

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates  
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 31 January 2023  
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting January 19, 2023:  
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, January 19, 2023, 9:30 -11:30 a.m. It was held as a Zoom meeting, due to COVID-19 demands.

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

**UFC Commissioners Absent** – Anjeanette Brown, Ivory Iheanacho, 1 vacancy

**PP&R UF Staff Present** – Jenn Cairo, City Forester Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry division (PP&R UF); Brian Landoe, Analyst III, (PP&R UF); Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist II (PP&R UF); Ashley Reese, Administrative Assistant (PP&R UF)

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

**Other City Staff** – Claudio Campuzano, Finance, Property and Technology Manager (PP&R)

**Guests** – Suzanne Owen, Natural Resources Specialist, USDA Forest Service; Pacific Northwest Research Station; Resource, Monitoring and Assessment Program

**9:32 a.m.** In response to a question from Vivek to Brian Landoe, no, there is no way for UFC members to see who is observing a meeting via Zoom.

**9:33 Public Testimony**

Marita Ingalsbe (resident in SW Portland) is concerned about the ivy growing at the base of and up trees along roadways. Her fear is that this may kill the trees. It just doesn’t seem like anyone is caring for these trees. She is specifically talking about along Capital Highway and other major roadways. Are there grants or some sort of incentive programs to deal with this invasive ivy?

Daniel Newberry responded that this is a problem the Johnson Creek Watershed Council has been dealing with for years. He suggests cutting the vines at the base and letting the dead part of the ivy that is in the tree die off and fall to the ground over time. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council has organized work parties. He strongly recommends prioritizing areas you want to work in so you don’t feel overwhelmed.

Megan Van de Mark shared that she did not think this is a priority for the City. It may be possible to get some assistance from the West Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Jenn Cairo is pleased that Marita is observing this ivy issue. It might be helpful to contact the Portland Bureau of Transportation even if technically the street of concern is owned by Oregon Department of Transportation. Urban Forestry has its Small Grants program, which can provide seed money for small-scale, short-term projects. It is good to keep in mind the mantra of the No-Ivy League, “PROTECT THE BEST!” *I could not find a link to UF Small Grants program, aside from one for PP&R UF- trained tree stewards for public trees. That might work for right-of-way trees in Portland.*

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/get-involved/funds-supplies-assistance>

### **9:33 City Forester’s Report, Jenn Cairo (City Forester, PP&R UF)**

1. Brian has sent out reminders to all UFC members inviting them to participate in the newly developed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training. It is a good opportunity for skills development. Contact Brian to register.
2. Dan Ryan is now the City Commissioner overseeing PP&R, replacing City Commissioner Carmen Rubio. It is possible that Commissioner Ryan may be at the February 16<sup>th</sup> UFC meeting. If he is able to come, that specific meeting may be in-person at a to-be-determined location, likely in the Portland Building.
3. Portland Clean Energy Fund (PCEF) is in its initial stages of making decisions about the \$40 million that will be specifically allocated for tree use over the next 5 years. A PCEF staff member will likely be coming to an upcoming UFC meeting. Currently a PCEF-led small-group roundtable discussion is occurring around tree canopy and PCEF’s priorities. Contact Brian if you are interested in observing the two remaining meetings of this group. *Roberta Jortner will be observing these meetings on behalf of UFC.*
4. A Streets PDX (*previously Streets 2035*) staff person will be coming to UFC in the future to discuss items pertinent to this program. One item is about trees planted outside of the existing curb, in street parking spaces.
5. The Portland Water Bureau (PWB) is working with PP&R UF on a case-by-case basis to figure out how best to use trees when they can only be planted within 10’ of a 24” or larger diameter water transmission pipe.

Current PWB administrative rule prohibits planting a tree within 10' of these 24" or larger water transmission pipes.

In response to a question from Adrienne, Jenn shared that UF finds no research backing up PWB's assertion that trees 10' or closer to 24" diameter water conveyance pipes can cause injury to those pipes. Many other cities do not have this specific rule. PWB believes there is a potential for pipe damage from tree roots that will be quite expensive to repair.

