
URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2018

City Hall, Lovejoy Room

Commission Members present:	Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Secretary Catherine Mushel, Damon Schrosk, Gregg Everhart, Brian French, Anjeanette Brown, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento, Thuy Tu, Daniel Newberry
Commission Members absent:	None
Urban Forestry staff present:	Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Natasha Lipai, Operations Administrative Specialist; Jeff Ramsey, Botanic Specialist II
City staff present:	Tony Garcia, City Attorney's Office; Jennifer Karps, Bureau of Environmental Services; Matt Krueger, Bureau of Environmental Services
Guests present:	Whitney Dorer, Friends of Trees; Roberta Jortner, Policy Committee; Jim Labbe, Policy Committee; Bruce Nelson; Doug Klotz

Public Comments

- Doug Klotz provided comments on driveway ramp shapes and their impacts on street tree planting spaces, hoping these will be considered and design improvements will be implemented with the Residential Infill Project.
 - Driveways with square wings are now the default design that Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is referring people to. These will continue to result in more impervious surface area and, therefore, less soil for street trees; moreover, this increased paving would dominate the right-of-way landscape in row-house situations where there are many driveways in a row. This is a concern due to the urban heat island effect.
 - Doug recommends that PBOT specify curved driveway wings as the primary default, while reserving the square driveway wings for special situations, such as for narrow planting strips.
- Friends of Trees (FOT) Deputy Director Whitney Dorer presented an overview of FOT's 2017 Impact Report, as well as offered the opportunity for FOT to present to the UFC once the 2017-2018 planting season wraps up.
 - Highlights from the season: No cancellations due to weather; greater than 50,000 trees and shrubs planted; planting events with community partners, including APANO in the Jade District.
 - Expressed concerns with two major changes coming with the renewal of their Programmatic Permit:
 - First, the exclusion of 'A Strips' (2.5- to 3-foot wide planting strips) would reduce the number of planting strips available for planting; affects about 17,000 planting strips in the city, which are disproportionately located in low-income and low-canopy neighborhoods; would negatively affect FOT's ability to work with all Portlanders.

- Second, 1.25-inch caliper trees would no longer be permitted for planting in residential areas; rather, 1.5-inch caliper trees would be required; would negatively affect FOT's ability to find a diverse variety of tree species to offer participants; this goal counters the goal of city bureaus and FOT alike to improve species diversity.
- Damon asked what percentage of planting strips in low-income/low-canopy neighborhoods are considered 'A Strips.'
 - Whitney offered to follow-up with Damon later with an exact number.
- Daniel asked why these changes are coming up.
 - Jenn answered that there are industry-accepted standards for planting strip size, with most programs in the nation having 3.5 to 4-foot wide minimum strip sizes. Additionally, City Code Title 11 specifies minimum caliper sizes for street trees planted. According to multiple studies, the amount of services provided by small trees is a net negative.
- Catherine commented that there should be further discussion around re-designing the right-of-way (ROW) for trees and retrofitting existing ROW to make more planting space, where possible.
- Damon commented that as a private arborist and contractor for Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), he also struggles to find trees of appropriate caliper size. He later acknowledged that he is the contractor specifically under the Programmatic Permit that FOT operates under.
- Megan inquired about Urban Forestry's knowledge of recent studies indicating that smaller caliper trees perform better and survive longer than trees planted at a larger caliper.
 - Jenn responded that those studies did not specifically focus on trees planted in the public right-of-way. She added that UF deals with trees throughout their entire life cycle and UF relies on nurseries to prune trees for ROW life in order to avoid setting up young trees to be future public hazards.
- Brian commented that there may be solutions that work best for specific neighborhoods that do not necessarily apply on a city-wide scale.
- Whitney closed with saying that FOT has a growing pruning program and that they are flexible with what trees they include in their pruning events.
- Commissioners agreed that we should revisit these questions.

Forestry Report - Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- Arbor Day is coming up Saturday, April 21st.
- The annual Elm Pruning Moratorium is currently in effect, as of April 15th. This is to curtail the effects of Dutch Elm Disease and ends October 15th.
- Catherine and Daniel were thanked for offering to serve on the Appeals Board.
- Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 budget updates and reminders:
 - UF's cut package calls for billing public entities as applicable for emergency response in public rights-of-way.
 - The Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC) has been presented with UF's proposed add package, which is to raise development permit fees to support increased and realigned permitting and operations staff. DRAC was more interested in System Development Charges, which are another fee administered by Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R) staff not affiliated with UF.
 - There was discussion of UF's budget packages at the public meetings. UFC commissioners who submitted budget comments were thanked for doing so.
- In support of the Street Tree Task Force, Commissioner Fritz has requested from City Council a one-time fund of \$100,000. The task force will be an advisory group with a purpose of reporting to Council on how The City can take on street tree maintenance responsibilities.
 - The City Budget Office (CBO) did not support this request for funds due to The City's General Fund already facing cuts. Commissioners Fritz and Fish both supported the funding; Mayor Wheeler's office and Commissioner Fritz are currently discussing the request.

- Streets 2035, also known as PBOT’s Street Design Master Plan project, aims to address competing space issues in the public right-of-way. UFC commissioners were critical in ensuring that street trees were given as much priority as other right-of-way infrastructure, such as street lights.
 - Project Manager Matt Burkow will come speak about Streets 2035 with the UFC at a later date; his professional background is with a private consulting firm.
 - Vivek commented that if the Street Tree Task Force does not receive funding, not much will happen in the way of reforming right-of-way spaces. Jenn followed-up by saying that residents are always welcome to submit their comments and suggestions to their elected officials. The CBO has recommended that UF cut education and outreach programs to cover the costs of the task force, but UF has pushed back.
- Vivek proposed moving Policy discussion to after break; everyone agreed to the agenda change.

