

# Tree Canopy Code Amendments

## Study Session

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# Direction Needed from Council

Initiate work on the Tree Canopy Code Amendments and direct the Planning Commission to process the Land Use Code Amendment



# Agenda

1. Policy Basis
2. Proposed Objectives
3. Existing Code and Opportunities
4. Process
5. Engagement



# Policy Basis

## Strategy N.1. Increase Tree Canopy Citywide

- 40% goal
- Ensure sufficient code provisions
- Incentivize the right tree in the right place
- Identify opportunities for tracking data



# Policy Basis

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## Comprehensive Plan

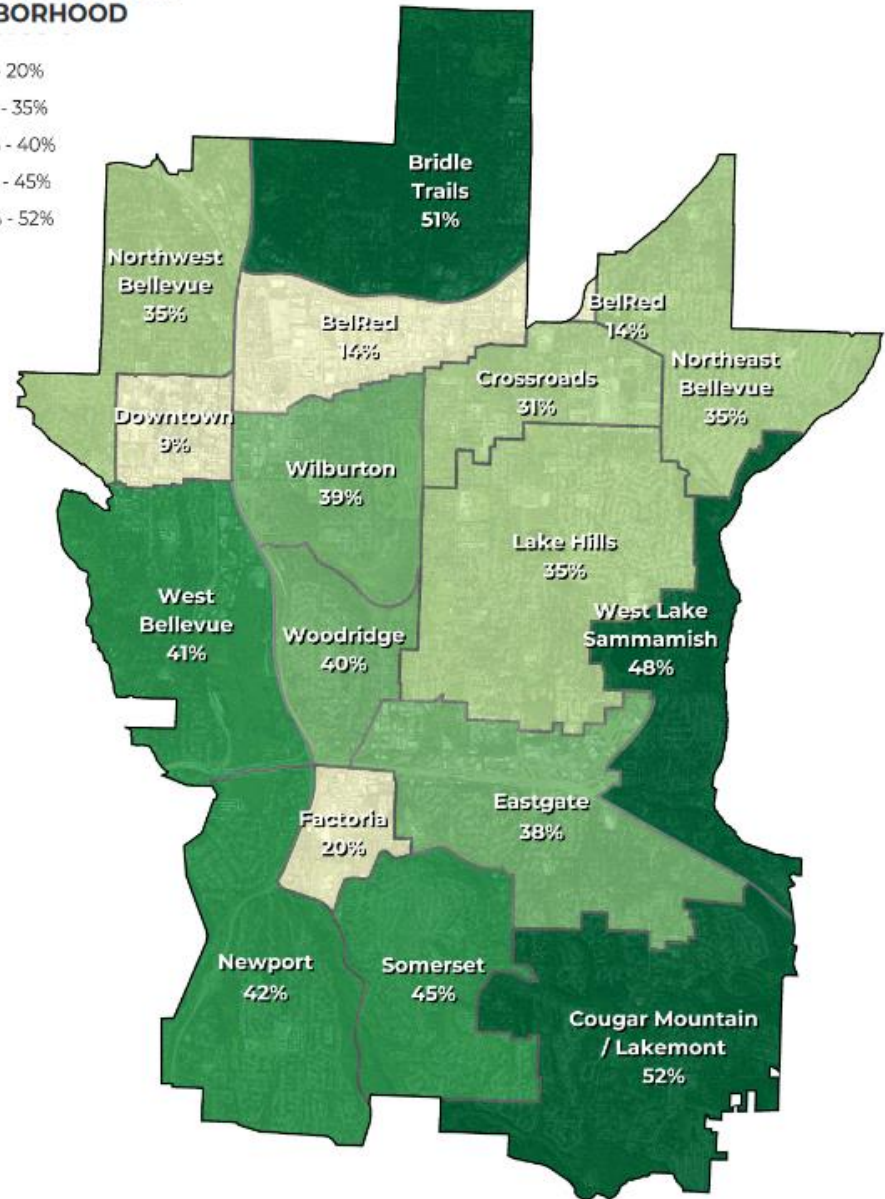
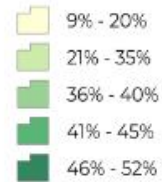
- Policy EN-71: Preserve a proportion of the significant trees throughout the city in order to sustain fish and wildlife habitat
- Policy PA-31: Manage Bellevue's forest resources, including street trees, formal plantings, and self-sustaining natural stands, to ensure their long term vitality



