MEMORANDUM

Date: **October 5, 2015**

To: **Tree Code Oversight Advisory Committee**

From: **Stephanie Beckman, Senior Planner**
Bureau of Development Services

Re: **Options for Changing Fee in Lieu of Preservation**

A number of Tree Code Oversight Advisory Committee (OAC) members have expressed concern that the fee lieu of preservation is too low. Staff has developed 4 potential options to consider for changing the fee. It would also be possible to combine options to achieve desired results. The current standard is also described below. Additional background material is also provided in the 8/12/15 memo about this topic (attached).

Current Tree Preservation Standard (private trees in development situations)
- Preserve 1/3 of trees at least 12" diameter on site (2/3 of trees over 12" may be removed)
- Each tree removed beyond the standard requires a fee in lieu of preservation
- Fee in lieu is based on the cost to plant and maintain two replacement trees (11.50.040.C.1.b). Per fee schedule = $1,200 per tree removed

Option #1: Update cost to plant two trees based on current estimates
This would maintain the same replacement ratio of 2 trees per each tree not preserved, but would reassess the current cost of planting and maintaining two trees for two years. Recent estimates from Urban Forestry would set this cost at $2,400 - $2,700 per tree removed beyond the preservation standard. See estimates for planting and maintaining one tree attached to the 8/12/15 memo for details.

This option would require a change to the fee schedule only. Note: updating the cost estimates would likely affect mitigation payments for all situations (development and non-development).

Option #2: Increase the number of replacement trees the fee in lieu is based on
As noted above, the code states that the mitigation is a payment equivalent to the cost of two trees. This could be increased to require the payment to be for more than two replacement trees.

This option would require a code amendment and a change to the fee schedule.

Option #3: Implement a graduated fee schedule based on the size of the trees removed
This option would involve a replacement table based on the size of the tree removed. More replacement (and a higher fee) would be required as the size of the tree removed increased. Several specific suggestions for a graduated replacement schedule have been suggested by committee members and are included in the summary of email responses also included in the packet for the 10/12/15 meeting. An example of what this could look like is also provided below:

Replacement for Trees Removed	
(Beyond 2/3 Tree Removal Allowance)	
Size of tree to be removed (inches in diameter)	**No. of replacement trees (for fee in lieu)**
More than 12 and up to 20	
More than 20 and up to 25	
More than 25 and up to 30	
More than 30	

This option would require a code amendment and a change to the fee schedule.

Option #4: Implement a full inch-for-inch replacement cost for trees removed
This option would require replacement of the total number of inches removed beyond the allowance to remove 2/3 of the trees above 12 inches. The current fee is based on $300 per inch. Assuming $300 per inch continued, removal of a 12 inch tree would cost $3,600, a 20 inch tree $6,000, a 30 inch tree $9,000.

This option would require a code amendment and a change to the fee schedule.

Attached:
Memo Re: Fee in lieu of preservation (8/12/15)