



SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist), Co-chair
Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair
Joe Sisneros (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist - ISA) • **Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency)
Becca Neumann (Position #4 – Hydrologist) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)
Hao Liang (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • **David Moehring** (Position # 8 – Development)
Blake Voorhees (Position # 9 – Realtor) • **Laura Keil** (Position #10 – Get Engaged)
Jessica Hernandez (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)
Lia Hall (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

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

Meeting notes

June 1, 2022, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Via Webex call and in-person at the
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2480 109 9474

Meeting password: 1234

In-person meeting are not being held at this time due to the pandemic. Meeting participation is limited to access by joining the meeting through a computer or telephone conference line.

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Julia Michalak – Co-Chair
Stuart Niven
Hao Liang
David Moehring
Laura Keil
Jessica Hernandez
Jessica Jones
Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Joe Sisneros
Falisha Kurji
Becca Neumann
Blake Voorhees

Public

Steve Zemke
Sandy Shettler

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: Josh called the meeting to order and offered a land acknowledgement.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke – regarding the Statement of Legislative Intent to be considered today, recommend that the position described for it be a Chief Urban Forester rather than Chief Arborist, and that it should help to oversee all applications. All permit applications should require a tree inventory and a planting plan up front, as Portland does. Portland also has an Arborist Division designated to deal with permits and permits are required for any tree over 6” diameter and they have three signs for the posting process. He reiterated that a permit system is possible and necessary here. He is still looking for a copy of Seattle Parks and Recreation’s draft update of their Tree Management Policy; it is not posted online yet.

Sandy Shettler provided another example of why permits are needed for all tree removals of any significant size and stated that enforcement is needed outside of the weekdays because illegal removals happen often on weekends and holidays. Last weekend, there was an attempted removal of two exceptional trees in Maple Leaf. Advocacy by the neighbors stopped the removals, but increased staffing and enforcement ability is greatly needed by SDCI.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Josh shared a few items:

- He noted that a subcommittee is needed to put together recommendations on SDCI’s draft urban forest ordinance. So far the list of Commissioners for that is Josh, Julia, David and Hao; there will be follow up on this.
- Josh, Julia and Patti have been meeting individually with the new Commissioners. Patti prepared a document with onboarding materials for new Commissioners; Josh suggested that could be shared with other Commissioners as well.
- He shared a link in the chat to a Community Forestry conference happening in November, which David had noted, in case Commissioners are interested in participating in that.
- The Green New Deal Oversight Board recently approved a letter regarding the urban forestry protection ordinance update, asking for it to be reexamined and realigned better with the UFC’s recommendations. A copy of that letter is not available yet, but will be shared with Commissioners when it is.

Patti provided some updates:

- Meeting location – as mentioned in the last meeting, all public meetings need to now offer an in-person option as of today. The meeting location for today was posted as the conference room in the OSE offices, and Patti is still working on locations with easier access.
- UFC-IDT joint meeting – the UFC and the city’s Urban Forestry Interdepartmental Team have a joint meeting each year. Patti has discussed planning for this with both the Co-Chairs and the UF Core Team. Suggestions from these discussions are that the timing should be in September and a good potential topic is canopy cover assessment and equity and resilience planning. This ties in well with the work we’re doing here in Seattle around canopy cover assessment as well as consultation with others, including that TNC will be briefing the Commission on the canopy assessment work they’re doing with NYC. It also links back to and can incorporate the focus of these joint meetings for the last two years, which was Equity and Urban Forestry. We will target the UFC meeting date of September 21 for this meeting.

Julia asked anyone else interested in meeting to discuss the draft ordinance comments to let her know; she will work on scheduling that meeting soon.

Approval of May 4 and May 18 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the May 4 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the May 18 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Chief Arborist Statement of Legislative Intent

Josh reviewed the intent of this SLI, which directs city staff to collaborate with the UFC to develop recommendations for a Chief Arborist position. The due date listed for the SLI is currently July 1. The Commission hasn't received invitation from staff to work on this yet, but Josh has reached out to Marco Lowe to initiate a conversation on that.

