

20.770.120 HERITAGE TREES

A. Heritage Tree Inventory

1. The City shall develop an inventory of Heritage Trees that shall satisfy the criteria of this of section. The initial inventory shall be the responsibility of the Urban Forestry Commission as established under VMC 12.02 and shall be updated annually by the Commission. The City Council, Planning Commission, Urban Forestry Commission, Neighborhood Association, a property owner, or any person may recommend to the City that a tree be designated a Heritage Tree.
2. The Heritage Tree designation may be applied to a tree or grove of trees.
3. The Urban Forestry Commission shall hold at least one public hearing on the proposed designations. The City shall notify each property owner by certified or registered mail when a tree on the owner's property has been proposed for designation to the Heritage Tree Inventory. The notice and a response form shall be mailed at least 30 calendar days prior to the public hearing. If the owner of the property objects to such designation in writing to the Urban Forestry Commission prior to the public hearing or at the public hearing, the designation procedure shall not proceed.
4. After the Commission completes its hearing, it shall establish a list of Heritage Trees based on the criteria found in this section. Decisions of the Urban Forestry Commission may be appealed to the Hearings Examiner/City Council by any aggrieved party.

B. Criteria

For any individual tree or grove of trees to be listed as a Heritage Tree(s), it must be in an apparently *healthy growing condition* and *one or more* of the following exist:

1. The tree has a diameter (at breast height) of 36 inches or greater;
2. The tree has a distinctive size, shape, or location, or is of a distinctive species or age which warrants a Heritage Tree status;
3. The tree possesses exceptional beauty which warrants a Heritage Tree status;
4. The tree is distinctive due to a functional or aesthetic relationship to a natural resource, such as trees located along stream banks or trees located along ridge lines; OR
5. The tree has a documented association with a historical figure, property, or significant historical event.

A grove may be considered for Heritage Grove Status if it is apparently in a healthy growing condition and one or more of the following criteria:

1. The grove is relatively mature and is of a rare or unusual nature containing trees that are distinctive either due to size, shape, species or age;
2. The grove is distinctive due to a functional or aesthetic relationship to a natural resource, such as trees located along stream banks, or trees located along ridge lines; OR
3. The grove has documented association with a historical figure, property, or significant historical event.

C. Heritage Trees Development Review

When development is proposed for property which contains a Heritage Tree, and the Director determines that the proposed development may affect a Heritage Tree, the property owner must have a tree preservation plan prepared by a qualified professional demonstrating how the Heritage Tree will be protected and preserved. A Heritage Tree shall be preserved unless the Urban Forestry Commission determines that the tree may be removed based on the removal criteria for Heritage tree in following section.

A tree preservation plan shall be composed of the following:

- a.** A site plan indicating the location of Heritage Trees.
- b.** The methods to be used to preserve the Heritage Trees.
- c.** If a Heritage Tree is proposed for removal, a narrative statement outlining the reasons why the Heritage Tree should be removed.
- d.** A mitigation plan indicating the replacement trees or additional new trees to be placed on the site. The mitigation plan should demonstrate, to the extent possible, that the character of the site will not substantially change as the result of development.

Site design adjustments may be allowed in some cases, as follows:

- a.** The Director may grant a variance to front, side, and/or rear yard setback standards by up to 20 percent to retain a Heritage Tree(s). The adjustment shall be the minimum necessary to accomplish preservation of trees on site and shall not conflict with the Uniform Building Code or other adopted ordinances or conditions placed on the property.
- b.** The Director may grant a 10 percent variance to the lot size and/or a ten percent variance to the lot width and/or lot depth standards in approving a short plat or other land division if necessary to retain Heritage Trees. The Director may accept a preliminary plat application and recommend approval to the hearing body of a plat which provides for similar variance to lot size, width and depth standards if necessary to retain Heritage Trees.

D. Removal of a Heritage Tree.

Except for the provisions in Section 20.770.030, no person may cut or remove a Heritage Tree without obtaining approval from the Urban Forestry Commission. The tree removal permit shall be approved if one of the criteria is satisfied:

- a.** Retention of the tree would make reasonable use of the property allowed under the current zoning impractical or impossible in that the development would not be allowed to meet the maximum density allowed by the applicable zoning or would require special design features that would significantly increase the cost of development by 5 percent or more.
- b.** The removal is necessary to accommodate a new improvement, structure or remodeled structure, and no alternative exists for relocation of the improvement on the site, or that variances to setback provisions of the Development Code will not allow the tree to be saved or will cause other undesirable circumstances on the site or adjacent properties.
- c.** The tree is hazardous, diseased or storm damaged and poses a threat to the health, safety or welfare of the public.
- d.** The tree has lost its importance as a Heritage Tree due to damage from natural or accidental causes, or is no longer of historic or natural significance.
- e.** The tree needs to be removed to accomplish a public purpose and no practical alternative exists.

