

SEATTLE URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Tom Early, Chair • Steve Zemke, Vice-Chair
Weston Brinkley • Leif Fixen • Mariska Kecskes • Donna Kostka • Richard Martin • Joanna Nelson de Flores
Erik Rundell • Andrew Zellers

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

March 9, 2016

Meeting Notes

Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 2750 (27th floor)
700 5th Avenue, Seattle

Attending

Commissioners

Tom Early – chair
Steve Zemke – vice-chair
Leif Fixen
Mariska Kecskes
Joanna Nelson de Flores
Andrew Zellers

Staff

Sandra Pinto de Bader - OSE
Gabriela Vega - SDOT

Public

None

Absent- Excused

Weston Brinkley
Donna Kostka
Richard Martin
Erik Rundell

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>

Call to order

Tom called the meeting to order and read the Commission’s mission.

Public comment

None

Chair report

Tom participated in a Right-of-Way Improvement Manual (ROWIM) update meeting and will talk about this later.

There is an issue around Street Trees in Queen Anne. There was an initial arborist report and then they issued a second arborist report for a development project. The real issue that caught Tom’s attention were the American Elm street trees. He wanted to let people know that he believes the Commission should weigh in on the process DCI is using. He would like to look at this in light of maybe finding an issue that is a problem in other cases.

Adoption of February 3 and February 10 meeting notes

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 3 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

ACTION: A motion to approve the February 10 meeting notes as amended was made, seconded, and approved.

Freight Master Plan (FMP) update

Gabriela Vega is with the Policy and Planning Division. Gabriela spoke to the Commission last year about the Freight Master Plan and is now giving the UFC an update on the process. The City has several modal master plans (bike, ped, transit) and is now working on the freight mode, which is very important.

Purpose of the plan:

To develop a citywide freight plan

- Vision and goals
- Analysis of existing and future conditions
- Update freight network
- Design guidelines
- Projects
- Programs
- Prioritization framework
- Performance measures

The project team has documented existing conditions and truck volumes throughout the city through a truck flow map. The City used 620 count locations (tube counts) and received input from WSDOT and KC Metro. They have found that trucks are a very small percentage of all trips.

With existing conditions they calculated future conditions:

- 2035 truck flow map
- Create districts for analysis
- Employment industries: retail, wholesale and manufacturing
- Develop growth factors and apply to districts.

Draft freight network designation

Tiered system criteria:

- Land use
- Trip purpose
- Roadway classification
- Truck volumes
- Physical roadway characteristics
- Connectivity

Limited Access:

- Purpose: long distance trips
- Land use: connections between the city and the rest of the region

- Roadway classification: highway
- Truck volumes: all

Major truck street

- Purpose: through trips
- Land use: connections to MICs, intermodal facilities, urban centers, and the regional system
- Roadway classification: minor arterial or higher
- Truck volumes: 500+ trucks per day

Minor truck street

- Purpose: to/from trips
- Land use: connections to and from urban villages and commercial districts, provides secondary connections to major truck streets
- Roadway classification: collector arterial or higher
- Truck volume: 500+trucks per day

First/Last mile connectors

- Purpose: industrial trips
- Land use: connections within the manufacturing and industrial centers (MICs)
- Roadway classification: minor arterial or lower, including non-arterial streets
- Truck volumes: 250+ trucks per day

Purpose of truck design guidelines

- Outlines basic design considerations for SDOT to accommodate freight
- Improve safety and mobility for all users
- Focused on truck street designations

Considerations for truck design guidelines

- Truck type, size, volumes
- Design for vs. accommodate
- Modal overlap
- Additional information and detail in the Right-of-way Improvements Manual (under development)

New Freight Project Concepts

- Perform bottleneck and truck collision analysis
- Map freight projects from previous planning efforts (Move Seattle, Large Capital, Freight Access Project, etc.)
- Identify locations without freight improvements
- Recommended ideas/solutions to improve safety and mobility
- FMP draft includes 55 freight projects.

