

Seattle City Council

Governance and Utilities Committee

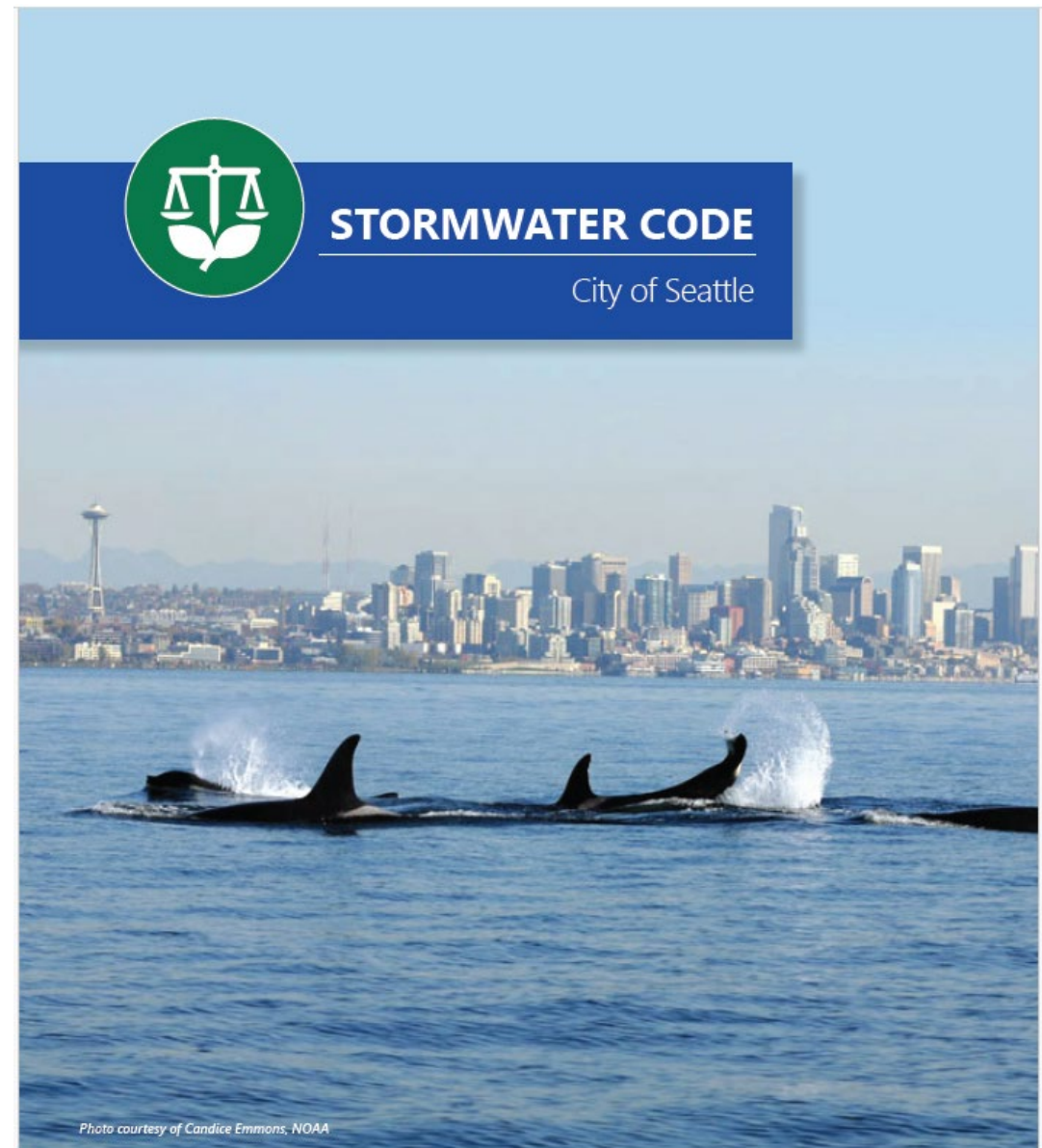
Stormwater Code Update

May 14, 2026



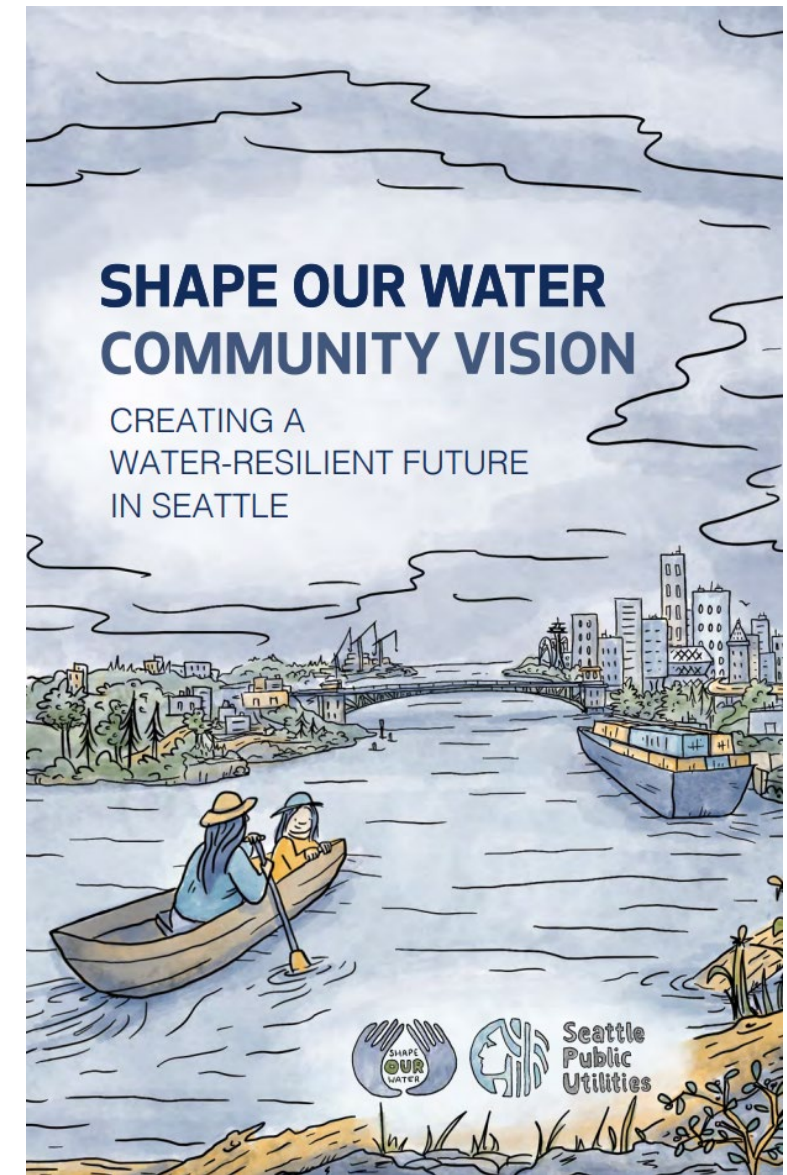
Quick Recap

- Committee Briefing on 4/9
- Provide more information
 - Stakeholder Engagement
 - Response to Comments



Stormwater Code is Only One Tool

- Seattle's stormwater requirements vs. what Ecology requires
- Investing in the future: ShapeOurWater.org
- Approaching 1 billion gallons of runoff managed annually



Additional Highlights

- Removing toxics from busy streets through street sweeping
- Adding resilience & community benefits through green infrastructure retrofits
- Other tools



