Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)
ADOPTED November 9, 2011
Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower Room 2750
700 5th Avenue, Seattle
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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

Attending

Commissioners
Tom Early (TE)
Gordon Bradley (GB)
John Floberg (JF)
Jeff Reibman (JR)
Peg Staeheli (PS)

Absent- Excused
Matt Mega (MM) – chair
Nancy Bird (NB)
John Small (JS)

Staff
Sandra Pinto de Bader (SPdB) - OSE
Lisa Ciecko (LC) - Forterra

Public
Steve Zemke (SZ)
Nicholas Dankers (ND)

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm

Call to Order
PS – let's start the meeting

Chair report
SPdB – reported on the debrief done by the IDT regarding the UFC/IDT joint meeting. Very positive interaction. Team wished for more time to interact with commissioners. Following meetings will include more time for interaction.

TE – Can individual commissioners meet with IDT individually?

JF- next steps for the UFMP update include commissioners' involvement in the process with the IDT.

PS – Maybe have assigned seating at those meeting so you can't sit next to someone you know. Not have two departmental people next to each other. In a way we ran out of time.

SPdB – next year the agenda might have more time to interact. IDT was very appreciative of the opportunity to meet UFC members. Felt it was a candid opportunity to interact. Well received. They liked the facilitator.

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JF – When is the UFMP due?

SPdB – shooting for a first draft in February. Needs to be ready to adopt in August. The iterative process would benefit from inclusion of UFC input (maybe individual commissioners would meet with IDT to work on specific policy issues on the UFMP. Also, Nancy had asked about follow up items from the meeting. The facilitator highlighted several points:

- Moving people to understand trees as infrastructure is a big important shift ahead.
- Right tree in the right place is a generally shared goal. This does not mean "no maintenance."
- A new revenue stream will be needed to achieve the goals of the UFMP.
- The iTree analysis will be useful and is long-awaited.
- The UFMP should have a stronger tie to public health to take advantage of momentum there.
- It would be useful for the UFC to help set priorities for the UFMP so it does not seem as "self serving."
- Preservation is a key theme. Also important to identify priority preservation areas, as well as areas where new planting is possible.
- The UFC should develop a statement of goals for the UFMP, to provide guidance ahead of the draft being developed.
- The UFMP is an opportunity for more public engagement.

As we move ahead on the agenda I would like to share six policy issues the IDT has identified as needing UFC input.

Also I've been working with the IDT on having a 'City of Seattle master tree list'. There is such a list already but the confusion is that it was named 'Green Factor tree list'. I'm working with staff to change the name to make it clearer that this is the general list. The IDT believes it's a good idea to have the list reside in OSE's website with all other departments would link to it. The document would be updated annually by the City Arborist (in SDOT).

JF – call it City of Seattle recommended tree list

GB – maybe the list can also include images

SPdB – SDOT also mentioned that maybe we could put together a plant list

PS – that might be taking it a bit too far. Probably would have to include 'unallowed' plants in the City of Seattle. The problem with a list like that is that is not exhaustive and might create trouble when people go to install plants. Maybe just make a reference to King County noxious plant list.

i-Tree project – Lisa Ciecko (Forterra)
Lisa Ciecko gave a presentation on the i-Tree project. Worked on 223 plots broken down by management unit according to the UFMP. The needed to have at least 20 plots for each management unit.

GREEN CITIES RESEARCH ALLIANCE

PARTNERING FOR
SUSTAINABLE CITIES
THROUGH SCIENCE,
POLICY, AND
CITIZEN ACTION

USDA
Forest Service

Pacific
Northwest
Research
Station

Urban Natural Resources Stewardship:
Green Cities Research Alliance

What is the issue?

Green cities are more livable cities. To address this, cities need to plant trees, protect parks and green spaces, build green infrastructure, and restore watersheds. Large-scale, long-term research will help us learn how natural resource planning, restoration, and stewardship can improve urban ecosystems.

Current Efforts

The U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Station is implementing the Green Cities Research Alliance in the broader Puget Sound region. Scientists are working with agencies, non-profit organizations, universities, and private sector firms to assess forest conditions, prioritize forest management programs, better understand stewardship activity, and integrate GIS and other geospatial tools to monitor long-term change.

Contact:

DALE BLAHNA, USDA Forest Service: phone 206-732-7833, email: dblahna@fs.fed.us
KATHLEEN WOLF, University of Washington: phone 206-732-7820, email: kwolf@uw.edu

Alliance Goals:

- Establish a network of scientists, conservation organizations, and urban sustainability professionals;
- Understand and promote citizen participation in urban ecosystem restoration and stewardship;
- Develop stewardship organization, partnership, and motivation tools;
- Use map-based tools and analysis to assess stewardship needs and track socio-ecological outcomes;
- Develop approaches to understand and value urban ecosystem services and prioritize restoration activities;
- Investigate the relationships between urban nature and human health and well-being.

