



**City of Seattle**  
Urban Forestry Commission

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**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*

**Draft meeting notes**

August 3, 2022, 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Via Webex call and in-person at the  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2494 142 4553

Meeting password: 1234

**Attending**

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair

Falisha Kurji

Stuart Niven

Hao Liang

Blake Voorhees

Laura Keil

Jessica Jones

Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Public

Barbara Bernard

Sandy Shettler

Susan Ricci

Steve Zemke

Absent- Excused

Julia Michalak – Co-Chair

Joe Sisneros

Becca Neumann

David Moehring

Jessica Hernandez

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

**Public comment:**

Barbara Bernard spoke about a project on Aurora Ave. This has long been an area that doesn't have adequate tree cover. Many mature trees were taken out a few years ago on Aurora for a storage unit project. SDOT indicated there would be a 2:1 replacement ratio with that project, but a recent visit showed there wasn't that amount of replacement, and many of the ones that were planted aren't doing well. She has photos that she will share for the record. Replacement trees are small and don't provide the shade the previous trees did. The buildings and surrounding concrete are absorbing and radiating heat now, exacerbating heat island effect. There is concern that removal of some of the last mature trees on Aurora and doing similar replacement for the new proposed project will not help the surrounding neighborhood.

Sandy Shettler – this is the time we're starting to think about budget. Two years ago, the Council tried to get funding into the budget for two additional Arborists in SDCI, but that didn't go through. She has been following tree removals and noted two recent project examples involving exceptional trees where SDCI Planners allowed removal. In both cases, the project didn't make it to SDCI Arborist review, and SDCI apologized that removal of the exceptional trees was missed. She would like the existing Arborists to have more support, so that they can be involved in project decisions. If the UFC prepares a letter for a budget request, she would help get the word out.

Sharon Ricci discussed a project in Taylor Creek, in Deadhorse Canyon and Lakeridge Park. Most of the residents bordering the park are residents of unincorporated King County. Seattle Public Utilities is planning to take out ~300 trees in a project aimed at reducing runoff, improv drainage and habitat for salmon. About 100 concerned people met at the Rainier Beach Community Center, and agreed they want 1) SPU to conduct a better community engagement process, 2) have an independent engineer (not hired by SPU) review and design the project, and 3) not have these trees clear cut for a road to be put through this hundred-year-old greenspace, which is the only open space in this area. They would like SPU to look at the alternative of having animal and human labor bring in materials to create the drainage solutions necessary. They are looking for support to avoid the runoff, heat and erosion that would happen if these trees are taken out with this project.

Steve Zemke noted that those replacement trees for the storage unit project on Aurora are failing due to lack of watering. The other issue on Aurora is the sweetgum removal project where notice was put up for removal of trees between 80<sup>th</sup> and 130<sup>th</sup> or so. This is a sidewalk issue and SDOT needs to look at how we can save those trees that are there. Removal will those trees are stressed, we need to care for them better. Regarding the Tree Protection Ordinance, the loss of trees from lack of oversight and planning in these projects points to the need to do tree inventory on the front end, that includes what trees will come out, what will stay and what will be planted and replanted. Looking at that along with the landscape plan, everyone will be clear on what is to be save and what is not. SDCI is too limited in what they can do (3 site visits per day at most), so they do need more Arborists and that proposal should come from the UFC. Dan Strauss indicated that the Land Use Committee would meet again September 14, which is getting late in the budget process, and the timeline for how the Ordinance can proceed is unclear. Perhaps discussing how some of the provisions can move forward this year is a step that can be taken.

**Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:**

Patti shared some updates:

- Regarding the potential removal of trees on Aurora Avenue for the project to replace sidewalks between 80<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup>, many emails have been received addressed to the Commission on this. There is much community concern about the potential removal of these trees, and is another example of the potential

tension between accessible sidewalks and trees, so folks are urging that creative solutions be used to accommodate both trees and sidewalks.

