



## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

**Becca Neumann** (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair  
**Joshua Morris** (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair  
**Laura Keil** (Position #10 – Get Engaged), Co-Chair  
**Julia Michalak** (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency)  
**Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)  
**David Baker** (Position #8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position #9 – Realtor)  
**Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position #12 – Public Health)  
**Lia Hall** (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

*The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle*

### Meeting notes

March 15, 2023, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Via Webex call and in-person at the  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2495 442 8916

Meeting password: 1234

### Attending

#### Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair  
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair  
Laura Keil – Co-Chair  
Falisha Kurji  
Stuart Niven  
Hao Liang  
Blake Voorhees  
Jessica Hernandez  
Jessica Jones

#### Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

#### Guests

Toby Thaler

#### Absent- Excused

Julia Michalak  
David Baker  
Lia Hall

#### Public

Steve Zemke  
Martha Baskin  
David Moehring  
Lois Martin

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:**  
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

**Call to order:** Josh called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

**Public comment:**

Steve Zemke noted that he sent out a preliminary assessment of the latest draft ordinance, and noted that the draft ordinance is now a tree protection and housing ordinance as it includes ideas coming from the building community. The draft ordinance has changed quite a bit from the 2022 version issued with the SEPA determination of non-significance. There are a number of issues that he includes in his assessment, including that street tree requirements are only for single-family houses and not for multi-family units which is what state legislation is pushing, the tiering system should not replace the historically-used terms of exceptional and significant, the ordinance remains a complaint-based system without a permit required, and the One Seattle Tree Fund is not included. Also, the ordinance should require a tree inventory to be done by developers who enter the tree info into the database rather than requiring city staff to pull the information from the plans.

David Moehring noted that the proposed tree ordinance hasn't gone through the city code requirement for the UFC to review policy before items go out to the public. The provision that trees can't be protected unless a lot is 85% covered by the building is concerning. With just trees in the right of way and without any trees on residential, the city's canopy would drop to around 15%. He suggested five points relative to the ordinance for the UFC to consider: 1) request the public comment record for the four-tier system and how it was created and whether it went through public comment; 2) given the major and substantial changes, ask for an environmental impact study to find out what the expected long-term outcome would be for the city's tree canopy with the proposed measures; 3) review the December 18, 2021 recommendation letter to the City Attorney; 4) the tree fees are too low to cover the cost of planting and establishment; and 5) the current draft is substantially different from last year's draft, and it would be a setback if it gets appealed again, so the Commission might want to recommend that last year's Mayor's proposed ordinance be put forward instead.

**Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:**

Patti noted that Recruitment for positions 1 and 2 is proceeding. The Co-Chairs and Patti conducted interviews with the candidates for these positions and will be finalizing decisions later this week. It's a really good slate of candidates and they look forward to moving forward with appointments in the near future.

**Adoption of February 1 and 15 meeting notes**

**Action: A motion to approve the February 1, 2023 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded and approved.**

**Action: A motion to approve the February 15, 2023 meeting notes as written was made, seconded and approved.**

**Seattle Arborists Association presentation**

Allen Taylor noted the fortuitous timing of this briefing, as arborist practitioners and the UFC are reviewing the draft tree protection ordinance, and the arborists can be a resource for Commissioners in understanding the proposal's impacts. He provided a preliminary introduction of the organization as private sector practitioners in the greater Seattle area who do a lot of the work on the ground. They came together as an organization after not being involved in the process of developing the Tree Service Provider registration ordinance, and recognizing the need to be more involved in these processes. They can bring a deep understanding of how regulations play out on the ground.

Kelsey Guewnoldt outlined the mission and key objectives of the organization. They are currently working on objective 4: partnering with municipalities to encourage effective urban forest management and policy.

- They are a community of working, professional arborists, representing 28 tree care and arboricultural consulting businesses that employ 83 ISA Certified Arborists and over 200 other full time workers in the arboricultural profession.
- Collectively, they prune a minimum of 21,000 trees within the City of Seattle in a given year.

- When the tree service provider registration ordinance went into effect, they realized that as a professional community, they should get involved and help inform policy .

The group wants to care for a healthy urban forest now and for decades to come, and they are here today to help answer any questions Commissioners may have and hopefully help shed light on tree policy from their perspective. The group is currently reviewing the current SDCI Tree Protection Updates ordinance and plans to provide written comment soon.

