



How **balanced tree policies** support healthy, thriving communities.

Housing availability in the Puget Sound region

Our region is facing a housing affordability crisis that will require more homes of all types for a diverse and growing population. To meet our region's pressing need for more homes, we need to thoughtfully plan for growth, in addition to policies that promote our region's natural beauty.

How state, regional and local governments are helping

Washington's Growth Management Act was adopted in 1990 to protect our open places while requiring fast-growing counties and cities to develop a comprehensive plan to manage their growth. Every new home should be an integrated part of its surrounding neighborhood – whether it be safe access to parks, schools, jobs, parking requirements or transit, to name a few.

Housing and trees

Tree codes can have a significant impact on the Puget Sound region's ability to produce the housing it needs to accommodate current residents, newcomers, and future generations. Local tree policies are important in maintaining a city's tree coverage, but they can have unintended consequences when it comes to housing.

With balanced tree codes, we can support a thriving tree canopy and create more housing choices at the same time.

What are tree codes?

Most cities regulate the maintenance, removal and planting trees on private property and public lands. Trees are vital to our quality of life, beauty of our neighborhoods and our community identity. However, when it comes to growth, some cities assume we can't increase housing supply while maintaining a healthy tree canopy. City tree codes often contradict their own housing targets, leading to fewer housing options and pushing prices out of reach for many households.

How can we address the housing crisis AND protect our region's trees?

A good tree code lays the foundation to responsibly maintain or grow the level of tree coverage in a city while also allowing for much-needed housing to be built.

Tree codes inhibit building housing when they:

- Are too restrictive for homeowners and homebuilders
- Have burdensome requirements and penalties on individual tree removal
- Prohibit trees from being thoughtfully replanted in communities
- Have unclear or confusing processes and requirements

Balanced tree codes will:

- Align with the Growth Management Act
- Set clear and data-driven goals
- Be simple to understand and objective
- Align local tree and housing goals
- Respect private property rights

