

Urban Forestry Commission Retreat
January 27, 2010
How Can We... Sticky Note Exercise Responses

How do we increase the quality and quantity of street tree maintenance, given the fact that the majority of street trees are privately maintained? Many of the oldest and largest street trees in the city are the maintenance responsibility of abutting property owners.

- City test for tree contractors
- Do we think topping done by City Light sets a bad example to home owners
- Seattle tree pruning month (October) get neighbors out
- Information- neighborhood newspapers
- Create volunteer groups to help property owners in planting trees
- Post signs – “This pruning is illegal”
- Twitter/blog sites
- Sell the real estate value
- Avoid unintended consequences – excessive pruning & timing of pruning
- Identify problem trees and notify owner of best practice and available services
- Use SCL and SPU bills to educate homeowner about proper tree care and what is and is not legal
- Minimize fees for or eliminate “tree pruning” permit fees altogether
- Do not allow “non-conventional” pruning methods by utilities while prohibiting the same for homeowners
- Establish information that helps property owners deal with conflicts between trees & real property (roofs, foundations, light, etc)
- Sell the habitat and stormwater benefits
- Cost share burial of overhead utility lines
- Listserv that sends out tree care tips on schedule (e.g. when and how to prune or plant)

How can tree protection regulations limit tree removal without discouraging planting and while accommodating other uses such as light access, solar panels, views, gardens, etc?

- Provide incentives in utility bill discounts
- Create an accurate database of existing trees on private property
- Regulations should consider aspect and resultant shading
- Instruct on view framing
- Assess solar space – 33%
- Fee in lieu plus onsite planting
- Give appropriate credit for retention or conversely require more caliper for removal
- Appropriate site/species selection is key (properly selected tree will not create issues)
- Use canopy coverage as an optional metric to provide incentive for retaining very large trees
- Can’t make everybody happy
- All property is not create equal
- Need to enforce current rules and close loopholes
- Sound science
- Fines should be based on several times the value of the tree

- Provide more \$ incentives (e.g. tax breaks) for planting and maintaining the right tree in the right place
- Tree removal permits will give property owners pause before they just remove a tree
- Fees should be minimized/eliminated for permits allowing interaction with trees
- Allow variances for tree protection (e.g. building height, parking requirements, setbacks)
- Increase value of trees in green factor calculations
- Tree permit issue
 - Educational opportunity
 - Tracking
 - Not a penalty

How can we provide cost-effective incentives to encourage planting and retention in order to make trees a benefit rather than a burden?

- Nursery incentives - % discount for use of natives
- Make it fun
- Design programs to capture outside funding sources
- Use your partners - Seattle Audubon, EarthCorps, CLC etc.
- Tax breaks for planting & maintaining the right tree in the right place
- Provide free or reduced cost consultation to land owners on comprehensive landscaping
- Technical bank of qualified arborists to provide on-call site visits
- History line tied to trees, interpretive signage
- Publish tree value comparisons
- Need to change the culture, trees are opportunities not barriers to development
- Tax breaks for stormwater benefits of large/mature trees
- Allow variances for tree protection (e.g. building height, parking requirements, setbacks)

With limited City resources, how can we make progress in promoting the value of trees and inspiring tree retention, care, and planting?

- Reframe issue to target kids – work with schools
- Use the City Light and/or SPU bills to educate homeowners about proper tree care and value of trees and what is legal/illegal
- Keep tree giveaways and ramp them up and track
- Like “tree city” “tree campus” – create tree street or green street designation
- Partner with nurseries and the big box stores
- Increase value of trees in green factor calculations
- Have cost-sharing between property owner and City
- Urban forestry pins

- Use information from other municipalities – don't reinvent the wheel
- Inform design review boards regarding tree preservation
- Integrate outreach message (trees, water etc) and tie to health
- Reframe issue from improving tree canopy and tie this effort to increasing health of kids and people

Blue Sky – other thoughts you want captured

- Base tree crews by geography not department to limit travel time and consolidate mission
- OSE to lead
- Consider a per foot ROW tax on property owners for urban forestry in general
- “Trees are not an amenity. They are a necessity.” Bob Skiera, long-time Milwaukee, WI system forester
- Charge more for plan enforcement, if not met
- Interconnections
 - Pro: create corridors
 - Con: site by site development review and cumulative impacts to urban canopy
- Tree permit issue
 - Educational opportunity
 - Tracking
 - Not a penalty
- Synergy with the popular urban agriculture movement. Push fruit trees as part of gardening
- Public fruit tree areas in parks or on public property - “tree patches”
- Initiate a 1% for forest program on City capital projects
- Address multiple departments issue:
 - Pros/cons
 - Comp plan inclusion
 - Cost savings by having all tree crews together
 - Department mission statement incorporate specifically UFMP
- Hand out “tree maps” or “walking neighborhood tree tours” emphasizing unique/significant tree specimens
- Use excess paved ROW