6. The expectation is that proposed new UFC members will be approved in early February, so those new UFC members can begin their volunteer duties at the March UFC meeting. *At the February 1, 2023 City Council meeting the proposed new appointments and one reappointment will be heard and voted on by the Portland City Council. The newly proposed appointees are Derily Bechtold, Casey Clapp, JR Lilly, and Justin Misner. See the link for more information on each individual. I will be considered for a second four-year term.*

<https://www.portland.gov/council/documents/report/urban-forestry-commission-appointments>

7. There are job openings at UF for Botanic Specialist, Tree Maintenance Supervisor, Development Services Technician and also various seasonal jobs. A link to those jobs is at:

<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/portlandor>

**10:05 Urban Forestry Budget Briefing** Claudio Campuzano, Finance, Property and Technology Manager (PP&R); Brian Landoe, Analyst III, (PP&R UF)

Claudio reviewed the City budget process, the PP&R Director's budget guidance, the base budget review, and the proposed decision packages (new budget requests on top of existing budgetary items) relevant to UF.

The PP&R budget process starts in May-June with basic guidance decisions, then proposal developments from various PP&R entities (July-September), basic decision making (October-December), budget building (December-January), communication of proposed budget (January-March).

The above fits into the Citywide budget process:

- a. Receive Mayor’s guidance (December),
- b. Request bureau submissions (end of January),
- c. Review and make recommendations by City Budget Office (February),
- d. Conduct City Council work sessions on budget (March),
- e. Present Mayor’s proposed budgets (April-May),
- f. Approve and adopted budgets by City Council (May-June),
- g. Start new fiscal year using adopted budgets (1 July).

The adopted budget for fiscal year July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023 for PP&R is \$211.4 million:

- a. \$94.7 million from General Fund,
- b. \$49.8 million from Parks Capital Improvement Program Fund (*systems development fees generate this money I believe*),
- c. \$46.2 million from Parks Location Option Levy (*5-year levy passed by voters that expires June 30, 2025*),
- d. \$10.9 million from the Golf Fund (*suspect this comes from fees to users of city-owned golf courses*),
- e. \$5.4 million from Portland Parks Memorial Fund,
- f. \$2.5 million from Grants Funds (primarily Tree Planting and Preservation Fund of Urban Forestry), and
- g. \$1.9 million from Portland International Raceway

*I believe this does not include revenues generated from fees collected for usage of recreational facilities other than golf courses and Portland International Raceway.*

Total FY 2022-2023 budgeted expenses by category are:

Personnel	\$104.4 million	
Extended materials and services	\$84.0 million	
Capital Outlay	\$27.1 million	
Internal materials and services	\$21.0 million	
Other	\$1.1 million	
		\$237.6 million

Total FY 2022-2023 Budgeted Revenue by Category

General Fund Discretionary	\$78.1 million
Taxes	\$46.2 million
Charges for Services	\$45.5 million
Bond and Note Proceeds	\$29.6 million
Miscellaneous	\$3.9 million
Interagency Revenue	\$3.5 million

Intergovernmental	\$3.0 million	
Licenses and permits	\$1.6 million	
		\$211.4 million

FY 2022-2023 Budgeted General Fund Revenues by Category

General Fund Discretionary	\$78.1 million	
Fund Transfers	\$42.2 million	
Charges for Services	\$11.7 million	
Interagency Revenue	\$3.5 million	
Other	\$1.3 million	
		\$136.8 million

FY 2023-2024 Director’s Guidance – General Direction

- Focusing on stabilizing the Bureau and the positions, programs, and services created in previous cycles;
- Stabilizing support of the Bureau’s progress toward our Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland; Sustainable Future; and Parks Levy goals;
- Anticipating decreases in City General Fund resources, higher-than-expected inflation, and rising PERS expenses due to the recent market downturn;
- Recognizing that upcoming round of labor negotiations may also impact the forecast and capacity.
- implementing the decisions that have already been made while we ascertain the impacts of these external forces.

