

From: Rick Weber [mailto:rweber37@comcast.net]

Sent: Sunday, January 10, 2016 6:28 PM

To: Planning and Sustainability Commission <psc@portlandoregon.gov>; Parks - Urban Forestry Trees Mailbox <PKUFTreesMB@portlandoregon.gov>

Subject: Public Comment on: Proposed Draft for Proposed Amendments to Title 11, Trees, Chapter 11.50, Trees in Development Situations.

Dear Portland Planning Commission and Portland Urban Forestry Commission:

I am shocked, dismayed, but unfortunately not surprised to see that the recommendation from the Tree Code Oversight Advisory Board of a 35" threshold inch per inch mitigation for large trees in development situations was ignored and the ridiculous standard of 48"-50" inches is back in the proposal language. Evidently the DRAC commission had their hands in this, as their only consideration is cutting down trees for their personal profit.

Do you know how few trees in Portland are 48"-50" inches DBH? I surveyed every tree (all 346 of them) in Wilshire Park, which is populated by very large trees, and found that only 2 of them were over 48" DBH. A 48"-50" threshold to begin inch per inch mitigation is a sham, and WILL NOT PREVENT THE REMOVAL OF LARGE TREES! Douglas Fir trees that are 100 years old in Portland are typically in the 36"-40" range. A 48"-50" threshold is outrageous and will not provide the PROTECTION that the people want! LESS THAN 3% OF OUR TREES ARE OVER 48" DBH!!!!

Please re-read the Tree Code Advisory Committees Final Recommendations:

1. Decrease the threshold for inch-for-inch mitigation to 35 inches DBH. The data from August 2015 shows that by decreasing the threshold, about 7 percent of trees removed in development situations would be subject to inch for inch mitigation requirement. With a 48-inch threshold, less than 3 percent would be affected. In addition, many trees require several decades to reach 48-inches and some never grow to that size. This proposal does not take into account the sizes of mature native trees, which provide more value to native wildlife.

2. Increase the notification timeframe to 30 days and include email to neighborhood association. We support the addition of a neighborhood notification requirement in the code prior to large tree removal. We recommend the length of time be 30 days to allow local residents time to ask questions and potentially work with the permit applicant to identify alternatives to tree removal. We also recommend that the notice be emailed to the neighborhood association in addition to the site posting proposed.

3. Relook at the idea of prohibiting the removal of large trees. We understand the disadvantages of outright tree cutting moratoriums and the potential for such an action to result in a taking. However, we recommend the City Attorney evaluate whether prohibitions of large tree removal can be considered when such action would not result in all economic viability of a property being removed.

4. Add a sunset clause. We recommend a sunset clause be added to the proposal so it is clear that the mitigation code amendment would only apply until larger Title 11 reforms are adopted. We understand that a larger package of amendments is likely and could take about a year to be drafted, reviewed and adopted. This stop gap measure would fill a need from early 2016 to early 2017.

We need our city officials to work to preserve trees, which is what is required under the 2035 Portland Comprehensive Plan. Make developers build AROUND trees... it can be done if you have the will! Look at what is done in Lake Oswego, or Seattle, or Vancouver BC.

I urge you to put the 35" threshold BACK into the language for Title 11, Trees in Development Situations.

Sincerely,

Richard Weber

Portland, Oregon