- Social media page – Lia is interested in running a social media page, likely on Instagram. The content would be mostly utilizing existing information about what the UFC does and announcing when the meetings happen and letting the public know how to participate, engaging public about current policies and happenings related to trees, sharing information about ecosystem services that trees provide and so on.
- Canopy cover assessment – we are still waiting for a draft report from the consultant team with this data, and staff hope to share results with the UFC at the August 20 meeting.
- Regarding Co-Chair nominations and election, Becca has indicated she is willing to serve as Co-Chair. No other nominations have been received yet.
- The joint meeting between the UFC and the IDT will be September 21, 1:00-5:00 p.m. We are looking at doing a 4-hour session rather than a full day as has been done in pre-COVID years, as we ease back into in-person gatherings. This will be an in-person meeting, but we'll retain remote participation options.

Josh shared that there are two meetings scheduled with OSE Director Jessyn Farrell later this month to collaborate on the Chief Arborist Statement of Legislative Intent. Additional Commissioners are able to participate as interested. Also, a subgroup met recently to discuss potential updates to the website and have another meeting scheduled to continue the discussion on August 17<sup>th</sup>. Additional Commissioners are able to join that discussion as well.

#### **Adoption of July 6 and July 20 meeting notes**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the July 6 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.**

**ACTION: A motion to approve the July 20 meeting notes as written was made, seconded, and approved.**

#### **SEPA draft urban forest protection ordinance – Chanda Emery, SDCI**

Chanda outlined the plan for this discussion, starting with an update on the appeal of the SEPA determination, then reviewing updates on the draft legislation in relation to the UFC recommendations from March and July 2022, and then next steps for this process.

Chanda outlined three potential outcomes from the Hearing Examiner's decision: affirming the City's determination, allowing Council to move forward considering draft legislation; ordering that a full Environmental Impact Statement be done, requiring much time and resources; and requiring additional analyses, allowing Council to proceed once that work is completed and confirmed. A ruling is anticipated at the end of July or early August, and can be found on the Hearing Examiner's website which will be shared in the chat.

Regarding the draft ordinance and the UFC recommendations, Chanda shared a list of recommendation and clarification areas based on review of the recommendations letters. Chanda and Commissioners selected and discussed several of those areas to discuss for this meeting:

- Payment-in-lieu program funds – Chanda clarified that the funds coming in for this new option would be pass-through only; they wouldn't stay with SDCI. They would be received by SDCI and then passed on to the department doing the planting, which is currently expected to be SDOT and Parks and Recreation. There are also legal requirements for how the funds are tracked and spent, so SDCI will be able to report out on how the funds are being spent.

- Payment-in-lieu amounts – the Director’s Rule on this that was published along with the draft legislation in February described how the payment is being determined. Chanda clarified that maintenance costs will be included in calculating the payment amount. Tree species and location of the tree are not currently included in the calculation of costs. Commissioners noted that Washington DOT has a formula that incorporates many of these considerations, and that in general, a 1-for-1 replacement ratio is not going to achieve the canopy replacement values lost quickly enough when trees are removed. Chanda noted that SDCI will review the WSDOT process, and that it is a challenge to achieve a greater than 1-for-1 replacement ratio.
- Type I Administrative tree reviews – the draft legislation retains the ability to do the same process as the existing process. It was a type I previously and it’s still a type I review. The draft legislation incorporates a tree review into the process that wasn’t part of the process previously. This applies to how permit applications are reviewed, but not to the legislation itself. Any changes to the legislation in the future would still go through a SEPA process and be appealable. Commissioners noted that this reinforces the need for additional Arborists in SDCI given the additional workload it would generate.
- Permits for tree removal – SDCI did not recommend instituting a process for requiring permitting for tree removals outside of development. Chanda notes that one reason for this was to accommodate flexibility for homeowners’ needs. Another reason is enforceability, since it is difficult enough for SDCI staff to process and enforce the existing set of permits. Also, other jurisdictions that do have permits for tree removal indicate that they are not able to enforce that permit requirement.

Chanda indicated that they look forward to more deliberative sessions through the summer as well as reviewing any additional information or resources that Commissioners have to share. Prior to legislation moving forward to Council, the current Mayor administration needs to review and confirm the content of the legislation, since the draft legislation was prepared under the previous administration.

Chanda also shared next steps for this work to be done in the remainder of the year:

- Work with the UFC and other stakeholders on any potential revisions to the SEPA draft legislation
- Identify resources needed for implementation and enforcement
- Work with the Mayor and City Council on the next steps

Josh will take the lead on drafting a response letter for SDCI, to include that replacement costs and ratio should incorporate ecosystem services for the payment-in-lieu program, appreciation for the clarification on the Type I process, and reinforcing the desire for a permit process and identifying more robust tracking options if that cannot be developed.

