

## Proposed Urban Forestry Goals, Policies for the Natural Environment Chapter

*The following goals are an expansion of the existing goals and policies in Chapter 1 of the Comprehensive Plan: See Goal 1.3 and Policies 1.3.1, 1.3.2; Goal 1.4 and policies 1.4.1 and 1.4.2; Goal 1.6, second bullet; Policy 1.6.4; Goal 1.7 and policy 1.7.4; Goal 1.8, policy 1.8.3 and 1.8.6; Goal 1.10, Policy 1.10.12*

**Goal 1: Trees are recognized by Tukwila citizens, businesses, City staff and decision-makers for their benefits to the environment, urban infrastructure and their aesthetic value.**

*Note: a discussion of the benefits of trees will be included in a narrative section that introduces the goal, so they won't need to be in the goal itself).*

### **Policies for Goal 1:**

1. Develop a formal urban forest management plan to promote and guide preservation, restoration and maintenance of a sustainable urban forest, using the goals and policies of this chapter (as a basis) for guidance.
2. Ensure that the benefits of trees are factored into site design and permit decisions.
3. Ensure that regulations recognize that larger trees provide more benefits than small trees.
4. Seek to create and fund an urban forester/municipal arborist position within the City, or contract for such services, to provide expertise for urban forest management planning, oversight of tree planting and maintenance, and assistance to all City departments that have responsibilities for tree management.
5. Educate the public, elected officials and City staff about the importance of and benefits provided by trees in Tukwila.
6. Develop tree valuation methods to reflect the value trees provide, for use in assessing fines, determining damages or estimating loss of tree benefits.
7. Identify funding sources to support urban forestry planning and management and establish an urban forestry budget and account.
8. Consider developing an "exceptional" or "heritage" tree program to foster tree appreciation in the community.
9. Encourage public involvement in urban forest stewardship through volunteer events, free training workshops, and other means.

*Note: the following goal will be preceded by narrative that summarizes the results of the tree canopy study and explains current percent canopy coverage and the acreage of each land use category.*

**Goal 2. Tree Canopy Goal: Overall city-wide tree canopy increased to a total of 28% by 2034~~29~~ by achieving the following City-wide goals for different land use categories:**

Goals for Increasing Canopy

Industrial zones: 1% increase to achieve 14% cover

Tukwila Urban Center and Tukwila South: ~~5~~3% increase to achieve ~~18~~6% cover

Office and Commercial: ~~34% increase to achieve 320% cover~~

Goals for No Net Loss of Canopy

Low Density Residential: Maintain current City-wide canopy coverage of 47%

Medium and High Residential Density zones: Maintain current City-wide coverage of 40%

**Policies for Goal 2:**

1. Promote tree retention throughout the City by:
  - a. implementing educational programs for property owners and managers regarding tree selection and care, applicable regulations, selecting a qualified arborist, and other issues;
  - b. ~~except for hazard trees, prohibiting tree-removal of any tree four inches or larger in diameter at four feet above grade~~ on all undeveloped property without an approved development or other land use permit, ~~except for hazard trees;~~
  - c. promoting the mutual goals of tree protection and urban development, through the implementation of incentive programs and flexible site development regulations especially to retain tree groves.
  - d. requiring financial assurances for required tree replanting and maintenance.
2. Improve retention of trees on steep slopes through modifications in regulations, ensuring the evaluation of the role that trees play in slope stability during geotechnical reviews, and by providing incentives.
3. Continue to protect trees in sensitive areas and the shoreline through relevant regulations.
4. Ensure that required replacement trees at maturity will have similar canopies to that of the removed tree(s), except where existing or future infrastructure impedes the planting of large trees.
5. Develop mechanisms for protecting tree roots for public and private surface and underground infrastructure installation, including such mechanisms as requiring the presence of a certified arborist when working in the critical root zone, replacement of trees where damage is unavoidable; and either requiring replanting or payment into a tree replacement fund as compensation if planting on-site is not feasible. Establish reasonable procedures to ensure consideration of tree root protection during routine or emergency maintenance of existing utilities and provide training to City and other public utility maintenance staff on root protection techniques.
6. Establish criteria for requiring professional assessment and corrective actions by property owners who damage ~~required~~ landscape trees, street trees, or other required trees by topping, poor pruning practices, or root ~~disturbance~~.

