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From: [Janet Way](#)

Sent: Sunday, March 20, 2022 7:34:17 PM

To: [City Council](#)

Cc: [Jessica Simulcik Smith](#)

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tree Amendments

Sensitivity: Normal

Attachments:

[Tree Amendments.docx](#) ;

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Council and Mayor,

Please read our attached letter before Monday's meeting.

Thank you.

Janet Way
Shoreline Preservation Society



940 NE 147th St
Shoreline, WA 98155

March 22, 2022

Shoreline Mayor and City Council
17500 Midvale Ave N
Shoreline, WA 98155

Subject: Tree Code Amendments and Agenda Item (A) Authorization of Construction Contract for 5th Ave NE

Dear Mayor Scully and Council:

Well, here we are again, asking for your help to protect our tree canopy with the newest development codes.

Words are beginning to fail us with the number of times we have asked the Council to protect our trees over roughly the last 20 years. And sadly now, with development increasing rapidly, we are losing our large, significant trees faster than ever. And this is at a time, when even the United Nations has warned that Climate Change is reaching dire proportions. And when the City has pledged to do everything within its powers to reduce Climate Change impacts, yet still huge trees are falling nearly every day.

So how can it be that when we all know that our large trees are our best line of defense against Climate Change, that the City is having so much trouble finding ways to save the Urban Forest with development pressures mounting?

We know it is complex, but fortunately, you have several important amendments before you that can help reduce the damage.

The Shoreline Comprehensive Plan has words of wisdom for you:

“In Shoreline, it is believed that the best decisions are informed by the perspectives and talents of its residents. Community involvement in planning and opportunities for input are vital to shaping the future, particularly at the neighborhood scale, and its decision-making processes reflect that belief. At the same time, elected leaders and staff strive for efficiency, transparency and consistency to ensure effective and responsive governance.”

And the Shoreline Comprehensive Plan indeed has many, many other references to preserving trees and green space for sustainability and many other reasons.

Agenda Item 8©:

- You have before you several important amendments to the Development Code.
 1. **Reduce the size of “significant trees” to a uniform 6”.** This will allow more smaller trees that will of course mature into larger trees (and not start from scratch) to be protected on all public and private spaces. And it’s important for 6” be used because deciduous trees, normally hardwood (trees that lose their leaves) and normally grow much more slowly. So, a six-inch maple or oak tree, for instance is much older than a six inch Douglas Fir tree.
 2. **Reduce the size of a Landmark Tree to 24”.** This is important because a 24” tree, for example a Douglas Fir is already a very big tree and a tree this size is contributing greatly with benefits to the community, such as Carbon Storage, Oxygen, Stormwater Retention, Shade and Temperature moderation, Wildlife Habitat, and of course beauty. Making it a Landmark Tree will better protect these big trees from thoughtless “weekend warriors” or unlicensed cutting, by requiring permits. A tree this size should only be cut by a professionally permitted service with a licensed arborist, otherwise it is extremely dangerous to the cutter, the public and nearby buildings or roadways.
 3. **Eliminate Director authority** to waive and reduce retention of trees on construction sites -

This amendment leaves way too much authority in the hand of one person. There are too many opportunities or potential for errors or favoritism based on outside influence or developers.
 4. **Eliminate Director authority** to reduce replacement trees on construction sites -

This amendment leaves way too much authority in the hands of one person. There are too many opportunities or potential for errors or favoritism based on outside influence or developers. There was a recent development approved in Parkwood where a high percentage of replacement trees which normally would be required as mitigation were waived with some questionable reasoning.

Beyond the above, our recommendation to you is to please read the outstanding and substantive letter submitted to Council by former Parks Commissioner Boni Biery. Her letter is chock full of great detail and reasoning about why passage of these amendments is wise.

Agenda Item 8(b):

- Please do everything possible to find an alternative design to save as many large street trees on Fifth Ave NE.
- As we stated in our last letter about Sidewalk Alternatives, Shoreline has found many, many design alternatives in the past to work around trees with sidewalk design. Sometime ADA requirements can be “softened”, with slightly narrower sidewalks or walkways. Sometimes angles can be adjusted. Sometimes different materials can be utilized. If protecting big trees is a priority, that an option can be found to get it done, especially for the biggest trees which had the audacity of hope to grow near a road.

Please do your best to find every possible way to save our big trees.

Thank you for listening.

Janet Way, Chair

Shoreline Preservation Society