
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1078

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By House Local Government (originally sponsored by Representatives Duerr, Doglio, Simmons, Reed, Ryu, Walen, Ramel, Macri, Reeves, and Kloba)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/23.

1 AN ACT Relating to urban forest management ordinances; amending
2 RCW 76.15.010 and 76.15.110; and creating a new section.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that there is
5 currently a shortage of housing, particularly affordable housing,
6 within the state. The legislature finds one of the most efficient and
7 sustainable ways to address this shortage is through the development
8 of housing options within existing urban growth areas. The
9 legislature also finds that tree canopy and green space are necessary
10 for the health and wellness of urban growth area residents. To
11 improve the quality of tree canopy and green space in the state, the
12 legislature previously adopted chapter 76.15 RCW to encourage
13 planning for, planting, maintaining, and managing trees in the
14 state's cities, counties, and tribal lands.

15 Local government policies, programs, activities, and management
16 plans regarding urban and community forestry may, however, limit or
17 prevent development opportunities that would provide needed
18 additional housing. The legislature believes it is important that
19 actions taken by local governments to promote urban and community
20 forestry and to address the negative impacts of a reduction in tree
21 canopy do not adversely impact the ability of local governments to

1 provide housing that is needed to accommodate projected population
2 growth. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to provide
3 guidance to local governments wishing to create tree bank programs as
4 an additional tool for promoting urban and community forestry while
5 also allowing for the development of needed housing. Tree banks can
6 allow the removal of trees in one area being developed to be offset
7 by the addition of trees to one or more areas in which the need for
8 trees is more acute. Using tree banks can facilitate adding trees in
9 areas that have historically suffered from environmental inequality
10 and health disparities, areas subject to the urban heat island
11 effect, and areas in which the trees will most benefit salmon and
12 orca recovery efforts. It is the intent of the legislature that these
13 programs be voluntary and that cities retain discretion in choosing
14 whether to adopt a program.

15 **Sec. 2.** RCW 76.15.010 and 2021 c 209 s 4 are each amended to
16 read as follows:

17 The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter
18 unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

19 (1) "Department" means the department of natural resources.

20 (2) "Evergreen community" means a city, town, or county
21 designated as such under RCW 76.15.090.

22 (3) "Highly impacted community" has the same meaning as defined
23 in RCW 19.405.020 or an equivalent cumulative impacts analysis that
24 identifies the environmental health conditions of communities as a
25 factor of both environmental health hazards and vulnerable
26 populations as defined in RCW 19.405.020.

27 (4) "Management plan" means an urban forest management plan
28 developed pursuant to this chapter.

29 (5) "Tree bank" means an area or areas designated by a community
30 wherein trees can be planted to compensate for the removal of trees
31 elsewhere, and includes programs providing for the payment of a fee
32 in lieu of physically planting the trees.

33 (6) "Tree canopy" means the layer of leaves, branches, and stems
34 of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above and that can be
35 measured as a percentage of a land area shaded by trees.

36 ~~((+6))~~ (7) "Tribes" means any federally recognized Indian tribes
37 whose traditional lands and territories include parts of the state.

38 ~~((+7))~~ (8) "Urban and community forest" or "urban forest" is
39 that land in and around human settlements ranging from small

1 communities to metropolitan areas, occupied or potentially occupied
2 by trees and associated vegetation. Urban and community forestland
3 may be planted or unplanted, used or unused, and includes public and
4 private lands, lands along transportation and utility corridors, and
5 forested watershed lands within populated areas. Nothing in this
6 chapter may be construed to apply to lands subject to or designated
7 under chapter 76.09, 79.70, 79.71, 84.33, or 84.34 RCW.

8 ~~((8))~~ (9) "Urban and community forest assessment" or "urban
9 forest assessment" means an analysis of the urban and community
10 forest inventory to: Establish the scope and scale of forest-related
11 benefits and services; determine the economic valuation of such
12 benefits, highlight trends, and issues of concern; identify high
13 priority areas to be addressed; outline strategies for addressing the
14 critical issues and urban landscapes; and identify opportunities for
15 retaining trees, expanding forest canopy, and planting additional
16 trees to sustain Washington's urban and community forests.

17 ~~((9))~~ (10) "Urban and community forest inventory" or "urban
18 forest inventory" means a management tool designed to gauge the
19 condition, management status, health, and diversity of an urban and
20 community forest. An inventory may evaluate individual trees or
21 groups of trees or canopy cover within urban and community forests,
22 and will be periodically updated by the department.

23 ~~((10))~~ (11) "Urban and community forestry" or "urban forestry"
24 means the planning, establishment, protection, care, and management
25 of trees and associated plants individually, in small groups, or
26 under more naturally forested conditions within cities, counties, and
27 tribal lands.

28 ~~((11))~~ (12) "Urban and community forestry ordinance" or "urban
29 forestry ordinance" is an ordinance developed by a city, county, or
30 tribe that promotes urban forestry management and care of trees.

31 ~~((12))~~ (13) "Vulnerable populations" has the same meaning as
32 defined in RCW 19.405.020.

33 **Sec. 3.** RCW 76.15.110 and 2021 c 209 s 10 are each amended to
34 read as follows:

35 (1) The department must provide technical assistance and capacity
36 building resources and opportunities to cities, counties, federally
37 recognized tribes, and other public and private entities in the
38 development and coordination of policies, programs, and activities
39 for the promotion of urban and community forestry.

1 (2) The department may use existing urban and community forestry
2 inventory tools or develop additional tools to assist cities,
3 counties, federally recognized tribes, and other public and private
4 entities to collect urban and community forest tree data that informs
5 urban and community forestry management, planning, and policy
6 development.

