



City of Seattle
Urban Forestry Commission

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Becca Neumann (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair
Joshua Morris (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair
Laura Keil (Position #10 – Get Engaged), Co-Chair
Julia Michalak (Position #1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **Falisha Kurji** (Position #3 – Natural Resource Agency)
Stuart Niven (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA) • **Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA)
David Baker (Position # 8 – Development) • **Blake Voorhees** (Position # 9 – Realtor)
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

April 7, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.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: 2487 090 0691
Meeting password: 1234

Attending

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair
Laura Keil – Co-Chair
Falisha Kurji
Stuart Niven
David Baker
Jessica Jones
Lia Hall

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE
Lisa Ciecko – SPR

Guests

Toby Thaler

Absent- Excused

Julia Michalak
Hao Liang
Blake Voorhees
Jessica Hernandez

Public

Steve Zemke

NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

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

Public comment:

Steve Zemke recommended removing the exemption for properties of certain size from needing to plant street trees, rather than reducing the size threshold down to 500 feet. He also recommended, regarding the pruning thresholds for reportable work, that the canopy and branch size thresholds included in the ordinance be consistent across departments.

Chair, Committees, and Coordinator report:

None

UFC recommendations on draft Urban Forest Protection ordinance

Josh thanked Hao and Becca for helping to make continued edits to the draft recommendation letter since the Wednesday meeting, and Commissioners then worked through the rest of the letter, reviewing and editing the content. Primary discussion areas included:

- The 85% hardscape allowance for development projects
- Tree replacement requirements when mitigation for removed trees is required, and ensuring adequate conditions for survival of replacement trees
- Canopy and branch size thresholds for reportable work done by tree service providers
- The payment amount for the payment-in-lieu option when tree removal mitigation doesn't happen on-site
- Penalties for violations and the city's ability to enforce them
- Expanding the reporting requirements to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of the ordinance and its outcomes
- Two additional recommended Director's Rules regarding invasive tree species and pest, pathogen and insect infestations
- The exemption for street tree requirements
- Tree removal limits when no development is proposed
- Refining recommendations regarding tree protection areas

Action: a motion to adopt the tree ordinance recommendation letter as amended 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 commented on the housing issue, noting that Portland amended their tree ordinance last year to provide for a 20% tree protection area on lots, and urged the UFC to consider the implications of potential zoning changes and impacts on tree canopy. He noted the schedule of Council meetings and votes and introduction and consideration of amendments.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Meeting chat:

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:10 AM

current code allows flexibility to city based on

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:10 AM

on what's on a lot

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:12 AM

Lots vary as to trees on lot. This change says treat all lots the same.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:16 AM

Need to do like Portland does - guarantee 20% of lot dedicated to tree retention and tree planting. Proposed change in draft does not say 15% has to be dedicated to trees.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:16 AM

People are waiting to get in to meeting but can't I've been told

From Barbara to everyone: 9:17 AM

Some team members of The Last 6000 are trying to get in but it is responding with waiting for host

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:18 AM

People are getting message host will let them in but they can't get in

From Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 9:19 AM

Webex Meeting doesn't require host letting people in. People use the meeting number and password and are automatically let in.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:21 AM

Neighborhood residential now has 34% canopy, Multifamily is 23% canopy

From Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 9:21 AM

When people use information for a previous meeting, they will get a message about the host not starting the meeting.

From June BlueSpruce to everyone: 9:22 AM

First bullet last sentence should not be worded as a question. Sounds as if the Commission doesn't doubt that it would exacerbate canopy inequities.

From Ciecko, Lisa to everyone: 9:22 AM

If you are hearing from people who can't join, please feel free to provide the meeting information from the website: <https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingschedule>

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:22 AM

HB 1110 is now in Senate Rules already passed House

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:26 AM

HB 1110 would allow 4-plexes and 6 plexes in what are now single family zones in 16 largest cities in state.

