

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and tree advocates
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team January 30, 2021
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting January 21, 2021:
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.

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).

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forestry-commission-0>

The decisions made at these meetings may affect the volunteer tree advocacy and influence Urban Forestry division processes and actions. I am sending you timely commentary on these monthly meetings. If you do not wish to receive this, 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 and occasionally to identify who is saying what.

The monthly Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meeting was held Thursday, January 21, 2021, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, as a Zoom meeting due to COVID-19 demands.

UFC Commissioners Present - Vivek Shandas (chair), Anjeanette Brown, Gregg Everhart, Barbara Hollenbeck, Lorena Nascimento, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Damon Schrosk, Megan Van de Mark

UFC Commissioners Absent - none

Urban Forestry (UF) Staff Present - Jenn Cairo (City Forester, Portland Parks & Recreation, Urban Forestry division) Jenn.Cairo@portlandoregon.gov ; Brian Landoe (Analyst 1, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division)

brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov, Nik Desai (Botanic Specialist I, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division) nik.desai@portlandoregon.gov

Deputy City Attorney- Tony Garcia (tony.garcia@portlandoregon.gov ?)

Other City Staff - Claudio Campuzano (Finance Director, Portland Parks and Recreation)

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.”

9:30 am Public Comment Doug Klotz shared concerns he had regarding a (proposed?) policy of the Portland Water Bureau that would exclude tree planting within 10 feet of a street water main. There are two new developments where he lives in southeast where he saw water line marks in the street at 5’ from the curb and 7’ from the curb. He is concerned about the Water Bureau policy that prohibits planting of street trees within 10’ of a water main. He thought that this would lead to large stretches of streets that would not be allowed to have street tree plantings. He has already seen this occur on some streets.

The particular comments from Doug brought some follow-up comments from City Forester Jenn Cairo and also led to a rather lengthy discussion and exploration of the topic at the Urban Forestry Commission Policy Committee meeting on Monday January 25, 2021. I also did some searching for information online before and after that Policy Committee meeting pertinent to a draft letter I presented to the Policy Committee on this water line issue. Additionally Jenn Cairo shared her perspective with me on this issue in a phone conversation just prior to the Policy Committee meeting.

The Portland Water Bureau has an online findable Standard P-846 called Tree Planting Clearance Water Facility Pipe greater than or equal to 24-inch Diameter P-846, dated March 28, 2016. It clearly states in the notes and shows in the diagram that “Trees must be a minimum of 10 feet from the nearest edge of 24-inch or greater water pipe.” There may be a policy that accompanies this but I could not find one. There is not information in Title 21 Portland Water Bureau that specifies this information. It seems likely this is an internal decision not subject to public review.

Urban Forestry has a City of Portland PP&R Urban Forestry Street Tree Planting Standards (update 2-26-20) which states on page 4, “Trees shall be spaced no less than the following distances from existing infrastructure: iii) Underground utilities: 5’ from underground utilities, e.g., water pipes.” At this point I do not know if there is a written policy that accompanies the Standard or if the Standard is sufficient. I could not find any specific information in Title 11 Tree Code that specifies the 5’ standard. It seems likely this is an internal decision not subject to public review.

The Standards from Portland Water Bureau and Urban Forestry Division are not in agreement.

As pointed out by Doug in his public testimony and backed up in Portland Water Bureau documents, water lines are located on the south or east side of a street and are roughly 4 feet to 6 feet from the curb, depending on the diameter of the water main, or 4 feet to 6 feet from where the curb would be on an unimproved street (specification in Portland Water Bureau Public Works Permit Process Manual 2010 (p. 3-4 Pipe Layout #2).

9:35 am Minutes Review Brian Landoe (Analyst 1, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division)

The minutes of the November 19, 2020 meetings were reviewed and accepted with minor changes.

