

## SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program

Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project



# Tree and Vegetation Removal—Frequently Asked Questions

*Learn about our tree and vegetation removal and restoration plans*

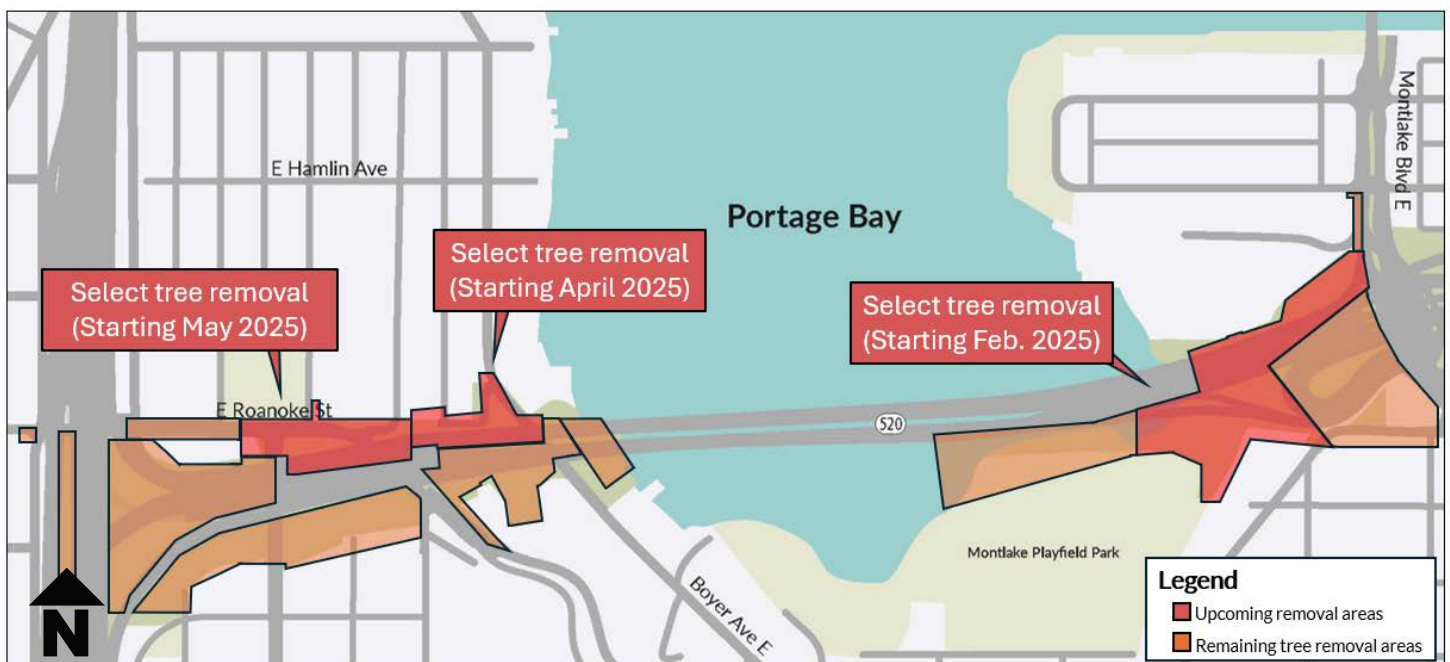
### What is happening now?

In November 2024, we started major construction for the SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project. As part of the early construction activities, crews will need to manage the trees and vegetation throughout the project area. This includes vegetation clearing, tree trimming and limbing, and tree removals.

During the first year of major construction, crews will remove trees and vegetation that conflict with construction activities and the final project design. We will remove trees in sections as we move forward with construction throughout the project area. The removal areas and planned removal schedule are shown on the **Tree and Vegetation Removal Map**.

Before we remove any trees, we will notify nearby neighbors in advance by sharing information via email updates and monthly construction meetings. We will also post large signs near the removal areas.

### Tree and Vegetation Removal Map



The map above shows all the areas where crews will remove select trees and vegetation.

UPDATED DECEMBER 2024

Crews will first remove select trees and vegetation in the areas highlighted in red. We will begin removing select trees and vegetation in the remaining sections starting as early as spring 2025 and continue the removals through the rest of the year. We will update this map as we make progress with construction and begin working in different areas. To learn more about the specific trees and vegetation that will be removed, please read our **Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan**.