Project prioritization

- Determine what projects to build and investments to make in the short, medium, and long term
- Rank projects based on quantitative and qualitative factors

Strategies and actions

- Based on plan goals
- Will inform FMP implementations
- Strategies guide us on how to achieve progress toward realizing the plan goals
- Actions are specific tasks for implementation

Gabriela will send Sandra the draft plan for the UFC to review and comment. Tom mentioned that a couple of years ago the UFC went on a tour of the Ballard industrial district. Their main concern was tree limbs blocking street signage. Many truck drivers are not from around town and they need to see the signs to be able to navigate the city. Another concern is visibility. They want to be able to see pedestrian and other vehicles.

UFC question/comment: what's the estimated cost of the proposed projects?

Answer: the FMP will only give an order of magnitude or cost for the top 10 projects (which still need to be prioritized).

UFC question/comment: what's the funding source?

Answer: Funding includes grants, partnerships, etc.

UFC question/comment: the Port has progressive air and water quality measures they are working on around heavy haul streets. Planting street trees along streets would help increase air and water quality.

Acknowledgement of outgoing Commissioners – discussion

Maybe it could be a quarterly event or twice a year to network with past Commissioners and to acknowledge and thank outgoing commissioners. We could try one event this year to gauge interest.

Sandra will send past commissioners an email (to be drafted by Tom) to see if they are interested in being in the public listserv and invite them to continue participating as part of the public or advisors.

What about a reoccurring event? Maybe one in the spring and one in the fall? Something after the standard meeting and have the location roam?

There are other events and engagement opportunities that the UFC could invite past members to participate. It would show that the UFC cares about trees and participate in events.

Maybe have the UFC plant trees as part of Seattle Arbor Day. The UFC could invite past commissioners to come give public comment on issues they are familiar with and have institutional memory on. Determine which UF events the UFC will attend to include in the calendars.

MIMP recommendation – discussion and possible vote

Tom re-ordered the content of the last draft to make it clearer.

The Commission discussed the current draft.

A concern was not to make Green Seattle Partnership the dumping ground where people go to get their tree replacement credits, because all tree planting currently taking place in GSP is to replace canopy loss being experienced in forested parklands.

Tom will produce a next iteration of the letter for further discussion.

SDOT tour debrief and ROWIM update

Commissioners really liked the tour.

Tom gave an update on the ROWIM. He attended a meeting on Monday with SDOT and Parks Commission, Design Commission, Ped, Bike Board, Planning Commission, Transit Advisory board. They all gave comments on the draft. It was a good meeting. He will provide comments to the preliminary draft for UFC to review. Would want to submit that in April. Leif will work with Tom. There will be another chance to comment when a formal draft document comes out.

Thailand – an example of the need for comprehensive planning

Leif shared photos of his trip to Thailand and Laos which he took as part of the AgForestry Leadership training. Leif shared his experience with what seems to be lack of strategic and comprehensive urban planning. Most vehicles run with propane and natural gas.

They are working on reforestation of teak forests.

Public comment

None

New business and announcements

None

Adjourn

Public input

From: Lex en Marjon [mailto:ompa@w-link.net]

Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 12:58 PM

To: Pinto de Bader, Sandra

Subject: Fwd: Carkeek Park

Hello Sandra,

I promised you I would keep you (and the UFC) informed about developments after my presentation to the Urban Forestry Commission on 10/14 last year. Well, I did start a project called CHIP (Carkeek Hanson Implementation Project) but in February this year I realized that it was way too big a project to be handled by me or our volunteer group. That is why I wrote a letter to Mr. Jesús Aguirre, our superintendent (attachment), mentioning our concerns and inability to cope with it ourselves, more or less implying that the issue was now in his ball park. I got a polite "Thank you" email from him and that seems to be the end of the story. I am not going to put more energy in it - which is kind of a relief. But I think the UFC, after having listened so patiently to my presentation,

deserves to be aware of this development.

