

Bend Bulletin, *Letters to the Editor* (published September 4, 2024):

Regarding the article [“More groups join appeal of Bend tree preservation code”](#) in the Aug. 30 Bulletin: A developer wishes to unilaterally change the rules they helped create, and has enlisted the support of groups who were not involved in the process.

The Tree Regulation Update Advisory Committee (TRUAC) process was open to the public. They conducted nine meetings last year.

The development community was directly or indirectly represented by seven of the 14 TRUAC members (a developer, home builder, lobbyist for the builder community, “YIMBY” lobbyist and design consultants — an architect, civil engineer, landscape architect) as well as other expert representation including two arborists. The construction-oriented members had opportunities to express opposition to policies proposed and to forward desired alternatives. In some cases they did and proposed rules were loosened.

I attended some meetings and saw this process at work. In the end, there was a close vote to approve the hard-won recommendations. The process was open, considered and fair. The close final vote suggests that no one got everything they wanted, and this is as it should be.

The appellants assert that this regulation will unduly increase housing costs. However, this assertion has not been documented, nor the degree of increase. Some may say that “any cost increase is too much.” However, a glance at the many factors that potentially increase housing costs (e.g. increased financing costs, NIMBY-ism, limited availability of skilled construction labor, and zoning skewed towards single-family housing) suggest that tree preservation may be a scapegoat. Trees are really more of an investment than a pure cost. Mature trees greatly improve the environment and in fact enhance property values.

It is a disservice to the hard work of the TRUAC committee to disrupt this process before it has been given a chance. To the city council I say: stand your ground, and give these environmentally-friendly rules a chance to work. They can always be amended if necessary.

— *Robert F. Anderson, Bend*