### **Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement alternatives**

Josh provided a review of the proposed EIS alternatives and the resolution the Council passed asking for climate resiliency to be incorporated into the Comp Plan update process.

Josh noted that there has been comment that Alternative 4 should not be included because of equity considerations.

Laura noted that something that is missing is prioritization of non-vehicular public spaces and planning from the human scale. This happens in a lot of cities in the U.S. Environmental attractiveness including trees adds to the experience of people moving through spaces; that is missing from the planning process so far. Potentially an Alternative 6 could incorporate climate resiliency and the human experience.

Hao noted that data is only shown for Alternative 1 (projections of jobs and people) and these are King County’s projections. Alternative 1 is aimed at meeting those targets and Alternatives 2-5 are aimed at meeting growth projections. One goal is to determine how to meet those needs for people and jobs and then figure out how to retain trees while doing that.

One alternative not included is something that studies things like regenerative EcoDistricts discussed by Michael Eliason in his recent presentation. The typical development models don't lend themselves to provision of parks, open spaces and amenities. The UFC could suggest those types of development models be included in this process.

The plan update process includes a set of defined place types. Commissioners noted that these types were developed in the 1990's and could potentially be updated.

Josh reviewed Council's resolution related to climate change impacts being included in the Comp Plan update. UFC supports the resolution and has additional items to suggest adding; Josh reviewed those potential suggestions.

Laura will work with Josh to draft a comment letter, with the aim to get it to folks a week in advance for review in preparation for the 8/17 meeting, so comments can be finalized prior to the end of the public comment period.

### **NYC work**

Josh explained that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is working with New York City to conduct a practical canopy analysis, a spatially explicit analysis of where new trees are possible in the city. This is similar to what we've been needing in Seattle. The lead for that project and the local urban program director will be presenting to the UFC on September 7 on the work in NYC and locally.

The UFC aims to compile a list of questions to share with the TNC team prior to their presentation on 9/7, and will have some time on the next agenda to develop those.

***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 noted that the UFC can be aggressive in continuing to push for greater protections beyond those currently proposed. We really need to keep the large trees we currently have given the difficulty in replacing that canopy. Patti could forward to the Commissioners past presentations from on payment in lieu options. Replacement ratios should be larger than 2:1, let alone 1:1. The resistance to permits is absurd. SDOT is doing it and other cities are doing it including Tacoma, Atlanta, and Lake Forest Park. Voluntary reporting does not give an indication of what's happening out there. The City was looking at amendments to the current Comp Plan ahead of the update process, to look at where we can concentrate more trees in order to reach tree equity.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 PM.

### **Meeting Chat:**

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:08 PM

Send photos/info to: [patricia.bakker@seattle.gov](mailto:patricia.bakker@seattle.gov)

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:09 PM

Thank you, Barbara.

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:11 PM

Thanks, Sandy!

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:13 PM

Thank you, Sharon. Send to Patti @ [patricia.bakker@seattle.gov](mailto:patricia.bakker@seattle.gov)

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:24 PM

Thanks Steve!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:39 PM

payment in lieu needs to increase with size of tree removed, like Portland does. Also tree replacement needs to be more than 1 tree for 1 tree - not on slide.

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:39 PM

Enforcement

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:40 PM

Great question!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:40 PM

SDOT has people on the weekend!

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:41 PM

I can send an example of an SDOT arborist stopping an illegal removal last Saturday.

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:41 PM

Please do

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 3:42 PM

<https://www.westsideseattle.com/robinson-papers/2022/07/31/sdot-stops-illegal-tree-cutting-only-one-three-large-cedars-still-stand>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:43 PM

Definitely need two week notice of applications to remove trees both on site and on line to stop illegal removal of trees

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:46 PM

cost needs to include ecosystem services value of tree that is lost not just cost to buy a replacement tree!!

Portland charges \$450/diameter inch for trees over 20 inches

from Blake Voorhees to everyone: 3:47 PM

Thank you, Sandy. Great article and public resource.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:48 PM

replacing a 89 year old conifer with a 6 foot tree is not an equivalence of the loss of the existing tree!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:52 PM

Other Seattle city Depts require a 2 for 1 replacement. Why isn't even that minimal replacement considered?

