

DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION: HEDGES NOT DEFINED AS TREES

REQUEST SUMMARY

Are hedges included within the definition of **Tree**?

INTERPRETATION

Hedges do not perform as trees and are intended to be landscape features, provide privacy, and wind screening. This is evident by their close spacing and severe trimmings, as part of their designed condition. As such, hedges do not fall within the definition of Tree. To make evident that such vegetation does not qualify as a tree, a Tree Removal Permit will still be required to document the determination. However, such hedge removal will not require any replantings.

David Pyle
David Pyle (May 7, 2024 15:24 PDT)

05/07/2024

David Pyle, Director of Community Development

Date

CONTEXT, FACTS, AND FINDINGS

To create screens for privacy or breaks from the wind, residents will plant rows of tightly spaced plants that will grow as a hedge. These hedges are often non-native and must be regularly replaced as part of standard maintenance.

These hedges are often topped to limit height, but the stems of which will grow large enough to define these plants as **Significant Trees**. Additionally, the planting of a new hedge would not satisfy the required tree replacement of [SMC 21.03.060.J](#).

[SMC 21.03.070.B.29](#) defines **Tree** as:

A large woody perennial plant usually with a single main stem or trunk and generally over 25 feet tall at maturity.

[SMC 21.040.040.B.377](#) defines **Tree, Significant** as:

A tree that is in a healthy condition and is a noninvasive species...that is:

- a. A coniferous tree with a diameter of 8 inches or more [at 54 inches above the ground] or
- b. A deciduous tree with a diameter of 12 inches or more [at 54 inches above the ground].

Related Code References

[SMC 21.03.060](#) – Permit approval required

Resources

[Sammamish Tree Management](#)

[Sammamish Property Tool](#)

[King County iMap](#)

Questions?

[Submit Project Guidance](#)

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SIMILAR REGULATIONS IN NEARBY CITIES

[Issaquah Municipal Code 18.102.120:](#)

Hedge means a landscape barrier consisting of a continuous, dense planting of shrubs.

[Kirkland Municipal Code 95.25.c:](#)

Hedge Trees – Five or more trees of the same species with overlapping or touching crowns that are in fair or poor condition; have been planted and maintained in a linear formation at maximum eight-foot spacing, typically to function as a screen or barrier.

[Seattle Municipal Code 25.11.130:](#)

"Hedge" means a line of closely-spaced trees and/or shrubs intentionally planted and/or maintained along a property boundary or landscape border for privacy, screening, safety, or similar function, which typically requires ongoing pruning or shearing to maintain its intended function and/or reasonable use of nearby developed areas.