



September 15, 2015

Councilmember Jean Godden  
Chair, Parks, Seattle Center, Libraries, and Gender Pay Equity Committee  
Seattle City Hall  
600 Fourth Ave., 2nd floor  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Councilmember Godden:

In May, I wrote to you about legislation relating to the acquisition of property owned by Hugh and Martha Sisley. In that letter, I stated my intent to direct a review, led by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON), to reengage the neighborhood and community to review previous plans and identify priorities.

Since I wrote you in May, my staff have been working closely with DPD, DON, the Office of Housing (OH), the Department of Parks and Recreation, and the City Attorney. We have reengaged with the Roosevelt community to confirm their priorities for the neighborhood. Based on this work, we have developed a holistic strategy that will not only provide open space to an area where we anticipate significant growth but also provide increased tenant outreach and assistance. In addition, now that the liens have been lifted, the Roosevelt Development Group (RDG) has started cleaning several of the sites.

As you know, the City has received \$3.48 million from the judgments and fines owed by Sisleys. I am proposing to spend the funds in the following manner:

- \$500,000 for tenant outreach and assistance;
- \$2.9 million for property acquisition and development of a new park; and
- \$80,000 for the DPD abatement fund to identify and remediate or abate vacant properties that have become a blight, nuisance and safety concern.

This funding will be included in the third quarter supplemental ordinance which will be sent to Council on September 28.

#### Tenant Outreach/Assistance and Affordable Housing

I am proposing to use \$500,000 of the funds from Sisley to provide tenant outreach and assistance. These recommendations are responsive to two HALA proposals that aim to increase supports for tenants (recommendations T.3 and T.5). The funds would be spent as follows and would be available to residents in all parts of the city:

- \$250,000 over two years for community-based organizations to provide assistance to diverse tenant populations to complete and submit tenant relocation assistance applications and provide housing search assistance. These funds will help provide eligible tenants affected by new development with assistance in relocating to new housing.
- \$250,000 over two years for services targeted to tenants with barriers to accessing housing, or who face challenges with housing quality and habitability. This recommendation is intended to educate tenants on rights and responsibilities and promote access to quality housing for those with few options.

In addition to these tenant services, efforts are underway to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Roosevelt neighborhood. The Roosevelt Development Group (RDG) has already submitted applications for the multi-family tax exemption (MFTE) for 4 projects in the Roosevelt neighborhood that would result in 69 units of affordable housing (out of the total 329 units that will be built with the 4 projects). In addition, OH has received an application in the same neighborhood from another developer that would result in another 16 affordable units. Furthermore, because the judgements against the Sisleys have been satisfied, the City has released the liens it held on a number Sisley properties. The release of the liens paves the way for additional development that could participate in the MFTE program.

Finally, a City interdepartmental team, led by DPD, is working with Sound Transit as they review the existing conditions/feasibility of the site for transit oriented development, including affordable housing as a potential use. The goal is to have a negotiated letter of intent with Sound Transit by the end of 2015. Sound Transit is planning to issue a RFQ/RFP for transit oriented development by the end of 2016.

#### Park Acquisition and Development

The need for additional parks and open space in the Roosevelt Residential Urban Village is documented in the Seattle Parks' 2011 Development Plan and the Roosevelt Neighborhood Plan, which says "creating new Roosevelt open spaces in conjunction with large developments - including a central "Town Square" open space - are the key open space objectives."

Seattle Parks and Recreation did a thorough reconnaissance of the neighborhood for potential park space and determined that the portion of the urban village south of Roosevelt High School presents the best opportunity for new park space, because of the combination of new zoning and lack of access to current park space. Of all the properties south of the Roosevelt High School, the property west of 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and between NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street and NE 66<sup>th</sup> Street is the top choice for acquisition because of its relationship with 14<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, a designated festival street

that would preserve a view of the Roosevelt High School from NE 65<sup>th</sup> Street as well as augment the future utility of the right-of-way. Preservation of the view remains the community's number one priority. Accordingly, I have sent legislation to the Council to authorize the acquisition of the property.

Neighborhood Cleanup/Code Compliance

On August 31, in response to an abatement order from DPD, RDG completed demolition of three vacant and decrepit homes on NE 65<sup>th</sup> St. In order to accomplish the demolition, RDG had to remove asbestos from the structures and also had to remove an astonishing amount of garbage, including hazardous materials, which had been stored inside the houses. Other homes in the area are boarded up to keep squatters from occupying them, and RDG is considering options for rehabilitation or demolishing and rebuilding.

I am recommending that \$80,000 of the Sisley proceeds go to the Housing and Abatement Accounting Unit at DPD to be used for proactive work to identify and remediate or abate vacant properties that have become a blight, nuisance and safety concern.

Roosevelt Neighborhood

For years the community has expressed a desire for more open space. This sentiment was echoed during the zoning conversations in 2011. Staff from DON re-engaged with the Roosevelt neighborhood over the summer and confirmed that there continues to be strong support for a park.

DON has been asked to facilitate a community discussion involving the Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (RNA), area residents and business owners, about their shared vision for the built environment, more housing and open space in the neighborhood. DON is working closely with the RNA on their Land Use Academy and looks forward to continuing that partnership.

If you have any questions, please contact Catherine Cornwall in CBO at 4-8725. Ben Noble will be my Executive Team point of contact on this issue.

Sincerely,



Edward B. Murray  
Mayor, City of Seattle

cc: Council President Tim Burgess  
Councilmember Sally Bagshaw  
Councilmember Bruce Harrell  
Councilmember Nick Licata  
Councilmember Mike O'Brien  
Councilmember John Okamoto  
Councilmember Tom Rasmussen  
Councilmember Kshama Sawant  
City Attorney Pete Holmes