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Memorandum

Date: March 9, 2022

To: General Government Committee

From: Brad Medrud, Planning Manager

Subject: Urban Forestry Management Plan –
Street Tree Plan, Scope of Work

Issue

Street 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. Street trees 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, street trees 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 City Council adopted the *Urban Forestry Management Plan* on March 2, 2021 after four years of work. 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 *Urban Forestry Management Plan* guides the stewardship of the urban forest within the City through a series of implementation actions. Twenty-five actions in the City's *Urban Forestry Management Plan* address street trees and the most important of these are the following three actions with their overall objectives:

Objective 1.1. Increase canopy cover in the City to expand the community and urban forest.

Action C. Require appropriate tree planting in new development and redevelopment, by emphasizing proper planning for trees, correct planting techniques, and aftercare that supports the healthy establishment of newly planted trees.

Objective 4.1. Update the *Urban Forestry Management Plan* and supporting regulations regularly and ensure they work in harmony with other City strategic priorities.

Action D. Review tree preservation, landscaping, and street tree regulations regularly to ensure that they are working with other City strategic priorities, plans, and regulations, responding to changes in climate, and implementing the *Urban Forestry Management Plan*.

Action E. Review and update the Comprehensive Street Tree Plan regularly to reflect “The Right Tree in the Right Place” strategies, including plantings in planter strips and medians and encourage planting of native tree species, where appropriate.

The next step in the implementation of the *Urban Forestry Management Plan* is the preparation of a *Street Tree Plan*, which is intended to guide street tree planting and maintenance in the City as an element of the 2021 *Urban Forestry Management Plan*. The *Street Tree Plan* will incorporate elements of the 2002 *Comprehensive Street Tree Plan* that was prepared by Washington Forestry Consultants, Inc.

Work on the *Street Tree Plan* will include updating Tumwater Municipal Code (TMC) 12.24 *Street Trees*, Chapter 3 of the *Tumwater Development Guidelines*, as well as review and update other relevant regulations, plans, and procedures for maintaining street trees with the *Urban Forestry Management Plan*’s primary goal of ensuring “The Right Tree in the Right Place.”

The purpose of the *Street Tree Plan* is to guide the maintenance, management, and improvement of the street tree component of the community and urban forest in the City for the benefit of the entire community over the next 20 years. The *Street Tree Plan* and the regulations establish the minimum requirements and standards for development and redevelopment of individual properties in the City as it relates to the street trees. The information for the *Street Tree Plan* will come from multiple sources, including stakeholder groups and inventories and surveys completed as part of the development of the *Urban Forestry Management Plan*.

As part of work on the *Urban Forestry Management Plan*, in 2018 more than 25 volunteers worked with staff and our consultant to inventory, measure, and catalogue more than 3,500 street trees using geographic information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS). Trees were identified by species, measured trunks at diameter breast height or four and a half feet above the ground, and canopy width, and rated for structure, condition, and health.

The street tree inventory included most City-owned trees planted in rights-of-way between a public sidewalk and a City street. In addition to common tree measurements described above, the inventory teams collected data on sidewalk displacement and planting location types in order to study relations between tree species and types of hardscape damage. This data has been incorporated into the City’s GIS-based asset management system.

On September 22, 2021, the Tree Board and Planning Commission took a field trip to four different sites in the City to review street trees conditions and then provided input on the *Street Tree Plan* scope of work at more than seven meetings in the summer and fall of 2021 and the winter of 2022.

The *Street Tree Plan* will identify recommendations regarding sustainable resource management for street trees in the City that can be used by residents, homeowner associations, commercial and industrial property owners, developers, landscape architects, arborists, tree professionals, and tree and landscape maintenance staff including the following criteria for sustainable resource management:

Criteria	Key Purpose
Management Plan	Develop and implement a management plan for street trees on public right of ways that includes updating tree design and planting guidelines to provide for long-term development and health of the trees by providing enough space for them to grow.
Funding	Develop and maintain adequate funding to implement the <i>Street Tree Plan</i> .
Staffing	Employ and train adequate City staff to implement the <i>Street Tree Plan</i> .
Assessment Tools and Data Management	Develop methods to collect information about the street trees on a routine basis.
Species and Site Selection	Provide guidelines and specifications for street tree species use, on a context-defined basis.
Standards For Tree Care	Adopt and adhere to professional standards for street tree care.
Public Safety	Maximize public safety with respect to street trees.
Equity	Ensure that ensuring each neighborhood in the City receives community investment and support by requiring street trees to be planted on all public and private streets, and in all new development
Reuse	Create a closed system for street tree waste.

