

From: [Rosemarie](#)
To: [Planning Commission](#)
Subject: Rosemarie Ives" testimony on Tree Canopy amendments
Date: Saturday, July 18, 2020 3:18:19 PM
Attachments: PlanningComontreecanopy#1.docx

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Dear Planning Commission members,

As you go into deliberations on the Comprehensive Plan amendments before you, I thought having a copy of my testimony would be helpful to all of you.

The Tree Canopy Strategic Plan, approved by the city council just last year, was approved and recommended by the Planning Commission in its advisory capacity. For there to be a recommendation to amend it now by deleting "no net loss of significant trees" cannot be substantiated by science or research and is contrary to the purpose and vision of the City having a Tree Canopy Strategic Plan. Such a significant deletion severely undermines and threatens the Sustainability vision adopted by the city council and publicly endorsed by Mayor Birney..

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me via email or give a call at 425.495.4442.

Rosemarie Ives

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Good evening members of the Planning Commission, staff and the public. My name is Rosemarie Ives. I served as mayor of Redmond for 16 years, 1992-2007. Before that, I was on the city council...it was around 1988 that the first tree ordinance was passed, now more than 30 years ago. I am speaking tonight on the Tree Canopy Strategic Plan.

I applaud the goals of the plan especially where it states that the city wants to lead in conservation and retention of significant trees. I implemented the ordinance during my mayoral tenure and continue to support adopted city policies that require the retention of landmark and valuable significant trees. Yet when I review the commission's minutes, there seems to be no mention of retention and protection of trees. The city has adopted a goal of 40% tree canopy by 2049 and reports that our existing canopy is at 38% which includes over 900 acres of forests that are outside the city limits. Tree canopy is commonly used by cities to describe what happens within a city. So to be accurate and not misleading, the percentage should be lowered to reflect only the tree canopy within our city limits where the environmental benefits accrue.

In reviewing the tree regulations update, the city has been overly permissive in allowing significant and landmark trees to be removed over the past five years. It would be valuable to look at the same information going back ten years to 2010. With those statistics before us, the city should commit to a "canopy floor" that we will not go below.

I am troubled that throughout the plan, the focus is on planting new trees. **There appears to be an over assumption that the city can plant its way out of canopy loss in order to meet its canopy goal. This is not supported by science and research.** There isn't anything in the plan that speaks to retention and preservation. Retention of trees is an important part of meeting a canopy goal.

Though the first of the plans three goals is "no net loss of significant trees," there is no mention of how that will be achieved in the first ten years of implementation of the plan. And under the matrix on Strategy Data, there is no accounting of number of trees removed, number of trees retained in addition to the number of new plantings. I also did not see the plans for monitoring the maintenance, assessing success or mortality of plantings on public property.

Though tree planning efforts are worthwhile, research indicates that newly planted trees must reach a certain size before they contribute any benefits. Within the context of an existing urban forest, the odds are not good that a young tree will or can replace the environmental benefits of a mature tree.

If you believe as I do that trees are important for aesthetics, clean water, clean air and CO2 emissions reductions, it seems to me that preserving and protecting existing trees is the best method of maximizing tree benefits especially in our urban centers where the population per acre is extremely dense. Wouldn't our time, effort, and resources be better spent on preserving more of the mature trees we already have?

I know that this is complex and involves hard decisions, however that doesn't mean we shouldn't try.