

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Weston Brinkley (Position #3 – University), Chair • Steve Zemke (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Vice-Chair

Sarah Rehder (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)

Michael Walton (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)

Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO) • Steven Fry (Position #8 – Development)

Whit Bouton (Position #11 – Environmental Justice)

Jessica Jones (Position # 12 – Public Health) • Shari Selch (Position # 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

September 4, 2019.

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan  
City Hall  
600 4<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Updating tree protection ordinance (SMC 25.11)

Dear Mayor Durkan,

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) would like to thank you for directing SDCI and OSE staff to move forward with updating the tree protection ordinance (SMC 25.11) and for your partnership with City Council. Commission members appreciated meeting with Deputy Mayor David Moseley on July 30 to discuss ways the UFC can support the City moving forward with updating the tree protection ordinance. This work is over a decade in the making and the UFC is excited that it's finally happening.

The UFC met with SDCI staff in August and was glad to hear of a number of critical developments that are moving forward this year to support the tree protection ordinance update:

1. **Public outreach in the next four months.** Staff will engage targeted communities that have not previously contributed to the comments received on the revised tree ordinance proposal. This will occur in parallel with the Urban Forest Management Plan update engagement effort.
2. **Implementing and enforcing SMC 25.11.090.** This code section requires the replacement of Exceptional trees and all trees over two feet in diameter removed during development. The UFC is pleased to hear it will finally be enforced.
3. **Finalizing the implementation of Executive Order 2017-11: Tree Protection in 2019.** This Executive Order (EO) involved critical steps for protecting and enhancing our urban forest including:
  - a) **Utilizing the existing Accela system to record all required data on trees as part of the current permit system.** Tree data required, both on development plans (and outside of development), is yet to be included in the Accela system. The

UFC is looking forward to this being corrected and to start critical data reporting associated with urban forest management.

- b) **Improved SDCI Director's Rules** associated with Hazard trees, illegal tree removal penalties, and development of a fee in-lieu system for tree removal. The UFC believes providing clarification to residents is critical.
- c) **UFC participation:** The EO specifically outlined participation of the UFC in 1) urban forestry leadership structure (Section 1C\*) and 2) in direct involvement on the tree protection ordinance update (Section 2A\*\*). The UFC is excited to support the City's efforts with its members' expertise.

The UFC looks forward to continuing to have deliberative sessions with staff on these items in order to have these activities be completed by the end of 2019. This process will keep the City on track to have an updated tree protection ordinance by mid-2020.

Sincerely,



Weston Brinkley, Chair

*\*Section 1C: The Urban Forestry Core Team, in consultation with the Urban Forestry Commission, will recommend necessary improvements to Seattle's urban forestry leadership structure to ensure implantation of urban forestry goals, address policy conflicts and gaps, and build community partnerships.*

*\*\*Section 2A: SDCI, in consultation with other City departments and the Urban Forestry Commission, is directed to update the SDCI Director's Rule regarding Exceptional Trees to include additional tree protection, as appropriate.*

cc: Council President Harrell, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Gonzalez, Councilmember Herbold, Councilmember Juarez, Councilmember Mosqueda, Councilmember O'Brien, Councilmember Pacheco, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Nathan Torgelson, Michelle Caulfield, Mike Podowski, Maggie Glowacki, Chanda Emery, Urban Forestry Management Team, Urban Forestry Core Team, Sara Maxana, Daniel Strauss, Aly Pennucci, Aaron Blumenthal, Peter Lindsay, Yolanda Ho, Caylyn Rolph-Tate, Amanda Hohlfeld

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