



**City of Seattle**  
Urban Forestry Commission

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**SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION**

**Becca Neumann** (Position #4 – Hydrologist), Co-chair  
**Joshua Morris** (Position #7 – NGO), Co-Chair  
**Alicia Kellogg** (Position #2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Stuart Niven** (Position #5 – Arborist – ISA)  
**Hao Liang** (Position #6 – Landscape Architect – ISA) • **David Baker** (Position # 8 – Development)  
**Nathan Collins** (Position 9 – Financial Analyst) • **Logan Woodyard** (Position 10 – Get Engaged)  
**Jessica Hernandez** (Position #11 – Environmental Justice) • **Jessica Jones** (Position # 12 – Public Health)  
**Lia Hall** (Position #13 – Community/Neighborhood)

*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*

**Draft meeting notes**

October 18, 2023, 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Via Webex call and in-person at the  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1872 (18<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700

Meeting number: 2482 969 3594

Meeting password: 1234

**Attending**

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair  
Becca Neumann – Co-Chair  
Hao Liang  
David Baker  
Nathan Collins  
Logan Woodyard

Absent- Excused

Alicia Kellogg  
Stuart Niven  
Jessica Hernandez  
Jessica Jones  
Lia Hall

Guests

Toby Thaler

Staff

Patti Bakker – OSE  
Sharon Lerman – OSE  
Lisa Ciecko – SPR  
Michael Yadrick – SPR  
Eric Sterner – SPR  
Danielle Devier – SPR  
Jamie Lim – SPR  
Stephanie Shelton – SPR  
Henry Arends – SPR  
Mark Malone – SPR  
Clay Antieau – SPU  
Ali Lakehart - SPU  
Anne-Marie Freudenthal – SDOT  
Katey Bean – SDOT  
Nolan Rundquist – SDOT  
Ben Roberts – SDOT  
Christy Carr – SDCI

Public

Steve Zemke  
Michael Oxman  
Ariel Medeiros  
Eric Scigliano  
Mary Manous  
Sandy Shettler  
Sage Miller

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:**  
<https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

**Call to order:** Patti called the meeting to order and reviewed the goals and agenda for the meeting.

## State of the Urban Forest

### - Recent developments

Patti started off this session covering the major milestones of the last year, noting that in this time the city conducted assessments of our canopy cover and the city's urban forestry investments, we have a new tree ordinance for trees on private lands and an updated Executive Order around replacement requirements on public lands, and our urban forestry capacity is being increased with some major grant funding and new UF positions coming on board.

In terms of our assessments, at the beginning of this year, we completed the first round of analyses around our canopy cover. The key findings of this work include the fact that we are slowly losing ground, with a net loss of 255 acres, a relative decline of 1.7% over the 2016 canopy. We also saw that this loss is not happening equitably, with neighborhoods impacted by racial and economic injustice starting with less canopy and experiencing more loss than the citywide average. The results also reinforce that trees are critical climate infrastructure helping to mitigate extreme heat, and showed that the greatest net losses were in forested parks and in residential areas.

For the Statement of Legislative Intent to gather information on and prepare a report around the city's urban forestry investments, OSE gathered information from the nine urban forestry departments' finance managers and urban forestry staff to prepare this report. Per the One Seattle Tree Plan executive order, OSE will prepare a report on a biennial basis on the city's urban forestry investments, and this report will be a baseline to use for continuing that reporting.

The new tree ordinance was passed this year. It updates regulations for trees on private property, and it includes additional elements Council is interested in, including reporting on pieces of the ordinance like the new payment in lieu option, developing strategies for reducing financial burdens on homeowners and setting up the One Seattle Tree Fund to receive the payments in lieu as well as other funds from grants or donations. Along with the tree ordinance, the Mayor also issued the One Seattle Tree Plan Executive Order to cover trees on public lands, the basics of which are that it increases the replacement requirements for healthy trees removed from public lands, introduces a replacement requirement for dead or hazard trees removed, and updates the reporting to be done by city departments around tree planting and tree removals.

Other additions to expand our funding and capacity for urban forestry work were also made this year. Seattle was awarded \$12.9 million for the two grant proposals that we submitted for the USDA Urban and Community Forestry program funding through the Inflation Reduction Act. The combined city project, which received \$12M includes three components: deep community engagement, natural area restoration that expands beyond city parklands to include neighboring property owners, and expanding job training/career pathways opportunities. SDOT also submitted a separate application for their Delridge Native Forest Garden project and that was fully funded for that \$900k request.

This grant funding will help us expand beyond the current city investments to support additional and deeper urban forestry work and goals, and the City is also making additional investments. These include funding additional positions, including the new Sr. Urban Forestry Strategic Advisor OSE will be hiring soon, and the new tree ordinance included three new positions for SDCI and one for SDOT. SPR also has additional positions that were funded through the Parks District to expand the capacity of their urban forestry crews and increase capacity of the GSP team.

