

## SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair  
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Reid Haefer • 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 14, 2016**

### Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

#### Attending

##### Commissioners

Tom Early – chair  
Steve Zemke – vice-chair  
Weston Brinkley  
Leif Fixen  
Reid Haefer  
Donna Kostka  
Joanna Nelson de Flores  
Erik Rundell

##### Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE  
Holly Miller - Parks  
Dewey Potter - Parks  
Nick Welch - OPCD

##### Guests

Theresa Doherty - UW  
Sally Clark - UW  
Kristine Kenney - UW

#### Absent- Excused

Richard Martin  
Andrew Zellers

##### Public

Lance Young  
Cass Turnbull

**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 and read the UFC's mission and agenda.

#### Public comment

Lance Young – He is a Shoreline resident. He has been working to preserve trees in Shoreline and the region and would like to talk about right-of-way (ROW) trees. The ROW provides a great opportunity to grow urban canopy. He just attended a meeting with Shoreline City Council and residents asked for a moratorium to all tree cutting due to the large amount of development they are experiencing. He is concerned about the pruning clearances used by Seattle City Light and how they affect the ROW, which represents 27% of the land mass in Seattle). He would like to make a longer presentation and bring experts to talk to the UFC. Maybe we can find a better way to do line clearance. Lance provided print outs.

Tom requested Lance to put together materials proving the points he has raised for the Commission to review.

Cass Turnbull – She is with Plant Amnesty. Cass believes that we need to embrace density and do it right instead of doing it wrong and then have to face unintended consequences. She would like to find out how much tree canopy can be supported with the City's available pervious surface.... 63% of the city's land mass is impervious surface with Single Family representing the majority of the land. A medium-sized tree needs 900 sqft to grow. She prefers DADUs for the same reasons a lot of people do, rather than having a tall towering building you get to keep the character of the neighborhood. The effect on the tree cover is different based on lot coverage.

### **UW Master Plan Update – Theresa Doherty, Sally Clark, Kristine Kenney (UW)**

Theresa Doherty is the Sr. project director for campus master plan. The last UW plan was done in 2003. This plan created a long-term vision on how the campus should be built in the next 10-year cycle. With the 2018 plan they establish a long-term vision that identifies 12.7 million gross square feet of development but will be only asking for 6 million to be developed.

The draft plan and draft EIS will be made public on October 3 – SANDRA will request the link to share with the UFC.

As part of the public comment opportunities, they have webinar open houses that show the work they are doing. On October 18 and October 20 they will host regular open houses. They also have office hours to answer questions.

UFC question/comment: the UFC's concern would be impact on existing open space and trees.

Answer: that will be dealt with in the EIS.

They identified 85 sites for potential development. Not all these sites will be developed. They are looking at increasing height of existing buildings and will not change the heights on the central area of the campus. The City is working on a park below Boat street and UW is proposing to add to this park as an amenity offered by their new plan.

The west campus has a capacity of 3 Million sq foot.

South campus: has many buildings that need work. They are planning to replace old buildings with new ones. This area has capacity for 1.5M gross sf. They are proposing a more porous south campus with more views of the water.

East campus: is where the athletic areas are. Overtime can accommodate 600,000 gsf. The area currently doesn't have a lot of infrastructure

Central campus can accommodate 900,000 gsf. There is development capacity along the edge.

### Urban Forestry Management Plan (UWUFMP) – Kristine Kenney

Kristine presented to the UFC two years ago. The UWUFMP will be an addendum to the report. She shared with the Commission the content of the UWUFMP.

The document communicates the value of the urban forest and states the UW's goals. They currently have data on 8,500 trees. They are working to get to 23% canopy cover and working on better understanding the composition of the UW's urban forest. They have mapped out exceptional trees (not groves) and memorial trees (significant number of memorial or special trees). They have also mapped out all invasive species in campus.

The U-District rezone is outside the boundaries of the UW. The UW tower is outside the master plan boundaries and complies with the City's land use code.

UFC question/comment: is there a management plan for the UW's Union Bay natural area?

Answer: is managed by the Center for Urban Horticulture

UFC question/comment: on the East campus, how much of the area is fill and how does it affect development?

Answer: there are several areas that are mostly fill. They will work with available funding but developing fill areas is more expensive.

UFC question/comment: is there a section in the plan that addresses increased programming, stewardship, and leaning opportunities.

Answer: it addresses the campus as a living laboratory. There are several active groups in campus removing invasives.

### **Dogs and Parks – Holly Miller, Dewey Potter (Parks)**

Holly Miller from the Parks department delivered the briefing. Council asked Parks to develop a management plan for dogs and parks. There was no funding allocated for this work so it didn't get going until the Parks District passed. The plan is a draft and it has been very controversial. On 9/22 there will be a public meeting at the Miller Community Center at 6:30 p.m. The document describes the public outreach and engagement effort.

There is not much data and literature around the issue of dogs and parks. There have been some studies around water quality. The number of dogs in Seattle is increasing.

UFC question/comment: how many dogs are licensed?

Answer: 45,000 (and they believe this represents 20% of the number of dogs).

