

ATTACHMENT D: Establish an Urban Forestry Advisory Panel

Tree Preservation Code Team Request – Establish an Urban Forestry Advisory Panel to operate from within the City’s Planning Department.

Justification – (From Tree Preservation Code Team) Public trees make up only a part of the City’s urban tree canopy. Roughly, 80% of the City’s tree canopy is on private property and it is irresponsible to ignore oversight for the city-wide tree canopy, known as the urban forest. The City has dealt with this issue since 2009 when the City created a baseline measurement and analysis of the City’s tree canopy.

In May 2014, the Urban Forest Strategic Plan (“UFSP”) was adopted and accordingly, tree canopy assessments were done, and are performed, every 6-10 years. The tree canopy assessments recognize all the trees that make up the City’s tree canopy, not just the public trees. To establish consistent oversight and accountability for the city-wide urban forest and tree management decisions, a single source of expertise should be created to better coordinate and respond to the public’s questions about the trees within Shoreline and the needs of diminishing canopy.

Such a group is authorized to be formed as expressed in Standard 1 for Tree City USA Recognition: “By delegating tree care decisions to a professional forester, arborist, city Department, citizen-led tree board or some combination, city leaders determine who will perform necessary tree work. The public will also know who is accountable for decisions that impact community trees. Often, both professional staff and an advisory tree board are established, which is a good goal for most communities.” The creation of such a group, which I will call at this time the “Urban Forestry Advisory Panel”, will work closely with the City’s Planning Dept. where the Shoreline Municipal Code is interpreted and enforced. The Urban Forestry Advisory Panel will be a visible resource not only for the Planning Dept., but for several other City’s departments from the City Council to Public Works and Park Maintenance. It would provide all these departments with consistent, science-based, updated information and expertise to work toward and formulate policies that incorporate the City’s urban forest management goals found in:

- Comprehensive Plan updated in 2012.
- Green Shoreline 20-Year Forest Management Plan of 2012.
- Urban Forest Strategic Plan of 2014; and
- Climate Impacts & Resiliency Study of 2020.

The Urban Forestry Advisory Panel would be composed of 5, 7, 9 or 11 community members / volunteers with experience and background in urban ecology, urban forestry, urban wildlife, arboriculture, climatology, etc. Also, citizen-scientists will be included from the public. In this manner, the public will be able to participate in the care of its urban forest and be reassured that the City values citizen input and acknowledges the importance of its urban forest to protect property values, along with the social, economic, climate, environmental, and public health services. An attached proposed organizational chart shows how the Urban Forestry Advisory Board would fit into the City’s government.