Engagement - Grounding & Context

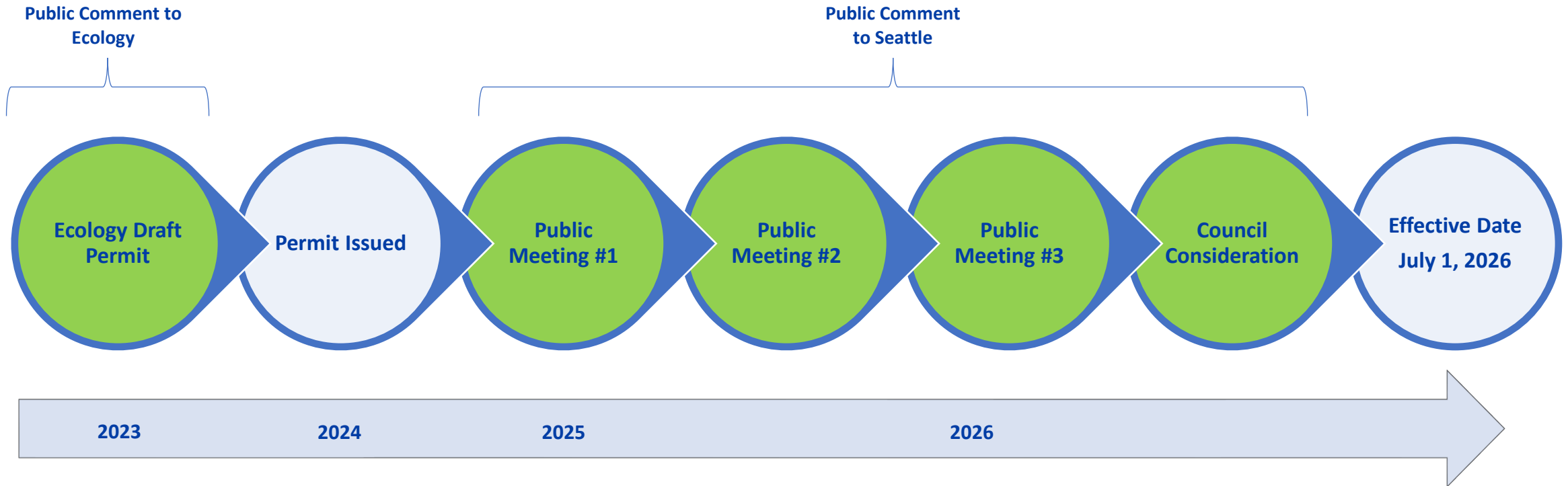
- Stormwater Code & Manual
 - Code provides the authority
 - Manual provides the technical details
- Everyday users are Architects, Engineers & Consultants
 - Private development
 - Right of Way projects
 - City & Agency projects

Process & Engagement Opportunities

- Seattle's Stormwater permit reissued every 5 years
- Three-year cycle with multiple touchpoints



Opportunities for Input



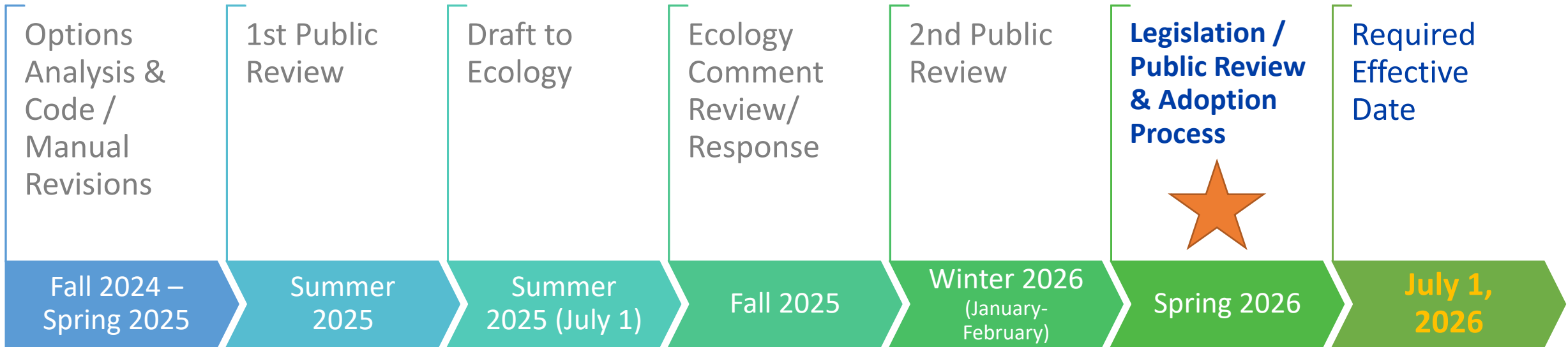
Engagement Summary

- 800+ comments
- Participants: Residents, NGOs, Development, Engineering / Architecture, Partner Agencies, Sister Departments
- List Servs, Bulletins, Newsletters
- Workshops, Meetings, Listening Sessions
- Emails, Phone Calls, etc.