They have held public hearings, and met with residents for off-leash areas. Currently, Parks has 28 acres dedicated to off-leash areas out of a total 6,200 acres of land in Seattle Parks. They want to focus on multiple-use areas, and preserving areas where people can do different things at different times of the day. Dogs are allowed on-leash in all areas, except in beaches, children play areas, and ball playfields.

Off-leash areas have been developed incrementally. Usually by request and don't have dedicated maintenance dollars. This is a challenge. There has not been a systematic approach to approve new areas. The plan begins to establish a method for new area approval.

Process for improving off-leash area (OLA) conditions and the user experience;

- Parks proposes using new Park District funding (\$106K/year) through 2020, to improve existing OLA's based on the facility assessments included in the draft plan.
- Support community groups in exploring potential partnerships and sponsorships to support the improvement of existing OLAs, and the creation of new ones.
- Proposes improvement and management of existing off-leash areas. They have made a list of improvements for each existing off-leash area.
- Open the door to work with partners to raise money for maintenance.

Dog walkers – this is a commercial use of these facilities. There are many responsible dog walkers but there are others that bring many dogs (up to 27) and let them loose at an off-leash area and don't manage them or their waster. They are going to create a licensing program for dog-walkers. \$100/years. Bring up to 10 dogs for 2 years. Then they have to acquire a certification (at UW it costs \$3,000). After 2 years if they haven't received the certification then they have to walk a maximum of three dogs.

Tom mentioned that the UFC is interested in the link with trees. Possibly through the idea of providing shade. Holly mentioned that it would be good for the UFC to review the recommendations for existing off-leash areas. Comments are due October 14.

### **Backyard Cottages/DADU briefing – Nick Welch (OPCD)**

Nick Welch is a planner with OPCD. CM O'Brien has been an advocate for making it easier for people to build backyard cottages and DADUs. Instructed DPD in 2014 to explore options to increase more affordable housing and help homeowners get additional income.

Attached dwelling unit (in basement) and Detached is separate from the main house.  
Have been allowed since the 1990s for ADU and 200 For DADUs.

Why do we want to encourage more backyard cottages and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)?

- They provide many benefits
  - o More housing options, often in areas unaffordable to many people
  - o Stable extra income for homeowners
  - o Flexibility to adapt to changing household needs
  - o Infill development is an efficient use of land and resources
  - o Opportunity for housing suitable to diverse household types, including families with children
- 75,000 single-family lots are eligible for a cottage, yet only about 220 have been built

Removing barriers to backyard cottages and ADUs

- Outreach to homeowners, designers, and other stakeholders
- Identified several barriers:
  - o Many lots are under 4,000 sqft but could otherwise accommodate a backyard cottage
  - o Parking requirement can increase project cost, add impervious surface, and require removing vegetation
  - o Development standards prevent some owners from building a cottage or inhibit functional design

- The current owner occupancy requirements deters some interested homeowners and limits flexibility.

In 2015 had lunch and learn with City Council with guests from Portland (they have a pretty successful DADU ordinance).

Summary of draft proposal: (released by CM O'Brien in May 2016)

- Remove off-street parking requirement for ADUs and DADUs
- Allow an ADU and DADU on the same lot
- Modify the owner-occupancy requirement for ADUs and DADUs
- Modify some development standards for DADUs
  - Increase maximum height limit 1-2 ft
  - Allow 60% rear yard coverage for one-story DADUs (40% limit currently)
  - Reduce minimum lot size to 3,200 sqft
  - Increase maximum square footage to 1,000 sqft (same as ADUs)
- No change to maximum lot coverage limit
- No change to yard and setback requirements
- No change to maximum number of people that can live on a single-family lot

UFC question/comment: is one or the other incentivized?

Answer: not really. Current standards are an indirect incentive to ADUs. (if ADU can build 1,000 sqft, if DADU then 800 sqft).

UFC question/comment: What about tree replacement? If people do a lot of DADUs it will decrease the number of trees.

Answer: that question is broader than the scale of what the current proposal will affect. Backyard cottages are a very small number compared to development of single-family homes. Creative thinking around trees should be considered for single-family areas in general.

UFC question/comment: a very small percentage of garages are actually used for parking. How about making them a useful space before allowing a DADU.

Answer: many people are transforming garages into DADUs but currently, if they remove a parking spot they need to replace it.

UFC question/comment: how many additional lots will become available for this?

Answer: around 82,000. 3,200 sqft is a threshold in the land use code. There have been 75,000 that qualify. There is an eight-person limit for occupancy in single-family lots. If everybody is related there is not limit.

Question: Driveways don't count as part of lot coverage. Did you look at the impacts on trees when encouraging more DADU's.

Answer: Under SEPA they compared what's allowed by code currently and what's allowed under the proposal.

UFC question/comment: When a DADU is applied for there is a review to see that current vegetation standards (trees) for SF homes are met. The concern is that they'll be using the largest available space in the

backyard (which would be used by a tree) to build the DADU. The UFC as a body is very interested in the canopy cover for SF areas.

