



Administrative Policy No. 2019-1
Use of Tree Mitigation Funds for Landscaping in Addition to Trees

Authority

The Department of Planning and Community Development has established procedural guidelines, which are regulated under LSMC 14.04.120(a). City departments may administratively adopt guidelines, standards, reference materials, forms, or other documents that aide the public, applicant, staff, or decision-maker in interpreting and administering the Lake Stevens Municipal Code. The minimum performance standards and objectives of RCW 19.27.020 shall not be diminished by a city amendment.

Intent

The proposed policy is to provide flexibility in administering the tree mitigation fund for alternate landscape items in addition to trees. Lake Stevens Municipal Code (LSMC) 14.76.100 provides the City Council's finding on the importance of trees in the environment to reduce carbon dioxide, provide erosion control, filter stormwater run-off and provide a visual aesthetic to reduce the impacts of developments. In areas where tree planting is physically impractical as part of a development project, LSMC 14.76.120(e) provides an alternative mitigation allowing developers to pay a fee in lieu of tree planting into a tree mitigation fund. In past practice this fund has been reserved for planting only trees in public spaces such as rights-of-ways and parks, which limits the ability for the city to use this fund. The city has a need to not only plant trees but also install associated landscaping in public spaces.

Planting different forms of landscaping can achieve the same intent and outcome for the environment and city aesthetic by mixing trees, shrubs and other vegetation. LSMC 14.76 defines screening as being a mix of trees and shrubs for aesthetic uses. LSMC 11.06 outlines requirements for low impact development by biofiltering run off through a mixture of plants and trees. The Western Washington Stormwater Manual supports the use of a mixture of plants and trees for stormwater treatment.

Diversifying the use of the tree mitigation fund will allow the city to accomplish the need for landscaping and meet the goals of the fund to enhance the environment and beautify the public realm.

Russ Wright, *Community Development Director*

Date: October 11, 2019