

**The 11-15-22 Jefferson County Gateway Plan Implementation and Boat Yard Expansion Grant addresses a legitimate economic development project that involves the Port of Port Townsend and the Jefferson County PUD. This development does not require the removal of the lower Sims Way poplar streetscape.**

- “The . . . Project will address safety and reliability issues with the main power transmission lines feeding Port Townsend. . . and expand the boat yard along Sims Way hereby providing additional work space to support marine trades jobs in Jefferson County.”<sup>1</sup>
- Pursuant to RCW 82.14.370 the PIF applicants specified that the Public Facilit[ies] eligible for PIF funding are “Storm water facilities, electric facilities and transportation infrastructure.”<sup>2</sup>
- The Project is located in the Sims Way corridor between the boat yard and the Kah Tai Lagoon. [Emphasis added]. See ftnt 2.
- The PIF Grant requires the removal of the Lombardy poplars lining the lower Sims Way “Flat’s” transportation corridor “to assist in implementing the City’s Gateway Plan.” See ftnt 1. The city’s 1993 Gateway Development Plan (p.14)<sup>3</sup> calls for the planting and maintenance of the very same Lombardy poplars. The city has actively protected these poplars for decades.
- The city’s primary interest in the Project was initiated by the Admiralty Audubon Society (AA) and the city’s Parks, Recreation, Trees and Trails Advisory Board (PRTTA), chaired by a member of AA. The intent of AA and PRTTA is to catalyze the development of the Kah Tai Lagoon Park. AA has a Kah Tai Adopt-A-Park agreement with the city and has been performing volunteer planting and maintenance work for 40+ years.
- **There is no doubt Kah Tai Lagoon Park has been neglected by the city and needs much more public investment.**
- No public agency, entity or individual certified master arborist has formally concluded that the removal of the poplars from lower Sims Way is *the* condition precedent to the achievement of the economic benefits of the Project or the

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<sup>1</sup> [PIF Grant Agreement - Sims Way Gateway Plan Implementation and Boat Yard Expansion](#)

<sup>2</sup> [PIF Grant Application](#) p.3

<sup>3</sup> [1993 Gateway Development Plan](#) p.14 & [Agency Principals Presentation](#) p.19

implementation of the recommendations of the 1986 Kah Tai Landscape and Furniture Plan.<sup>4</sup>

**The solution to the city’s legitimate concern about the condition of the Kah Tai Lagoon Park is to promote an independent project to address that. Parks are not specified in [RCW 82.14.370](#)<sup>5</sup> as eligible for PIF grants for economic development.**

**We call upon the Stakeholder committee members to:**

exercise the independent informal authority they wield as experienced professionals and critical thinkers, qualities that made them good candidates to advise the PRTTA and the city council, and

honor the success of the Gateway Development Plan and to preserve the 90+ year legacy the poplars have provided since they were planted, replanted and protected by the city and

*to recognize the need for the city to develop funding sources for the care and maintenance of the Kai Tai Lagoon Nature Park, keeping in mind the need to proceed thoughtfully in the park to protect the wildlife habitat now supporting wildlife and to avoid precipitously stripping the park of unwanted trees.*

**What is it about present conditions of the Port Townsend Sims Way gateway transportation corridor that requires removal of the poplars ?**

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[https://cityofpt.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/engage\\_pt/page/20561/1986.00.00 - kah tai lagoon landscape\\_furniture\\_site\\_development\\_details.pdf](https://cityofpt.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/engage_pt/page/20561/1986.00.00 - kah tai lagoon landscape_furniture_site_development_details.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>(i) "[Public facilities](#)" means bridges, roads, domestic and industrial water facilities, sanitary sewer facilities, earth stabilization, storm sewer facilities, railroads, electrical facilities, natural gas facilities, research, testing, training, and incubation facilities in innovation partnership zones designated under RCW [43.330.270](#), buildings, structures, telecommunications infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, or commercial infrastructure, and port facilities in the state of Washington.

## **Nothing.**

The **necessity** of removing the poplars from this *transportation corridor* is never stated in the PIF application, nor in the presentation to the PIF Board nor in the PIF Grant Agreement. To date, not one agency, organization or individual has established the health or safety conditions on the lower Sims Way *transportation corridor* that would require the removal of the poplars, a corridor that serves 10,000+ vehicles per day.

The PUD manager told his PUD Board of commissioners on 2-15-22 that the overhead power lines on the boat yard, south side of Sims Way can be undergrounded without removing the poplars. Trenching to bury cables has been done successfully in the past in that very location and without harm to the poplars.

When local agencies met on 5-19-22 at their regularly scheduled [Intergovernmental Collaborative Group \(ICG\)](#) meeting, which included the city manager, several city councilors, the port manager, all three PUD commissioners and the county manager, not one mentioned the Sims Gateway and Boatyard Expansion Project (intended “[to] address safety and reliability issues” See ftnt 1) in any context whatsoever. The port representative presented a list of six projects, the first being a \$10 million project to create capacity for twenty 300 ton boats and a \$2.1 million 300 ton travel lift project.

