

TO: General Government Committee
FROM: Brad Medrud, Planning Manager
DATE: March 8, 2023
SUBJECT: Landscape Code Update

1) Recommended Action:

Review the packet and be prepared for a discussion with the City's consultant and staff on the gap analysis and public engagement plan.

2) Background:

Trees are an essential part of the character of the City. As part of a healthy community and urban forest, they provide many environmental, economic, and community benefits. Trees and their associated vegetation work constantly to mitigate the negative effects of development, while protecting and enhancing lives within the community. In addition to environmental benefits such as improving and protecting water and air quality, directly and indirectly addressing the effects of climate change, and buffering urban noise, trees and their associated vegetation also have socioeconomic and aesthetic benefits, including promoting equity and environmental justice within the community by ensuring each neighborhood in the City receives community investment and support.

The Tumwater City Council made urban forestry one of four top priority actions for 2022-23. The City Council adopted the *Urban Forestry Management Plan* on March 2, 2021 after four years of entirely City-funded work by City staff, stakeholders, a consultant, the Tree Board, and the Planning Commission.

The City's urban forest consists of all trees and understory plants on public and private property in the City. It includes a diverse mix of vegetation that is managed by a broad group of individuals and groups that are located in a range of urban and natural settings including private properties, developed parks, rights-of-way, conservation areas, and other public lands.

The focus of the *Urban Forestry Management Plan* is the "The Right Tree in the Right Place." The *Urban Forestry Management Plan* guides the stewardship of the urban forest within the City through a series of implementation actions.

The landscaping code update is the next step in the City's implementation of the *Urban Forestry Management Plan*. As part of this project, the City's consultant, SCJ Alliance, and City staff will be working in 2023 with stakeholders and the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council to update the City's landscaping regulations (TMC 12.47 *Landscaping*), as well as review and update other relevant regulations and standards.

In addition, the City is currently updating its tree and vegetation preservation regulations (TMC 16.08) and its Street Tree Plan and regulations (TMC 12.24 *Street Trees*) this year.

3) Policy Support:

Conservation Element Policy C-1.1: Protect the ecological integrity of the natural

environment while allowing for compatible growth and development.

Conservation Element Policy C-1.5: Maximize retention of a healthy tree cover and native vegetation and encourage restoration, replacement, and enhancement of unhealthy trees and disturbed vegetation.

Land Use Element Implementation Policy 16: Implement the Urban Forestry Management Plan through the municipal code, Development Guidelines, City employee processes, and community education and engagement.

4) Alternative:

☐ None.

5) Fiscal Notes:

This is an internally funded work program task.

4) Attachments:

- A. Baseline Assessment
- B. Public Engagement Plan