9:40 am City Forester Report Jenn Cairo (City Forester, Portland Parks and Recreation, Urban Forestry division)

1. City Commissioner Carmen Rubio has been assigned oversight of Portland Parks and Recreation. Currently she and her staff are getting oriented and briefed on Urban Forestry programs. This should be completed before potential new Urban Forestry Commission members can be recommended to Portland City Council.
2. Two other citizen review commissions that can affect Portland’s urban forest are the Historical Landmarks Commission <https://www.portland.gov/bds/landmarks> and the Design Commission <https://www.portland.gov/bds/design-commission/about>

Both commissions are trying to fill vacancies. It can be very useful to have members of these commissions who are interested in tree-related issues. Please encourage any interested individuals to apply.

3. At the February 18, 2021 Urban Forestry Commission meeting, there will be an update presented on the Streets 2035 Maintenance Project. This may include some information pertinent to the Portland Water Bureau's proposed policy to exclude street trees in the public right of way if they are 10' or closer to a water main that is 24" in diameter or larger. This specific (*standard?*) (*proposed?*) policy has been a concern of Urban Forestry for nearly 5 years. That concern has been communicated to the Portland Water Bureau. UFC Commissioners, in response to Jenn's comments, thought it would be appropriate for the UFC Policy Committee to develop a letter that UFC might send to the Portland Water Bureau expressing UFC concerns on this matter.
4. Street Tree Maintenance Project – This project has involved Davey Resource Group (*whose contract work for Urban Forestry on this specific project began in the summer of 2020*). For a variety of reasons, this project is progressing at a slower pace than originally planned. There is nothing new to report. In response to a question, Jenn responded that Urban Forestry does have as a possibility the development and delivery of a pilot project for street tree maintenance at some time in the future.
5. Currently all Urban Forestry staff are on a 20% reduction in paid work time as a cost saving measure due to the COVID-19 budget challenges for Portland Parks and Recreation. The effects on Urban Forestry have been no elimination of programs. However, work in all areas has slowed down and no filling of vacant staff positions has occurred or will occur during this time. An example of the Operations Group was used. This group is responsible for emergency pruning in parks and in public spaces as well as routine planting and pruning of trees in the park. With furlough days and COVID-19 safety requirements, prioritizing of pruning work has remained the same but the time in which it takes to do the work has slowed. For safety considerations, staff no longer can travel in vehicles together. More safety training has also been required. More time needs to be spent in sanitizing equipment. The net result is the normal day-to-day work is taking more calendar days to get done.

10:00 am Portland Parks and Recreation and Urban Forestry Budget Update: Megan Van de Mark (Urban Forestry Commission member); Jenn

Cairo (City Forester, Portland Parks and Recreation/Urban Forestry division); Claudio Campuzano (Finance Director, Portland Parks and Recreation)

Megan Van de Mark on PP&R Budget Advisory Committee

Megan represents the Urban Forestry Commission on the Portland Parks and Recreation Budget Advisory Committee. This group has met two times and is scheduled to meet for a third time soon. The group gives guidance in prioritizing how PP&R budget dollars should be allocated for the 2021/2022 budget year that begins 1 July 2021. This includes Urban Forestry. The first two meetings have focused on broad processes and explanations of various programs within the PP&R. Very broad goals of “ramp building” within PP&R are agreed upon as being important. This means getting PP&R prepared to handle the large budgetary increase that will occur annually over the next 5 years, thanks to the passage of the Parks levy in November 2021. At the next meeting of the PP&R Budget Advisory Committee, there is expected to be discussion on specific programs to prioritize.

Claudio Campuzano on budgeting process and timeline for PP&R budget

Claudio Campuzano reviewed the process upcoming for the PP&R budget for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. One different component for consideration this year is the fact that funds from the recently passed levy will not start to become available until November 2021. Additionally, with those expected funds PP&R needs to make extensive plans for how to prepare to be able to most efficiently use them. The upcoming timelines are:

January 29, 2021 Have prepared a preliminary budget for PP&R Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022;

February 2021 Present a supplemental Budget for the remainder of FY2020-2021 which will include loan from existing capital expenditures funds to provide for summer PP&R programming and to “build the ramp” needed to prepare for levy funds coming in November; this loan will be paid back from levy funds once they begin to come in in November (*Building the ramp refers to PP&R staff preparing for the large infusion of additional funds from the levy. At Urban Forestry perhaps this means what additional equipment and staff would be needed to expand tree planting in low-canopy neighborhoods or perhaps it could mean something like how to set up an expanded Youth Conservation Corps. This all involves planning,*

and identification of staff and supplies that will be needed. That is all part of necessary infrastructure.

