

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Mariska Kecskes • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores
Erik Rundell • Andrew Zellers

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

September 7, 2016

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Tom Early – chair
Steve Zemke – vice-chair
Weston Brinkley
Leif Fixen
Reid Haefer (non-voting)
Donna Kostka
Joanna Nelson de Flores
Andrew Zellers

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Beth Duncan – Seattle Center
Keiko Nungesser – Seattle Center

Guests

None

Public

None

Absent- Excused

Mariska Kecskes
Richard Martin
Erik Rundell

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

Tom called the meeting to order, read the UFC's mission and the agenda.

He updated the Commission on his meeting with CM Bagshaw. He reminded her of a couple of letters sent by the Commission including the Supplemental Use Guidelines for Greenbelts and Natural Areas. They talked about the upcoming canopy cover assessment, and the Tree Ordinance. They also remarked that the Commission and the IDT have been working well together.

CM Bagshaw mentioned that she has learned that Richmond, B.C. has been breaking grid streets to add plantable areas, increase open space and calm traffic. She would like the Commission to weigh in on ideas like this one. There were concerns about planting over utilities and emergency vehicle access. The Commission would like to discuss with SDOT. Tom will gather examples to talk about with SDOT.

They also talked about backyard cottages and ADU/DADUs. The Commission will be briefed on this next week.

Steve mentioned that he had a chance to talk to the Mayor at an event and asked him about the tree ordinance. The Mayor said he didn't know where things stood and the Steve should follow up with an email requesting more information.

Tom has been involved in the Right-of-way Improvements Manual update. He is going to read the latest draft to make sure it incorporates the recommendations made by the Commission. He will put together a draft letter for review, comment and possible vote at the next UFC meeting.

Public comment

None

Adoption of August 3 and August 10 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 3 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the August 10 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.

Seattle Center Tour

Beth Duncan and Keiko Nungesser delivered a budget and challenges briefing to the Commission.

The Seattle Center prioritizes maintaining Dedicated Trees. A Dedicated Tree is a tree planted to commemorate and/or memorialize an event, group of people, or individual. There is a plaque, marker or documentation on file regarding its significance. All dedicated tree plantings are submitted to the Seattle Center Director and reviewed by the Seattle Center Advisory Board before approval is given for the planting. Seattle Center has 19 officially dedicated trees including the Ann Frank Memorial Tree, planted in 2016, three Sargent Cherries dedicated in 2007 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Cherry Blossom festival, and the Dove tree, dedicated in 1995 to children with AIDS.

Also a high priority is to maintain, protect and preserve Legacy trees which are individual or groups of trees on campus that are considered important community resources because of their unique or noteworthy characteristics of values. One or more of the following characteristics are used to define a legacy tree: size, species, age, historic significance, ecological value, aesthetics, location, required planting and retained trees.

The Seattle Center is a 74-acre campus that faces significant challenges from events, construction, vandalism, disease and art installations. They also have a hard time accommodating Two-for-One tree replacement policy trees due to the limited space in the campus. To comply with the policy in the past they have partnered with other City departments.

Seattle Center staff mentioned that they will be taking over maintenance of trees along 5th Ave from SDOT. This will strain their budget.

The Commission expressed interest in Seattle Center coordinating with the Center School and the Seattle Science Center on an urban forestry curriculum for students to learn about the benefits of trees.

The group toured the campus.

Public comment:

None

New Business:

None

Adjourn

Community input:

-----Original Message-----

From: Mary [mailto:maryfleckws@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, August 22, 2016 8:58 PM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra; mariska@earthcorps.org; stevezemke@msn.com

Cc: Elaine Ike; Martin Westerman

Subject: Urban Forestry Commission's responses to Recommended Comp Plan and MHA EIS

Dear Mariska and Steve and Urban Forestry Commission, I want to thank you and the Urban Forestry Commission for your support of saving the Myers Way Land from being sold off for warehouses. We appreciate your receptiveness and your willingness to write to the Mayor. Seattle Green Spaces Coalition is committed to working with communities for planning of future uses of the site.