Warm regards,

Lex Voorhoeve

Seattle, February 10th, 2016

To: Mr. Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department

From: A. G. Voorhoeve, Carkeek Park volunteer

Re: Serious concerns about how much longer the Red alder/Bigleaf maple forests in Carkeek Park will last (see photo below)

CC: Many stakeholders in Seattle Urban Forestry (by email)



Collapsing forest on the steep slopes of Piper's Creek, Carkeek Park

Dear Mr. Aguirre,

My name is Lex Voorhoeve; I have been a forest steward volunteer in Carkeek Park since 1998. You may get information about me from Christopher Williams, Michael Yadrick (Urban Forestry), Andrea Mojzák (Green Seattle Partnership), and Loren McElvain, GSP Forest Steward in Carkeek Park.

What prompted me in 1998 to start volunteering was finding a big uprooted Red alder tree blocking Piper's creek trail. Being a forester by training I recognized the process that was going on:

this forest is maturing and gradually “falling to pieces”. Something might have to be done about this, and perhaps I could help.

Over the past 18 years I have observed this process accelerating, the forest becoming more and more “pockmarked”; the about 100 acres big forest is now \pm 85 years old, over-mature, and I expect that it will collapse altogether in the near future, possibly within 20 years.

When the steep slopes of the Piper’s creek ravine become deforested, you will be faced with a few unpleasant problems:

- * The whole area is an environmentally critical area, subject to a nightmare of rules and restrictions;
- * Minor landslides occur occasionally, but a major landslide may occur also, affecting housing along the rim of the ravine, especially the houses close to the edge along 8th Ave. NW;
- * Erosion, already ever-present partly thanks to the ubiquitous presence of Mountain Beavers, will increase – much to the benefit of the beach, which has tripled in size over the last 20 years, but that is not what we are aiming at;
- * An open area of dozens of acres inevitably will be invaded by exotic species like Blackberry, Morning glory, and others;



Slope covered with Morning glory and Blackberry; Morning glory will win. Imagine this “urban nature” over dozens of acres – not fun.

* Finally: planting a new coniferous forest immediately after collapse is not really a viable option, because it does not create the needed short-term dense forest canopy needed to minimize erosion and/or landslides, it is extremely expensive, it takes forever, and does not create the diversity that is expected from an urban forest.

Of course prevention is better than repairing. Forest restoration has been going on in Carkeek Park since the middle nine-ties, with disappointing results. Since 2005 this work has been channeled through the Green Seattle Partnership (GSP). Work is mostly executed by a group of regular volunteers, called the WEWOS, with occasional help from Earthcorps work parties and

Park's Natural Areas crew. However, neither GSP nor the WEWO group is equipped, or even has the experience, to deal with deforestation and subsequent restoration of larger areas within a very short time frame. There is presently no pro-active planning for disaster control, and it is not the task of GSP or the WEWO group to face this challenge.

In 2013 Seattle Parks acted on alarm signals from the WEWO group by ordering a study on the restoration of Red alder forests¹; however, the "Hanson report" from May 2014 does not address the mentioned issues resulting from a major deforestation. After presenting our concerns to the Urban Forestry Committee, October 14 (2015), I started to develop "CHIP", the Carkeek Hanson Implementation Project, with the support of the WEWO group and Carkeek Park Advisory Council. However, after talking over a draft of this project² with several stakeholders who would be involved with such a project, among others Margaret Glowacki (Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections), I have come to the conclusion that this is too big a project to be initiated and executed by me or the WEWO group. I was reaching too high.

So that is why I bring this to your attention: my core concern that the Carkeek Park Red alder/Bigleaf maple forest soon will collapse and that there are no plans to mitigate this concern.

Respectfully yours,

A.G. Voorhoeve

(206) 706 1009

ompa@w-link.net

Afterthought 1: if you ever wish to make a site visit and discuss these issues with the WEWO group, or talk this over with us and your staff members, please let us know.

