Tree Code Update Project

Coalition of Gresham Neighborhood Associations
March 11, 2025

Mary Phillips, Senior Planner
Gabby Sinagra, Planner 2

CITY OF GRESHAM

Tonight's Agenda

1 **Project Update**

- Project Overview and Progress
- Background Refresher
  - Existing Conditions
  - Community Goals

2 **Policy Framework**

- Key Policy Approaches
- Discussion

Project Overview

Project Vision

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

Project Scope

- Include high levels of community engagement.

- Update City's tree goals, policies, procedures, & regulations.

- Update to Volumes 1-3 of Community Development Plan.

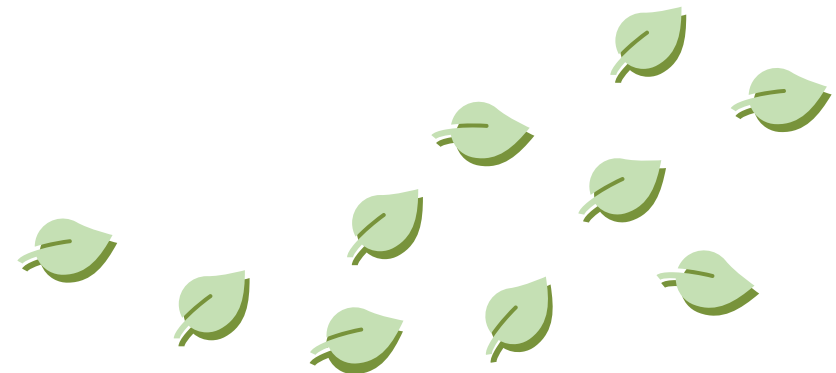- Updated tree lists and creation of City Tree Guidebook(consultant).

Project Overview

Phase 1: Project Outline and Background Analysis	Phase 2: Goal Setting	Phase 3: Alternatives	Phase 4: **Policy Development**	Phase 5: Adoption	Phase 6: Implementation
Fall 2023–Winter 2024	*Spring/Summer 2024*	*Winter/Spring 2025*	*Winter/Spring 2025*	*~Late Summer 2025*	*~Late Summer 2025 +*
• Outline project • Background Analysis • Peer Review • Equity Lens Tool • Plan for Public Involvement	• Visioning • Community Outreach • Draft Outcome Goals • Finalize goals and scope	• Develop Alternatives • Alternatives Analysis • Preferred Alternative	• Policy Development • Review Draft Policies • Refine Draft Policies	• Public Hearings	• Policy enactment • Ongoing implementation

Neighborhood Coalition Feedback Summary

- Tree guidebook should prioritize education
- Plant trees where they aren't
- Right tree right place
- Canopy target goal is needed in the City
- Prioritize preservation of mature trees/stands/groves and their benefits
- Address storm and heat impacts
- Mitigation should consider equivalent environmental benefits
- Consider wildfire mitigation
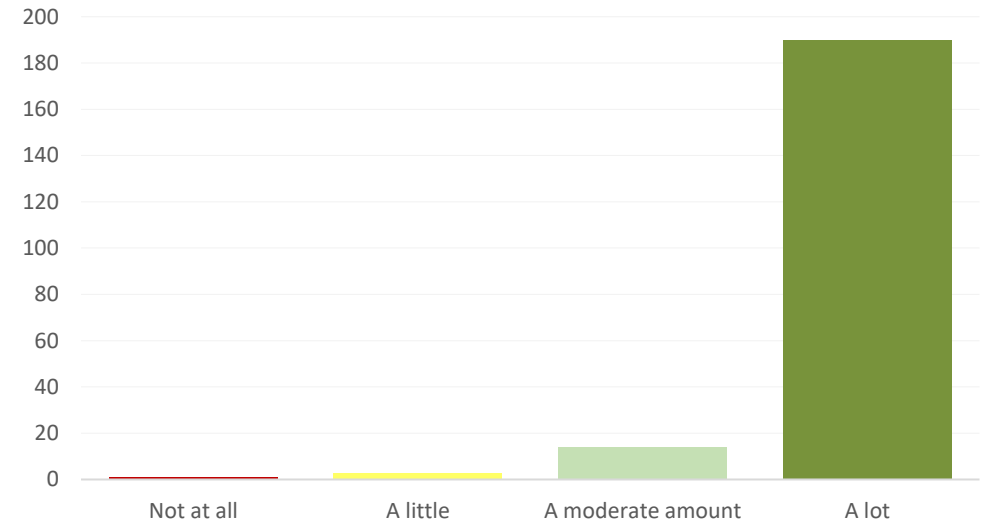- Stricter enforcement is needed for tree removal
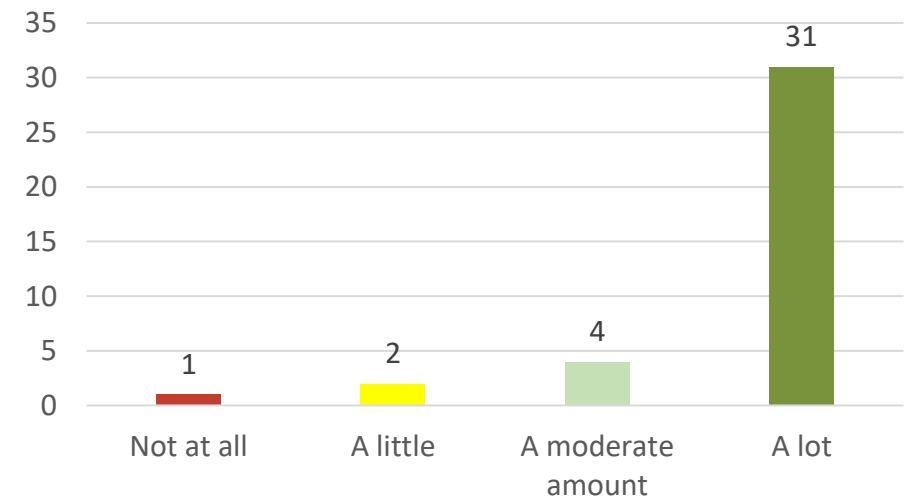
The Community Clearly Values Having Trees.