Questions and comments from Commissioners included:

- What are some of the equitable approaches that the group is implementing to increase tree canopy?
- Beyond the tree code, how does the city's urban forest planning trickle down to arborists in the field?
- The tree protection ordinance and urban forestry in general is a shared vision and the responsibility of front line workers and policy creators.
- It's been hard to find arborists over the years that are interested in improving the code, so this is a beneficial and well-timed evolution of Arborists' involvement in this kind of work.

### **Urban Forest Protection ordinance update**

Patti provided a recap of the process with this ordinance and what the main changes are in the new draft ordinance. The updated ordinance incorporates more of the stakeholder items requested, including a number of the UFC recommendations, including changing the tree removal limits outside of development, extending the establishment period for newly planted trees to five years, and covenants on replacement trees. The main recommendations remaining from the UFC that are not included is the permit system for trees removed outside of development, and increased replacement requirements.

Councilmember Strauss provided an overview of the timeline for moving the ordinance forward. There will be several special meetings of the Land Use Committee (LUC), then it may pass out of the LUC with a vote on April 26, be voted on by full Council May 2, and be in force in June 2023. One goal is to avoid a situation where folks cut down a bunch of trees between the time of introduction and passage of the bill.

Comments and discussion areas around the draft ordinance included:

- When the ordinance refers to Tier 2 trees incorporating historical and cultural aspects in determining trees in this canopy, what does that mean?
- Efforts to increase equitable distribution of tree canopy – payment in lieu can help with that, but we could also end up with many healthy trees removed and a long lag time before replacement trees planted in low canopy areas catch up to the canopy lost. The additional protections also included should help avoid that – it's not all about replacement and payment-in-lieu.
- Heritage trees – how many are there?
- The updated ordinance is an opportunity to fix some of the things SAA would like to see still in the TSP ordinance.
- A reservation: expansion or new build of single family get the same exemptions as development of multi-unit and affordable housing.
- ISA TRAQ certification is not accessible – expensive and hard to access (only available in English).
- Definitions of hazard trees – it's a high bar for a tree to be considered a hazard tree. There are sometimes trees that don't meet the TRAQ qualification as a high or imminent risk, but are dying trees with no chance of survival and are valid to be removed.

Commissioners discussed the process and schedule for developing their feedback on recommendations. Becca, Jessica H., Hao, Stuart agreed to work with Josh in developing draft feedback. Commissioners considered who else/what other groups should be included in conversations around the draft ordinance. Suggestions include educators who are teaching people about horticulture and arboriculture, landscape architects, environmental groups and tree advocates, the American Institute of Architects, Community Councils, WA Department of Health.

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>**

**Public comment:**

Steve Zemke noted that as a former Commissioner and having followed the work of the UFC for 12-13 years, the process of the last two draft ordinances has not been good process for developing public policy. Both drafts were released without the UFC having the opportunity to weigh in on development of the drafts. They've been developed by the Mayor's Office and the building community has had much input on the current draft. The UFC should have a chance to review and comment on drafts before they are released.

Lois Martin noted that she is a teacher and is very concerned about the ordinance and how's it's going to impact the lives of her students. She hopes that the UFC will ask the Mayor's Office and City Council will slow the process down. She will share some additional materials to be posted with the meeting notes.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 5:03 PM.

**Meeting chat:**

from Lois Martin to everyone: 3:13 PM

First time attending - when documents are shared by the public, is a copy provided to attendees with meeting notes?

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:14 PM

Lois - yes, materials provided by the public are included in the meeting notes that are posted to the website.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 3:16 PM

Thanks Patricia. If I'm signed up for meeting notices, or am an attendee, are they automatically sent out or only via the website?

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:17 PM

Notes are not currently sent out via the meeting notices or to attendees as a group.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:26 PM

Hello, joined late but here.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:28 PM

Welcome Councilmember Dan Strauss

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:30 PM

Yes Dan please share timeline. Thanks.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:38 PM

Question: What are some of the equitable approaches that you are all doing or implementing to increase tree canopy? Want to get a sense of what is being defined as "equitable" by the group. Thank you!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:39 PM

for tree removal on line filing would it be possible to add why tree is being removed for data collection!purposes?

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:41 PM

Thank you Andrea.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 3:41 PM

One of the missing pieces is protections for neighboring trees on adjacent properties.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:43 PM

Agree. Also, in terms of regulatory burden, it should be shared beyond arborist companies to property owners who seek illegal removals and contract with non-TSP companies.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 3:44 PM

Thank you Allen for defining what "equitable" distribution means to your group: definitely very important to go beyond just economic equity to address environmental justice.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 3:46 PM

As a legacy member of the redlined central district, I can share from my experience that more trees are removed via illegal tree work for development than homeowners.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:52 PM

Yes thank you for your work and your involvement in the current ordinance update.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:53 PM

Common good, private burden.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:59 PM

is 12'

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:00 PM

is 12 inches and over on site plans in current draft

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:05 PM

That is a rushed schedule for proposed changes. All of documents have not been made public!