Tim Reynon, member of the Puyallup Tribe and Tribal Relations Director with Seattle's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, then offered some reflections on the first ever Tribal Summit that was held this summer. This event stemmed from conversations held with Tribal Councils, which indicated interest in meeting and seeing action result from it. Attendees included staff from 11 of the federally recognized Tribes, elected leaders, six urban native organizations and all branches of city government – Mayor's

Office, 16 departments, Councilmembers and the city prosecutor's office, and discussions focused on Tribes' concerns and expectations for the City. A summary report was prepared for the discussions, themes and outcomes. Tim offered the reminder that the local Tribes have stewarded these lands since the Creator placed them here and gave them the responsibility to care for Mother Earth. Tribes have rich knowledge that they are willing to share, making sure that this sacred knowledge is protected and respected. He noted city staff would all do well to engage Tribes in any type of action as we work on tree canopy and developing policies and developing projects, from the beginning, to help inform these projects and policies.

SDOT staff Katey Bean provided information on their Delridge Native Forest Garden project. This is a pilot project stemming from groundwork that SDOT has been doing with regional Tribes to do collaborative natural area stewardship. They'll be starting work on the project early in 2024. It includes four acres of degraded forest in the Longfellow Creek watershed in West Seattle, and will include removal of invasive plants, installation of a trail and interpretive signage around the importance of upland plant species. Per the model for collaboration discussed at the Tribal Summit, SDOT is working with the Muckleshoot Tribe and the public on the project.

- Climate impacts – pests, diseases, tree health  
SPR Arborist Jamie Lim and SDOT Arborist Nolan Rundquist provided information on what they're experiencing around tree health and pests and diseases in trees currently. Jamie provided an overview of the areas that SPR manages, including developed parks and natural areas. The urban forestry tree crew and the Green Seattle Partnership teams work closely together to manage these areas. They have seen a lot more tree failures due to climate impacts, a big portion of which are red alders and big leaf maple. She noted a number of the pests and diseases they have been detecting in trees, as reflected in their tree inventory data.

Nolan noted what SDOT has been experiencing as reflected in their work orders, permits and inventory data. He noted some of the challenges facing street trees and how they affect species selection and what trees will do well. They are seeing pest issues cause greater problems than they used to due to the drought conditions.

### **Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan – status update**

Sharon Lerman, OSE's Healthy Communities Director, provided an update on the status of this planning effort. We have been discussing this work as a next phase following on from the canopy assessment work. The plan will build off of the findings of the assessment that we are losing canopy and that canopy loss is not happening equitably. The purpose for the effort will be to develop a plan for planting, growing and maintaining trees that is really focused on low canopy neighborhoods in environmental equity priority areas based on the Race and Social Equity Index and heat and air quality data, and other factors. The plan will identify maintenance and tree resilience resources needed to sustain urban canopy and pave the way for leveraging future federal, state and philanthropic funds for the resilience of the tree canopy.

The scoping of the plan will center BIPOC community voices, building new partnerships with BIPOC communities and with Tribes. Questions that we'll be answering include: what does it mean to have a canopy that's equitably distributed and that builds resilience? What does it mean to have a forest that's successful today and like tens, hundreds, and thousands of years from now, and then really getting tactical what are the strategies and action? What are the considerations we need to incorporate to ensure the canopy and the forest is resilient to climate and other impacts in our planting and in our maintenance, and what partnerships will we strengthen to ensure that BIPOC voices are centered in our efforts to grow healthy, equitable canopy?

### **Planting and maintenance opportunities group work**

Katey Bean began by providing information on the challenges in locating street trees. Then attendees discussed input on aspects of planting and maintenance – where are the opportunities, where are the needs, where do these overlap?

### **Climate resilience group work**

Attendees worked in groups (in the room and online breakout rooms) to discuss input on strategies that we can continue to employ, employ more of, or start to employ around our urban forestry work and care of the city's forest.

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocs.htm>**

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 PM.

### **Meeting chat:**

Lerman, Sharon: 14:09

It's a bit hard to hear the folks in the room. If you're able to speak a little louder, please do!

Arends, Henry: 14:16

hi

Arends, Henry: 14:18

Howdy! I am a lead in the field with Parks Urban Forestry. My pronouns are he/him. I'm looking forward to zooming out from my usual vantage point and learn more about the big picture efforts. Sorry about my tech issue!

Ciecko, Lisa: 14:52

Here's the upcoming symposium information: <https://botanicgardens.uw.edu/education/adults/conferences-symposia/urban-forest-symposium/>

Malone, Mark: 15:19

Thats me on the right. Photo courtesy of Seattle Parks and Recreation

Malone, Mark: 15:42

AGREE!

Michael Oxman: 16:14

When the question be answered of which street trees are the homeowners or the city's responsibility?

Lerman, Sharon: 16:47

Thank you to my breakout group for the great discussion!

Michael Oxman: 16:50

Citizens also asked for a staff list in the form of a flow chart with all the duties being fulfilled across all 9 departments with authority to condemn a tree. Not just the money, but how it is being spent.

Michael Oxman: 16:59

Look for video of this meeting on Youtube

### **Public input (additional comments received):**