

CITY OF SEATTLE
ORDINANCE 126998
COUNCIL BILL 120725

AN ORDINANCE relating to the Cedar River Watershed; authorizing five years of ecological thinning, in accordance with the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan and Forest Management Plan, in Sections 13, 19, 20, and 21, Township 22, North, Range 7, East, W.M., Sections 1, 3, 4, 8, and 17, Township 22, North, Range 8, East, W.M., Section 3, Township 21, North, Range 8, East, Section 11, Township 21, North, Range 9, East, Sections 30 and 32, Township 22, North, Range 10, East, and Sections 4, 9, and 11, Township 21, North, Range 10, East, W.M.; declaring the logs resulting from ecological thinning to be surplus to the City’s needs; authorizing the sale of such logs pursuant to applicable City contracting and surplus property sale procedures; and directing deposit of the proceeds therefrom to the Water Fund for the purposes of the Habitat Conservation Plan and Forest Management Plan implementation.

WHEREAS, following several years of technical studies, negotiations with federal and state agencies, and review by public groups and individuals, the City Council in 1999 adopted Resolution 29977, authorizing the Mayor to submit the Final Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and other related documents for federal review and issuance of an “incidental take permit” under the federal Endangered Species Act, and to execute on behalf of the City of Seattle (City) the HCP and related agreements, which together establish the City's long-term commitments regarding watershed habitat protection and mitigation for impacts resulting from the presence and operation of certain City-owned facilities; and

WHEREAS, the HCP describes the City’s planned forest management practices, including the use of ecological thinning on 2,000 acres of second-growth forests to accelerate development of old-growth conditions, improve habitat for species dependent on older forest, and reduce risks of catastrophic events in certain existing densely-stocked second-growth stands; and

1 WHEREAS, the City in 2000 received the incidental take permit and executed the HCP and
2 related agreements; and

3 WHEREAS, the City Council in 2002 approved Ordinance 121040, which: clarified certain
4 differences between the forest management policies contained in the Secondary Use
5 Policies (adopted by Ordinance 114632) and those contained in the HCP; prohibited the
6 harvesting of trees for commercial purposes on City-owned land within the Watershed;
7 authorized the cutting of trees for certain limited non-commercial reasons, including
8 ecological thinning; provided limited authority for the sale of logs resulting from such
9 non-commercial cutting; and dedicated the proceeds from such sales for the purpose of
10 offsetting the costs of the HCP; and

11 WHEREAS, the City Council in 2002 and 2005 approved Ordinances 121039 and 121793
12 authorizing two ecological thinning projects under the HCP, which were completed in
13 2003 and 2008 respectively; and

14 WHEREAS, the City Council in 2012 approved Ordinance 124068, which provided authority for
15 ecological thinning projects over a five-year period (2013-2017) under the HCP, and
16 those projects were completed in 2017; and

17 WHEREAS, the City Council in 2015 approved Ordinance 124853, which provided authority for
18 ecological thinning projects over a five-year period (2015-2020) under the HCP, and
19 those projects were partially completed in 2020; and

20 WHEREAS, the City Council in 2020 passed Ordinance 126267, which provided authority for
21 ecological thinning projects over a two-year period (2021-2022) under the HCP, and
22 those projects were completed in 2022; and

1 WHEREAS, following development of a comprehensive Forest Management Plan for the Cedar
2 River Municipal Watershed, Seattle Public Utilities recommends additional ecological
3 thinning to meet HCP commitments, improve climate resilience, mitigate wildfire
4 hazards, and address Tribal concerns about ungulate habitat located in Sections 13, 19, 20
5 and 21, Township 22, North, Range 7, East, W.M., Sections 1, 3, 4, 8, and 17, Township
6 22, North, Range 8, East, W.M., Section 3, Township 21, North, Range 8, East, Section
7 11, Township 21, North, Range 9, East, Sections 30 and 32, Township 22, North, Range
8 10, East, and Sections 4, 9 and 11, Township 21, North, Range 10, East, W.M., that
9 consists of approximately 600 acres of second-growth forest that will receive ecological
10 thinning treatment between 2024 and 2028; and

11 WHEREAS, this ecological thinning over five years is estimated to result in up to 6,700,000
12 board feet of merchantable logs from among the vegetation that would be cut; NOW,
13 THEREFORE,

14 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF SEATTLE AS FOLLOWS:**


15 Section 1. The General Manager/CEO of Seattle Public Utilities is authorized to contract,
16 pursuant to applicable City contracting or surplus property sale procedures, for the service of
17 ecological thinning of second-growth forest stands located in Sections 13, 19, 20 and 21,
18 Township 22, North, Range 7, East, W.M., Sections 1, 3, 4, 8, and 17, Township 22, North,
19 Range 8, East, W.M., Section 3, Township 21, North, Range 8, East, Section 11, Township 21,
20 North, Range 9, East, Sections 30 and 32, Township 22, North, Range 10, East, and Sections 4, 9
21 and 11, Township 21, North, Range 10, East, W.M.; and consisting of approximately 600 acres
22 of second-growth forest that will receive ecological thinning treatment under the principles and
23 procedures described in the Cedar River Watershed Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and Forest

1 Management Plan, which contract may provide for the sale and removal of merchantable logs
2 down as a result of ecological thinning. The General Manager/CEO of Seattle Public Utilities
3 shall, no later than March 31 of each year, submit to the Mayor and City Council a report for the
4 previous calendar year describing the timber volumes sold and the proceeds derived from sales
5 authorized by this section, an estimate on what tree cutting is anticipated in the next year, and an
6 analysis of the cumulative effects of these projects. A public hearing having been held, the logs
7 resulting from ecological thinning authorized by this ordinance are hereby declared to be surplus
8 to the City's needs. The General Manager/CEO of Seattle Public Utilities is further authorized to
9 conduct all related monitoring, surveys, and other such activities as may be required by the
10 City's commitments in the HCP and by applicable permit requirements.

11 Section 2. All proceeds from the sale of logs authorized by Section 1 of this ordinance
12 shall be deposited in the Water Fund (43000) and further dedicated for the exclusive purpose of
13 offsetting the costs of implementing the HCP, including the projects, programs, and activities
14 described in the HCP documents and those that educate the public about them.

1 Section 3. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force 30 days after its approval by
2 the Mayor, but if not approved and returned by the Mayor within ten days after presentation, it
3 shall take effect as provided by Seattle Municipal Code Section 1.04.020.


4 Passed by the City Council the 5th day of March, 2024,
5 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 5th day of
6 March, 2024.

7 
8 President _____ of the City Council

9 Approved / returned unsigned / vetoed this 7th day of March, 2024.

10 
11 Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

12 Filed by me this 7th day of March, 2024.

13 
14 Scheereen Dedman, City Clerk

15 (Seal)