



Alicia Kellogg (Position 2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Lani Chang** (Position 3 - Natural Resource Agency or University) • **Drue Epping** (Position 5 – Arborist) • **Maeve Gillis** (Position 10 – Get Engaged) • **Melanie Ocasio** (Position 11 – Environmental Justice) • **Andrea Starbird** (Position 12 – Public Health)

Commissioners Absent

Aaron Clark (Position 1 – Wildlife Biologist) • **David Baker** (Position 8 – Development) • **Lia Hall** (Position 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

Facilitators

Drue Epping (Position 5 - Chair) and UFC staff

Briefings

Christy Carr, SDCI, presented on the City Tree Code 101

Lisa Ciecko and Danielle Devier, presented on the Green Seattle Partnership Strategic Plan

The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle

Minutes

February 11, 2026, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m

- 1. The meeting was called to order at 3:05, the Chair conducted the roll call, and the agenda was reviewed.**
- 2. The Chair facilitated Public Comment and provided a guideline to the public for engaging in this period**

Steve Z. made comments for OSE staff:

- Highlighted that there are five (5) vacancies in the UFC. Also noticed that the website has no notices about the process/timeline to fill these roles. He advised that it would be helpful to have these positions filled to ensure the Commission has this corresponding expertise to aid UFC efforts.
- Noted that there were missing items from the public meetings on UFC website and listed them accordingly. He encourages staff to make sure this is kept up/corrected as it is helpful for the Commissioners and public to be able to review this information if they are unable to attend.

3. Updates & Announcements

- Drue gave a shout-out to the Seahawks for their Superbowl win and thanked everyone for attending given that celebrations were also happening.
- Drue recognized the turmoil currently happening across the country and how it can be overwhelming and heavy, especially for the mid-west and communities the UFC prioritizes. She encourages everyone to be open to providing feedback on how they want the UFC to respond if they feel strongly on the matter.
- Lauren followed-up with an update regarding the consultant that will be working with the UFC on governance practices; the process is taking longer than expected and so consultant is now projected to join in March.
- Lauren noted that OSE is starting the early phases to recruit for the vacancies on the UFC and will be working with the Chair/Co-Chair on that process.

4. Vote: Approve Meeting Notes from 01/14/26

- Alicia motioned to approve, and Andrea seconded.
- UFC unanimously voted to approve.

5. Briefing: City Tree Code 101

- Christy Carr provided an outline of today's presentation regarding the tree protection code, and the tree-related changes that came with zoning code updates
- Tree Related Regulatory Framework
 - Trees are regulated by a framework of regulations and codes, including the Tree protection code.
 - These are meant to protect trees while allowing reasonable development while balancing other City's priorities
 - Trees could be regulated by one or more codes and protection standards will apply accordingly.
- Structure of the Tree Protection Code
 - 2023 tree protection update – now categorizes tree based on Tier (1,2,3,4) and are generally defined by size, with some exceptions (i.e. heritage trees)
 - Organized generally into the following two buckets: "Tree requirements outside of development" and "Tree requirements on developing property" (or associated with development)
 - Emphasized there are different rules based on which bucket the tree falls in and breaks down the difference.
 - Christy then broke down the different rules and regulations for tree requirements depending on what bucket they fall under
- Updates to the Tree Protection Code