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:06 PM

How was the penalty amount set? It seems extremely low when compared to the amount of profit most developers make fully building out a lot by removing shrubs.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:06 PM

End of April isn't enough time for community members to weigh in.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:07 PM

Can you define "radical" Stuart? How are you using that in this context?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:08 PM

What is purpose of public hearing if you are limiting change proposals to Fri.?

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:10 PM

We've invited Taylor and colleagues to participate as they were, for this session, Jessica :)

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:20 PM

I am concerned we will have more "fees" than "trees" as developers opt to pave parcels corner to corner.

Removing healthy trees to plant saplings will further hurt neighborhoods with lower tree canopies.

from Jim Davis to everyone: 4:21 PM

There are 178 Tier 1 trees currently I believe.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:22 PM

no requirement in ordinance to maximize retention of existing trees on property during development

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:23 PM

No requirement in ordinance to protect neighboring trees that may border two properties.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:25 PM

Mayor's Executive Order: [https://pedersen.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Executive-Order-cf\\_322585-delivered-2023.03.07.pdf](https://pedersen.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Executive-Order-cf_322585-delivered-2023.03.07.pdf)

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:25 PM

<https://pedersen.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/image.png>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:26 PM

Heritage trees are only 178

from Jessica Dixon to everyone: 4:27 PM

The Heritage Tree program is not currently active online

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:27 PM

The link to apply for Heritage tree status has been dead for at least two years.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:27 PM

Not all heritage on private property also include city property. Site currently not working for applying for Heritage trees according to Plant Amnesty comment I've seen

from Andrea Starbird to everyone: 4:28 PM

Thank you for that background, Sandy, Jessica, Steve and Jim. The last number I was able to find was 131, so happy it's at least a bit more than that. Very, very low number

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:28 PM

Patricia can you share the link for how to apply for a heritage tree or add it to the UFC website?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:28 PM

Number can

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:29 PM

me from counting them on SDOT site which may not be updated for trees removed

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:30 PM

Harrell's One Seattle Tree Fund can added to include help for homeowners and trees as Portland does.

from Antieau, Clayton to everyone: 4:34 PM

TRAQ method is super easy to game.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:38 PM

Can you give some examples of when this happens Taylor?

from Ethan Childs to everyone: 4:39 PM

Has any thought been given to how this will effect the housing market? This code removed most of the agency a new homeowner might have over shaping their property? It seems to insentivise fewer trees.

from Ethan Childs to everyone: 4:40 PM

Would remove\*

from Taylor Duke to everyone: 4:40 PM

Often times larger, older trees take a long time to go from healthy to completely dead. Sometimes this takes 10+ years! A dead/almost dead tree can possibly still technically not pose a high risk.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:40 PM

Just a quick question to Allen as you mentioned about the burden of notice in the TSP bill - were you only referring to the physical notice? What's your feedback on the online public notice system

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:41 PM

When was the meeting for public comment? That was mentioned by the council member?

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:41 PM

April 24

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:42 PM

Josh: Are we discussing next steps as commissioners?

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:42 PM

Want to make sure we have time for that.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:43 PM

Thanks, Jessica, yes, coming next, I swear!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:43 PM

Thank you. Want to make sure since the meeting is coming up April 24th.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:44 PM

The Urban Forestry Commission should ask to restore the tree ordinance that was proposed one year ago by Mayor Harrell, before that proposal was appealed by the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish County. The City won that appeal with the Seattle Office of the Hearing Examiner ratifying the 2022 version of the tree ordinance. As such, the Mayor's office need not make any changes especially those of a dramatic scale that have just now been released without study of tree loss data and canopy assessment, without public comment, and without Urban Forestry Commission preview of the content .

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:45 PM

Volunteering!

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:46 PM

Would we present these on April 24th?

from Andrea Starbird to everyone: 4:46 PM

Hao, other issues with the notice requirement as of right now is that if we are on site and a tree owner.manager wants to add another tree with even one 2" cut, we cannot prune that tree that day but would need to leave the site, submit notice, return at least 3 business days later so the expense that may have been an additional \$40-50 may now be a few hundred dollars to cover that return site visit and additional logistics required

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:46 PM

25% previously has been called excessive pruning and not according to normal arboculture practices. so would be few or noone reporting. Is that correct?