FY 2023-2024 Director’s Guidance – Priorities

- Access and Equity – Continue to reduce cost as a barrier;
- Operations and Maintenance – Address costs of new assets as they come online;
- Workspace Improvements – Add new facilities and upgrade existing;
- Tree Canopy Partnership Opportunities – Develop a proposal for alternate sources of funding;
- One-Time Funded items – Continue programs that have been funded on a one-time basis;
- Strategic Staffing Needs – Provide limited-term, front-line staffing to backfill for seasoned staff assigned to bureau-wide projects;
- Parks Development – Focus new Systems Development (SDC) resources (*money*) on funding cost increases on current projects;

- Restructure – Encourage internal realignments to better achieve results;
- Major Maintenance – Request \$500,00 ongoing General Fund, per Budget Note;
- Parks Levy Commitments – Identified service gaps.

FY 2023-2024 Base Budget for PP&R

- No significant changes, reductions, or re-organizations of any programs;
- Expense pressure is greatest from cost increases in these areas:
  - Bargained wage increases in labor agreements;
  - High inflation in internal and external materials and service expenses;
  - General Fund resource increases likely to cover 57% (*of what?*), with Parks Levy covering the balance;
- The five-year forecast for Parks Levy tax revenue has improved by 1% (\$2.4 million).

Fiscal Year 2023-2024 New Proposals for PP&R for Review

1. Reducing Cost as a Barrier	\$1 million	Parks Levy
2. Recreation Access	\$0.9 million	Parks Levy
3. Equity and Inclusion	--	FY 22-23 Resources
4. Operations & Maintenance	\$2.7 million	Parks Levy
5. Workspace Improvements	\$2.0 million	Parks Levy
6. Major Maintenance	\$0.5 million	General Fund
7. One-Time Maintenance	\$0.8 million	Parks Levy & Other
8. Tree Canopy	\$1.9 million	Parks Levy & Other
9. Aquatics	\$0.3 million	Parks Levy
10. Strategic Resources	\$0.9 million	Parks Levy

Specific New Program/Staff Budget asks for UF Budget in addition to UF’s base budget request:

- Urban Forestry Management Plan: Contract funding for update;
- Tree Preservation and Compliance Team: Six FTE for code compliance and permit inspection;
- Permitting Tree Inspector: One tree inspector to improve permit processing times, particularly for non-development permits;
- Arborist Trainees: Three trainee positions to create a pathway to the Arborist work classification series;

- Equity in UF Permitting: Provide tree permit waivers for low-income customers;
- Planting Program Expansion: Create a Partnership and Innovation team in UF to leverage funding by increasing capacity of community organizations; expand UF planting capacity.

Funding ~\$1.6 million (supported in part by Parks Levy-generated funds)

*The following thoughts come to me after I have had time to go over this information:*

1. *I wish that specific UF new program/position requests were itemized in terms of costs. I can guess at the relative costs of the new requests but that is really just a guess.*
  - a. *Contract funding for UFMP ~\$500,000*
  - b. *6 new staff positions for Tree Preservation & Compliance members @ \$90,000 per position so \$540,000*
  - c. *One Tree Inspector @ \$90,000*
  - d. *3 Trainee arborist positions @ \$40,000 = \$120,000*
  - e. *Equity in UF permitting, a wild guess at \$100,000*
  - f. *Planting program expansion ~\$250,000*

*If UFC is being asked to support PP&R requests for \$1.6 million additional dollars for positions and services, stated direct dollars stated for each item would be helpful. Hopefully that will be forthcoming.*

*As I look over the various budgetary records I have for UF the following items stood out to me:*

- a) *At the 4.22.2021 UFC meeting we heard that UF is projecting a 50% increase in its budget for the Fiscal year July 2, 2021 – June 30, 2022. This takes into account additional revenues from the Parks Levy that was passed.*
- b) *At the August 17, 2021 UFC meeting it was stated, as part of the UF budget discussion that also include Parks Levy funding information, that 5 additional staff people would be added for Title 11 Regulatory improvement.*
- c) *At the December 16, 2021 UFC meeting Jenn reported that there are 8 additional positions added to the existing 19 positions in Permitting and Regulation.*
- d) *Is Permitting and Regulation the same as Tree Preservation & Compliance?*



