

Office of the Mayor

Tim Burgess, Mayor

Mayor Burgess signs executive order to bolster Seattle tree protections

October 13, 2017 by [Dan Nolte](#)

Today, Mayor Burgess signed an [Executive Order](#) focused on strengthening Seattle’s protections for trees on private property. The order identifies areas of improvement among existing tree regulations, creates additional tools to help mitigate tree loss, and asks city staff to explore how Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) policies could support Seattle’s urban forestry goals.

“Seattle’s tree canopy is a treasure that provides critical health and economic benefits to our city,” said **Mayor Tim Burgess**. “It must be protected, nurtured, and expanded. As we grow as a city, we must also grow our commitment to be good stewards of our urban forest.”

The Executive Order directs the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections to better implement existing tree regulations through:

- Strengthening the existing regulations through new and updated Director’s Rules;
- Increasing penalties for illegal tree cutting; and
- Developing a fee-in-lieu program to mitigate tree loss

Additionally, the Executive Order directs the Office of Planning and Development to explore how legislation to implement Mandatory Housing Affordability citywide can include tree requirements and development standards to support the City’s urban forestry goals. Seattle’s overall urban forestry goal is 30% canopy cover by 2037.

Councilmember Rob Johnson (District 4, Northeast Seattle) said, “Trees are central to our city’s identity. Trees are also a vital part of the infrastructure that contributes to our City’s character. We’re known as the Emerald City, in part because of the ways our trees provide shade and beauty, create cleaner water and air, and anchor our ecosystem. Above all, trees help keep our region livable

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for a fast-growing population and the many species that call the ‘Evergreen State’ and surrounding region home.”

Trees on private property make up the majority (58%) of Seattle’s tree canopy. Preserving and growing Seattle’s tree canopy requires significant community partnership and engagement. On Saturday, October 14, there is a public opportunity to build partnerships to support trees when City staff and the community will come together to celebrate Arbor Day.

The Seattle Arbor Day celebration is an annual event to celebrate and recognize the importance of trees in our community. City of Seattle arborists will be on hand to answer questions about how residents and businesses can continue to support Seattle’s trees, and there will be a guided tree walk as well.

The celebration also includes planting 20 new trees. Ten of these trees came from the Archangel Ancient Tree Archive, and are clones of the some of the largest coast redwood trees in the world. This initiative is part of an international effort to preserve the DNA of the world’s largest trees and supports biodiversity in Seattle’s urban forest.

The Seattle Arbor Day celebration is a free, family friendly event open to the public.

Seattle Arbor Day Celebration

Saturday, October 14

8:30 am – 12 pm

Sam Smith park, across from 2800 S. Massachusetts St. Special note: The activities will be in the area of the park northeast of the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Way and S. Massachusetts St. Parking is limited to adjacent streets.

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