



Legislation Text

File #: 24-0132, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Request: Requesting authorization for the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Chicago Horticultural Society, Glencoe, Illinois.

Reason: The Forest Preserves and the Chicago Horticultural Society, which operates the Chicago Botanic Garden (the “Garden”), seek to partner for cooperative land management at Turnbull Woods, and to utilize the Garden’s unique expertise in plant propagation to assist with the launch of the Forest Preserves’ in-house seed amplification program. The Garden is a recognized global leader at the forefront of research on floristic genetics and species diversity for landscape restoration efforts throughout the Upper Midwest. Through this partnership, the Garden would recruit, hire, and train a plant Nursery Manager and a Nursery Technician to support restoration on Forest Preserves properties through the development of seed beds, greenhouse infrastructure, collection and propagation of seed, etc. The Garden will staff the positions for a two-year period starting in 2024. Cultivating native seed and plants from local populations is critical to the resiliency of ecological restoration efforts throughout the preserves by ensuring that native plants are genetically adapted to our local habitats.

This partnership would also provide support for the Garden’s Stewardship and Ecology of Natural Areas (“SENA”) internship program to conduct ecological restoration activities at Turnbull Woods. The SENA program provides advanced workforce training for aspiring natural resource professionals, with a focus on stewardship, ecological monitoring, data collection and analysis. The SENA interns, under the Garden’s direction, will conduct invasive species removal, seed collection, prescribed burning and other restoration actions in accordance with the Forest Preserves’ approved management schedule.

The Forest Preserves has a long history of cooperation with the Garden on shared initiatives, including without limitation, the Plants of Concern Program (Board Item No. 22-0375), Joint Purchasing Initiatives (Board Item No. 20-0142), and ARPA Projects (Board Item No. 23-0308).

Contract Period: Date of execution - 12/31/2027

Fiscal Impact: Not to exceed \$432,800.00 (\$332,800.00 for Seed Amplification Program and \$100,000.00 for SENA internship program). Additionally, the Garden is contributing an additional \$264,555.00 of in-kind support.

Account(s): Professional Services 51034.520840; Grant and Mitigation 51010.521444 and 51010.520840; and all future Professional Services and Grant and Mitigation accounts

Concurrences: The Chief Financial Officer has approved this item. Final agreement is subject to legal review and approval.

District(s): Districtwide