

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • **Joanna Nelson de Flores** (Position #7 – NGO), Vice-Chair
Steve Zemke (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Sandra Whiting** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist)
Sarah Rehder (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA certified)
Michael Walton (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA certified) • **Andrew Zellers** (Position #8 – Development)
Craig Johnson (Position #9 – Economist) • **Bonnie Lei** (Position #10 – Get Engaged)
Whit Bouton (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position #12 – Public Health)
Shari Selch (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

October 10, 2018.

CM Sally Bagshaw, Chair
Council Budget Committee
City Hall
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Adequately resourcing an updated proposed tree ordinance

Dear Councilmember Bagshaw,

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) thanks City Council and Council Central Staff for moving forward an updated tree protection ordinance. The UFC is pleased to support the City in this effort.

A tree protection ordinance is only effective if it is appropriately resourced. The UFC commends and supports the Mayor's decision to include funding for an additional arborist position in SDCl. In addition, the UFC believes there are other areas that need increased funding. For this reason, the UFC asks City Council to consider the following recommendations when building the budget that will support an updated tree ordinance:

1. Leveraging technology: The City currently has tools at its disposal that can be easily adapted to provide great benefit to protecting trees. For example, currently there is no system in place to track the removal and replacement of trees on private property (as directed in Mayor Burgess' [Tree Protection Executive Order 2017-11](#)). However, a modification to the Accela system would allow for tree action tracking, which will greatly improve the City's ability to understand and account for tree removal and re-planting. The UFC also recommends adding appropriate funding, including necessary staff in SDCl, to oversee the design and implementation of this work in order to avoid undue burden on existing staff.

2. Monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement: Successful enforcement of the current tree regulations has been a challenge. The UFC recommends including funding to hire enforcement staff whose role would be to monitor tree actions across the city. The UFC also recommends including funding for monitoring and evaluation of the ordinance overall in order to assess the impact of the ordinance on changes in tree canopy. Finally, the UFC recommends resourcing

now the implementation and enforcement of [SMC 25.11.090](#) to require developers to replace exceptional trees and trees over 24” in diameter in all zones.

3. Community resources: In order for residents to be able to implement tree regulations on their own property, the UFC believes that more resources are needed to support smart decision-making and compliance. The UFC recommends hiring, at minimum, a second arborist to support SDCI and to be a resource for residents considering tree removal. The UFC also recommends allocating additional resources to SDCI to staff positions to support residents with education/outreach and public support related to the permitting process for trees on private property.

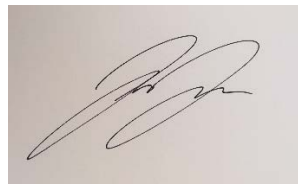
The UFC believes that the funding recommendations above are critical to ensuring that the updated tree protection ordinance is effective, impactful, accessible, and enforceable. The UFC does not believe that relying on a fee structure as the sole source of funding will be adequate and might create barriers and inequities.

The UFC urges you to consider these recommendations as you continue your budget deliberations.

Sincerely,



Weston Brinkley, Chair



Jessica Jones

cc: Mayor Durkan, Council President Harrell, Councilmember Gonzalez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember O’Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Nathan Torgelson, Michelle Caulfield, Mike Podowski, Noah An, Maggie Glowacki, Chanda Emery, Urban Forestry Management Team, Urban Forestry Core Team, Sara Maxana, Aaron Blumenthal, Eric McConaghy, Yolanda Ho, Susie Levy, Daniel Strauss, Evan Philip

Sandra Pinto de Bader, Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator
City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability & Environment
PO Box 94729 Seattle, WA 98124-4729 Tel: 206-684-3194 Fax: 206-684-3013
www.seattle.gov/UrbanForestryCommission