

Tree Canopy Code Amendments

Study Session

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January 24, 2024





Planning Commission Direction

Provide direction on the options for tree credit calibration, proposed LUCA topics and any additional guidance



Agenda

1. Outreach Updates
2. Q&A from Study Session 2
3. Tree Credit Calibration
4. Proposed LUCA Topics
5. LUCA Process
6. Planning Commission Direction



Outreach Updates

Bellevue Development Committee Feedback

- Assurance for zoned density
- Provide clarity early
- Desire for in-lieu fee, off-site planting
- Incorporate flexibility for:
 - Right tree in the right place (with arborist recommendation)
 - Tree location within site
 - Height, FAR, setbacks
 - Affordable housing and middle housing



Outreach Updates

Public Information Session Feedback

- Support for preserving landmark trees wherever possible
- Concerns with tree removal for large single family home development
- Desire for development to respond to site
- Encourage native species, groves of trees
- Mixed opinions:
 - Strict, consistent application Citywide
 - Open to some development incentives to support retention



Outreach Updates

Public Information Session Feedback

Enforcement

- Support for maintenance agreements
- Need for improved tracking
- Interest in tree service registry
- Support for strict penalties
- Ensuring sufficient staff available

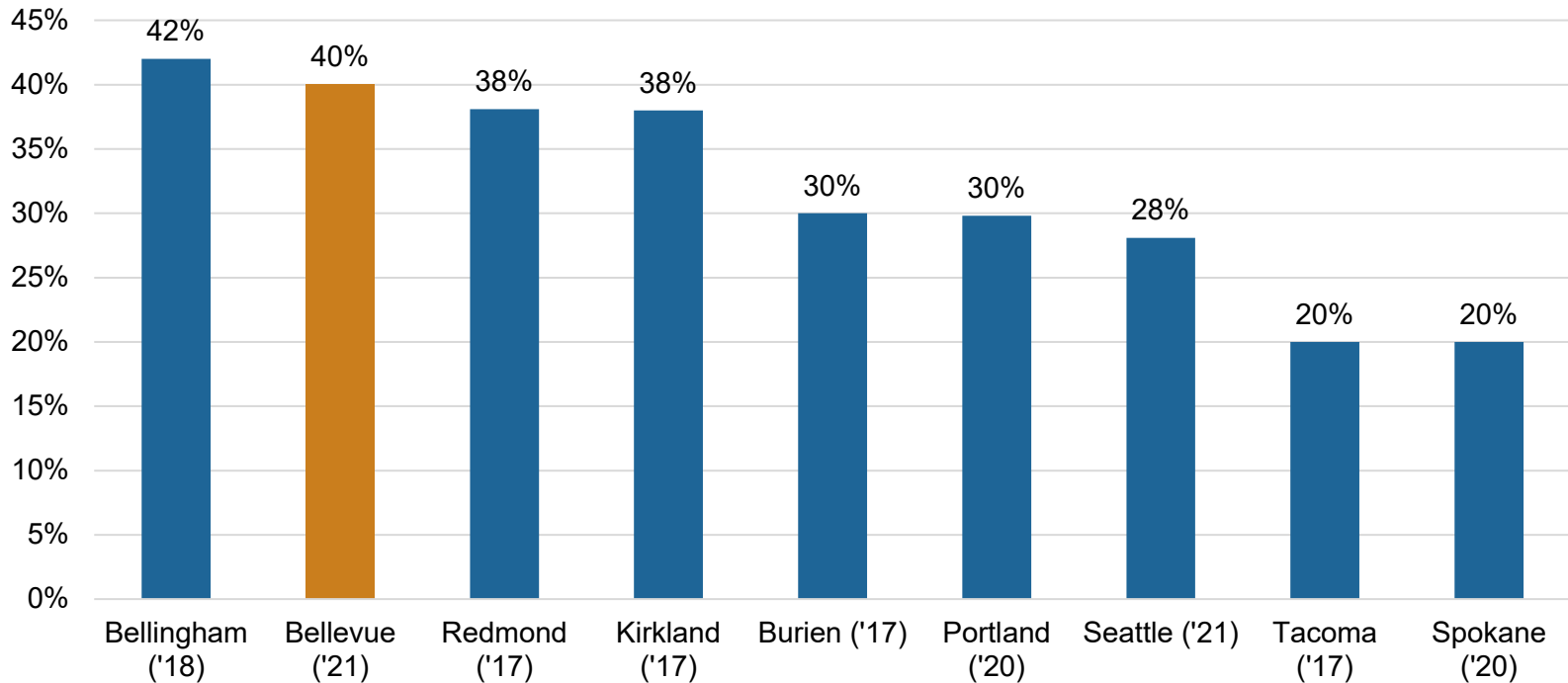
Implementation

- Importance of education



Q&A from Study Session 2

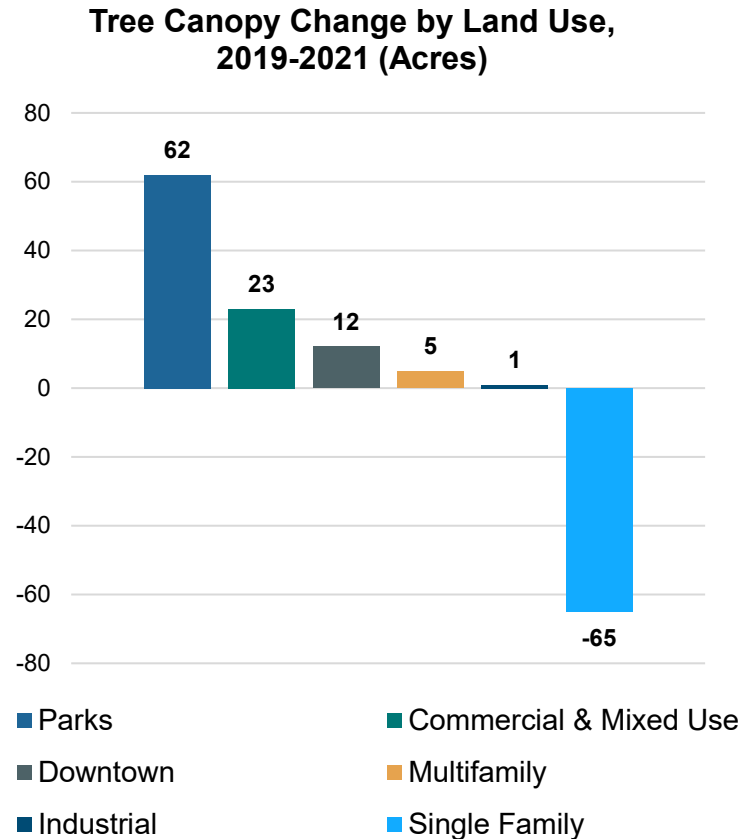
How does Bellevue's canopy compare to its neighbors?



