

Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

Weston Brinkley, Chair • Joanna Nelson de Flores, Vice-Chair
Tom Early • Megan Herzog • Craig Johnson • Sarah Rehder
Sandra Whiting • Andrew Zellers • Steve Zemke

April 11, 2018.

Mayor Jenny Durkan and Councilmember Rob Johnson
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Ave.
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Tree regulations update recommendation

Dear Mayor and Councilmember Johnson,

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) commends the Mayor and Councilmember Johnson for providing the impetus to move forward the Tree Protection ordinance update. The UFC is excited to support the City in this important effort.

Seattle recognizes the important role trees play in our densifying city. The UFC is interested in finding ways to allow for flexible management of trees by property owners, while protecting trees and accomplishing the City's urban forestry goals.

The UFC has provided input in support of an update of the tree protection ordinance over the years (copies of such letters of recommendation can be made available if so desired).

The UFC recommends addressing the areas listed below in an updated tree protection ordinance. More detailed input will be forthcoming:

1. Keep protection of groves and exceptional trees.
2. Reinstate a policy of no-net-loss of tree canopy with a goal of increasing canopy.
 - Explore incentives for tree retention and deterrents for tree removal.
3. Establish a fee-in-lieu program (separate from the City's General Fund) for tree replacement, maintenance, and tree protection enforcement.
4. Establish a tree removal permit system to track and monitor tree loss and replacement.
 - This could be accomplished by expanding SDOT's current tree permit system.
 - The code update is an opportunity to require invasive plant removal from sites undergoing development.
5. Require an urban forest canopy impact assessment for development sites.
6. Establish a tree service provider registration/certification to cover all tree work done in Seattle.
7. Include environmental equity considerations.
8. Remove the exception from the tree protection code for single-family lots smaller than 5,000 sf.

9. Establish financial guarantees to ensure tree survival.
10. Include requirements to follow current industry standards and best management practices for tree selection and care.
 - Including how a hazard tree determination is done.
11. Terms to be clearly defined: Canopy area, Canopy volume, DBH, Excessive pruning, Fee-in-lieu, Hedge, Invasive, Mayor pruning, Off-site replacement, Pruning, Seattle Comprehensive Plan, Seattle Urban Forest Stewardship Plan, Significant tree, Tree, Tree permit, Tree protection area, Tree Replacement and Maintenance Fund, Tree service providers, Urban forest canopy impact assessment, and Volume.

We appreciate your commitment to Seattle's urban forest and look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



Weston Brinkley, Chair



Steve Zemke

cc: Council President Harrell, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Gonzalez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Nathan Torgelson, Michelle Caulfield, Mike Podowski, Maggie Glowacki, Aaron Blumenthal, Peter Lindsay, Eric McConaghy, Yolanda Ho, Urban Forestry Core Team, Susie Levy, Alberta Bleck, Evan Philip