## **Does the lower Sims Way “Flats” part of the gateway need critical aesthetic, restoration or maintenance work?**

## **No.**

The city’s primary interest in the Project was initiated by its Parks, Recreation, Trees and Trails Advisory Board (PRTTA). At the PIF Board meeting on 11-2-22 city manager John Mauro referred four times to PRTTA’s general concerns regarding the need to remove the poplars lining the lower Sims Way transportation corridor.<sup>6</sup> No expert opinion or studies were submitted in support of poplar removal by the city or its agency co-applicants.

One of the city’s Project goals stated on its website is “Improved bio-diversity and create an aesthetically pleasing gateway.”<sup>7</sup> Surely lower Sims Way could be redesigned in any

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<sup>6</sup> PIF Board meeting 11-2-22 ([transcript available w/ video](#))

<sup>7</sup> [Sims Gateway and Boatyard Expansion Project](#)

number of ways, including creating a “triple-canopy” with a planting median for various aesthetic reasons but for which there are no funds. As transportation infrastructure there have been no expert analyses identifying defects to remedy.

**One member of the Stakeholder committee expressed the business community’s appreciation for the current beauty of the gateway. Another committee member is on record with his professional analysis of the lifetime value of the poplars to the community.**

**Arlene Alen**, Ex. Dir., Jeff Cty Chamber of Commerce, left no doubt in her comment at the 5-10-22 Stakeholder meeting what the business community values today about the gateway into the city: “What we do care greatly about is the fact that the drive into Port Townsend through the forest is so beautiful. . . . maintaining some look and feel that maintains the character of this warm iconic gateway to this city that people remember for decades. . . is so critical to the way people think and feel about this community. . . .”  
<sup>8</sup> [Full comment footnoted below]

**Dan Burden**, [Director of Walkable Communities](#), estimated in 2006 dollars that at about \$90k value per tree the city is proposing to destroy \$11.7+ million in streetscape

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<sup>8</sup> [Arlene Alen @50:28](#) 5-10-22 Stakeholder Committee Meeting

What we do care greatly about is the fact that the drive into Port Townsend through the forest is so beautiful. And we want to be certain that people that have been coming here for years and years and people that made the determination to live here continue to be able to feel the same way when they come home. And it is for us all about maintaining some look and feel that maintains the character of this warm iconic gateway to this city that people remember for decades. It is so critical to the way people think and feel about this community. . . . Our area of expertise is what appeals to businesses, what appeals to our visitors and how we can keep them staying here and coming back and keeping the quality of life and having the amazing visual appeal that this community has going forward. So whatever the solution is it needs to maintain that look and feel that's so welcoming. We keep using the word welcoming, that this is a very welcoming community in all aspects and in all sectors . . . We want to maintain that feeling that people have when they come in and that really is our perspective on this.

value (not including aesthetic, social and natural).<sup>9</sup> The equivalent of \$11.7 million in 2022 is about \$15.2 million.<sup>10</sup> This is way too high a public downpayment for addressing the city PRTTA's remediation interest in the Kah Tai Lagoon Park.

**The solution to the legitimate concern about the condition of the Kah Tai Lagoon Park is to promote an independent project to address that.**

**Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park is a worthy project suitable for grant funding and the improvement of which would contribute to what makes Port Townsend a special community. The Nature Park project would not require poplar removal from the Sims Way ROW.**

During the [5-10-22 Stakeholder meeting](#) Stakeholder committee members Ron Sykes, AA treasurer, (1:26:17; 1:56:25) and Forest Shomer (1:31; 1:58:20), spoke quite eloquently about their 40+ year devotion and work, individually and in conjunction with Admiralty Audubon, to nurture and enhance Kai Tai Park's potential for abundant wildlife and diverse flora. The PRTTA is chaired by an Admiralty Audubon member. It was in August 2021 that the PRTTA advanced the idea to the city council that the Project goals should, as later articulated by city Public Works, include "Environmental stewardship of Kah Tai Lagoon and support for growth of plantings of native species that has already occurred as recommended in the 1986 Landscape Plan." See ftnt 7.

It is clear that knowledgeable citizens who serve on city advisory boards and who have been volunteering for decades to maintain Kah Tai Park have justifiably concluded the park needs much greater public support to realize the vision articulated in various Kah Tai Lagoon Nature Park plans.

This nature park is the place for nurturing abundant wildlife and diverse flora, not the Sims Way ROW.

The lower Sims Way "Flats" district is a transportation corridor that is beautiful as it is--especially if the city provided the proper maintenance and care of the poplars (Port

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<sup>9</sup> [Urban Street Trees 22 Benefits By Dan Burden](#). (\$90k x 130 trees = \$11.7+ million.)

<sup>10</sup> [St. Louis Federal Reserve, Consumer Price Index for 4-2006 to 4-2022](#).

Townsend is a designated “Tree City US”). The city should continue to fulfill the stated goals of the Gateway Development Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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On behalf of [Gateway Poplar Alliance](#)