

**DRAFT**  
**CITY OF SHORELINE**

**SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**  
*(Via Zoom)*

October 7, 2021  
7:00 P.M.

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**Commissioners Present**

Chair Mork  
Vice Chair Sager  
Commissioner Malek  
Commissioner Callahan  
Commissioner Lin  
Commissioner Rwamashongye

**Staff Present**

Rachel Markle, Planning Director  
Andrew Bauer, Planning Manager  
Steve Szafran, Senior Planner  
Cate Lee, Senior Planner  
Julie Ainsworth-Taylor, Assistant City Attorney  
Carla Hoekzema, Planning Commission Clerk

**Commissioners Absent**

Commissioner Galuska

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Mork called the regular meeting of the Shoreline Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Ms. Hoekzema called the roll.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Mork noted that the Planning Commission had been asked to make a procedural change to allow public comments prior to the staff presentation for item 6b. The agenda was accepted as amended.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of August 5, 2021 and September 2, 2021 were accepted as presented.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no general public comments.

**6a. STUDY ITEM: SHORELINE PLACE SIGNAGE DESIGN GUIDELINES**

Planning Manager Andrew Bauer made the staff presentation. He reviewed some background on the signage design guidelines, highlighted the related Community Renewal Area on a map, and summarized the design guidelines. He discussed applicability, colors, materials, fonts, cohesive branding, and the administrative review process. This is an Administrative document and the Planning Commission is the final decision maker. Following public comment and Planning Commission discussion, this item is scheduled to come back for potential action on November 18.

Public Testimony:

Jamas Gwillam, VP Development, Merlone Geier Partners, explained that the developer is looking forward to having the signage design guidelines resolved as quickly as possible. He expressed appreciation to staff for incorporating their recommendations. He referred to page 10 and suggested that white would be a better option than green for the wayfinding signs.

Discussion:

Commissioner Callahan asked if the signage color designs have been tested for contrast effectiveness. She agreed that it might be a little hard for some people to read. Planning Manager Bauer replied that it has not been tested, but indicated that the colors could be changed.

Commissioner Lin suggested adding a note in design guidelines to follow current accessible standards, regulations and laws.

Chair Mork asked about the process for choosing different colors. Planning Manager Bauer replied that they could partner with Merlone Geier’s sign consultant to look at better contrasting options. Chair Mork suggested expediting this item and revisiting it at the first meeting in November. Commissioner Malek and Commissioner Rwamashongye concurred. Planning Manager Bauer indicated staff would try to do that.

Vice Chair Sager echoed Commissioner Lin’s request to add verbiage that addresses accessibility. Planning Manager Bauer noted that the sign placement and sizes would be dictated by the existing sign code. Additionally, the City is already subject to ADA standards. Commissioner Lin noted she had concerns about the visually impaired. She suggested placing a general note in the design guidelines to refer to the sign code.

**6b. STUDY ITEM: 2021 DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENTS – BATCH #2 – TREE AMENDMENTS**

Public Testimony:

Rebecca Jones, Seattle, spoke in support of the Tree Code submitted by the Tree Preservation Code Team to help meet mitigate growth and carbon emissions.

Susanne Tsoming, Shoreline, Tree Preservation Code Team, spoke regarding Amendment #8 and expressed support for increasing the minimum tree retention requirement from 20% to 25% or higher. The team recommends that the Planning Commission and the City Council ask staff to study other workable incentives.

Kathleen Russell, Shoreline, Tree Preservation Code Team, expressed concern about Amendment #9 on page 19 which would give the director the authority to waive the percentage of retention of trees in zones which now require 20% retention.

Janet Way, Shoreline, Shoreline Preservation Society, spoke in support of a hiring a full-time city arborist and protecting existing trees.

Melody Fosmore, Shoreline, Tree Preservation Code Team, spoke in support of Amendment #2 regarding tree measurements and definitions and expressed concern about staff's measurements and definitions for significant landmark trees. She also requested that staff use the word *viable*, or at least *healthy*, to describe trees.

Wally Fosmore, Shoreline, expressed concern about pro-development zoning codes and the loss of many trees. He recommended the City have a better plan for minimizing the impacts of new development and making it compatible with the surrounding area. He spoke in support of the proposed tree code amendments submitted by the residents, but not Amendment #9 recommended by staff.

Nancy Morris, Shoreline, expressed concern about the implications of the loss of tree canopy. She spoke in support of the code amendments as recommended by the residents.

Isis Charest, Shoreline, spoke in support of the tree code amendments proposed by the Tree Preservation Code Team and noted they are consistent with the Shoreline Comprehensive Plan.

Staff Presentation:

Senior Planner Steve Szafran presented the staff presentation related to the 2021 Development Code Amendment Batch #2 – Tree Amendments. These are mostly private-initiated amendments related to the regulation of trees which include definitions, protection of trees, tree retention, tree replacement and public notification when trees are removed in the public right-of-way. Eleven amendments were submitted by the Tree Preservation Code Team, a private citizen group, and one amendment was submitted by staff.

- Amendment #1:
  - Critical Root Zone and Inner Critical Root Zone definitions to protect trees on development sites. Staff is recommending addition of both definitions.
- Amendment #2:
  - Tree Canopy definition revision – Staff recommends keeping language that refers to total area of the trees to be consistent with other studies.
  - Amendment to the current definition of Hazardous Tree – Staff is recommending this amendment.

