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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment to Planning Commission 12/2/21 by Kathleen Russell

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Kathleen Russell / Shoreline / Tree Preservation Code Team Member

Waiving Tree Retention Requirements

Amendment 9, revision to Exception SMC 20.50.350 (B) 1 has been recommended by Staff. This code differs from Amendment 10 which is about replacement. This code is about retention. Staff asks that the word “waive” be included in this code. The Planning Department already has the authority to *(quote)* “allow reduction in the minimum significant tree retention” *(end quote)*. Further, Staff has tied this amendment to the approval of Amendment 8, proposed tree retention of 25%.

The Code Team respectfully asks the Planning Commission to hear our comments about Amendment 9 and existing SMC Exception 20.50.350 (B) 1. Staff states in the original Staff Report of October 7, this code is needed to “preserve a greater number of smaller trees, Landmark trees”, etc. but we are unclear about this tree preservation.

The Code Team asks that both the words “waive and reduce” be eliminated from this code for two important reasons. First, SMC Exception 20.50.350 (B) 1 overrides the tree retention code of 20% (proposed 25%), and second, this code does not provide equity to property owners – why should one property be authorized to waive or reduce trees and another property not have this same option? This is an inequitable code and should be revised to only address, as Staff brought up in December 2020 at Council review of this code, a problem tree on a private homeowner site.

Thank you.