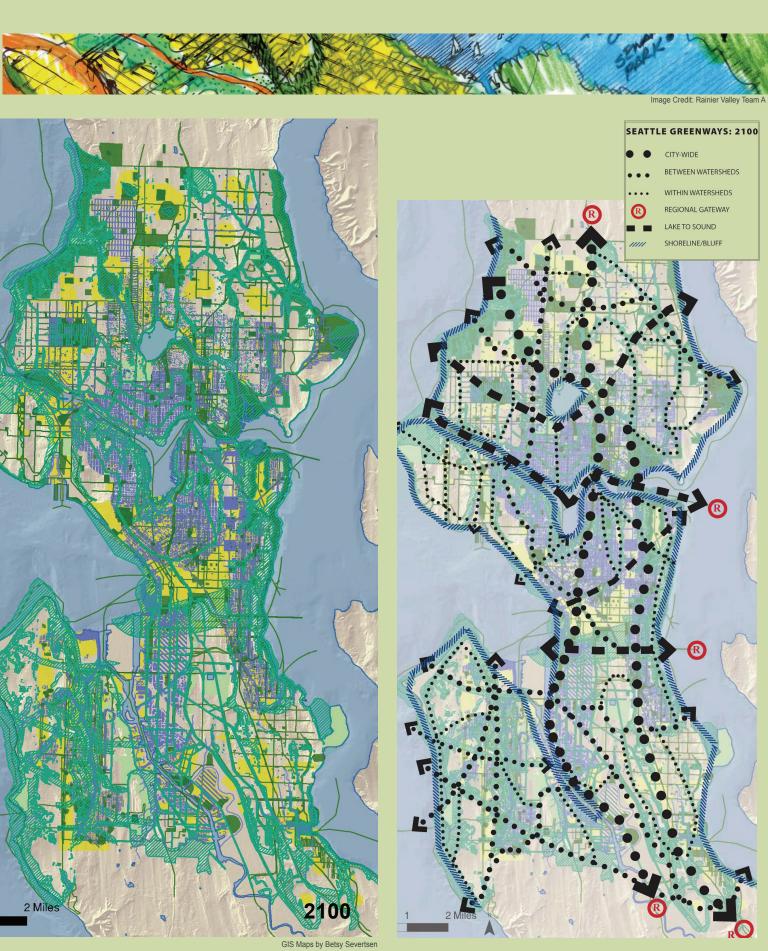






Image Credit: Nancy Rottle

Introduction

While each charrette team developed visions for its own respective watershed study area, patterns clearly emerged across each of all teams' visions. Taken in aggregate, these themes and strategies represent new pathways for the City of Seattle to pursue as it looks toward future infrastructure investments that are humanistic, health, ecologically-responsible and climate friendly.



Image Credit: Brice Maryman

Create an Integrated Green Infrastructure



Image Credit: Peter Nelson

- Aggregate Open Space to Create Connections and Urban Greenways forming loops, connecting uplands to shorelines, linking backyards, and connecting to regional trails.
- Create Multi-functional Open Space that maximizes the uses and benefits of every parcel as real estate prices rise. For example, multiple-use street rightsof-ways could include transit, water purification, stream corridors, and recreation.
- Redefine Transportation Corridors to include more green spaces and ecosystem functions in the rights-of-way. Lid freeways to create new urban space and re-connect neighborhoods.
- Recreate Natural Drainage to Restore our Waters using pervious surfaces, rain gardens, restored wetlands and bioswales that can clean and detain water before entering streams, lakes and the Puget Sound.



Promote Ecological Open Space



Image Credit: Tim Shuck

- Understand the City as Watersheds to repair water-based ecological corridors and to connect neighborhoods.
- Respect Underlying Natural Conditions to honor the existing ecology and minimize damage from natural disasters.
- Re-establish Historic Streams that are now buried in pipes by bringing water to the surface and restoring riparian corridors that salmon will always have a place in our city.
- Restore Shorelines for Habitat since Seattle sits at a critical threshold of two major Puget Sound watersheds—Lake Washington-Cedar-Sammamish and the Green-Duwamish—for salmon migrating to and from spawning grounds.
- Establish and Protect Greenbelts and Habitat Networks to extend existing urban forests, with potential wildlife, forestry and recreational uses.



