

TO: Neighborhood Tree Team members and Portland tree advocates
FROM: Bruce Nelson, Cully Tree Team 6 September 2022
RE: Portland Urban Forestry Commission Meeting August 18, 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 YouTube recordings of the meetings. Go to the link at the UFC website <https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc> or to the YouTube 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, August 18, 2022, 9:30 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. It was held as a Zoom meeting due to COVID-19 demands.

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

UFC Commissioners Absent - Anjeanette Brown, Adrienne Feldstein

PP&R UF Staff Present – Jenn Cairo (City Forester); Ashley Reese (Administrative Assistant; Nik Desai (Botanic Specialist II); Belinda Judelman (Policy Analyst); Casey Jogerst (Permitting and Regulations Manager)

City Attorney's Office – No one was present

Other City Staff - Tim Collier (Community Relations Manager, PP&R)

Other presenters - none

9:32 a.m. Public Testimony

Albert Kaufman shared that he has lived in Portland for 20 years and previously lived in Seattle. He has been involved in urban forestry affairs in both areas. His experience was that Seattle government agencies planted more trees than Portland does. He has been a Friends of Trees (FOT) neighborhood tree coordinator, donor, and social media consulting volunteer. He considers FOT an impressive organization that is the main tree-planting entity in Portland. It is unsettling to see the cessation of the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES)-funded work that allowed FOT to plant street trees here. The extensive community engagement with FOT street tree planting has been very positive for the city. He asked what the plan is to regain this immense public engagement and support for street tree planting.

Meryl Redisch (former UFC member, former Executive Director of Portland Audubon, formerly active in tree issues in Utah, and current member of the UFC Policy Committee) expressed her thanks to City Forester Jenn Cairo for her excellent work on behalf of Urban Forestry in Portland. Meryl believes the Oregon Public Broadcasting report was one-sided in its reporting.

<https://www.opb.org/article/2022/07/11/portland-oregon-tree-canopy-city-contract-friends-of-trees>

Meryl believes that Jenn has built a professional and robust team at PP&R UF. As the City Forester, Jenn's responsibility is to manage the trees in Portland, which she is doing admirably. Meryl is glad that Jenn is the City Forester and also glad that FOT is active here. FOT had a large contract with BES for a number of years. That contract was time-limited, which FOT knew well in advance.

Benjamin Ayer, former parks manager, said he understands the importance of planning. He would like to know what is being planned to plant street trees that are no longer being planted by FOT in Portland.

Rachel Morris is a founder of a nonprofit and appreciates projects done with and for community members as well as the benefits that derive from such efforts. FOT's work includes youth involvement, education about tree care, and empowerment of marginalized communities. This comes from the community engagement model of FOT. She hopes this type of community engagement that gets trees planted while building closer connections within communities and between Portland residents and their street trees will be continued.

9:43 a.m. - Minutes review and approval

Minutes from June 16, 2022 were reviewed and accepted as amended.

9:45 a.m. – City Forester's Report, Jenn Cairo (City Forester, PP&R UF)

1. Heritage Tree #332 experienced major failure since the last meeting and UF approved an emergency removal permit. Jenn will talk more about this at the September UFC meeting.
2. Streets 2035, a Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)-led inter-agency effort, is continuing its efforts. PP&R UF is involved in this inter-bureau endeavor, which is attempting to clarify right-of-way needs and how to resolve conflicts over the use of this space.
3. At the September UFC meeting, a preliminary PP&R UF budget for July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 will be presented. One of the prescribed activities of UFC is to advise on budget issues. At the September meeting there will also be a progress report on PP&R's Sustainable Futures project. This group is looking at long-term options for funding both the backlog of PP&R maintenance projects and ongoing PP&R programs and staff needs.
4. The manager of the BES Tree Planting program, Margita Redding, is retiring. Jenn is working on an inter-governmental agreement with BES that clarifies what planting responsibilities will be assumed by PP&R UF and what planting responsibilities will be assumed by BES Tree Planting program.