- Some language was adjusted to provide additional scrutiny
- Changes to also provide more incentives for retaining trees
- Onsite replacements count for zoning green factor score for private property tree point requirements – current practice that is now codified.
- Tree protection area
 - “Basic tree protection area” definition deleted – area was determined to be larger than what was needed to protect the tree
 - “Tree protection area” definition updated – modified based on what is needed to protect the tree if it were to be retained during construction and include modifications
 - One tree protection area to be used to determine removal and what is needed during construction – this is an arborist-defined area.
 - For determining if a Tier 2 tree may be removed: Tree protection area may be modified or reduced by Director
 - Tree-Related Zoning Code Updates
 - Tree requirements shifted from caliper inches to tree points
 - Developments with one or more dwelling units must retain a certain number of trees to achieve required tree points
 - Tree points requirements are based on density and lot area and are determined by size and type - applicants decide what they will use.
 - Retaining trees count towards this
 - New incentives and opportunities for people to incorporate trees into site developments and modifications to standards for doing so.
- Questions and Comments:
 - Drue: Thanked Christy for her presentation/summary given how complex this subject is before opening the floor. Also appreciates that the goals to protect trees while allowing reasonable development is one of the hardest parts of what UFC does; acknowledges that it resonated a lot with her. Noted how critical it is to consider these green infrastructure items in the city.
 - Melanie: Asked how popular tree replacement is in terms of in-lieu vs. replanting on property.
 - Christy can provide numbers to the Commission after searching in the database for that information, but states that based on her knowledge the onsite replacement is more; payment in-lieu is rare. Notes that the code does allow offsite replacement or can do a combination of offsite/onsite or payment in-lieu.
 - Drue: Is payment in lieu always accessible or do they demonstrate that it is needed?
 - Christy: It is a voluntary program.
 - Andrea: For offsite planting, which department handles that?
 - Christy: Only states preference for public property but it is not a requirement and there is no guidance on that part. It is up to the applicant to figure it out. Doesn’t happen too often – offsite is not common.

- Andrea: Which department handles tree protection requirements when a parcel is being developed next to a street or park?
 - Christy: It doesn't really matter - tree protection will be required by the developer, it's neutral on who owns that property. Consider them as typical offsite trees.
- Melanie: What's the standard practice with co-dom trees in protection areas?
 - Christy: We have a specific formula on how to measure a tree with multiple trunks.
 - Drue drew an example to provide further clarity on Melanie's question. Appreciates that SDCI has a definition for this to ensure that everyone is on the same page on how to measure it for protection. Notes creating these definitions is a hurdle on creating a tree code.
 - Drue also provided some additional comments on goals to protect trees and allowing reasonable development balances with her and also gave background for tree risk and how it runs on the TRAQ system (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification).
- Christy shared other SDCI updates:
 - Continue process improvements, helping applicants with providing information/compliance.
 - Working on an Excel workbook for the applicant to put all tree information in and utilize calculations accordingly. Great to streamline permit review and look for this to be rolled out in the summer.
 - In response to the tree protection removal no longer being a circle, a new service for permit applicants will be available. This is a pre submittal application (or tree sub) where arborists will be available for a fee to conduct a site visit to review and confirm tree protection area in advance of application submission; this will give more predictability for developers and was piloted yesterday.
 - Outreach materials and series of tips are being updated; includes possibility of webinars to ensure that people understand the code and know that resources are available.

6. Co-Chair(s) Elections

- Drue provided expectations of the Co-Chair(s) position.
- Candidates read their statements and Hannah sent out a link to Commissioners to collect votes.
 - Aaron is not available to join – Lauren read out his statement.
- Aaron Clark and Andrea Starbird were elected as Co-Chairs.

