

# Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair

Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Mariska Kecskes • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores  
Erik Rundell • Andrew Zellers

June 1, 2016.

Maureen Sheehan  
Seattle Department of Neighborhoods  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98124

Re: Increasing consideration of the urban forest during Seattle Major Institutions Master Plans

Dear Maureen,

The Urban Forestry Commission would like to share with you the following suggestions for future updates to the Seattle Major Institutions Master Plans. We suggest the following changes to increase consideration of the urban forest and offset tree canopy losses managed by Seattle's Major Institutions. These comments are consistent with the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan which was adopted by City Council in 2013. We would like you to consider the following specific changes:

## 23.69.002 Purpose and Intent

Suggest inserting the following *italics* into paragraph I:

I - Make the need for appropriate transition primary considerations in determining setbacks. Also setbacks may be appropriate to achieve proper scale, building modulation, or view corridors ***as well as retain existing trees or provide space for planting new trees.***

[This addition is intended to acknowledge existing trees may have a longer lifespan than the future building and recognize that a long-lived tree can help a building achieve a proper scale. It is also intended to propel the idea that enough space is needed to support a newly planted tree in order for it to reach maturity.]

## 23.69.012 Conditional Uses

Suggest inserting the following *italics* into paragraph (A)(3):

(A)(3) - In authorizing a conditional use, adverse impacts may be mitigated by imposing conditions such as landscaping and screening, ***restoring tree canopy***, vehicular access controls and any other measures needed to mitigate adverse impacts on other properties in the zone or vicinity and to protect the public interest. The Director shall deny or recommend denial of a conditional use if it is determined that adverse impacts cannot be

mitigated satisfactorily.

[This addition is intended to maintain an equivalency of tree canopy within the existing Major Institution Master Plan overlay zone.]

#### 23.69.012 Conditional Uses

Suggest inserting the following *italics* into paragraph (B)(2)(b):

(B)(2)(b) - Required landscaping shall be compatible with neighboring properties. Landscaping in addition to that required by the Code may be required to reduce the potential for erosion or excessive stormwater runoff, ***to restore removed canopy using at least a 1:1 tree replanting ratio of equivalent sized trees at maturity***, to minimize coverage of the site by impervious surfaces, to screen parking, or to reduce noise or the appearance of bulk and scale; and...

[This addition is intended to maintain an equivalency of tree canopy either within the existing Major Institution Master Plan overlay zone or in the immediate vicinity of the Major Institution or via a fee in lieu to the Trees for Neighborhoods program.]

#### 23.69.026 Determination to prepare a master plan

Suggest replacing paragraph (D)(6) with the following:

(D)(6) – ***Would not reduce existing open area by more than 4000 square feet or remove three or more non-hazardous significant trees.***

[The existing thresholds are not specific in stating, “Would not significantly reduce existing open area or landscaping.” This threshold would easily be measurable and foreseeable by the applicant.]

#### 23.69.030 Contents of a master plan

Suggest inserting the following *italics*:

(C)(3)(d) – Landscaping ***shall include at least 1:1 tree replacement and 1 tree per 4000 square feet of plant-able area at a minimum. New and replacement trees should be species maturing to the largest appropriate size and shall be provided enough space to reach maturity including both root zone space and canopy space. Off-site planting or fee in lieu to Trees for Neighborhoods program shall be an option in the immediate vicinity if planting space is not available on-site to meet these requirements. Evergreen trees should be replanted with evergreen trees.***

[This addition is intended to maintain an equivalency of tree canopy within the existing

Major Institution Master Plan overlay zone consistent with increasing tree canopy per Urban Forest Stewardship Plan goals by 2037. We recognize the difficulty in achieving this requirement at Hospital facilities, which is why we suggest off-site planting in the immediate vicinity available]

Please let us know if questions or concerns arise when exploring the above suggestions. We believe that these changes would increase the awareness and care of the urban forest within Seattle's Major Institutions.

Sincerely,



Tom Early, Chair

cc: Mayor Edward B. Murray, Council President Harrell, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Burgess, Councilmember Gonzalez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Kathy Nyland, Nathan Torgelson, Eric McConaghy.

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