Q&A from Study Session 2

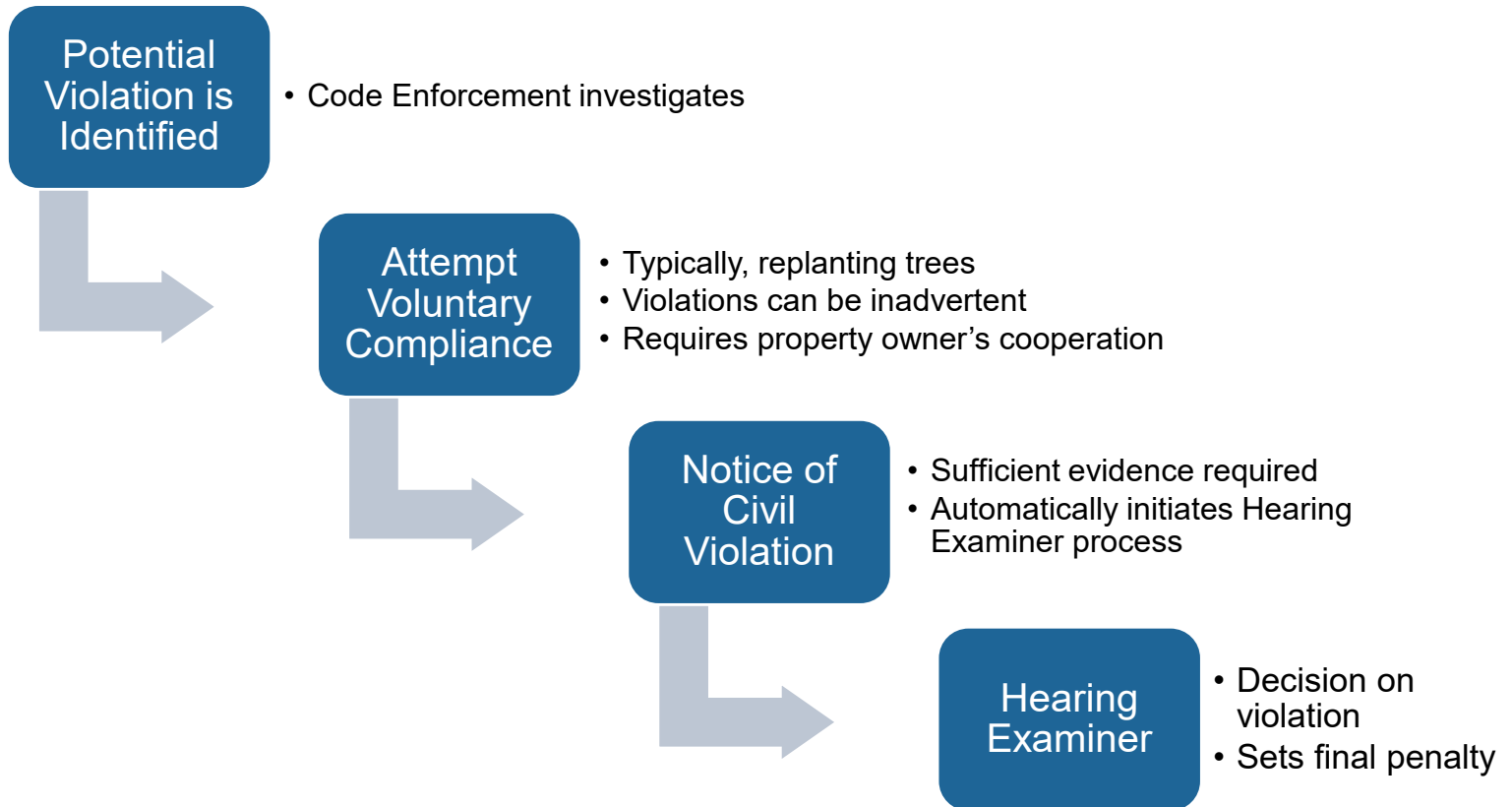
How can Bellevue's canopy improve?

- Growth in certain areas has offset losses in others
- Opportunity to address known flaws
- Opportunity to review regulations comprehensively



Q&A from Study Session 2

How are tree regulations enforced?



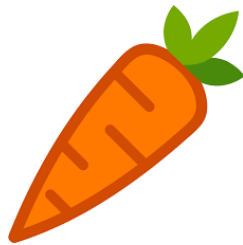
Q&A from Study Session 2

What are the limitations of a minimum tree credit system?

- Increased up-front analysis required
- Wide latitude for implementation, city's priorities must be clear
- Emerging approach, education for applicants and staff is important



Tree Credit Calibration



Extreme 1

- Tree credits can be achieved in any way
- Maximum development flexibility
- Least certainty for large trees

Future Bellevue

- Mixture of incentives and requirements



Extreme 2

- Strict retention standards, even above minimum credit
- Least development flexibility
- Maximum certainty for large trees



Tree Credit Calibration

Potential Incentives

- Extra credit for:
 - Retaining landmark trees
 - Retaining trees in groves
 - Retaining and planting native species
- Continuing to discount alders and cottonwoods
- Existing parking reduction when exceeding required retention
- Exceeding minimum retention, especially in low canopy neighborhoods



