

CITY OF EDMONDS, WA TREE CODE AMENDMENT PROJECT PUBLIC MEETING #2 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

OVERVIEW

Edmonds' Tree Code was formally adopted in 2021, and City staff is now in the process of gathering public input on potential code updates with the following objectives:

1. Clarify the current tree code related to development (minor amendments)
2. Consider regulations on private property tree removals

As a part of the Tree Code Amendment Project's Community Engagement Strategy, a second public meeting was held for the community to learn about the project and to voice their thoughts and opinions about potential changes to the tree code. The meeting was advertised using an event page and project page on the City's website, social media posts on May 5 and May 15, and a [press release on May 13](#). This meeting was organized in a hybrid format so that attendees could join virtually via Zoom, or in person at the Edmonds City Hall's Brackett room. The meeting results analysis and summary are included in this document as a progress report.

Tree Code Amendment Community Conversation

Date: May 15, 2023
Time: 6:00 – 7:30pm
Location: Edmonds City Hall, 3rd Floor, Brackett Room,
121 5th Ave. N., Edmonds, WA 98020
Virtual Option: Zoom link provided on City's event page
Zoom recording available at request
Attendees: ~28 (~20 in person and 8 virtual)

Summary and Assessment Contents

Framework for Organizing Public Feedback
Outreach Prior to the Meeting
Feedback Gathered at the Meeting

FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZING PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Comments received during Public Meeting #2 were categorized into one of five categories (listed below with associated activities). These categories and activities are part of the framework utilized in the Tree Ordinance Checklist, which was created for the [Municipal Tree Care and Management in the United States: A 2014 Urban & Community Forestry Census of Tree Activities](#). This framework provides a starting point to assess and organize the comments received and prepares the feedback to be integrated into potential code recommendations.

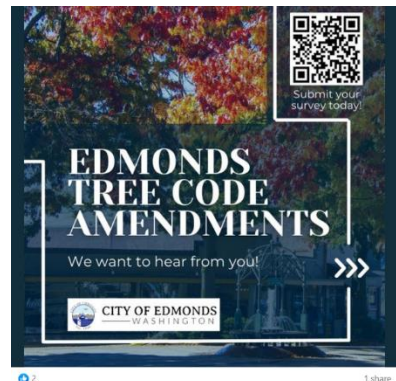
Tree Ordinance Checklist Framework

- **Credential**
 - o Requires certified arborist for paid private tree work
 - o Requires certified arborist for public tree work
 - o Requires licensing of private tree care firms
 - o Defines official authority for public tree management
- **Management/Maintenance**
 - o Requires annual community tree work plans
 - o Identifies formula for determining monetary tree value
 - o Requires regular public tree maintenance
 - o Requires particular types of maintenance (e.g. pruning)
 - o Establishes permit system for work on public trees
 - o Establishes provisions for penalties for non-compliance
 - o Restricts burning of solid wood waste
 - o Establishes an insect/disease control strategy
 - o Defines tree maintenance requirements on public property
 - o Prohibits tree topping
 - o Regulates abatement of hazardous or public nuisance trees
 - o Regulates removal of dead or diseased trees
- **Planting**
 - o Regulates tree species which may or may not be planted on private property (approved tree list)
 - o Requires tree planting around reconstructed parking lots
 - o Requires replacement of removed publicly owned trees
 - o Requires tree planting around new parking lots
 - o Requires tree planting in new developments
 - o Regulates tree species which may or may not be planted on public property (approved tree list)
- **Preservation**
 - o Restricts tree cutting on private property
 - o Identifies preservation of heritage or significant trees
 - o Requires preservation of trees during development
- **Other**
 - o Citywide canopy cover goals and targets
 - o Public education/engagement regarding codes
 - o Other

OUTREACH PRIOR TO THE MEETING

In preparation of the event, multiple engagement strategies were utilized for reaching community members and informing them of the event. All of the methods and strategies used align with the project’s overarching Tree Code Amendment Community Engagement Strategy.

Engagement Strategies	Engagement Impact (# of opens, views, likes, comments, shares, etc.)
City Website - Project Page	unknown
City Website - Event Page	unknown
Press Release – May	3 comments, unknown views
Facebook post – May	2 likes, unknown views
Facebook post – May	0 likes, unknown views
Total	29



Press Release in My Edmonds News

The City published a press release in My Edmonds News on May 5, 2023. The press release and comments on the press release are included below. The comments and discussion posted in response to the press release were factored into the planning of the event as well as the public survey.

