

Urban Forestry Commission
Urban Forest Management Plan Update Listening Session
9/5/18
Completed on 11/7/18

Commissioners present:

Weston Brinkley – chair
Joanna Nelson de Flores – vice-chair
Whit Bouton
Jessica Jones
Stuart Niven
Sarah Rehder
Michael Walton
Andrew Zellers
Steve Zemke

Staff present:

Jana Dilley
Michael Sanchez
Sandra Pinto de Bader

1. Background presentation
 - a. Requested the commission to participate in UFMP update process
 - i. Public engagement in two phases. Seeking input first
 - ii. Will next develop content and bring it to the commission for review
 - iii. Some commissioners will be invited to joint meetings; dates are not established yet, but will be in Seattle Municipal Tower
 - iv. Let Sandra know if you would like to be involved
 - b. We are actively inviting everyone we are interacting with to participate in Phase II
2. Questions on process / timeline for plan update

The Commission was in general in support of the process. With the following input:

- a. Consider developers and contractors as a stakeholder group.
 - i. Sandra will reach out to SCDI and invite developers to a listening session
- b. Having these sessions with the public and everyone involved will help clear up confusion
- c. Clarify that we are increasing outreach to historically underrepresented communities but not exclusively
- d. Question: Lots of emphasis on the equity but how does urban forest help that out?
 - i. Answer: Urban forest is for everyone, but not everyone has the same access
- e. Lots of emphasis on the equity but how does urban forest help that out?
 - i. Urban forest is for everyone, but some people do not have access to it
 - ii. Some confusion on how the canopy cover study will bridge the gap between the urban forest and equity
- f. Question: Would you consider the Mayor to be involved in this?
 - i. Answer: We are keeping the Mayor's office updated on the process; the final plan will be approved by Mayor and adopted by Council

3. Listening session for future UFMP content
 - a. The values below are meant to help guide the development of the new Urban Forest Management Plan. How would you add to / strengthen these values?
 - i. Include enforcement of regulations
 - ii. Collect good data regularly
 - iii. Use best available science to use data to deliver urban forestry services.
 - iv. Public health component as separate piece
 - v. Focus on increasing canopy to achieve equity and the benefits of the urban forest being distributed equitably
 - vi. Focus on economic benefits on trees
 - vii. Plan for the Seattle of the future
 - b. What are the highest priority issues that Urban Forest Commission would like to see addressed in the new UFMP?
 - i. Equity component
 - Keep an equity lens throughout rather than all in one section
 - ii. Public Health component
 - Seeing the benefits for humans is important
 - iii. Education component
 - iv. What would give the person in the field (like a developer) incentive to protect trees?
 - Explanation of the economic benefits on trees because that's what people will understand it. Put a dollar amount to the benefits of trees.
 - v. Provide guidance on the hierarchy of tree species value (i.e. native vs non-native)
 - vi. Value ecosystems for wildlife
 - vii. Include management of the urban forest understory
 - viii. Have more community members know about urban forestry because it seems that the people that know are only a small group of tree advocates
 - ix. Managing the urban forest in the context of climate change
 - x. Strong planting practices; consider soil, water, stewarding community when planning to plant
 - c. What specific goals or actions would the Urban Forestry Commission like to see included in the new UFMP?
 - i. Review canopy cover goals
 - Can we have a higher citywide goal? What is keeping us away from the 40% aspirational goal contained in the Comp Plan?
 - How we can achieve it and when?
 - Is the goal to achieve no net loss or to show actual canopy growth?
 - Need to have a canopy goal even if it's not perfect
 - Consider tracking canopy volume in addition to canopy cover
 - ii. Reflect on the goals from the previous plan – what did and did not work?
 - iii. Identify the problems and how the future plan will take them on
 - iv. Emphasize biodiversity

- v. Consider impacts to canopy cover goal if the City annexes White Center
 - vi. Incorporate public health in the UFMP
 - vii. Tree regulations
 - viii. Increase funding for urban forestry outreach / engagement
 - ix. Use of snags
- d. What are the Urban Forest Commission's goals for the next five years? How would you like to work with the City in the future?