# Tree Canopy

- Citywide tree canopy estimated at 39%
- 3.4% increase from 2011-2019
- Opportunities for improvement remain

URBAN TREE CANOPY %  
BY NEIGHBORHOOD



# Project Objectives

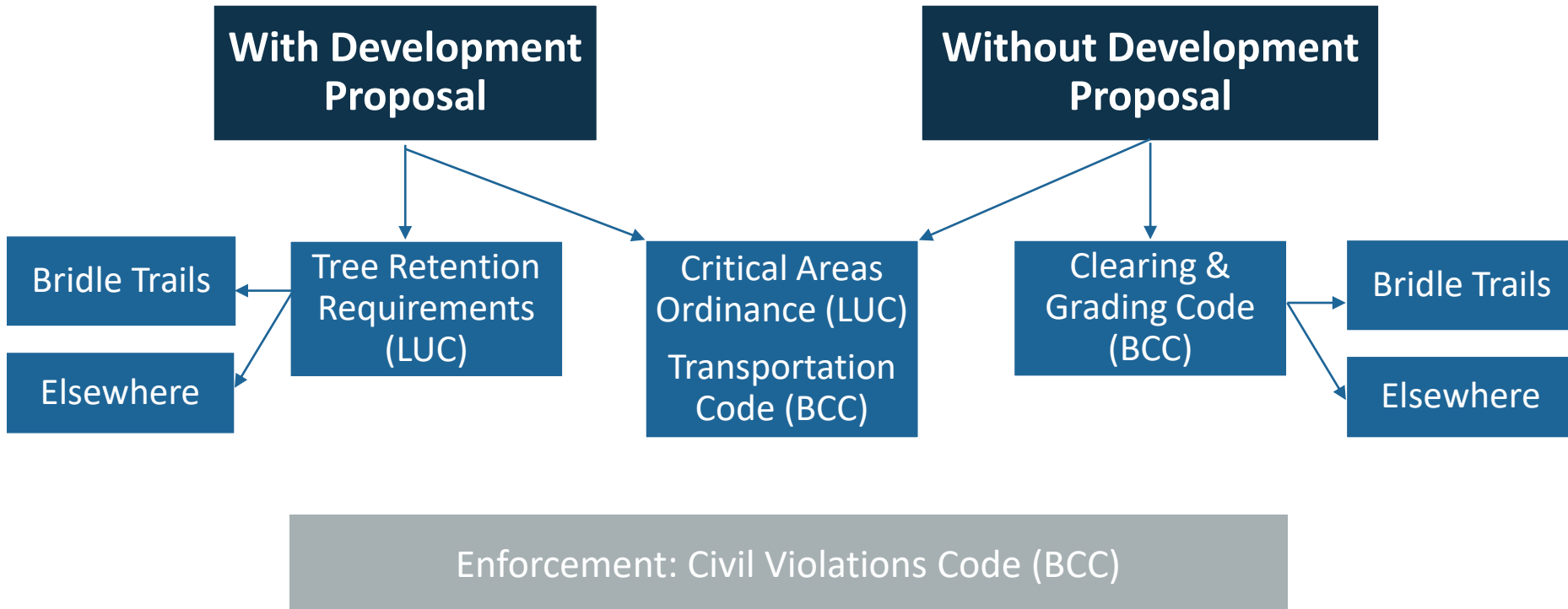
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- Comprehensive code review
- Support tree preservation, retention, replacement, and protection
- Balance housing production needs
- Improve the function and clarity of code
- Capture better data



