

May 11, 2018

Mayor Jenny Durkan / Seattle City Council

Seattle City Hall
600 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98124

We urge you to significantly strengthen Seattle's tree ordinance; to protect the trees that provide great benefit to Seattle citizens and provide habitat to birds and wildlife.

Seattle has both benefited from, and paid a steep price for, the recent economic development and growth happening throughout the city. With the rampant building boom downtown and increasing densification of our neighborhoods, we feel it's imperative for Seattle leaders to take pause and note, the tremendous impacts of this growth on its citizens and on the environment. The '[Trees for All](#)' framework, championed by Councilman Rob Johnson, provides a brighter path forward, towards prioritizing the preservation of trees, increasing tree canopy, and working towards environmental equity across the city.

We appreciate Rob Johnson for his leadership on this issue and would urge the Mayor & City Council to take this opportunity to support not only 'Trees for All', but also the additional recommendations made by the Urban Forestry Commission that would further strengthen tree protections. The core recommendations we support include:

- Consolidating the oversight of Seattle's Urban forest/trees into one city department and making this department's mission solely to advocate for trees and preserving the tree canopy
- Establishing one citywide online portal to provide clear information and make the tree permitting process easy, and create one citywide source of data to track tree canopy status
- Encouraging planting native species and discouraging the planting of invasive species, to maximize sustainability, environmental services and promote biodiversity
- Requiring the replacement of all trees removed that are 6" DBH and larger with an equivalent size tree; or paying for the replacement/maintenance/mitigation costs to a City Tree Replacement & Maintenance Fund
- Increasing the notification time on public/private property the removal of any heritage trees, or stands of trees that are 6" DBH and larger
- Regulating tree service providers working on trees in Seattle, requiring them to know and follow City Tree Policy or face fines
- Providing education/incentives to homeowners and developers to keep existing trees, promoting the idea that 'Trees are the View'
- Providing a way to easily report down trees, and/or trees which are known to have been removed without proper permits

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. Study after study has proven they enhance our health and well-being. It is time for Seattle to take the lead and prioritize preserving what we have, and work to increasing tree canopy for everyone.

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.