Response to Comments

- Summarized, posted responses on Seattle.gov
- Addressed questions from Mayor's Office, Council & Ecology
- Key Themes:
 - Common Plan of Development
 - Flow Control Thresholds
 - Trees as Stormwater Management

Schedule



Questions & Discussion



Response To Comments

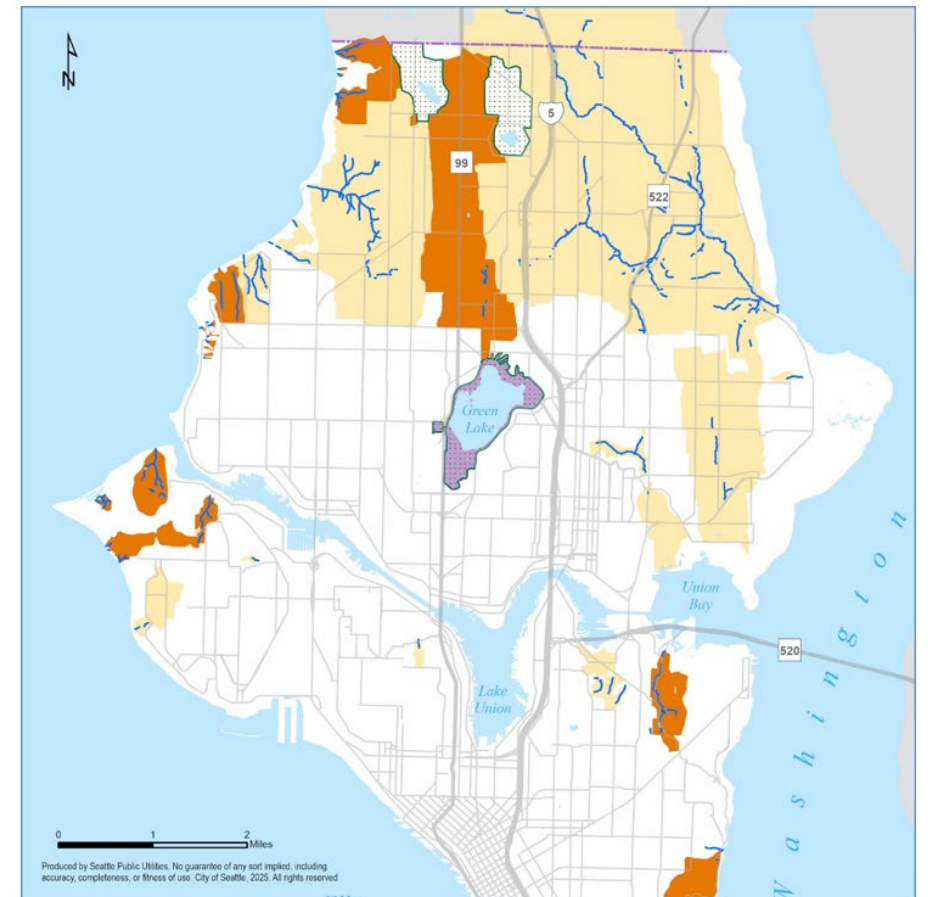
Key Concerns

- Common Plan of Development
- Flow Control Thresholds
- Trees as Stormwater Management



Revising the Flow Control Requirement

- 2,000 to 5,000 square feet of hard surface
- Haller, Bitter, & Green Lake basins
- Ditch & culvert areas
- *Ecology threshold at 10,000 sq ft*