# Existing Code

## How do we regulate trees?





# Existing Code

## What trees are regulated?

- “Healthy” trees
- Minimum 8” diameter
- Landmark Trees
- Critical areas, landscape requirements

## *Opportunities*

- *Evaluate Significant Tree Definition*
- *Evaluate Landmark Tree Implementation*



# Without Development Proposal

## Tree Removal

- Permit required to remove:
  - Any Landmark Tree (Interim Ord)
  - More than 5 significant trees within 3 years
  - Any significant tree in Bridle Trails R-1 district
  - More than 25% of the live crown of any significant tree
- Replacement only required in limited cases

## *Opportunities*

- *Evaluate Removal Limits*
- *Evaluate Replacement Requirements*



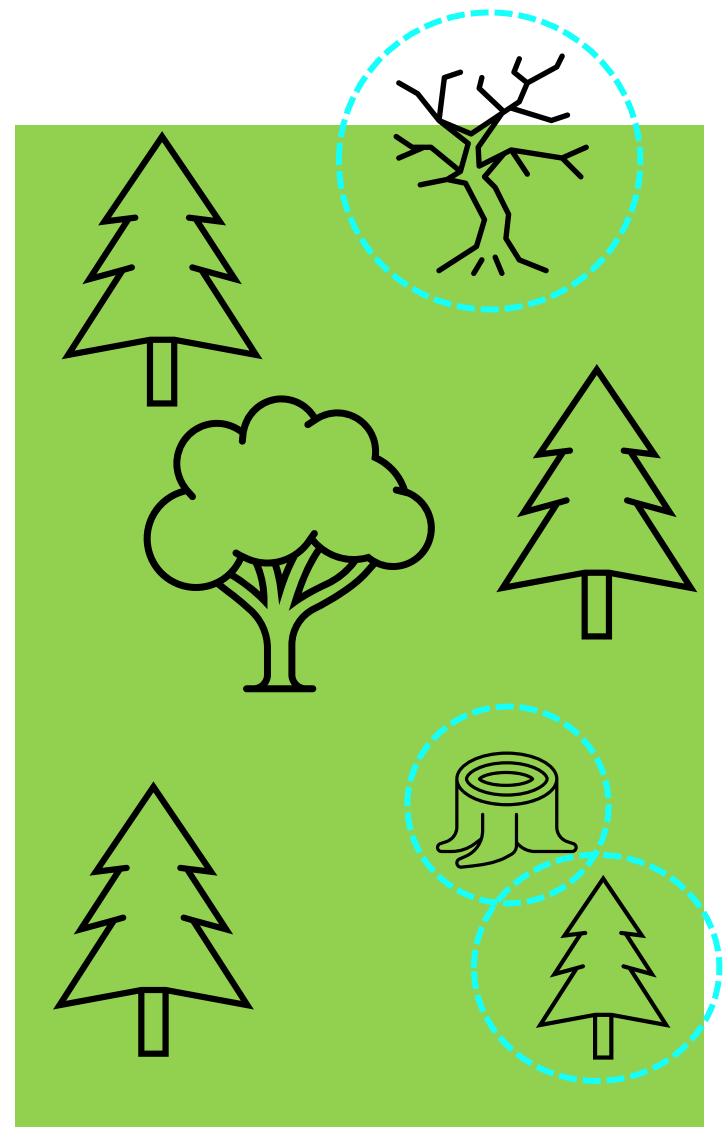
# With Development Proposal

## Tree Retention

- Only applies when significant trees exist

### *Opportunities*

- *Counting recent removals*



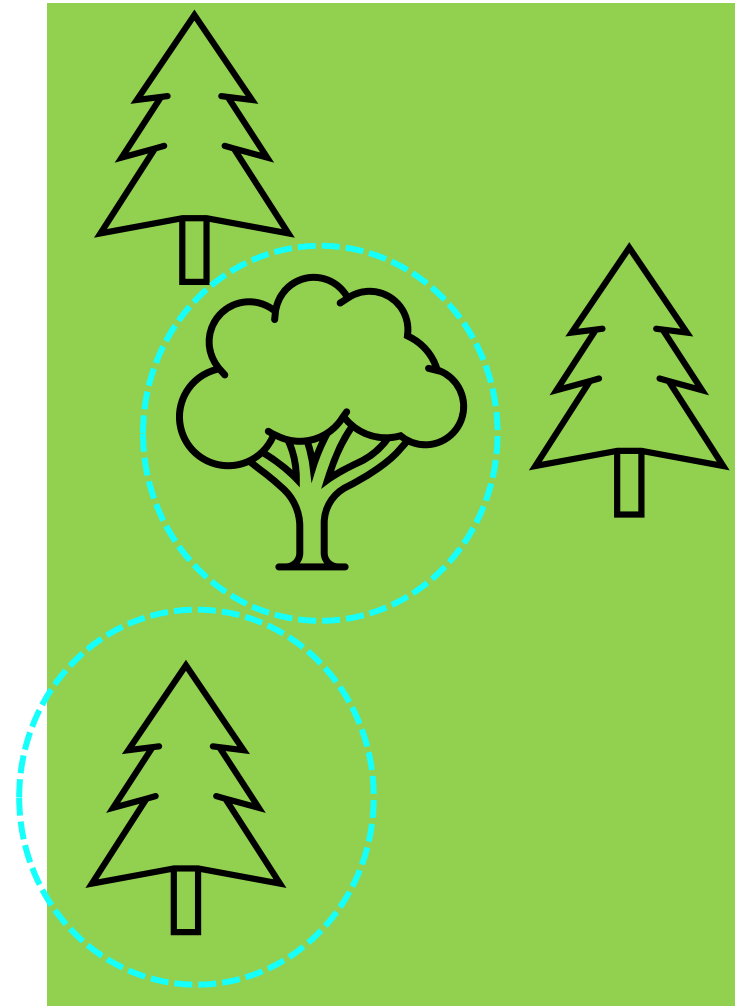
# With Development Proposal

## Tree Retention

- Retain 30% total diameter inches
- Replacement only required in limited cases

## *Opportunities*

- *Evaluate establishing minimum*
- *Improve selection criteria*



# With Development Proposal

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## Tree Retention

- Tree protection techniques required during construction
- Retention duration undefined

## *Opportunities*

- *Clarify duration of retention*
- *Codify key protections*