Partners:

- Cascade Land Conservancy;
- University of Washington School of Forest Resources Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis Lab;
- King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks;
- EarthCorps;
- Institute for Culture and Ecology
- City of Seattle Office of Sustainability & Environment;
- Oregon State University;
- International Forestry Consultants, Inc
- U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station: New York and Chicago Field Stations;
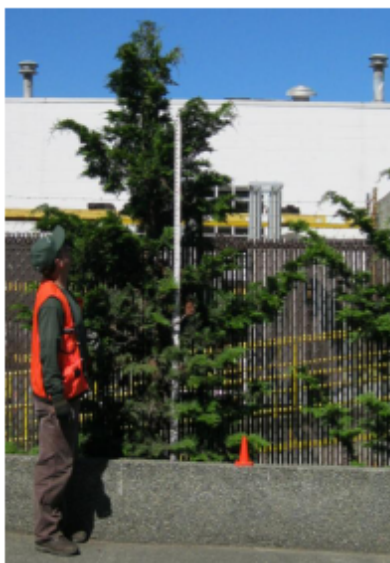- Baltimore Ecosystem Study.

Research Sponsors

May 2011

Seattle's i-Tree Analysis

Study Approach

Data collection began in Seattle in the summer of 2010 and was completed in the summer of 2011. Data was collected from 223 plots that were randomly selected within each of the City of Seattle's urban forest management units. This approach best allows the results to be used in conjunction with the Urban Forest Management Plan. Data will be analyzed using the i-Tree Eco tool, also known as the UFORE model.
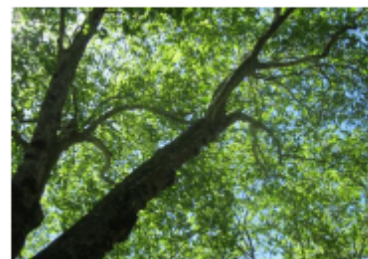
Why is this research important?

Sound science provides a basis for long-term management decisions. This study will provide baseline data which can be used in updating the City of Seattle's Urban Forest Management Plan. Assessments such as this one also help demonstrate the public value that urban forests offer.

Study Goals

- Understand the function and structure of Seattle's urban forest
- Estimate monetary values for the ecosystem services provided by Seattle's trees
- Compare results to two similar studies in King County: King County parklands, and an urban to wildland gradient along the Green-Duwamish River;
- Improve forest assessment tools for use in King County and other Pacific Northwest communities.

Categories of Findings

- Estimated number of trees
- Most common species
- Species size distribution
- Pollution removal value
- Carbon storage
- Carbon sequestration

- Energy saving (in 1 or 2 story residential buildings)
- Avoided carbon emissions from reduced energy use
- Structural value

Research Sponsors

Contact:

LISA CIECKO, Cascade Land Conservancy: phone 206-905-6924 email: lisac@cascadeland.org

ARA ERICKSON, Cascade Land Conservancy: phone 206-905-6923 email: arae@cascadeland.org

May 2011

JF – Are we incorporating i-Tree results into UFMP? The most compelling economic argument for trees in the city is stormwater. You have basic info that can be extrapolated.

LC – Met with SPU about the hydro piece. I-tree hydro requires a hydrologist. SPU hired a consultant to review the model. They are drafting a memo about it. I-tree hydro doesn't represent the pipes system and that's integral to how Seattle functions. The model will be updated in the spring of 2012.

PS – We are still a step away from adjusting the model to our trees in the Pacific NW.

LC – i-tree hydro is watershed so it can't be set up by municipality.

SPdB – even if information is not ready by the time the UFMP is updated, we can make reference to it and bring it up to date in the next five year implementation strategy.

PS - Where is the information on soil type?

LC – We are only getting ground cover, which includes bare soil. There is no other explanation on soil type. They are updating the model in the spring and at that point in time SPU might be more interested in its application.

GB – If there are going to be updates every so many years. What's the plan to continue this research to have it updated for the City?

LC – This is very much funding driven. We are out of funding at this time. Will need funds to re-visit in five years. This will be great to find a partnership to fund this research again.

JF – is the data providing canopy cover?

LC – yes

JF – so we can use that information in the UFMP.

SPdB – I think it's going to be important to use the same or equivalent technology to measure canopy cover. iTree is looking more at ecosystems values and we can extrapolate canopy cover, but I would be reluctant to use that as a substitute of another aerial assessment so we can talking apples to apples.

LC – right

SPdB - I would like to avoid confusing methods and results. But we will certainly take a look at it.

LC – The weakness of iTree is that the US Forest Service runs the model but it's a black box approach and it doesn't have ways to manipulate the data.