7. Briefing: Green Seattle Partnership Strategic Plan

- Lisa introduced herself and proceeded to give overview of background/history of the GSP program, including the overarching goals it focuses on.
 - Originally intended to be a 20-year program but now extends beyond that timeframe.
 - Explained the reasoning and thought process behind what started this partnership 20 years ago and how it led to the current plan.
 - Focuses on relationship repair with communities and the land itself.
- Built on a Partnership Model - many people are involved in this body of work and contribute in their own way.
- 20th Anniversary Opportunity (2025)
 - Provided opportunity for reflection and renewal in the past 20 years
 - Looking for approaches to improve towards the future, improving partnership, and taking specific near-term actions that focus efforts/investments
 - One out of the three approaches listed includes creating a 3-year action plan with a vision for the next 10 years (discussed later in presentation)
- Broad Participation
 - Partnership models depend on incorporating many voices into this work and planning process for alignment.
- 10-Year Vision
 - Steering committee set tone for developing the vision and identifying where to go as a partnership
 - Plan itself is built off this vision and defines where to go from here
- Strategic Plan Pillars
 - Identified 3 focus areas (pillars) of the plan
 - Includes 3 work groups established dug in to create pillar-specific strategies/actions/outcomes
 - Takeaways:
 - Affirmed mutual benefits/value – recognized that continued leadership/buy-in and support from partner organizations for Parks to be successful in delivering quality restoration/community programming
 - No big shifts in programming/function - do more intentional planning and coordination work (everything works just need to improve from there)
 - Lisa discussed what each of the focus areas (pillars) of the plan are and what their actions/strategies entail
- Implementation: Working Circles
 - Continuing to find this method to involve folks from across the partnership was going to be critical to success
 - Move some existing committee structure to these 7 small formats working circles
 - Partnership structure working circles: determine long-term format
- Overview of 2025 Year in Review
 - Statistics in annual graphics support the fact that this is a great body of work
- Questions/Comments:

- Lauren: Thanks, Lisa, for their hard work and appreciation for their hard work and care of Seattle Parks/natural areas. Also mentioned that Commissioners are always interested in getting involved for connecting with communities/caring for forests and highlighted that there are a lot of GSP events. Dropped link for the Get Involved GSP page in case folks want to check it out.
- Lisa added there are other opportunities with partner organizations
 - Quarterly relational land care events – reach out to Lisa to get invite for next event at end of March
- Drue appreciates this being done and appreciates having the option to do more outside of Forest Week community show up – Lauren reiterates that Commissioners can connect folks who are interested in doing more or participating if they reach out and want to touch base with Lisa.
- Drue: Thanks Lisa and acknowledges that the presentation aligns with UFC vision and values that were set. Climate resilience element – personally resonates with Urban Forestry lens right now.
- Lisa introduced Danielle Devier, Senior Urban Ecology Analyst, who joined later and thanked everyone for their time and work in contributing to the Urban Forestry work in Seattle.

8. Review: Welcome Letter

- Drue shared current version of letter to give everyone an update in progress
 - Discussed what it includes, reasoning behind how it was framed, and what sections worked well.
 - Noted the areas that need to be flushed out as a group
 - Highlight the shared priorities and explain that the goal is to find shared priorities from the Mayor’s Vision and Values (MO Vision and Values) to share how we can approach these goals together
 - Personalize the ones for the new councilmembers as well and make sure it’s interchangeable with other meetings
- Plan is to vote on final version at next meeting
- Comments/Feedback:
 - Maeve/Andrea: Nothing to add and everything looks good.
 - Alicia: Thinks this looks really good and thanks everyone for their hard work. Appreciates how simple and straightforward this is.
 - Drue will meet with folks again next week and send it out before next meeting.

9. Second Public Comment (if time allows)

Steve Z. made the following comments:

- Thanks everyone for their efforts and the great presentations
- Urged OSE to post the presentation recordings and reiterate previous comments regarding updating and keeping the website updated.
- Noted that a tree questionnaire was done with the Mayor before she was elected at treepack.org for people to check if they are interested.

10. The meeting adjourned at 4:57p.m

Meeting Chat:

Maeve Gillis (Position 10), 2/11/2026 4:03 PM

Thank you, Christy!

Melanie Ocasio 2/11/2026 4:03 PM

Thank you :)

Pascual, Hannah 2/11/2026 4:11 PM

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/unpave/>

Here is Aaron's LinkedIn

Urgenson, Lauren 2/11/2026 4:45 PM

[Get Involved - Green Seattle Partnership](#)

Lisa Ciecko (she/her), Seattle Parks and Recreation Unverified 02/11/2026, 4:46 PM

www.greenseattle.org/strategic-plan