

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and tree advocates  
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team February 26, 2021  
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting February 18, 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, February 18, 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

**UFC Commissioners Absent** - Megan Van de Mark

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

[brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:brian.landoe@portlandoregon.gov) ; Casey Jogerst, Urban Forestry: Rick Faber, Urban Forestry.

**Deputy City Attorney- ?**

**Other City Staff - Matt Berkow, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Streets 2035 Program Manager; Michelle Marx, Portland Bureau of Transportation; Matt Glazewski, [matt.glazewski@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:matt.glazewski@portlandoregon.gov) Senior Policy Analyst for City Commissioner Mingus Mapps; Cynthia Casto, Senior Policy Analyst for City Commissioner Carmen Rubio**

**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 wondered why at SE 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue between Stark and Washington Street there are no street trees as part of the new building on the east side of the street. He wondered if this was an ODOT decision or PBOT decision. 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue needs all the trees it can get.

Doug also noted that at the southwest corner of Southeast 24<sup>th</sup> and Southeast Division a power pole has been located such as to impede pedestrian movement should there be any future development at that site. He wanted to bring this to the attention of Matt Berkow.

Yashar Vasef introduced himself to the UFC. He is the new executive director of Friends of Trees. He is a former refugee from Iran, has past work experience in the global climate action field and looks forward to working for trees and with UFC.

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

The minutes of the January 21, 2021 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. Jenn introduced Cynthia Castro, the Senior Policy Analyst for Commissioner Carmen Rubio. Cynthia will be serving as the Commissioner's liaison to Portland Parks and Recreation/ Urban Forestry. Jenn also introduced Matt Glazewski, the Senior Policy Analyst for Commissioner Mingus Mapps. One of Matt's assigned areas includes serving as the Commissioner's liaison to both the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Parks & Recreation/Urban Forestry.
2. Due to the recently concluded winter storm (ice, snow, wind) there has been a really high level of damage done in the city to public roads and city-owned or managed properties. Hazardous conditions have resulted in emergency tree crews called out to do much of the tree clearing needed. Emergency tree work is being prioritized in a manner similar to triage operations in a hospital setting. It should take several weeks to complete the emergency work. This work has often involved cooperation with Oregon Department of Transportation, in dealing with work near or over interstate highways and other state managed roadways in Portland. In response to a question by Bruce Nelson, Jenn replied that paper records are kept of this emergency work but since Urban Forestry has no sufficient software, there really is no efficient manner to evaluate storm damage in terms of careful examination of tree/branch failures, categorizing tree damage by species, categorizing tree damage by area of town or other parameters that could be used to guide future policies toward trees in terms of appropriate tree planting and maintenance schedules that reduce storm damage.
3. City Council Commissioners unanimously approved Portland Parks and Recreation's budget plan for use of bridge funding (loan of existing PP&R capital funds to summer programming and for ramping up staff time and other support in preparation for when Parks' levy funds will come to PP&R beginning in the fall/early winter.
4. The Portland Water Bureau (PWB) has decided to make individual unit water meters optional rather than mandatory for new construction multi-unit development projects. PWB is still considering the possibility of locating water meters outside of the right-of-way zone. These practices potentially allow for more trees in the R-O-W space. They are also policies advocated by UFC and other members of the public.

5. There is no new information to report on the Street Tree Maintenance Project.

Daniel wondered how members of the public and also UFC Commissioners will be able to specifically address matters relating to trees as decided in the Streets 2035 process. *At a later point in the meeting Matt Berkow of Portland Bureau of Transportation who is the Project Manager for Streets 2035 expressed a willingness to return again to UFC to report. I do not believe he made any statement regarding how members of the public can weigh in.*

Damon really appreciated seeing Cynthia Castro and Matt Glazewski here to introduce themselves.

Gregg hoped that there was attention to whether or not a specific tree in the R-O-W was a Heritage Tree or not. Jenn responded that this is something crews note.

**10:15 am Streets 2035 Update, Questions and Comments Matt Berkow, Portland Bureau of Transportation and Michelle Marx, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Pedestrian Coordinator**

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/79886>

Streets 2035 is a multi-year project working to bring together all the entities that have activity within the street right-of-way space. This includes private utilities (electric, gas, phone, cable), the Portland Water Bureau, sewer services under the Bureau of Environmental Services, transportation services (walk, bike, car, trolley, bus, truck, scooter) occurring in the street right-of-way, and street trees currently owned by Portland. All of these entities are using the right-of-way space that is publicly owned. The big goal is to figure out a better way for all of these entities to better utilize this public space, including clear guidelines to resolve differences that may arise between different users. The words used for this is “context-sensitive decision-making teamwork to guide right-of-way space allocation...”