- e) *It is unknown when UFC gets informed about staff additions being budgeted for, if indeed those positions were all filled. It is possible some of the staff numbers used above for Permitting and Regulation refer to the same position, even though the dates are different?*
- f) *Full time Employment for UF for FY 2021-2022 as reported at the December 16, 2021 UFC meeting was 67 staff members. This is compared to 42 staff for the FY 2018-2019.*
- g) *The FY 2019/2020 budget for Tree Regulation and Permitting was \$2,098,300. The FY 2020/2021 budget for Tree Regulation and Permitting was \$2,844,046.*
- h) *For FY 2022-2023 (current) the budget increases for UF included a \$1 million dollar increase for the Permitting and Regulations group which represented 24% of the total UF budget increases for FY 2022-2023.*
- i) *For FY 2018/2019 the UF budget was a little under \$6,000,000. In FY 2019/2020 the UF budget was ~\$9.5 million. In FY 2020/2021 the UF budget was \$12,315,667. I believe the base UF budget for FY2023/2024 is \$13,000,000*

*There is a large increase in staff for Permitting and Regulation. There is a pending request for additional funds to add more positions to this group. It seems appropriate to provide information as to why these additional 5 positions are needed. What is the expectation in terms of work that will be accomplished with the addition of these 5 positions?*

*What I really would have liked to have seen in this budget presentation to UFC are:*

1. *Existing base budget and staff FTE numbers for FY 2022-2023 broken down by:*
  - a) *Policy (Jenn, Brian, Ashley & Belinda)*
  - b) *Maintenance*
  - c) *Permitting and Regulation*
  - d) *Science, Education & Planting*
2. *FY 2023-2024 Budget increase asks or budget decrease asks for each of the above UF groups(#1) and each of the programs below(#3)*
3. *Breakdown of budget by services/programs:*
  - a) *Forest Management Plan*
  - b) *Heritage Tree Program*

- c) *Learning Labs School Program*
- d) *Yard Tree program*
- e) *Street Tree program*
- f) *Park tree maintenance (planting, pruning, removal)*
- g) *Emergency tree removal/safety work for PBOT, BES, PWB*
- h) *Tree survey program*
- i) *Administrative oversight*
- j) *Policy*
- k) *Non-development permitting and inspections*
- l) *Development permitting and inspections*

### **Comments from UFC Commissioners on budget presentation**

Daniel: New staff is being added to better deal with issues relating to Title 11. It may be appropriate to look at ways to simplify Title 11 as a means to reduce staff necessary to explain and enforce it.

Roberta: Is there any discussion of a pilot project for street tree maintenance? Jenn: This is being considered as part of the Sustainable Future project. *UFC will likely receive a presentation relating to Sustainable Future sometime later. There is no online information about the work Sustainable Future is doing in 2023.*

Adrienne: 20% of PP&R revenue is coming from fees? What percentage of the UF budget comes from fees? Claudio: The Systems Development Charge (SDC) generated \$20-\$40 million per year. Typically \$14-\$15 million per year went for new park development. Now it is around \$10 million per year going for new park development. UF gets about \$1.4 million annually from development fees.

Megan: As a sitting member of the PP&R Budget Advisory Committee, she says she always talks about the need to get Street Tree Maintenance done by the City.

After some questions and discussion it was agreed that if UFC wishes to support UF's new budget requests, a letter of support should go to PP&R Director Adena Long and to all members of City Council. The appropriate timeline would be before March.

Daniel: Proposed that the UFC Policy Committee write a draft letter and bring it back to the February UFC meeting. This letter may include reference to PCEF funding

**11:00 Urban Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) (My City Trees)** Nik Desai Botanic Specialist II (PP&R UF); Suzanne Owen, Natural Resources Specialist (USDA Forest Service; Pacific Northwest Research Station; Resource, Monitoring and Assessment Program) [suzanne.m.owen@usda.gov](mailto:suzanne.m.owen@usda.gov)

Nik and Suzanne presented information about the nationwide forest analysis program conducted by the US Forest Service. It now also includes urban areas. Portland began participating in 2018 and is currently one of the few cities on the west coast in the program. The Portland program is a partnership with US Forest Service. Nik is the UF lead. Suzanne is the lead for the Forest Service.

This long-term monitoring of all land forms in the US includes a variety of survey work. Within Portland there are a number of undisclosed locations, each 1/6 of an acre. At each location core forest inventory analysis measurements are taken. Each participating urban area chooses which urban variables it wishes to use. Data from the I-Tree application is used. Basic data includes land condition, tree identification, tree numbers, tree volume, along with other important regional variables. Within urban areas, data on land use designation, impervious cover, and urban damage to trees are also included.

