

Tree Canopy Code Amendments Briefing

Study Session

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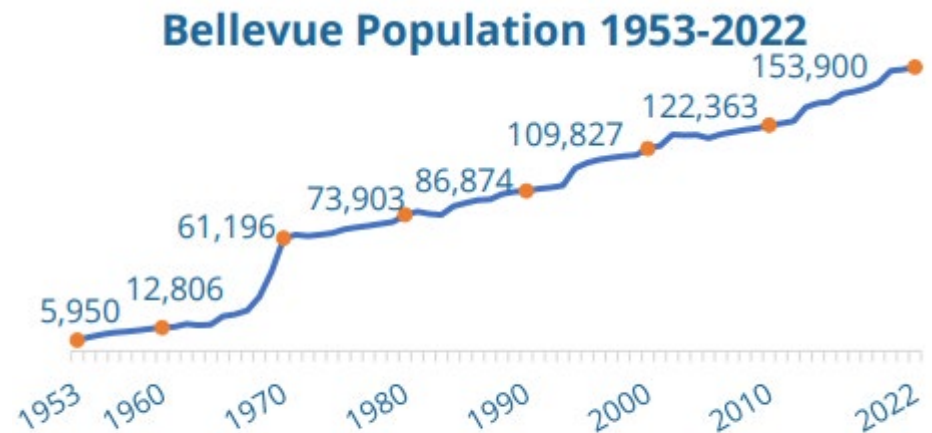
Agenda

1. Project Goals
2. Engagement Plan
3. What are we hearing?
4. Initial Scope Recommendations
5. Next Steps



Background

- Council Initiation: November 2022
- Planning Commission Briefing: December 2022
- Tree preservation requirements added in 1982
- Population growth:
 - 1982: ~73,903
 - 2022: ~153,900
- Growth Management Act adopted 1990



Source: Washington State Office of Financial Management. 2022. April 1 Post Censal Estimates. Population 1960-Present. City of Bellevue. Population Estimates and Acreage For the City of Bellevue 1953-2015.



Project Goals

- **Comprehensive** code review
- Support tree **preservation, retention, replacement,** and **protection**
- **Balance** housing production needs
- Improve the function and **clarity** of code
- Capture better **data**



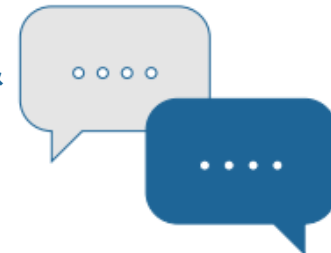
Engagement Plan

Phase One (Ongoing through June)

- Engaging Bellevue project site
- Direct Engagement
- Listening Sessions – 5 complete
- Online Questionnaire – Launched, Open Now
- Public Information Session – June 8

Online Questionnaire Translated in 6 Languages

- Traditional & Simplified Chinese
- Japanese



- Korean
- Russian
- Spanish



Engagement Plan

Phase Two (July Onward)

- Continued direct engagement
- Up to 6 listening sessions
- Up to 2 public information sessions
- Planning Commission Public Hearing
- **Flexibility for additional outreach**



What are we hearing?

Definitions

- Support for lower threshold for **significant trees**
- **Species variation** in definitions
- **Landmark tree** definition should align with purpose



What are we hearing?

Tree Removal

- Require affordable **permit to remove any** significant tree
- Ensure **hazardous trees** can be removed
- Conflicting:
 - **Limit tree removal**, particularly large trees
 - Provide **notice of tree removal** to neighbors

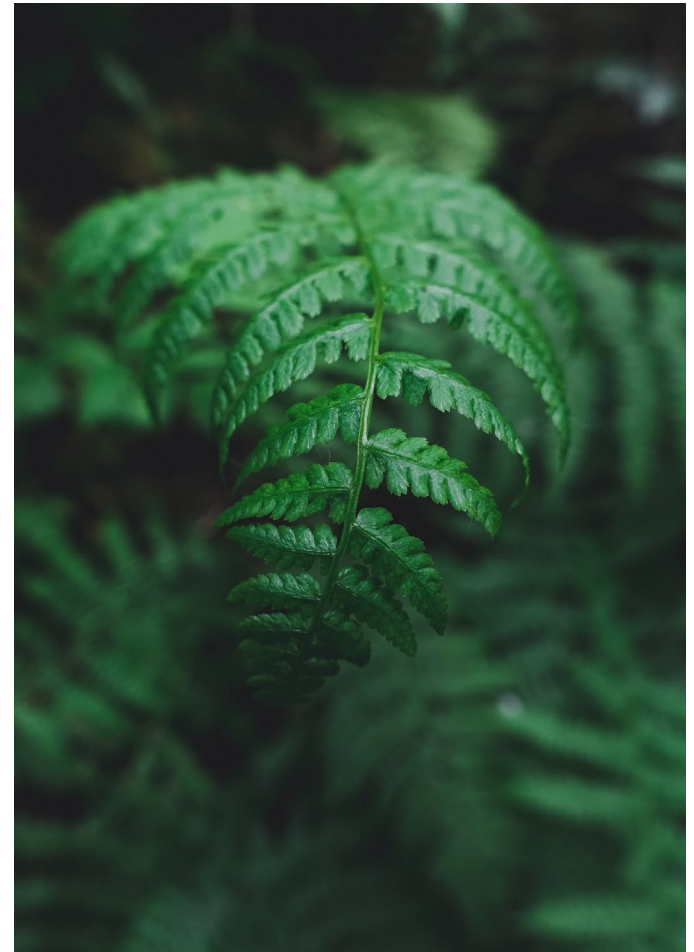
vs

 - Accommodate **property owner preferences**

What are we hearing?