Josh reviewed details of the SLI document, including the background of the 2009 City Auditor's report noting that there was not top leadership overseeing urban forestry in the city and that this type of position would have accountability and coordination role to provide needed oversight.

One comment on the position is that it should be called the Chief Urban Forester position rather than Chief Arborist since it involves more than just trees. There are other aspects needed of this position as well, such as oversight of what happens in watersheds and environmentally critical areas. The question of which department this position is assigned to is important as well. The position needs to have sufficient authority to be effective, and be linked well to coordinate with the other departments. Regarding job responsibilities, the development of the citywide planting plan should be included. There is some thought to broadening the scope of what the position entails. Los Angeles recently established a Chief Heat Officer, which could be an example to look at.

Stuart is listed as the lead on this in the work plan. Josh put out a call for others who want to work with Stuart; Hao and Laura volunteered to do so. Josh drafted a letter to Marco Lowe to request initiation of coordination with staff; that may be considered at the next meeting.

City budget recommendations

David recapped the letter he drafted for these recommendations, which was worked on at the last meeting. Josh also did some reorganization of the letter, organizing the recommendations around three sections. The first section reiterates how hard it is to track investments made by the city on urban forestry without a system in place to do so. The second section relates to funding projects that will help the city make data driven decisions for the urban forest, including specific items such as development of the planting plan that will help us reach our goals. Julia described some edits she made to this section as well. The third section is about funding positions and projects that improve urban forest management and create new green career pathways, including the Chief Arborist position and internships, apprenticeships and jobs programs.

The last part of the letter relates to previous budget recommendations made by the UFC that are relevant in this budget cycle. Commissioners worked through edits to the letter to refine the recommendations.

ACTION: A motion to approve the budget recommendations letter as amended was made, seconded and approved.

Ship Canal water quality project follow up

Josh walked through the draft letter he prepared related to the recommendations for this project. Recommendations include increasing the maintenance period for replacement trees from three years to five years. The letter reiterates the questions about the species of trees used for replacement and the number of trees planted and interventions used for the off-site mitigation.

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

Seattle Parks and Recreation Tree management policy follow-up

David drafted a letter in response to SPR's presentation and review of the document for their updated Tree Management Policy. The letter stresses the importance of SPR's management of trees given that 20% of the city's canopy is within parks. David walked through the sections of the document with recommended clarifications and modifications. Recommendations include specifying maintenance and establishment periods, rather than keeping the language that leaves the maintenance period up to the arborists, and increasing penalties for illegal cutting of trees.

Commissioners edited the letter to refine the recommendations. Commissioners added to a list of other stakeholder groups that SPR could reach out to for input on this, as requested by SPR.

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

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>

Public comment:

Steve Zemke put in the chat a links to SDCI's and Atlanta's Accela systems. Lake Forest Park also now uses Accela for tree and critical area permits, so it's becoming a commonly used system. This should remove some of the resistance SDCI has to developing a permit system. Sage Miller asked if these letters will be available for review, so that she can share with other members of the community.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:12 PM

<https://www.arborday.org/programs/pcf/>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:20 PM

Arbor Day Partners in Community Forestry conference in Seattle is Nov 16 and 17th. The 16th is the third Wed which is a UFC meeting date. May want to change it or cancel it so Commissioners can attend

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:21 PM

<https://www.treesatlanta.org/resources/how-to-save-a-tree/#arboristdivision>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:29 PM

Atlanta's Accela database system portal How do I know if someone has a permit to remove a tree?

Search for the permit on the City permit website called Accela – all permit applications filed in the City of Atlanta are recorded in this public database.

This is the home page for Accela. (https://aca-prod.accela.com/ATLANTA_GA)

It is not necessary to create or have a Log In account to look up records.

To look up building permits, select "Search Permits/Complaints" under "Building". https://aca-prod.accela.com/ATLANTA_GA/Default.aspx

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 3:32 PM

my apologies... Todd Burley's 10,523 trees when mature at 400 sq ft would be great -- almost 100 acres--- less trees lost in 2021.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:36 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/permits-and-services/permits/street-tree-permits>

"Urban Forestry Permits have moved to Accela! Connect to the Seattle Services Portal to file an online permit application. For more information, see the Urban Forestry help page.

