

Order No. 2023-10
AN ORDER OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

...to adopt principles to guide development of Port of Seattle’s environmental land stewardship efforts around trees, forest, and other habitat.

ADOPTED
JULY 11, 2023

INTRODUCTION

This Order contains principles that offer a value statement and guidance for evaluating trade-offs that may arise when considering specific courses of action or projects in the comprehensive approach to Port environmental land stewardship, including protecting and restoring trees, forest, and other habitat. This set of principles ensures strategies, decisions, and actions are consistently coordinated Port-wide for all types of land use.

The Port operates essential transportation infrastructure to ensure the efficient movement of people and goods in the region and must utilize its land for development and operations, which can include tree removal. At the same time, the Port recognizes the importance of balancing our operations with responsible use of resources, related to economic development, transportation, and natural resources.

The Port understands that trees, forest and other habitat provide valuable benefits to the public and the environment. The Port continually strives to go beyond minimum regulatory requirements to address environmental justice, improve environmental health, increase climate resilience, and improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

These principles, in line with the Equity Policy, offer guidance for responsibly stewarding our economic, community, and environmental resources to further improve the livability, accessibility, and environmental health of the region.

TEXT OF THE ORDER

The Port of Seattle Commission hereby adopts the following principles:

- 1. Use a comprehensive approach to environmental land stewardship, including trees, forest, and other habitat.**

- a. Utilize landscape-scale inventory and assessment as the foundation for decision-making to establish benchmarks of existing conditions and natural resources and tailoring stewardship approaches to existing and/or planned land uses.
 - b. Implement stewardship measures across all land use types (restoration sites, parks and open space, development sites, and operating areas), so the Port is consistent in its approach while reflecting site-specific needs.
 - c. Recognize the benefit of trees, forest and other habitat at locations that are publicly accessible or near Port facilities, because those areas provide environmental health and other benefits.
- 2. Maximize opportunities to increase trees, forest and other habitat as part of infrastructure planning and design.**
- a. Seek opportunities to expand and connect trees, forest, and other habitat to achieve greater benefits to the community and fish and wildlife. The Port will prioritize opportunities in or adjacent to existing contiguous trees, forest and other habitat.
 - b. If the Port is not able to add trees, forest and other habitat to development sites because of operational or land use standards, then the next consideration is to prioritize opportunities on other Port property that further contribute to the environmental and community benefits.
- 3. Apply an equity and environmental justice lens to environmental land stewardship.**
- a. Prioritize areas identified by the Equity Index as having the greatest need for stewardship actions to provide community benefits such as combatting heat island effects and improving air quality, community resilience, recreational opportunities and mental health.
 - b. In applying an equity lens, consider the historical and cultural value of the site and its assets.
 - c. In applying an equity lens, engage and consult community members to identify their concerns.
- 4. Support Community Partnerships and leverage inter-governmental coordination and Port funds to catalyze stewardship processes and outcomes.**
- a. Prioritize expanding and supporting community-led environmental land stewardship opportunities through grants and Port-sponsored events.
 - b. Actively support and participate in regional efforts and methodologies for stewardship of trees, forest and other habitat.
 - c. Coordinate with local governments to conduct the Port's stewardship activities supportive of regional planning, including city and regional tree canopy goals and initiatives.
 - d. Identify opportunities to connect and expand contiguous tree, forest and other habitat across jurisdictions and property owners.

5. **Use a holistic approach to stewardship to ensure trees, forest, and other habitat are healthy and self-sustaining.**
 - a. Use a landscape-based approach to stewardship. The Port will use landscape-scale inventory to broadly assess the extent and health of trees, forest, and other habitat supplemented with site-based assessments as appropriate. This approach supports informed decision-making for comprehensively stewarding tree, forest and other habitat across all land uses.
 - b. Protect existing high-value resources and enhance impaired resources to support current and future environmental and community benefits. Port operations and development may disrupt trees, however, the Port will explore and prioritize protection over removal and replacement, whenever possible.
 - c. Actively steward trees, forest and other habitat to ensure long-term viability to preserve resources.
 - d. Emphasize replacing invasive species with diverse, native species to ensure healthy and self-sustaining trees, forest and other habitat.

Strategies in Support

The Port shall implement the following strategies to build a strong and comprehensive foundation for environmental land stewardship:

1. **Adopt Aviation (SEA) Land Stewardship Plan**

Develop an Aviation (SEA) (Aviation) Land Stewardship Plan by Q4 2023. This plan will recommend Aviation land stewardship goals and prioritized actions that integrate and balance environmental land stewardship with airport operations, planning, and development.

2. **Adopt Aviation (SEA) Tree Replacement Standards**

Port-owned property is subject to tree replacement standards established by the local jurisdictions in which the properties are located. Currently certain Port-owned property within the SEA airport boundary is not subject to City of SeaTac tree replacement standards. SEA tree replacement standards shall be adopted for property under the airport building department jurisdiction pursuant to this Order and the Land Stewardship Plan.

- a. Develop and implement SEA tree replacement standards that meet or go beyond the minimum regulatory requirements of our neighboring jurisdictions.
- b. Ensure continued compliance with city, state, and federal development standards for all operations and development activities.
- c. Ensure development and other land use projects replace cleared trees and forest and identify opportunities for additional types of beneficial habitat such as pollinator meadows and wetlands.

3. Integrate trees, forest, and other habitat stewardship into existing Maritime programs.

Maritime currently has a robust program to expand trees, forest and other habitat to yield substantial community as well as fish and wildlife habitat benefits, particularly for endangered salmon and orcas.

- a. Maritime shall continue to implement the Sustainable Shorelines Program and the Multi-site Mitigation Banking Programs to create additional trees, forest and other habitat.
- b. Maritime shall continue to enhance and increase trees, forest, and other habitat through maintenance at existing restoration sites and parks.
- c. Maritime shall continue to seek innovative ways to support restoration of kelp forests and eelgrass beds in collaboration with statewide recovery efforts.

4. Sustainable Evaluation Framework Update

For Capital Improvement Projects subject to the Sustainable Evaluation Framework in compliance to Resolution 3768, incorporate consideration of environmental land stewardship into the evaluation framework, including documenting trees, forest and other habitat as part of project evaluations.