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:47 PM

Does any body know of any conversations around FUNDING for the oversight of these changes with TSP and/or the code updates etc?

from Taylor Duke to everyone: 4:47 PM

@Hao - The code is written such that a TSP loses their registration (can't legally work in Seattle) with 2 "notices of a violation" not "unaddressed or not corrected violations"- these could easily be technicalities or honest mistakes. Alternatively, no such penalty exists for developers...

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:47 PM  
Landscape architects

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:47 PM  
Thank you Andrea, I think this comes to the purpose of the notice and I believe some of the notices should be just for documenting the records

from Allen Taylor to everyone: 4:48 PM  
Steve, 15% can be excessive for some trees. Appropriate pruning dose will vary widely by tree species, pruning objective, and tree condition. It's a really hard thing to make a rule about.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:49 PM  
Environmental groups and tree advocates need to also be considered a group to be consulted on a meeting basis rather than just a couple of minutes of public comment

from Laura Keil she/her to everyone: 4:49 PM  
WASLA (Washington Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects)

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:49 PM  
Thanks Taylor!

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:49 PM  
Thanks Laura...

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:49 PM  
Would love to get the public health perspective. Dept of Health from WA?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:50 PM  
AIA - American institute of Architects

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:50 PM  
Community Councils for different neighbourhoods

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:50 PM  
and chamber of Commerce(s)

from Andrea Starbird to everyone: 4:50 PM  
I also wonder about Got Green or other non-profits who work on green job development

from Allen Taylor to everyone: 4:50 PM  
Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:50 PM  
Outdoor preschools

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:50 PM  
University of Washington college of Forestry, Environment

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:51 PM  
Would love for us to move away from a narrow lens of focusing solely on urban planning and education. Pushing for this for next voices.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:52 PM  
Public health, South Seattle community organizations, Environmental justice organizations. I will help identify some.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:52 PM  
+1 Stuart

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:54 PM  
Patrica - can all documents on the ordinance be posted on the UFC website.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:54 PM  
Steve - yes, so far I've posted the March 7 draft ordinance and the Mayor's EO and will post other materials as they become available.

from Laura Keil she/her to everyone: 4:55 PM  
Puget Sounds Sage and Front and Centered are two local environmental justic orgs

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:56 PM

Do we have a set guideline of when a council member comes in unexpectedly so that we can have a productive conversation with them and commissioners? Was a lot today to process lol

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:57 PM

If not, can we work on one? I volunteer.

from Lois Martin to everyone: 4:57 PM

Central area Collaborative

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:57 PM

Thanks, Jessica, that's a great idea.

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:57 PM

Good point Steve, a presentation could get everyone on the same page

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 4:57 PM

Yes, I had so many questions but many people giving input.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 5:01 PM

Thank you Lois for bringing in the seven generations perspective.

from Jessica Hernandez to everyone: 5:01 PM

I call to bring in more Indigenous groups as well for next voices.

from Chris Gaul to everyone: 5:01 PM

Thanks!

**Public input: (see next page and posted notes):**

**From:** Monica Tackett <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 2, 2023 1:17 PM

**To:** Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

**Subject:** Protect the Maple Leaf Mother Groves!

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

One of the Maple Leaf Mother Groves, at 1211 NE 104th St, is at risk due to arborist report errors, poor site design, and lack of protection during construction. With thoughtful planning, the developer of this property can achieve maximum density while retaining these groves, a win-win for people and nature.

The Maple Leaf Mother Groves are 22 "super-groves" which span entire city blocks in the Maple Leaf neighborhood. The City defines "groves" as eight or more large (12 inch dbh or larger) trees whose canopies touch. In contrast, Mother Groves span most of the properties on their blocks, and function as intact native PNW ecosystems. Because trees in groves cool each other and share defense from disease through their root network, we can count on them to be the most resilient part of our entire urban forest! They are also reservoirs of biodiversity for iconic native species which rely on forests to survive, rather than single trees along streets or in front yards.

The two groves at 1211 NE 104th St form an important part of a Mother Grove. Their removal or damage could launch a cycle of decline leading to the loss of the entire block's grove. To preserve this amazing community resource, please ensure the following:

1. Require a new arborist report. The arborist report submitted by the developer lists only 13 trees, yet 20 trees grow on this site. The report also omits an entire grove of 13 western red cedars, which are shared with adjacent properties.