The UFC's goals for the next five years:

- i. A new goal for urban forestry that is not just a canopy cover number. Need to find a better proxy for how urban forestry is doing.
- ii. Look at three-dimensional measure of canopy.
- iii. Look at seasonality as well. Conifer vs. deciduous.
- iv. Integration: Departments, data, benefits – bring different things together to work towards the common goal: integrated budget, policies, etc.
- v. Passage of new tree ordinance and monitoring implementation and success. Do necessary work to make it successful and adapt overtime as needed.
- vi. Look towards what comes after hitting the 30% canopy cover goal.
- vii. Likes to receive letters from the public and be aware of issues.
- viii. Tree ordinance rollout. First hearing in Council Chambers is a problem (should start at community events, festivals, etc.)
- ix. Update on an annual basis on how the new tree protection ordinance is doing. Ongoing tweaks.
- x. Get beyond just doing letters and maybe creating some products more directly related to community education - which seemed to be a key issue for commissions.

How to work with the City:

- i. Would like to work toward improving the relationship with City staff so they come to the UFC first. The UFC could contribute with the expertise around the table. Use UFC as a sounding board for UF issues early in the process.
- ii. Have meetings where things are generally discussed and incorporate UFC feedback early on. The more interaction, the better ideas.
- iii. Include UFC members in the strategic conversations with the Core Team as they develop the UFMP update.
- iv. It sometimes feels very reactive and ad-hoc. UFC gets bits and pieces of info from different departments. Hard to tie a thread throughout all of those bits of information. Have an annual brief snapshot from every department to understand what each dept is trying to do in the next year. To guide UFC input throughout the year.
- v. Communicate better with other boards and find ways to collaborate.
- vi. Clarify the role the UFC has with the public – not clearly defined.

- e. How can the City better communicate with the general public?
 - i. T4S newsletter, Mayor’s weekly – hard to keep up with those. Find more interactive ways to present information. Maybe incorporate art and other means to communicate.
 - ii. More education to tree service providers – put more effort on educating this group.
 - iii. Tree festival – i.e. what Cass Turnbull did years ago, as a way to celebrate our trees.
 - iv. Educating the public will be crucial for the new ordinance and tree-care practices. Might get into this with the UFMP update. Maybe there is a way for the UFC to get more involved to look at different ways to do that.
 - v. The communications are mostly opt-in. Think of ways for information be distributed more broadly. Maybe information at hardware stores as an example.
 - vi. A “hackathon” could be a great way to get people involved. Create events to draw people and get them engaged with the topic.
 - vii. Create a project to evaluate what stores such as Lowe’s and Home Depot offer in terms of tree species, sale of invasives, clone trees, etc.
 - viii. What’s the UFC’s role vis-à-vis urban forestry communications with the public – mouth piece, sounding board?
 - ix. UF policy should begin in community spaces, events, locations – not at Council chambers during the week and during the day when people are working.
 - x. Better communicate the value of trees to the community. Strengthen the outreach to communicate why we are doing urban forestry work.
 - xi. Don’t engage with community only when there are problems with trees.

Urban Forestry Values:

- **Ecosystem and human health:** maximizing the mental health and human well-being, air quality, water quality, storm water runoff reduction, carbon sequestration, recreation, wildlife habitat, beauty, and other benefits of trees
- **Commitment to equity:** including diverse perspectives and equitable distribution of urban forestry resources and program
- **Community stewardship:** engaging the Seattle community, including residents and businesses, in appreciating and caring for the urban forest
- **Tree health, human safety, and property protection:** keeping the urban forest healthy using best management practices with a focus on public and crew safety
- **Good governance:** working in conjunction with other City and community goals such as transportation, utility provision, and housing

Public comment: UW Arborist

- Enforcement on protecting heritage trees
- Does the plan include snags?
- Equity component:
 - Tree care costs a lot of money
 - How do we include that in the plan?
 - How can people take care of these new trees for T4N?
- How about canopy volume instead of area?
 - Because methodology does change