



Keep the Emerald City Green

Urban Forest Management Plan

2009 Progress Report

Work Continues to Implement Seattle's Forest Management Plan

Seattle's trees provide a myriad of environmental, social, and economic benefits significantly enhancing the livability and health of our city. Trees absorb global warming pollution, provide wildlife habitat, clean our air and water, lessen the impacts of storms by intercepting and absorbing rainwater, increase property values, calm traffic, reduce crime, and improve the walkability of our neighborhoods. Increasing our tree canopy cover will increase the value of these benefits to both current and future generations.

In 2007, the City of Seattle set the bold goal of achieving 30 percent tree canopy cover in 30 years. The Seattle Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) was developed as a comprehensive strategy for increasing Seattle's tree canopy cover to meet the 30 percent target. The UFMP lays out goals and a broad range of actions to be implemented over time to preserve, maintain, and plant trees as well as restore the public forested areas remaining in the city.

An implementation strategy with a shorter time horizon than the 30-year UFMP was needed to guide our actions. Increasing knowledge about the distribution of the urban forest and current opportunities and challenges must be considered in order to effectively prioritize actions. We created a 5-year Implementation Strategy to establish priorities for the next five years.

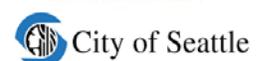
In 2009 City Council asked the Office of City Auditor to review the City's management of its trees. The City Auditor's report stated that the management of City trees can be improved and provided recommendations on how to improve the City's processes and practices.

The Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) was established to serve in an advisory role to the Mayor and City Council.

The nine-member UFC provides recommendations on plans, policies, and legislation related to the protection, management, and conservation of trees in Seattle. UFC meetings are held monthly and members bring expertise in areas such as wildlife biology, urban ecology, hydrology, arboriculture, landscape architecture, finance, and economy. Commissioners include representatives from natural resources agencies, universities, non-profit organizations, utilities, as well as the real estate and development community.

The Urban Forestry Commission has a website where the public can access meeting agendas, meeting notes, and other announcements related to the UFC's work. The website is <http://www.seattle.gov/trees/UFcommission.htm>.

The table in the next two pages provides a detailed summary of our goals and progress to date.



Seattle Urban Forest Management Plan 2009 Performance Monitoring

Goal	Objective	Accomplishments
TREE RESOURCE		
Maintain trees to promote health and longevity	Continue restoration on 386 acres of forested parkland Begin restoration on an additional 90 acres	Continued restoration on 400 acres of forested areas Added 105 acres to restoration
	Maintain trees on developed parkland on an 18-year cycle- 2,500 trees/year maintained	Pruned 2,200 trees (with reduced crews)
	Maintain Seattle Dept. of Transportation (SDOT)-managed trees on a 12-year cycle- 3,000 trees/year maintained	Pruned 3,767 trees
	Prune trees away from power lines along 275 miles of arterial streets for electrical safety and reliability	Pruned 334 miles of arterial streets along power lines
	Continue to treat London Plane trees for disease control at Seattle Center	Trees were not treated in 2009 due to lack of funding
Increase canopy cover and environmental benefits	Parks – Plant 500 trees in developed parks Meet 2 for 1 Tree Replacement Policy	1,051 trees planted in developed parks 474 trees removed Policy met
	SDOT – Plant 800 street trees with Bridging the Gap (BTG) levy funding Meet 2 for 1 Tree Replacement Policy	1,144 trees planted (818 BTG levy trees, 326 CIP trees) 233 trees removed by SDOT crews Policy met
	Seattle City Light (SCL)– Assist community members to plant 250 trees through the Urban Tree Replacement Program (UTRP) Meet 2 for 1 Tree Replacement Policy	251 trees planted (204 through UTRP) 31 street trees removed Policy met
	Assist community members to plant 400 trees through the Department of Neighborhoods Tree Fund	Community members planted 467 street trees and 165 fruit trees in yards
	Replace trees 2 for 1 during Seattle Center Theater Commons re-development	Provided funding for planting of 58 trees as part of the Seattle Community ReLeaf Giveaway Program 41 trees were removed
	Expand City incentives for tree planting on private property	Community members planted 329 yard and street trees in residential neighborhoods with low canopy cover through the Trees for Neighborhoods Program
		Tree planting totals:

Note: Number of trees (58) planted with funding from Seattle Center was not included in the original Progress Report. Total number of trees planted and net increase were updated accordingly. This correction was done on 9/20/11.

