

In the past few weeks, you've seen new trees planted in your neighborhood. We wanted to provide you with more information about the City's urban forestry goals and the benefits of a thriving tree canopy.

### **Why does this project include so many new trees?**

The Delridge Natural Drainage System trees will grow to become a crucial part of Seattle's urban forest. Seattle's urban trees, and street trees in particular, are critically important to keeping Seattle a healthy, sustainable place to live. Significant research shows that street trees:

- [Build strong communities](#) by connecting neighbors
- [Soak up rainwater](#), keeping our streams, lakes, and Puget Sound clean
- [Melt away stress](#) and help us recover from illness more quickly
- [Calm traffic](#), helping to avoid accidents
- [Clear our air](#), making it easier to breathe
- [Discourage crime](#) by making neighborhoods look cared for and watched over

These are only a few of the [important benefits](#) that trees bring to a city, which is why the City of Seattle has adopted a goal to have 30% of Seattle covered by trees by the year 2037. Currently, 23% of the city is covered by trees. You can learn more about the City of Seattle's urban forestry goals and programs, and how you can get involved, by visiting the Seattle reLeaf website at [www.Seattle.gov/trees](http://www.Seattle.gov/trees).

### **How did SPU decide where to plant the trees?**

The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), in conjunction with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), put serious thought into the selection and placement of trees in order to best ensure the future health of the tree and minimize impacts to surrounding infrastructure like existing trees, streets, sidewalks, and driveways. This includes planting appropriately around power lines to avoid possible future interference with the electrical system and buried utilities such as gas, water service and sewer lines.

SPU Natural Drainage System Projects are atypical in terms of the design options because of the wider than standard planting strips, the need to maximize volume for roadside rain garden cells, the preservation of existing, healthy trees and the general diversity in tree selection for compatibility with soil conditions - some must be more tolerant of saturated soil during a portion of the active growing season. These projects often provide opportunities for a stratified tree canopy –use of understory tree species adjacent to large existing or newly planted large-scale species. Stratified tree canopies allow the City to preserve existing trees and add new tree species to the right of way. The canopy volume also provides protection from full sun exposure and makes it possible to replicate natural forest conditions in an urban setting creating cleaner air and better habitat for wildlife. SDOT's Urban Forestry team worked very closely with SPU's Landscape Architectural Design Consultant with the goal to maximize canopy volume and diversity in tree selection compatible with the space needed for roadside rain gardens in the right of way.

### **Who will maintain the trees after they're planted?**

The trees that SPU and SDOT have worked together to plant in your neighborhood will be maintained by the City of Seattle in the future. For the first three years after planting, SPU will care for the trees. Beyond that three-year period, SDOT is responsible for the trees. SDOT maintenance includes summer watering and future pruning to improve the health and longevity of the trees as well as to provide

clearance for pedestrians, bikes, and vehicles. There are a few things that you can do to help the tree thrive:

- Keep all grass and weeds at least a foot away from the trunk of the tree. This protects the tree from damage and decay, and minimizes competition with the tree for water and nutrients.
- Give the tree a 2-4 inch thick layer of [wood mulch](#). Mulch should be in a doughnut shape around the tree, staying a hands-width away from the trunk. Mulch helps to hold water in the soil for the tree, and breaks down over time to release nutrients into the soil. Replace mulch every year.
- If you notice that the tree appears to need water, fill up the water bag. SDOT's crews will be watering trees once a week, but sometimes during the hottest, driest part of the year, trees could use a little more.
- Protect the tree from damage by weed wackers, bike locks, or anything else tied to the trunk or branches.
- Report any issues with the tree to SDOT at 206-684-TREE.

Thank you for staying actively involved in the Delridge Natural Drainage Systems project. If you have additional questions related to the project, please call or email Jason Sharpley, Project Manager, at (206) 615-0030 or [jason.sharpley@seattle.gov](mailto:jason.sharpley@seattle.gov).

Construction updates will be sent via the project listserv. Please forward this update to your neighbors and/or encourage them to sign up at: [http://www.seattle.gov/lists/delridge\\_natural\\_drainage.htm](http://www.seattle.gov/lists/delridge_natural_drainage.htm).