All natural and built systems change over time. Adaptive changes must be actively planned, managed, and maintained over the course of the *Street Tree Plan*'s duration to result in effective benefits. Lack of planning and management is evident where street trees are planted in places that do not allow for growth, which can lead to conflict with sidewalks and utilities. Proactive planning, management, and

maintenance are needed to keep street trees in the City sustainable and in balance with other urban priorities.

The conditions under which trees grow in the City are often less than optimal. The soils in developed areas are often severely compacted, low in organic content and may contain construction debris. Trees often have restricted rooting space, and the space they do have is often covered with concrete or asphalt, reducing access to water and gas exchange from the soil to the air, critical to tree health.

Because the urban environment is a complex combination of human growth and disturbed environments, the selection of street trees used to create a healthy, sustainable urban environment should include a mixture of native and non-native trees, with no single species dominating. The predominance of a single species will increase the susceptibility of street trees to pests or disease.

The *Street Tree Plan* will provide a comprehensive list of street trees appropriate for all of the City's arterial and collector streets, as well as a general list for all other street types and include a detailed tree planting specification for use in transportation and engineering projects that could also be used for parks and recreation projects. The tree planting plan, specifications, and maintenance guidelines will ensure that the durable, long-term, canopy forming trees will be planted along City streets, forming the linkages between neighborhoods in the City.

The *Street Tree Plan* is proposed to be organized into four chapters and series of appendices.

Chapter 1 – Introduction describes the reasons why the City developed the Plan, its benefits, and its purpose.

Chapter 2 – Background refers to the existing regulations and street tree surveys completed.

Chapter 3 – Street Tree Planning describes the vision for future street tree plantings.

Chapter 4 – Street Tree Planting contains recommendations for street tree planting and maintenance.

Appendices include information specific street trees to be planted, as well as planting and pruning recommendations.

Grant Application

The City submitted a Community Forestry Assistance grant application on February 22, 2022 to the Department of Natural Resources to support a consultant to work on the *Street Tree Plan*. The purpose of the grant is to assist communities with planning and implementing projects that improve management, care, and public engagement with trees growing in parks, natural areas, and along public rights-of-way. As part of the grant, projects also need to address social and environmental disparities in

Washington communities by investing in community-identified urban forestry needs that advance environmental, social, or public health outcomes.

Draft Scope of Work

1. Prepare Public Engagement Plan, which will:
 - a. Define the stakeholders for the process of creating the *Street Tree Plan*, their different information needs, and their role in the update process:
 - 1) Residential property owners
 - 2) Homeowner associations
 - 3) Commercial, industrial, and institutional property owners
 - 4) Residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional developers
 - 5) City maintenance staff
 - 6) City development review staff, including planning, building and development engineering staff
 - 7) City code enforcement staff
 - 8) Professional consultants, such as landscape architects, foresters, and arborists
 - 9) Tree cutting/landscape maintenance companies
 - b. Explicitly address how the *Street Tree Plan* will promote equity and environmental justice
 - c. Establish external and internal stakeholder groups
 - d. Contain a project schedule for:
 - 1) Community and stakeholder meetings
 - 2) Staff stakeholder meetings
 - 3) Draft work product delivery schedule for review by staff, stakeholders, and the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council
 - 4) Public worksessions with the Tree Board and the Planning Commission
 - 5) Formal adoption of the supporting regulations through the Tree Board, the Planning Commission, including a public hearing, General Government Committee briefing, City Council worksession, City Council consideration and adoption
 - e. Identify materials for the implementation of the Public Engagement Plan
 - 1) City website and social media materials
 - 2) Materials to support the external and internal stakeholder groups