This was set up by Mayor Nickels over a decade ago.

from Sharon Ricci (privately): 3:54 PM

I sent you an email Patricia with what I know so far about the proposed SPU Taylor Creek "Restoration" project.

from Sharon Ricci (privately): 3:55 PM

And I used my work email sricci@wfs.org but signed in to this meeting using my personal email ricci.sharon@gmail.com.

from Sharon Ricci to everyone: 3:59 PM

Is there a reason why trees under 6" diameter are not considered important? These trees are often 5-15yrs old and holding soil in place.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:59 PM

The Type 1 review removes exceptional tree removal in multi family zones from design review requirement.

Tree regulation research project noted that only .3% % of projects had gone to design review for exceptional trees

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:01 PM

6" trees represent 45% of tree sin neighborhood residential 12"DBH represent only 18% of trees according to Ecosystems Services Report.in 2012

from Jim Davis to everyone: 4:02 PM

How much would it cost to provide a permitting service for private property outside of development. Could this scenario be shown as an option with the price associated with it.

from Jim Davis to everyone: 4:04 PM

Perhaps let the Council and Mayor decide if the additional costs would be warranted rather than just say it is a non starter.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:05 PM

SDOT has set up on line tree removal and replacement permits. through the Accela database system SDCI could do the same for 6" DBH trees and larger

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:08 PM

Atlanta GA, Tacoma DOT and Lake Forest Park currently use on line Accela system for tree removal and replacement permits. Voluntary reporting is not accountable and accurate.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:09 PM

I don't think that means we should give up on those trees.

from Sharon Ricci to everyone: 4:15 PM

Thank you all for providing this platform for our community members. I have another Zoom at 4:30pm for my daughter's upcoming trip to the UN! Thank you for your effort and thoughtfulness for our urban forest.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:18 PM

Thanks Sharon for caring for the canyon forest and trees in general. Best wishes for your daughter!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM

None of alternatives really discuss impact on trees and urban forests, Maybe need to consider an alternative based on presentation at last UFC meeting that puts a higher priority on open space and trees into development process.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:21 PM

Need to give priority to building affordable housing, not just housing which id usually market rate housing many cannot afford.

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:22 PM

I concur with the need for exploring regenerative eco districts.

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:24 PM

Has need to include trees on private land in order to meet Comp Plan goals been stated in OPCD's material?

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:31 PM

<https://seattle.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5721424&GUID=BC88BA35-B914-4B65-84BC-F8A5CF1106A8&Options=ID%7cText%7c&Search=climate>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:33 PM

Resolution was not voted on at the last Land Use Committee as they do it at next meeting on Sept 16th. So you have time to draft and send draft amendments.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 4:33 PM

As noted in the draft protection ordinance discussion, here is the website to track hearing examiner decision : [seattle.gov/hearing-examiner/decisions/case-search](http://seattle.gov/hearing-examiner/decisions/case-search)

from Falisha Kurji to everyone: 4:34 PM

I'd like to see safe walking and biking routes incorporated in this resolution

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:38 PM

130th and 145th Station Area Planning - July 21 2022 Presentation

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:38 PM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHIfmNcZesM>

from Hao Liang to everyone: 4:38 PM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HHIfmNcZesM>

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 4:42 PM

NYC Urban Forest Agenda:

[https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/UFA\\_Pages\\_final\\_hires.pdf](https://www.nature.org/content/dam/tnc/nature/en/documents/UFA_Pages_final_hires.pdf)

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:43 PM

Resolution 32059 was passed out of Land Use Committee July 13 and adopted by Council on July 19:

<http://seattle.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5721424&GUID=BC88BA35-B914-4B65-84BC-F8A5CF1106A8>

from Toby Thaler to everyone: 4:43 PM

A RESOLUTION stating The City of Seattle's intent to address climate change and improve resiliency as part of the One Seattle update to the Comprehensive Plan.

from Stuart Niven to everyone: 4:44 PM

Very sorry but I am having significant connection issues at my end which is why I am dropping in and out. I think my wife is dehydrated.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:48 PM

I agree with Steve! SDOT has been doing this for 9 years and the public both accepts and overwhelmingly supports it.

from Sandy Shettler to everyone: 4:50 PM

Thanks Commissioners for volunteering so much of your time and energy.)

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