

Portland Planning Commission

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August 27, 2024

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Members of Portland City

Council Portland City Hall

1221 SW Fourth Ave

Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mayor Wheeler and City Commissioners:

At its August 13, 2024, meeting, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to approve and recommended that City Council adopt the proposed amendment to the Tree Code (Title 11), as recommended by staff. The proposed amendment removes the December 31, 2024, sunset clause in PCC 11.50.040.C. The effect of the proposed amendment would be to make permanent the current Title 11 tree preservation and mitigation requirements that apply to development on private property. These provisions require preservation of trees larger than 20 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) or inch-for-inch mitigation payments into the City's Tree Planting and Preservation Fund. The provision includes broad exemptions including for affordable housing projects.

On July 23, 2024, the Planning Commission (PC) held a joint public hearing with the Urban Forestry Commission on a proposed amendment to Title 11, Trees, Tree Preservation in Development Situations (PCC 11.50.040). Planning Commission is supportive of PP&R Urban Forestry's current efforts to update the City's Urban Forest Plan and approach to update Title 11 in the future when it can be informed by the updated Urban Forest Plan.



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Comments

- 1. Testimony.** More than 60 oral and written comments were submitted in support of current Title 11 tree preservation requirements; only one testifier opposed. Most comments emphasized the importance of large trees in mitigating the public health impacts of climate change and supporting healthy communities.
- 2. Benefits to Public and Environmental Health.** Current Title 11 tree preservation requirements have been effective in retaining large trees during development with minimal documented impacts on the production of new housing units. With Portland experiencing its first documented tree canopy decline in several decades, preserving existing large trees and the benefits they provide is essential to reversing this trend. This is especially relevant for low-income communities which experience lower tree canopy, poorer air quality, and higher peak summer temperatures.
- 3. Future Title 11 Amendments.** Public testimony expressed significant support for current efforts by PP&R Urban Forestry to update the Portland Urban Forest Plan (PUFP) and a subsequent Title 11 amendment project upon completion of the plan. This work presents an opportunity to align the City's Tree Code with the updated vision, goals, and canopy targets of the new PUFP. The planned future project to amend Title 11 will also help ensure Title 11 supports community expectations for a healthy, growing, and equitably distributed urban tree canopy along with increased residential housing production.

Sincerely,



Mary-Rain O'Meara
Chair