April Mayor's proposed budget;

June FY 2021-2022 City budget is adopted by Portland City Council;

September Fall Budget Monitoring Process (BMP) where 1) City Council and public receive a summary of prior year budget and performance (budget monitoring) and 2) City Council takes the opportunity to adjust the current year's fiscal budget (supplemental budgeting) which will specifically look more closely at expected funds generated by Nov 2021 passed levy.

The stated broad budgetary values to be expressed in PP&R budgets are equity (racial equity), safety, maintenance (care) and financial sustainability (sustainability). The priorities agreed upon are providing Summer 2021 Programming (recreational?), building a ramp to support growth of services, addressing potential critical operational failures, and providing budget stabilization.

The expected outcomes for PP&R from use of levy funds are: to prevent ongoing reductions to park services and recreation programs, to preserve and restore park and natural area health, and to center equity and affordable access for all.

The more specific areas that will be addressed through the use of levy funds are:

1. Enhancing and preserving parks, rivers, wetlands, **trees**, and other important natural features in urban areas for the benefit of all Portlanders and wildlife;
2. Providing park and recreation services to diverse populations, including communities of color, seniors, teens, households experiencing poverty, immigrants and refugees, and people living with disabilities;
3. Increasing opportunities for communities of color and children experiencing poverty to connect with nature;
4. Preventing cuts to recreational programs, preventing closures of community centers and preventing closures of pools; and
5. Enhancing park maintenance to keep parks clean and safe, including litter and hazardous waste removal, restroom cleaning, and playground safety.

The amount of dollars coming annually to PP&R from the levy is not precisely known. An estimate at this time is that an additional \$45 million per year will be

generated, to add to the already \$78 million annually going to PP&R from general budget dollars. *Other revenue streams (program fees, systems development charges and others that I am not listing) contribute to the Parks budget. For FY 2020-2021 the PP&R budget was \$281 million for operational expenses and \$53 million for capital expenses.*

Jenn Cairo on Urban Forestry Division Budgeting

Jenn reminded UFC members that the 2004 Portland Urban Forest Management Plan provides underlying guidance for budgeting priorities. Six broad areas addressed in the Urban Forestry budget are 1) code and policy, 2) education and outreach, 3) tree maintenance, 4) tree planting, 5) permitting and regulation, and 6) canopy analyses and planning.

An area that UF hopes to better address with budgetary dollars is capacity. This refers to the amount of work that is able to be accomplished and by whom. UF is currently viewed as severely strained in terms of both supervisory and oversight capacity and staff available to do specific tasks.

Program managers are being required to both oversee the day-to-day operations of large numbers of staff and to perform higher level program coordination, evaluation and future planning. The hope is to create more mid-level supervisory positions that will free up time for program managers to address the higher level tasks that are currently slowed down.

Some specific on-the-ground tasks are not being adequately addressed due to staffing shortages. One example is that an estimated 2,000 trees are not being planted annually, although various permits have required their planting. It is hoped that some levy dollars will be used to add staff that can address this issue.

Another area of concern for UF is the limited recognition of the role of trees and the forest infrastructure (by the public and by some public agencies and staff) as a significant component of City-managed infrastructure. UF sees Title 11 amendments that may be developed as playing an important role in helping to address this limited recognition. Urban tree planting, pruning and selective removal, as part of the management of the urban forest, needs to be recognized for its importance. A tool currently lacking but needed is software to help track and manage the urban forest and to bring that information to the public and to public officials.

UF receives guidance from the City-approved 2018 Growing a More Equitable Forestry document. However, more work and budget dollars are needed to better reach the desired outcomes in this area

In broad strokes, the UF priorities for funds from the November levy are: to hire more supervisory staff, to increase funding available for park tree maintenance and for tree emergency work, to grow UF tree planting programs, and to obtain a suitable Tree Asset management software. Dollars will be needed to provide support within UF for the increased budgetary dollars expected from the levy.

