

Trees4Livability
www.trees4livability.org

Khaiesta English
kenglish@trees4livability.org

Ruth Lipscomb
ruthlipscomb@comcast.net



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NONPROFIT SEEKS PETITION SIGNATURES FOR BELLEVUE TREE PROTECTIONS

[Bellevue, WA, March 2022] Trees4Livability, a nonprofit focused on strengthening the City of Bellevue's tree code, is gathering signatures to petition the City Council to take action to preserve the local tree canopy in 2022. Read and sign the petition at <https://trees4livability.org/tree-code-petition> during March. Trees4Livability comprises a group of concerned citizens from many backgrounds and neighborhoods across the city. Their volunteer Tree Code Working Group headed by Khaiesta English and Ruth Lipscomb collaborated to produce a research study comparing regional city tree codes and offering detailed recommendations. Among these are requiring permits for Significant or Landmark Tree removal, enforcing minimum tree density requirements for residential lots, and establishing meaningful deterrents for illegal cutting. Trees4Livability's recommendations are intended for greater Bellevue, outside of the R1 zone of Bridle Trails, which already has strong tree protections in place.

"City ordinances allow landowners to remove up to five Significant Trees without a permit, and there are no special protections for Landmark Trees, which take 100 - 150 years to grow," explains Trees4Livability founder Khaiesta English. "These trees contribute substantially to the overall canopy and air quality in Bellevue. No other city in our region allows these tree removal practices. Cities that care about their tree canopy have logical rules and meaningful enforcement. We are not looking to get in the way of development, but we want things to be done more thoughtfully so we can preserve trees for the next generation."

Citizens living or working in Bellevue should consider signing the Tree Code Petition to urge the City Council to take action in 2022. Findings will be presented to the City Council in advance of their retreat at the end of March. Bellevue currently has some of the weakest tree codes in the region, and getting stronger regulations into place now will protect the tree canopy for all to enjoy. The city is growing rapidly. Demolition permits have been up 75% in the past decade, and the number will only continue to grow. Millions of square feet of office space are being built to accommodate Amazon by 2025, and other companies are moving in.

"We want Bellevue to continue to be a desirable community for all to live, work, and play. We love our 'city in a park.' Once these trees are gone we can't get them back in our lifetimes," says English.

The report has been endorsed by more than ten civic, environmental, and advocacy organizations, including 300 Trees, People for Climate Action, 350 Eastside, Bellevue Green & Clean, and TreePAC, with more taking up the cause daily. Read and sign the petition at <https://trees4livability.org/tree-code-petition> and help spread the word!