

**MATERIAL PREPARED FOR DISCUSSION BY THE URBAN FORESTRY  
COMMISSION.  
THIS DELIBERATIVE DOCUMENT DOES NOT REFLECT THE OPINION OF  
THE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION AND MAY OR MAY NOT MOVE  
FORWARD TO VOTE.**

**DRAFT**

Dear Councilmember O'Brian,

The Office of Planning and Community Development briefed the Urban Forestry Commission about the proposed changes to the zoning code to remove barriers to the construction of backyard cottages and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) at our September 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Based on this briefing, we have a couple comments and suggestions for the City Council regarding the legislation.

The proposed change to remove the off-street parking requirement in particular should help reduce impervious surface and provide more flexibility in maintaining trees and greenery when backyard cottages or ADUs are built. Maintaining this provision in the final proposal will be important in reducing potential trade-off between providing more housing and maintaining the city's tree canopy.

However, even with reduced impervious surface requirements, in some instances existing trees will be cut down to make room for a new backyard cottage or ADU. The current draft proposal does not provide any way to mitigate the loss of these trees. The UFC would like to see the proposed changes include some form of mitigation for trees that are removed due to the construction of a backyard cottage or ADU. A couple policy options include require replanting a tree of similar potential size and type on the property or mitigation payments to fund planting of trees elsewhere if trees cannot be planted on site.

Seattle's Urban Forest represents a vital part of the city's green infrastructure that provides numerous benefits for all residents. The Urban Forest Stewardship Plan establishes a goal of 30 percent tree canopy cover by 2037. Ensuring opportunities for new housing and maintaining, and growing, the city's tree canopy at the same time will important for Seattle to meet its housing, social equity, and environmental sustainability goals and maintain our overall quality of life for all residents.

Thank you,