

Dear Planning Commissioners,

My name is Shelly Bowman. While I serve on the Redmond Parks and Trails Commission, my comments tonight are as a private citizen.

I do support the Tree Canopy Strategic Plan amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.

With the amendment, I would like to urge you to revise the Permitting Code to ensure we meet the 40% Tree Canopy Goal in 2050.

Redmond currently has a 38% Tree Canopy includes the Watershed, which offers many benefits to our community that I will not review tonight.

During a recent Planning Commission meeting, as Sr PARK Planner Jeff Akens presented the Tree Canopy Strategy Plan, you learned that **under that current Permitting Code**, the **planting of trees** is being **outpaced by the removal of trees**. Thus, we will fail to meet 40% Tree Canopy goal.

(We are planting 220 acres of trees, but at current rate, we are projected to lose 330 acres by 2050.)

So, I am calling for Revisions to the Permitting Code, so we can avert this Tree Canopy Failure.

I strongly believe that the Growth Management Act can be adhered to and at the same time the Tree Canopy 40% goal can be achieved.

As you move forward and begin to focus on potential revisions to the Permitting Process, I would like to offer some suggestions for consideration, please. I am only going to read the highlights and submit my letter to provide further detail:

1. **Consider developing a Stakeholder group of Developers, Private Owners, City Staff, Arborists and interested citizens to gain their input.** Collaboration is key to create an objective, clearly defined code. Kirkland did this, and while it is still a work in progress, I believe they have ideas to share. Tree Canopy can be a complex decision.
2. **Educate yourselves on Best Practices of neighboring cities, and distant Cities.** Examples: Kirkland Stakeholder Study and Portland. Portland's report: iTree reference: [www.itreetools.org/documents/175/Sustainable Urban Forest Guide 14Nov 2016.pdf](http://www.itreetools.org/documents/175/Sustainable_Urban_Forest_Guide_14Nov_2016.pdf)
3. **Provide Public Information/Comment regarding Tree Removal and Mitigation Details prior to "large projects" final approval.** Many complain that by the time they learn and weigh in, it is too late to make changes. I have suggested that the new Public Information Boards: Requested Tree Type removal numbers, exceptions requested, location of replanting, In lieu of fees that the Permitting Staff has put as Pending giving the public time for comment and potential for adjustments.
4. **Provide Transparent Quarterly Metrics and Analysis.** As Tree removal and replacement must be entered into a database, this information should be readily available to the public.

5. **Update the 35% retention of Significant Trees to 40%.** Align with our Tree Canopy and the need to keep the Canopy spread throughout of Redmond boundaries.
6. **Ensure Enforcement of replantings and Tree Survivability.** Enforce includes private owners must replant on their property or contribute to a Tree Canopy Fund. As a community, we must pay now to regulate or pay more later in crisis.
7. **Clearly define Replacement Tree Types, Sizes and Survival rates.** Include a list what trees cannot be, such as monoculture or Arborvitae. Suggested survival rate of 5 years at which point, owner get a rebate.
8. **Establish a Tree Definition and Replacement Ratio for Trees large than 6 inches and smaller than 30 inches.** "Heritage Tree" is sometimes the given name.
9. **Remove Dead, Dying or Hazardous Trees as a Free Pass Teardown.** These trees have habitat value standing and as they decompose and should be considered a Significant or Heritage Tree.
10. **Increase the In-lieu rate to \$500 or more, or perhaps Eliminating this Option.** \$250 dollars per tree, Redmond has the lowest barrier to tree removal of any municipality in the region (the next lowest is \$500). Clearly define by each type of tree.
11. **Be Transparent about In-Lieu Fees Collected and Uses.** The community should clearly know why exceptions are granted, how much was pulled, exactly how the money was spent and proof that the Trees are there and survived.
12. **Increase the Ratio of Landmark Tree Replacement.** Perhaps it is 5:1 and the Trees must be in a cluster, and a certain tree type that has both longevity and more adequately addresses their habitat loss. A Landmark is priceless in terms of its value to the environmental health, wildlife habitat, beauty and grace of longevity and wisdom. Killing it by exception instead of enforcing 100% retention must be changed.
13. **Explore neighborhood goals.** Different parts of the city have their own vibe and ownership creates pride.
14. **And lastly, Rally and educate the public on our united goals.** Provide affordable PNW tree plants at events. We all need a feel-good united community project. Tell us how many Trees we planted. Telling us acres is not easily understandable. Use fees to cover costs.

I am excited for you to Take advantage of the strong support you have through the City Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategic goal, the Staff's current Sustainability and Tree Surveys, and Cathy Beam's Tree Canopy Metric Analysis that will help guide you in updating the City's Tree Regulations.

There are so many positive ways to close the Tree Canopy gap. I know that the Planning Commission will succeed with Code Revisions that ensure the 40% Tree Canopy goal will be met in 2050.

I hope I in some way contributed to your work ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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