SDOT issues Urban Forestry Permits for the following in the public right-of-way:

Plant a tree

Prune a tree

Remove/Replace a tree"

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:38 PM

SLY only mentions for "exceptional trees" - that is very limiting. Need independent oversight on all trees and urban forestry.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:40 PM

Could recommend creating a new Dept of Environment and Climate with an Urban Forestry Division.

Independent oversight on trees rather than limitations by Department priorities.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:45 PM

From NPI poll on tree issues ast year QUESTION: Oversight of trees in Seattle is currently overseen by nine city departments. Do you support or oppose creating a new Seattle Department of Environment and Climate that would include a consolidated urban forestry division?

ANSWERS:

Support: 72%

Strongly support: 44%

Somewhat oppose: 28%

Oppose: 18%

Somewhat oppose: 6%

Strongly oppose: 12%

Not sure: 10%

More than seven in ten voters backed this idea overall.

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 3:47 PM

<https://www.portland.gov/trees>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:47 PM

Again 28% is somewhat support, not oppose. Is wrong on on poll as posted.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:50 PM

Portland actually requires all taccess during development trees outside the building footprint and utilities to get permits from their Parks Dept independent of the Building Dept.

from David Moehring Pos 8 (privately): 4:02 PM

Hi Patti, for the UFC Work Plan agenda, are we using the version on the UFC link for today's meeting

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2022/2022docs/UFC2022WorkPlan.pdf> If so, I'll pull up my edits for those tasks I could volunteer on.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:02 PM

SDOT, PARKS and other Depts are required to report tree removal and replacement I believe on a quarterly basis to OSE. All do except SDCl which has never responded to this reporting requirement.to OSE. info was

from Sandra Pinto de Bader

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:11 PM

Unless have tree removal permits, it is hard to collect tree loss occurring, particularly outside development.

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:14 PM
<https://www.seattle.gov/trees/planting-and-care/street-trees>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM
communities

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:24 PM

(Next on agenda) From the May 18th minutes, these bullets could be added to the SPR letter as "ideas" •

Does SPR have enough arborists to implement their policy?

- What are the biggest causes of impacts in tree decline?
- Illegal tree removals
- How policies are evaluated
- Other stakeholders to reach out to (Got Green is one suggestion)

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:34 PM

• Within '5.2, Capital Projects' the UFC would suggest that SPR identify a removed tree replacement ratio than the 2:1 required by Executive Order 03-05 when rare and ECA trees have been removed.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:36 PM

Again any reason why the Parks Dept entire draft document is not available for review by the UFC and public review?

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:40 PM

Should have some consistency between Departments in what is required as fines for trees illegally removed and cost to replace?

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:40 PM

Sorry about that, Steve. Letter draft was submitted late this afternoon.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:43 PM

And yes, we'll get it posted, Steve.

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:46 PM

From the May 18th minutes, these bullets could be added to the SPR letter as "ideas" • Does SPR have enough arborists to implement their policy?

- What are the biggest causes of impacts in tree decline?
- Illegal tree removals
- How policies are evaluated
- Other stakeholders to reach out to (Got Green is one suggestion)

from David Moehring Pos 8 to everyone: 4:53 PM

FYI, currently the SPR presentation listed these partners • SPU/SDOT/OSE

- Forterra
- Cascade Land Conservancy
- Friends of Olmsted

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:53 PM

Duwamish Tribe

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:53 PM

Tree planting and species selection shall have considerations of the heritage of park planning and design.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:53 PM

Thank you again to Todd Burley, Nicholas Johnson, and the many others at SPR who care for the hundreds of thousands of trees that make Seattle parks so special.

from Julia Michalak She/Her to everyone: 4:55 PM

Thank you for drafting this David - we appreciate it!

Public input: (see next page and posted notes):

From: Lisa Bombard <lbombard@mac.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 26, 2022 6:13 PM

To: Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections <PRC@seattle.gov>

Cc: McGarry, Deborah <Deborah.McGarry@seattle.gov>; Humphries, Paul <Paul.Humphries@seattle.gov>; Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

Subject: Re: Exceptional Pacific Madrone will be lost with noncompliant development at 3040 31st Ave W

CAUTION: External Email

I see that this project is moving forward. It does not appear that my neighbors and my concerns have been addressed.

