



## Memorandum

Date: March 13, 2023  
To: Tree Board  
From: Alyssa Jones Wood, Sustainability Coordinator  
Subject: Tree Planting & Retention Incentives

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### Introduction

The Tumwater Urban Forestry Management Plan, adopted in 2021, includes actions to:

Objective 1.1, Action D: *Explore non-regulatory programs and incentives to engage the community, plant more trees, and reforest property owned by the City.*

Objective 2.1, Action D: *Explore non-regulatory programs and incentives to engage the community and allow for the retention, planting, and replanting of more trees.*

This memorandum provides examples of incentives and programs from other Cities, mostly in the Pacific Northwest, that are used to promote tree planting and tree retention on public and private properties. This memorandum is organized in two sections: incentives and programs for (1) public property and (2) private property.

### Public Property

When it comes to community plantings at properties owned by a municipality there appear to be three approaches: aspirational goals to plant a certain number of trees in an established timeframe, partnerships with non-profits or multiple organizations, and giveaways/refunds for residents to plant specifically and only in City-owned right-of-way.

### Tacoma

The City of Tacoma advertises volunteer planting opportunities provided by Green Tacoma Partnership and Tacoma Tree Foundation.

The City of Tacoma's Grit City Program provides free street trees and supporting supplies with the intention for them to be placed in City right-of-way. Applications are online with no set deadline. Only applications with a signed Tree Care Agreement from the property owner will be approved. 59% of trees go to

communities with the greatest need as identified on the City of Tacoma Equity Index Map. The City will provide free street trees to be planted in the right-of-way, tree stakes, ties, compost, and watering supplies for the dry months. When a group of neighbors organize to participate in this program together they can receive free delivery of the trees and other materials. Individual applicants are responsible to pick-up the trees and materials from a centralized location. Once an application is approved, City staff submit the planting permit on behalf of the applicant. Educational resources such as a webpage on proper tree placement and selection, guidance on planting in right-of-way, and long-term care and maintenance are provided on the program webpage.

The City of Tacoma also offers multiple neighborhood-scale grants including the Make a Splash Grant, Neighborhood Innovative Grants, Spark Grant, Grants from Alliance for Community Trees, or the Sustainability Small Grant Program to support tree planting and care. Example projects include new street plantings, pruning existing street trees for crown clearing and crown raising, removal of stumps or hazardous/dying trees especially with replanting, reclaiming your planting strip, and starting a community orchard. Education is available on the program webpage including recommended Street Tree Lists and information on how to properly select, plant, maintain, and prune trees.

### Vancouver

The City of Vancouver offers a Street Tree Refund program. The value of the refund is 50% of the cost of the tree, up to \$50. The application process is as follows:

- Apply for a street tree work permit prior to purchasing the tree. City staff will measure the right-of-way and assign a list of appropriate list of trees to plant along that street;
- Visit a local nursery, purchase the tree, and plant it in the approved location;
- Save the receipt and mail it to the City's Urban Forestry Department; and
- City staff visits the tree at the site and the applicant receives their refund by mail.

The City of Vancouver partners with non-profit Friends of Trees for volunteer tree planting events. Gloves, tools, and training are provided. Neighborhood volunteers will provide a potluck lunch right after planting.

### Seattle

The City of Seattle's Green Seattle Partnership is a collaboration between the City of Seattle, community groups, non-profits, businesses, schools, and thousands of volunteers working together to restore and actively maintain the City's forested parklands. Over the program's 17 years of operation, Green Seattle Partnership has restored 1,889 acres, planted 8,595 trees, 61,418 native plants, and employed 123 paid staff people.

### Non-Pacific Northwest Cities

Outside of the Pacific Northwest, there are multiple examples of municipal-led reforestation goals and efforts. With the exception of New York City, there is no reporting available regarding the success or progress of these goals and programs.

- The Million Trees NYC initiative, led by New York City Mayor Bloomberg aims to create 2,000 acres of forest on City parkland and other public open spaces by establishing new, ecologically healthy, multi-story forests.
- The Tucson Million Trees initiative, led by the City's Mayor, aims to plant one million trees by 2030 to increase the City's tree canopy and help mitigate the effects of climate change. This program is science-based, planting native, shade, and drought-tolerant trees in heat vulnerable communities.
- The City of New Orleans partners with a non-profit group Sustaining Our Urban Landscape (SOUL) and plans to plant about 7,000 trees per year between now and 2040.
- The City of Boston partnered with American Express to establish Grow Boston Greener, an effort to plant 100,000 trees by 2020. It is unclear if that goal was achieved and now the City's Grow Boston webpage is focused on urban agriculture.
- The Mayor of Chicago established the "Our Roots Chicago" program in 2022 which has a goal to plant 75,000 trees over the next five years. Trees planted are focused in historically marginalized and underserved communities where the City's current tree canopy displays a shortage of trees.
- The Greening of Detroit is a non-profit organization that, since 1989, has planted 135,000 trees in two parks in the City of Detroit. This organization pairs the tree planting with adult workforce development training and a youth Green Corps.

### Private Property

Multiple cities throughout the Pacific Northwest provide incentives to facilitate tree planting. Additionally, there are three examples included in this memorandum that speak to non-regulatory financial incentives for retaining trees, but only one of which is at a municipal scale.

Common, but not universal, components of programs include education, commitment to support the trees for at least a few years, watering bags, mulch, compost, follow-up assessments, and equity drivers for the distribution of the trees.

### Kirkland

The City of Kirkland has two programs – a Rebate and a Certificate. Both programs are:

- run by the City's Storm & Surface Water Division;
- have a rolling deadline for applications;

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- are valued at \$500 per property with a lifetime maximum of \$1,000 per property;
- include the costs of trees, 2-3 bags of compost and mulch per tree, and watering bags; and
- Require that applicants purchase trees that are included on a pre-approved tree list.

The Certificate approach is designed so there is little to no out-of-pocket costs for the property owner or tenant. The application process for the Certificate approach is as follows:

1. Take and pass an online tree planting course;
2. Visit a WSNLA nursery;
3. Submit a certificate application;
4. The City reviews the application and mails the certificate;
5. The applicant uses the certificate to purchase the tree(s) from a WSNLA nursery;
6. The applicant plants the tree(s); and
7. City staff conduct annual follow up with applicants to check on tree health and provide maintenance/care recommendations.

The Rebate approach is simpler and allows applicants to purchase trees anywhere, but it does involve out-of-pocket costs. The application process for the Rebate approach is as follows:

1. Take and pass an online tree planting course;
2. Purchase and plant the tree(s);
3. Submit the rebate form; and
4. City staff will conduct annual follow-up with participants to check on the tree health and provide maintenance/care recommendations.

The City's website includes a webpage with links to a Tree Planting PDF and Tree Care PDF guide. The City will not provide additional rebates for trees that do not survive. Rebates or Certificates cannot be used to remove/replace existing trees on the property. If an applicant's property had a tree removal permit issued in the last 12 months, they will only be eligible for 50% of the normal value. All trees planted must be within the City of Kirkland city limits. This program does not permit these trees to be planted in the City right-of-way. Trees must be planted at least 10 feet from buildings, 5 feet from property lines, 5 feet from pavement edges, 20 feet from streetlights and other trees, 30 feet from corner curbs, and 10 feet from underground utilities.

### Lynnwood

The City of Lynwood offers a Certificate program. The program appears to have a rolling deadline and is valued at up to \$500. City residents can apply for this program once per year. The program can only be utilized with WSNLA nurseries. There are no tree species or planting location restrictions.

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The application process is as follows:

1. Confirm eligibility (within City limits and haven't received vouchers in the last 12 months);
2. Go to a participating WSNLA nursery;
3. Fill out the online application;
4. The City reviews the application;
5. If the request is approved, the applicant will receive tree vouchers in the mail which must be used within one year; and
6. Once the tree is planted, call the number on the voucher approval. The City may do an inspection of the newly planted trees.

There is no education component to this program.