From June BlueSpruce to everyone: 9:30 AM

David Moehring is an invaluable source of design flexibility ideas.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:30 AM

SDCI should be able to ask for alternative site plan if it looks like more trees could be protected

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:36 AM

Other cities require more trees for replacement as size of removed tree increases. Removing an 80 year old tree takes 80 years to replace

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:37 AM

Some cities actually require more

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:38 AM

One for one is tremendous loss of environmental benefits for decades

From Barbara to everyone: 9:38 AM

Will there be a requirement for type of trees? One example I heard was removing an exceptional Doug fir and planting 5 dogwoods... not really an equivalent.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:39 AM

Yes Harrell says city will require 3 for 1 replacement for healthy public trees removed

From Jim Davis to everyone: 9:41 AM

Yes. I understand a norm today is to replace the Douglas Fir with 5 ornamental trees like Dogwoods with equivalent canopy coverage.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:43 AM

If 25% not recommends means no TSP will file for pruning. Exempt fruit trees not all pruning. Pruning is removing canopy.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:47 AM

Should require permits for tree removal and replacement like SDOT does. Tree removal is area needs most oversight and data collection for.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:48 AM

shoul start \$17.87 at 12 inches to follow loss of tree benefits increasing with size of tree removed

From Barbara to everyone: 9:49 AM

Smart, because yes, cost of water will certainly increase at minimum.

From Barbara to everyone: 9:50 AM

Perhaps *Required minimum mitigation

From Joshua Morris to everyone: 9:51 AM

To the extent practicable, tree selection should consider native species, indigenous or cultural significance to the area in which it is being planted, or a climate adaptive species from a similar ecosystem that will maximize mitigation of carbon and stormwater runoff and be resilient to climate change and pests

From June BlueSpruce to everyone: 9:51 AM

Excellent language.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:52 AM

draft says replacement can be a combination of on site and off site

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:54 AM

Needs to be some equivalence to tree lost

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 9:55 AM

The landscape plans are reviewed by SDCI

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:55 AM

There are recommended trees lists based on size

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 9:55 AM

By the planners, not the SDCI arborists

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 09:55AM

Not plant invasives

From Lia Hall to everyone: 9:56 AM

Invasives plant themselves usually

From Lia Hall to everyone: 9:56 AM

By definition

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 9:56 AM

Approved street trees

https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/SDOT/PublicSpaceManagement/2015-Street_Tree_List.pdf

From Lia Hall to everyone: 9:59 AM

Idk if I missed this and someone else mentioned David, but there are certain trees only allowed in planting strips under power lines, but I don't think on private property.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:00 AM

\$000 is for exceptional tree, \$17.87 applies to non-exceptional trees and quickly increases to pass \$4000

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:01 AM

excessive pruning was in 2022 draft recommend reas

From Barbara to everyone: 10:02 AM

Groves are critical travel ways for urban wildlife

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:02 AM

Yes. They are our micro forests.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:04 AM

Permits needed for accurate reporting on tree removed outside development. Tree inventory needed front end of development Putting information on site plans is not data collection since city employees need to put in a data system

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:05 AM

Need information on tree replacements

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:06 AM

Agree with Steve. The City has invested many software dollars in making the system usable by the public. This would leverage involvement of stakeholders and reduce City staff time.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:07 AM

Permits are already done through the Accela database system by SDOT for tree removal

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:07 AM

I and replacement of street trees

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:10 AM

Should include any factors like climate change , pest infestations that have happened since previous reports

From June BlueSpruce to everyone: 10:11 AM

Thanks for all your hard work! I'm going to have to leave now.

From Bakker, Patricia to everyone: 10:17 AM

Suggest adding a sentence above the request for the Director's Rules "the UFC recommends development of two additional DRs:"

From David Baker to everyone: 10:18 AM

"The commission acknowledges that reducing the guaranteed percentage lot coverage will decrease the development capacity of residential zones and subsequently the number of housing units that can be produced. We urge City Council to find a compromise that protects trees and produces new housing units."

