

Thornton Creek Alliance
Post Office Box 25690
Seattle, Washington 98165-1190



Mayor Jenny Durkan
600 Fourth Avenue
Seventh Floor
Seattle, Washington 98104

June 3, 2018

Dear Mayor Durkan:

The Thornton Creek Alliance (TCA) is a volunteer nonprofit organization of 145 members concerned with the health of the Thornton Creek watershed, the largest in both Seattle and Shoreline. Over 25 years TCA has worked with Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Public Utilities, Green Seattle Partnership, and innumerable community groups and Forest Stewards in the process of working to restore sustainable water treatment and healthy riparian habitat.

Trees, especially native trees, are a vital component of making this work successful, but Seattle's tree canopy is shrinking and falling away in the face of today's dense development methods. Therefore, we respectfully request that the following considerations be included in proposed new tree protection ordinance language.

- Better protection and replacement of trees and groves, especially in Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs); they are losing trees at an alarming rate. Please see discussion in Tree Regulations: Urban Forestry Commission, Nov. 1, 2017, p 7. (https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2017/2017docs/TreeRegsUFCommission_SDCL.pdf)
- Include greater penalties for removal of large protected trees and provide additional incentives to retain those trees. Both during and outside of development, require the replacement of all trees cut that are six inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) and larger with similar sized trees and/or payment into a mitigation fund for planting and maintaining similar size trees that will be planted as close to the removal site as possible.
- Encourage the planting of native trees as a way of building sustainable, low maintenance plantings that support environmental services and biodiversity.
- Provide sufficient funding for the Office of Sustainability and Environment to employ tree experts to enforce the tree protection ordinance.
- Provide for analysis of development standards in the city code to determine if they leave adequate space to sustain large trees to maintain the canopy cover.
- Include a better definition of hazard trees, and provide for city review of the claim that a tree presents a hazard, to prevent the abuse of the hazard tree exception. Also require the replacement of hazard trees that are removed.

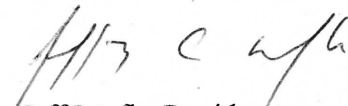
- Include liability for tree service providers who remove trees in violation of the tree protection ordinance

We are aware that you have received a list of seven proposals from the Seattle Urban Forestry Commission, May 9, 2018, and a letter from TreePAC with numerous co-signers, May 3, 2018, containing eight similar proposals. TCA supports the proposals in these documents as well.

If Seattle is to live up to its reputation as one of the most livable cities in the US, now is the time to take action to protect our beautiful, hard-working tree canopy. Not in five or ten years when, at the rate we are going, hardscape will dominate every view.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the City on this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeff Laufle, President
Thornton Creek Alliance

cc: Seattle City Council

THORNTON CREEK ALLIANCE (TCA), founded in 1993, is an all-volunteer, grassroots, nonprofit organization of over 100 members from Shoreline and Seattle dedicated to preserving and restoring an ecological balance throughout the Thornton Creek watershed. Our goal is to benefit the watershed by encouraging individuals, neighborhoods, schools, groups, businesses, agencies, and government to work together in addressing the environmental restoration of the creek system including: water quality, stabilization of water flow, flood prevention, and habitat improvement through education, collaboration, and community involvement.

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