

From: [Kathleen Russell](#)
To: [City Council](#)
Cc: [agenda comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Council Discussion 5/22/23; tree code amendments 9 & 10
Date: Thursday, May 18, 2023 10:27:56 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of Shoreline. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To: Shoreline City Council
From: Tree Preservation Code Team
Date: May 18, 2023
Re: Proposed tree code for residential/cottage housing/middle housing zone

Dear Mayor Scully, Deputy Mayor Robertson, and City Councilmembers,

Pertaining to the Council's discussion of cottage housing regulations, and according to HB 1110¹ middle housing legislation, individual city municipal codes will manage set-backs, lot coverage, stormwater, clearing and tree canopy and retention requirements. Since, there will be increased construction on the newly defined residential middle housing zone, the significant trees in nearly 80% of the City of Shoreline will be subject to removal.

We know this construction is not going to happen immediately, but over time it will happen, neighborhood by neighborhood. As a consequence, Shoreline's tree canopy will decrease. You might ask, "how do we know this?" Because the current residential tree code allows a minimum of 75% of the significant trees to be removed on residential, with no protection for trees 24" and larger DBH. This current code, combined with the tree code that allows removal of 100% of all trees on the seven development and commercial zones, will devastate our urban tree canopy and deprive citizens of physical and mental health benefits.

We ask Council to adopt the proposed tree code amendments as submitted by Councilmember Pobe, Amendments 9 and 10.² These amendments pertain to the City's residential zones to be converted to a middle housing zone.

Amendments 9 & 10: Proposed tree code for residential/cottage housing/middle housing zone:

Maintain the existing residential tree code of permitted removal of 3 trees per 7200 sf and 1 tree per each additional 7200 sf:

Add to the above:

- Retention of 35% of significant trees in residential zones. (Current code is 25% significant tree retention.)
- Requirement that no tree with 24" and larger DBH can be removed unless a tree is determined to be hazardous or dead as determined by a certified arborist. If a tree is determined to be hazardous or dead, tree replacements per existing code are required.
- If a tree 24" and larger DBH is approved by the Planning & Community Development Director to be removed for development, a fee in lieu must be paid to the City Tree Fund in the amount of \$9000 for a 24" to 30" DBH tree; and \$15,000 ~~\$16,000~~ for any tree greater than 30" DBH.

Pertinent to the above proposed residential tree code:

- 1) The fees as stated above are currently in code [20.50.300 H. \(5\)](#) *(There was a typo in the original; corrected above to \$15,000.)*
- 2) It is already stated in code that the Director has the prerogative to waive tree regulations see [Exception 20.50.360 \(C\) b.i,ii,iii,iv](#).

We understand Staff will refine this language for municipal code.

The authority to revise the tree code is supported by Council-approved Ordinance 975³, which includes Land Use Policy 5:

“Develop regulations to maintain and increase Shoreline’s urban tree canopy with the goal of encouraging tree retention and protection while also increasing housing opportunities and choice.”

There is popular support of tree retention as expressed by Council and citizens. Support for this proposal appears in:

- City Council Goal 2, 2023-2025: Manage and develop the City’s infrastructure, steward the natural environment, and address climate impacts.⁴
- Blueline's “Cottage Housing Code Public Outreach Summary where 89% of residents “like” and “really like” landscaping and trees.⁵
- Resident concern expressed at the middle housing senior focus group on May 10, 2023 with Stepherson & Associates and Blueline.

Further, we agree with Amendment 19, as submitted by Councilmember Roberts, to remove the proposed tree retention incentives.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Russell
Susanne Tsoming
Tree Preservation Code Team

References:

¹ [HB 1110, Section 3, 6 \(b\) \(page 12\)](#)

² [Continued Discussion of Ordinance 984, Regulations for Cottage Housing, Staff Report for Council, 5/22/23](#)

³ [Ordinance 975](#)

⁴ [Currents](#), May 2023, “Council Adopts 2023-2025 Goals”, page 3

⁵ Blueline [“Cottage Housing Code Public Outreach Summary](#) (2022), page 3