

2022 Seattle City Council Statement of Legislative Intent

Council Budget Action: Agenda

Tab	Action	Option	Version
MO	001	A	002-2022

Budget Action Title: Request that MO provide recommendations regarding creating a chief arborist position

Ongoing: No Has Attachment: No

Primary Sponsor: Alex Pedersen

Council Members: Kshama Sawant, Dan Strauss

Staff Analyst: Yolanda Ho

Date		Total	LH	TM	KS	AP	DJ	DS	AL	BC	LG
	Yes	0									
	No	0									
	Abstain	0									
	Absent	0									

Statement of Legislative Intent:

This Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) would request that the Mayor's Office (MO), in consultation with the Urban Forestry Interdepartmental Team (IDT), Urban Forestry Commission (UFC), and other departments as necessary, provide a report with recommendations for the creation of a "chief arborist" position that would promote the preservation of Seattle's tree canopy and provide independent oversight of the City's management of trees, with an initial focus on the preservation of exceptional trees. The goal would be to have this position filled no later than January 1, 2023.

Currently, there are nine City departments that have a role in managing Seattle's urban forest:

- The Office of Sustainability and Environment coordinates citywide policy development, updates the Urban Forest Management Plan and monitors its implementation, and provides administrative support for the UFC;
- Seattle Department of Transportation regulates and maintains trees in the public right-of-way;
- Department of Finance and Administrative Services, Seattle Center, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) manage trees on their property;
- SPU engages community in urban forest stewardship on both private property and in the right-of-way, and incorporates trees and urban nature in its approach to green stormwater infrastructure;
- Seattle City Light maintains trees near power lines;
- Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) and the Office of Planning and Community Development develop policies and plans; and
- SDCI enforces regulations for trees on private property.

The report should include the following:

- Position title, classification, department, and position within the department's organization chart;
- Job responsibilities;
- Desired qualifications;
- Assessment of opportunities and challenges related to establishing the new position; and
- Description of how the proposal responds to and/or incorporates input from the Urban Forestry IDT and UFC.

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This position's duties would be expected to include reviewing and providing input on permit applications that involve the removal of exceptional trees, as long as this review does not cause any delays in the permitting process. The recommendations should also consider how the position would: (1) advance the City's environmental justice priorities; and (2) support the goals of Resolution 31902 that established the City's intent to consider strategies to protect trees and increase Seattle's tree canopy cover.

The MO should submit the report to the Land Use & Neighborhoods Committee, or successor committee, and the Central Staff Director by July 1, 2022.

Responsible Council Committee(s):

Land Use & Neighborhoods

Date Due to Council:

July 1, 2022