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DRAFT

Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance Update

Seattle has a long-standing commitment to its urban trees. Because of the many social, environmental, and economic benefits urban trees provide, they are essential to enhancing the community's quality of life, especially as Seattle grows. Benefits include stormwater runoff reduction, improved air quality, decreased carbon footprint, enhanced quality of life, savings on energy bills, and habitat for wildlife.

Recent timeline of Seattle's tree protection regulations:

- 2009 - City adopts interim tree protection regulations.
- 2012 - City unsuccessfully attempts to update the tree regulations.
- 2016 - Seattle Department of Construction (SDCI) and Inspections and Office of Sustainability & Environment (OSE) undertake the [Tree Regulations Research Project](#).
- 2017 - [Executive Order 2017-11](#) on Tree Protection instructing City Departments to make improvements to tree protection.
- 2017/2018 - City Council undertakes efforts to update tree regulations through [Trees for All](#) initiative.
- 2019 – Urban Forestry Commission provides [input](#) to the draft tree ordinance.
- 2019 - SDCI and OSE are instructed by the Executive to work on tree regulations update:
 - September/December 2019: Conduct public outreach.
 - Q1 2020: Introduce draft ordinance to Council for discussion. SEPA determination.
 - Q2 2020: Adopt updated legislation.

UFC recommendations

- UFC supports City Council's MHA Companion Resolution #31870 – Section 6:
 - Expand exceptional tree definition and retain protections
 - Create significant tree (6" & >) removal permit
 - Require replacement for significant tree removal
 - Simplify tree planting/replacement requirements
 - Maintain tree removal limits in single-family zones
 - Explore in-lieu fee option for tree replacement
 - Track tree removal and replacement
 - Provide adequate funding to administer/enforce

Updated draft summary

1. Expand existing tree removal and replacement permit program, including:

- a. 2-week public notice and posting of the permit application, as used by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
 - b. Covering all trees 6" DBH and larger on private property in all land use zones
 - c. Both during development and outside development.
2. Require replacement for all 6" DBH and larger trees removed
 - a. Replacement trees should reach equivalent canopy volume in 25 years
 - b. Replacement can take place on site or pay a fee-in-lieu
 - c. City would establish a Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund to receive fee-in-lieu
 - d. Allow the Fund to accept fines, donations, grants, and set up easements.
3. Retain current protections for Exceptional Trees
 - a. Reduce upper threshold for exceptional trees to 24" DBH
 - b. Protect tree groves
 - c. Prohibit trees over 6" DBH being removed on undeveloped lots.
4. Allow removal of no more than 2 significant non-exceptional trees in 3 years per lot outside development
5. Establish citywide database for tree removal and replacement permits
 - a. Track changes in the tree canopy.
 - b. Post online all permit requests and permit approvals for public viewing.
6. Expand SDOT's existing tree service provider's registration and certification to include all tree service providers working on trees on private property in Seattle.
7. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance.