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- South Cedar Park Good
Neighbors Association
- Thornton Creek Alliance
- Victory Heights Community
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June 19, 2018

Mayor Jenny Durkan

Council Member Rob Johnson, Chair Planning, Land Use, and Zoning Committee

Dear Mayor Durkan and Council Member Johnson,

We are writing to express Lake City Neighborhood Alliance's (LCNA's) concerns with the proposed weakening of Seattle's Tree Ordinance as suggested in the May 11, 2018 Central Staff Memo. Healthy and bountiful tree canopies are critical to our neighborhoods' environmental health and to residents' physical and mental health and well-being. Tree canopies are beautiful and set Seattle apart from many urban areas. A stronger not weaker ordinance is required.

At our June 14 LCNA meeting, one of our member organizations, Thornton Creek Alliance (TCA), detailed the proposed Tree Ordinance "updates", including increasing the diameter at breast height (DBH) measurement of large and protected trees from 6" to 12", and excluding developers from tree-removal permitting and repayment/replanting regulations that would apply to homeowners. LCNA member organizations at that meeting unanimously and enthusiastically endorsed both TCA's concerns about the proposed changes to the Tree Ordinance and their recommendations to strengthen the Tree Ordinance. We note that the Central Staff's draft updates seem to be counter to many of the findings and recommendations of Seattle's own Urban Forestry Commission.

LCNA urges the City to:

- Maintain the goal of 30% Seattle tree canopy coverage, and implement and enforce policies that reverse downward tree-canopy coverage trends to achieve that 30% goal;
- Better protect trees and groves, especially in Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs);
- Maintain the 6" DBH measurement of large and protected trees ;
- Add stronger tree protection to the Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) Ordinance;
- Include greater penalties for removal of large protected trees and incentivize retention;
- Encourage/incentivize planting of sustainable, low-maintenance native trees;
- Sufficiently fund the Office of Sustainability and Environment to employ tree experts to enforce the Tree Protection Ordinance;
- Analyze the City's development standards in the City Code to ensure large trees and tree canopy coverage are sustained;
- Better define "hazard tree", provide City review/oversight of hazard claims to prevent abuse of the hazard tree exception, and require replacement of hazard trees that are removed;
- Hold tree-service providers accountable if they remove trees in violation of the Tree Ordinance;
- Hold developers to the same standard of tree protection as homeowners.

Thank you for your attention to protecting our trees, groves, and tree canopies.

Very sincerely,

Philip Shack,
Chair

Sandra Adams Motzer,
Treasurer and Immediate Past Chair

cc: Council President Harrell; D5 Council Member Juarez; Council Members Bagshaw, Gonzalez, Herbold, O'Brien, Sawant, and Mosqueda; Director of Office of Sustainability and Environment Jessica Finn Coven; Thornton Creek Alliance President Jeff Laufle