The limb structure, or crown, of a Heritage Tree may be pruned in any one year period without obtaining approval from the Urban Forestry Commission, provided that at least 80 percent of the existing tree crown remains undisturbed. Any person who wishes to prune a Heritage Tree in excess of 20 percent of the existing crown shall obtain approval from the Urban Forestry Commission subject to the following conditions:

- a.** The protected tree shall be pruned following acceptable arboricultural standards.
- b.** The tree shall be pruned in a manner which ensures safety to public and private property and shall be done by a qualified professional.
- c.** Any other conditions necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of the community development plan.

March UFC Program and Staff Reports

9. Program Updates

AmeriCorps & Friends of Trees (FOT):

The winter intern cohort wrapped up and we have begun working with the spring cohort of interns. Riley has done an excellent job leading the youth on their 60 hours with our program, including orientation, ongoing communication, developing & coordinating projects, and supporting the youth in professional and personal growth.

- Planted 21 conifers at southeast stormwater facility with help of 15 volunteers
- 7 trees planted in Volunteer Grove to honor COV's amazing volunteers, including Kyle Roslund with Vancouver Bee Project
- Drew & Jesse have hosted a successful pruning workshop in Brickyard park, 12 excited attendees on a rainy Thursday morning
- Riley & Rose working with Cascadia Schools to transplant natives in Tranquility Park
- Successful Farmer's Market Tabling in February (thank you Clif & Susan L!): great educational opportunity; lots of newsletter signups; some community members attended UF events after!

Friends of Trees:

214 people volunteered at the Westside Planting.

Last 2 Friends of Trees Planting for the season are:

Mach 23th Northeast Neighborhoods with 77 trees ordered

April 13th Central North Neighborhoods with 80 trees ordered

Annual Report 2023:

The 2023 Annual Report is with the Communications team and will be released and posted after their review.

Tree Stewards 2024:

Tree Stewards will take place this May with a hybrid format of online presentations on Thursday evenings and field days on Saturdays. We are finalizing the program for this year, it will be similar to past years with education on benefits of trees, urban forestry, pest and disease, codes and ordinances, proper pruning, tree selection and planting, and presentations from our community partners on how to get involved.

ACTION Requested: As we develop outreach communication, we will share with Commission. Please share with your networks.

Subcommittee Reports:

Outreach:

Here are some notes from our March outreach meeting on 3/7. Feel free to add on:

Newsletter Book of the Month idea: Cascadia Field Guide

1. Interpretive sections followed by poetry written by locals
2. **Tacoma Tree Foundation – Trees of Significance**
 1. <https://tacomatreefoundation.org/programs>
3. **Farmer's Market reflections**
 1. lots of newsletter sign ups, some visitors attended volunteer events after
 2. interns were helpful
 3. should do 2x/year
 4. should do sapling giveaway
 5. try to get booth in late summer to capture people before planting season
 1. spinny wheel
 2. watering demonstration (bag, bucket, ooze-tube)
 3. temperature sensor (sun v. shade)
4. **Summer Outreach Meeting**
 1. Let's meet up for coffee for one of our summer monthly meetups!
5. **Community connections to follow up on**
 1. Someone who worked for Cowlitz County volunteered at westside FOT event, highlighted Carbon Sequestration charity
 2. (Jess?) Neighbor who lives by a cemetery wants a nature/tree walkway
6. **Be Heard Vancouver**
 1. <https://www.beheardvancouver.org/projects>

Policy:

Staff met with Long Range Planning to discuss timelines for moving the proposed tree and landscape code updates forward. The proposed updates would need to be in final draft by fall 2024 and would move forward as part of the Comprehensive Plan update project.

Invasive:

No report

Pollinator:

No report

Corridor:

Canvassed NE 39th, a lot of interested in planting trees along this corridor. The project is scheduled for fall 2024 due to tree availability.