# Tracking and Enforcement

- Limited data to track removal & retention
- Complaint-driven
- Many unaware of requirements
- Work toward voluntary compliance

## ***Opportunities***

- *Improve tracking systems*
- *Assess current enforcement mechanisms*



# Proposed Process

## Phase 1: Listening, Fundamentals

- Focus on education
- Input on priorities
- Confirm Code Approach, key definitions
  
- *Check in:*
  - PC Study Session 1
  - Council Study Session 1

## Phase 2: Reviewing & Refining

- Reporting back
- Input on code proposals
- Draft provisions for retention, removal, replacement, protection
  
- *Review Proposal:*
  - PC Study Sessions 2 & 3

## Phase 3: Action

- PC Public Hearing & Action
- Council Study Session & Action



# Public Engagement

## Stakeholders

- Environmental Advocacy Groups
- Residents, including renters, multifamily residents
- Developers
- Internal: Parks, Transportation

## Other Inputs

- Neighbor cities





# Summary of Issues

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- Evaluating **definition** of significant and landmark trees
- Evaluating **limits on tree removal**
- **Clarifying retention** requirements
- Improving **tracking systems** for tree removal and retention
- Evaluating **expanding replacement** requirements
- Assessing **enforcement mechanisms**
- **Avoiding barriers** to housing productions





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