Image Credit: Seattle Public Utiliti



utures Charrette

Balance Density and Community



Image Credit: Alyse Nelson

- Focus development in the urban core to protect outlying farms and forests, reduce the impacts of sprawl to lakes and streams, climate and air.
- Create New Urban Villages with Civic Hearts that are walkable with mixed residential, commercial, public amenities and civic gathering spaces while creating magnet communities. Charrette teams typically located new urban nodes on ridgelines, with views corridors preserved.
- Employ Green Roofs and Walls on residential and commercial buildings to reduce the city's heat island effects, detain stormwater, create habitat and provide green relief.
- Encourage Decentralized Self-sufficiency with localized power generation, water treatment, and agriculture to reduce dependency and impacts on outside resources.



Provide Democratic Access and Use

- Provide Equality in Accessibility to open space for all citizens, addressing diverse cultural needs and environmental justice.
- Give Increased Access to Water from every neighborhood with waterfront acreage through public and private incentives.
- Use Open Space for Education/Schools for Open Space by incorporating schoolyards as community open space, and creating learning spaces such as gardens, views, interpretive trails and ecorevelatory features.
- Provide a Hierarchy and Variety of Open Spaces including natural areas, large parks, playgrounds, P-patches, trails and pocket parks.

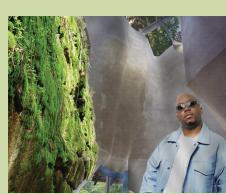
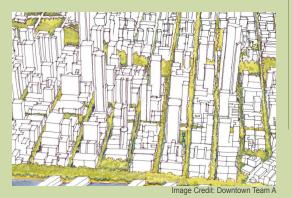






Image Credit: Brice Maryma





Strategy Statement



The following section outlines the five key strategies for bringing the Green Futures' visions to fruition and identifies agencies and organizations that will play critical roles in stewarding this implementation. By working with our existing coalition members in city government, the development community, the non-profit sector, our educational allies and neighborhood advocates, we believe that we can attain even the most ambitious visions of the Open Space Seattle coalition.

1. Establish the Vision

Through a Mayor-appointed Green Infrastructure
Task Force and an independent design consultant,
the City should use the work of the charrette teams,
additional public input and the ongoing efforts in our
vibrant neighborhoods to further develop a visionary,
long-range green infrastructure plan for Seattle's next
century. This plan will chart a livable, sustainable
course for clean air and climate protection, restored
shorelines and clean water, robust forests parks,
trails, open spaces and habitat corridors, and strong
neighborhoods with connected civic elements. In short,
we seek the re-establishment of Seattle as a mythic
place on a sustainable planet.

For this reason, we have included a request in the 2007-2008 biennial budget for the following: Through community, consultant and city collaboration, further develop the 100-year Green Infrastructure Plan from the visions generated during the Green Futures Charrette and existing neighborhood plans, that spatially locates and integrates strategic green infrastructure investments and establishes a 20-year, near-term implementation strategy.

Key Organizations Responsible: Mayor Greg Nickels, City of Seattle Government, Outside Consultants, Green Infrastructure Task Force, Green Futures Charrette Participants, Open Space Seattle 2100/Green Futures Institute (UW), Seattle Great City Initiative.

2. Advocate for the Vision

From the beginning, the Open Space Seattle 2100 coalition has rallied around the idea of a long-term

vision for Seattle's green infrastructure. With a long-term, city-wide vision in place, it will be up to each of the constituencies within the coalition to advocate to their leaders, elected representatives, neighborhood councils and others to popularize, embrace and adopt the long-term spatial plans and implementation mechanisms developed by the city/consultant partnership.

For this reason, and to develop implementation strategies, we have made a request in the 2007-2008 budget for the City to establish a Green Infrastructure Task Force.

Key Organizations Responsible: Mayor Greg Nickels, City of Seattle, Green Infrastructure Task Force, Seattle Great City Initiative, Non-profit partners, Neighborhood Organizations, Green Futures Charrette Participants and Open Space Seattle 2100 Coalition Members.