Tree Removal

- Expand **replacement requirements**
- Consider **site characteristics** for any limits on removal
- Conflicting:
 - Support for incorporating **expert feedback vs mistrust** of tree service providers
 - **Mitigate** tree removal on-site **vs in-lieu** payment, tree banks



What are we hearing?

Tree Retention

- Current code is **confusing**
- Difficult to know which trees are **retained**
- Address **lot clearing** before development
- Concerns about tree removal to build **large homes**



What are we hearing?

Tree Retention

- **Be flexible but predictable**
- **Establish minimum** when few or no trees exist
 - **What's the role of replacement?**



What are we hearing?

Tree Retention

- Retained trees **don't always thrive** after development
- Consider **climate change impacts** on appropriate species
- Conflicting: Emphasis on **large trees vs** incorporating **tree diversity**
- Development regulation **incentives** to support retention



What are we hearing?

Tracking and Enforcement

- Perceived **lack of consequences**
- **Misconceptions** about regulations
- Complicated regulations can drive **noncompliance**
- Ensure **resources available** to administer regulations



What are we hearing?

Implementation and Engagement

- Inform **new homeowners** of regulations
- Provide guidance on **arborist qualifications**
- Educational materials on **appropriate species**
- Develop **tree checklist** for permits



Initial Scope Recommendations

Strongest Support, Alignment with Goals

- **Affordable permit** to remove any significant tree
- Update **significant tree definition**
- Define **hazardous trees**
- **Clarify duration** for tree retention
- Discourage **lot clearing** before development



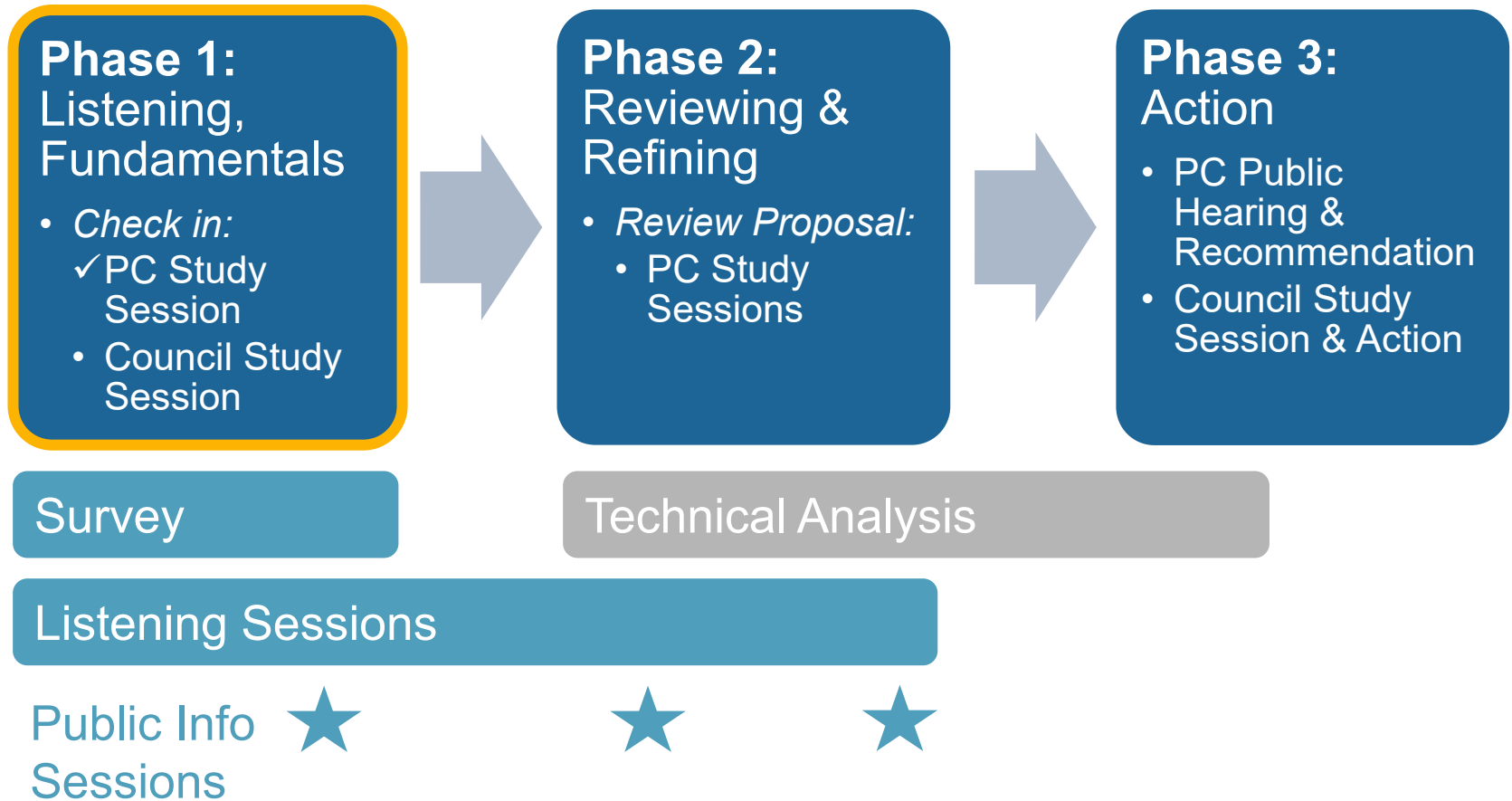
Initial Scope Recommendations

Strong Support, Needs More Study

- Permanent **landmark tree** definition
- Establishing **minimum tree density**
- Expanding **tree replacement** requirements
- Update retention **criteria**
- Development **incentives**
- Codify **key protections**



Next Steps



Questions?