### Portland

The City of Portland has a "Treebate" program run by its Stormwater utility. The program is open from September 1 to April 30 each year. The Treebate program credits up to \$10 for edible fruit trees, \$20 for small trees, \$30 for medium trees, and \$40 for large trees. This credit is applied to the property owner's City utility bill. Trees planted and credited under the Treebate program are intended to be planted in the yard of a single-family home or duplex. If an applicant is applying for more than five trees, they must include a site plan to show that all the trees will be enough space to reach their full mature height and width. Tree species planted within this program cannot be on the City's Nuisance Tree list and must be 4 feet tall measured from the top of the soil. Tenants of rental properties can participate in the program with permission of the property owner, but the rebate will be issued to the utility account holder. Treebate is for new trees only and cannot be used to replace existing or dead trees.

The application process is as follows:

1. Apply online
  - a. Include your City of Portland Water, Sewer, and Stormwater Account Number;
  - b. Scan or photograph receipts;
  - c. Agree to a "Tree Care Pledge" to provide adequate water and care for at least three years; and
  - d. Authorize staff to enter the applicant property to verify the planting and care of trees.

There is no education component to this program.

### Seattle

The City of Seattle has a "Trees for Neighborhoods" program. Applications open on July 11 and close on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The trees are made available in October. The

giveaway includes four free trees per household, a watering bag, and mulch. There is a lifetime maximum for six trees per household.

The application process is as follows:

1. Apply online including what species you're requesting from the tree option list;
2. Attend a Right Tree, Right Place webinar in July or an in-person Planting and Care workshop;
3. Applications are picked at random and those who are selected are notified; and
4. Selected applicants pick up the trees themselves and bring them home.

Renters can participate in this program with permission from the property owners. Participants can receive help selecting the right tree for the right location, training on proper planting and care, assistance for applying for street tree planting permits, ongoing care reminders, and future pruning workshop opportunities. The City can provide assistance planting trees for folks who need physical assistance, but on a limited basis. There are no commitments required to participate in this program.

### Shoreline

The City of Shoreline has a "Trees for Shoreline" program. Applications open July 15 and close August 15. Giveaways happen late in September. The giveaway includes 1 tree per household, a watering bag, and bag of mulch for the tree. It is unclear how often residents can participate. Trees given away as part of this program must be planted on private property and are not permitted to be planted along streets or in right-of-way.

The application process is as follows:

1. Apply online including what species you're requesting from the tree option list;
2. Attend one in-person Tree Planting & Care Workshop; and
3. The trees and supplies are distributed at the Tree Planting & Care Workshop. Participants are responsible for transporting trees from the pick-up site to their home.

Renters of single-family homes and duplexes are eligible to participate with property owner permission. Renters of apartments are not eligible to participate. Planting assistance is subject to volunteer availability. There are no commitments required to participate in this program.

### Tacoma

The City of Tacoma offers a Tree Coupon program. Applications are online and open from October 1 to March 15. Coupons must be redeemed by March 31. The coupon value is \$30 off each tree purchased and can apply to up to three trees per coupon. Coupons are accepted at nurseries that the City has developed this relationship with. Trees purchased with the Tree Coupons can be planted on private property or right-of-way. However, if the tree is planted in right-of-way, it must be a species

included on the recommended tree planting list and a no-fee permit is required. Tree coupons are one-time use per residential property. If there is a new owner of a property, they can contact the City and re-apply. The City produces an in-depth report on the program each year including maps for the addresses where the coupons were distributed overlaid over the Tacoma Equity Index and qualitative survey information from participants. The City has a “Planting and Growing” webpage with information on how to properly plant and care for trees.

### Vancouver

The City of Vancouver has a “Yard Tree Giveaway Program”. There are no specific application dates listed on the program’s webpage. The giveaway includes 1 tree per household, 1 bag of mulch, and tree planting and care information. It is unclear how often residents can participate. Trees are intended to be planted on private residential property within the city of Vancouver city limits. Trees may not be planted in containers, as street trees, or to fulfill planting requirements. Trees should be planted 10 feet from one’s home, 2 feet from property lines, and 5 feet away from driveways and water meters. Applicants register for the giveaway online and trees are distributed first-come first-served. The event is drive-through. Tenants are eligible to participate in the program with approval from the property owner.