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:19 AM

I think the goal is to encourage the use of proven strategies such as alternative foundations (pier, non-trench options) as well as strategic building placement to build the SAME amount of housing WITH trees

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:20 AM

Current site plans are inefficient and waste space that could be aggregated to retain or plant trees

From Barbara to everyone: 10:20 AM

The same amount of housing can be achieved with many creative alternatives as well as building up.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:21 AM

Can also build up rather than spread out. If we want to save trees we need to guarantee them space on lots

From Barbara to everyone: 10:21 AM

There doesn't need to be a reduction in housing to save trees

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:21 AM

Need to balance and give space to trees

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:23 AM

Don't need to build on all lots.

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:23 AM

Agree with Becca. It's important to emphasize that we are not reducing housing units. Most trees already grow on the periphery of lots and are not being saved anyway, when they are not in the way of homes being built. Houses need trees around them for the health of their human occupants..

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:23 AM

We could recommend increasing building heights to save trees

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:23 AM

Agree with David in that we need more emphasis on how to integrate trees into new housing. Other cities are much more progressive.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:24 AM

Can c

From Toby Thaler to everyone: 10:24 AM

The current development capacity is resulting in failure to meet City's tree canopy goals.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:25 AM

Could change what could be built on lots to increase housing units and save more trees

From Barbara to everyone: 10:25 AM

Acknowledge that there is a potential, of reduction as code currently stands, but this NOT a guaranteed reduction in development capacity, if developers are required to use creative solutions.

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:25 AM

Speakers at Land Use Committee meetings against the current proposed ordinance are stating this will result in 150,000 less housing units. Is that what is being acknowledged?

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:26 AM

What about referencing tree-friendly design such as building placement strategies, pier foundations where seismic conditions allow, etc.

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:26 AM

150,000

From Toby Thaler to everyone: 10:32 AM

Fix paragraph number

From Toby Thaler to everyone: 10:33 AM

Amend my prior: It's how development is regulated and managed that results in failure to meet canopy goals, not the development capacity per se

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:36 AM

Can there be some cross sharing of duties between SDCI arborists and SDOT arborists?

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:36 AM

Thank you Toby,. The current process is what results in urban forest loss, not the number and size of homes per se.

From Francisca to everyone: 10:36 AM

I have personal experience about what Lia is saying. Would support her comments.

From Barbara to everyone: 10:36 AM

Yes Lia, its all based on calls in, and often the SDCI investigation falls flat for numerous reasons. The needs to be an Avenue for enforcement

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:37 AM

A permit required to remove a tree would help to cut down on illegal tree removal

From Barbara to everyone: 10:38 AM

Yes, agree with Steve. Plus we will then have more data with permits.

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:38 AM

Need a certified inspector to follow up on complaints

From Barbara to everyone: 10:40 AM

Please consider adding stronger enforcement to the section items missing from the ordinance

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:42 AM

Need a code compliance officer to follow up on complaints <https://silverwrightlaw.com/the-role-and-importance-of-code-enforcement-officers>

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:45 AM

6' and larger is what is in current code. draft says 12" and above on site plans and needs to be corrected.

From Francisca to everyone: 10:46 AM

Thank you for all your expertise and commitment to tree protection.

From Barbara to everyone: 10:47 AM

Please consider changing the table to say "Minimum Required Mitigation ", that way, if more are needed it's still in guidelines

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:48 AM

Need a dedicated Code Compliance Officer that has authority to follow up. on complaints

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:48 AM

how about addresses off-hours illegal activity

From Francisca to everyone: 10:49 AM that accommodates easy navigation and response to the public and private citizens

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:49 AM

SDOT seems to be able to comply on weekends and holidays

From Sandy Shettler to everyone: 10:49 AM

how about timely?

From Steve Zemke to everyone: 10:50 AM

someone on call to respond to weekend and holiday and after hours complaints

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:50 AM

Yes, "investigate use of SDOT arborists in enforcement process"

From Jim Davis to everyone: 10:53 AM

Thank you Commissioners for the work you put in for trees.

From Francisca to everyone: 10:54 AM

Possible to send link to Landuse meeting Joshua mentioned?

From Joshua Morris to everyone: 10:58 AM

@Francisca: public comment sign up here: <https://www.seattle.gov/council/committees/public-comment>

From Joshua Morris to everyone: 10:58 AM

opens at 12 pm

From Francisca to everyone: 10:59 AM

Thanks Joshua

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