Goal	Objective	Accomplishments
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK		
Improve management of trees on private property through incentives & regulations	Continue analysis of regulatory/incentive strategy based on updated tree canopy cover data and release draft strategy	Interim tree protection regulations were adopted. Information regarding the interim regulations was provided to citizens and tree care professionals including mailed notice to all know tree care contractors, emails to neighborhood groups, posters in libraries and neighborhood centers, and articles in city newsletters, online, and Seattle City Light bills
Track implementation of the Urban Forest Plan	Monitor performance annually	Annual report completed
Implement resource management tools	Complete an updated citywide tree canopy cover assessment to better understand current conditions and recent trends	High resolution satellite study and data analysis completed for 2002 and 2007 tree canopy
	Develop 5-year strategy for meeting UFMP goal 30-year goal	Drafted 5-year Urban Forest Management Plan Implementation Strategy and presented to Urban Forestry Commission
	Complete and implement the Seattle Center Landscape Management Plan which includes tree management and canopy cover goals	The Landscape Management Plan has been completed and implementation is underway
	Revise street tree planting list and improve procedures for review of plantings in the street Rights-of-Way (ROW)	SDOT and SCL collaborated on updated ROW tree list for planting under electric lines SDOT updated tree selection & planting guidelines for ROW plantings
Facilitate interdepartmental cooperation	Convene Urban Forest interdepartmental team monthly Bring policy and program issues to the Sustainability & Environment sub-cabinet as needed	Urban Forest IDT met regularly and briefed the sub-cabinet as needed
	Identify opportunities for better coordination in managing ROW trees	SDOT and SCL management meet monthly to discuss issues related to tree planting, pruning and removal SDOT Urban Forestry and Street Maintenance Divisions executed an MOA to guide decisions on tree planting and removal.
COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK		
Enhance awareness of the urban forest as a community resource	Engage the community in a dialogue about the updated tree canopy assessment and opportunities for achieving the UFMP goals Pursue earned media	The decision was made to instead invest resources in creating an Urban Forestry Commission representing a range of related expertise. The Commission was established and members selected.
Increase community engagement in urban forest management	Recruit and manage 87,000 hours of volunteer support through the Green Seattle Partnership	Recruited and managed 87,000 volunteer hours at 1,100 volunteer events

Tree Canopy Assessment Results

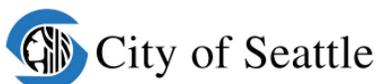
In order to better understand current tree canopy and recent trends in canopy gain and loss, Seattle's canopy cover in 2002/2003 and 2007. Data was taken from both 2002 and 2003 to compensate for areas where the images were hazy. Our latest data comes from a state-of-the-art high resolution satellite study and advanced data extraction and analysis techniques, which are more accurate than those used in the past, when Seattle's canopy cover was believed to be 18 percent. We will use this same method for future studies to evaluate our progress toward the City's goal of 30% tree canopy City-wide by 2037.

Results show that Seattle's canopy cover is about 23% which is higher than earlier studies indicated. Between 2003 and 2007 canopy increased slightly with gains balancing losses. Canopy was assessed for nine different land use categories: single-family, multi-family, manufacturing/industrial, developed parks, parks natural areas, commercial/mixed use and institutional lands. We also looked at the city's street right of way (ROW) and found that tree cover in the ROW is increasing more quickly than on non-ROW property. We also learned that to meet our 30% goal, we need to more than double the pace of canopy increase each year.

Single-family property represents the City's largest land use category comprising 56% of the total city land area and the greatest tree preservation and planting potential. When past trends are projected forward we see that another 3,400 net new trees per year need to be planted to meet the goal of 33% canopy cover in these areas.

Green Seattle Partnership Wins Award

The National League of Cities' Municipal Excellence Award is meant to identify and showcase outstanding city and town programs that improve the quality of life in America's communities. Seattle received the Silver Award in 2009 for the Green Seattle Partnership, a collaboration between the City of Seattle, Cascade Land Conservancy, and Seattle residents to restore 2,500 acres of forested parkland by 2025. To learn more about the Green Seattle Partnership visit <http://greenseattle.org/> to see how you can get involved!



To help increase the number of new trees in single family neighborhoods, the City pilot-tested a new incentive program, Trees for Neighborhoods, to help residents plant trees.

In 2009, the program helped residents in low canopy neighborhoods and neighborhoods with lower incomes plant 329 yard and street trees. We are planning to expand this program in the fall of 2010 helping residents plant 1,000 trees in south Seattle.

The program provides assistance selecting the right tree, training in tree planting, and ongoing tree care information to help the trees survive and thrive into maturity. To learn more about this program please go to: <http://www.seattle.gov/trees/treesforneighborhoods.htm>.

Vision for the Future

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 and is an essential environmental, economic, and community asset.