



Tree Retention Regulations

Planning Commission
Follow Up

March 21, 2007

Background

- ◆ A year ago, staff brought this issues to the Planning Commission for discussion
- ◆ In January 2007, staff briefed the Planning Commission on current City policy and tree regulations
- ◆ Last time we discussed proposed language to codify tree retention requirements on developing parcels
- ◆ This is part of an on-going work program to maintain and improve Renton's tree canopy

Summary of Past Discussion

- ◆ There are good reasons for retaining trees and good reasons for removing trees
- ◆ Established neighborhoods and developing neighborhoods (or infill neighborhoods) may have different priorities in tree retention
- ◆ Comprehensive Plan provides broad support for tree retention and preservation
- ◆ RMC authorizes the City to require retention, but needs improvement
- ◆ 2006 Director's Rule has been used to interpret and implement RMC authority

Summary of Proposed Changes

- ◆ Remove lot development criteria from allowed minor renewal activities
- ◆ Retention Standard is 30% or 25 trees per acre for R-8 or lower intensity zones
- ◆ Replacement/Replanting requirement 12 caliper inches per tree replaced
- ◆ Add clarifying language throughout
- ◆ Amendments to create consistency between sections

Feedback from Council Hearing

- ◆ A couple people gave broad support for the proposed code changes
- ◆ A representative for the Master Builders was concerned with the effects on housing affordability
- ◆ No new issues were presented

Preservation of Heritage Trees

- ◆ Added criterion to RMC4-4-130 H4 that directs the reviewing official to maximize the preservation of heritage trees
- ◆ Added definition of heritage tree in RMC 4-11-210: *Any tree in good health that is an outstanding specimen because of its size, form, shape, age, color, rarity, or other distinctive community landmark*

Heritage Tree Definition

Heritage Trees can be further defined by:

- ◆ Size
- ◆ Species
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Historic Significance
- ◆ Ecological Value
- ◆ Aesthetics
- ◆ Location
- ◆ Other unique characteristics

However, careful study and consideration must be given to create definitions that are useful and useable.

Definitions in RMC 4-11-210

- ◆ Added a definition of dangerous tree, consistent with RMC 4-4-130C: *Any tree that has been certified as dead, terminally diseased, damaged, or otherwise dangerous, by a professional forester, licensed landscape architect, or certified arborist*
- ◆ Fixed definition of tree to specify vegetation with a minimum 2" trunk



Next Steps

- ◆ The Planning and Development Committee will review the proposal and the Planning Commission recommendation and then forward a final recommendation to the Council
- ◆ Larger issues relating to preserving Tree Canopy and related issues will be addressed as part of an on-going work program