Tree Credit Calibration

Potential Flexibility

- Removing trees not well suited to their location
- Certain development regulations, when necessary to accommodate retaining trees
 - Affordable housing focus
- In-lieu fee as last-resort option
- Accommodating existing view neighborhoods
- Limit barriers to removing:
 - Genuinely hazardous trees
 - Invasive or noxious species



Tree Credit Calibration

Potential Requirements

- Minimum tree density, scaled with development type
- 6" significant tree threshold, expanding regulated trees
- Permanent definition for landmark trees
- Enforcement
 - Inspections for tree retention
 - Requiring sign for permitted tree removal activity
 - Marker identifying retained trees during construction
 - Tree contractor registry



Proposed LUCA Topics

Updated Structure: 20.20.900 Tree Retention and Replacement

- A. Purpose
- B. Applicability
- C. Definitions
- D. Required Review
- E. Minimum Tree Density
- F. Tree Protection



Proposed LUCA Topics

Purpose

- Prevent Citywide net loss of tree canopy and address local canopy gaps
- Reduce the impacts of development on the storm and surface water systems and water resources
- Provide guidance and flexibility to support “the right tree in the right place”
- Preserve other public benefits of Bellevue’s urban forest, including minimizing heat impacts, enhancing ecosystem resilience, and storing carbon



Proposed LUCA Topics

Applicability and Required Review

- Requirements imposed with any permit, approval, or review for development activity
 - Reviewed by Development Services
- Directs to BCC regulations for tree removal not associated with development activity
- Establishes exceptions
 - Shorelines
 - Critical Areas
 - Downtown and East Main



Proposed LUCA Topics

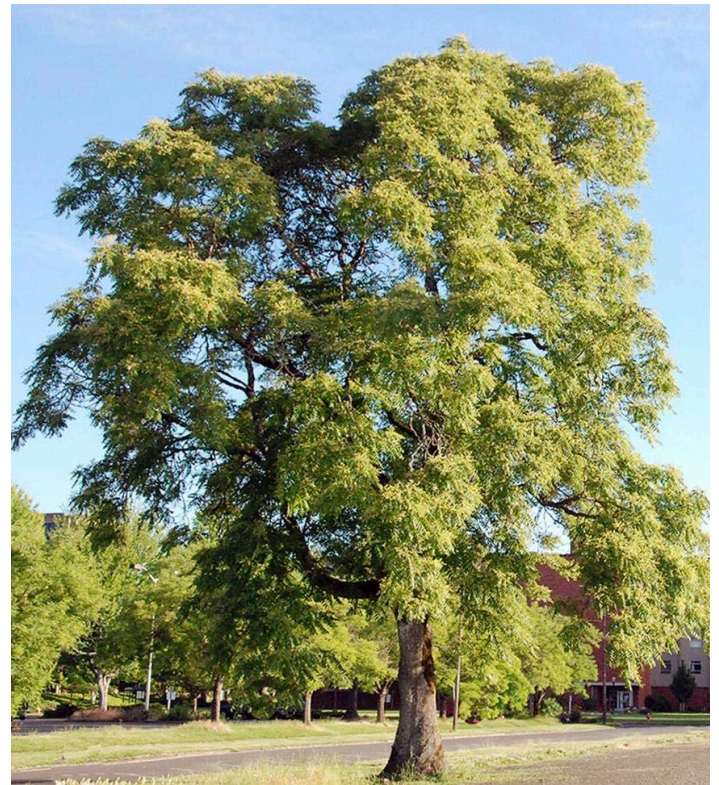
Section-Specific Definitions

Development Activity

- Defines permits, approvals, or reviews which trigger tree retention requirements
- Maintains current approach, clarity update