*More information can be found at:*

<https://www.fia.fs.usda.gov/program-features/urban/>

How I-tree estimates are determined: <https://www.itreetools.org/>

Portland UF decided to focus on ecosystem services and the value of trees. Themes specified by UF are: Land Cover, Zoning, Equity-Based, Neighborhood Coalitions, and Heat Island. Nik shared that all plots have been initially surveyed. The practice now is to resurvey 10% of the plots annually. Data from Portland can be compared to other urban areas. It is not yet possible to look at data just from Portland to compare changes from one year to the next. Results from different US cities, including Portland, are available by using the My City's Trees app at <https://mct.tfs.tamu.edu/app>

*I e-mailed Nik and Suzanne following the meeting to get more information about what they presented. Their responses are merged and edited for length.*

1. *When did collection of data begin in Portland?*  
*Answer: Summer/Fall 2018 using UF staff under the guidance and in partnership with USFS. Established 200 plots for long-term study. Suzanne Owen served as Project Manager with Jodee Perry and Julie Fukuda (PP&R UF) as crew leads. Remeasurement of 10% of the plots is conducted annually.*
2. *Is there an intention to look for changes over time in the Portland data?*  
*Answer: Yes. 10% of the plots are re-measured by USFS staff each year, so we are on a ten-year cycle for a complete data set. Remeasurements of Portland plots began in 2019. A huge part of this project is long-term monitoring of urban forest health, growth, mortality and changes over time. Change analysis and reporting occurs every 10 years.*
3. *How much is UF budgeting for this annually?*  
*Answer: Collection of baseline data was funded by UF. Follow-up data collection is funded and being conducted by USFS.*
4. *What is a tree in this work? In the data I found for Portland, two of the most common “trees” found in Portland plots were a) arborvitae, Thuja occidentalis cv. and b) cherry-laurel, Prunus laurocerasus.*  
*Answer: The Urban FIA program has a specific nationally consistent tree list, and if a species is on that list it must be tallied. This does get a little tricky because a ‘tree’ will grow more like a shrub in some regions, but it is still considered a tree for FIA. When deciding whether to add or remove species from the tree list, species form is taken into account and a tree is generally described as a woody perennial plant, typically large, with a single well-defined stem carrying a more or less definite crown, sometimes defined as attaining a minimum diameter of 3.0” and a minimum height of 15’ at maturity. One reason you see all those arborvitae and laurel is that the MCT program includes all trees with at least 1” diameter. It often makes more sense to filter out only trees with >5” dbh.*
5. *Is the survey work done by a person physically entering private property?*  
*Answer: Survey work is completed by a team and at least 1 member must be certified through the FIA’s urban training program. We only sample on private property after receiving permission from the landowner. A huge problem for urban FIA is non-response or no permission and that leads to higher unsampled areas in privately owned properties. The past couple years our trained crews have been door knocking and communicating more and providing more educational materials so permission rates are increasing.*

6. *In my notes taken from the 1.16.23 UFC meeting I have reference to a 1/6 acre subplot but I thought that when I explored the website there was mention of an 8' x 6' plot. What is actually used?*

*Answer: Subplots measured 48' in radius, equaling 1/6<sup>th</sup> of an acre.*

*Within the subplot are 4 microplots, each measuring 6.8' in radius.*

*More intensive measurements occurred in the microplots*

*<https://www.fia.fs.usda.gov/program-features/urban/#DCTools>*

Nik is optimistic that this analysis will provide UF with valuable information about Portland's urban forest over time. Questions about this program should be directed to Suzanne Owen of the US Forest Service at [suzanne.m.owen@usda.gov](mailto:suzanne.m.owen@usda.gov) or to Nik Desai at [nik.desai@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:nik.desai@portlandoregon.gov)

**Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting:** The next UFC meeting will be 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 am, February 16, 2023. It is not known as of January 31, 2023 if this will be in-person or via Zoom. Check the link below prior to the meeting for the agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain Zoom access to this meeting. If the meeting is held in a physical location, the public is welcome to attend in person.

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/events/2023/2/16/urban-forestry-commission-meeting>