7 (3) The department shall strive to enable Washington cities'
8 urban forest managers to access carbon markets by working to ensure
9 tools developed under this section are compatible with existing and
10 developing urban forest carbon market reporting protocols.

11 (4) The department may use existing tools to assist communities
12 to develop urban forestry management plans. Management plans may
13 include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

14 (a) Inventory and assessment of the jurisdiction's urban and
15 community forests utilized as a dynamic management tool to set goals,
16 implement programs, and monitor outcomes that may be adjusted over
17 time;

18 (b) (~~Canopy~~) Tree canopy cover goals;

19 (c) Reforestation and tree canopy expansion goals within the
20 city's, town's, and county's boundaries;

21 (d) Restoration of public forests;

22 (e) Achieving forest stand and tree diversity goals;

23 (f) Maximizing vegetated stormwater management with trees and
24 other vegetation that reduces runoff, increases soil infiltration,
25 and reduces stormwater pollution;

26 (g) Environmental health goals specific to air quality, habitat
27 for wildlife, and energy conservation;

28 (h) Vegetation management practices and programs to prevent
29 vegetation from interfering with or damaging utilities and public
30 facilities;

31 (i) Prioritizing planting sites;

32 (j) Standards for tree selection, siting, planting, and pruning;

33 (k) Scheduling maintenance and stewardship for new and
34 established trees;

35 (l) Staff and volunteer training requirements emphasizing
36 appropriate expertise and professionalism;

37 (m) Guidelines for protecting existing trees from construction-
38 related damage and damage related to preserving territorial views;

39 (n) Integrating disease and pest management;

40 (o) Wood waste utilization;

- 1 (p) Community outreach, participation, education programs, and
2 partnerships with nongovernment organizations;
- 3 (q) Time frames for achieving plan goals, objectives, and tasks;
- 4 (r) Monitoring and measuring progress toward those benchmarks and
5 goals;
- 6 (s) Consistency with the urban wildland interface codes developed
7 by the state building code council;
- 8 (t) Emphasizing landscape and revegetation plans in residential
9 and commercial development areas where tree retention objectives are
10 challenging to achieve; and
- 11 (u) Maximizing building heating and cooling energy efficiency
12 through appropriate siting of trees for summer shading, passive solar
13 heating in winter, and for wind breaks.
- 14 (5) The department may use existing tools to assist communities
15 to develop urban forestry ordinances. Ordinances may include, but not
16 be limited to, the following elements:
- 17 (a) Tree canopy cover, density, and spacing;
- 18 (b) Tree conservation and retention;
- 19 (c) Vegetated stormwater runoff management using native trees and
20 appropriate nonnative, nonnaturalized vegetation;
- 21 (d) Clearing, grading, protection of soils, reductions in soil
22 compaction, and use of appropriate soils with low runoff potential
23 and high infiltration rates;
- 24 (e) Appropriate tree siting and maintenance for vegetation
25 management practices and programs to prevent vegetation from
26 interfering with or damaging utilities and public facilities;
- 27 (f) Native species and nonnative, nonnaturalized species
28 diversity selection to reduce disease and pests in urban forests;
- 29 (g) Tree maintenance;
- 30 (h) Street tree installation and maintenance;
- 31 (i) Tree and vegetation buffers for riparian areas, critical
32 areas, transportation and utility corridors, and commercial and
33 residential areas;
- 34 (j) Tree assessments for new construction permitting;
- 35 (k) Recommended forest conditions for different land use types;
- 36 (l) Variances for hardship and safety;
- 37 (m) Variances to avoid conflicts with renewable solar energy
38 infrastructure, passive solar building design, and locally grown
39 produce; and
- 40 (n) Permits and appeals.

1 (6) The department must establish optional model urban forestry
2 ordinances and recommendations and deliver technical assistance and
3 planning support to local jurisdictions that decide to utilize the
4 model ordinances and recommendations. These model ordinances and
5 recommendations must:

6 (a) Establish criteria for including tree bank programs in urban
7 forestry ordinances;

8 (b) Establish criteria for designating areas for tree banks,
9 including that tree banks must be located within areas identified as
10 priority regions under RCW 76.15.100 and areas suffering from adverse
11 environmental factors including, but not limited to, erosion,
12 flooding, air or water pollution, and the urban heat island effect;

13 (c) Using the best available science, determine, at a minimum:

14 (i) The appropriate ratios of trees planted within the tree bank
15 to trees removed elsewhere within the community; and

16 (ii) The appropriate species of trees to be used within the tree
17 bank;

18 (d) Provide a tree selection and siting tool for use by local
19 jurisdictions; and

20 (e) Provide best practices for maintaining and growing newly
21 planted trees within a tree bank.

22 (7) The department may consult with the department of commerce in
23 the process of providing technical assistance, on issues including,
24 but not limited to, intersections between urban forestry programs and
25 growth management act planning.

26 ~~((7))~~ (8) The department may use existing and develop
27 additional innovative tools to facilitate successful implementation
28 of urban forestry programs including, but not limited to,
29 comprehensive tool kit packages (tree kits) that can easily be
30 shared, locally adapted, and used by cities, counties, tribes, and
31 community stakeholders.

32 ~~((8))~~ (9) The department must encourage communities to include
33 participation and input by vulnerable populations through community
34 organizations and members of the public for urban and community
35 forestry plans in the regions where they are based.

36 ~~((9))~~ (10) Delivery of resources must be targeted based on the
37 analysis and prioritization provided in RCW 76.15.100.

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