Moving Forward the Urban Forest Management Plan's Goals

In August of 2009, the Seattle City Council issued a resolution (Resolution 31138) instructing City departments whose work impacts trees to, among other things, submit legislation that would establish a comprehensive set of regulations and incentives to limit the removal of trees and promote the retention and addition of trees in Seattle; to revise tree planting requirements in all land-use zones; to prepare a cost estimate and plan for conducting physical inventories of all trees on public and private property in the city employing a sampling model; and to provide an update on work done to advance recommendations made by the Office of City Auditor in their 2009 Management of City Trees report.
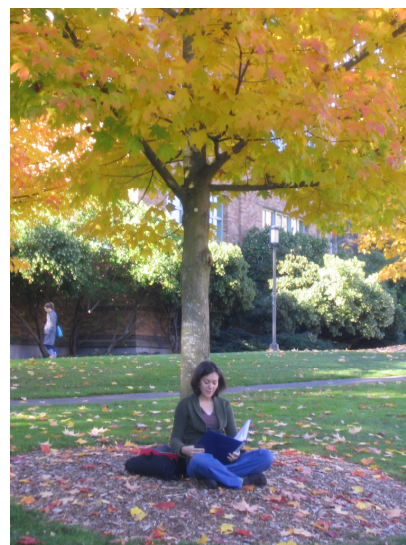
On June 15, 2010 staff from the departments tasked under Resolution 31138 gave an update to Council's Regional Development and Sustainability Committee on progress. Through the end of 2010 accomplishments included:

• The Department of Planning and Development (DPD) released a draft proposal for updating tree regulations and conducted public outreach through the end of the year. DPD also amended language contained in the interim tree regulations that prevented DPD from being able to enforce the exceptional tree provision outside of development.

• The Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE) researched tree inventory options, including the work that other cities have done. The research results show that a random sample-based inventory offers the highest quality scientific data. OSE is currently collaborating on an effort by the Green Cities Research Alliance, a partnership between the US Forest Service, University of Washington, King County, and the Cascade Land Conservancy, to implement a multi-phase research project which includes a sampling-based inventory of Seattle's trees using the nationally recognized i-TreeEco Assessment model. The results of this work should be available by early 2012.

• OSE's Trees for Neighborhoods program planted 978 trees with 480 residents in 2010. The program is designed to have a strong, ongoing education element to help ensure that trees planted under the program survive and thrive into maturity and maximize their multiple social, economic, and environmental benefits.

• The Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Seattle City Light (SCL) are collaborating more closely with monthly management team meetings to discuss issues related to tree planting, pruning, and removal; SCL is reviewing vegetation elements of SDOT-developed projects. Additionally, both departments have approved a tree planting list for use near overhead power lines.

• SDOT Street Use and Urban Forestry Division and Street Maintenance Division executed a Memorandum of Agreement to guide decisions on tree planting and removals as well as provide urban forestry support to the sidewalk repair program.

• SDOT worked on the Green Stormwater Initiative (GSI) with other departments to establish retention of trees and planting new trees as a first priority Best Management Practice (BMP) to meet GSI requirements for new projects.

The table in the next two pages provides a detailed summary of the Urban Forest Management Plan goals and progress to date.

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Seattle Urban Forest Management Plan
2010 Progress Report

Goal	Objective (Lead Department)	Accomplishments
	TREE RESOURCE	
Maintain trees to promote health and longevity	Continue restoration on 500 acres of forested parkland. Begin restoration on an additional 100 acres (Parks)	Continued restoration on 500 acres Brought 90 new acres into restoration
	Maintain trees on developed parkland on an 18-year cycle. 2,500 trees/year maintained (Parks)	Maintained 1,600 trees (below target due to budget cuts)
	Maintain Seattle Department of Transportation-managed trees on a 12-year cycle 3,000 trees/year maintained (SDOT)	Pruned over 3,000 trees; pruning cycle of 14 years due to new tree plantings, since 2007, with no additional maintenance resources
	Prune trees away from power lines along 390 miles of arterial streets for electrical safety and reliability (SCL)	Pruned trees away from 517 miles of electrical distribution lines for safety and reliability
Increase canopy cover and environmental benefits	**Trees planted and maintained by the City:** Department of Parks and Recreation • Plant 500 trees in developed parks • Meet 2 for 1 tree replacement policy	Planted over 900 trees and removed 400 trees Exceeded 2 for 1 tree replacement policy
	Department of Transportation • Plant 800 street trees with Bridging the Gap levy funding • Meet 2 for 1 tree replacement policy	Planted 1,329 street trees (822 with BTG funding) and removed 616 trees Exceeded 2 for 1 tree replacement policy
	Seattle Center • Replace trees removed for the Seattle Center Fun Forest and Theater Commons projects • Meet 2 for 1 tree replacement policy	Planted 51 trees and removed 41 trees at the Theater Commons. Planted 8 trees at the Fun Forest 2 for 1 tree replacement policy not met
	Trees planted and maintained by residents: Seattle City Light • Assist community members to plant 250 trees through the Urban Tree Replacement Program (UTRP) • Meet 2 for 1 tree replacement policy	Planting objective was not accomplished due to lack of staffing resources Removed 369 trees across the service territory 2 for 1 tree replacement policy not met
	Department of Neighborhoods • Assist community members to plant 200 trees through the Department of Neighborhoods Tree Fund	Planted 276 trees
	Office of Sustainability and Environment • Assist community members in areas with low canopy cover to plant and care for 500 trees through the Trees for Neighborhoods program • Identify additional incentive opportunities	Planted 978 trees with 480 people. Ongoing work is being done with the Trees for Neighborhoods program and finding additional incentive opportunities

