

*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*

GOAL:

City decision-making recognizes the urban forest as a critical piece of our urban infrastructure.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES:

1. To help implement the Urban Forest Management Plan and achieve Seattle's 30% tree canopy cover goal
2. To provide feedback and recommendations to City Council and the Mayor on specific policy actions that will ensure the long-term health and viability of Seattle's urban forest
3. To suggest new city policy that will ensure the long-term health and viability of Seattle's urban forest
4. Provide a forum for public dialogue to assist the Commission in its advisory role

RECENT ACTIVITIES:

1. Letter of support to consolidate community tree planting and education programs and the creation of a new full time position within the Seattle Department of Public Utilities
2. Proposed an update to the environmental element of Seattle's Comprehensive Plan for the 2012 Annual Update
3. Provided comments to the proposed draft Shoreline Master Program Regulations

MORE INFORMATION:

For more information on the Urban Forestry Commission visit:

<http://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/>

Seattle's urban forest is a thriving and sustainable mix of tree species and ages that creates a contiguous and healthy ecosystem that is valued and cared for by the City and all of its citizens as an essential environmental, economic, and community asset

Frequently Asked Questions

Seattle's urban forest resources

What is vegetation?

Vegetation is a general term for the plant life of a region; it refers to the ground cover provided by plants.

What is the urban forest?

Seattle's urban forest consists of all trees in the city on both public as well as private property.

What are some functions of the urban forest?

Trees located throughout Seattle on public and private property affect our lives and the local economy in ways that aren't always obvious. Trees provide community, environmental, and economic benefits that range from reducing the effects of density to increasing property values, to providing ecological services such as stormwater mitigation, air toxics removal, and greenhouse gas sequestration.

What threatens the health of the urban forest?

There are many threats to the health of our urban forest including lack of available growing space; pressure to convert green spaces, parks, and vacant lots into building sites; inadequate funding for municipal tree-care programs (to conduct urban forest inventories, develop management plans, enforce ordinances, and monitor tree health); overuse of park and natural spaces; harsh growing conditions that make tree survival difficult; poor tree selection that creates maintenance problems; poor nursery stock and failure to provide adequate care after planting; many urban forests are dominated by relatively few species and genetic diversity is limited; poor tree care practices by residents and untrained arborists; jurisdictional complexity; limited outreach to professionals and residents; limited grass-roots participation in tree planting and stewardship; and lack of public awareness about the benefits of healthy urban forests.

Where can I find more information about Seattle's urban forest?

You can go to the Seattle reLeaf website: www.seattle.gov/trees

Management of Seattle's urban forest

What is infrastructure?

Infrastructure is the basic physical systems of Seattle's population, including roads, buildings, and utilities (gray infrastructure), as well as trees and landscapes (green infrastructure).

How is Seattle managing its urban forest?

Urban trees are under pressures not present in native forests and require active management intervention to sustain them. In 2007 the City of Seattle set the bold goal of achieving 30 percent tree canopy cover in 30 years to increase the environmental, social, and economic benefits trees bring to Seattle residents. The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) is a 30-year plan that recommends a broad range of actions that will forward the goal of a sustainable urban forest in Seattle. The plan can be found at: <http://www.seattle.gov/trees/management.htm>

Where did the 30% goal come from?

The Urban Forest Coalition started with the American Forests recommendation of 40% for cities in the Pacific Northwest and went through the following process to define an ambitious but doable goal for the UFMP 30-year planning horizon: 1) considered American Forests' recommendations and benchmarked with other cities; 2) considered land-use mix in Seattle and other City land-use goals (e.g. encouraging density, facilitating freight mobility, etc.); 3) consider current canopy cover and planting opportunities; 4) defined goals for each land-use type; 5) factored in the percentage of the total land base within each land-use type and individual land-use goals to calculate the recommended city-wide goal of 30%; and 6) consulted with external experts from other cities, consultants, the University of Washington, and the public.

Seattle's community and the urban forest

Who should I call if I think a tree is being removed illegally?

For street trees call (206) 684-TREE(8733). For trees on private property call (206) 615-0808.