Question for you? – Will UFC be submitting comments on the Mayor's Recommended Comp Plan and on the Mandatory Housing Affordability framework EIS? We urge you to weigh in! We are interested in your insight.

For your reference, I attach a copy of Seattle Green Spaces Coalition's comments on the Recommended Comp Plan.

Comments to Mayor's Comprehensive Plan June 27, 2016
General Recommendations

Seattle Green Spaces Coalition (SGSC) urges the City of Seattle to amend the proposed 2035 Comprehensive Plan, to ensure that Seattle's green infrastructure will be regarded as a natural capital asset, not an amenity; that it will be maintained in a sustainable, resilient condition to provide clean air and water, and other ecosystem and public health services; and it will be actively employed to meet the City's Climate Action Plan, forest canopy and other livability, social justice and environmental goals.

We recommend that the Comprehensive Plan be amended to include:

(1) Numerics to ensure that the City of Seattle meets our need for green space

The Plan must be amended to include actual metrics to ensure that Seattle provides adequate green space for its citizens – both for public health and environmental justice.

The Proposed Plan makes the mistake of deferring open space numerics to the future Parks Legacy Plan/Parks Development Plan. **This is not within the scope of the Seattle Parks & Recreation Department's (DPR) mandate** to project Seattle's future green space and natural resources needs. Green infrastructure covers much more area than parks -- extending to watershed protection, maintenance of healthy forested areas, establishing storm water runoff goals, determining ecosystem service values, and protecting natural resources. While DPR has

historically maintained natural areas, it primarily focuses on recreation, and access to recreation. Creating and implementing a green infrastructure plan lies beyond DPR's purview.

The SGSC requests that the 2035 plan reinstate the current numeric, such as in Urban Village Appendix B, for the amount, type and distribution of open space, which calls for one acre per 1,000 households, and within 1/8 of a mile.

(2) Policies to ensure that our green infrastructure and our natural environment are valued as concurrencies, and that these concurrencies are funded at pace with Seattle's rapidly developing built environment.

In 2011, the Trust for Public Lands reported that Seattle parklands deliver nearly \$500 million a year in benefits and savings to the city – beyond the \$20 million they generate in revenue. These benefits include oxygen production and carbon sink, drainage, storm water and erosion control, habitat provision, heat island mitigation, aesthetics and property value enhancement, and recreation, public health and community engagement. In 2013, the Urban Forest Stewardship Plan (UFSP) found that urban forests provide \$23.4 million annually in air quality benefits and savings alone. The total benefits and savings provided by Seattle's natural capital – public and private, would exceed a billion dollars a year.

Protecting ecosystems is one of the top priorities of the Proposed 2035 Plan. While the Plan's Environment Section describes certain aspects of the ecosystem, it does not address the basic need to acquire and preserve natural areas. These natural areas fundamentally balance the environmental impacts of past, current and future development, and mitigate negative effects on residents, wildlife, and our ecosystem.

Despite their enormous economic and environmental value, the Mayor's proposed plan marginalizes our natural areas, with barely a mention, and omits them entirely from the Parks and Open Space section. The proposed Plan provides **no commitment stewarding Seattle's natural areas.** While the Environment section describes tree protection, it does not mention our city-owned natural areas.

The SGSC propose that the plan be amended to add a section for **Natural Areas and Green Infrastructure.** The Plan must affirm Seattle's commitment to enhancing and protecting its natural areas. The new section would align the Plan with the Climate Action Plan, Urban Forestry Stewardship Plan, and Equity and Environment Action Agenda.

