



BROADVIEW
PLANNING

Attachment B

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23 June 2023

To: Kristina Gallant, Senior Planner – City of Bellevue

From: Andrea Petzel + Anne Holland

RE: Summary of Participants' Comments + Questions from Tree Canopy Code Information Session

This memo summarizes the comments and questions from the June 8th Tree Canopy Code Update Public Information Session held at Bellevue City Hall. Thirty-five people attended the meeting, and provided input three different ways:

- Using dots to vote on the most important objective of the tree code.
- Participating in an online poll.
- Providing comments during the Q+A session at the end of the meeting.

RESULTS

Voting Exercise

Participants were given three dots each and asked to place them on their top three objectives of Bellevue's tree code. Results in ranked order were:

30	To protect the health of large trees.
23	To enhance the overall health of Bellevue's tree canopy by balancing planting new trees and preserving established trees.
11	To help preserve Bellevue's character, livability, and neighborhood identity.
8	To encourage planting more trees.
6	To ensure trees don't pose hazards to property or life.
5	To ensure that trees are replanted or replaced after tree removal.
4	To allow people to make decisions about their own property.

Online Poll Results

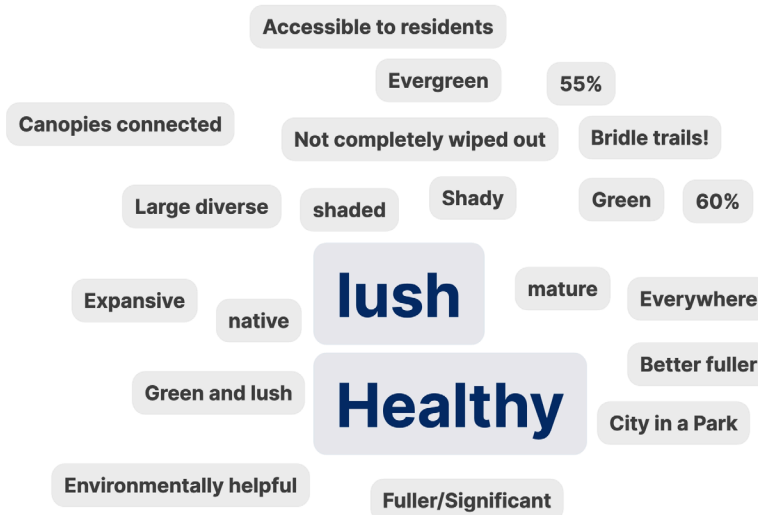
Using Slido, an online polling platform, participants were able to respond to questions anonymously and in their own words. The following are summary tables from Slido.

What's your neighborhood?
Wordcloud Poll 24 responses 20 participants



slido

In 1-2 words, describe what Bellevue's tree canopy should look like 25 years from now.
Wordcloud Poll 23 responses 19 participants

