

# Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

*The **Urban Forestry Commission** was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle*

## GOAL:

City decision-making recognizes the urban forest as a critical piece of our urban infrastructure.

## PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

1. To help implement the Urban Forest Management Plan and achieve Seattle's 30% tree canopy cover goal
2. To provide feedback and recommendations to City Council and the Mayor on specific policy actions that will ensure the long-term health and viability of Seattle's urban forest
3. To suggest new City policy that will ensure the long-term health and viability of Seattle's urban forest
4. Provide a forum for public dialogue to assist the Commission in its advisory role

## RECENT ACTIVITIES:

1. Letter of support to consolidate community tree planting and education programs and the creation of a new full time position within the Seattle Department of Public Utilities
2. Proposed an update to the environmental element of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan for the 2012 Annual Update
3. Provided comments to the proposed draft Shoreline Master Program Regulations

## MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on the Urban Forestry Commission and how to get involved with urban forestry issues in Seattle visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/>

*Seattle's urban forest is a thriving and sustainable mix of tree species and ages that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem that is valued and cared for by the City and all of its citizens as an essential environmental, economic, and community asset*

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Seattle's urban forest resources

### **What is the urban forest?**

At its simplest form Seattle's urban forest consists of all trees in the city on both public as well as private property. However, it is also important to define the urban forest as part of the larger urban ecosystem. In this case a definition of the urban forest includes all of the plants (understory and trees).

### **What is an ecosystem?**

An ecosystem consists of all the biological elements (plants, wildlife, humans) and the abiotic elements (climate, soil, water) that interact with one another in a local environment (i.e., the City of Seattle).

### **What are ecosystem services?**

Ecosystem services are the fundamental life supporting processes that humans depend upon that are provided by the natural environment. (e.g., the leaves and needles of trees remove air pollution that is emitted from car exhaust).

### **What are some of the ecosystem services of the urban forest?**

Trees located throughout Seattle on public and private property affect our lives and the local economy in ways that aren't always obvious. Trees provide community, environmental, and economic benefits that range from reducing the effects of density to increasing property values, to providing ecological services such as stormwater mitigation, air toxics removal, and greenhouse gas sequestration.

### **What threatens the health of the urban forest?**

There are many threats to the health of our urban forest including lack of available growing space; urban growth and development; inadequate funding for municipal tree-care programs; overuse of park and natural spaces; soil compaction; vandalism; poor tree selection that creates maintenance problems or trees that get too large for their growing space; insect or disease, especially in areas where there is limited tree diversity; storms and wind; poor tree care practices by residents and untrained arborists; and lack of public awareness about the benefits of healthy urban forests.

## Management of Seattle's urban forest

### **How is Seattle managing its urban forest?**

Urban trees are under pressures not present in native forests and require active management intervention to sustain them. In 2007 the City of Seattle set the bold goal of achieving 30 percent tree canopy cover in 30 years to increase the environmental, social, and economic benefits trees bring to Seattle residents. The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) is a 30-year plan that recommends a broad range of actions that will forward the goal of a sustainable urban forest in Seattle. The plan can be found at: <http://www.seattle.gov/trees/management.htm>

### **What is infrastructure?**

Infrastructure is the basic physical systems of Seattle's population, including roads, buildings, sewer pipes (gray infrastructure), as well as trees and landscapes (green infrastructure).

## Seattle's community and the urban forest

### **Who should I call if I think a tree is being removed illegally?**

For street trees call (206) 684-TREE (8733). For trees on private property call (206) 615-0808.

### **Where can I find more information about Seattle's urban forest?**

You can go to the Seattle reLeaf website: [www.seattle.gov/trees](http://www.seattle.gov/trees)