



KUBOTA GARDEN  
FOUNDATION

December 3, 2019

TO: Mobility and Environment Committee, King County Council  
FROM: Joy Okazaki, President, Kubota Garden Foundation  
RE: 2019 WaterWorks Project Application, Kubota Garden Foundation

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### **Statement of Support of the Kubota Garden Foundation's WaterWorks project application**

As a member of the Kubota Garden Foundation since it was formed in 1989 and current Board President, I used to run through the garden when it was the private nursery, home and demonstration garden belonging to the Kubota family. This gorgeous Japanese garden created by the Kubota family, started in 1927. They sold the garden to the City of Seattle in 1987 so that it could be enjoyed by the public. It is located in Rainier Beach, a diverse neighborhood in Southeast Seattle where 31% of people are immigrants and 42% speak languages other than English at home. Over 20,000 people live within a half mile of the garden's Entry Gate, including 5,600 children. Approximately 75% are people of color, 25% live in poverty, and 73% of children at local schools qualify for reduced or free lunch.

The Kubota Garden Foundation and Seattle Parks have partnered for 30 years to provide programming, events and improvements at Kubota Garden, including capital investments in Kubota Garden to meet demand and improve the visitor experience, but nothing has been done to improve storm water drainage along 55<sup>th</sup> Ave S.

The capacity of the ditch on 55th Ave S cannot handle storm events and water sheet flows across the street and runs across the surface of the unpaved parking lot of Kubota Garden. Water from the parking lot flows through a small bio swale in the garden, then enters the Spring Pond (which becomes visibly impacted with sediment and pollutants from off site and on site vehicular parking) then flows into the lower ponds in the garden which is Mapes Creek. However, we must evaluate existing storm water flows and capacity of drainage, determine feasibility of treating storm water prior to its flow into the ponds in Kubota Garden or diverting flow into combined sewer in Renton Ave S with the goal of improving water quality in ponds of Kubota Garden which flow into Mapes Creek and ultimately into Lake Washington, 1.3 miles north at Beer Sheva Park where 400' of the creek was day lighted to promote juvenile salmon habitat in 2014. Recent creek daylighting and habitat improvements in Beer Sheva were completed in concert with Seattle Public Utility Combined Sewer overflow reduction efforts.

This project has the unique opportunity of focused groups leading the vision for the Upper Mapes Creek basin (Kubota Garden Foundation, Seattle Parks and Seattle Public Utilities), building on previous successful outreach and implementation of Mapes Creek daylighting (a partnership between Parks and SPU), treating run off from pollution generating hard surfaces prior to discharge into the creek. There are bodies of work related to the Mapes Creek Daylighting project, utility re-routing, and Chief Sealth Trail which allow this analysis to build upon this knowledge and data. Potential improvements analyzed will include decentralizing flows from 55th, identifying opportunity for dispersion and infiltration in the upper basin, treating and conveying lower basin storm water runoff to maintain base flows to the creek and addressing the water quality issues from the concentrated peak flows.

10915 51<sup>st</sup> Ave S Seattle, WA 98178-2160  
[www.kubotagarden.org](http://www.kubotagarden.org)

*Handout provided at  
December 3, 2019 Mobility  
& Environment Committee  
meeting*





KUBOTA GARDEN  
FOUNDATION

## **Page 2. Statement of Support of the Kubota Garden Foundation's WaterWorks project application**

The study will be the first step to improving the cleanliness and visual water quality in the ponds of Kubota Garden by finding ways to reduce and normalize the storm water flows will drastically reduce maintenance required to dredge and remove silt and sediment from the ponds every year. It will also start the conversation on storm water infrastructure and its relationship to local residents, Kubota Garden and the Mapes Creek Basin.

We have a letters of support from King Conservation District, Seattle Parks, Seattle Public Utilities, Southeast Effective Development, the Rainier Beach Action Coalition, and Seattle Department of Transportation for your consideration.