5. Jenn is hopeful that an interim software program can be found to use as part of an Emergency Tree Response Service. This could expedite PP&R UF's ability to efficiently respond to tree emergency situations (*e.g., ice damage, storm damage, wind damage, and landslides*).
6. PP&R UF long-time Operations Manager Larry McGinnis has retired. Paul Anderson has replaced him. Belinda Judelman has been hired to fill the new policy position created at PP&R UF. She will be the lead person for the Urban Forest Management plan update and the tree code review, and she will represent PP&R UF on the Streets 2035 project.
7. Rocky Mountain Power is asking for some modifications regarding vegetation management around power lines.

10:04 UFC Retreat Recap, Vivek Shandas (Chair, UFC)

Vivek reviewed the priorities he believed were agreed upon at the June UFC retreat. He thanked Brian Landoe and Ashley Reese at PP&R UF for capturing the highlights and sending them to UFC members.

The five priorities were:

1. Increase UFC's engagement with the community
2. Identify high-priority changes to Title 11 and advocate for this substantive project to begin as soon as possible
3. Participate in updating the Urban Forest Management Plan
4. Advocate for City maintenance of street trees
5. Review and update the structure of UFC.

UFC members were asked if these were an accurate representation of priorities discussed at the retreat. *I think that overall UFC members accepted these priorities as those deemed significant at the retreat.* A number of UFC members responded that there should be an overlay in all of these priorities that increasing urban tree canopy while also increasing housing options is critical.

Vivek wants to have this list of priorities available and in the minds of UFC members as actions are considered. Megan hoped UFC could set aside some time in the future to determine how to address these priorities. Vivek hoped that this will come as an agenda item at some future UFC meeting. He will work with Jenn and Brian to see if this can happen.

10:20 Portland Heritage Tree Program Overview, Nik Desai (Botanic Specialist II, Heritage Tree Program Manager, PP&R UF); Rebecca Criscillis (Non-Development Permitting Supervisor, PP&R UF); Dylan Saito (Non-Development Tree Inspector, PP&R UF)

Nik reviewed the basics of how the Portland Heritage Tree program operates to help UFC members better understand the program and what responsibilities UFC has with the program.

The program recognizes trees of unique size, age, historical significance, horticultural significance, or some combination of these features. Trees must be within the city limits of Portland, a non-nuisance species, in good health at the time of consideration, and have ample space for root and crown growth.

PP&R UF manages the Portland Heritage Tree Program as part of its Science and Education sub-division. Staff at PP&R UF do permits and inspections of Portland Heritage Trees as needed. In emergencies, PP&R UF staff may be called on for removals of heritage trees.

The current process for listing a new Portland Heritage tree is:

- a. Potential Heritage Trees are submitted to PP&R UF by interested parties for trees on public and private properties. Trees must be in sight of the public from public space.
- b. Trees are reviewed by the UFC Heritage Tree Committee, which then makes recommendations to UFC.
- c. UFC reviews these suggestions. Trees that receive the support of at least six UFC members are sent to City Council for consideration of Heritage Tree listing status.
- d. The City Council may list a tree as a Portland Heritage Tree if it finds that the tree's health, aerial space, and open ground area for its root system have been certified as sufficient by an arborist. This information has been earlier determined by PP&R UF and reviewed by the UFC Heritage Tree Committee.

The Heritage Tree Committee reviews all trees submitted for consideration of Heritage Tree status and makes recommendations to UFC. The committee also does regular inspections and measurements of Portland Heritage Trees.

UFC reviews requests for taking down a Portland Heritage Tree and delisting Heritage Trees. Portland Heritage Trees can only be removed with the consent of

at least six UFC members and only after a public hearing has been held on the request to remove the tree. However, if the City Forester determines that a Heritage Tree is dangerous and is a threat to public safety, the City Forester may order the tree removed without prior consent from UFC.

Only the Portland City Council can designate (list) a tree as being a Portland Heritage Tree or remove that designation (delisting) from an existing Portland Heritage Tree.

Heritage Tree #206: Request for Removal of Designation, Dylan Saito

A request was made by the property owner and supported by the UFC Heritage Tree Committee to remove the listing of Portland Heritage Tree (royal ann cherry) at 3415 SE Kelly Street. The owner (the original applicant for Portland Heritage tree listing for this tree around 2004) has this tree regularly pruned and hopes to keep the tree. The tree has declined significantly in recent years and now has serious safety issues. This backyard tree is difficult to see from public property. It has poor structure (multiple co-dominant stems rising several feet above ground level), shows much dead wood in the upper branches, and has significant trunk decay. Despite all of these current health challenges for the tree, the owner hopes to keep it but not as a Heritage Tree. Megan and Leah appreciated the presentation and the owner's desire to retain the tree, even in its decline. A motion was made and seconded to recommend that Portland City Council remove the designation of Heritage Tree status from this tree. It was approved by UFC. This matter will be brought to Portland City Council by PP&R UF.