City-wide tree planting total: 3,542
City-wide tree removals total: 1,426
Net gain (loss): 2,116

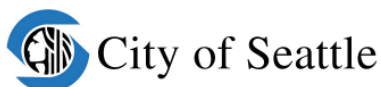| Goal	Objective (Lead Department)	Accomplishments
MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK		
Improve management of trees on private property and ROW through incentives & regulations	Adopt updated street tree regulation (SDOT)	Proposed street tree ordinance was tied to DPD's private property regulations. In 2011 SDOT will move to have its proposed ordinance submitted to council independent of DPD's effort
	Adopt permanent tree protection regulatory framework for private property during and outside of development (DPD)	Developed and completed outreach on proposed tree regulations framework for private property
Implement resource management tools	Evaluate tree inventory sampling options and explore grants and partnerships to help fund inventory (OSE)	Partnered with Cascade Land Conservancy to conduct city-wide sample-based inventory. 185 (78%) plots completed
	Develop citywide tree care metrics (SDOT/Parks)	SDOT developed performance metrics designed to measure the impact of maintenance on the long-term health of trees
		Parks completed initial planning
	Assess vegetation management at City Light to identify opportunities to improve tree management (SCL)	Revised the approved street tree list to ensure appropriate tree planting under power lines
Facilitate interdepartmental cooperation	Convene Urban Forest interdepartmental team monthly. Bring policy and program issues to the Sustainability & Environment sub-cabinet as needed (OSE)	Urban Forest IDT met monthly. Sustainability and Environment sub-cabinet did not convene in 2010
	Identify opportunities for better coordination and efficiencies in managing ROW trees (SDOT/SCL)	SDOT/SCL staff met monthly to discuss and resolve issues and coordinate management
COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK		
Enhance awareness of the urban forest as a community resource	Develop K-12 urban forest curriculum (Parks)	Developed viable K-12 education program and delivered curriculum to 15 schools reaching 300 youth
	Develop collaborative strategy with non-profit partners to increase community awareness of the value of trees and proper tree planting and care (OSE)	Partnered with City Fruit to develop Urban Orchard Stewards program; recruited 24 stewards in 5 pilot parks; developed management plans for each park Secured funding for Tree Ambassadors Program through Green Seattle Partnership
Increase community engagement in urban forest management	Recruit and manage 90,000 hours of volunteer support through the Green Seattle Partnership (Parks)	Exceeded 90,000 hours of volunteer support
	Staff the Urban Forest Commission and facilitate their advice on policies, programs, and regulations to the Mayor and City Council (OSE)	Staffed Urban Forestry Commission
	Support youth employment programs to work at restoration sites (Parks)	Supported over 20,000 hours of youth employment programs at restoration sites
	Expand Forest Steward community restoration leader program (Parks)	Expanded Forest Steward community restoration leader program by 5 leaders and developed regional Stewards meetings

2010 Community Catalyst Award

The Urban Forestry Project (UFP), a groundbreaking Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) program, received the Environmental Education Association of Washington's 2010 Community Catalyst Award. The UFP educates and empowers high school, middle, and elementary school students to explore urban forestry issues on lands adjacent to their schools and improve the health of their forests in a sustainable way.

Students participate in real-world science by evaluating the urban forest, forming a study hypothesis, designing their study, and implementing field investigations based on their research. The project provides significant and innovative opportunities for schools to meet state standards, especially in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) disciplines. The UFP incorporates multi-grade teaching that begins with high school students conducting scientific investigations that analyze the health of their local forests.

The GSP is a joint effort between the Cascade Land Conservancy and the City of Seattle. Under their leadership, grant funds were acquired from the U.S. Forest Service with the stated purpose of creating a compelling program that would model educational learning objectives of the Seattle School District and integrate with Seattle Parks' Environmental Learning Centers.

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

City of Seattle

CASCADE LAND CONSERVANCY

Urban Orchard Stewards Program

In 2010, the City of Seattle was excited to see the launch of the Urban Orchard Stewards program to train local neighborhood volunteers to care for existing fruit trees in public parks. Funded by a grant from the Washington Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry program, Urban Orchard Stewards is a public-private partnership between the City of Seattle and City Fruit, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion of urban fruit.

Five orchards were chosen for the pilot year. These orchards are in Meadowbrook Community Center, Bradner Gardens, Jose Rizal Park, Martha Washington Park, and along the Burke-Gilman Trail near Gasworks Park. Each orchard is represented by a team of at least three volunteers. These volunteers are being trained on the basics of tree biology, orchard management, fruit tree pruning and pest care. Each team has developed a management plan for their orchard and will be recruiting volunteers for work parties over the coming year.

Watch for the Urban Orchards Stewards program to continue to grow in 2011. Pending further grant funding, three more public orchards will be brought into the program. Come fall, existing teams hope to hold community fruit harvest events and cider pressings, and to increase the visibility of Seattle's public orchards.

For more information on how you can be involved with the program, contact Gail Savina (gail@cityfruit.org) at City Fruit.