



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 17, 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: 2483 066 4221

Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Julia Michalak – Co-Chair
Falisha Kurji
Becca Neumann
Hao Liang
Blake Voorhees
Laura Keil
Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE

Guests

Toby Thaler

Public

Greg Spotts
Steve Zemke
Valerie
Tina Cohen

Absent- Excused

Joe Sisneros
Stuart Niven
David Moehring
Jessica Hernandez
Jessica Jones

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:

Greg Spotts introduced himself to the UFC, as the Mayor's nominee for director of Seattle Department of Transportation. He will be starting in the position on September 7 and is introducing himself to folks in advance of that and noted that he is very passionate about trees. He grew the Urban Forestry Division in Los Angeles DOT from 95 staff to 250 staff during his tenure there. He really looks forward to collaborating with the UFC on the challenges regarding street trees and private property trees and trees in public lands. He hopes to lead SDOT with the knowledge of all of the options in the toolkit to develop multipurpose streetscapes. He worked with a similar body in L.A. and looks forward to meeting and working with the UFC.

Valerie noted they are very interested in hearing about and is concerned about the project in Lakeridge Park.

Tina Cohen noted regarding Michael Eliason's presentation, she has some concerns that the European model referred to is very different from how the U.S. is laid out. The schemes described didn't allow for large trees; we need space for large trees to thrive in Seattle.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

Patti shared information on upcoming meetings and projects:

- Deadhorse Canyon project – Sharon Ricci shared concern at the last meeting about an SPU project in Deadhorse Canyon. She followed up with information on a meeting that is coming up next Monday, August 22. This will be a walking tour of the Taylor Creek Restoration Project site in the canyon. Sharon wanted to ask if a member of the Commission could attend this walking tour.

The options presented and resulting decisions will affect whether hundreds of trees are removed from the Deadhorse Canyon corridor. This property is owned by City of Seattle and the parks department but affects residents of Seattle and unincorporated King County who have property that unfurls into the canyon.

Links to register for this event, and also for details of the project, will be put in the chat.

- Food Action Plan - The City is inviting Board and Commission members to share their thoughts on the update of the Food Action Plan during a public comment period.

The City of Seattle is updating the Food Action Plan for the first time in 10 years. The Food Action Plan is the City's roadmap for an equitable, sustainable, and resilient local food system that supports healthy, vibrant communities.

They have developed seven draft strategic priorities and 40 draft actions the City can take to improve our local food system, and are seeking public input on this draft plan until August 26. They have an online forum to learn about the draft plan, share thoughts on specific strategic priorities and actions, and express how high of a priority they are to you. Links to the plan website and the online forum will be put in the chat.

- Trees for Seattle volunteer engagement Request for Proposals – the Trees for Seattle team has a request for proposals out to recruit for a new consultant to support their ability to deliver volunteer programming. This consultant would work to host volunteer tree-stewardship and natural-area restoration events at assigned sites in priority neighborhoods. The consultant will partner with community groups to host tree care events in priority neighborhoods and develop a model of volunteer stewardship that addresses planting, protecting, and watering young trees on Seattle Public School campuses. This is an important need for the Trees for Seattle team and they are hoping for a robust set of proposals from consultant groups to provide this support. If anyone knows of consultants who are a good fit for this, please pass this along to them.

Josh shared several updates:

- The appeal to the SEPA draft tree protection ordinance determination was denied and the city is not required to do additional analyses and the Council can consider the ordinance. We will work with Chanda to schedule additional discussion on the ordinance and to further understand the next steps for that moving forward,
- A special session of the UFC is being scheduled for Wednesday August 24th at 4:00 p.m. to discuss the canopy cover assessment preliminary results.
- There are some small group meetings scheduled for next week to discuss the Chief Forester Statement of Legislative Intent.
- The Woodland Park Zoo is planning for an exhibit called Forests for All, which will have a strong conservation and urban forest preservation component. They are seeking public input on that exhibit; Josh shared the link to provide that input.