Heritage Tree # 265 Request for Removal of Portland Heritage Tree, Rebecca Criscillis

A request has been made by the property owner to remove the declining dove tree, *Davidia involucrata* located on private property. Heritage Tree #265 is one of only two dove trees on the Portland Heritage Tree list. The tree was inspected by PP&R UF staff person Frank Krawczyk. Frank's findings were reviewed and presented by Rebecca Criscillis of PP&R UF. The tree has experienced top die-back in the past five or more years and has been pruned on seven different occasions since October 2013. There is significant decay within the trunk, as indicated by the depth penetrated by a probe. An estimated 35% - 40% of the circumference of the tree is missing cambial tissue. The tree has been in serious decline for about the last 10 years and safety of the tree is a major concern. The UFC Heritage Tree Committee supports removal of this tree. The process, should UFC support removal, is to post a public notice stating the request to remove the tree and a date of a public hearing on the matter. The public hearing can be no earlier than 45 days after the posting is

listed. Once the public hearing is held, UFC can then vote to approve the tree removal request and recommend delisting of the tree by the Portland City Council or deny the tree removal request.

Six UFC members need to vote in support of the removal request for it to go forward. Typically these public hearings are held as part of the regularly scheduled monthly UFC meetings. *The earliest this public hearing could be held at a UFC meeting is at the October 20, 2022 UFC meeting.*

11:10 a.m. UFC Statement on Climate Emergency Resolution and Action Plan, Daniel Newberry (Chair, UFC Policy Committee)

City Council is slated to vote on the Climate Emergency Resolution and Action Plan (Work Plan) at their meeting on August 25, 2022. Roberta Jortner wrote a draft 8-page UFC statement on the proposed Work, with input from UFC Policy Committee members. All UFC members were e-mailed the draft UFC statement.

Key content of the draft statement:

1. There is a lack of specificity in terms of metrics, resource requirements, gaps, timelines and tracking/reporting process needed for this Work Plan to serve as the City's Climate Action Plan;
2. There needs to be a recognition or incorporation of guidance provided by Portland/Multnomah County Climate Change Preparation Strategy (2014), with its strong direction for climate adaptation and resilience;
3. The Work Plan calls for planting nearly 100,000 acres by 2050. There isn't that much acreage in Portland. Clarify how and where this will occur.
4. Under Land Use Action LU-1, in the section called "Why this matters," language needs to be modified to address "resilience"; for LU-2 Action, call for proactive planning and development of tools to prevent gentrification, including real and perceived gentrification impacts associated with neighborhood greening;
5. Combine the heading "Trees" with "Natural Resources/Green Infrastructure" to create a single heading that reads "Green infrastructure/Trees (Canopy)/Natural Resources";
 - a) Specify resource gaps that currently exist;
 - b) Add wording so that updating the Urban Forest Management Plan is to address climate change, potential canopy changes due to development and other impacts, equity, public health, infrastructure asset management, and the need to preserve large-form trees and space for large-form trees;
 - c) Under Action T-2, addressing the update of Title 11, add language "to improve preservation of trees and space for trees (especially large-form

- trees), provide more equitable distribution of tree canopy, and achieve canopy goals.”
- d) Provide or refer to metrics relevant to expanding tree planting in East Portland;
 - e) Add new language that directs PP&R to “Evaluate and recommend street tree maintenance program and funding options to improve tree canopy and community resilience.”
 - f) Support Action NR-2 that calls for continued support for community-based organizations doing watershed stewardship, community engagement and education. Add “tree planting” to the list of functions attributed to these organizations. Clarify what is meant by “continue support.”
 - g) Reword Action NR-3 Action regarding climate resilience as it pertains to Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA) by deleting “allowing space for trees” and include “address equitable public health and environmental justice, bring viable strategies to reduce urban heat island effect, create and maintain healthy urban tree canopy within the Heavy Industrial (IH) zone, and protect wetlands, riparian corridors, and other natural areas.”
6. Regarding wildfire in urban areas, consider including a city-sponsored, proactive tree-pruning program at the Wildland Urban Interface near City natural areas to reduce risks to nearby residents and to the natural areas.
 7. In addressing health impacts from heat and smoke, the Portland Comprehensive Plan 2035 specifically calls out the need to reduce impervious areas and assist tree canopy to reduce heat island effects while assisting in hydrologic function, air and water quality, and habitat connectivity. The Climate Emergency Work Plan should clearly call out the need to reduce impervious surfaces.
 8. For City infrastructure planning and construction, there is a need to establish a clear intent to leverage City infrastructure investments to improve community resilience.