In Phase 1 of Streets 2035, a thorough description of the existing conditions in the ROW space was developed as well as an airing of the common issues arising and in what context they arose. At the meeting with UFC about a year ago Commissioners shared their perspective on the use of the ROW, including important issues that could be better dealt with. Similar information was gathered

from the various entities using the public ROW space. The key issues the UFC previously identified:

1. Design is a very important element in sidewalk construction for preserving existing trees.
2. It would be very helpful if there were better coordination with the Pedestrian Design Guide to allow for better tree wells, more clarification on furnishing zone standards including hardscape furnishings and to provide a better set of tree preservation tools when tree roots or tree trunks present sidewalk conflicts.
3. Electrical transformers should be moved out of the ROW space.
4. There needs to be a clear, agreed upon mechanism and structure for bureaus to follow when there is disagreement or conflicts on use of ROW space.

Matt is okay with questions being sent to him via e-mail. It is true that COVID-19 has slowed the progress on Streets 2035. Michelle Marx is also a resource on this, as many issues touch on sidewalk issues.

Lorena: Urban Forestry wants to increase the canopy in low-canopy areas. Are there currently any attempts to specifically address the east Portland canopy deficiencies? Michelle noted that east Portland is a priority area of concern for Streets 2035, especially in the need for more sidewalks. As these sidewalks in high-need areas are built, there will usually be trees included.

Gregg: What is the timeline for completion of the updated Pedestrian Design Guide? Can we get a copy of Matt's slide presentation? What can be done about the narrow strips (A strips), where trees are no longer allowed to be planted? Could sidewalk cut-outs be routinely allowed? Jenn Cairo shared that Jeff Ramsey developed a map of Portland showing the various planting strip widths throughout the city. Michelle said that tree wells are being explored as are extensions of the planting strip into the street parking area. She hopes that the new Pedestrian Design Guide will be completed by June 2021.

Damon: Are there any attempts as part of Streets 2035 to allow for better tree growing conditions in the ROW space? Michelle said that arborist consultants have provided input on this issue and that information is under review. This specifically refers to subgrade soil volume sufficient for a healthy street tree.

Daniel: It would be good if equity concerns and climate change considerations could be included in the stating of the Streets 2035 objectives. Do we need sidewalks on both sides of the street? Michelle: Yes you do. (*I think it is important to realize that this answer may not necessarily apply to residential areas. I believe she was thinking more about high-use areas that include businesses but this will need to be further clarified.*) For sidewalks you can consider guidelines the same as standards.

Barbara: Sandy Boulevard really could use some trees for traffic calming. That is clearly a location where trees in the ROW space would provide great public benefit.

Vivek: As the recent ice storm illustrates, we are losing trees in the ROW space. We need to design our public spaces to allow for more trees. Even within this inter-bureau effort to coordinate, there will remain a lot of subjectivity. We hope that Matt and Michelle will return to make further progress reports on Streets 2035.

**11:20 Heritage Tree #191 Request to De-List and Permission to Remove it as highly damaged Tree--Gregg Everhard with support from Gina Dake (Botanic Specialist 1, Portland Parks and Recreation/Urban Forestry Division)**

Gregg reported that due to COVID-19 challenges it is unlikely that the Heritage Tree Committee will be able to meet in the field to review new applications for Heritage Tree nomination. Nominations from the past will be reviewed to see if it would be appropriate to bring some forward for UFC consideration.

Gregg would like for UFC to approve a recommendation of Urban Forestry staff to grant the request of the property owner at 2825 SE Tolman to remove Heritage Tree #191, a *Quercus palustris*, due to extensive branch and canopy loss. For this to occur, it is necessary for UFC to first approve delisting the tree and then to approve removal. Three different UF staff evaluated the tree and concluded that it was appropriate to remove the tree. *No information was presented as to why the tree declined from 2012 to 2020.* Following discussion, UFC approved the request.

**Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting:** The next Urban Forestry Commission meeting will be 9:30 am – noon, Thursday, March 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>