PS – is that the same situation with hydro?

LC – yes, that's why SPU is hesitant to use it at this point

LC – I'll be happy to answer any questions.

SPdB – I will bring Lisa back once the results are ready to be shared

PS – when talking about trees as infrastructure and tie it to stewardship we are not talking about and missing the piece about green jobs. Seems to be a concern for restoration people (we pay for gray infrastructure) for both installation and maintenance.

TE – of the 73 single family plots, how were they selected?

LC – they were randomly selected in four quadrants of the City. Used a multi-lingual crew to approach parcels in the south end.

Street Tree Ordinance recommendation – possible vote

Sandra will produce a document with all the comments on the Street Tree Ordinance thus far. That way Commissioners will be able to put together a recommendation more easily.

Urban Forest Management Plan update discussion
SPdB – The IDT has already had two UFMP update meetings. They identified six policy issues that they would like to get UFC input on:
1. Canopy cover goals by management area
2. Policies around trees in the right-of-way (both developed and undeveloped)
3. Research agenda
4. Performance indicators
5. Review costs
6. Review of long-range action agenda
Would like to involve Commissioners in this early stage of the update process.

PS – there is value in talking about quadrants of the city. We have talked about the idea of habitat corridors (the city has much north-south, but not so much east-west).

JR – there is a qualitative aspect here that is missing overall. Would like to see guidance on qualitative aspects such as groves, proximity to waterways, wildlife corridors,

PS – and maybe the social equity, and the health piece that could start working on the prioritization

SPdB – SDOT is looking into doing some work on the health piece. Even if we don't currently have the data it could be mentioned in the UFMP that additional research needs to be done.

JR – To dig in a little bit in terms of some specific action agenda, if we don't the data right now to do the comparative analysis in terms of the qualitative value of trees primarily over impervious surfaces in the ROW vs. the functional value of a tree that is part of a natural parks area, I'd like to get that in terms of investment on return. Downtown has not only a very aggressive canopy cover goal, it also has the highest cost per tree installation and being able to

use that and say, if we are going to reduce the goal for downtown what would the value of that be if transferred to a parks area. How much more could we accomplish, not so much per tree for in terms of function. If the downtown tree is worth more because it's over impervious surface or if the tree in the parks area is worth more because of compounded benefit.

JF – Use the term canopy and canopy configuration by geography instead of canopy cover goals.

PS – so, currently the management unit is the land use code.

JR – yes, one management unit is single family

SPdB – having these different policy areas where the IDT is requesting the UFC input will allow us to start working together as we develop an updated draft of the plan. That way there won't be surprises when the IDT presents a first draft to the UFC. We have a very aggressive timeline.

PS – The first issue is canopy configuration; looking at it by geography. The piece on street trees is a standalone.

JF – can you explain again the Research agenda?

SPdB - To make sure the document reflects the most current research and also calls for additional research that is needed moving forward.

Regarding performance indicators I have created a table comparing what Clark et al proposed and what is now being proposed by Kenney et al. We will then see what makes sense to include in the plan for Seattle.

PS – I would suggest playing around with the calculator to see that there is more to it.

Policy issues to revisit:
1. Canopy configuration by geography/review of costs
2. Performance indicators/review of long-range action agenda
3. Policies around trees in the ROW (both developed and undeveloped)
4. Research agenda

Public comment
SZ – Save the Trees Seattle. A couple of short comments. I wanted to note that under the issue you mentioned let's not get into the discussion of which plants to plant. I think you need to decide whether or not you are going to encourage native plants and their relation with plants and animals to create a native habitat. Put information on your website about the value of planting native plants instead of having a lot of exotic plants.

Need to also highlight the problem in our plants and discourage planting things such as ivy. On the Street Tree Ordinance under definitions A – H there a bunch of definitions missing. It's confusing. Need to define forest canopy as a separate item. There is no real discussion of canopy goals.

Anecdotal experience – an issue of a conifer being removed by SCL in a rental home he owns. The SCL staff could not give him a reason why the tree was being removed. Some of the bark was disturbed and the SCL staff the tree had been girdled. Narrative continued for some time. The City should not give a blanket exemption to SCL to remove trees. That they need to comply with a permit system the same everyone else and they need to post it in the internet.

ND – Consulting arborist. I worked to plant trees in the SW corner of properties for shade. UFC website could become more of a resource. Maybe could put seasonally appropriate pruning in the website as storm season approaches. How to prune evergreens and inspect them. He has been working on a conifer care guidelines. There is a lot of misinformation out there, would like to have feedback from UFC on the document he is producing. They are also doing Sonic scans of trees (tomographs) to be used as a reference tool to provide more scientific base for their advice.

Next month's agenda items

Adjourn