- New definition for Heritage Tree - Staff does not support this because it has the potential to change land use policy throughout the city. Staff does support adding some of the language to the existing definition of Landmark Tree. Staff supports using the term *healthy*, as opposed to *viable*, because it is a term arborists are familiar with. Staff does not support reducing the definition of the diameter of a Landmark Tree.
- New definition for Nonsignificant Tree – Staff does not support this because it would increase the number of permitting requirements.
- Amendment #3:
  - New definitions for Urban Forest and Urban Tree Canopy – Staff supports adding these two amendments.
- Amendment #4:
  - This adds “tree purpose” to title of Subchapter 5 and adds a new Section 20.50.280 that includes policy statements that aim to protect and preserve the City’s tree canopy. Staff recommends denial of amendment as written as it is duplicative of the code section that follows, 20.50.290. Staff recommends taking some of the proposed language and adding it to the existing section to strengthen it.
- Amendment #5:
  - Change the section title from Purpose to Policy, adds tree preservation and protection language, and adds property owner and developer information to the section. Staff supports the amendment, but recommends leaving the title as Purpose.
- Amendment #6:
  - These would add Best Management Practices, Site Violations, Restoration Plans, Site Investigations, Monetary Penalties, and Financial Guarantees to the General Requirements section. Staff recommends withdrawal of this amendment and bringing it back pending further input, review and analysis.
- Amendment #7:
  - This would revise the maximum number of trees that can be removed from a site without a permit. Staff is recommending denial. The subject code was reviewed in depth in 2019. Staff believes the existing regulations are more equitable for all property owners.
- Amendment #8:
  - This would increase the minimum tree retention requirements and add incentives for retaining more trees above the minimum. Staff is recommending denial due to concerns about providing incentives that use expedited permitting and reduced permit fees. Staff is open to looking at potential incentives for retaining more trees in its work plan going forward if directed to do so by City Council and Planning Commission.
- Amendment #9:
  - Staff has recommended this amendment which would allow the director to waive or reduce the minimum significant tree retention percentage to facilitate other priorities on the site.
- Amendment #10:
  - This would require an applicant to either provide replacement trees for significant trees removed during development or pay the fee-in-lieu replacement to the dedicated tree fund if trees cannot be replaced on-site. Staff does not support this amendment.
- Amendment #11:

- This proposes tree protection measures that clarify the best management practices that need to be implemented to improve and safeguard the survival of the designated trees to be retained during construction. Staff mostly agrees, but does not recommend changing the tree protection fencing from 4 feet to 6 feet because it may not be reasonable depending on the circumstances. Also staff recommends keeping deadwooding to insure the safety of workers and the health of the trees.
- Amendment #12
  - This would require public notification when trees in the right-of-way are proposed to be removed. Staff does not recommend approval as it puts a high burden on the city to provide public notification for specific trees that are going to be removed in the streets. Most of these projects already have a separate public outreach process which includes questions and feedback from the public.
- Associated Request to Council to establish an Urban Forestry Advisory Panel – Council will consider this request.

Discussion:

Chair Mork thanked staff and the public for all their thoughtful comments. She suggested that the Planning Commission might need to continue this item to another meeting in order to have thorough discussion. She solicited general comments.

Commissioner Malek thanked staff for the comprehensive work. He asked how the City is doing with respect to tree canopy goals. Mr. Szafran clarified that the previous discussion had revolved around the MUR-70 zone which he thought was 37 or 39% coverage.

Commissioner Rwamashongye also thanked staff and the public for their good work. He agreed that they might need to continue this item. He asked about the implications of the critical root zone definitions on city trees and right-of-way areas. He also asked if they are looking at the tree canopy in totality or just in micro-areas. He suggested looking at the larger aspect of tree canopy and definitely having more discussion.

Commissioner Lin expressed appreciation for the community members who put together these amendments. She asked about the approximate number of trees that would qualify for heritage status under the proposed amendment, especially those on private property, but not in critical areas. She also asked about doing an overall tree canopy update.

Commissioner Callahan also thanked the community members and staff who have worked hard on this. She suggested doing more research on what other jurisdictions are doing regarding incentives and penalties, specifically positive incentives that would not burden staff.

Vice Chair Sager expressed appreciation for the Tree Preservation Code Team members and their passion. She asked how many properties there are in Shoreline that are over one acre. Senior Planner Szafran indicated staff could bring back that information.

There was a general consensus to spend more time on this subject than they had available. Senior Planner Szafran replied that staff could bring this back to a future date in November along with the following:

- The tree canopy study which was previously completed and the date it was completed.
- A percentage of how much light rail area, commercial, and mixed use residential there is.
- A list of the other cities whose tree regulations Shoreline has reviewed.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Planning Director Markle had the following comments:

- She noted she had provided to the Planning Commission the permitting update report for September and the first part of October.
- She announced the first mixed use building in MUR-70 adjacent to the 148<sup>th</sup> Street light rail station.
- She informed the Planning Commission that the City of Shoreline is requiring all volunteers and staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by November 16 in order to participate in service.
- Planning Manager Bauer submitted a Housing Action Plan Implementation grant to the Department of Commerce for assistance with the development of cottage housing regulations.
- She noted the last tree canopy assessment was completed in 2018.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

City Attorney Ainsworth-Taylor gave an update on Point Wells.

### **REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Washington – American Planning Association conference will be held virtually next week.

### **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 25, 2021 and will be a joint meeting with the City Council.

On November 4 the agenda will include: Sign Design Guidelines, Development Code Amendments related to trees, and an update from Nora on the Transportation Master Plan (TMP).

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

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Laura Mork  
Chair, Planning Commission

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Carla Hoekzema  
Clerk, Planning Commission

**DRAFT**