

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates  
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 2 January 2023  
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting December 15, 2022:  
Summary and Comments

**NOTE: This document is not an official document of the Urban Forestry Commission. I am a private citizen who is a volunteer member of the Urban Forestry Commission. I write this document as a private citizen.**

**Conflict of Interest Policy** –

**“Members of City advisory bodies are public officials, based on State law ORS 244.020(15), and as such are required to disclose conflicts of interest. Under the Oregon Revised Statute 244.020(3), an appointee has a conflict of interest when participating in an official action which could or would result in a financial benefit or avoidance of detriment to the public official, a relative of the public official, or a business with which either is associated.”**

These meetings usually occur on a monthly basis, on the third Thursday of the month. Official minutes of the meetings are available at the website for the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC), once they are approved by the Commissioners (usually 1-3 months after the meeting). You can see and listen to You-tube recordings of the meetings. Go to the link at the UFC website <https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc> or to the You Tube site <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1ToXf0RSV44U3FpC0nwIUqtFOmFulxMY>

The decisions made at these meetings may affect volunteer tree advocacy and influence Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry (PP&R UF) processes and actions. If you do not wish to receive this commentary on monthly meetings, let me know.

*Italicized text indicates my own point of view and/or items not necessarily expressed during the meeting.* **Red bold text is used for my required statement that this is not an official or adopted statement from the Urban Forestry Commission, as well as the Conflict of Interest policy for the City of Portland. Bold black text is used for subject headings, lead presenters for a specific agenda item and occasionally either to identify who is saying what or for emphasis.**

The monthly Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting was held Thursday, December 15, 2022, 9:30 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. It was held as a Zoom meeting.

**UFC Members Present** - Vivek Shandas (chair), Adrienne Feldstein, Ivory Iheanacho, Roberta Jortner, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Leah Plack, Melinda McMillan, Megan Van de Mark

**UFC Commissioners Absent** - Anjeanette Brown, 1 vacancy

**PP&R UF Staff Present** – Jenn Cairo, City Forester (Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry division, PP&R UF); Belinda Judelman, Planning and Policy Analyst (PP&R UF); Brian Landoe, Analyst II (PP&R UF)

**City Attorney’s Office** – No one was present.

**Other City Staff** – None

**Other presenters** - Donnie Olivera, Director (Bureau of Planning and Sustainability); Andria Jacob, Climate Policy Program Manager (BPS)

**9:31 a.m. Public Testimony** None.

**9:33 a.m. – City Forester’s Report, Jenn Cairo**

1. A 15-member committee will be formed to advise the city on how to make the structural changes that were approved in the November election. These pertain to forming 4 electoral districts, electing 12 City Commissioners, with 3 from each of the four districts, instead of the existing 4 City Commissioners who currently run at-large. The Mayor and City Auditor will still be elected at large. These and other portions of the approved City Charter amendments will be worked on with this 15-member committee.
2. Urban Forestry-funded tree planting is underway. The PP&R Diversity/Equity & Inclusion team is providing training for contractors involved in the Street Tree Planting program, called Opt-Out.
3. Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) code amendments have been approved by the City Council. One involves the development of a 5-year Climate Investment Plan to guide allocation of PCEF funds. \$40 million has been allocated for improving urban canopy in Portland in low-income, low-canopy neighborhoods. Spring 2023 will see the launch of

- the use of \$8 million in the first year for tree work. Urban Forestry is eager to collaborate in this work.
4. Streets 2035 has been folded into another Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)-led program called Streets PDX. PBOT will be bringing information to the UFC in the future.
  5. Work continues on developing design standards for placing trees in curb extensions (for the UF-PBOT pilot). The hope is to have the design done by August 2023.
  6. BPS is working on a policy that focuses on land divisions while PBOT is developing a policy for electric charging stations. Both can influence tree placement and tree restrictions. If UFC wishes, these may be agenda items in the future.
  7. PP&R is exploring the staff facilities at PP&R UF- East Delta Park office, specifically replacing the aging house currently used for offices.
  8. PP&R continues its exploration of the options for street tree maintenance.
  9. PP&R has sent to City Commissioner Rubio and the Mayor the nominations for the current and upcoming UFC vacancies.