### **Kubota Garden**

Kubota Garden is a unique and special place. Its history, design, pruned pines, use of stone, waterfalls, ponds, and sense of exploration combine to create a beautiful and serene place. It is a popular place for people from many cultures to walk, relax, gather for celebrations, picnic, and take photos. It will lift your spirit and delight your eyes. The garden is open every day and free of charge. While the garden is beautiful year-around, it is particularly colorful in April and May with spring flowers and in October with fall color. Eighteen acres of natural area surround the garden, providing a visual buffer and protecting Mapes Creek.

The garden began in 1927 as the home and nursery of horticultural visionary Fujitaro Kubota, a Japanese immigrant who was instrumental in introducing Japanese garden design to the Pacific Northwest. After being incarcerated during WWII, Mr. Kubota and his family courageously rebuilt their garden and business. The 4.5-acre core garden was designated as a Historical Landmark by the City in 1981. Developers eagerly sought to purchase the 20-acre property to build condominiums. Instead, the Kubota family sold the Garden to the City in 1987, preserving Mr. Kubota's legacy and his vision to assure the land would be a public place for people to gather and a respite from an increasingly busy world.

### **Kubota Garden Foundation**

The Kubota Garden Foundation is a non-profit 501(c3) organization formed in 1989 to continue a partnership with the City and assure the preservation of the entire 20-acre garden as envisioned by the Kubota family. With the support of staff, volunteers implement many programs and projects: conduct tours, greet visitors, help with garden maintenance, and organize publicity and capital projects to build special garden features such as the Terrace Overlook. Working with partner organizations, volunteers implement free cultural and educational events, including Soapstone Carving Workshops for Youth, Japanese Iris Exhibition, and Butoh Dance performances. Volunteers and donor members raise revenue for programs and projects by organizing plant sales, writing grants, and recruiting members. A team of Foundation archivists catalogue and maintain the important historic aspects of the garden.





**Stormwater Runoff in the Necklace of Ponds (Mapes Creek) at Kubota Garden**



Murky 2<sup>nd</sup> pond



Murky 4<sup>th</sup> pond







*Empowering community,  
Moving Rainier Beach Forward*

David Sauvion  
Food Innovation District Strategist  
Rainier Beach Action Coalition  
9013 S. MLK Jr. Way  
Seattle, WA 98118

June 19, 2018

King County Waterworks

To whom it may concern,

We strongly support the Kubota Garden application to fund a study to analyze current flow patterns and drainage issues (quality and quantity) and develop options to treat and convey stormwater from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden.

RBAC is a grass roots neighborhood development action coalition devoted to implementing neighborhood responsiveness, renewal and development, focusing specifically on the implementation of the Rainier Beach Neighborhood Plan Update. RBAC seeks builds a connected, sustainable and equitable neighborhood, promoting the "made in Rainier Beach" concept, quality education, living wage jobs, affordable transportation and housing for all. RBAC promotes a safe place where people thrive in a neighborhood the world calls home and builds neighborhood capacity to enhance quality of life in Rainier Beach by addressing critical issues threatening the welfare of Rainier Beach residents.

As part of the Healthy Living framework, the neighborhood plan calls for strong and interconnected communities and organizations, healthy people and families and great places that support our community. Kubota Garden is one of these assets to the neighborhood, "a natural and built environment that is healthy and provides for a healthy community."

Kubota Garden is a rich and valuable resource for the Rainier Beach Community. Please support the Kubota Garden Foundation as they seek to improve the amenities at the garden. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "DS" or "David Sauvion".

David Sauvion  
Rainier Beach Action Coalition  
Food Innovation District Strategist





# SEED

SouthEast Effective Development

June 12, 2019

RE: SEED community support letter for Kubota Garden Foundation application for King County Waterworks grant

To Whom It May Concern:

Southeast Effective Development's (SEED) is supportive of the Kubota Garden Foundation's application for the King County Waterworks grant. They are seeking a King County Waterworks grant to study the storm water system along 55th Ave S and the Upper Reaches of the Mapes Creek Basin which flow into and through the ponds at Kubota Garden and into Mapes Creek.