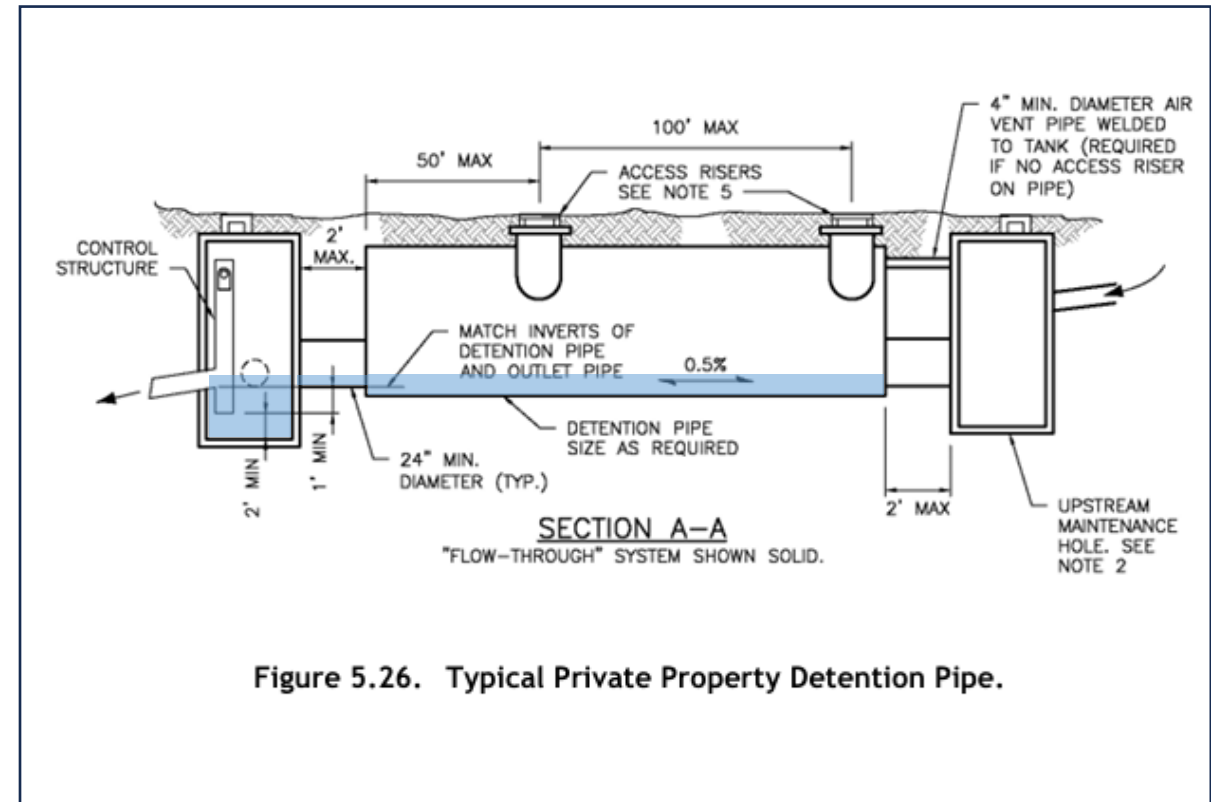


- Creek Watershed (Listed)
- Creek Watershed (Non-Listed)
- Small Lake Basins
- Nutrient-critical Basin
- Open Stream Channel
- - - Seattle City Limits

Figure 2.56. North End Creek and Small Lake Basins.

Existing Requirement

- Projects install underground pipes to slow the flow
- May require pumps, electricity
- Design optimized to manage larger sites
- Requires underground maintenance & city inspection



More Effective Alternative

- Instead, all projects do On-site Stormwater BMPs
 - Trigger at 1,500 square feet hard surface (Ecology @ 2,000)
 - Increased size of non-infiltrating bioretention planters
 - Common tool for development
 - Provides flow control AND water quality benefits



