



TO: City of Shoreline, Planning & Community Development – Attn: Steve Szafran, Senior Planner

FROM: Tree Preservation Code Team (TPCT) by Susanne Tsoming, Member (stsoming@frontier.com)

DATE: January 13, 2023

RE: Cottage Housing - Development Code Amendment Application re SMC 20.50.350D. Site Design.
New subsection k

Amendment Proposal

SMC 20.50.350D Site Design. Design Goal.

(k) To ensure cottage housing regulations recognize the importance of trees and other vegetation elements of the physical environment, cottage housing structures and dwellings will be planned and designed around established significant trees to blend into similar single-family neighborhoods for the purposes of continuity and screening between developments.

Justification/Reason for Proposed Amendment

The cottage housing concept is appropriate for Shoreline with provisos.

First, in the Staff Report on Cottage Housing Development Code Amendments to Planning Commission on Dec. 1, 2022, it stated that cottage housing “[w]ith appropriate design standards would be the easiest to fit into single family neighborhoods. It conducted two public engagements on cottage housing in 2022 which indicated five major preferences, one was “for retention of existing tree canopy, especially large conifer trees.” (pg. 4).

Second, it is an opportunity to integrate and align appropriate design standards with the City’s recently approved Climate Action Plan under Ecosystems and Sequestration as well as Community Resilience and Preparedness as follows:

- Strategy CRP-1: Ensure that new buildings, land use decisions, and public infrastructure improvements increase resilience to current and future climate impacts. (pg. 9).
- CRP 1.2: Develop recommended design practices for urban heat. Develop a list of recommended design practices for private development and City capital projects to increase resilience to urban heat impacts and surface water vulnerabilities and update regularly based on best available science. Practices may include trees, green stormwater infrastructure, reduced impervious surface area, cool roofs, green corridors, or high-albedo pavement. (pg. 50)
- CRP 1.3. Climate resilient urban design standards. Review and update codes and design standards to increase citywide resilience to climate change. For example, modify design standards to encourage reduced impervious surfaces, retention of mature trees, increased tree planting, and increased green stormwater infrastructure. Consider specific requirements for development in areas with identified urban heat impacts, surface water vulnerabilities, or environmental health disparities. (pg. 50)

Present and future Shoreline residents want and prefer housing choices; they want to be climate resilient and respect their physical environment. TPCT's proposal to require the retention of established trees, is consistent with public preferences, complies with City's 2022 Climate Action Plan, and increases the likelihood of purchases of and living in cottage housing.

Decision Criteria Explanation

Please describe how the amendment is in accordance with the 2012 Comprehensive Plan.

- Element 1: Land Use – Policies for Residential Land Use. “LU5: Review and update infill standards and procedures that promote quality development and consider the existing neighborhood.” (pg. 21)
- Element 1: Land Use – Policies for Residential Land Use. “LU6: Protect trees and vegetation, and encourage additional plantings that serve as buffers. Allow flexibility in regulations to protect existing stands of trees.” (pg. 21)
- Element 1: Land Use – Supporting Analysis. “One of the factors that contribute to Shoreline’s high quality of life is attractive and vital residential neighborhoods. Residents often credit this aesthetic appeal to abundant and healthy trees. A variety of housing types add to Shoreline’s diversity and allure.” (pg. 85)
- Element 2: Community Design – Vegetation and Landscaping – Policies “CD16: Where feasible, preserve significant trees and mature vegetation.” (pg. 35)
- Element 2: Community Design – Residential – Policies “CD37: Minimize the removal of existing vegetation, especially mature trees, when improving streets or developing property.” (pg.36)
- Element 6: Natural Environment – Goal “NE X. Maintain and improve the city’s tree canopy.” (pg. 63)
- Element 6: Natural Environment – Policies – General “NE18: Develop educational materials, incentives, policies, and regulations to conserve native vegetation on public and private land for wildlife habitat, erosion control, and human enjoyment. The City should establish regulations to protect mature trees and other native vegetation from the adverse impacts of residential and commercial development, including short-plat development.” (pg. 64)
- Element 6: Natural Environment – Policies – General “NE19 “Minimize removal of healthy trees, and encourage planting of native species in appropriate locations.” (pg. 64)
- Element 6: Natural Environment – Policies – Sustainability “NE 42 Recognize that a sustainable community requires and supports economic development, human health, and social benefit. Make decisions using the “triple bottom line” approach to sustainability (environment, economy, and social equity).” (pg. 66)

Please describe how the amendment will not adversely affect the public health, safety and general welfare.

In the 2022 Climate Action Plan, Strategy CRP-1 states “Ensure that new buildings, land use decisions, and public infrastructure improvements increase resilience to current and future climate impacts.” This applies to the proposed design goal amendment by specifying and requiring urban planners to design around the trees. Trees have been scientifically documented to benefit the public by:



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1. Minimizing the adverse impacts of stormwater runoff, soil erosion, land instability and waterway pollution.
2. Decreasing and/or mitigating impacts of climate change by improving the air quality, reducing urban heat island effect, assimilating carbon dioxide and generating oxygen.
3. Reducing the effects of noise pollution and screening buffers.
4. Providing habitat, cover, food supply for a diversity of fish and urban wildlife.
5. Providing natural visual relief that reduce stress, promotes mental well-being and produces restorative health effects.
6. Providing recreational benefits.
7. Providing economic benefit by enhancing property values and contributing to the livability of a community.

Please describe how the amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of Shoreline.

In “Climate Impact & Resiliency Study, City of Shoreline” of June 2020, the recommendations, “Common opportunities for advancing resiliency strategies across master planning processes” are pertinent and relevant. All six recommendations mentioned can be traced back to the benefits of retaining established trees (as inserted by applicant in brackets) below:

- **Proactively collect data and map areas** with flooding or other stormwater vulnerabilities and/or urban heat island vulnerabilities when conducting any inventory or data collection for the specific master planning process to improve the City’s ability to evaluate stormwater system deficiencies, improve system resilience, and protect critical areas. [Trees filter runoff, prevent surface soil erosion which benefits Shoreline citizens and property owners.]
- **Require capital project managers to review near-term planned and proposed projects** for their potential to improve surface water issues, reduce urban heat island effects, and/or increase equitable services by using the Climate Impacts Tool. [Retention of trees is a part of good stewardship of the natural environment which in turn will serve the public better.]
- **Construct more green stormwater infrastructure (GSI)** through new construction, retrofit programs, and/or policies to include GSI on City projects. [Trees qualifies as “green infrastructure” under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) where it captures stormwater from impervious surfaces, such as roadways and rooftops.]
- **Develop a framework for public and private partnerships** that works toward a more resilient city through stormwater management strategies that increase green space, habitat connections, and mobility. [Retention of established trees in housing designs will afford citizens not only the health benefits of trees, but help build trust between them and City government to keep its commitment to work in the best interests of its citizens.]
- **Increase tree plantings of species that will be more resilient to climate impacts** in open spaces, parks, along roads and trails, and other areas. Co-benefits include more resilient urban habitat, expanded urban forest canopy, reduced urban heat island effect, and greenhouse gas emissions mitigation. [This is self-explanatory.]
- **Consider modifying design standards citywide** to ensure that future development increases resilience to climate change. [Modifying design standards keeps up with current times and follows best management principles.]