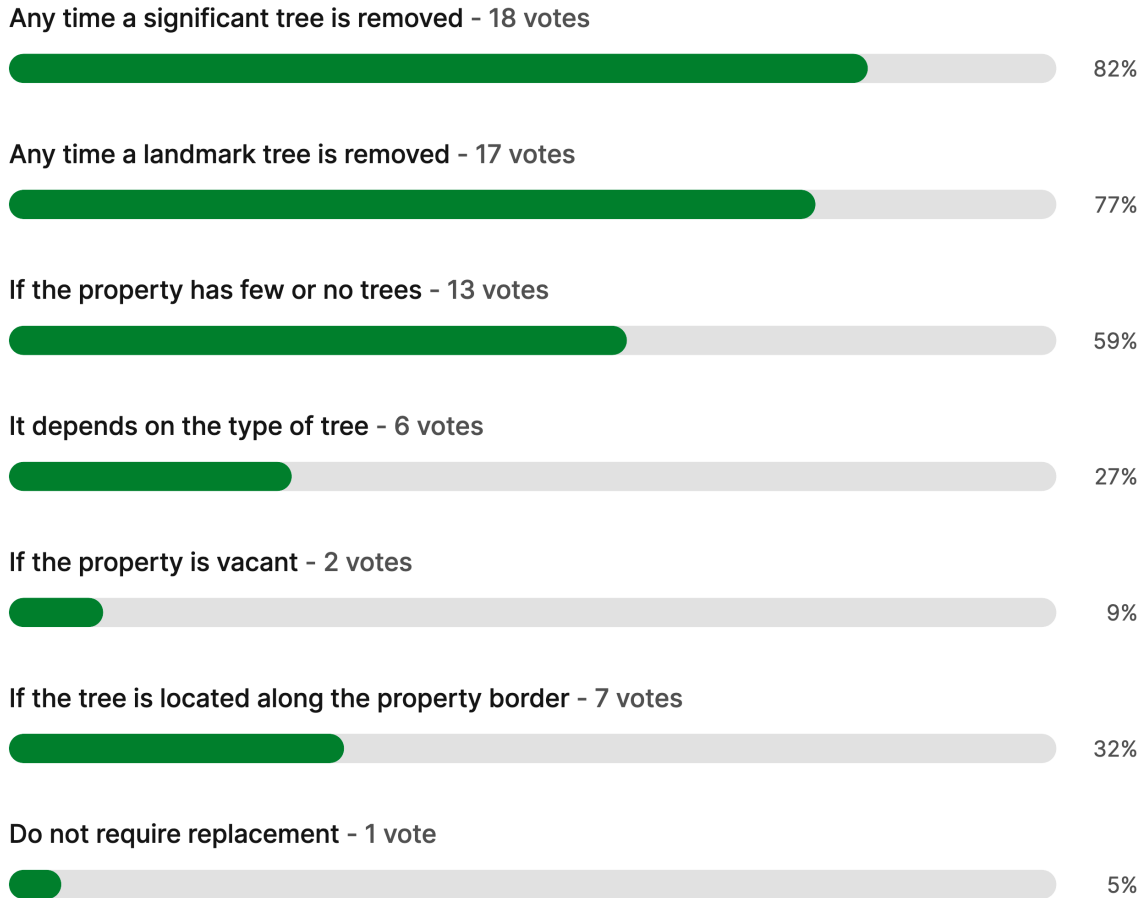



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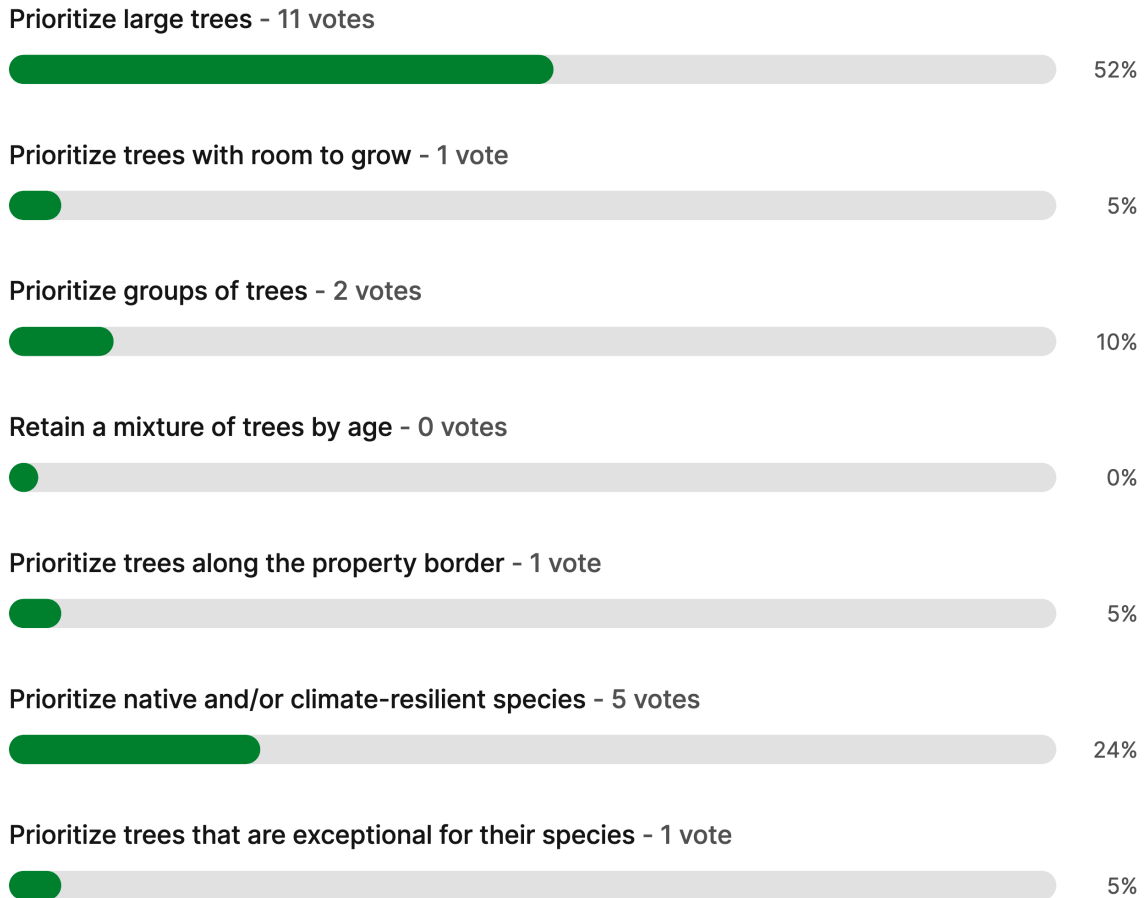
When should someone be required to replace a legally removed tree on their property (select all that apply)?