**Comment [SW1]:** Increased to a 20 year horizon to account for additional time needed to achieve more than 3% increase in canopy and to account for rate of redevelopment and new development in urban center and Tukwila South

**Comment [P2]:** Committee would like to consider higher goals for both the Urban Center and Tukwila South and for Office and Commercial

**Comment [CL3]:** Per Committee's direction at 4/10/13 mtg

**Comment [SW4]:** Modified policy to make it less regulatory and more like policy language

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7. Where trees are regulated, establish procedures for off-site planting of replacement trees, or payment into a dedicated tree replacement fund when all required replacement trees cannot be accommodated on a site.
8. Identify potential tree planting locations on publicly owned properties and develop tree planting and urban forest rehabilitation programs for City parks and other publicly owned lands. Collaborate with other agencies, such as Washington Department of Transportation to promote planting in highway interchanges and other locations.
9. Collaborate with other government, non-profit organizations and private sector entities to promote urban forest management and restoration.
10. Provide flexibility in the landscape code. ~~Modify street tree and front, side and rear yard landscape codes~~ to promote increased tree planting and/or planting of large canopy trees, ~~and recognize the value of existing healthy trees where planting space and site conditions allow to assist in meeting the City's canopy goals.~~
11. Evaluate current parking lot landscape requirements to identify opportunities to increase tree canopy.

**Comment [CL5]:** Revised per discussion at 4/10/13 Committee mtg.

**Goal 3. Tukwila’s streetscapes and landscaped areas are sustainable and attractive and its urban forest is healthy, diverse, and safe.**

**Policies for Goal 3:**

1. Develop tree/urban forest inventories and assess the health of trees and forests in Tukwila’s public spaces.
2. Develop maintenance plans and programs for trees on City property or rights-of-way to ensure that maintenance pruning is properly carried out, diseases and pest infestations are managed, hazardous trees are identified and managed in a timely manner to reduce risks, and invasive vegetation is managed.
3. Modify landscape codes and educate property owners, property managers, landscape maintenance companies and tree companies to promote best practices for soil preparation, planting techniques, pruning, trenching, and general tree care.
4. Ensure that landscaping and replacement trees in new development or re-development are properly cared for and thrive in perpetuity, through such means as maintenance agreements, monitoring and enforcement.
5. Develop a mechanism to ensure that tree removal and maintenance companies have the necessary qualifications and liability insurance for work in Tukwila.
6. Modify landscape code and public right-of-way code requirements to require diversity of tree species in landscape plantings and consideration of species already present in the vicinity.
7. Establish minimum standards and landscape manuals to ensure long-term tree health for street trees, required landscape trees and required replacement trees, including: minimum soil volume, soil quality, plant quality, planting techniques, irrigation, mulching, tree pruning, and prohibition of topping.
8. Develop an approved/recommended tree list for street trees, landscape perimeter planting and parking lots that takes into account the importance of species diversity, available planting space and infrastructure conflicts, climate conditions, canopy coverage goals, allergy issues, urban wildlife benefits, and species-tolerance of urban conditions.

**Comment [SW6]:** Existing landscape code requires maintenance of required landscaping for the life of the project. If the approved landscaping is modified without City approval or is not being maintained, there could be a code enforcement action against the property owner.

**IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

- Prepare and publish technical guidance manuals for landscape professionals and landscape contractors reflecting best management practices/standards for achieving adequate soil conditions, plant quality specifications, proper planting techniques, proper mulch placement, tree care and pruning and other relevant information.
- Prepare and distribute technical guidance for homeowners on tree selection, planting, care, pruning, selecting a good arborist, identifying and controlling invasive plants.
- Conduct volunteer work parties in parks and other public areas to help carry out urban forest restoration plans to remove invasive plants and plant native trees and other vegetation.
- Create an “adopt an urban forest” “ivy removal teams” or similar program to promote removal of invasive plants and ongoing stewardship of urban forests in the City’s parks and other public areas.

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- Add an urban forestry page to the City's web site that contains information about programs, regulations, technical guidance, how to find a certified arborist and other relevant issues.
- Expand the annual Arbor Day celebration to widen public participation;
- Reach out to business and resident community to determine interest in heritage tree program in Tukwila.
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring tree canopy removal and replacement, in addition to periodic tree canopy assessments using GIS and remote sensing methods;
- Review and amend as necessary, SAO and Shoreline regulations to ensure consideration of tree retention, particularly in steep slope areas.
- Provide ongoing training for City staff from all departments on tree selection, site preparation, proper planting techniques, and protection of tree roots during construction activities, proper pruning, and general tree care.
- Prepare and publish technical guidance manuals for utility companies and City staff to identify techniques to protect tree roots during installation of public and private surface and underground infrastructure.
- Revise City regulations to allow assessment of fines or requirement of financial guarantees in the enforcement of corrective actions.
- Revise the landscaping code based on opportunities identified to increase tree canopy in parking lots.
- Prepare an urban forest inventory for publically owned trees in the City.
- Notify property owners about applicable tree regulations via inclusion of fliers in storm water utility bill, direct mailings, and media announcements.
- Improve the frequency of landscape and tree replacement inspections and increase enforcement.
- Develop street tree plans for various parts of the City, taking into account the need for diversity for tree health and urban design issues.
- Modify landscape, tree and right-of-way vegetation regulations including consideration of a point system for landscape requirements, clarification of responsibilities for trees on City ROW, identifying incentive programs, and allowing for fines based on the value of trees damaged or removed.