Please include the attached letter in public comment for this evening's meeting.

Thanks,
Boni Biery

August 3rd, 2020

Re: Study Item 8b -Results of the Climate Impacts and Resiliency Study

Dear Council,

This study clearly points out that Shoreline can be doing a much better job to preserve and protect our forest canopy along with all the functional environmental services a healthy canopy provides. Here is a page from Bowling Green, Kentucky's Tree Advisory Board delineating the ways in which trees benefit Society, Community, the Environment and the Economy.

Benefits of Planting Trees

Most often we plant trees to provide shade and beautify our landscapes. These are great benefits but trees also provide other less obvious benefits.

Social Benefits

- Trees make life nicer. It has been shown that spending time among trees and green spaces reduces the amount of stress that we carry around with us in our daily lives.
- Hospital patients have been shown to recover from surgery more quickly when their hospital room offered a view of trees.
- Children have been shown to retain more of the information taught in schools if they spend some of their time outdoors in green spaces.
- Trees are often planted as living memorials or reminders of loved ones or to commemorate significant events in our lives.

Communal Benefits

- Even though you may own the trees on your property your neighbors may benefit from them as well.
- Through careful planning trees can be an asset to your entire community.
- Tree lined streets have a traffic calming effect, traffic moves more slowly and safely.
- Trees can be placed to screen unwanted views or noise from busy highways.
- Trees can complement the architecture or design of buildings or entire neighborhoods.

Environmental Benefits

- Trees offer many environmental benefits.
- Trees reduce the urban heat island effect through evaporative cooling and reducing the amount of sunlight that reaches parking lots and buildings. This is especially true in areas with large impervious surfaces, such as parking lots of stores and industrial complexes.
- Trees improve our air quality by filtering harmful dust and pollutants such as ozone, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide from the air we breathe.
- Trees give off oxygen that we need to breathe.
- Trees reduce the amount of storm water runoff, which reduces erosion and pollution in our waterways and may reduce the effects of flooding.
- Many species of wildlife depend on trees for habitat. Trees provide food, protection, and homes for many birds and mammals.

Economic Benefits

- Well placed trees can reduce your cooling costs in the summer by shading the south and west sides of your home. If deciduous trees are used they will allow the sun to pass through and warm your home in the winter.
- Evergreen trees on the north side of your home and shrubs around the foundation of your home can act as a windbreak to reduce the cooling effects of winter winds.
- The value of a well landscaped home with mature healthy trees can be as much as 10% higher than a similar home with no or little landscaping. (Topping will reduce the value of your trees)
- Some indirect economic benefits of trees are that if we reduce the energy we use then utility companies will have less demand placed on the infrastructure, thus reducing operating costs which can be passed on to the consumer.

The Climate Impact and Resiliency Report recommendations include the need for "proactive data collection." Shoreline already has a tree database and would benefit greatly by simply using this database to more accurately document what is being lost. As I'm sure the Council knows, commercially zoned developments are exempt from tree retention and replacement requirements. However, even though developers provide information in their planning about the number and types of trees removed, these removals are not documented. This makes it as if the trees never existed and the losses never occurred.

The information about these removals is readily available and can be included in the database to more accurately inform the changes to resiliency within the City. While the failure to capture this data may be based on the fact the trees are "privately owned" and therefore not "public trees," a database can easily make the distinction between public and private trees while also capturing the existing data. I encourage the Council to direct the capture of this information from all commercial development plans from 2012, when the tree code changed, to date and to continue to do so into the future.

The Tree Board as an extension of the PRCS Board has proven to be most effective as demonstrated by their recent list of priorities. Trees were not even discussed and are not among their stated priorities. The Parks, Recreation and Culture Board is focused, as it should be, on the needs of people for a variety of recreational and cultural

opportunities. This work does not require the same type of expertise needed by members of a Tree Board. I doubt that most PRCS Board members can identify five native trees, yet they are tasked with protecting and preserving them.

 After years of having this board as a non-function appendage of the PRCS Board, it would be far more effective to have become a stand-alone board with the sole objective to focus on the City's canopy, both public and private. It would be more properly aligned under the Community Service Division along with Natural Yard Care, Enviro-stars, Salmon-safe and reference a link to the Tree Code itself. If volunteer tree professionals were on the board, they could use their expertise to inform and create a better tree code list, help to avoid the planting of invasives (like the one planned for the new Einstein campus) and more accurate assessment of tree values based on canopy measurements in lieu of overly simplistic stem counts currently in use. This is the type of data the city needs to make wise choices to protect our future. They could even plan and guide a total inventory of trees within Shoreline!

I hope you will consider these suggestions as important improvements that could be easily made right now.

Sincerely,

Boni Biery