Co-Chair elections – nominations and vote

Patti recapped the need to elect at least one new Co-Chair to provide leadership along with Josh, given Julia's need to step down from her Co-Chair position. She indicated that one nomination had been received, as Becca indicated that she is willing to serve in that capacity.

Commissioners voted on the nomination of Becca as Co-Chair; this was approved unanimously. Patti will share information with Becca on the next meeting between the Co-Chairs and Patti.

NYC canopy assessment work – finalize prep for September presentation

Josh recapped the start of this discussion that happened at the last meeting. Since the team from The Nature Conservancy will present to the UFC at the September 7 meeting, the UFC wants to develop a list of questions and particular areas of interest to provide to the team in advance of that presentation.

Commissioners compiled the following list for this purpose:

- What was the level of investment (cost of staff time, amount of time) required to do the work?
- How has the work been received by the city government?
- How did you determine feasibility of planting?
- Did you experience any data limitations and challenges? Did you need to create any unusual data sets? How much was existing city layers, how much did you have to create?
- Did you look at whether there are areas in the city where EcoDistrict-type redevelopment could occur – depaving, installing parks, planting trees around developments?
- Interested in descriptions of urban forest in terms of land uses distributed across the city. Unlike Seattle, most of NYC's urban forest is on city owned land. Interested in comparing/contrasting NYC and Seattle in this regard, using that to understand the strategies deployed to achieve their canopy goals.
- What is NYC's Urban Forestry management structure? Are there challenges or benefits in how NYC manages their trees?
- NYC is looking at changing single family zoning to higher density. Do they have similar patterns in terms of relationships between zoning, housing density and tree canopy, and solutions for increasing density? Commissioners are interested in what those projected changes look like compared to what we're seeing here.
- How is the city addressing equity areas (redlined areas) for developing their canopy?
- More heat comes from arterials rather than neighborhoods. How is NYC addressing heat caused by arterials?
- How do they account for root zones in huge arterial settings?
- How has NYC being a coastal city impacted the study?

- NY Times reported recently on Seattle’s new Expedia campus project and associated work, which includes ecosystem restoration and new design tools in a previously industrial area. How does NYC introduce “practical canopy” into industrial areas?
- How will increased canopy affect native wildlife? Given that red-tailed hawks already come to the city despite the challenges.
- How are they going to prioritize planting in certain areas based on equity and habitat connectivity?

2023 City Budget Recommendations, second round

The UFC has had a couple of discussions on the budget already this year, and budget season is ramping up so it is timely to revisit this topic. Capacity issues at SDCI have been discussed in recent meetings, and some of the proposed changes in the tree protection ordinance would increase the workload of that staff. So that is one potential budget recommendation the UFC can make.

The UFC’s previous letter called for a system of tracking urban forestry expenditures for decision-making purposes. Commissioners discussed potential other recommendations to add to what was submitted earlier, and discussed the process for requesting a response when letters are submitted.

Josh will draft a letter requesting additional staff support for SDCI and referring back to the original letter submitted with budget recommendations.

Comprehensive Plan update Environmental Impact Statement alternatives

Josh reviewed the letter that he and Laura drafted, along with initial feedback from David to the letter. The letter provides background for why urban forestry goals and recommendations should be considered through the Comprehensive Plan update process and final document, and outlines what those recommendations are.

Commissioners worked through edits to the letter, which includes the following recommendation areas:

1. Analyze the impact of all growth strategies on urban ecosystem services.
2. Analyze the impacts of all growth strategies on biodiversity.
3. Analyze the impacts of all growth strategies on human health and equity
4. Include an alternative that provides more evenly distributed density than Alternative 5.
5. Include an alternative based on an EcoDistrict planning model.
6. Consider a larger diversity of place types.
7. Consider a greater diversity of housing choices
8. Add additional biodiversity and climate impact considerations to Council’s request in Resolution 32059.