Currently the storm water runs through an open drainage ditch on the east side of 55th Ave S. It cannot handle storm water volume during storm events and overflows across Kubota Garden's parking lot, into a bio-swale and into the ponds of Kubota Garden which are part of Mapes Creek. These overflows create turbidity, introducing toxins into the creek and increase pond maintenance to remove the sedimentation.

This grant would fund a study to analyze current flow patterns and drainage issues (quality and quantity) and develop options to treat and convey storm water from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden.

This grant application and storm water study align exactly with SEED's mission "to improve the quality of life in Southeast Seattle by creating partnerships and inspiring investments in housing, arts and economic development - with a special focus on residents with fewer opportunities and resources". This community is exceptionally diverse and is the lowest income part of Seattle. Indeed Rainier Beach has double digit unemployment, a perverse and inequitable anomaly in a rich city. Kubota Garden is an oasis for the public and local residents. It is an inspiration and a celebration of the community's cultural diversity. From its beginning in 1975, SEED has considered arts, culture, and the environment to be central to community renewal and equity and identity -- along with housing and jobs. This project directly supports that aim.

The Kubota Garden Foundation, a non-profit partner for Kubota Garden, is very active and forward thinking. I strongly support Kubota Garden Foundation for initiating this grant application and their efforts to partner with multiple agencies across jurisdictional lines to preserve the health and beauty of the garden and the larger Mapes Creek watershed.

Sincerely,



Lance Matteson  
Executive Director  
SEED

SouthEast Effective Development

5117 Rainier Ave South, Seattle, WA 98148 | 206.723.7333 | 206.723.7137 | seedmail@seedseattle.org | www.seedseattle.org





June 11, 2019

Dear King County WaterWorks Grant Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the Kubota Garden Foundation's application for funding through the King County WaterWorks Grant Program. The Foundation's application supports water quality improvements and aligns with Seattle Parks and Recreation's commitment to healthy people, a healthy environment and strong communities.

Kubota Garden is one of Seattle Parks and Recreation's hidden gems. The City of Seattle acquired the property in 1987 from the estate of master landscaper Fujitaro Kubota. This stunning 20-acre landscape, which is also a historic landmark, blends Japanese garden concepts with native Pacific Northwest plants, and provides a place of beauty and respite for the residents of South Seattle and the entire region.

As we continue each year to see an increase of visitors to this special garden, it is critical that we make every effort to protect the integrity of the garden's ecological system. Optimizing water quality is crucial to sustaining Kubota Garden and Seattle's environment. As part of the Mapes Creek basin, the garden supports shoreline habitat for migrating salmon. In addition, portions of the creek in Kubota Garden collect runoff along the way before flowing into Lake Washington. In 2013, the Seattle City Council and the Mayor directed City departments to work together to achieve the goal of using green infrastructure to manage 700 million gallons of storm water runoff. The WaterWorks grant would provide essential resources to support those efforts.

Seattle Parks and Recreation wholeheartedly supports the Kubota Garden Foundation's grant application and applauds the Foundation's tireless work to preserve the garden's health and beauty. The grant would enhance environmental stewardship of the garden and help preserve this local treasure for future generations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesús Aguirre".

Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent  
Seattle Parks and Recreation







June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019

I am writing to support Kubota Garden Foundation's application for the King County Waterworks grant. Their application, which supports water quality improvement, aligns with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and the City's goal of managing 700 million gallons of stormwater runoff using green infrastructure.

Kubota Garden Foundation, the non-profit partner for Kubota Garden, is seeking a King County Waterworks grant to study the stormwater system along 55th Ave S, and the Upper Reaches of the Mapes Creek Basin, which flows into, and through, the ponds at Kubota Garden and into Mapes Creek.

Currently, the stormwater runs through an open drainage ditch on the east side of 55th Ave S, which cannot handle the capacity of stormwater runoff during rain events, causing it to overflow across Kubota Garden's parking lot, into a bioswale and ponds of Kubota Garden, which are part of Mapes Creek. This not only creates turbidity in the pond and creek, but also requires excessive pond maintenance to remove the sedimentation annually to keep water flowing through the creek.

