

Date: Nov. 6, 2024
To: City of Seattle Urban Forestry Commission
From: Lindsay King, City of Seattle Sound Transit 3
Project Manager
Subject: Planning for Light Rail – Trees



Purpose of this Communication

This memo provides background for a planned presentation to the Urban Forestry Commission about the City of Seattle and Sound Transit's shared goal to create project-level tree and vegetation management plans (TVMPs) for West Seattle and Ballard Link Extension projects.

Why do we need project level tree and vegetation management plans (TVMPs)?

We have an opportunity to improve how we protect and replant trees during light rail construction. The West Seattle Link Extension and Ballard Link Extension projects will pass through rights-of-way, private property, parks, environmentally critical areas and shoreline habitat. A project-level tree and vegetation management plan provides a comprehensive approach to tree management versus reviewing tree impacts and replacement at an individual permit level. For context, more than 270 permits are anticipated for the West Seattle Link Extension. Project-level plans will provide for retention and tree replacement across a variety of City jurisdictions and offer consolidated information to the public regarding tree management.

The City is requesting feedback from the Urban Forestry Commission, tribes, and environmental and community organizations regarding the content of the tree and vegetation management plans.

The Criteria

The TVMP will address tree replacement per existing City policy:

- Restore ecological function in environmentally sensitive locations
- Replace lost tree canopy and creates new tree canopy
- Replace trees lost from City property with a minimum of 3:1
- Locate trees in high-opportunity areas, such as public rights-of-way and parks

Next Steps

We intend to discuss the plan concept and approval process with you at your Nov. 13, 2024 meeting. We request the Urban Forestry Commission to provide comments on the content of a future project-level tree and vegetation management plan. In 2025 the Urban Forestry Commission will be able to comment on the draft TVMP for the West Seattle Link Extension.