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## More about the planned tree and vegetation removals

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### What work has been completed so far?

During the project planning phase, WSDOT and Skanska developed a [Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan](#) (TVMPP) as part of the [Section 106 Programmatic Agreement](#). The TVMPP outlines best management practices to preserve, protect and minimize impacts to trees and vegetation within the project area. The plan identifies specific areas where we need to remove, protect and restore trees, which are also shown in the [Tree and Vegetation Removal Map](#). The plan reflects feedback that WSDOT gathered during discussions with the city of Seattle and stakeholders, which can be reviewed in Section V of the TVMPP.

In summer 2024, the project's environmental team worked with certified arborists to locate trees and tag them for identification. Skanska is using the tree and vegetation data to help inform the project's design and construction, including how to access work zones, when to remove trees and where to place temporary and permanent structures. Additionally, we are developing plans to reach out to neighbors before we remove trees in their neighborhoods.

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### Where will trees and vegetation be removed and replanted?

We have several areas where we need to remove and replant trees and vegetation. Each area has its own landscaping goals and requirements, which can be found in the TVMPP.

These areas are outlined on the Tree and Vegetation Removal Map and include:

- Montlake Boulevard and the Bill Dawson Trail
- Montlake Interchange Area
- Portage Bay Shoreline Areas
- Boyer Avenue Hill Area
- North Capitol Hill "Buffer" Area
- East Roanoke Street
- I-5 and SR 520 Interchange

### When will you begin removing trees and vegetation?

We will begin removing trees and vegetation in winter 2024 and continue this work through 2025. We will remove trees in sections, starting with the area near Boyer Avenue East and East Roanoke

Street. As we move forward with construction, we will remove trees section-by-section through 2025. While we have not determined these dates yet, we will notify neighbors before we remove any trees.

### What is the process for removing trees?

Before we remove any trees, we follow a specific process to make sure that tree and vegetation removal is the last resort. This process includes:

#### **Tree inventory and survey:**

A team of experts identify and record each tree for tracking. Neighbors may have noticed surveying tags on trees, which help us identify trees in our inventory and keep records of their type, size, location and health.

#### **Health and safety evaluation:**

Arborists assess trees for potential hazards or health issues. If a tree poses a public safety risk or is in poor condition, we will remove the tree if there are no other solutions.

#### **Consultation with experts:**

Skanska, WSDOT and city of Seattle's Urban Forestry team work together to determine the impact on trees. We only consider removing trees that conflict with construction and permanent infrastructure or pose a danger to our crews.

**Public notice:** If we need to remove a tree, we will post a tree removal notice on the specified tree 30 days in advance. We will also post signs in the area to let neighbors know more about the tree removal process.

All decisions follow the guidelines laid out in the Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan (TVMPP), developed by WSDOT and Skanska to protect and preserve trees wherever possible.

## Will you replace the removed trees?

Yes, tree replacements are a key part of our commitment to maintaining the urban canopy. Skanska will follow WSDOT's detailed guidelines for replacing trees.

We base the number of replacement trees using a formula that considers the diameter of the trunks of the removed trees. This ensures more trees will be planted than removed. For example, several smaller trees may replace a single large tree that was removed, or in some cases, fewer large trees may replace a larger number of smaller ones.

## What happens to the trees that will be removed?

Trees provide benefits to the environment, whether they are planted in the neighborhood or after they are removed. Skanska is exploring several different options for reusing trees to get the most benefit per tree. Some of these options for repurposing the removed trees include using the wood byproducts to help stop soil erosion, manage stormwater runoff and develop landscaping in wetland areas.

## What are the benefits of the new trees?

We've carefully chosen the replacement trees and vegetation to best meet WSDOT's commitments with stakeholders and the standards set by the city of Seattle. We've included specific information on the restoration benefits in the ***Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan***.