A lot.

How much do you value having trees in our city?

Survey Results:

| | Not at all | A little | A moderate amount | A lot |

Work Session Feedback:

| Not at all | A little | A moderate amount | A lot |
| 1 | 2 | 4 | 31 |

The Community Wants:

- Protection of mature trees and mature tree groves

- Regulations that promote a variety of both building size and tree size

- Plentiful or dense tree coverage throughout the City

Tree Policies Should:

- **Reduce urban heat**

- **Improve air quality**

- **Support healthy living**

- **Provide habitat for wildlife**

- **Enhance community vibrancy**

Community Priorities Feedback Summary

Most Common Tree Concerns:

- **Lack of clarity on who is responsible for tree care or planting**

- **Tree and infrastructure conflicts (damage to sidewalks, blocked signs, etc.)**

- **Safety hazards (dropped limbs in storms, street signals, etc.)**

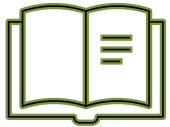- **Inappropriate tree pruning, maintenance, or removal**

Policy Alternatives and Framework

Alternatives: Comp Plan

City Tree Guidebook
- Supporting document to regulations
- Details on planting, preservation, maintenance, etc.

Volume 1: Community Development Plan Findings
- Update findings to incorporate community feedback and recent project work
- Consolidate existing information

Volume 2: Community Development Policies
- Update urban forest goals, policies, and action measures
- Reorganization to reflect key policy topics

Volume 3: Development Code
- Based on policy framework

Policy Framework

Canopy Policy
- Citywide canopy goal
- Subareas goal

Retention Policy
- Challenging but achievable preservation standard
- Prioritize important individual tree retention

Replacement & Mitigation Policy
- Require medium replacement rates
- Replacement based on canopy coverage

Enforcement Policy
- Tiered enforcement

Policy Framework : Canopy

Policy Purpose
- Goal for citywide canopy
- Goals for subareas
- Outcomes for regulations
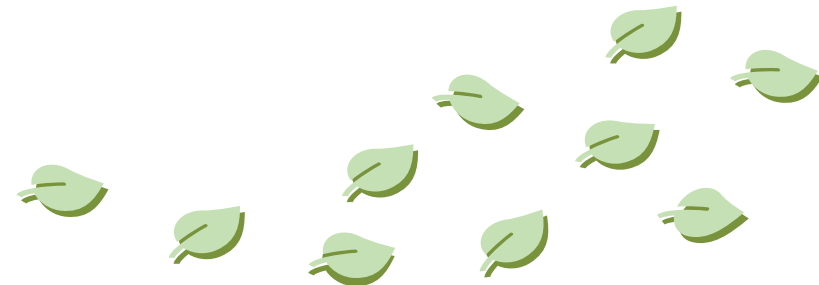
Related Community Feedback
- "Plentiful" or "dense" tree coverage
- Higher coverage in residential neighborhoods

Policy Considerations
- 30% canopy coverage = health benefits
- 40% canopy coverage = heat benefits

Policy Approach
- Long-term targets
- Equitable distribution
- Context sensitive

Policy Framework : Tree Retention

Policy Purpose

- Establish preservation minimums
- Maintain existing canopy
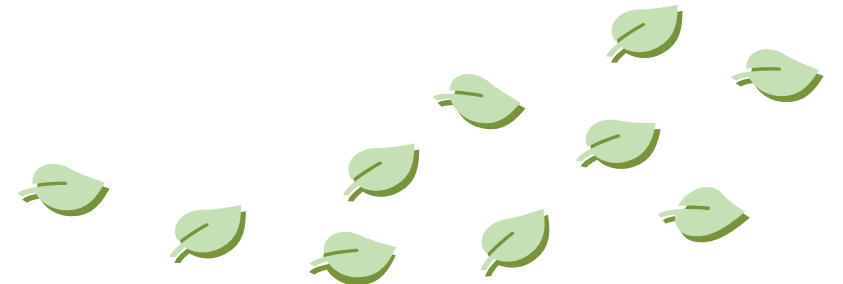
Related Community Feedback