**ROWIM letter of recommendation:**

Tom clarified the intention behind the draft which is to reinforce the need for the necessary soil volume to support a tree. The Commission discussed the document.

**ACTION: A motion to approve the letter of recommendation as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

**Public comment:**

n/a

**New Business:**

None

**Adjourn**

**Public input:**

To: URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION September revised 2016  
From: Cass Turnbull, PlantAmnesty/TreePAC  
Re: Building impacts on tree canopy, DADU and impervious surfaces

**We need a densely built City**

Maximizing density for housing in Seattle is a recognized goal of Seattle. This is largely because of the Growth Management Act adopted by the state to reduce sprawl. Sprawl can add to global climate change, reduce natural ecosystems and their services, segregate populations according to income, over-utilize resources, etc. However, density does have adverse local environmental impacts. The challenge is to provide sufficient mitigation to ensure the success of Smart Growth and preservation of Seattle's character, health and livability.

**Need for a build out study, and/or pervious land conversion study**

Building code and zoning practices affect not only the current tree canopy coverage but also determine the future stocking potential of the Urban Forest. Calculating the amount of pervious land (planting spaces) we will have in the future (and its rate of conversion to impervious surfaces) can provide us with useful information to plan for mitigation measures, adjust incentives and goals, and inform planting projects. It would also, I assume, help predict impacts to stormwater runoff.

**DADU impact on tree canopy coverage.**

The addition of DADUs, is an example of how building codes may affect tree canopy coverage in unexpected ways. The DADU helps preserve the aesthetics of SF neighborhoods while increasing density, two very desirable functions.

Although a DADU does not increase allowable lot coverage of the building, it appears to preclude more trees by reducing contiguous pervious land. Knowing this environmental impact can add another factor for decision makers to consider when balancing height v. in-fill decisions.

35 % lot coverage by **one large house allows for more tree canopy than 35% coverage of the same lot by two houses.** See illustration.

### **Relevant Numbers**

According to the Seattle Urban Tree Canopy Analysis Project report 900 sq feet is the city's number for that amount of land needed to support a medium sized tree. 35% is the amount of lot coverage allowed for a SF 5000 sq foot lot. Parks Urban Tree Canopy Report 2009.

**63 % of Seattle is impermeable** land as of 2015

The Single Family zone has **56% of the land**  
And **63 % of the City's trees**

That is greater than the next three management zones combined

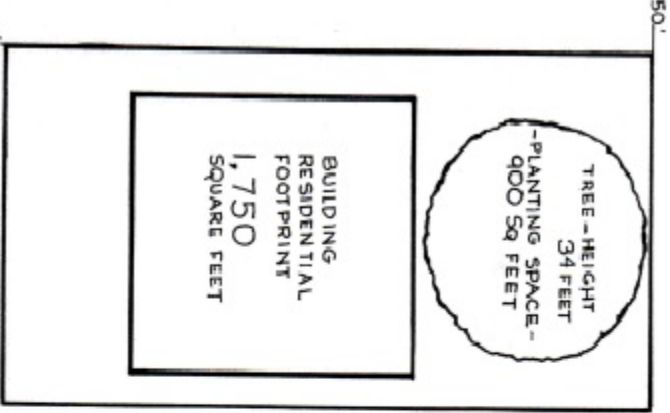
Industrial = 11% of the land 4% of the trees

Multifamily =11% of the land 17 % of the trees

Parks = 11% of the land, 21 % of the trees

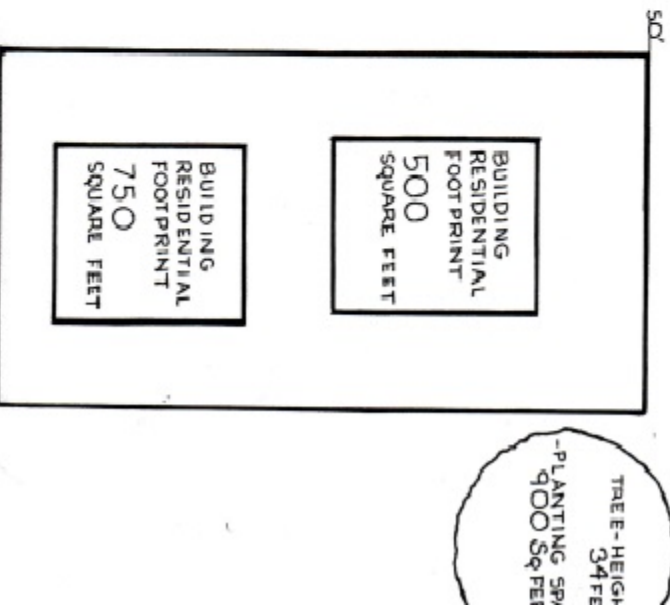
Single family is 48 % impervious of that 23 % is lawn and 29% Urban Forest according to a Foreterra report. What happens in the Single Family Zone is important with regards to tree cover.

LOT SIZE . 50 x 100  
5000 SQUARE FEET



LOT COVERAGE . 35%

LOT SIZE . 50 x 100  
5000 SQUARE FEET



LOT COVERAGE . 35%