



September 4, 2024

## Memorandum

**To:** Parks, Utilities, & Technology Committee  
**From:** Christopher Williams, Senior Deputy Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation  
**Subject:** CB 120843: Amendments 2-3-4 to Conservation Futures Tax Levy (CFT) Interlocal Agreement

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On September 11, 2024, the Parks, Utilities, & Technology Committee will discuss Council Bill (CB) 120843, amendments 2, 3, and 4 to the King County Conservation Futures Tax levy (CFT) interlocal agreement. This memo provides background information on the interlocal agreement and describes the proposed amendments.

### Background

The CFT is a countywide property tax that provides funding to protect forests, farms, passive outdoor recreational areas, and open space through land acquisition. CFT funding is restricted to site acquisition and stabilization costs. It cannot be used to fund development or maintenance. Certain types of public uses are not eligible for CFT funding, such as athletic fields and fenced off-leash dog parks.

The CFT was first approved by the voters in 1982. King County voters affirmed the levy in 2022, doubling the rate to 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Since 1990, the City has received \$112 million in CFT funding helping the City acquire more than 150 acres of public land. Examples of recent CFT-funded projects include: Broadview-Bitter Lake (Seattle City Light property), Bitter Lake Park Addition (Seattle Public Schools property), Terry Pettus Park Addition, and Southwest Queen Anne Greenbelt.

An interlocal agreement (ILA) between King County and the City governs the use of CFT funds and authorizes appropriations of CFT funds for specific projects. The ILA covers all City departments that apply for and receive CFT funds. King County Council approves CFT awards on an annual basis. The City Council approves amendments to the ILA authorizing acceptance of CFT project awards, when those occur. The ILA was last [amended](#) in 2023.

The CFT is an annual grant program. Applications for funding are submitted to King County by eligible local jurisdictions. King County evaluates applications using specific scoring criteria. Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) applies for projects that will score well and fills funding gaps in accordance with the City Council-adopted [Parks and Open Space Plan](#). Examples of acquisitions include neighborhood park sites in dense urban villages, park additions, and increasing the size of green spaces/natural and riparian areas through the purchase of private inholdings. SPR also works with other City departments, and local jurisdictions on innovative partnerships to set aside open space. Successful park acquisitions require SPR planning to identify opportunities to leverage funds and continual evaluation of real estate market conditions.

### Proposed Amendments

Council Bill 120843 before the City Council makes three amendments to the ILA, authorizing the acceptance of up to \$5,822,500 from the King County CFT levy for the purchase of open space properties in Seattle and making policy changes related to the use of CFT funds.

Amendment 2

Amendment 2 reallocates \$900,000 of 2023 CFT funds. Some planned CFT projects cannot be completed because the negotiation was not successful, appraisals came in lower than expected, or the scope of the acquisition was reduced, among other reasons. In this case, the City may choose to abandon some or all of a grant award that will not be spent.

The City cannot simply move grant money from one CFT project to another, as per the [King County Conservation Futures Program Manual](#) (page 15), abandoned funds are placed in a reallocation pot for the benefit and consideration of all participating jurisdictions’ established project needs. Jurisdictions that need additional funding for already-approved CFT projects due to high appraisals, scope change, etc. may apply for supplemental funds from this reallocation pot. The CFT committee evaluates these requests and recommends additional funding, subject to King County Council approval.

Amendment 2 makes the following reallocations:

Project Name	Allocation
Longfellow Creek Addition	\$15,224
Longfellow Creek Addition	\$384,776
North Rainier Town Center	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$900,000

Amendment 3

Amendment 3 amends the terms of the ILA to add site stabilization costs as acceptable use of funds, reduces the required local match to 25% instead of 50%, and allows for a combination of land and cash to exchange in the event of change of use of the property acquired with CFT funds. The current ILA requires that if a property funded will CFT is changing use, the City must provide entirely new land to replace the property or repay the CFT funds used to acquire the property.

Amendment 4

Amendment 4 allocates \$4,922,500 to SPR and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) as follows:

Jurisdiction	Project Name	Allocation
Seattle (Parks)	Hitt’s Hill Park Addition	\$1,522,500
Seattle (Parks)	Rainier Beach Residential Urban Village Park	\$1,000,000
Seattle (SPU)	Helen Sherry Property Acquisition	\$1,650,000
Seattle (SPU)	Thornton Confluence Natural Area Expansion	\$750,000
TOTAL		\$4,922,500