- 97% of community respondents report valuing trees "a lot"
- Community wants regulations that protect mature trees and groves of trees

Policy Considerations

- Targets are faster met by existing trees growing
- Scaled mitigation approach can parallel scaled retention approach

Policy Approach

- Challenging but achievable
- Will apply to groves of trees and healthy individual trees
- Requirements in addition to future tree canopy goals

Policy Framework : Tree Replacement & Mitigation

Policy Purpose

- Helps determine what and how much needs to be replanted, planting alternatives, and other mitigation measures
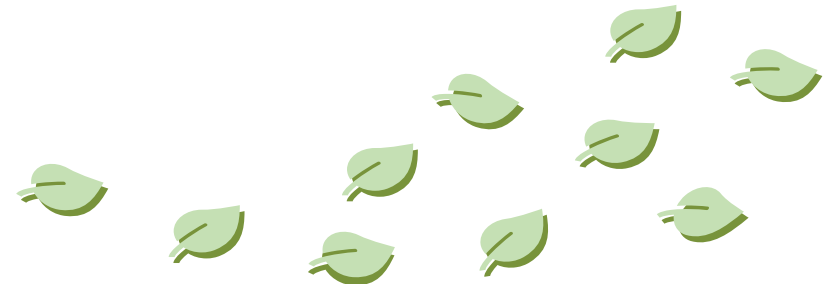
Related Community Feedback

- 80% of survey respondents and 74% of workshop participants prefer "plentiful" or "dense' tree coverage

Policy Considerations

- Reduces the risk of overplanting
- Ensures certain trees with specific functions are replaced
- Allows flexibility in planting to meet canopy goals

Policy Approach

- Medium replacement rates for priority trees

- Replacement based on canopy coverage

- Replacement at deficient site

Policy Framework : Enforcement

Policy Purpose
- Ensures compliance with tree regulations
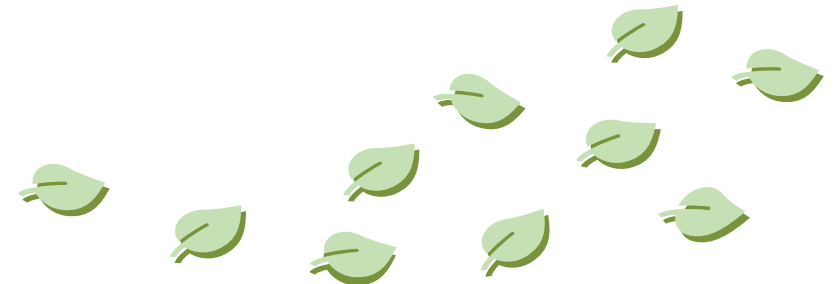
Related Community Feedback
- Community acknowledges regulations are important to meet tree goals
- Top 3 concerns community has with trees are growing trees and infrastructure, lack of clarity on who is responsible for maintaining trees, and inappropriate pruning, maintenance, or removal

Policy Considerations
- Impactful enough to reduce violations without causing undue hardship

Policy Approach
- Tiered enforcement
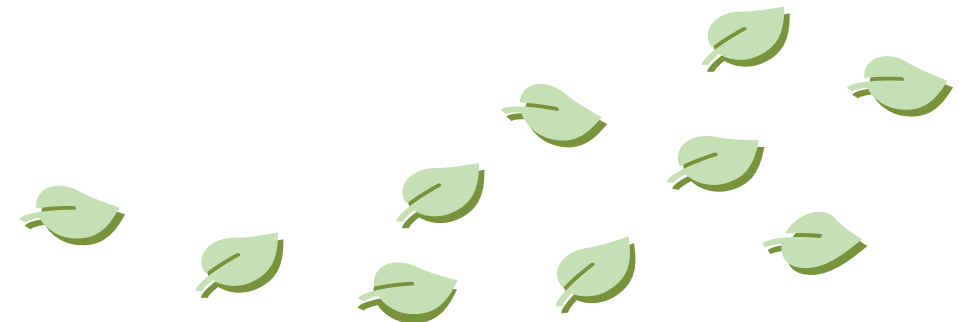- Less impacts on vulnerable populations

Discussion

Discussion Questions

- Does the Coalition have questions on the policy framework?

- Does the approach accurately reflect the community's goals?

- Are there neighborhood specific contexts/priorities that staff should be aware of as we move into policy development?

- Are there other topics the Coalition wants the project team to consider during policy development?

Thank You!

https://engagegresham.org/gresham-tree-code.