I didn't receive a response to the email below. Please advise on the concerns surfaced below.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 16, 2022, at 7:04 AM, Lisa Bombard <lbombard@mac.com> wrote:

There is a truly exceptional and unique madrone tree on the proposed development site that could be impacted if not protected with this build. Additionally, there is a significant slope on the proposed development site. I am aware that there is a request for a site exception to build on the ECA. This area met the criteria to be designated an ECA and an exception should not be granted as it may impact the stability of the proposed build as well as the existing homes.

From Seattle.gov website: [https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-\(a-z\)/environmentally-critical-areas-\(eca\)-code](https://www.seattle.gov/sdci/codes/codes-we-enforce-(a-z)/environmentally-critical-areas-(eca)-code)

ECA - What Is It?

Our Environmentally Critical Areas (ECA) Code governs areas of Seattle that provide critical environmental functions. For example, wetlands protect water quality and provide fish and wildlife habitat. Our ECA code also addresses areas that represent particular challenges for development due to geologic or other natural conditions. The goal of our ECA regulations, (Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) chapter [25.09](#)) is to effectively protect these areas and to protect public safety, while allowing reasonable development in our growing city.

Please keep me informed of the proposed non-complying development at 3040 31ST AVE W.

Thanks,
Lisa Bombard
775-544-3729
3039 30th Ave W

[Site Plan](#) 03/24/21 Record #: [002144-21PA](#) Building & Land Use Pre-Application

From: Robin Schwartz <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Friday, May 27, 2022 12:28 PM

To: Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

Subject: Please Update Seattle's Tree Ordinance

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

To whom it may concern:

We need better protections for trees in Seattle. I live in the Duwamish Valley which has some of the worst tree cover in the City as well as the worst air quality, and is therefore expected to also offer the worst extreme heat events in the City. We need protection from developers who are destroying trees to maximize their investment, at the expense of community members quality of life

Please update Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance as recommended in the latest draft by the Seattle Urban Forestry Commission.

Here are the key provisions that need to be in an updated tree ordinance:

1. Expand the existing Tree Removal and Replacement Permit Program, including 2-week public notice and posting on-site, as used by the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) – to cover all Significant Trees (6" and larger diameter at breast height (DBH)) on private property in all land use zones, both during development and outside development.
2. Require the replacement of all Significant Trees removed with trees that in 25 years will reach equivalent canopy volume lost – either on site or pay a replacement fee into a City Tree Replacement and Preservation Fund. Allow the Fund to also accept fines, donations, grants, purchase land and set up easements.
3. Expand current protections for Exceptional Trees and reduce the upper threshold for Exceptional Trees to 24" DBH, protect tree groves and heritage trees and prohibit Significant Trees being removed on undeveloped lots.
4. Allow removal of no more than 2 Significant non-Exceptional Trees in 3 years per lot outside development.
5. Establish one citywide database for applying for Tree Removal and Replacement Permits and to track changes in the tree canopy.
6. Post online all permit requests for 2 weeks prior to removal and all permit approvals for public viewing. Establish and maintain a city-wide database and inventory of existing trees, trees removed, and trees planted. Post on-line quarterly reports.
7. Expand SDOT's existing tree service provider's registration and certification to register all Tree Service Providers (arborists) working on trees in Seattle.
8. Require developers throughout the development process to maximize the retention of existing trees with adequate space for trees to grow and survive.
9. Require a Tree Inventory and Tree Landscaping Plan prior to any development permits being

approved.

10. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration,

Robin Schwartz

Robin Schwartz

robinschwartz@hotmail.com

736 S Kenyon St

Seattle, Washington WA

From: Christian Peetz <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Saturday, May 28, 2022 12:04 AM

To: Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

Subject: Please Strengthen Seattle's Tree Ordinance

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

It's time to end the delay by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) on presenting the Seattle City Council with an updated draft Tree and Urban Forest Protection Ordinance. Over the last 12 years, the Seattle City Council has repeatedly asked successive Seattle Mayors and SDCI for an updated workable and effective ordinance draft to consider and it is obvious SDCI is not responding as requested. In its most recent 2019 Resolution 31902, the Council gave specific issues for SDCI to address.