Press Release:

[Announcing Second Tree Code Updates Community Conversation](#)

Posted: May 5, 2023

(Edmonds - WA) The City of Edmonds is considering updates to the tree code (ECDC 23.10). This next phase of code updates is to consider limiting tree removal on private property and to make minor changes to the existing code, which was adopted in 2021 to retain and plant trees with development. The public is invited to join our second public info session on May 15th to share ideas and hear more ways to get involved. To better understand public sentiment on trees and tree codes, a public survey is available in English, Spanish, Korean and Chinese at the links below.



Tree Code Amendment Second Community Conversation

When: Monday, May 15, 2023, 6:00-7:30pm

Where: In-person in the Brackett Room, 3rd Floor at City Hall located at 121 5th Ave N, Edmonds WA 98020

Virtual Option: Zoom webinar platform at the following link:

[https://edmondswa-](https://edmondswa.gov.zoom.us/j/81229176949?pwd=TVNIWU1zdUlpbHpXeldtaUlsUktTZz09)

[gov.zoom.us/j/81229176949?pwd=TVNIWU1zdUlpbHpXeldtaUlsUktTZz09](https://edmondswa.gov.zoom.us/j/81229176949?pwd=TVNIWU1zdUlpbHpXeldtaUlsUktTZz09)

Passcode: 400781, Webinar ID: 812 2917 6949 Or call in to the meeting at (253) 215-8782

A public survey is available through May 19th:

<https://forms.gle/PkS8zQ1xUbsbwM6LA>

- (Korean) Edmonds 의 수목 조례 개정 프로젝트: Edmonds의 나무에 대한 간단한 설문 조사에 참여해 주십시오. 감사합니다!
- (Chinese) 《埃德蒙兹市树木守则》修订项目: 请参加这个关于埃德蒙兹树木的简短调查。谢谢!
- (Spanish) Proyecto de Enmienda al Código del Árbol de Edmonds: Responda esta breve encuesta sobre árboles en Edmonds. ¡Gracias!

For more information, email deb.powers@edmondswa.gov or visit the project website at <https://www.edmondswa.gov/treecodeupdates>.

Press Release Comments

Haydee Loucel

May 9, 2023 at 9:48 am

As an Edmonds resident, I would like to see more trees planted by the builders when they tear down homes to build more apartments and also underground parking for the residents. That should be a requirement for the builders!

Clinton Wright

May 9, 2023 at 11:44 am

Fear not Haydee, the other night I saw a TV ad by the Master Builders Association that promises to plant two trees to replace one whenever they demolish a single family home to build a duplex on what used to be single family homes only zoned property (which is now illegal unless you are rich and live in Woodway, Broadmore or Innis Arden). Thus they are providing more housing and saving the planet as well; being the benevolent folks they are. Last night I saw Governor Inslee state that the new anti single family home laws will make up for past discrimination against minority groups and help solve the homelessness crisis. Well, great to know, there's no more problems to be dealt with regarding trees and housing. I'll sleep better tonight.

Clinton Wright

May 14, 2023 at 10:16 am

I won't be attending the tree conversation because I will be attending Diane Buckshnis' Town Hall meeting with local residents at the Edmonds Lutheran Church on 84th. Ave. which is happening at the same time. Those residents are quite

concerned about a huge apartment planned that will abut their single family neighborhood and the possible purchase of a park property in the area that may not be appropriate to their needs and a waste of valuable Edmonds' tax money. These two meetings actually relate and overlap a bit since the state has now taken over our zoning rights regarding forms of housing. My take is that, based on the new laws, Edmonds won't have much to say about whether owners can or can't remove trees and as I noted in comment above the "propaganda" is that the new laws will promote the installation of more trees. Stay tuned.

FEEDBACK GATHERED AT THE MEETING

Attendees were provided multiple opportunities to provide input during this hybrid meeting. The following sections analyze the feedback received during live polling, breakout groups, and Zoom chat. When possible, this feedback has been categorized using the [Tree Ordinance Checklist Framework](#) to prepare for potential tree code recommendations.

Breakout Groups

In this hybrid meeting format, breakout groups were held both in person and virtually. Code-related comments from all breakout rooms were organized and categorized in the summary charts below, followed by the full transcripts of the breakout group notes with images of the notes.