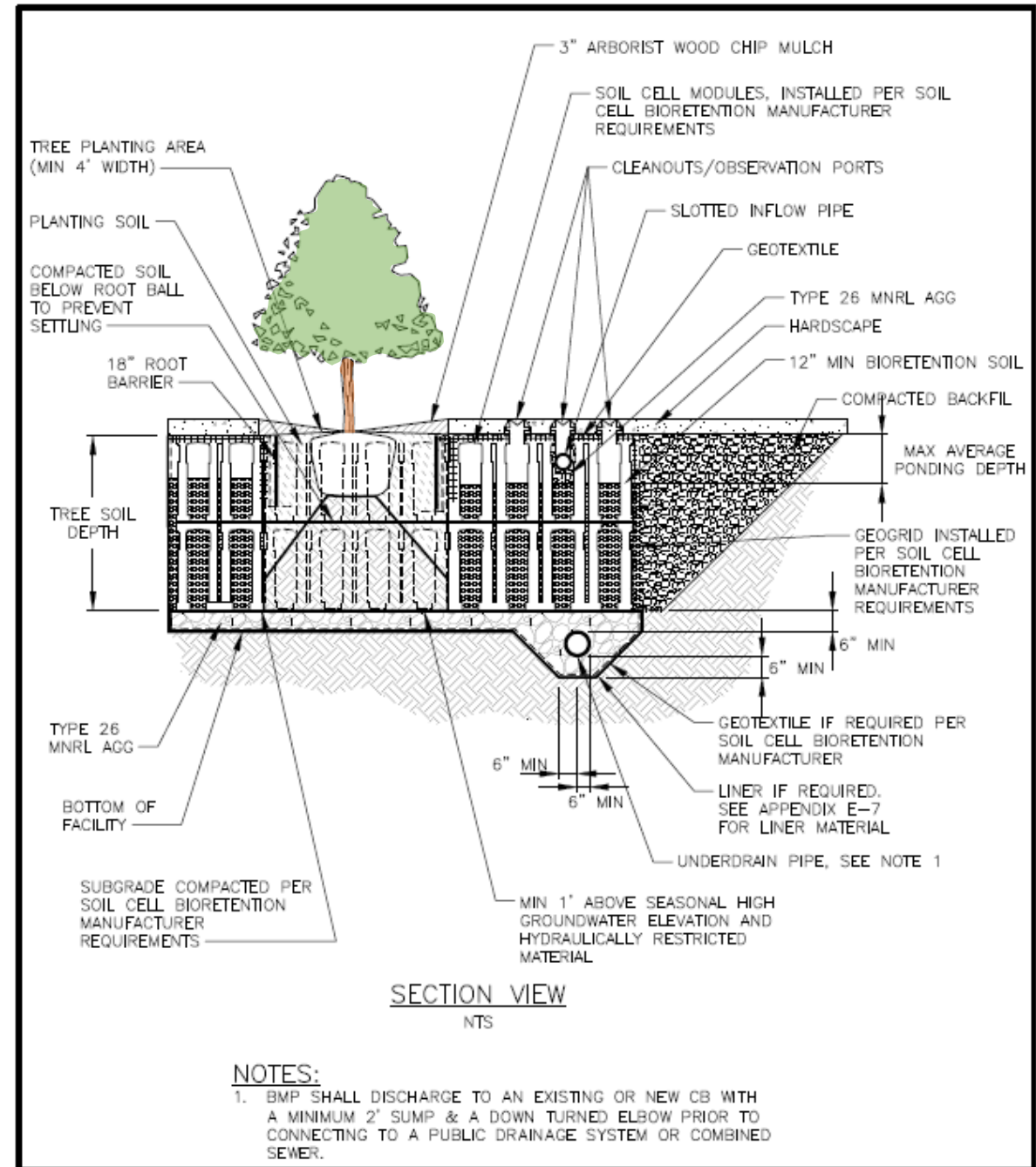
Trees & Stormwater Code

- Trees in Seattle
 - Executive Order
 - Tree Protection Code
- Stormwater Code manages drainage
- Seattle has more tools for trees vs. other cities
- Provides credits for new & retained trees
- SPU Trees for Neighborhood Program



New Tools for Trees

- Structural Bioretention
 - Modular soil cells
 - Cleans the water and slows the flow
 - Applicable for right of way and parcel projects
 - Will help fit trees in Seattle's dense urban environment



New Tools for Trees

- New Plan Detail
- Promotes tree planting in bioretention cells
- Adds trees while reducing conflicts on parcel and in the busy right of way

