

Tukwila Tree and Environment Advisory Committee, Joint Meeting with City Council and Planning Commission.

Draft Speaking Notes

Information and Education

A major theme that kept recurring throughout the Committee deliberations was the need for on-going education efforts by the City on a variety of topics, including:

- Ensuring that property owners are notified proactively about sensitive areas and tree regulations
- Need to continue educating the public and businesses about environmental stewardship, sensitive areas, tree retention and other issues.
- Specialized training and guidance is needed for city staff, landscape architects, landscapers, tree removal companies, and others about sensitive areas and tree care.

Surface Water Management & Low Impact Development Techniques

- The city should be a leader in applying low impact development techniques to City projects and in encouraging developers to use them, even before their use is required under the City's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.
- It is important for the City to carry out water quality monitoring to prioritize efforts to improve surface water management and ensure good water quality for fish and other wildlife.

Trees/Urban Forestry

Importance of having sufficient resources, plans, standards:

- The Committee feels that all City departments and the Tukwila Community should recognize the benefits of trees and take the necessary actions to protect trees and ensure a healthy urban forest.
- The City needs a qualified urban forester or municipal arborist who would work across department lines and could also provide some assistance to Tukwila citizens.
- The City should have an urban forestry plan that lays out the future actions for protecting and improving the health of the urban forest, including street trees, trees in parks, and trees on private property.

- It is important that the City dedicate sufficient resources for the monitoring and preventive maintenance of trees on City property and rights-of-way, in order to improve tree health and reduce potential tree hazards.
- Standards for tree quality, tree and landscape installation, tree care, pruning and tree removal are needed to ensure that planted trees survive and thrive. Such standards/specifications should be communicated to the landscape-related professional community and commercial and industrial property owners and managers. Additionally the City should provide guidance for homeowners about tree selection, planting, and care.

Canopy Goals and How to Achieve Them

- The Committee recommends more ambitious tree canopy goals for some zoning classifications, than what was recommended by the Urban Tree Canopy consultant. The Committee heard varying viewpoints and discussed the mechanisms for increasing canopy – including increasing number and size of street trees, increasing the number and size of trees in parking lots, improving tree retention, and other possibilities. The Committee agreed that canopy goals should be increased in Tukwila South and the Urban Center, in light industrial areas (parking lots), and office and commercial areas.
- The Committee feels that the City should require significant street tree planting, tree retention, and replanting where trees are damaged or intentionally removed.
- The Committee emphasized that flexibility in meeting code requirements must be built into any changes to the landscape code to promote tree retention and increase the planting of trees for required landscaping including such techniques as clustering trees, and applying a point system like that used in Federal Way and proposed for use in Seattle.
- After hearing various viewpoints and discussing the issue at length, the Committee came to a consensus that the City should prohibit removal of trees on undeveloped residential property until a development permit is issued. The Committee did not want to prohibit tree removal on already developed lots (except where they are in a sensitive area or where tree planting was required). The Committee felt that it was important to protect tree canopy (particularly on residential property) until such time as a property is ready to be developed, which would allow an opportunity to evaluate if any healthy trees could be retained on the property to be developed, while at the same time, allowing the maximum density allowed under existing zoning regulations.