3. Adopt the Vision

Having a roadmap and making a journey are two very different propositions. At this critical juncture, it will be up to the City's leaders—with support and expectations, pressure and prodding from Open Space Seattle 2100's partners, non-profits, charrette participants and citizens—to take the ideas in the Green Infrastructure Plan and to root them within our comprehensive planning, civic, design, and land use cultures. However, this cannot be an add-on to existing city planning initiatives, but rather a complete integration into existing city planning efforts.

The pebble has dropped; how can we keep the ripples going? Bert Gregory

The adoption of this plan must not be the exclusive domain of our elected officials; it should be institutionalized within the City without being locked up. The panoply of urban livability proponents, neighborhood activists, "Friends of" groups, creek stewards, p-patch coordinators, mobility groups and others shall guide the implementation of the larger, city-wide vision within their local communities.

Key Organizations Responsible: Mayor Greg Nickels, Seattle City Council, Seattle Parks, DPD, SDOT, SPU, OSE, Parks and Recreation Advocacy Organizations, Environmental Organizations, Seattle Great City Initiative, Neighborhood Councils, Green Futures Charrette Participants, Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Organizations, Urban Agriculture Advocates

4. Fund the Vision

Without financial resources, this vision will remain unrealized. As with any large-scale municipal initiative, the leveraging of existing resources and the knitting together of beneficial partnerships will be key to successful implementation.

However, we do see two potential opportunities within the existing city budget to expedite the implementation of a citywide vision of integrated green infrastructure. The first involves reallocating existing resources around a systematic directive to make nominal investments in green infrastructure measures within each municipal project. From streets to community centers to new transportation projects, Seattle could henceforth make ecological open space a small portion of every project to create a system of green infrastructure.

Second, we see tremendous potential in a Green Infrastructure Levy that will fund all types of "Green Works," creating a model of interdepartmental cooperation for a sustainable City. Thus, we can work to install and expand walking and biking trails, sidewalks, natural drainage systems, riparian conservation easements, parks, p-patches, urban forests and other types of green infrastructure. For this reason we have made a budget request for the 2007-2008 budget that will begin planning for a Green Infrastructure Levy to replace the expiring Pro-Parks

> Key Organizations Responsible: Mayor Greg Nickels, Seattle City Council, Seattle Voters, Green Infrastructure Task Force, Key Non-profit and Private Partners

5. Implement the Vision

With a cohesive vision propelling us toward the next century of green infrastructure in the City, Seattle's reputation amongst the legions of worldwide urbanists seeking a greener, more progressive urbanism will soar. However, without implementation of this vision, our words and goals will be hollow.

The implementation of the vision will not happen overnight, and it will not happen without the support of all sectors. From city agencies to neighborhood groups, non-profits to developers, the implementation of a green infrastructure system will require the momentum of every constituency in the City. With grants, incentives and requirements, we can create a Future Seattle that has enduring beauty, utility and ecological integrity that will benefit our children and grandchildren for generations to come. Slowly, parcel by parcel, we will create a system of green infrastructure for our grandchildren that will be the envy of urbanists the world over.

> Key Organizations Responsible: Mayor Greg Nickels, Seattle City Council, Seattle Parks, DPD, SDOT, SPU, OSE, Seattle Neighborhood Organizations, Development Partners, Parks Advocacy Organizations, Environmental Organizations, Green Futures Charrette Participants, Creek and Shoreline Stewardship Organizations, Bike and Pedestrian Mobility Organizations, Urban Agriculture Advocates and virtually every constituency in the city.





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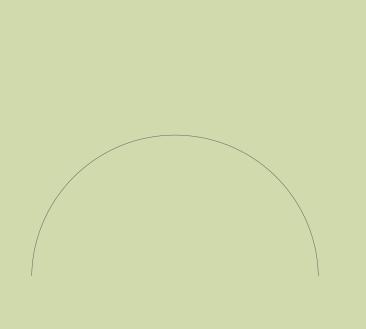
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