



More transit, more trees: Sound Transit's tree replacement program

Sound Transit's light rail system expansion creates alternatives to driving in gridlocked traffic. Though construction of Lynnwood Link involves removing some trees, the reduction is only temporary. Sound Transit will plant thousands more trees than removed for the project, in some cases replanting new trees even before construction begins. The ratio of replaced to removed trees varies depending on the jurisdiction, the number, maturity and species of trees removed, and federal and state environmental regulations.

Community and stakeholder engagement

Sound Transit works with our partners to retain as many original trees as possible while still meeting project needs. We recognize that communities strongly support trees and the benefits they provide. That's why Sound Transit is working with cities along the rail line to create opportunities for early plantings and additional trees throughout local neighborhoods, parks and open spaces.

The survivability of newly planted trees is an important aspect of the revegetation plan. Going beyond typical industry standards, Sound Transit is partnering with the Washington State Department of Transportation to extend the standard three-year plant establishment and maintenance period—which provides for close, extended care of replanted trees—by an additional ten years. Ultimately, this 13-year effort will greatly improve the survival rates of trees planted along the alignment.

What to expect

Sound Transit's contractors will remove trees along the future light rail guideway, including potentially hazardous trees that could fall across tracks and cause facility damage or injury once light rail operations begin. Contractors will also remove invasive species such as blackberries and ivy in select locations to create suitable areas for planting new vegetation. To the greatest extent feasible, Sound Transit will select native, adaptive plant and tree species for replacement. Sound Transit will plant larger trees rather than saplings, and together with irrigation and the extended plant establishment period, will result higher survival rates than the smaller trees used on past projects.

Trees cut for the Lynnwood Link Extension can be used as timber, mulch, compost or other wood by-products.

Sustainability at Sound Transit

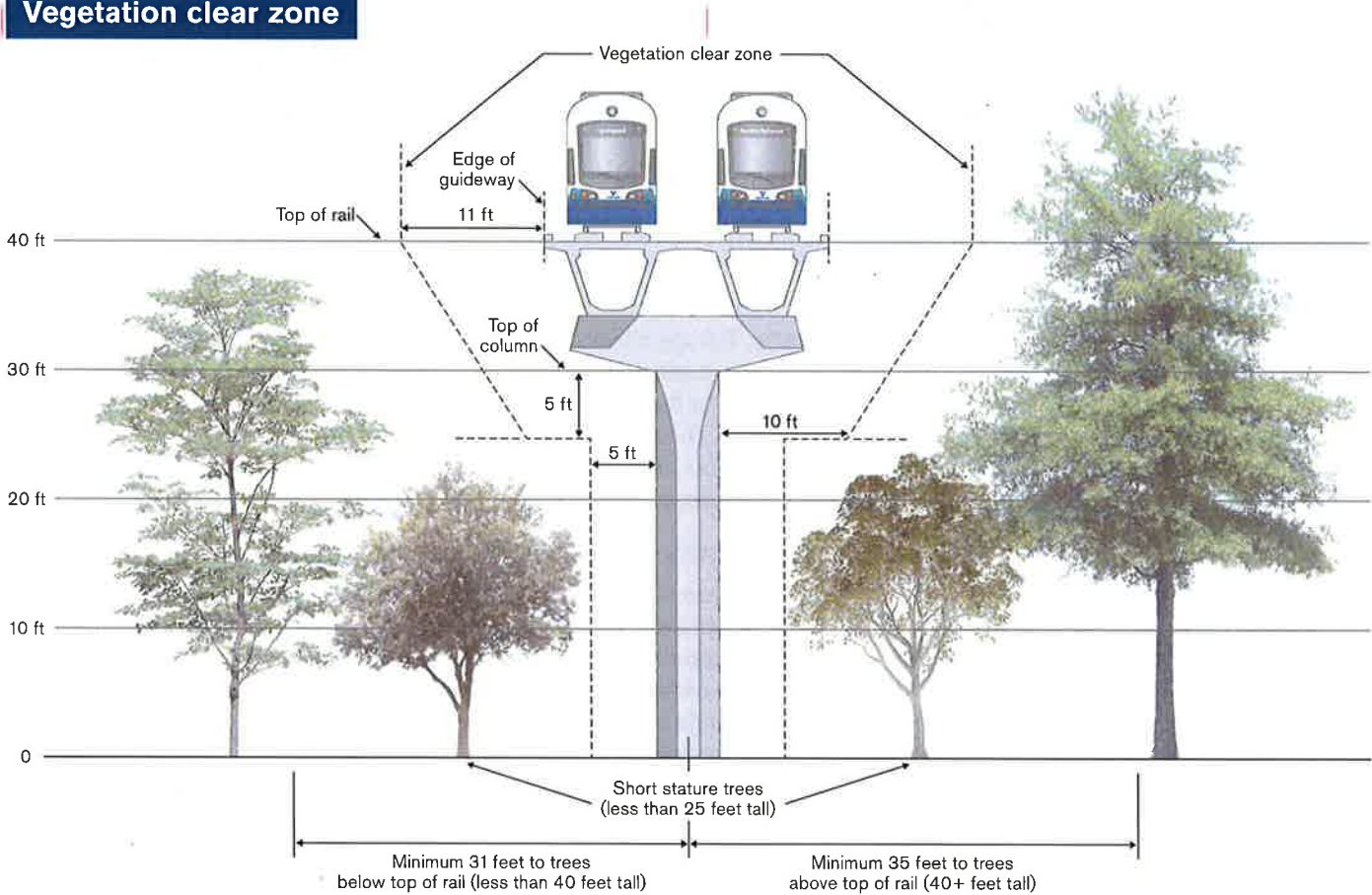
The entire transit system expansion will reduce greenhouse gas emissions annually by 793,000 metric tons. This is equal to:

- › Sequestering the carbon equivalent to growing more than 20.5 million tree seedlings for 10 years.
- › Burning more than 89 million gallons of gasoline.
- › Powering the electricity for more than 117,000 homes annually.



Sound Transit contractors plant one-gallon trees below the light rail guideway in Tukwila. Lynnwood Link will start with 2-5 gallon plantings to better ensure the long-term success of replaced trees.

Vegetation clear zone



Trees around transit

In early 2019, Sound Transit will begin removing trees on land needed for track and guideway construction, or for construction staging.

The above diagram shows a cross section of a guideway elevated 40 feet above ground. A proposed vegetation-clear zone on either side prevents branches and debris from structural interference. The clearance zone widens with height, reaching a maximum clearance buffer of 11 feet beyond the edges of the guideway. There will be no vegetation within five feet of the guideway columns.

The first layer of vegetation outside of the clearance zone includes short-stature trees. Depending on species, healthy trees of any height can stand approximately 30 feet away from supports.

Proposed plantings

City	Trees removed*	Trees replanted*
Seattle	579	6,156
Shoreline	1,419	5,893
Mountlake Terrace	2,318	7,504
Lynnwood	1,074	1,192
Total:	5,390	20,745

* Estimated as of February 2019. Approximately 75 percent of the trees to be removed are in the WSDOT right-of-way bordering I-5, where 77 percent of the replacement trees will be planted.

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