Furthermore, the Growth Management Act (GMA) requires Seattle to concurrently develop its infrastructure – including green and open spaces – as it builds out its hardscape. The Proposed Plan, on the contrary, does not contain adequate policies to ensure concurrent development of green infrastructure. We suggest the following policies be added:

- Develop open space goals for Seattle's growing urban population and **plan ahead** for how to meet them.
- **Monitor** urban centers and villages to track changes over time in number of housing units and jobs, population and public investments, **parks and open space.** Use this information to make decisions about further planning, and additional investments to help meet green and open space needs of residents in these locations.
- Engage in on-going evaluation of how growth shall trigger increased stewardship of Seattle's environment, enhancement of public health and review and implementation of our climate action goals.
- Ensure that our natural areas and environmentally significant features are protected from degradation.

(3) Provisions to align the Comprehensive Plan with our Climate Action Plan, Urban Forestry Stewardship Plan and Equity and Environment Action Agenda

The city has civic and fiduciary responsibilities to maintain and increase open and green space assets, as land is developed with hardscape. These responsibilities must be met in concert and compliance with city environmental, equity and social justice goals.

Specific Recommendations

Land Section

Add: Look for opportunities to expand non-park holdings of open space

Arts and Culture

Add: 4.3 Add community organizations

Add: policy to look for opportunities to provide indoor and/or sheltered gathering spaces for community use at no cost

Transportation

Add: Retain street ends, shoreline access, green belts and boulevards as natural areas

Industrial

Revise: GS2.17 would limit the use of City-owned land in industrial areas to industrial uses. This restriction would bar the use of City-owned land for mitigation or buffers that are recognized methods to reduce the pollution of industrial areas. We recommend that this policy be revised to allow for use as green space.

To reduce industrial pollution and improve air and water quality, we recommend that natural areas be developed in the industrial areas. We propose the following additional policies:

Add: Seek opportunities to develop natural areas to reduce industrial pollution and improve air and water quality, and retain public-owned surplus and excess properties for buffers and to reduce industrial pollution and improve air and water quality.

Growth Strategy

Add: GS 4.1 should be amended to include wetlands among natural features because wetlands are significant to Seattle's history and our sense of place.

Land Use

Revise: Should be changed from "consider retaining" to retain.

Environment

Add: policy to incorporate ecosystems services values in city planning and budgeting

Add: Amend the Tree Ordinance to strengthen tree protection and educate the public

Add: policy to involve youth in environmental education and stewardship through paid internships, green jobs or other programs

Revise: EN 1.2 This policy needs a firm deadline for increasing the tree canopy. The current language "over time" is too vague.

Add: Prioritize the principles of the Equity and Environment Agenda in surplus land disposition and neighborhood planning

Add: Ensure that the City has sufficient green space to support a green infrastructure that provides clean air, clean water and a healthy, sustainable and resilient ecosystem for all.

Add: Policy to support protection, enhancement and restoration of watersheds, wetlands and streams and consider daylighting streams where potentially beneficial

Add: Quantify the nature and quality of the City's green infrastructure needs and how those needs are and are not met by the ecosystem services provided by private and public lands

Add: Retain public-owned surplus and excess property to offset growing density and to restore our ecosystem.

Add: Develop protections for environmentally significant or distinctive land and features.

Add: Retain publicly owned surplus and excess properties in watersheds and/or containing wetlands and streams.

Add: Seek to restore wetlands and streams on under-utilized or vacant land.

Annexation

Add: Retain publicly owned land in South Seattle to accommodate future needs for green infrastructure, parks and natural areas, and green jobs.

Add: Develop plans for vacant and under-utilized land in South Seattle to accommodate future needs for green infrastructure, parks and natural areas and green jobs.

Parks and Open Space

Add: Integrate DPR's stewardship of land into the green infrastructure needs of the City.

Add: Identify potential private-public partnership opportunities to fund acquisition of land.

Add: Provide incentives, impose impact fees, and utilize other mechanisms to require developers to provide funds for the city to acquire open space.

Add: Retain public-owned surplus and excess property to meet the open space needs.

Contact Information

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