



## Sunset Cove HOA Buffer Zone Tree Modification Policy/Guidelines

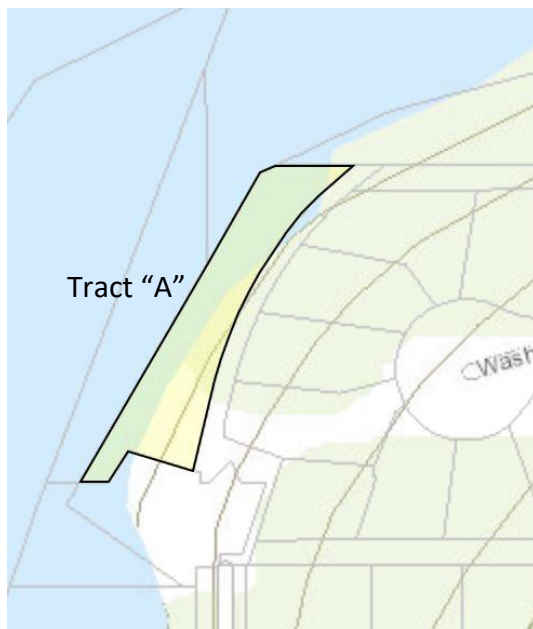
### Tract A

Tract A is the area along the west bluff by the SCHOA gazebo. The area below the property edge cliff has a strip of City of Anacortes land, while the area from there to the shore, also on a bluff is Sunset Cove HOA Property. This property has the gazebo, several conifers, and a mix of native and non-native grasses, flowers and shrubs. This policy regards only the viewshed trees in the Tract A area and secondarily target or health risk trees in tracts B, C and D.

The Skagit County property description of Tract A may be viewed at the following link:

<https://skagitcounty.net/Search/Property/?id=P117680>

The tax lot parcel number is: P117680



Filed with the Skagit County Auditor's Office in December of 1999 are 2 easement agreements (#199912300185 & #199912300183) permitting/allowing the Sunset Cove Development LLC HOA to alter the trees in Tract "A" to maintain the viewshed for the residents. This was likely done to ensure the value of the properties in the SCHOA that benefit from the view.

However, over the course of time this permission has been interpreted numerous ways by residents. The purpose of this document is to identify the policy and guidelines that provides clarity and consistency over time, while ensuring the landowners and the health of the trees are recognized.

While the SCHOA needs to be involved with the management of the trees in Tract A, the location of the trees presents a special case. Historically, the SCHOA Board takes action such as pruning or removing trees based on a target risk threat to human safety or property damage, or for the health of the tree(s). As of this date (April 2023), no trees in Tract A are of a height or distance from a building to be such a threat. Therefore, the SCHOA will not cover the cost of tree modification in Tract A unless they pose a target risk threat to persons or property, or both.

#### Guidelines for tree modification(s) in Tract A:

- In recognition that alterations to trees in the viewshed of others will impact everyone who sees the tree(s), a collaborative approach is needed. Any tree modification in Tract A must be approved by the SCHOA Board.
- Tree modification in Tract A must reflect the recommendations of a certified arborist. An arborist report must accompany proposed changes to trees in Tract A. The SCHOA Board periodically performs a tree survey of Tract A and all wooded buffers (Tracts B, C and D). Property owners are also welcome to have trees evaluated professionally by a certified arborist. (Resources-City of Anacortes and Pacific Northwest ISA Certified Arborists-page 4)
- Prior to tree modification, a photo of the tree or trees in question must be taken, with arrows or x's showing which branches will be altered/eliminated. If a property owner is unsure how to do this task, the SCHOA Board will provide a volunteer to assist them.
- This image will be shared with all impacted landowners. The list of viewshed landowners will be determined by the landscape committee and approved by the SCHOA Board on a case-by-case basis.
- All impacted property owners will have the opportunity to voice their preference/opinion regarding the change. The SCHOA Board will consider all feedback and provide a decision.

- Once modifications have been approved by the SCHOA Board a certified arborist will be hired and compensated by the property owner(s) requesting the change and the tree modification must be done consistently with the original plan.
- Questions regarding tree modification(s) in Tract A, B, C & D of the Sunset Cove Homeowners Association should be directed to the following address:  
[board@sunsetcove.org](mailto:board@sunsetcove.org)

## Tracts B, C and D Tree Modification

- Tree modification in Tracts B, C and D (map below) must reflect the recommendations of a certified arborist. An arborist report must accompany proposed changes to trees in Tracts B, C and D.
- Tracts B, C and D found in the SCHOA are surveyed from time to time by certified arborists to determine the size, health and possible target risk to human safety or property damage that trees found within said Tracts pose. Owners can also offer suggested revisions to trees in Tracts B, C and D based on their observations.
- Once a determination has been made by a certified arborist that a tree or trees have been identified, and labeled as “in need of pruning or removal” the SCHOA must take action to satisfy the guidance found within the report; the cost of the required maintenance will fall upon the SCHOA.

Sunset Cove Lot Map-Buffer zones A, B, C and D are hi-lighted in blue



## **Additional Resources:**

City of Anacortes Planning Department

Contact: Planning Manager Libby Grage (360) 299-1984

Pacific Northwest ISA Certified Arborists

Phone: (503) 874-8263

Website: [pnwisa.org](http://pnwisa.org)

To find a directory of ISA certified arborists by state follow the path below:

[pnwisa.org](http://pnwisa.org)>Homeowners>Find an arborist