A Waterworks grant would fund a study to analyze current drainage flow patterns and issues (quality and quantity), and to develop options to treat and convey stormwater from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden, where it could be treated along 55<sup>th</sup> Ave S (as part of a separate community sidewalk project).

Seattle Public Utilities has been studying the Mapes Creek Watershed along with Taylor Creek for the better part of the past decade; a study by the US Army Corps of Engineers (2011) mapped the Mapes Creek Stream Reaches (6, 7A and 7B), all of which flow into and through Kubota Garden. In addition, Seattle Public Utilities and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have been monitoring the significance of lower Mapes Creek as refuge and rearing habitat for ESA-listed juvenile Chinook salmon migrating from the Cedar River, from January through June each year (Tabor and Moore, 2018).

Seattle Public Utilities strongly supports Kubota Garden Foundation for initiating this grant application, and for their efforts to partner with multiple agencies and departments to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff on Kubota Garden and on Mapes Creek. The Waterworks grant would be used to collect data, that would be applied to developing environmentally sustainable solutions that reduce stormwater impacts and improve water quality in Mapes Creek and at Kubota Garden.

If there are any questions, please direct them to our creeks biologist, Katherine Lynch at [katherine.lynch@seattle.gov](mailto:katherine.lynch@seattle.gov) or 206-233-5194.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Minichillo".

Amy Minichillo, Manager  
Environmental Science and Technology Drainage and Wastewater

Cc: Katherine Lynch, SPU  
Rose Ann Lopez, SPU  
Kathy Minsch, SPU





**Seattle**  
Department of  
Transportation

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King County Waterworks

June 13, 2019

To Whom it May Concern:

Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) is supportive of the Kubota Garden Foundation's application for the King County Waterworks grant. They are seeking a King County Waterworks grant to study the storm water system along 55th Ave S and the Upper Reaches of the Mapes Creek Basin which flow into and through the ponds at Kubota Garden and into Mapes Creek. When completed, their study will help SDOT develop improvements for the unimproved ROW along 55<sup>th</sup> Ave S.

Currently the stormwater runs through an open drainage ditch on the east side of 55th Ave S which cannot handle the capacity of stormwater during storm events and overflows across Kubota Garden's parking lot into a bioswale and Kubota Garden ponds, which are part of Mapes Creek. These overflows create turbidity, introducing toxins into the creek and increase pond maintenance to remove the sedimentation.

A Waterworks grant would fund a study to analyze current flow patterns and drainage issues (quality and quantity) and develop options to treat and convey stormwater from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden.

The community has applied for a grant through Neighborhood Street Fund which funds projects between \$100,000 and \$1 Million. The broad community is very supportive of the project which is to add a sidewalk along 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue South adjacent to Kubota Garden. The application has passed through several steps and is being further developed by our staff engineers. If the community receives the King County Waterworks grant, understanding how run off should be treated, will help guide future improvements along 55<sup>th</sup> Ave S.

The Kubota Garden Foundation, a non-profit partner for Kubota Garden, is very active and forward thinking. They have worked hard with the Parks Department to update their master plan, initiated two grant applications, and are partnering with multiple agencies and departments to preserve the health and beauty of the garden and the larger Mapes Creek watershed.

If there are any questions, please contact Shauna Walgren at [shauna.walgren@seattle.gov](mailto:shauna.walgren@seattle.gov) or 206-684-8681.

Sincerely,



Lorelei Williams, P.E.  
Deputy Director, SDOT

Cc: Shauna Walgren, SDOT  
Brian Dougherty, SDOT  
Jim Curtin, SDOT  
Chris Svolopoulos, SDOT  
Katherine Lynch, SPU







June 12, 2019

Dear WaterWorks Panelists:

I am writing this letter in support of the application from Kubota Garden Foundation for funding through the King County WaterWorks grant process. The Foundation's application, which supports water quality improvement, aligns with the goals of the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) and the City's goal of managing 700 million gallons of stormwater runoff using green infrastructure.

Kubota Garden Foundation, the non-profit partner for Kubota Garden, is seeking a King County Waterworks grant to study the storm water system along 55th Ave S and the Upper Reaches of the Mapes Creek Basin which flow into and through the ponds at Kubota Garden and into Mapes Creek.

