

17 May 2018

Councilman Rob Johnson & the Planning, Land Use & Zoning Committee
Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124

Councilman Johnson,

Thank you for your recent effort to strengthen Seattle's Tree Ordinance with your 'Trees for All' framework. The ideas you are proposing: establishing a tree removal permitting system, having clear requirements for tree removal and replacement, establishing a centralized web portal for tree permitting, and addressing environmental equity concerns within the city, are significant enhancements, and we want to commend you for championing these improvements.

Given that these updates to Seattle's Tree Ordinance require a council vote, we strongly urge you to take this opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to the urban forest, and further strengthen protections, by considering the additional recommendations made by the Urban Forestry Commission:

- making the threshold for permitting be 6-inch DBH (diameter measurement) threshold rather than a 12-inch DBH threshold (Redmond, Kirkland and Lake Forest Park are using 6" for their measurement)*
- registration/professional pledge of tree care professionals
- require developers to do a detailed canopy assessment prior to any construction permits being issued
- a tree replacement plan included in any proposed or actual tree removal

Additionally, the Seattle Nature Alliance would like to see:

- education around trees being critical to eco services which the entire community depends; incentives to homeowners and developers to keep existing trees, promoting the idea that 'Trees are the View'
- providing a way to easily report the down trees, and/or trees which are known to have been removed without proper permits
- establish a stewardship fund for caring for and increasing the tree canopy, particularly in underserved neighborhoods

Trees are integral to Seattle's identity. In addition to their beauty, they are essential habitat for birds and wildlife. Trees provide shade, improve air quality, lessen soil erosion, provide wind/sound buffers, filter polluted waters, and offset our energy needs. **We urge you to be a leader and prioritize preserving the trees we have, and work to increasing tree canopy for everyone.**

** in honor of Cass Turnbull (1951-2017), who was unwavering in her support for a stronger tree policy, and an inspiration to us all, we propose the required measurement of 6" DPH, if adopted, be informally referred to as "Cass's Rule".*

Sincerely,

Denise Dahn, Mark Ahlness, & Rebecca Watson

Seattle Nature Alliance

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It is our mission at the Seattle Nature Alliance to preserve urban natural areas for wildlife habitat, passive use, and scenic beauty.