At a glance, new trees will:

- Be carefully chosen for their resilience to each landscaping area
- Improve air quality and help manage stormwater
- Enhance the natural beauty of the area and support biodiversity
- Provide shade and reduce urban heat, contributing to long-term environmental health, as identified by the Urban Forestry team

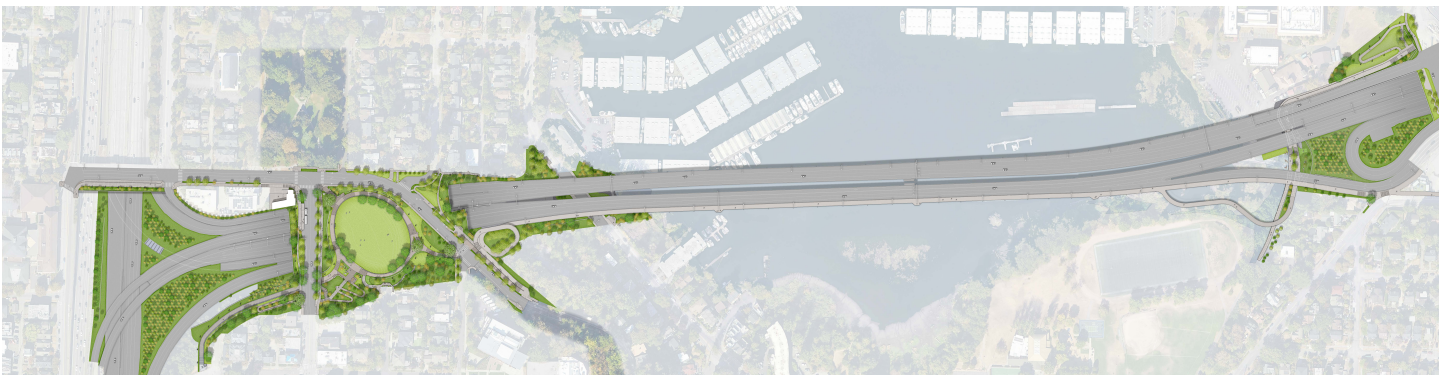
We will plant new trees in all the tree and vegetation management areas indicated in the TVMPP, as well as on the new Roanoke lid. Once the project is complete, there will be more trees in the project area than there are today.

## How will trees and vegetation be protected during construction?

We will protect all trees in the project area that do not conflict with construction and the final design. We will post tree protection permits issued by the city of Seattle's Urban Forestry team on the trees. We will primarily protect these trees by installing bright orange fencing around the base of the tree. We will follow the tree protection guidelines that have been established by the city of Seattle. Information on specific regulations and ordinances can be found in Chapter IV of the TVMPP.

## Where can I learn more about tree and vegetation management?

You can view the SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Project's ***Tree and Vegetation Management and Protection Plan*** (TVMPP), which describes project-specific management practices to preserve, protect and avoid affecting trees and other vegetation within a project's construction area.



*We will plant trees throughout the project area, including planting trees on the landscaped Roanoke lid.*

**Additional project information, including future road closures and construction activities, can be found on the SR 520 Construction Corner and WSDOT Project website.**

**SR 520 Portage Bay and Roanoke Lid Project:**

[wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/sr-520-portage-bay-and-roanoke-lid-project](https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/sr-520-portage-bay-and-roanoke-lid-project)

**SR 520 Construction Corner:** [sr520construction.com](https://sr520construction.com)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**SR 520 Portage Bay Bridge and Roanoke Lid Construction 24-hour Hotline:**  
[206-319-4520](tel:206-319-4520)

**SR 520 Program Communications email:**  
[sr520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:sr520bridge@wsdot.wa.gov)

**For general SR 520 Program questions:**  
[206-200-9484](tel:206-200-9484) (8 a.m.–5 p.m. M–F)

**SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Program  
Community Liaison & Ombudsman:**

David Goldberg | [David.Goldberg@wsdot.wa.gov](mailto:David.Goldberg@wsdot.wa.gov) | [202-412-7930](tel:202-412-7930)

**IF YOU NEED THIS INFORMATION TRANSLATED, CALL 206-319-4520.**

Si necesita esta información traducida, llame al 206-319-4520.

Nếu quý vị cần có bản dịch thông tin này, vui lòng gọi 206-319-4520.

이 정보의 번역본이 필요한 경우, 206-319-4520으로 전화하십시오.

Для получения информации на русском языке, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с WSDOT по телефону 206-319-4520.



*The new Roanoke lid will provide green spaces for community members to enjoy.*

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Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

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