



URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2020

Online Meeting

Commission Members present: Chair Vivek Shandas, Vice Chair Barbara Hollenbeck, Gregg Everhart, Lorena Nascimento, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Megan Van de Mark, Damon Schrosk

Commission Members absent: Anjeanette Brown, Brian French

Urban Forestry staff present: Jenn Cairo, City Forester; Brian Landoe, Analyst I; Nik Desai, Botanic Specialist II

City staff present: Emily Sandy, BDS; Jeff Caudill, BPS; Sallie Edmunds, BPS; Steve Kountz, BPS; Tom Armstrong, BPS

Forestry Report – Jenn Cairo, City Forester

- The UFC and PSC will hold a joint public hearing on the proposed amendments to Title 11 on September 8th at 3:30pm.
- Vivek provided an update on the BES-PP&R Stakeholder Engagement Process which is discussing the City’s tree planting programs. So far, the group has received information on the BES and PP&R tree planting programs and has discussed how tree planting can equitably meet the needs and expectations of the community. The process is expected conclude by the end of September and the UFC will receive a briefing shortly after.
 - Megan asked if the list of stakeholders could be provided to the UFC. Brian will send this.
- There is no update on PBOT’s Streets 2035 project.
- The report on the cost and implementation of the City assuming responsibility for street tree maintenance is nearly complete.
 - Daniel asked what the process would be for considering this change. Jenn answered that City Council would need to approve the policy change and provide necessary funding.
- Urban Forestry continues to be impacted by the COVID pandemic by furlough days, hiring freezes, and budget reductions. UF did receive exceptions in order to hire a few high priority positions, including seasonal tree establishers.
- The giant sequoia situation in NE Portland has been appealed to the Code Hearings Officer. The date of the hearing is not yet confirmed.
- Urban Forestry’s Dutch Elm Disease program has confirmed one newly infected tree. Urban Forestry arborists are conducting DED inoculations of Park trees.

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Urban Forestry Commission

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- Barbara made a motion to approve the June 2020 minutes. Gregg seconded the motion.
 - Yay: Vivek Shandas, Barbara Hollenbeck, Gregg Everhart, Megan Van de Mark, Lorena Nascimento, Bruce Nelson, Daniel Newberry, Damon Schrosk

Title 11 Amendment Project Briefing – Emily Sandy, BDS

- On 1/8/20, through Resolution 37473, the Portland City Council directed the Bureaus of Development Services (BDS), Planning and Sustainability (BPS), and Parks & Recreation (PP&R) to conduct an analysis, legal review and stakeholder engagement process for the following proposals recommended by the Planning and Sustainability Commission and the Urban Forestry Commission:
 - Removing the exemptions from tree preservation and tree density requirements in IH (Heavy Industrial), IG1 (General Industrial 1), EX (Central Employment), and CX (Central Commercial) zones on private and City-owned/managed property during development situations.
 - Reducing the threshold for required tree preservation and higher inch-for-inch mitigation payment during development on private property, from 36 inches to 20 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), wherever tree preservation is required.
- City staff conducted analysis to determine the impact the proposed amendments will have:
 - **Compliance with State Land Use Planning Goal 9:** Increased development cost could reduce acreage of developable industrial land rendering the city out of compliance with statewide land use regulations and susceptible to litigation.
 - IH: According to analysis, removal of tree preservation and tree planting exemptions are not legally defensible at this time, as the Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI) would fall below required 20-year minimum.
 - IG1, CX, and EX: removal of exemptions would result in some reduction of BLI but still provide 20-year minimum.
 - **Cost of housing:** Staff reviewed permit data to estimate the impact on housing supply. The estimated impacts are minimal.
 - **Canopy goals:** Removing exemptions to tree preservation and tree planting requirements in IH, IG1, EX and CX zones would increase canopy in these zones and contribute towards Portland’s citywide canopy goals. As of 2015, Portland’s canopy covered 30.7% of the City. However, the distribution of tree canopy is not equal. On the west side, canopy coverage is 53%, while just 21% on the east side. Current canopy coverage in industrial zones is 9% which is below the City’s goal of 15%.
 - **Environmental, Community health and public health:** Peer reviewed studies have demonstrated that low income communities and communities of color living adjacent to, or working in industrial zones are adversely affected by urban heat island effect, poor air quality, and numerous other negative public, community, and environmental health outcomes due to lack of canopy. A recent study has shown an 18 degree F difference between parts of Portland with most and least canopy on a hot day.
- The staff report makes the following recommendations:
 - Remove the exemptions from tree preservation and tree density in IG1 (General Industrial 1), EX (Central Employment), and CX (Central Commercial) zones on private and City-owned/managed property;
 - Retain the exemption from tree preservation and tree density in IH (Heavy Industrial) zone on private and City-owned or managed property;
 - Reduce the threshold for required preservation of trees on private property from 36” to 20” in diameter at breast height (dbh), wherever tree preservation is required;
 - Reduce the threshold for inch-per-inch fee in lieu of preservation for trees on private property from 36” dbh to 20” dbh

- Staff also strongly recommend that City Council direct BPS to work with relevant bureaus, including PP&R, to evaluate removing the tree preservation and tree density exemptions for the IH zone as part of the 5-year EOA currently underway. The outcomes of this update should be consistent with City goals including those related to tree canopy, climate change, and urban heat islands.
- Barbara asked if the City has received any pushback from the developer community on the proposed amendments.
 - Emily: We have received some comments, but overall, there has not been a great deal of pushback.
- Daniel noted that most of the canopy in the zones under consideration is in IH, which staff is proposing to allow to be exempt from tree preservation and planting requirements. He asked if state land use planning goals other than Goal 9 were considered in the project.
 - Emily: Staff started from a point of wanting to removing the exemptions in all zones and conducted an analysis to determine what legal barriers would prevent that. Goal 9 was identified as the primary barrier.
 - Steve Kountz (BPS): Johnson Economics, the consultant on the project, found that the code changes would reduce development in IH zones by 34% over 20 year, which is significant.
- Megan asked if the analysis considered environmental benefits, such as the services those trees would deliver over the 20-year study period.
 - Brian Landoe: Unfortunately, Goal 9 does not weight environmental value compared to economic value. It required a straightforward analysis of developable land. We do think there is an opportunity in the upcoming Economic Opportunity Analysis to preserve and expand canopy. Urban Forestry shares your frustration in how Goal 9 requires compliance.
- Lorena asked if there are any examples of industrial landowners working to address environmental challenges in their community. Have staff connected with them to work on solutions?
 - Steve Kountz: The City's Comprehensive Plan was completed a few years ago with support from the business community. Many trees in the IH zones are protected by environmental overlay zones. The industrial community is aware of the importance of trees.
- Greg noted that Portland is geographically restrained and not able to add new land. Yet Goal 9 requires continued increases in industrial zones.
 - Emily: The City's Office of Government Affairs would be an appropriate place to direct priorities for changing state law.
 - Jenn: It's appropriate for the UFC to voice the concerns they have about the impact Goal 9 has on the urban canopy.
- Damon asked how the City accounts for underutilized IH land.
 - Tom Armstrong: Underutilized lots are accounted for by estimating how many jobs could be added through redevelopment.
- The UFC and PSC will hold a joint public hearing on the propose amendments to Title 11 on September 8th at 3:30pm.