

# Seattle Urban Forestry Commission

Leif Fixen, Chair • Tom Early, Vice-Chair

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October 14, 2015.

Tom Hauger  
Department of Planning and Development  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98124

RE: Comments to the Draft Seattle 2035 Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mr. Hauger,

The Urban Forestry Commission has reviewed the draft 2035 Comprehensive Plan, and the Commission is glad to see that urban forestry related goals and policies were incorporated throughout the draft Plan. Seattle's urban forest is an important piece of the City's environmental health, economic vitality, and social wellbeing, which are central to Seattle's quality of life and the goals of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

The Commission has a number of comments and additions it believes will strengthen how the Plan addresses urban forestry issues. Commission comments are organized by section and element, beginning with the Executive Summary.

## **Executive Summary**

### *Comments*

- Add tree canopy as a key indicator (page 8) for Comprehensive Plan progress.

## **Introduction**

### *Comments*

- Include the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan under examples of implementing plans (page 16).
- Include tree canopy coverage as a key indicator for monitoring progress (page 17).

## **Growth Strategy Element**

### *Comments on Draft Goals and Policies*

- GS 4.2: Better define "public vistas" so as not to compromise the value of trees relative to view. Reference Park's identified and maintained public vistas.
- GS 4.5: Remove "visual". It is unclear what this means and it may compromise the value of trees in these areas.
- GS 4.7: Add reference to native species and trees, or make the role of native species a separate new policy.

*Add a point under Natural Environment*

- GS 4.8: Promote a healthy urban forest throughout the city including an emphasis on native species and increasing canopy coverage.

*Possible New Policies*

- Add policy on urban forest as a significant contributor to Seattle’s natural environment.
- Add policy on promoting native species for protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

**Land Use Element**

*Comments on Draft Goals and Policies*

- LU 5.8: Make specific mention of tree canopy coverage as a stormwater mitigation strategy.
- LU 5.16: Reference Park’s current identified public vistas on third bullet.
- LU 11: Acknowledge the need to balance industrial uses with environmental natural areas, such as the Duwamish Greenbelt, and environmental justice issues related to adjacent or nearby residential neighborhoods, which often have a higher share of low-income households.
- LU 11.11: Remove reference “to a minimum” and replace with “compatible with industrial activities...” The intent of the policy should be on the special needs and flexibility of landscaping requirement in industrial areas. This does not require minimizing standards. Also reference the need to offset impact for adjacent residential areas.

*Add a new item:*

- LU 11.27 Recognize the common adjacency between industrial zones and environmentally critical areas, shoreline and habitat by creating voluntary incentives for green infrastructure and buffers at these borders.

*Possible New Policies:*

- Add policy acknowledging that the large share of canopy coverage is on private property and the importance of maintaining this canopy coverage for reaching the City’s canopy coverage goal.

**Transportation Element**

*Comments on Draft Goals and Policies*

- T 2.5 and 2.6: Clarify what “greening” and other uses include. Also, define the “transition zone” or include in the glossary. Clarify if the transition zone is expected to accommodate all the predominate uses listed.
- T 3.15: Include greening as an element that enhances the public realm and creates vibrant public spaces.
- T 4.5: Change to “**Increase** and enhance the public street canopy...”

**Environment Element**

*Comments on Draft Goals and Policies*

- E1.1: Add a reference to native trees in addition to thriving and sustainable mix of tree species.
- E1.2: Reference the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan’s goal of 30% canopy coverage by 2037 and a goal of 40% over time.
- E1.7: Add specific reference to exceptional trees.

*Possible New Policies*

- Add policy related to tree pruning and maintenance cycles to align with industry standards for public and street trees.

**Parks and Open Space Element**

*Comments on Draft Goals and Policies*

- P1.1: Continue to expand the City’s parks holdings, and open space, with special...
- 1.11: Add qualifier of ensuring protection of environmentally critical areas and wildlife habitat.
- P3.4: Add: Increase open space to maintain current open space ratio per person.

The Commission appreciates DPD’s work on the Comp Plan update and the opportunity to provide comment.

Sincerely,

Leif Fixen, Chair

Erik Rundell

cc: Mayor Edward B. Murray, Council President Burgess, Councilmember Bagshaw, Councilmember Godden, Councilmember Harrell, Councilmember Licata, Councilmember Okamoto, Councilmember Rasmussen, Councilmember O’Brien, Councilmember Sawant, Jessica Finn Coven, Diane Sugimura, Gordon Clowers, Brennon Staley, Maggie Glowacki, Eric McConaghy.

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