



TO: Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Director, Environmental Services *for 6m/19*
John Burk, P.E., Division Manager, Science & Engineering
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Contract extension with EarthCorps for Management of the City's Passive Open Space Program Volunteers - June 4, 2019.
DATE: May 17, 2019

SUMMARY:

A resolution authorizing an increase and extending the contract with EarthCorps, by an amount not to exceed \$247,240.97, for a cumulative total of \$440,524.97, budgeted from the ES Surface Water Fund 4301, to continue to manage volunteers who assist in the restoration and care of the City's passive open spaces through December 31, 2021.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITIES:

- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- Encourage thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.

EarthCorps provides knowledgeable and skilled staff to supervise and train volunteers in the restoration and care of passive open spaces year-round. Proper stewardship of Tacoma's passive open spaces requires a routine presence for invasive species control, debris removal and native plant maintenance. Training volunteers to work on passive open space sites also helps ensure long-term success of the sites once restoration is completed and a general awareness of environmental issues.

BACKGROUND:

The Environmental Services (ES) Department restores and stewards City-owned passive open space properties to retain and increase surface water benefits. Invasive vegetation currently threatens the ecosystem health of our passive open spaces and needs to be removed and replanted with native species.

The City has contracted with EarthCorps since August 1, 2017, to manage passive open space volunteers. They have developed a robust volunteer training program and tripled the number of volunteer hours in one year, with 1,016 volunteer hours in 2018. They are currently managing volunteers working on seven open space sites and have 61 volunteer events scheduled in 2019, up from 38 volunteer events in 2018. There are plans to add at least one new site into active volunteer restoration every contract year. Volunteers not only learn how to restore and preserve open space sites long-term, but they also share their knowledge with others, helping to build a more environmentally sustainable Tacoma.

ISSUE:

In 2016, the City developed a Passive Open Space 20-Year Restoration Plan. One outcome of this plan is that all 488 acres, or 46 sites, of passive open spaces be enrolled in active restoration and maintenance by 2036. Examples of major passive open space restoration efforts include the creation and implementation of the Schuster Slope, Mason Gulch, and Salmon Beach Slope landscape management plans. The City has contracted with Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews for major restoration efforts, work on steep slopes, and unexpected issues. Restoring all 488 acres of passive open spaces cannot be fulfilled by WCC crews and City staff alone in terms of time or money, therefore another outcome of the 20-year plan includes an active volunteer program to help the City reach its environmental goals. Volunteers are a valuable asset to perform restoration in non-critical areas, hastening the City's ability to restore more sites, provide long-term site care, and instill community ownership.



In order to continue this momentum a contract extension is needed. The City's current contract with EarthCorps began on August 1, 2017, for an initial two-year period, in the amount of \$193,284, with the option to renew for three additional one-year terms. The initial two-year period will end July 31, 2019. ES requests an additional \$247,240.97, for a two-year and 5-month period from August 1, 2019 through December 31, 2021. The total amount for the contract would be \$440,524.97.

ALTERNATIVES:

Alternatives to extending the contract include (1) hiring a professional crew, such as Dirt Corps, or a similarly focused entity, at a potentially increased cost to the City, or (2) not approving to extend the contract. These options could delay ES momentum and progress of passive open space restoration needed to fulfill the City's goal to restore all these sites by 2036.

RECOMMENDATION:

A resolution authorizing an increase and extending the contract with EarthCorps, by an amount not to exceed \$247,240.97, for a cumulative total of \$440,524.97, budgeted from the ES Surface Water Fund 4301, to continue to manage volunteers who assist in the restoration and care of the City's passive open spaces through December 31, 2021.

FISCAL IMPACT:

EXPENDITURES:

FUND NUMBER & FUND NAME	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
4301 Surface Water Fund	521700	5195000	\$247,240.97
TOTAL			\$247,240.97

REVENUES:

FUNDING SOURCE	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	COST ELEMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT
4301 Surface Water Fund	521900	Rate Revenues	\$247,240.97
TOTAL			\$247,240.97

FISCAL IMPACT TO CURRENT BIENNIAL BUDGET: \$247,240.97

ARE THE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES PLANNED AND BUDGETED? Yes