SDCI, once again, has not responded in a timely manner with a comprehensive tree protection ordinance update. It's been delay after delay. Please remove tree and urban forestry protection from their Department. In 2009 the Seattle City Auditor proposed transferring tree and urban forestry oversight and authority to an independent entity that does not have a conflict of interest. The Auditor proposed oversight be moved to the Office of Sustainability and the Environment.

Much has changed since 2009 and it is time to create an independent Department with authority over environment, urban forestry, and climate issues. SDCI has a conflict of interest in tree oversight – their priority mission has been to help developers build, not protect trees. Years of inaction on effective oversight and protection of trees by SDCI demands that a separate independent entity take over the city's responsibility to protect and enhance our urban forest. We propose that an Urban Forestry Division be created within a new Department of the Environment and Climate.

Seattle's trees and urban forest are vital to keeping our city healthy and livable. Trees and the urban forest comprise vital green infrastructure needed to keep our city and people healthy. Trees reduce air pollution, storm water runoff and climate impacts like heat island effects, while providing essential habitat

for birds and other wildlife. They are important for the physical and mental health of our residents. A robust urban forest is critical for climate resilience and tree equity.

Seattle's rapid growth and an outdated tree ordinance are reducing these beneficial effects as trees are removed and not even replaced. It is urgent to act now to stop this continued loss of existing trees, particularly large mature trees and tree groves. It is important to promote environmental equity by retaining as many trees as possible and replacing those removed.

Please update Seattle's Tree Protection Ordinance as recommended in the latest draft by the Seattle Urban Forestry Commission.

Here are the key provisions that need to be in an updated tree ordinance:

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7. Expand SDOT's existing tree service provider's registration and certification to register all Tree Service Providers (arborists) working on trees in Seattle.
8. Require developers throughout the development process to maximize the retention of existing trees with adequate space for trees to grow and survive.
9. Require a Tree Inventory and Tree Landscaping Plan prior to any development permits being approved.
10. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance.

Christian Peetz
cpeetz72@yahoo.com
801 s southern
Seattle, Washington 98108

From: Nicole Lugioyo <info@email.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Monday, May 30, 2022 11:05 AM
To: Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>
Subject: Please Protect Seattle's Trees

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

It's time to end the delay by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) on presenting the Seattle City Council with an updated draft Tree and Urban Forest Protection Ordinance. Over the last 12 years, the Seattle City Council has repeatedly asked successive Seattle Mayors and SDCI for an updated workable and effective ordinance draft to consider and it is obvious SDCI is not responding as requested. In its most recent 2019 Resolution 31902, the Council gave specific issues for SDCI to address.

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Nicole Lugioyo
nlugioyo@gmail.com
500 w barrett St
Seattle, Washington 98119

From: Susan Davis <info@email.actionnetwork.org>

Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2022 8:01 PM

To: Bakker, Patricia <Patricia.Bakker@seattle.gov>

Subject: Please Update Seattle's Tree Ordinance

Urban Forestry Commission Coordinator Urban Forestry Commission c/o Patti Bakker,

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3. Expand current protections for Exceptional Trees and reduce the upper threshold for Exceptional Trees to 24” DBH, protect tree groves and heritage trees and prohibit Significant Trees being removed on undeveloped lots.
4. Allow removal of no more than 2 Significant non-Exceptional Trees in 3 years per lot outside development.
5. Establish one citywide database for applying for Tree Removal and Replacement Permits and to track changes in the tree canopy.
6. Post online all permit requests for 2 weeks prior to removal and all permit approvals for public viewing. Establish and maintain a city-wide database and inventory of existing trees, trees removed, and trees planted. Post on-line quarterly reports.
7. Expand SDOT’s existing tree service provider’s registration and certification to register all Tree Service Providers (arborists) working on trees in Seattle.
8. Require developers throughout the development process to maximize the retention of existing trees with adequate space for trees to grow and survive.
9. Require a Tree Inventory and Tree Landscaping Plan prior to any development permits being approved.
10. Provide adequate funding in the budget to implement and enforce the updated ordinance.

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