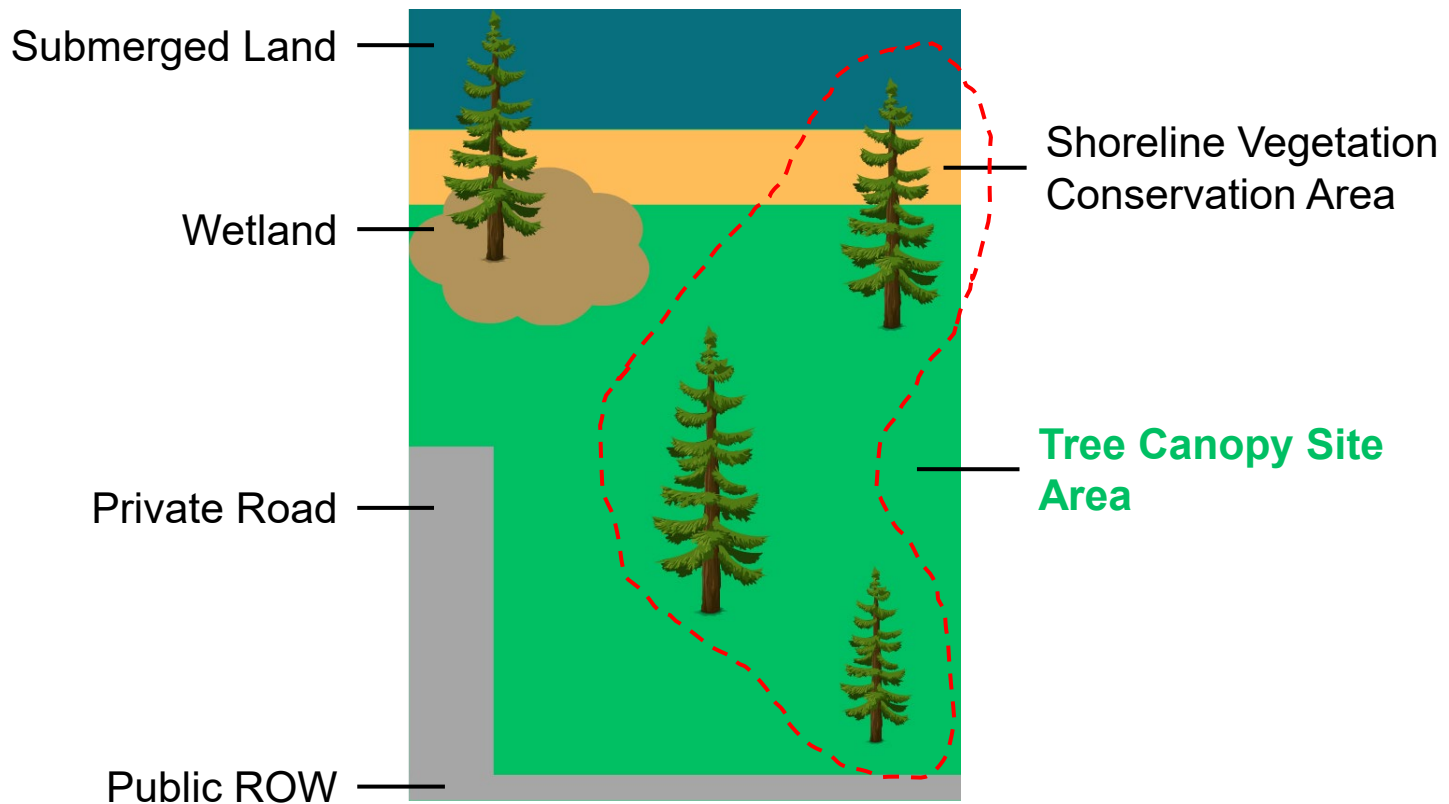
Invasive or Noxious Species

- Used to establish species which:
 - Are not eligible to earn tree credits
 - May not be planted