Free planting and delivery is available for people with limited mobility by request. The City’s website has a webpage with tree planting and care instructions and a summer tree care video. Tree recipients must commit to watering, mulching, and caring for their trees.

The City of Vancouver also has a “Treefund” refund program. This program is funded by the City’s Tree Fund where donations, penalties, and mitigation funds are deposited. The refund is for 50% of the cost of up to 5 trees, up to \$50 per tree. The application process is as follows:

- Review list of approved yard trees;
- Visit your local nursery and purchase your approved yard tree and plant it in your yard within the City of Vancouver;
- Complete your application and mail it and the purchase receipt to the City; and
- You receive the refund in the mail.

The Vancouver Urban Forestry program also provides a series of free, educational workshops. Current offerings include:

- Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop;
- Winter Tree ID Workshop;
- Tree & Shrub Pruning Workshop; and
- Tree Pests & Diseases Workshop.



### Vancouver, British Columbia

The City of Vancouver, BC has developed a “Citizen Coolkit on Climate Change and Urban Forestry” to engage its residents in learning about climate change and the benefits of green infrastructure. This toolkit is intended to be used by families, neighbors, and friends. The Coolkit specifically includes pledges at the end to plant a suitable tree in the reader’s yard, to water street trees during dry seasons, and to volunteer at planting events with friends/family/neighbors. This Coolkit also includes information on good tree and native plant species, how to find the right place to plant a tree, how to plant the tree, and tree care.

This Coolkit, while a stand-alone tool, is also paired with Tree Giveaways by the City of Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. This giveaway, called “Branch Out”, focuses on distribution of resilient, adaptable species to private property owners in areas of the City with less than 15% canopy cover.

### Tigard, Oregon

The City of Tigard, Oregon provides permanent financial and technical assistance with tree maintenance and preservations for Heritage Trees. Specifically, the City maintains the tree including:

- Pruning;
- Pest Control;
- Unwanted planted removal;
- Fertilization;
- Soil amendment; and
- Cabling and bracing.

### State of Hawaii

Property owners who have designated exceptional trees on their property can deduct up to \$3,000 per exceptional tree for qualified expenditures made during the taxable year to maintain the tree on their property. Exceptional trees must be designated by the local county arborist advisory committee.

### Payment for Ecosystem Services

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) is “a voluntary transaction where well-defined Ecosystem Service (or land-use likely to secure that service) is being bought by a minimum of one Ecosystem Service buyer from an Ecosystem Service provider if and only if the Ecosystem Service provider secures the Ecosystem Service (Bauchet, 2020). In 1997 Costa Rica became the first country to offer payments for ecosystem services. Following the success of Costa Rica’s program, other Countries have followed suit including but not limited to Mexico, China, Uganda, Honduras, and Bolivia. As an example., in Uganda a local non-profit – the Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust – designed the program and paid an annual payment of \$28 per hectare for the property owners to not cut down any mature trees. The results in each country have shown to be promising.



A 2011 report asserts that the United States participates in PES for forest-based ecosystem services mostly through wetland mitigation, averaging a payment of \$5.22 per acre of forestland (Mercer et al., 2011). Other Federal programs that provide PES for private landowners include:

- Conservation Reserve Program
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
- Forest Land Enhancement Program
- Forest Legacy Program
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Wetlands Reserve Program
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program; and
- Conservation Security Program.

Additionally, some non-regulatory incentives for tree retention exist within the voluntary carbon market.

### Cited Sources

Bauchet, Jonathan, Nigel Asquith, Zhao Ma, Claudia Radel, Ricardo Godoy, Laura Zanotti, Diana Steele, Benjamin M. Gramig, and Andrea Estrella Chong. "The practice of payments for ecosystem services (PES) in the Tropical Andes: Evidence from program administrators." *Ecosystem Services* 45 (2020): 101175.

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