

**Draft August 8, 2011
CITY OF SEATTLE**

**TREE STANDARDS
FOR SPECIES SELECTION, PLANTING, MAINTENANCE AND PROTECTION**

In service to the Urban Forest Management Plan's overarching goal of achieving thirty percent canopy cover, Seattle's Urban Forestry Commission recommends city-wide adoption of Tree Standards for species selection, planting, underplanting, establishment, protection, pruning and topping. These standards, at a minimum, should be included in the requirements for trees to replace those removed or killed under a Tree Permit system. The expected outcomes of establishing these standards include increasing the survival of planted and existing trees, providing an information resource to citizens for developing healthy trees and canopy cover, and protecting the investment of property owners and the general public from poorly planned tree planting, protection and maintenance projects.

1. Tree Selection Should:

- Use existing resources consistently such as SDOT and/or DPD plant lists.
- Take distance from street lines into account

2. Planting and Establishment Should:

- Use Department of Transportation *Street Tree Planting Procedures*, the Seattle Pedestrian Master Plan Issue Paper: *Trees and Sidewalks*, and James Urban's *Up By the Roots*. Requirements should include:
 - i. Setbacks from and avoidance of driveways, sidewalks, curbs and utilities
 - ii. Confirming sufficient ground area and soil volume for planting sites. Recommend 30 square feet minimum and 3-1/2 feet wide minimum and that these guidelines are written in city code or CAM.
 - iii. Proper methods for transferring potted trees from containers to the ground, including excavation, root treatment, tree placement, soil treatment, and watering requirements. Tree planting, care guidelines adopted based on established source such as Seattle Parks' Green Seattle Partnership Field Guide.

3. Protection –

- Should protect root zone inside and outside development areas.
- Should include both short and long-term protection
- Should have standard for tree protection outside of Development Regulations. (people need better information to understand what impacts trees. *You could imply an analogy similar to "one call requirements for digging but I don't think we will get that far ..."*)
- Should include guidelines for maintenance and watering
- Should include guidelines for under planting to protect the root zone

4. Pruning & Maintenance –

- Should prohibit topping (variance required for special case)
- Should include SDOT's pruning guidance for street trees and shrubs
- Should include or reference ANSI's 300 series standards for tree care
- Should fund educational outreach

References

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