



BIRDS CONNECT SEATTLE

Seattle City Council
600 4th Ave
Seattle, WA
Via email to council@seattle.gov

September 12, 2025

RE: Please Revise and Support Tree-friendly Amendments to the One Seattle Plan Update

Honorable Councilmembers:

Birds Connect Seattle is an environmental conservation organization that advocates and organizes for cities where people and birds thrive. **We write today to urge you to revise and support tree-friendly amendments to the One Seattle Plan Update, specifically Amendments 93 and 102.**

Seattle must add nearly 1,000 acres of tree canopy by 2037 to meet its environmental and equity goals. Practices that allow untimely and unnecessary tree removal are pushing us in the wrong direction. Projections in the Final Environmental Impact Statement of the One Seattle Plan update show the trend worsening. A scenario analysis of changes to development requirements on just neighborhood residential lots, for example, could eliminate an extra 200 acres of tree canopy over the next 25 years.*

For cities where both people and birds thrive, we must have both trees and affordable housing. Through amendments that simplify code, ensure tree survival, incentivize retention, and empower city agencies, we can stay green while we grow. Our specific recommendations follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Please revise and support Amendment 93: Neighborhood Residential Tree Planting Requirements.

This amendment would guarantee a minimum tree planting area to give trees the room they need to survive and thrive. Without it, restricted root zones and conflicts with infrastructure will continue to stress and kill trees.

This amendment also revises requirements for tree retention and replanting on redeveloped lots. The intent here is sound—incentivize preservation and planting of large trees—but the current proposal works backward, awarding more points for preserving fewer trees.

We urge you to revise and support this amendment. To ensure that preserving our most ecologically valuable existing trees is the most efficient way to meet tree point requirements, we propose updating the tree point system such that retaining one 24" evergreen tree on a 5,000 sq ft lot with 4 units will meet the minimum tree point requirements.

Proposed revised Table B for 23.44.120

Tree Points

Type of tree	Tree species	Points for deciduous trees	Points for evergreen trees
Trees planted as part of construction	Small	0.25	0.5
	Small/medium	0.5	1
	Medium/large	1	1.5
	Large	1.5	2
Trees preserved during construction	Small	0.1 points per inch of diameter	0.15 points per inch of diameter
	Small/medium	0.12 points per inch of diameter	0.18 points per inch of diameter
	Medium/large	0.15 points per inch of diameter	0.22 points per inch of diameter
	Large	0.2 points per inch of diameter	0.3 points per inch of diameter

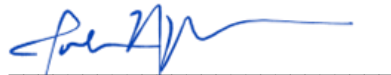
2. Please support Amendment 102: SDCI alternative site plan authority and procedural discretion for development that encroaches on tree protection areas

This amendment would streamline the tree protection ordinance by creating a single, more flexible definition of "tree protection area," a key concept that determines whether protected trees may be removed during development.

The amendment would also give the City discretion to request alternative project designs from developers when a comparable number of units could be built while retaining more trees. This discretion provides important balance to ensure we meet both housing and environmental goals.

Amendments 93 and 102 offer practical, balanced solutions to protect more trees while building the housing we need. Birds Connect Seattle urges you to revise and support these critical amendments.

Sincerely,



Joshua Morris
 Conservation Director

** 2025 Final Environmental Impact Statement, One Seattle Plan Update, January 2025. Chapter 6: Appendices. Appendix G: Land Use Appendices. G3: [Neighborhood Residential Tree Analysis](#). Scenario modeling of a Neighborhood Residential (NR) block with 14% of lots redeveloped over 25 years projects overall tree canopy cover declining from 34% to 21%, even after accounting for growth from retained and replanted trees. City analysts estimate that 8-10% of NR lots will be redeveloped over the next 25 years. The total area of NR lots is 20,841 acres currently averaging 34% tree canopy cover (7,086 acres). If 8% of NR lots are redeveloped and experience the same canopy decline (from 34% to 21%), this would affect 1,667 acres of lots, resulting in a loss of 217 acres of tree canopy cover. If 10% of NR lots are redeveloped, this would affect 2,084 acres of lots, resulting in a loss of 271 acres of tree canopy cover.*