

From: [Emily Abate Guttman](#)
To: [Planning and Zoning](#)
Subject: Thoughts on efforts to preserve our mature trees
Date: Tuesday, January 4, 2022 4:06:51 PM

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Dear Planning and Zoning,

I'm writing in support of legislation that protects our town's trees.

Trees help improve water quality, air quality, increase property values and make neighborhoods more visually appealing. Our landscapes are among a visitor's first impressions of a place; they help improve the image and reputation of neighborhoods and business districts.

Backyard trees specifically provide landowners and communities with many benefits. In addition to improving air and water quality, mature trees prevent soil erosion, and save homeowners money and energy by moderating extreme temperatures. With our many neighborhoods in flood zones, protecting against soil erosion is incredibly important to our town.

Lastly, our mature trees are all

native to this region. Native plants are the ecological basis upon which life depends, including birds and people. Without them and the insects that co-evolved with them, local birds cannot survive. Unfortunately, most of the landscaping plants available in nurseries are alien species from other countries. These foreign plants not only sever the food web, but many have become invasive pests, outcompeting native species and degrading habitat in remaining natural areas.

My husband and I moved our family to Westport in 2020. We were attracted to our neighborhood's woodsy feel. We moved into a newly built house that was built with the property's mature trees in mind. Sadly, a property currently being built down the street, has not been approached in the same thoughtful way. Over fifty mature trees were removed, the majority were on the perimeter of the lot. The entire neighborhood was pained by the loss of those trees. We'd love to see the town help to find the balance of growing and expanding, while maintaining the beautiful trees that make our town so picturesque.

Thank you for your
consideration,

Emily Guttman
Old Hill, Westport

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