Multiple Choice Poll 22 votes 22 participants



 **How should developers decide which trees should be retained? Select up to three to prioritize:**

Multiple Choice Poll  21 votes  21 participants





Participant Comments + Questions

Meeting participants were able to ask questions in two ways: directly to the group, and anonymously on Slido. Below are a list of questions and response, with some overlap between both sources of questions. Please note that Slido had a character limit so some of the questions are missing words at the end.

- A resident in the Bridle Trails neighborhood has a wooded lot with an 80-90% tree canopy. He feels the regulations are too broad. His lot is overcanopied and needs to cut down dangerous trees and can't with the existing regulations.

- The Bridle Trails neighborhood has changed over the years as homes have sold and trees are taken down. A resident is frustrated that there seems to be no follow through from the City when she reports unauthorized activity. Further, her neighbors are planting laurel which is coming into her yard. She advocated for regulations against planting noxious weeds and invasive species.
 - Kristina noted that there are no current regulations to prevent invasive species, but the City is aware of it looking into it.
- What was the tree canopy in 1982?
 - Not sure, but Kristina will see if the information is available.
- The residential goal for the city is a reasonable, but there should be a minimum tree density. Let's look back at goals and not fight over percentages to be taken down.
- A participant overlaid a heat map with the tree canopy map and found that there is a 16-degree difference in temperature between the canopied and non-canopied areas. Not many cities have as much of a tree canopy as Bellevue and it is a distinguishing characteristic of the city. The trees are a community resource and are needed for shade, wildlife habitats, and in general are a benefit to everyone.
- How can we make the code so it's not a one size fits all? A resident pointed out there is diversity in neighborhoods. Bridle Trails is heavily treed; the View Court Neighborhood has great views so there are height limits to trees. The downtown tree regulations are currently different. How are differing preferences accounted for?
- If you make the tree code too restrictive and punitive, there will be pushback. Need to provide carrots in addition to sticks.
 - Kristina said the City recognizes and supports trees as a valuable resource and incentives are part of the picture. A suggestion for a 'carrot' for developers would be to reduce parking requirements on site if a landmark tree is preserved. That resident could be granted more parking on the street.
- Several participants told stories about trees [seemingly] unlawfully taken down by residents and developers. They are frustrated because there seem to be no consequences even when there is proof provided. It's often hard to prove a violation and some developers are taking advantage of that and not telling the truth. Who takes complaints and then checks? Can there be aerial photography used? Should an arborist do a site plan of trees before a parcel is developed? Can you move a developer down the line in the permitting process if he has clearcut or done other illegal or questionable things?
- One resident, who was a builder in the past, suggests a detailed plan for ground truthing and enforcement. He suggests that it would only cost the city 1/200 of 1% of the city tax budget to have a tree inspector. He has provided his written plan to the City.
- How long will the rewrite take?
 - Hope to adopt it by the end of the year.
- Has tree loss been more on public or private land?
 - Private land.

Questions from Slido:

- How does the city measure tree canopy and how often does that happen?
- Is the canopy that is lost mostly on private or public property?
- How will the city prevent 5-tree removal w/o permits every 3 years until a given lot is...?
- Who supervises and enforces the tree regulations?
- There needs to be a distinction between commercial sites; new residential sites; and existing homes.
- If there are no trees on a lot, why not require trees be planted?
- The significance of trees based on diameter alone is a start, but it does not address species differentiation (a 1000-year-old Bristle Cone (8 inches) vs...)
- Why not adopt the Bridle Trails codes city-wide? "City in a park," and all...?
- Are there thumb rules for what canopy corresponds to a given trunk diameter by species?
- Why not make fines for illegal removal more punitive?
- % of trees to be retained should depend on number and type of tree and how many allowed to be removed over say a decade and canopy % in neighborhood.
- Residents adjacent to development plans should have a veto approval when removal of trees affects tree health/ impact on that homeowner's property.
- Can Bellevue hire a Licensed Arborist who responds to trees inventory, evaluating trees, guide compliance, insure tree retention sticks.
- Neighborhoods below tree canopy targets should have stricter restrictions for landmark tree removal.
- Are tree removal contractors required to be registered with the city and display their registration during major tree work?
- Now that we have lidar, can we base requirements on canopy size/volume vs trunk measurements?
- Will the tree code amendments replace the current tree codes in the Bridle Trails neighborhood?
- Bellevue doesn't enforce parking even when called; why would I have any confidence that tree code violations would be enforced? Once the chain saw roars it is too late UNLESS significant fines and MEANINGFUL tree replacements; a one-gallon tree does not replace an established tree.