Tree Removal, No Development	
Question 1: Does the City have a role in limiting property owner tree removals?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category
If the tree is a hazard, you should be able to cut it down	Preservation
Require prop owner to hire an arborist, but not get a permit	Credential
Over-the-counter removal process	Management
Establish tracking system to know how many trees are removed vs planted	Management
Specify types of trees which are better for mitigation (i.e. deciduous vs conifer)	Planting
There should be notification of tree removal permits to surrounding neighbors	Management

Tree Removal, No Development	
Question 2: What's the one thing you'd change about the current code related to private property tree removals?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category
Allow property owners to maintain viewsheds	Maintenance
Establish different regs for "The Bowl" (e.g. overlay district)	Management
Clarify critical areas regs	Preservation
Include liabilities when landslides occur after tree removals.	Management

Require public notice to surrounding property owners	Management
Require Geotech assessment.	Management
Establish critical area public education program	Other
Invasives should not be allowed – push for natives	Maintenance
Climate adaptation (doug firs not adaptive)	Maintenance
Switch from regulating trees to regulating property	Management
Protection for larger trees 30” DBH	Preservation
Enforcement needs improvement	Management
Require replanting in commercial development (Clarify in CRA)	Planting
Surface H2O fear – decreased fee structure for tree retention. (Tax incentives)	Preservation
Require the city to notice that they are doing removal and why	Management
Educate the public on the importance of preserving trees because they are multi-generational entities	Other
Responsibility needs to be on an arborist or someone for knowing the proper code and way to take the trees down. Some kind of mechanism knowing the proper removal steps and ensuring they are followed	Credential

Tree Removal, No Development Question 3: Should anyone be required to plant replacement trees when trees are removed on private property?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category
City shouldn't say yes/no on removal, but should have a say in the replant requirement	Planting
Mitigation should be same for same species type (i.e. deciduous : deciduous and evergreen : evergreen)	Planting
Provide notification of trees removed (not a permit – no cost – no ability for the City to say “no”)	Management
Replacement should consider the size of the tree being removed in order to get the same ecological benefits	Planting
With Edmonds turning over like hotcakes, trees are cut without much consideration with consideration to the overall impact they have on the homeowner and other residents. Trees are not respected for their benefits over time, they are multi-generational.	Preservation
Concerned that the developers/private property owners are approved to cut down huge swaths of 100 yo forests and then are able to “replant” which does not support the MAJOR biodiversity is lost	Preservation
Recommendation: If there is a clear code and neighbors know what it is...they can help to enforce	Other

Tree Removal, With Development Question 1: Does the City have a role in requiring tree retention with development? Replanting? Assessing fees in lieu?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category
Fees should be used for tree planting	Planting
Retention should be #1 focus	Preservation
Dislike fees in lieu – no cap on amount	Management
Provide a basic framework but let developers be the experts on site design	Credential
Planting requirements, no penalties	Planting
Tree diversity	Planting
Incentives to retain trees (esp drainage)	Preservation
Replanting – penalties	Planting
Incentives over penalties (e.g. “developers must use 10% for network in Seattle” 10% tree limitation	Preservation
Carrots over sticks – development incentives	Preservation
Gather data on replacement, planting, preservation, etc. for the urban forest	Management
Fees should be much higher than they are now	Management
The diameter classes do not capture the whole ecosystem cost, so either lowering the DBH threshold or increasing the costs with these because the other factors involved	Preservation
would prefer to make it more difficult to cut down old growth or second growth rather than the payout.	Preservation

Tree Removal, With Development Question 2: What’s the one thing you’d change about the current tree code related to development?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category
Clarify it.	Other
Increase tree planting in commercial properties	Planting
Weak/confusing and needs revision	Other
Ensure equity in fees so replacement are throughout Edmonds	Planting
Overly complicated	Other

Tree Removal, With Development Question 3: Should certain trees (landmark, trees in critical areas, etc.) have a higher degree of protection on development sites?	
Comment	Ordinance Checklist Category

Property of concern - on Shell Creek by Theatre – City owns property on other side of the creek, but this property is up for development (asking for variance, which we don't think they'll get). How is this possible?	Preservation
Don't want any development in certain types of critical areas.	Preservation
Landmark trees = Cultural significance to community (e.g. Monkey puzzle tree)	Preservation
Prefer incentives as opposed to regulations	Preservation
Use fees/fund for land acquisition	Management
Area of concern – Perraville development concerns	Preservation
Consider other development styles that preserve more land	Preservation
Natives and trees in critical areas	Preservation
Get away from single tree protection, but a whole ecosystem protection and do a pocket or a larger landmass protection for biodiversity. Change the name from tree code to forest code	Preservation

Breakout Groups – Fully Transcribed Comments

Two breakout groups met in person and one breakout group met virtually via Zoom. Typed transcripts of the flip chart notes are included below.

