



Memorandum

Date: 7/21/2026
Meeting of: City Council

File No. AM No. 26-117
Type: Staff Report

TO: Members of the City Council
FROM: Mayor Angela Birney
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR CONTACT(S):

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DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Planning and Community Development	Lauren Anderson	Senior Planner
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TITLE:

Tree Code Update to the Redmond Zoning Code (RZC)

OVERVIEW STATEMENT:

Staff will introduce amendments to RZC 21.72, Tree Protection, RZC 21.30.070 Historic and Archaeological Resources, RZC 21.78, Definitions and references to RZC 21.72 for future City Council review and adoption in 2027.

Let's Connect page with draft code documents: <https://www.letsconnectredmond.com/trees>

☒ **Additional Background Information/Description of Proposal Attached**

REQUESTED ACTION:

☒ **Receive Information** ☐ **Provide Direction** ☐ **Approve**

REQUEST RATIONALE:

- **Relevant Plans/Policies:**
 - Redmond 2050 Comprehensive Plan:
 - Natural Environment Element: Tree Preservation and Landscape Enhancement
 - Housing Element: Housing Locations
 - Climate Resiliency Element: General Policies
 - Tree Canopy Strategic Plan
 - Environmental Sustainability Action Plan
 - 2023 Park, Arts, Recreation, Culture and Conservation (PARCC) Plan
 - Climate Action Implementation Plan
 - Watershed Management Plan

Community Strategic Plan
Redmond Zoning Code

- **Required:**
N/A
- **Council Request:**
N/A
- **Other Key Facts:**
N/A

OUTCOMES:

Approach:

An inter-departmental Tree Team was formed, consisting of staff from Planning, Parks, Public Works, and the Executive Office. It was vital to create this team to gain insight into how each Department addresses trees.

Three high-level goals were established for the Tree Regulations Update:

1. Clarity in the regulations where there are conflicts or regulatory gaps, to ensure consistent implementation and predictability;
2. Reflective of community values; and
3. Alignment with the City's Tree Canopy Strategic Plan so the regulations are complimentary and do not conflict with the greater vision.

Additionally, the team established main objectives:

- Early involvement of internal and external stakeholders;
- Informed by research of surrounding jurisdictions and review of emerging nationwide trends to help identify regulatory gaps;
- Establishment of clear mechanisms for reporting on tree removals, tree retention, and tree plantings; and
- Regulations that support the Comprehensive Plan, Tree Canopy Strategic Plan, and adopted growth targets.

Growth:

The existing tree regulations in the RZC were adopted in 1998. In 1998, Redmond had a population of 44,383. According to King County's 1998 Growth Report, there were 18,705 housing units (8,635 single-family homes and 10,068 multifamily units) and 52,812 jobs in Redmond. That is a stark difference to current statistics. In 2025, Redmond's population grew to 82,380 people. There were 14,254 single-family residences and 22,932 multifamily units. In 2024 there were 99,169 jobs. A thorough review of the regulations is warranted to ensure they reflect current community values and balance competing interests.

Key Changes

As noted above, a key element of the update is to provide clarity and reflect community values. Key proposed changes are noted below:

21.72 Tree Regulations.

- **Tree Management Approach.** Establishes a tree management framework that follows an impact mitigation sequencing approach by avoiding tree removal, minimizing impacts through retention of as many trees as possible, mitigating impacts that cannot be avoided by replacing trees at a higher ratio, compensating by paying a fee-in-lieu, and monitoring for success through the bonding period.
- **Tree Credit Calculation.** The minimum 35% tree retention requirement has been replaced with a new tree credit calculation. This calculation allows the City to prioritize certain kinds of trees (i.e. coniferous) and base the minimum credits on the land use district and development type. The tree credit calculation allows more flexibility for development and allows the retention of trees that are viable.

- Programmatic Permitting & CIPs. For city improvement projects, utility and infrastructure maintenance, sidewalk improvements, etc., programmatic permitting will be used to streamline the process under one tree removal permit for multi-phased projects.
- Tree Replacement. Prioritize conifers as replacement trees.
- Tree Replacement Ratios for Non-Development. Replacement tree quantities are based on the Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) of the removed tree. The larger the DBH, the more replacement trees are required.
- Fee-In-Lieu. Applicants will need to document in writing the rationale why on-site or off-site tree replacement is not achievable.
- Fee-In-Lieu Fund Uses. Expanding what the fee-in-lieu tree funds can be used for. Adding that the funds can be used for public education, site and soil prep, land acquisition, staffing needs, and site analysis and studies.
- Exception Requests. Revisions specifying documentation for exception requests and criteria for granting exception requests have been clarified. A third-party review may be required, and the fee is paid by the applicant. General criteria are to avoid, minimize, and mitigate.
- Development Flexibilities. Preserve trees associated with development to earn incentives such as reduced parking, yard encroachments, and additional height.
- Penalties & Enforcement. Move requirements from RMC to RZC for clarity. Repeat violators pay multiplied fines.
- Hazardous, Dead or Diseased Trees. The approach to hazardous trees has been clarified. Their removal requires a permit and 1:1 replacement is required. Removal doesn't count against the removal limits & tree credit calculation. The health of the tree must be verified by a Qualified Tree Professional.
- Culturally Modified Trees (CMTs). Prohibited from removal and require Department of Archeological and Historic Preservation (DAHP) permit to disturb. Added per feedback from the tribes and is in alignment with our Natural Environment Element policy and goals.
- Heritage Trees. A viable historic tree with 50-inch or greater DBH. Added into code to add protections for large old trees.

