

## Public comments for the 11/23/21 Commission Meeting.

From: fredtrain@aol.com <fredtrain@aol.com>  
Sent: Monday, November 22, 2021 4:03 AM  
To: Eron Berg <Eron@portoft.com>  
Subject: Sims Way trees

Open Letter to the City of Port Townsend, Jefferson County PUD #1 and Port of Port Townsend

Reasons for Cutting Sims Way Trees are Baseless

The rationale for destroying the wonderful poplar corridor leading in and out of our downtown makes no sense whatever. The reasons given for this significant waste of taxpayer money are not compelling:

- 1) Eliminate hazard trees - Driving along that corridor there is little evidence, based on gaps or re-plants that many poplars have fallen. As a matter of fact, I only saw one small poplar down after the horrendous storm we had last Monday. We need some clear statistics backing up the City's claims. No new trees planted in that corridor will be immune from falling, given the fierce winds that funnel through there. Certainly, evergreens would be much more likely to succumb, since they retain full foliage during the windier cold seasons.
- 2) Provide land for Boat Haven expansion – The Port is hoping for enlarging the Boat Haven by a thin strip of 1 acre (3%), hardly a sufficient reason to cut down the trees. In reality, the City's property line maps show Highway 20's right-of-way running through or closely adjacent to the trees. If the Port's land uses (excluding buildings) can occur in the setback area, there is nothing to stop them from expanding toward the trees now. If the setback cannot be used, then how does the Port propose to wrest land from the Department of Transportation?
- 3) Put utilities underground - The trees do not need to come out. There are other options, like trenchless drilling near the roadway edge or under the bike lane.
- 4) Eliminate non-native trees - These trees have been here for decades and have been planted all over City as effective windbreaks. Are they going to go after all poplars and other non-native species in the City, including ornamental maples? This reasoning is specious at best.

Why on Earth are we even talking about spending almost \$2 million of scarce local public funds (\$370,000 by the City alone) on a completely discretionary project? We have much more pressing problems to address, like homelessness and potholes.

If the City insists on pursuing this folly, please replace the trees in stages, so the towering poplars are not all at once replaced with spindly, insubstantial saplings. Also, before any work is commenced on this project, the public should be allowed to view and comment on the specific replacement tree plan.

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