Tree Removal, No Development

Breakout Group 1 (in-person)

1. Does the City have a role in limiting property owner tree removals?

- No
- Not a fan of limitations on #/year
- No bureaucracy
- City has a role, but it needs to be defined
- If the tree is a hazard, you should be able to cut it down
- Do we need to hire an arborist?
 - Yes, but not necessarily a permit
- Over-the-counter removal – proposed by Planning Board
- Aren't people planting more than removing?
 - We don't know because there's no tracking system
- Specify types of trees which are better for mitigation (i.e. deciduous vs conifer)
 - There should be notification of tree removal permits to surrounding neighbors

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current code related to private property tree removals?

- Maintain viewsheds
 - This is muddy/unclear in the current code
 - City should not regulate others' views
- Consider different regs for "The Bowl"
 - Currently these regs are per geography

- Clarify and make consistent the regs in critical areas
- Include liabilities when landslides occur after tree removals. Require public notice to surrounding property owners
 - Require Geotech assessment
- Establish critical area public education program

3. Should anyone be required to plant replacement trees when trees are removed on private property?

- Yes. City shouldn't say yes/no on removal, but should have a say in the replant requirement.
- Mitigation should be deciduous : deciduous and evergreen : evergreen
- Provide notification of trees removed (not a permit – no cost – no ability for the City to say “no”)

Breakout Group 2 (in-person)

1. Does the City have a role in limiting property owner tree removals?

- Yes – standard practice in municipalities - depends on capacity
- Yes – public good
- Yes – protect adjacent property owners
- Yes – critical areas
- No – standard properties
 - (can't read the rest of this page of notes, due to low picture quality)

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current code related to private property tree removals?

- Invasives should not be allowed – push for natives
- Climate adaptation (doug firs not adaptive)
 - Switch from regulating trees to regulating property
- Protection for larger trees 30” DBH
- Enforcement needs improvement
- Required replanting in commercial development
- Clarity in CRA
- Surface H2O fear – decreased fee structure for tree retention.
 - Tax incentives

3. Should anyone be required to plant replacement trees when trees are removed on private property?

- No – canopy is maintained or a
- No – no impact to small vs danger, not equivalent. Wrong tree, wrong place. Option to replant in public property (limitations)
- Yes/no – not in non-CRA
- Yes in CRA – not arborvitae, must be equivalent
- Yes/no – it depends if you don't want to do what you have to do
- No – enforcement is not feasible, we're not an “enforcement city”

Breakout Group 3 (virtual)

1. Does the City have a role in limiting property owner tree removals?

- *Kelsea*- the city does-there is planning, from a biodiversity perspective they hope the city can link all that up and make a larger plan/ if the residents have remove all trees this would be a large loss since there is no central “manager”
- *Christian*- Yea, what data do we have on all this? My guess is that most trees are on private property. We should be clear why we have to have a role. The city does have a role in this since they have a responsibility to maintain the overall canopy.
- *Christian*- question on whether the city has authority on the view covenant and having restrictions on anything over 6 ft tall and how these properties are being managed or exempt from any other ordinances-concern on how they are grandfathered out of some of the restrictions

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current code related to private property tree removals?

- *Christian*- at least a minimum on letting know the city is doing removal and why
- *Kelsea*-echo the same and make it more strict and give a reason to why they are removing the tree-because there is a solid reason not just because it drops leaves on the lawn. Make people think about the tree being removed from a forest and know the impact. Review process to meet certain perimeters
- *Lu*- educate the public on the importance of trees and keeping them because they are multi-generational entities and it is important to preserve them when possible. Is this possible to make people aware of this as a tree board?
- *Kelsea*- responsibility needs to be on an arborist or someone for knowing the proper code and way to take the trees down. Some kind of mechanism knowing the proper removal steps and ensuring they are followed.

3. Should anyone be required to plant replacement trees when trees are removed on private property?

- *Christian*- is there replacement on the same property or can it be somewhere?
 - *Chris*-i think this is left open for any input around either one of these scenarios
 - *Chrisitan*-should have something to do with the size of the tree being removed in order to get the same ecological benefits.

