



Memorandum

DATE: September 25, 2023

TO: Bristol Ellington, City Manager

FROM: Tricia Juhnke, Public Works Director

RE: Tree Removals on capital projects

In follow up to the City Council discussion on September 11, 2023, regarding the removal of trees as part of the 5th Avenue NE, 15th Avenue NE and NE 155th Street capital projects, this memo provides information regarding other upcoming capital projects with notable levels of tree impacts. While these projects have all had several rounds of public outreach and community engagement, the focus of this engagement has not been on tree impacts/removals and the community and Council are likely unaware of the level of tree impacts required/anticipated for these projects.

145th Street Interchange and Corridor Project

The [145th Street Interchange and Corridor Project](#) is out for bid advertisement with bid opening anticipated in late October/early November. A brief summary of the tree removals and replanting is as follows:

	Tree Removals	Tree Replanting
Interchange Project	183	856
Corridor Project	134	8
Total	317	864

A few unique items worth mentioning related to these projects:

- These numbers include the total project removals which are in both the City of Seattle and the City of Shoreline.
- About 350 of the replacement trees are Sound Transit (ST) mitigation trees. These are trees that ST is required to plant but based on the overlapping work areas are being transferred to the Interchange project.

As the project is moving into construction, staff has contracted out for construction management and inspection which also includes outreach. The outreach plan is still being developed but will include a construction hotline, email, regular website updates, monthly Currents articles and other social media postings. We anticipate a significant

website update in the next few weeks. The November Currents article will contain information regarding tree removal for this project. This information will be pushed out through other channels as well.

145th Street Corridor Project - Phase 2 and 3

The 145th Corridor Project was taken to 60% design as a whole before splitting out Phase 1 to take to final design. [Phases 2 and 3 of the Corridor Project](#) have not progressed past 60%. The arborist report for the full corridor identified 259 trees for removal. Phases 2 and 3 identify 139 trees for removal and 83 trees for replanting. More information on the tree removals and opportunities for replacement will occur as the design proceeds. This work is anticipated to restart in Q1 2024.

148th Street Non-Motorized Bridge Project

Phase 1 of the [148th Non-Motorized Bridge Project](#) is under contract and construction is expected to start in the next month. This phase builds the east side abutment and Trail Along the Rail that connects into the light rail station. There are four (4) trees that will be removed in Phase 1, as many trees were already removed in this vicinity as part of the Sound Transit Lynnwood Link Extension Project. This phase of the project does not include trees being planted.

Phase 2 of the project is approaching 100% design with an expected bid advertisement date in Q1 2024. Phase 2 of the project includes construction of the bridge and the connection to 1st Avenue NE. This project is anticipated to remove 47 significant trees and another 16 trees that are not considered significant (total of 63 trees). Most of the trees identified for removal are necessary in order to build the bridge and put it in place. The project has been designed to protect nine (9) trees located on the Unitarian Church property near the connection to 1st Avenue NE.

Following the bridge project, WSDOT will be constructing a project to daylight Thornton Creek within the WSDOT right-of-way. Based on the timing of the projects, WSDOT has asked that the City not replant trees that are within the footprint of their daylighting project. The Thornton Creek project will have an extensive restoration plan that will include tree replanting. The 148th Bridge Project is planting seven (7) trees on private property that are outside the footprint of the WSDOT project.

175th Street Corridor Improvements Project

The [175th Street Corridor Improvements Project](#) is at 60% design for the full 175th Street Corridor from I-5 to Midvale Avenue N. The draft arborist report identifies 274 trees for removal and 191 trees for protection. A subsequent draft memo and evaluation identified another five (5) trees for protection and six (6) trees to further evaluate with the 90% design. The Draft Arborist Report and subsequent draft memo is available for public review on the project website (linked above).

Moving forward, the project is being split into phases with the first phase primarily being centered on the intersection of N 175th Street and Meridian Avenue N. The tree

assessment has not been refined to identify the tree impacts specific to Phase 1. As the design proceeds, the potential tree impacts will continue to be reviewed as will the opportunities for tree planting.

New Sidewalk Program

Construction of the [20th Avenue NW Sidewalk Project](#) is underway and was designed with no tree removals. With staffing vacancies, the City has no designs underway for the remaining nine routes that are part of the new Sidewalk Program. As such no additional tree removal information is available at this time. Staff does anticipate however that many of the remaining routes will require tree removals. Staff anticipate design starting up on this program in late 2023/early 2024.

Tree Impact Communication Initiatives

As discussed at the September 11th Council meeting, staff are proceeding with other measures to increase transparency regarding capital project tree impacts. These initiatives include:

- Updating the City’s website to make information on tree impacts more accessible and available to the community;
- Developing better direction on how and when to best utilize arborists across projects for consistency;
- Incorporating more information in project outreach regarding tree impacts;
- Including tree impact and replanting information, if available, in project staff reports; and
- Developing plans for additional outreach and communication on tree removal for those projects that have completed the standard 30%, 60% phases of outreach, such as Current articles.