#### UFC Members' Questions and Comments to City Forester

Roberta: What is the role of UFC in discussing PCEF? I would like to see UFC involved somehow.

Jenn: Work is occurring currently with community groups. The Sustainable Future Program of PP&R focuses on finding funding for a street tree maintenance program.

Megan: Are trees considered part of the PCEF green infrastructure concerns?

Vivek: Two tree-friendly bills will be introduced in the Oregon legislature in 2023. Representative Khan Pham will be presenting a bill pertaining to urban trees and State Senator Michael Dembrow a bill on rural trees. [*I was unable to find any content online about these bills. I've emailed both legislators for more information.*]

Daniel: In discussions PP&R UF is having with PCEF, has there been anything about permanent funding for UF street tree maintenance?

Jenn: This has been mentioned along with many other options. PCEF is community-driven.

Daniel thinks now is the time to push for PCEF support.

Vivek: Has there been any discussion with Metro about their regional tree policy?

Jenn: I have no information on this.

Vivek would like to see Metro buying small plots for pocket parks.

**10:10 a.m. Climate Emergency Workplan from BPS** Donnie Olivera, Director (BPS); Andria Jacob, Climate Policy Program Manager (BPS). Donnie gave an overview of how the Climate Emergency Work Plan came about. In 2019 BPS developed a working Climate Emergency Declaration. This document was not viewed as acceptable due to the lack of community involvement in developing it. In July 2020 the document was approved by City Council, with the stipulation that an annual update would be brought to Council. The Climate Emergency Declaration included few specifics on exactly how to fulfill its stated aspirations. The 2015 Climate Action Plan had sunsetted out of existence.

Andria Jacob was assigned the task of figuring out what specific tasks the various city bureaus are currently working on that address climate emergency. With the help of many bureau workers, she identified 43 actions currently underway. There are lots of demands on both Portland and Multnomah County for climate emergency action. Efforts are underway to try to actively use community engagement in future climate emergency discussions. These discussions are looking at actions to be undertaken in the next 3 years.

In the adopted Portland Climate Emergency Work Plan, the dollars listed by specific actions are incomplete [*something like place holders*]. The hope is to convey to the public the intentionality of investments of city dollars in these areas. Private dollar investments in many of these areas are essential.

#### Questions and Comments from UFC members

Roberta: In the 2014 report [*prepared by the City and County called Climate Change Preparation Strategy*] bureaus were trying to resolve who does what and to “silo bust.”

<https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action/documents/climate-change-preparation-strategy-2014/download>

Donnie thinks the 2014 report is very good and has many worthwhile items to pursue.

*A number of relevant city and county documents are available online. For example, in 2014 the City of Portland and Multnomah County put out one called Climate Change Preparation Strategy and another called Climate Change Preparation Strategy: Risk and Vulnerabilities Assessment. In 2015 the City of Portland and Multnomah County put out the Climate Action Plan and the Climate*

*Action Plan Summary. Since 2015 even more documents have been issued. BPS provides a list of these and links to them. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/climate-action>*

Megan: A missing action in the Climate Emergency Work Plan is street tree maintenance done by city workers or contractors. This needs to be included.

Donnie says there are many additional needs. It will be a challenge for the City to address the 43 actions listed in the Work Plan.

Andria Jacob stated that there is a 3-year horizon for the Climate Emergency Work Plan [July 2022 - June 2025]. BPS is striving to communicate urgency for starting these actions. Significant reductions in carbon emissions need to happen. The goal is a 30% reduction by 2030 and to eliminate all carbon emissions by 2050. BPS has looked at carbon emissions by sector. The two largest sources are the transportation sector (43%) and the building/commercial industry sector (23%). Trees are considered a crucial part of the resilience section of the Climate Emergency Work Plan, but not carbon emissions reduction.

Adrienne: Who is responsible to tying actions and outcomes to specific city programs and staff?

Daniel: It is really important to retain existing, healthy large trees. It would be good to see more focus on this in the document and in actions. Currently the City emphasizes housing infill. This is often resulting in loss of space for growing future large-form trees. Additionally, short-term rental housing may also be taking housing away from long-term city residents and further accelerating more construction of infill housing to replace the housing lost to short-term rentals.

Donnie: Land use is one of the strongest measures the City controls.