Currently the stormwater runs through an open drainage ditch on the east side of 55th Ave S which cannot handle the capacity of stormwater during storm events and it overflows across Kubota Garden's parking lot, into a bioswale and into the ponds of Kubota Garden which are part of Mapes Creek. This not only creates turbidity but also requires excessive pond maintenance to remove the sedimentation annually to keep water flowing through the creek.

This WaterWorks grant would fund a study to analyze current flow patterns and drainage issues (quality and quantity) and develop options to treat and convey stormwater from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden.

GSP works to restore the 2,500 acres of urban forest in the city's parklands, including many restoration zones along Mapes Creek through Kubota Gardens. Given the anticipated improvements in water quality and stormwater management in this section of Mapes Creek, the GSP program supports Kubota Garden Foundation in seeking funding through this grant program, as well as their efforts to partner with multiple agencies and departments to preserve the health and beauty of the garden and the larger Mapes Creek watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patti Bakker".

Patti Bakker  
Manager 1 | Green Seattle Partnership, Wildlife, IPM  
Seattle Parks and Recreation  
[patricia.bakker@seattle.gov](mailto:patricia.bakker@seattle.gov); 206-233-5019





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**King Conservation District**

800 SW 39<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 150 • Renton, WA 98057 • Phone (425) 282-1900

Fax (425) 282-1898 • [www.kingcd.org](http://www.kingcd.org)

June 6<sup>th</sup> 2019

King County Water Works

To Whom it May Concern;

King Conservation District would like to express support for Kubota Garden Foundation's application for the King County Waterworks grant. Their application, which supports water quality improvement, aligns with King Conservation District's vision to make better ground through important stewardship actions at home and in our communities to create healthy soil and water, to provide healthy food, and to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources.

Kubota Garden Foundation, the non-profit partner for Kubota Garden, is seeking a King County Waterworks grant to study the storm water system along 55th Ave S and the Upper Reaches of the Mapes Creek Basin which flow into and through the ponds at Kubota Garden and into Mapes Creek.

Currently the stormwater runs through an open drainage ditch on the east side of 55th Ave S which cannot handle the capacity of stormwater during storm events and it overflows across Kubota Garden's parking lot, into a bioswale and into the ponds of Kubota Garden which are part of Mapes Creek. This not only creates turbidity but also requires excessive pond maintenance to remove the sedimentation annually to keep water flowing through the creek. The stormwater flows through Mapes Creek and eventually to Lake Washington.

A Waterworks grant would fund a study to analyze current flow patterns and drainage issues (quality and quantity) and develop options to treat and convey stormwater from the hillside to the south of Kubota Garden.

Polluted stormwater runoff is the number one source of toxic pollution to Puget Sound and surrounding waterways. Studies have shown that the pollutants in stormwater runoff can kill Coho salmon in as little as three hours. The recent Orca Recovery Task Force report identified "toxic contaminants in water and food" as one of three key factors affecting the health of the resident Orca population.

This is not a problem that is going to be satisfactorily addressed by any one constituency or interest group. Every step and every action taken to improve the quality of stormwater entering our waterways is a step in the right direction.





In 2015, KCD launched an expansion of its aquatic area protection and enhancement programs to include education, technical assistance and project implementation services to urban residential freshwater shoreline and riparian habitat landowners. The Urban Shorelines & Riparian Habitat Program includes technical assistance and project implementation services for urban homeowners and residents, and education programming for urban homeowners and residents.

The work that will be done by the Kubota Garden Foundation with this grant will result in a meaningful contribution to the conservation outcomes we all seek for the Sound. It is a direct complement to the work that KCD is doing with individual landowners.

KCD strongly supports Kubota Garden Foundation for initiating this grant application and their efforts to partner with multiple agencies across jurisdictional lines to preserve the health and beauty of the garden and the larger Mapes Creek watershed and to better understand and manage the impacts of stormwater runoff on the health of Puget Sound.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like additional information.

*Bea Covington*  
Bea Covington  
Executive Director

