

A New Ordinance to Protect & Grow Seattle's Tree Canopy

	Seattle's Current Tree Regulations	Seattle City Council Proposal-Trees for All* 6/2018	Coalition for A Stronger Tree Ordinance	Background
When is a permit required to remove trees?	No permit required; technical limit of up to 3 trees/yr/site barring Exceptional/Heritage Trees	For all trees over 12" in diameter	For all trees 6" in diameter	Only 18% of trees in SF zones are 12" in Diameter while 55% are 6" in diameter.
Size of trees affected by permit	6" trees after 3 trees are removed	All trees over 12" in diameter	All trees over 6" in diameter	Many other cities in our region (Redmond, Kirkland, Lake Forest Park) use the 6" diameter threshold already.
Who must get a permit?	Home/Property Owners & Developers	Home/Property Owners Only (!)	Home/Property Owners & Developers	Developers must be included in the new Tree Ordinance. They are far more likely to remove trees than homeowners in order to develop properties.
Replacement of trees	None	For every tree over 12" in diameter removed, plant replacement tree somewhere else or pay into tree fund	Preferred replacement on site or elsewhere (equal to value of tree lost) with payment into fund as last resort	Preservation of existing trees has a much more significant impact on our ability to retain and grow our tree canopy, but establishing a tree fund to replace trees when they are removed would be better than current system where no trees are replaced.

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Minimum lot size where Permit is required	Larger than 5,000 sf	Larger than 5,000 sf	No minimum lot size. All lots would be subject to permit system.	40% of the City's lots are less than 5,000 sf in size. Developers routinely subdivide lots to avoid compliance with the current ordinance.
Who is responsible for Seattle's trees?	Includes SDOT, City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection (SDCI) and Parks and Recreation. There are nine separate City departments/agencies that manage trees!	Likely to consolidate into SDCI for private trees, SDOT for public ROW.	Consolidate tree oversight into one City entity such as The Office of Sustainability and Environment.	Trees need an independent advocate for their protection. A single entity could manage a citywide database and track changes in the tree canopy as well as avoid conflicting goals with other city departments. SDCI nearly always sides with developers who want to remove trees.

DBH: Diameter at Breast Height (approximately 4.5')

Tree Canopy - Area of the city covered by the branch and leaf structure of trees. An indicator of the extent and health of the urban forest.

Significant Trees - Currently refers to trees over 6 inches DBH.

Exceptional Trees - Trees that have significant value due to their size and species as defined in Director's Rule (DR) 16-2008 which have unique historical, ecological or aesthetic value.

Heritage Trees - A tree or group of trees given special designation by the Heritage Tree Program.

Deciduous vs. Evergreens - The terms refer to whether a plant retains its foliage year round. Deciduous species, such as maples, alders, and ashes, shed their leaves annually. Evergreen trees keep their foliage for more than one season. Evergreens play a key role in Seattle's urban forest because they provide ecosystem benefits year-round.