2. Request that the Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit (DADU) be built on the generous amount of land available near the proposed new home, rather than where it is currently planned in the cedar grove. Both tree groves are conveniently located on the periphery and small panhandle of the site, leaving a large buildable expanse!

3. Protect the groves during construction with rigid fencing. Currently only vinyl netting is required, which provides little protection for trees and is often moved. Construction damage to roots could send these verdant groves into a cycle of decline. If trees at the edge of the grove die, others within the grove often follow.

Climate change has brought Seattle hotter, dryer summers and stronger winter storms. The Maple Leaf Mother Groves provide the community with resilient reservoirs of cooling nature, benefiting both the community and our larger ecosystem. Please ensure they are protected and continue to thrive for the health and safety of future generations.

Please make this a priority for the city. Once they are gone, they are gone for years.

Monica Tackett  
[mtackett47@gmail.com](mailto:mtackett47@gmail.com)  
826 NE 97th St  
Seattle, Washington 98115

**From:** Elizabeth Gould <info@email.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 4, 2023 7:53 PM  
**To:** Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>  
**Subject:** Protect the Maple Leaf Mother Groves!

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Elizabeth Gould  
[deficit.miner.Or@icloud.com](mailto:deficit.miner.Or@icloud.com)  
7710 14th Ave NE  
Seattle, Washington 98115

**From:** Elizabeth Gould <info@email.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 4, 2023 7:54 PM  
**To:** Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>  
**Subject:** Save Meadowbrook's Iconic True-Love Trees

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

I am writing to ask you to support preservation of the Meadowbrook True-Love trees, an exceptional cedar-fir pair in Meadowbrook, and their nearby grove. Because of the True-Love trees' remarkable union and visibility on a busy street, they are well-known and beloved by the community, with over 500 signatures on a recent petition to save them. Together with the adjacent grove, they shelter the north fork of Thornton Creek's and form a vibrant urban forest.

Development plans have been filed for this project on SDCI's portal under 004386-22PA. The plans call for the removal of the trees to achieve maximum development potential. Yet, a respected local architect has drawn plans which would include the trees in the development, a win-win for the homes' future residents, the community, and the environment!

These huge native conifers are our last link to the vast, ancient coastal forest which covered this land before settlement. Now, we benefit from the seedlings of that time, which have grown and reached the

size and grandeur of their ancestors. They cool us in our increasingly hot summers, provide habitat for native birds and wildlife, filter pollutants from the air and stormwater, and provide amazing public health benefits.

With thoughtful planning, Seattle can preserve its forest and build new homes. Please use your authority to ask the developer to include these trees on the development plan, instead of cutting them down.

Elizabeth Gould  
[deficit.miner.Or@icloud.com](mailto:deficit.miner.Or@icloud.com)  
7710 14th Ave NE  
Seattle, Washington 98115

**From:** shana kelly <info@email.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 1:42 PM  
**To:** Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>  
**Subject:** Save Our Trees!

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

Please act to update Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance. It's been 13 years since the Seattle City Council first urged the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to update the ordinance. We appreciate the recent enactment by the Seattle City Council and Mayor to adopt registration of Tree Service Providers in the city as a first step. We also appreciate action finally by SDCI to release a more complete draft of an updated Tree Protection Ordinance.

We believe that Seattle needs to protect its existing trees while planting more trees in underserved areas with low tree canopy to address adverse climate impacts while also increasing affordable housing. It is not a question of one or the other. We need to do both.

Trees and the urban forest comprise vital green infrastructure needed to keep our city and people livable and healthy. Trees reduce air pollution, storm water runoff and climate impacts like heat island effects, while providing essential habitat for birds and other wildlife. They are important for the physical and mental health of our residents. A robust urban forest is critical for climate resilience and environmental equity.

Seattle's rapid growth and increased density combined with an outdated tree ordinance are reducing these beneficial effects as trees are removed without serious consideration of ways to incorporate more of them in the development. Unless exceptional there is no real effort to save them. And what replacement requirements were in the ordinance since 2001 appears to have seldom been enforced. It is urgent to act now to reduce this continued loss of existing trees, particularly large mature trees and tree groves. It is important to promote environmental equity by retaining as many trees as possible and replacing those removed for climate resiliency.

We support the following provisions in SDCI's draft ordinance.