Action: a motion to adopt the letter of recommendations regarding the Comprehensive Plan EIS alternatives as amended was made, seconded and approved.

Public comment:

Steve Zemke noted that in planning cities, considering a matrix of conceptual alternatives doesn’t relate to how the city is in terms of planning where its streams, roads, etc. are. That complexity needs to be taken into account. Builders would like to be able to build large units everywhere they can in the city and don’t support paying a fee for developing them. We need to look at alternative ways of building or we are not going to have space for trees as development increases. We need to look at the amenities provided in growth strategies – transit, schools, etc.

Richard Ellison supported Steve's note about requiring designs to maximize retention of existing trees, especially where density is increasing. He noted the idea that open space is opportunity for tree canopy, and if there is lack of open space and development is happening, then that is a lack of opportunity for tree canopy. There needs to be a way of considering a minimum for open green space on grounds, as a measure of human density. Develop a way of evaluating that and having a requirement for open space. The idea of mental health isn't being incorporated into the Comp Plan currently – we need to consider what is the impact of sitting in the hot sun or torrential rains. Potentially develop an Alternative 7, where all zones have increased open space requirements for families and wildlife. He suggests the UFC invite City Council members attend meetings in order to discuss with them the needs and potential impacts to each of their Districts.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 PM.

Meeting Chat:

from Lia Hall to everyone: 3:14 PM

I am very interested in the Dead Horse plan (this is in my neighborhood), but will be out of town. Would like to know what the community input period is.

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:17 PM

Deadhorse Canyon project walk: <https://brent582.wixsite.com/website-15> and https://www.seattle.gov/utilities/neighborhood-projects/taylor-creek?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:18 PM

Trees for Seattle volunteer support RFP: <https://seattle.procureware.com/Bids/7a6f2ef5-dfdf-4c74-ba7c-cd6f14d11089?t=Description>

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:18 PM

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/27L7GDQ>

from Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 3:19 PM

Food Action Plan update:

https://seattlefoodactionplan.consider.it/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&tab=Strategic%20Priorities

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:20 PM

Yay!

from Laura Keil she/her (privately): 3:21 PM

Yay!

from Joshua Morris (privately): 3:21 PM

I vote YAE and YAY for Becca!

from Julia Michalak She/Her (privately): 3:21 PM

Yes! Yay!

from Hao Liang (privately): 3:21 PM

Aye

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 (privately): 3:21 PM

Becca, yes

from Lia Hall (privately): 3:22 PM

Yay

from Barbara B to everyone: 3:22 PM

Same happened to me- but found the other link

from Becca Neumann (privately): 3:23 PM

I vote yes!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:24 PM

just joining meeting. You link on the page announcing the meeting did not work. Checking on agenda had different sign

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:31 PM

One Seattle EIS Scoping - need to also consider Natural Capital assessment which Council approved but never funded.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:34 PM

Will add some comments on Scoping -in next texts since missed public comment - include more on health impacts across city - mental and physical benefits reference Natureand Health Dr Katleen Wolf at natureandhealth.uw.edu

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:35 PM

add to alternative housing condos to look at.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:38 PM

equity concerns also needs to insure that housing built needs to insure access to amenities like grocery stores and retail and access to bus transit, sidewalks and parking and increased traffic on narrow streets that could happen

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 3:39 PM

whatever underlying reports NYC Conervancy may be willing to release to us. it could give us some road maps to complimentary research we may want to consider conducting in Seattle or if additional data can be gleaned from our existing reports to proactively consider data in additional ways...

from Lia Hall to everyone: 3:40 PM

yes and achieving stretches of contiguous canopy

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:40 PM

Just Building more housing at market rate does not mean it will be affordable unless city plans for such, eg low income housing, subsidized housing etc.