- 4257715033: With Edmonds turning over like hotcakes, trees are cut without much consideration with consideration to the overall impact they have on the homeowner and other residents. Trees are not respected for their benefits over time, they are multi-generational. Squares of ownership is a limitation and if each do removals we will lose the diversity. Need to protect the resource, talked about the rainforest and how important trees are to everything.
- Sue von Derwies: (IN CHAT) I am confused. I live in a condo in the Edmonds bowl. In 2019, 2020 we were required by the city of Edmonds to replace 9 dying cedars. Why are the rules different for private owners?
 - Follow up by participant over speaker-How would we know if the trees are ever replaced?
 - Deb-Condos and multi-family residents have different rules based on the zoning and landscaping requirements in that zone. That's because a required number of trees are related to buffers or number of parking spaces, or other requirements that don't apply to single family properties.
- Kelsea Ballantyne: (IN CHAT): Overall, I am also concerned that the developers/private property owners are be approved to cut down huge swaths of 100 yo forests and then are able to "replant" which does not support the MAJOR biodiversity is lost
- Kelsea Ballantyne: (IN CHAT): Recommendation: If there is a clear code and neighbors know what it is...they can help to enforce

Tree Removal, With Development

Breakout Group 1 (in-person)

1. Does the City have a role in requiring tree retention with development?

Replanting? Assessing fees in lieu?

- Fees should be used for tree planting
- Yes
- Retention should be #1 focus
- Dislike fees in lieu – no cap on amount
- Provide a basic framework but let developers be the experts on site design

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current tree code related to development?

- Clarify it.

3. Should certain trees (landmark, trees in critical areas, etc.) have a higher degree of protection on development sites?

- Property of concern - on Shell Creek by Theatre – City owns property on other side of the creek, but this property is up for development (asking for variance, which we don't think they'll get). How is this possible?

- Don't want any development in certain types of critical areas.
- Landmark
 - Cultural significance to community
 - Monkey puzzle tree
- Prefer incentives as opposed to regulations
- Use fees/fund for land acquisition
- Area of concern – Perrinville development concerns
- Consider other development style that preserve more land

Breakout Group 2 (in-person)

1. Does the City have a role in requiring tree retention with development?

Replanting? Assessing fees in lieu?

- Planting requirements, no penalties
 - Tree diversity
 - Incentives to retain trees (esp drainage)
 - Replanting – penalties
- Incentives over penalties (e.g. “developers must use 10% for network in Seattle” 10% tree limitation)
- Carrots over sticks – development incentives

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current tree code related to development?

- Increase tree planting in commercial properties
- Weak/confusing and needs revision
- Ensure equity in fees so replacement are throughout Edmonds
- Overly complicated

3. Should certain trees (landmark, trees in critical areas, etc.) have a higher degree of protection on development sites?

- Natives and trees in critical areas

Breakout Group 3 (virtual)

1. Does the City have a role in requiring tree retention with development?

Replanting? Assessing fees in lieu?

- *Kelsea*- Yes, they have zoning for the community, so making sure there is retention and replanting or fees is important because this allows us to have the data for the urban forest care and educates the community on this, as well as we replant and retain the trees. Even more important because this affects exciting forest and wetlands so it impacts the loss of biodiversity. Balancing the wildlife and the developers' needs and what do we value out of these two.
- *Kelsea*- the fees should be much higher than they are now, because development companies have a lot of money and actually know the

capital(cost of the trees) what it is worth, so the value needs to be comparable to these losses and may have a developer think twice on removal of the entire area.

- *Kelsea*- the diameter classes do not capture the whole ecosystem cost, so either lowering the DBH threshold or increasing the costs with these because the other factors involved
- *Kelsea*- would prefer to make it more difficult to cut down old growth or second growth rather than the payout.

2. What's the one thing you'd change about the current tree code related to development?

- **HAD TO SKIP FOR TIME DEB ASKED US TO FOCUS ON 3**

3. Should certain trees (landmark, trees in critical areas, etc.) have a higher degree of protection on development sites?

(2 ATTENDEES STAYED ON FOR THIS)

- *Sue*- what is the definition of landmark?
 - *Chris*-depends by the city, generally is a historical or significant tree by the city specific definition, but a tree of importance and worth keeping.
 - *Sue*-Not aware of Edmonds having this type of designation, but knows Seattle does.
- *Kelsea*- Yes but get away from the one two trees but a whole ecosystem protection and do a pocket or a larger landmass protection would be best rather than the 1 tree protection. It is the city's responsibility to protect the tree and the biodiversity of the ecosystem and protect that rather than the definition of a single tree or DBH that makes it special. Change the name from tree code to forest code to get away from the single stem protection.

Public Comments Organized by Category

Participants provided input during virtual and in person breakout sessions, and throughout the event in the Zoom chat feature. These comments were organized using the [Tree Ordinance Category Framework](#), which will be used throughout all public engagement and for final tree code amendment recommendations.

Tree Ordinance Checklist Category	#	%
Credential	3	5%
Maintenance	3	5%
Management	15	26%
Other	6	10%
Planting	11	19%
Preservation	20	34%