Afterthought 2: In case a massive deforestation happens, top priority will be to create a dense interim forest canopy of fast growing species to mitigate erosion and landslides. A "Best management practice" for establishing such an interim forest needs to be developed as soon as possible.

¹ Accelerating conifer regeneration in Seattle Parks (Hanson report, May 2014)

² Draft available on request

-----Original Message-----

From: Dunlap, Laurie On Behalf Of PKS_Info

Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 3:40 PM

To: ompa@w-link.net

Cc: Aguirre, Jesús; Jainga, Jon; Stowers, Robert; Pinto de Bader, Sandra

Subject: RE: Carkeek Park [forest concern]

March 14, 2016

Lex Voorhoeve

ompa@w-link.net

Dear Mr. Voorhoeve,

Thank you for your letter about Carkeek Park's forest. We're grateful for your concern and for your two decades of volunteer forest stewardship at Carkeek.

There's no question that reforestation is needed at Carkeek Park. But we believe that the best way we can move forward with that goal is to stick with the reforestation plan that was approved by Seattle Parks and Recreation's ProView Committee last year. The plan is to reforest one acre in Carkeek Park. Although a small step, it is the step we can feasibly take over the next five or six years with the resources available.

The plan takes into consideration the park's many environmental elements such as the presence of salmon and mountain beaver, the sandy soil, flooding, and sediment build-up; also the community outreach and education that will be needed before the work can be done.

Even that limited reforestation will take tremendous work, and Seattle Parks and Recreation intends to augment your group's work with help from Earthcorps and others.

If you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to speak with Jon Jainga (206-233-5019). Also, I understand that our office is working now to arrange a time for Jon and Jesús to meet with you for a site visit at Carkeek.

Again, our thanks for your partnership with Seattle Parks and Recreation.

Sincerely,

Laurie Dunlap

Superintendent's Office, Seattle Parks and Recreation

cc: Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Jon Jainga, Urban Forestry Operations Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Sandra Pinto de Bader, Environmental Sustainability Policy Advisor, Seattle Office of Sustainability and Environment

Robert Stowers, Acting Parks Division Director, Seattle Parks and Recreation

www.seattle.gov/parks

Explore More

-----Original Message-----

From: Aguirre, Jesús

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2016 10:59 AM

To: Lex en Marjon <ompa@w-link.net>
Cc: Dunlap, Laurie <Laurie.Dunlap@seattle.gov>; Johnson, Dan
<Dan.Johnson2@seattle.gov>
Subject: Re: Carkeek Park

Thank you!

On 2/11/16, 7:10 PM, "Lex en Marjon" <ompa@w-link.net> wrote:

>Dear Mr. Aguirre,
> This document was also sent to you by snail mail, but you might
>want to have is as a digital file as well.
> Of course collapsing Alder/Maple forests is a city-wide issue, not
>limited to Carkeek Park.
>
> Respectfully yours,
>
> Lex Voorhoeve

-----Original Message-----

From: Lex en Marjon [mailto:ompa@w-link.net]
Sent: Monday, March 14, 2016 8:41 PM
To: PKS_Info
Cc: Aguirre, Jesús; Jainga, Jon; Stowers, Robert; Pinto de Bader, Sandra
Subject: Re: Carkeek Park [forest concern]

Dear Mrs. Dunlap,

You miss the point. My letter is not about regular forest restoration but about how to deal with a sudden collapse of the whole 100 acres Alder/Maple forest. As you write below, the restoration of only 1 acre is already a major effort - then how to deal with 100 acres? And that collapse is coming - inevitably. But just like "The BIG One" we don't know exactly when, but soon. And there are some simple steps that can be taken to be better informed/prepared for what to do when that event happens.

That is the topic I wanted to talk about when I invited MR. Aguirre; it now looks that we will meet in the second half of June.

Note: the 1 acre you mention in your message has already been planted; we only want a few overhead trees removed - and that seems to be a major bottleneck that even Earthcorps cannot deal with..

Rerspectfully yours,

Lex Voorhoeve