Appeals Board Appointments

- Vivek shared that we have two potential new members of the Appeals Board, pending a vote.
- Barbara briefly explained the purpose of the Appeals Board, which is to review appealed permit decisions. The board verifies whether the City Forester issued the permit decision according to code and was not arbitrary or capricious in doing so. There is no further appeal within the City for appellants, though they may seek legal counsel and a remedy in the courts. She closed by referencing the [by-laws](#) on the City’s website for more information.
- Vivek motioned to nominate Megan and Anjeanette as new members of the Appeals Board. Damon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Barbara explained that the next steps will be for Megan and Anjeanette to attend a training; once this is completed, they will be able to serve on the board. The Appeals Board and the Heritage Tree Committee are required by code, while the other committees are not. Jenn announced that the next Appeals Board training will be before May’s general UFC meeting.

February and March UFC Minutes

- Jenn proposed correcting the February minutes to have all acronyms and abbreviations spelled out; Thuy requested that acronyms remain noted this way for all future meeting minutes; Jenn agreed.
- Vivek moved to accept the February minutes with the proposed acronym-related corrections. Damon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Jenn announced that the March meeting minute vote needs to be deferred to May’s general meeting, since not all corrections submitted had been reviewed by the UFC.

Policy Committee Report

- Daniel provided an overview of a letter containing the Policy Committee’s (“The Committee”) comments on the second draft of the Residential Infill Project (“The Infill Project”). The Committee aims to submit the letter by May 8th.
- Highlights of the letter:
 - Limits on impervious surfaces are encouraged; there are currently no limits.
 - The proposed removal of the “A Overlay” is supported because it would increase potential tree space. A Overlay zoning currently allows for higher density on lots to the point that they would be exempt from certain Title 33 requirements; no Title 11 implications.
 - Catherine requested adding a brief definition of “A Overlay” be included in the letter; the Policy Committee agreed.
 - Recommend reducing on-site parking to reduce impacts to on-site tree planting spaces.
 - Supports increasing front yard setbacks; however, The Committee is concerned that this goal competes with The Infill Project’s other goal of encouraging more ADU construction, which may lead to less space for trees.
- After much discussion between committee members and UFC commissioners, both groups agreed that The Infill Project needs to ensure that space for trees will be maximized on the lots, regardless of how it moves forward with the proposed setback changes.

- Barbara Hollenbeck motioned for Daniel to edit the letter with the UFC members' recommendations, including rephrasing the setback comments in an outcome-oriented framework to ensure maximizing space for large form trees, then to go ahead and submit the letter to the PSC by May 8th. Damon seconded the motion. Gregg abstained. The rest of the UFC members approved and the motion passed.

Community Needs Survey Report & Assessment – Kerry Anderson, PP&R Operations & Strategies

- The Community Needs Assessment Survey (“The Survey”) was a large project conducted in May 2017 in conjunction with Portland State University’s Research Survey Lab. Intend to conduct this survey every five years going forward.
- The Survey specifically focused on equity and inclusion, as well as parks and trees. The last community needs survey was completed in 2008. Past surveys have focused primarily on Recreation Services and have not included Urban Forestry.
- Focus groups, market research using Bureau and Census data, and park intercept surveys, were all methods and resources used to determine needs and identify disconnects in service.
- Three objectives:
 - Develop a general “Portlander” sense by ensuring that the demographic composition of survey respondents matches that of Portland according to Census data categories: gender, race and ethnicity, age, and income.
 - Break down responses geographically by neighborhood coalition.
 - Compare responses between people of color, as a cohesive unit, and white people.
 - Important to note that these responses cannot be used to represent a specific ethnic or cultural community’s response.
- The Survey received 2,003 respondents, which surpassed the goal of 1,065. 85 percent of the surveys were completed on the Internet, and 15 percent were completed over the phone.
- Responses overall indicate that Portlanders care the most about maintaining and improving existing assets, and improving equity and accessibility of park access and services throughout the city.
- Survey results for general long-term planning items (average importance scores, rated 1 to 5):
 - “Restoring and improving the environmental health of existing park lands,” 4.4
 - “Planting and maintaining trees to improve the health of the urban forest,” 4.3
 - “Supporting environmental sustainability,” 4.6
 - “Preserving and enhancing trees and forests in the city,” 4.3
- Results for Street Tree Quantity Satisfaction:
 - Satisfaction was highest among residents living west of the Willamette River
 - Satisfaction was lowest among residents in central NE and North Portland.
- Results for Prioritizing Goals—Urban Forestry:
 - “Managing the health of trees and forests in the city” received the highest positive response rate of any question on the VISTA survey, with an average score of 4.7.
 - All other goals received above average importance goals.
 - Seventy percent of respondents did not know PP&R managed park and street trees.
- Survey Comments:
 - Positive comments included an appreciation for Forest Park and trees, in general.
 - Negative comments focused on tree maintenance needs and a lack of public awareness of the Tree Code.
- The Survey indicates that the public finds Urban Forestry’s work important. But there is a disconnect between what UF does, what the public thinks we do, and what the public thinks we should do.
- Regarding the survey question asking if respondents knew that PP&R “managed” park and street trees, after some discussion, Jenn and the UFC agree that “oversees” would be a better word than “manages.”
- Vivek asked if there was a difference in responses among Portlanders that had lived in the city for a long time versus for a short time; Kerry responded that this part of the analysis has not yet been completed. Commissioners expressed surprise and curiosity about how most Portlanders heard about

parks through interpersonal communication versus through social media. They also thanked Kerry for her time and for including Urban Forestry in the survey.

Meeting adjourned at 11:37 AM