1. Lowering the upper limit for exceptional trees to 24" Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) from 30" DBH.
2. Continuing protection for exceptional trees less than 24" DBH and tree groves and heritage trees
3. Defining any tree 6" DBH and larger that is not exceptional as a significant tree
4. Continuing prohibition on removal of trees 6" DBH and larger on undeveloped lots.
5. Requiring replacement of 12" DBH and larger trees removed by developers
6. Creating an in-lieu fee for developers to replace trees 12" DBH and larger that cannot be replaced on the development site.
7. Requiring in lieu fees be used to replace and maintain newly planted trees
8. Limiting removal of significant trees outside development to those less than 12" DBH
9. Protected trees and replaced trees are covered by a covenant for life of project

Here are key provisions that need to be added to the draft ordinance

1. Expand the existing Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) Tree Removal and Replacement Permit Program using the Accela database system to include SDCI to cover all significant trees 6" DBH and larger, and all exceptional trees, on private property in all land use zones, both during development and outside development.
2. Require SDCI submit quarterly reports to the Office of Sustainability and Environment on tree removal and replacement as required by other City Departments
3. Require 2-week public notice posting, as SDOT does on-site, and add online, of any 6" DBH and larger tree removal and replacement permit requests and keep posted on a lot for 1 week after removal
4. Require that tree replacement numbers increase with the size of the removed tree such that in 25 years or less they will reach equivalent canopy volume lost – either on site or pay a replacement fee that also increases with the size of the tree removed
5. All replacement in lieu fees and fines should go into a dedicated Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund (not SDCI budget or city general fund), that yearly reports on their budget to the City Council and Mayor.
6. Allow the Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund to also accept fines, donations, grants, purchase land, set up covenants and for educational purposes.
7. Require 5-year maintenance of replanted trees
8. Allow removal of no more than 2 Significant non-exceptional trees in 3 years per lot outside development
9. Require developers throughout the total development process to maximize the retention of existing trees with adequate space for trees to grow and survive.
10. Require a Tree Inventory of all trees 6" DBH and larger and a Tree Landscaping Plan prior to any building permits being approved.
11. Extend ordinance to cover all land use zones, including Industrial, Downtown and Institutions
12. Keep requirement that all 6" DBH and larger trees be on site plans
13. Require tree replacement or in lieu fees by developers for trees removed 1 year prior to property purchase

14. Allow city certified inspectors to enter property if necessary to ascertain any illegal tree activity
15. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance
16. All trees relaced are protected trees and not subject to removal
17. Require removal of invasive plants, like ivy, from development sites

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**From:** Samantha Holkins <info@email.actionnetwork.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 8:20 AM  
**To:** Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>  
**Subject:** Please Update Seattle's Tree Ordinance

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

Please act to update Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance. It's been 13 years since the Seattle City Council first urged the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to update the ordinance. We appreciate the recent enactment by the Seattle City Council and Mayor to adopt registration of Tree Service Providers in the city as a first step. We also appreciate action finally by SDCI to release a more complete draft of an updated Tree Protection Ordinance.

We believe that Seattle needs to protect its existing trees while planting more trees in underserved areas with low tree canopy to address adverse climate impacts while also increasing affordable housing. It is not a question of one or the other. We need to do both.

Trees and the urban forest comprise vital green infrastructure needed to keep our city and people livable and healthy. Trees reduce air pollution, storm water runoff and climate impacts like heat island effects, while providing essential habitat for birds and other wildlife. They are important for the physical and mental health of our residents. A robust urban forest is critical for climate resilience and environmental equity.

Seattle's rapid growth and increased density combined with an outdated tree ordinance are reducing these beneficial effects as trees are removed without serious consideration of ways to incorporate more of them in the development. Unless exceptional there is no real effort to save them. And what replacement requirements were in the ordinance since 2001 appears to have seldom been enforced. It is urgent to act now to reduce this continued loss of existing trees, particularly large mature trees and tree groves. It is important to promote environmental equity by retaining as many trees as possible and replacing those removed for climate resiliency.

We support the following provisions in SDCI's draft ordinance.

1. Lowering the upper limit for exceptional trees to 24" Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) from 30" DBH.
2. Continuing protection for exceptional trees less than 24" DBH and tree groves and heritage trees

3. Defining any tree 6" DBH and larger that is not exceptional as a significant tree
4. Continuing prohibition on removal of trees 6" DBH and larger on undeveloped lots.
5. Requiring replacement of 12" DBH and larger trees removed by developers
6. Creating an in-lieu fee for developers to replace trees 12" DBH and larger that cannot be replaced on the development site.
7. Requiring in lieu fees be used to replace and maintain newly planted trees
8. Limiting removal of significant trees outside development to those less than 12" DBH
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