

To: City of Gresham Planning Commission
From: Mary Phillips, Senior Planner
Gabby Sinagra, Planner II
Memo Date: December 2, 2024
Meeting Date: December 9, 2024
Re: Tree Code Project Work Session

Meeting Purpose

This work session will include an update from staff on the Tree Code Project's Phase 2 community goals outreach and the feedback received as well as a review of the project's next steps. Staff will request feedback from the Planning Commission on the community goals as well as what priorities the Commission may have for developing project alternatives as we move into Phase 3: Alternatives.

Project Background

The tree code was last changed in September of 2020, when Council voted to adopt amendments to tree regulations in the Development Code. These amendments reformatted the tree regulations; however, they did not update the tree policies and related content. Concerns have arisen from residents, staff, and developers regarding the complexity of tree processes, enforcement challenges, and the appropriateness and effectiveness of the standards. This project is an opportunity to look holistically at the City's tree management priorities and policies, and work with the community to update them.

Tree Code Project Overview

The Tree Code Project team is working with the community to update Gresham's tree goals, policies, procedures, and regulations to reflect community goals, best practices in urban forestry and green infrastructure, climate resilience and climate justice, community vibrancy, and the guiding principles of the 2022-2025 Gresham Strategic Plan. The project is part of the Community Vibrancy action items (CV-D1) on the year three action plan to implement the goals of the 2022-2025 Gresham Strategic Plan. It includes high levels of community engagement and collaboration and will result in updates to Volumes 1-3 of the Community Development Plan, as well as updated tree lists and the creation of a city tree guidebook. The project was initiated by the City Council on July 18, 2023, and it is anticipated to run through late summer of 2025, with additional implementation work after the code updates are adopted.

Project Purpose

Gresham has a thriving and equitably distributed tree canopy that supports climate resiliency and healthy living.

Project Guiding Principles:

- *Collaborate* with external partners and community members to determine outreach/engagement strategies and set policy priorities/project outcome goals.
- *Involve* partners and community members in drafting of policy language to ensure policies match goals and limit unintended consequences of new policy.
- *Integrate* a climate (and climate justice) lens into the project process and policies.
- *Apply* an equity lens to the project process and policies to support early and intentional attention to eliminating inequities and advancing fair treatment.

Project Outline

The following table outlines the general components for each project phase:

Phase 1: Project Outline and Background Analysis	Phase 2: Goal Setting	Phase 3: Alternatives	Phase 4: Policy Development	Phase 5: Adoption	Phase 6: Implementation
<i>Fall 2023 – Winter 2024</i>	<i>Spring/Summer 2024</i>	<i>Fall 2024/Winter 2025</i>	<i>Estimated Spring 2025</i>	<i>Targeted Summer 2025</i>	<i>Estimated Summer 2025 +</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline project • Background Analysis • Peer Review • Equity Lens Tool • Public Involvement Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visioning • Draft Outcome Goals • Finalize goals and scope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Alternatives • Alternatives Analysis • Preferred Alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Development • Review Draft Policies • Refine Draft Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Hearings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy enactment • Ongoing implementation

Phase 2 Public Involvement Overview

Phase 2 of the Tree Code project included high levels of community engagement and collaboration. Staff attended numerous community events, hosted a community survey online, and held two culturally specific community work sessions.

Event	Location	Date
Community Goals and Priorities Survey	Project Webpage	7/5 - 9/30
Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations	Virtual	6/11
Movies in the Park	Arts Plaza Pat Pfeifer Red Sunset	7/12 8/9 8/16
Arts Festival	Downtown Gresham	7/20
Rockwood Block Party	Rockwood	7/27
Downtown Farmer’s Market	Downtown Gresham	8/4
Rock the Block (Block Party & Fair)	Rockwood	8/23 & 8/24
Rockwood Community Market	Rockwood	9/15
Cross-Cultural Community Work Session	Rockwood	10/15
Cross-Cultural Community Work Session	Rockwood	11/12

Community Goals Feedback Overview

The community outreach participants shared that trees in our city are very important to the community, and that they would like our updated tree policies to:

- Protect mature trees and groves of trees;
- Support a high level of tree coverage;
- Promote places with a variety of tree sizes and building sizes;

- Reduce urban heat;
- Provide wildlife habitat;
- Improve air quality; and
- Support healthy living.

As we move into Phase 3: Alternatives, the project team will look at how to craft policies to support these community goals.

Next Steps

- *Neighborhood Coalition*: Staff will be attending the December 10th meeting of the Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations to review project progress and community goals and to discuss the development of project alternatives.
- *Phase 3 Alternatives*: The project consultant will work with staff to develop and analyze alternative approaches to the tree policy updates.
- *Jan. 27, 2025, Urban Forestry Subcommittee Work Session*: Project alternatives work session with staff and the project consultant.
- *Jan. 27, 2025, Planning Commission Work Session*: Project alternatives work session with staff and the project consultant.
- *Feb. 2025 City Council*: Project alternatives work session with staff and the project consultant.
- *For more information*: Visit the project page at: <https://engagegresham.org/gresham-tree-code>.