21.30.070 Archeological Sites and Resources.

- Scope. Updated the scope to be aligned with DAHP's Guidelines and included CMT's.

21.78 Definitions.

- Definitions. Several relevant definitions have been added to provide code clarity, such as a qualified tree professional, critical root zone, tree protection zone, street tree, right-of-way tree, tree credit, regulated tree, retained tree, grove, heritage tree, CMT, tree condition & viability, topping, and pruning.

References to 21.72.

- Update references to RZC 21.72 in 21.32 Landscaping, 21.64 Critical Areas, 21.68 Shoreline Master Program, 21.76 Review Procedures, and Appendix 11 Overlake Planned Action Applicability and Mitigation Measures.

The proposal reaches a balance of environmental protection in an urbanizing community. It is more reflective of community values than the current regulations.

COMMUNITY/STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH AND INVOLVEMENT:

Staff revised the existing Let's Connect webpage in May 2026 to obtain community input. The page contains information that frames the context for the regulations update, along with supporting documents and a project schedule. This webpage is still active. City Staff also created a Tree Code Update webpage. Community members additionally reached out via email through the update process offering input.

Public noticing methods:

- Electronic newsletter blasts: Parks, Sustainability, Economic Development, One Redmond, Plans, Policies & Regulations, Gov Delivery
- Social Media alerts

- Bulletin Board at City Hall
- Business cards with QR code at City Hall & community events
- **Timeline (previous or planned):**
 - Learning Sessions May and June 2026
 - Sustainability Office Hour June 2026
 - Open Office Hours June 22 & 25, 2026
 - Version 1 Draft Code Release June 4, 2026
 - Let's Connect Questionnaire June 4-31, 2026
 - Let's Connect Comments: June 2026 - Present
 - Meet Me at Marymoor July 19, 2026
 - Version 2 Draft Code Release Near the End of July 2026
 - Derby Days July 25, 2026
- **Outreach Methods and Results:**

Feedback and comments are currently being collected through the Let's Connect questionnaire and the open comment forum. The questionnaire will remain available until July 31, 2026. The comment forum will remain open throughout the entire process until final adoption. Community members may also submit comments via email to treecode@redmond.gov <<mailto:treecode@redmond.gov>>. We are continuing to gather input from the Let's Connect questionnaire and from Open Office Hours sessions. A summary of responses and associated data will be provided at a later stage. Comments received from internal Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as well as planning and code enforcement staff generally focused on the need for improved clarity, enforceable code provisions, and well-defined terminology.
- **Feedback Summary:**

A significant amount of the feedback received was incorporated into the proposed tree regulations. Most of this input is reflected in the Key Changes noted above.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Total Cost:

\$50,000 Facet consultant review & deliverables. The Tree Regulations Update was identified in the Planning and Community Development work program.

Approved in current biennial budget: ☒ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐ **N/A**

Budget Offer Number:

0000303 Development Services Planning \$19,881,810

Budget Priority:

Vibrant and Connected.

Other budget impacts or additional costs: ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒ **N/A**

If yes, explain:

N/A

Funding source(s):

General Fund

Budget/Funding Constraints:

N/A

☐ **Additional budget details attached**

COUNCIL REVIEW:

Previous Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
N/A	This item has not been presented to Council	N/A

Proposed Upcoming Contact(s)

Date	Meeting	Requested Action
1/5/2027	Committee of the Whole - Planning and Public Works	Receive Information
1/26/2027	Study Session	Receive Information
2/23/2027	Study Session	Receive Information

Time Constraints:

No time constraints.

ANTICIPATED RESULT IF NOT APPROVED:

Existing regulations will remain in effect. Continued application of current regulations would not be in compliance with HB 1110 Middle Housing and Comprehensive Plan HO-14 “reduce barriers to multiplexes, ADUs, backyard homes, middle housing, and other dense housing choices in all predominantly residential neighborhood zones of the City.”

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Tree Code Update Introduction Presentation