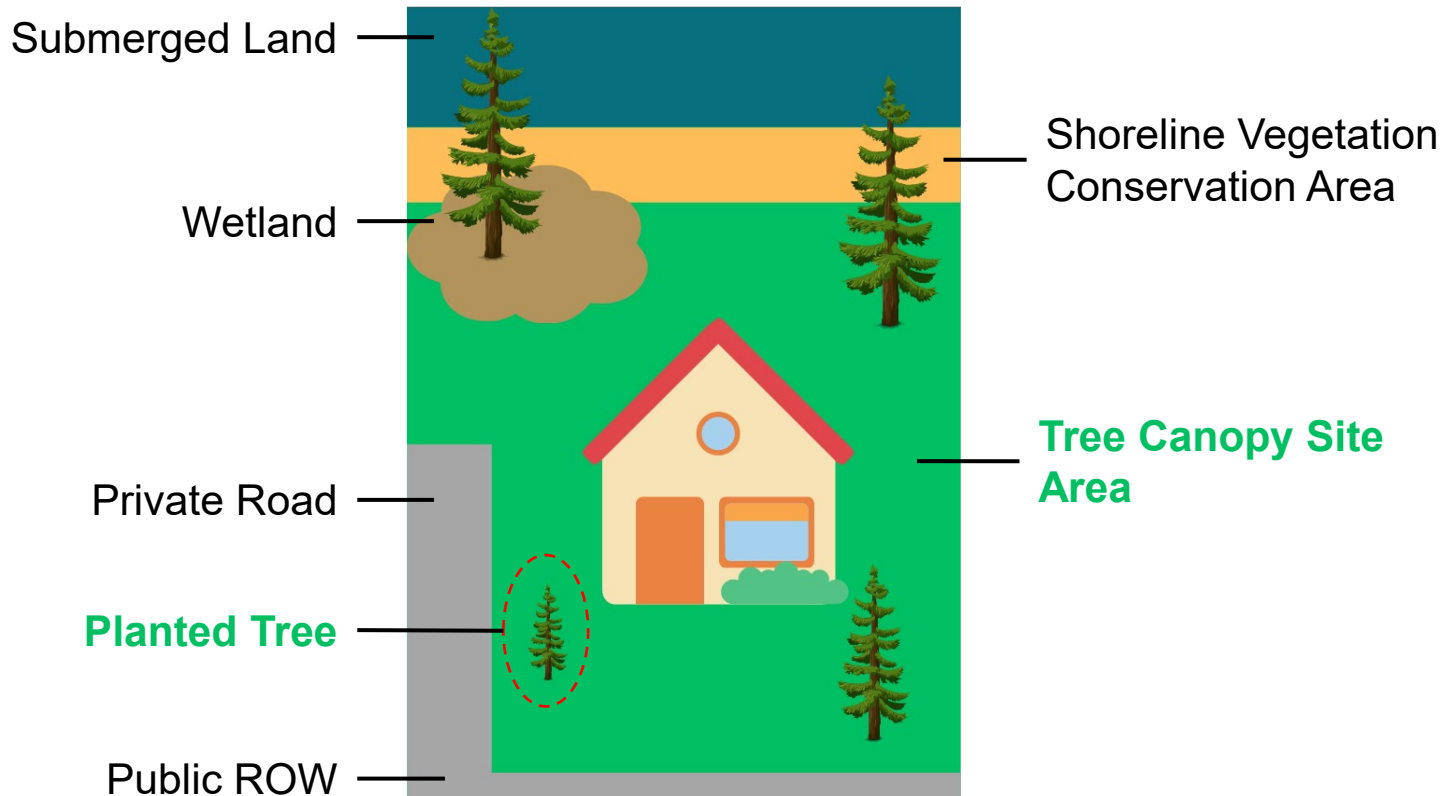
Proposed LUCA Topics

Section-Specific Definitions: Tree Canopy Site Area



Proposed LUCA Topics

Section-Specific Definitions: Tree Canopy Site Area



LUCA Process

| Action | Date |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| LUCA Initiated | November 21, 2022 |
| Public Information Session | June 8, 2023 |
| PC Study Session 1 | December 13, 2023 |
| BDC Presentation | January 10, 2024 |
| Public Information Session | January 11, 2024 |
| PC Study Session 2 | January 24, 2024 |
| PC Study Session 3 | To be scheduled |
| PC Public Hearing and Recommendation | To be scheduled |
| City Council Study Session | To be scheduled |
| City Council Action | To be scheduled |



Planning Commission Direction

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