

From: [Kelsey Mines](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tree Retention
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Dear Shoreline City Mayor Scully and City Council members:

As Kathleen Russell shared on June 6 at the City Council meeting the 2,283 significant tree removal since 2019 is a PARTIAL count of tree loss to development. This count does not include private homeowner tree removal.

It strikes me that we are losing trees every week, like a death of a thousand cuts. When I scan the horizon (when it's not blocked now by large developments) I can still see trees but I know my memory is not serving me well to remember what trees use to fill that skyline. I doubt you can remember as well. We do not have a solid count of how many tall and significant trees there are in Shoreline. All we have is a measurement of a canopy based on a drone fly over every seven years. So as every lot is clear cut, and more tree loss continues, we will forget what we used to have, until it's too late.

The challenges of climate change are not changed by other headlines grabbing our attention. The earth continues to heat and our environment is suffering. This fact remains as our number one concern for our and our children's future.

I understand that housing is a big focus for our communities however I do believe we need to be smart about how we develop Shoreline. Removing 100% of our tall, carbon sequestering, shade-giving trees is creating heat islands and more health challenges for our community. Creating incentives for the builders to retain more trees through creative planning and adjusting expectations will keep more of the Shoreline that is attractive to buyers.

Since the housing boom began, our neighbors to the east, Lake Forest Park, have worked very carefully to retain trees and restrict development that clear-cuts the land. One glance at a high level map shows a heavier canopy in that community. Lake Forest Park has become a destination for home buyers as a more desirable area. Shoreline has been the place that people wanted to move to, 'because of the trees' is a refrain I often hear - but now there is more of a lament of how many trees are lost to tall, sun blocking buildings with no shade on the sidewalks.

We can do better. The first place to start is to require 10% retention of healthy mature trees on the MUR-70' zones. Development is here to stay however with encouragement to be more creative developers can fulfill these requirements and still make their profit margins. 10% retention is a small compromise for a much larger gain for all of us.

Please incorporate 10% tree retention on Ordinance 968 (MUR-70').

Thank you for reading my letter and for your service to our community.

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