- 3) Explanatory materials to support the community and stakeholder meetings, public worksessions with the Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council, and adoption of the *Street Tree Plan* and supporting regulations
 - f. Review of the draft Public Engagement Plan by City staff, Tree Board, Planning Commission, and City Council
2. Implementation of the Public Engagement Plan
 - a. Conduct stakeholder meetings
 - 1) External stakeholders
 - 2) Internal stakeholders
 - b. Conduct a public open house, if needed
 - c. Conduct public worksessions with the Tree Board and Planning Commission
 - d. Conduct formal adoption of the *Street Tree Plan* and supporting regulations through the Tree Board, the Planning Commission, including a public hearing, General Government Committee briefing, City Council worksession, and City Council consideration and adoption
 - e. Prepare materials for the implementation of the Public Engagement Plan
3. Prepare the *Street Tree Plan*, which would include the following sections:
 - a. Introduction, describing the reasons why the City developed the *Street Tree Plan*, its benefits, and its purpose
 - b. Background, referring to the process for creating the *Street Tree Plan*, public engagement process updating regulations, and street tree surveys completed
 - c. Street tree planning, describing the vision for future street tree plantings, including:
 - 1) Arterials and connectors
 - 2) Guidance for other street types
 - 3) Street tree design recommendations
 - d. Street tree planting, containing recommendations for the following:
 - 1) Street tree planting and maintenance guidance
 - 2) Street tree management responsibilities
 - 3) Best management practices for street tree care
 - 4) Street tree planting list
 - 5) Street tree planting specifications and details

- 6) Street tree pruning guidelines
- e. Shorter, individual documents derived from the *Street Tree Plan* for specific audiences and their needs:
 - 1) Residential property owners and homeowner associations
 - 2) City maintenance staff
 - 3) Tree cutting/landscape maintenance companies
4. Prepare amendments to the following, as needed:
 - a. Tumwater Municipal Code Amendments:
 - 1) TMC Title 12 *Streets, Sidewalks and Public Places* (TMC 12.08 *Street and Sidewalk Obstructions*, TMC 12.12 *Construction of Curbs and Sidewalks*, and TMC 12.24 *Street Trees*)
 - 2) Title 16 Environment (TMC 16.08 *Protection of Trees and Vegetation*)
 - 3) Title 17 Land Division (TMC 17.04 *Definitions*)
 - b. *Tumwater Development Guide*, Chapter 3 *General Engineering Considerations* and Chapter 4 *Transportation*, text and details
 - c. *Littlerock Road Subarea Plan*, Chapter 5 *Implementation*
 - d. *Tumwater Town Center Street Design Plan*
 - e. *Capitol Boulevard Community Zone Design Guidelines*
 - f. The ordinance should be assessed for compliance with the Growth Management Act (GMA) requirement to comply with the Attorney General's Guidance regarding takings

Schedule

- May and June 2022 – RFP process and consultant selection
- July 2022 – Project start
- July 1, 2022 – June 1, 2023 – Department of Natural Resources grant money will be available
- December 31, 2022 – Project completion

Notice of Intent and SEPA Review

- August 2022 – Submit Notice of Intent to Commerce
- August 2022 – SEPA Review

Tree Board Meetings

- July 11, 2022 – Tree Board worksession
- August 8, 2022 – Tree Board worksession
- September 12, 2022 – Tree Board worksession

Planning Commission Meetings

- August 23, 2022 – PC worksession
- September 13, 2022 – PC worksession
- September 27, 2022 – PC hearing

City Council Meetings

- October 12, 2022 – GGC briefing
- October 25, 2022 – CC worksession
- November 15, 2022 – CC consideration

Other Notes

- The street tree survey completed as part of the development of the Urban Forestry Management will be used to determine which tree species caused the most infrastructure damage.
- At the December 14, 2021 City Council worksession on the Planning Division department work program, Councilmember Dahl recommended contacting the company she used that would like to review ‘tree’ related documents and plans. They also voiced interest in joining the Tree Board if there is room in the future. <https://www.doubledtreelc.com/>
- Also at the December 14, 2021 City Council worksession, Councilmember Schneider recommended avoiding the Bradford pear as a street tree.
- Staff has asked our Permitting Division staff if they could provide recent as-built plans and landscaping plans for recent projects such as Skyview to the Planning Commission and Tree Board. As part of this scope of work, staff will spend a worksession taking the Planning Commission and Tree Board through the development review process.
- Staff has reviewed materials related to the scope of work provided by Ben Thompson and his staff at the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.
- On December 16, 2021, the City issued the job posting for the new sustainability coordinator position, which will be taking lead on urban forestry projects in 2022. The position closed in January 2022 and staff are reviewing

Urban Forestry Management Plan – Street Tree Plan

Scope of Work

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candidate for the position in February and March 2022. The new sustainability coordinator will be taking over as lead staff for the Tree Board, but Planning Division staff will continue to lead the work on the code update.