COMMENTS FROM UFC MEMBERS

Leah thought that depaving is especially relevant at most Portland Public Schools that have extensive areas paved over with asphalt. Megan noted that the Work Plan is lacking in reference to a) trees and b) wildlife habitat corridors.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the draft letter Roberta had written. Vivek will send it to City Council members and relevant staff for consideration.

City Commissioner Rubio did publicly thank UFC for their comments. When City Council later passed the Climate Emergency Work Plan, I am not aware of any changes that were made in their document.

This Work Plan should be considered as a starting point. Its adoption does not necessarily mean any new actions are being undertaken by any City employees. The Work Plan is mainly a summary of what is already in the works for various bureau employees. It will take considerable public pressure and political courage to advocate for and implement new actions, new programs, and major workload modifications if any new climate emergency work is to happen at the City government level.

11:25 Tree Planting discussion Jenn Cairo (City Forester, PP&R UF)

Jenn requested that any further questions UFC members may have about the City's tree planting efforts be e-mailed to her so she can respond. She reminded UFC members that UF's 2021 Tree Planting report is available online. This report includes information from the Bureau of Environmental Services Tree Planting Program.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/730a73bf7cc9463d80a1956a5b2239bd>

I briefly reviewed this document again. The report lists numbers of trees planted for specific types of locations. There is an app that shows trees planted from 2018 to 2021 by both BES Tree Planting program and its contractors and by Urban Forestry and its contractors.

Information that is not in the report includes:

- 1. how many and who exactly are the key individuals at each of these bureaus that are involved in the tree planting;*
- 2. how much was spent for these programs;*
- 3. how many permits were issued for new street tree planting and how many of those trees were planted as part of development permits and non-development permits;*
- 4. how many and what types of trees are being planted by a sampling of landscape firms in the Portland area or sold by selected retail nurseries in Portland.*

The stated function at the beginning of the report is:

“This annual report details the City’s 2021 tree planting efforts and provides information on the health and survival of trees planted or

given away by the Portland Parks and Recreation Urban Forestry (PP&R UF) program. ... PP&R UF is the primary manager of the city's tree infrastructure, working to protect, preserve, and expand the urban forest through education, regulation, and tree planting and maintenance. Together, PP&R, community partners, residents, and other City bureaus plant thousands of trees each year."

This report provides some background information that is helpful in trying to figure out what can be done to improve the quality and quantity of the urban forest in Portland.

Megan wondered when we would be able to hear from other community groups involved in tree planting in Portland. Jenn responded that it is PP&R UF that manages the urban forest. PP&R UF will be requesting work with community partners and is interested in any ideas UFC members have about how this should be done.

Daniel wondered if any Request for Proposals have gone out to community groups relevant to tree activities. Jenn said she expects these will be released in 2023. *She did not specify exactly what sort of work this is for.* Jenn also stated that with the retirement of the key person at the BES Tree Planting program, Jenn is hopeful that a faster timeline can be used to get a written inter-bureau agreement between PP&R UF and BES/Tree Planting program. *I am guessing this would pertain to UF contracting or performing all street tree related City actions (planting and pruning?), while BES/Tree Planting Program performs tree-related actions (planting, pruning?) at multi-unit residential properties and in commercial areas.*

Jenn closed by reminding UFC members to send any further questions they have to her.

Next Urban Forestry Commission Meeting: The next UFC meeting will be 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., September 15, 2022 as a Zoom meeting. Check the link below prior to the meeting for the agenda, meeting materials, and how you can gain access to this Zoom meeting,

<https://www.portland.gov/trees/ufc/events/2021/6/17/urban-forestry-commission-meeting>