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 3:41 PM

True that, Steve. Michael Eliason's report also outlined how they are able to construct livable ecodistricts well below market rate, which would enable affordable housing pricing.

from Joshua Morris to everyone: 3:41 PM

<https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/UrbanForestryCommission/2022/2022docs/ADOPTED2022BudgetRecommendations060122.pdf>

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 3:42 PM

Provocative and timely to be sure.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:43 PM

More street trees does not necessarily mean more habitat, need to create more parks, including pocket parks for habitat and environmental equity as population increases

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:44 PM

Yes it would be good to ask for response to letters

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:48 PM

Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda Chairs the Council Budget Committee. Would be good to cc all Budget Committee members also on budget issues.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:51 PM

Commission members can also send in individual comments on the EIS scoping process.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:54 PM

One alternative not looked at or considered is a combing of alternatives 2 and 4.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:56 PM

Birds also need ground area with bushes and plants for food and water sources. Some birds nest on the ground. Others nest in the top of tall trees.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:57 PM

Birds need habitat, which is not just connectivity.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 3:59 PM

Birds need insects for feeding their young. Insects need trees and plants.

from Barbara B to everyone: 4:00 PM

Urban wildlife

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:00 PM

The issue is not just connectivity. It's habitat with diverse plants and animals.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:03 PM

add after pollinators and other insects. Douglas Tallamy says birds rely on insects for 95% of what they feed their young.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:06 PM

Also stormwater runoff and pollution affects on Orca and other wildlife and plants in Puget Sound

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:08 PM

forgot salmon

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 4:08 PM

i'm trying to understand how this impacts the Cedar River Watershed. I am unaware where Seattle overlaps with it.

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 4:09 PM

thank you, Josh!

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:10 PM

maybe add sustainability of habitats and ecosystems

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:12 PM

salmon are also in some steams in Seattle eg Thornton Creek watershed

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:13 PM

also add Lake Washington which also can be impacted

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:18 PM

Need to look at how things can be changed, its future development, agree its premature to eliminate

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:19 PM

Alternative not considered would be combination of 2 and 4 which would combine focused and corridors

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:23 PM

More transit should help reduce pollution along these corridors.

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:26 PM

Say need to analyze health impacts of different options. More housing near light rail should reduce traffic impacts in city. Thatt's the concept anyway

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:28 PM

The goal is to reduce both traffic into the city and traffic in the city to reduce pollution.

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:34 PM

comprising?

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:39 PM

Just a note: some areas are self-designating as "ecodistricts" <https://www.capitolhillecodistrict.org/>

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:39 PM

Do we need to define what we mean then by "ecodistrict"

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:41 PM

Canopy in multifamily zones is currently 23% Making residential zone open to higher density as in option option 5 will reduce canopy cover in residential zone from current 33% to 20 to 25%. That seems clear to me. That is what needs to be analyzed in EIS. What is the impact on canopy cover in all the alternatives..

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:47 PM

Its not just building more housing but looking at how increased density can be done while trying to maximize the retention of existing trees.in neighborhoods. Too often now developers just clearcut lots as current ordinance does not say they have to be protected unless exceptional.

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 4:48 PM

I do like this definition;

from Blake Voorhees UFC Position 9 to everyone: 4:48 PM

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecodistrict>

from Steve Zemke to everyone: 4:50 PM

Understand current comments are a coordinated effort by people wanting increased density but is not a poll or statistically valid representation of people living in the city.,

from Lia Hall to everyone: 4:56 PM

and I think a long dash right after "and more"

from VZenos to everyone: 5:00 PM

Hi, I have to go now. Please email me with addresses so I can respond to the Commission with questions I have.

from VZenos to everyone: 5:00 PM

Thank you! Valerie

from Lia Hall to everyone: 5:02 PM

to Hao's comment, "similar contexts" I think "environments"

from Lia Hall to everyone: 5:02 PM

' makes sense

from Hao Liang to everyone: 5:02 PM

Agree

from Blake Voorhees UFC 9 to everyone: 5:12 PM

All good points, Steve, and those I think our letter discussed today re EIS alternatives endeavors to address.

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