Leah: Large trees add much more canopy than small trees. Planting new trees is good. The multiple benefits derived today from existing large trees need to be pointed out. It is a matter of quality of life today.

Megan: I like seeing the numbers [*in terms of carbon sequestration, emissions?*].

Donnie: I suspect trees, healthy rivers, and healthy natural areas are critical (*in carbon sequestration?*).

Melinda: Regarding interagency work and accountability, will there be some sort of interim tracking?

Andria: Annually BPS will need to present to City Council progress made and not made. Andria will be reaching out to different bureaus frequently to get their updated progress on the different actions they committed to.

Donnie: Bureau Directors are all deeply committed to the Climate Action Work Plan. Everyone is chipping in. Portland is very fortunate to have leadership currently in place “that gives a damn.”

Roberta: Trees are a major part of resilience. A large percentage of the trees in Portland are on private property. There is also an increasing amount of impervious surfaces in Portland. The Climate Emergency Work Plan should address private trees and impervious surfaces. Resilience should also be built into City capital improvement projects.

Donnie: These items are on our radar.

Vivek: UFC greatly appreciates the time and attention Donnie and Andria have given to this Climate Emergency Work Plan and to UFC in this presentation and responses to comments and questions. UFC can certainly help and will continue providing feedback.

**10:56 a.m. Urban Forest Management Plan Update & Discussion** Belinda Judelman Planning and Policy Analyst (PP&R UF); Brian Landoe, Analyst II, (PP&R UF)

This agenda item was intended to allow UFC members to provide feedback to Belinda and Brian on the Draft Scope of Work for the Urban Forest Management Plan that was presented at the November 2022 UFC meeting.

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forest-management-plan>

#### UFC Member Comments and Questions

Roberta: Other bureaus play a critical role in Portland’s Urban Forest management and this should be acknowledged in the UFMP. This is a long process lined out [3+ years] for developing the UFMP. It is very important to have a means to keep various bureaus informed along the way.

Daniel: It is very exciting that a new UFMP is going to be developed. This has been put off for many years due to staff and funding challenges. Much is changing daily that affects urban trees. There will be upcoming changes that none of us could have planned for. How do we make this a living document that can be modified [*when needs arise that are inadequately addressed or not addressed at all*]?

Bruce: The UFMP draft process needs to build community engagement and trust. This should be actively included in the process.

Megan: The leadership and approach that Belinda is demonstrating in this is greatly appreciated. Megan would like clarification as to what exactly is meant by “getting other bureaus to buy in.” Hopefully the UFMP will be used as an implementing document that helps Portland reach its climate goals.

Belinda sees the developing of the UFMP as a means to get other bureaus to participate and buy in to the plan.

Vivek: There are items in the scope that will be a very big lift. How do you characterize city-wide urban forest health? Are there other resources that will be called on?

Belinda: We do have tree inventories [*street trees, developed park trees*]. We also have the assessments from a variety of reports done by Urban Forestry. A broader look from other sources of information will be undertaken.

Brian: We will be collecting data from many different sources.

Roberta: The scope is good but needs an accompanying work plan. It will be challenging updating the citywide canopy goal. The utility of one number as a citywide canopy goal is unclear. It is important to identify key barriers for planting trees and also for tree health. Looking at Title 33 is important, as it addresses tree planting in new development.

Brian: UF will prioritize how to spend the funds targeted for use in developing the new UFMP. Title 33 needs to be looked at. Contracted consultants will be looking at how other cities are dealing with land use.

Roberta: There are consultants available who are familiar with both Title 33 and Title 11.

Daniel: Impervious industrial and commercial areas need to be addressed in the UFMP. These use square footage that is not available for trees [*and that increase surface heating*].

Melinda: Incentives that other cities use to reduce impervious surfaces could be explored.

Adrienne: Do we expect that what other cities are doing will be useful in Portland?

Belinda: It is good to look at what others do and see if that could work here.

Vivek thanked Belinda and Brian for the time spent on this important project.

**Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting:** The next UFC meeting will be 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 am, January 19, 2023 as a Zoom meeting. Check the link below prior to the meeting for the agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain access:  
<https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/events/2022/12/15/urban-forestry-commission-meeting>