In the short term, UF has less budgetary dollars due to COVID-19 issues. UF is cutting non-personnel costs where it can (no travel, slowing purchases of supplies as long as possible), reducing expenditures in regulations work, and not undertaking any new programs that would require additional dollars.

UFC Commissioners questions and comments regarding budgeting

Gregg wondered if an appropriate software program exists that UF is thinking of getting. Jenn said they are still exploring this. Ideally they want a software program that is compatible with City software. The tree inventory data is in a format that is readily transferrable to most types of software. Claudio said that PP&R would likely bring on folks to look at the various systems for project management support. Jenn shared that currently UF does not have good software to do many of the reports and other tasks it would like to do.

Daniel wondered if levy money will be used for tree planting and tree maintenance work in low-canopy neighborhoods. Jenn responded that could be done at some point, but it is not currently in the UF budget.

Damon shared that the State Forestry department has made available a software program called Tree Plotter™ that could be of use to UF. Damon also shared that he believes there needs to be more public relations work that helps Portland citizens better understand the role of and need for trees in Portland.

Megan reminded everyone that the levy, though necessary and very helpful, is only for 5 years and does not at all address the very large capital expenses backlog of PP&R. Claudio reiterated the same point; PP&R is still exploring options to address this huge backlog of capital expenses needed to provide the level of PP&R services that Portland residents want.

Vivek thought that a 5-year levy would be a good way to try out short-term pilot projects.

Damon wondered what sort of marketing of trees is UF doing or wanting to do? Jenn replied that no current budget dollars are allocated for this sort of work. Tim Collier, the Communications Manager for PP&R, does have long-term plans to address this need.

Bruce wondered how much local involvement there is in tree planting efforts in low-canopy neighborhoods. Jenn replied that currently there are no budget dollars for such work but it is hoped that in the future there will be.

Barbara thought it would be great if UF had some sort of catchy marketing campaign for trees, similar to one that the Oregon Humane Society used in getting more people to adopt dogs and cats.

11:00 am Title 11 Amendments Update and Discussion – Jenn Cairo, City Forester, Portland Parks and Recreation/Urban Forestry division

A task assigned in 2020 by City Council to PP&R/Urban Forestry division was to bring to City Council a scope of work for looking at additional Title 11 changes that need to be addressed, basically a more comprehensive review and potential modifications of Title 11. With the passage of the PP&R levy, there has been further refinement in how UF is looking at this. Title 11 is the tool used to codify the goals and direction for UF spelled out in the 2004 Forest Management Plan.

The 2004 Forest Management Plan calls for review and updating every ten years. Funds have yet to be allocated for this work. The 2004 Forest Management Plan makes no reference to climate change and is very sparse in language that addresses current equity concerns.

The thinking on the part of UF managers is that the Forest Management Plan needs to be updated and then more attention can be given to recommendations for Title 11 changes based on the revised Forest Management Plan. Rather than taking a list of specific Title 11 Code changes to City Council by March 31, 2021 the hope is to take to City Council sometime in May – June 2021 a scope of proposed work that includes a) revisions to Title 11 by Jan-March 2022 to allow full enforcement of Title 11, b) work on updating the Forest Management Plan (June 2022 – 2024) , and c) begin community and stakeholder engagement in Summer 2022 to address potential amendments to Title 11 and continue this process for 2 years.

Vivek wondered if there existed any Forest Management Plans for other cities that address equity. Jenn was not aware of any.

Daniel said it was unfortunate to see things being put off. He supported the idea of getting more voices involved in the process. Hopefully the longer time can allow appropriate outreach to community voices previously not heard.

Future UFC Agenda Ideas – Vivek Shandas (chair, UFC)

Vivek led the UFC Commissioners through an exercise to try to identify areas successfully addressed by UFC in 2020 and areas of importance that UFC Commissioners hoped to address in 2021. *(I did not record the results of that exercise as I was completely bewildered by the technology tool used.)*

Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting: The next Urban Forestry Commission meeting will be 9:30 am – noon, Thursday, February 18th, as a Zoom meeting. Check the link below in early February for the meeting agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain access to this Zoom meeting,

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/urban-forestry-commission-0>