

RCW 76.15.110 Promotion of urban and community forestry—

Department's authority. (1) The department must provide technical assistance and capacity building resources and opportunities to cities, counties, federally recognized tribes, and other public and private entities in the development and coordination of policies, programs, and activities for the promotion of urban and community forestry.

(2) The department may use existing urban and community forestry inventory tools or develop additional tools to assist cities, counties, federally recognized tribes, and other public and private entities to collect urban and community forest tree data that informs urban and community forestry management, planning, and policy development.

(3) The department shall strive to enable Washington cities' urban forest managers to access carbon markets by working to ensure tools developed under this section are compatible with existing and developing urban forest carbon market reporting protocols.

(4) The department may use existing tools to assist communities to develop urban forestry management plans. Management plans may include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(a) Inventory and assessment of the jurisdiction's urban and community forests utilized as a dynamic management tool to set goals, implement programs, and monitor outcomes that may be adjusted over time;

(b) Canopy cover goals;

(c) Reforestation and tree canopy expansion goals within the city's, town's, and county's boundaries;

(d) Restoration of public forests;

(e) Achieving forest stand and diversity goals;

(f) Maximizing vegetated stormwater management with trees and other vegetation that reduces runoff, increases soil infiltration, and reduces stormwater pollution;

(g) Environmental health goals specific to air quality, habitat for wildlife, and energy conservation;

(h) Vegetation management practices and programs to prevent vegetation from interfering with or damaging utilities and public facilities;

(i) Prioritizing planting sites;

(j) Standards for tree selection, siting, planting, and pruning;

(k) Scheduling maintenance and stewardship for new and established trees;

(l) Staff and volunteer training requirements emphasizing appropriate expertise and professionalism;

(m) Guidelines for protecting existing trees from construction-related damage and damage related to preserving territorial views;

(n) Integrating disease and pest management;

(o) Wood waste utilization;

(p) Community outreach, participation, education programs, and partnerships with nongovernment organizations;

(q) Time frames for achieving plan goals, objectives, and tasks;

(r) Monitoring and measuring progress toward those benchmarks and goals;

(s) Consistency with the urban wildland interface codes developed by the state building code council;

(t) Emphasizing landscape and revegetation plans in residential and commercial development areas where tree retention objectives are challenging to achieve; and

(u) Maximizing building heating and cooling energy efficiency through appropriate siting of trees for summer shading, passive solar heating in winter, and for wind breaks.

(5) The department may use existing tools to assist communities to develop urban forestry ordinances. Ordinances may include, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(a) Tree canopy cover, density, and spacing;

(b) Tree conservation and retention;

(c) Vegetated stormwater runoff management using native trees and appropriate nonnative, nonnaturalized vegetation;

(d) Clearing, grading, protection of soils, reductions in soil compaction, and use of appropriate soils with low runoff potential and high infiltration rates;

(e) Appropriate tree siting and maintenance for vegetation management practices and programs to prevent vegetation from interfering with or damaging utilities and public facilities;

(f) Native species and nonnative, nonnaturalized species diversity selection to reduce disease and pests in urban forests;

(g) Tree maintenance;

(h) Street tree installation and maintenance;

(i) Tree and vegetation buffers for riparian areas, critical areas, transportation and utility corridors, and commercial and residential areas;

(j) Tree assessments for new construction permitting;

(k) Recommended forest conditions for different land use types;

(l) Variances for hardship and safety;

(m) Variances to avoid conflicts with renewable solar energy infrastructure, passive solar building design, and locally grown produce; and

(n) Permits and appeals.

(6) The department may consult with the department of commerce in the process of providing technical assistance, on issues including, but not limited to, intersections between urban forestry programs and growth management act planning.

(7) The department may use existing and develop additional innovative tools to facilitate successful implementation of urban forestry programs including, but not limited to, comprehensive toolkit packages (tree kits) that can easily be shared, locally adapted, and used by cities, counties, tribes, and community stakeholders.

(8) The department must encourage communities to include participation and input by vulnerable populations through community organizations and members of the public for urban and community forestry plans in the regions where they are based.

(9) Delivery of resources must be targeted based on the analysis and prioritization provided in RCW 76.15.100. [2021 c 209 s 10.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 209: See note following RCW 76.15.005.