

Tree Code: Implementation phase shows progress and pitfalls

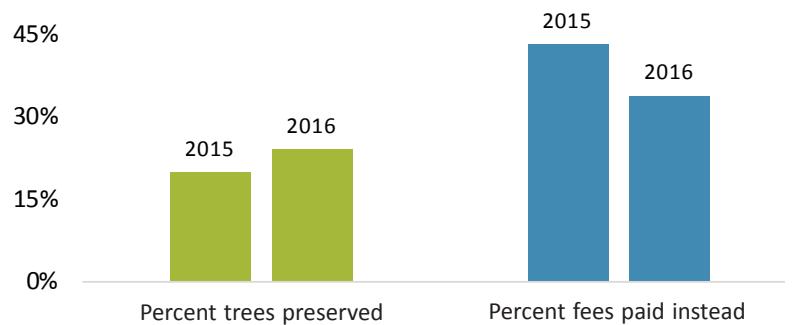


Audit highlights - September 2017

The City's comprehensive Tree Code went into effect in 2015 and applies to more trees than previous regulations. We audited whether the City is on track to both effectively implement the Code and to measure how well it works.

Initial results show improved tree protection for some trees . . .

Residential demolitions: percent with trees preserved went up from 2015 to 2016. Percent with fees paid instead of preservation went down.



. . . but less positive results for other trees as well as issues with implementation

- Some trees were less protected from 2015 to 2016
- Increased responsibilities added to City workload
- Outdated permitting software impaired implementation and outcome tracking
- The City's Urban Forestry Management Plan needs updating. The Plan and the Tree Code should be aligned with other priorities, such as housing affordability and equity.

We recommend addressing workload, technology, and compliance issues; updating and aligning City plans and priorities; and continuing to assess Tree Code outcomes.



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