10. Urban Forestry Staff Report

Since the February Commission meeting, staff has working on implementing our winter planting projects, planning for Arbor Day, next steps with our Urban Forest Management Plan and our workload to ensure all aspects of our program are moving forward. We anticipate planting more than 1,100 trees this winter.

Arbor Month and Arbor Day:

Arbor Month proclamation on April 8, Khanh has agreed to accept the Proclamation from the Mayor. FYI, Native Plant Appreciation Month proclamation is also on April 8. Pop up Arboretums all month long at Fisher Basin Park and Edgewood Park. Urban Forestry and Naturespaces will have a display at the Cascade Library for the month of April.

Arbor Day is Wednesday, April 10th at Hough Elementary School. Staff is collaborating with the Hough Student Equity Team (4th and 5th graders) to plan the event.

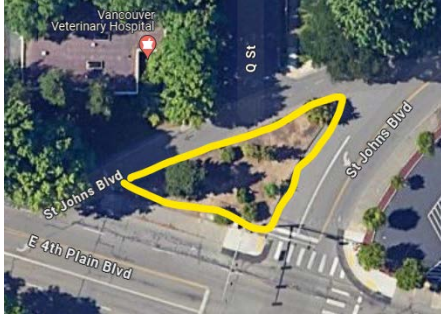
8:45 a.m. school wide assembly, led by the equity team focusing on benefits of trees and the theme of the month, compassion. The assembly will be followed by a small tree planting on school grounds with 5th grade classes and the equity team.

Due to the location, we need to plan ahead for non-students to attend. Jessica will provide details as we learn more.

Earth Day at Mother Camas island and Cascade Community Library:

Saturday, April 20, 1 – 4 p.m. at Mother Camas Unveiled: An Earth Day Celebration

Landscape island at 4th Plain and St Johns Blvd is being re-imagined into a gateway to the Fourth Plain International District. A collaboration of many community partners, this area features a statue of Mother Camas (designed and created by Native American artist) and native planting throughout the landscape island. The celebration on April 20th is a community event with outreach booths, food, games, and a ceremony to celebrate the space. Are any Commissioners interested in helping to staff a UF booth?



Cascade Community Library, Saturday, April 20, 2- 4 p.m. Courtyard opening celebration and Heritage Tree recognition

Message from the library,

"The Cascade Park Community Library is having a Courtyard celebration on April 20th to officially open our courtyard and to celebrate the designation of our Douglas Fir as a Heritage Tree. I want to invite you and the Urban Forestry folks to attend. We'd love to have someone say something about trees and/or participate by announcing the "name" of our Heritage Tree (kids are submitting names right now and the public will get to vote. The winning name will be announced at the celebration).

If this is something you or another representative could attend, please let me know. We are planning the event for Sat April 20th, roughly 2-4pm.

Thank you so much,

Rachael"

ACTION Requested: This event conflicts with the Earth Day event. Are any Commissioners interested/ available to attend and to say a few words?

Hazard and Invasive Assistance Program:

We received our first applications for our new Hazard and Invasive Tree Assistance Program. This new program is to support low-income property owners with hazard and invasive tree removal or pruning to help meet the City's equity and inclusion goals. Trees that are removed, will be replanting with quality trees. This program is funded through the City Tree Fund.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB):

Our [EAB website](#) is up and includes our EAB Management Plan. We partnered with Clark Public Utilities to remove approx 80 ash trees along se 34th under powerlines. Outreach was conducted and we will be replanting this fall with utility friendly trees. We are planning for the removal/replacement of declining ash trees (approx 20 trees); round 2 of treatment to preserve quality ash trees; and other action items. We are seeking

funding from Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to assist with implementation of our EAB management plan.

Staff is working closely with Pavement Management on 2024 Proactive Street Tree Management Program prior to paving season. Phase 1 streets have been notified and tree work has begun. Staff anticipate the start of Phase 2 streets canvassing and inventorying late March. Earlier this month we received notice from DNR that our street tree inventory grant was approved. This is a no match grant that will help inform our new proactive street tree management program. Completing a street tree inventory is also an early action item identified in the newly adopted 2023 Urban Forestry Management Plan. This DNR grant is in addition to the five-year IRA Grant that was awarded to develop a green youth work force program to assist us with young plant care through the summer months which will begin summer of 2024.

Our site visit inspection backlog is less than 14 days (goal is 10 day response time) and hovering around 20 requests. Development and inspection request are steady. Staff is completing final site inspections for all new development to ensure quality trees are planted per the approved tree plan.