



Portland Urban Forest Plan

Community Advisory Committee Meeting 6 Summary

Date: Monday, December 16, 2024

Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Attendance: 11 Community Advisory Committee members, 6 Project Staff

Abstract

The purpose of Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting #6 was to confirm the CAC's top priorities for urban forest management and feedback on the draft actions, hear feedback on the proposed canopy goals, and provide an overview of the draft Portland Urban Forest Plan (PUFP) ahead of the release of the public draft. The 2-hour meeting included a presentation on the City's canopy goals and the key elements in the draft plan. Attendees participated in group discussions to provide feedback on top priorities and canopy goals. CAC members were also offered an additional, optional 7th meeting to discuss their comments on the public draft with staff.

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Sustaining a healthy park and recreation system to make Portland a great place to live, work, and play.

Meeting 6 Outcomes

- CAC members understood how their feedback on the Plan recommendations and actions was integrated and confirmed that staff correctly interpreted what they had heard from the group over the meeting series.
- CAC members understood the structure of the Plan and the key sections that will appear in the Plan, ahead of the release of the Public Draft.
- CAC members discussed the canopy goals staff are recommending in the Plan, and responded to questions from staff about how the goals should be calibrated across different parts of Portland.

Discussion Summary

Discussion #1: CAC Priorities for Plan Actions

- Staff shared a list of priorities they heard during past CAC meetings and discussions about the recommendations that will guide the implementation actions that will be included in the Plan.
- **Specificity and detail:** Participants asked questions about the intended audience, and there was some concern about the lack of specificity and detail provided in the summary.
- **Accountability:** Participants wanted to know how staff will be held accountable to the plan and how progress will be tracked. Participants wanted to know whether there could be a community oversight committee for the plan.
- **Industrial lands:** Participants want to see more canopy in industrial areas and noted an interest in seeing actions that

reflect the unique challenges that come with expanding canopy in industrial areas.

- **Intra-bureau support and collaboration:** participants wanted to know how staff will get buy-in from other City bureaus.
- **Workforce development and diversity:** participants asked how the Plan will help support green workforce development, and increase diversity in the field of urban forestry.
- **Improving tree maintenance:** one participant observed that there seemed to be a gap for trees that are 10 to 15 years old that don't qualify as new trees (which receive establishment care) but also are not big enough to be considered a significant tree or Heritage Tree. Can there be an action that brings attention and care to trees in this middle age range?
- **Budgetary monitoring:** participants wanted to see budgetary monitoring and accountability measures in the Plan, including how funds from PCEF are spent.
- **Format and elements of implementation strategy:** one participant shared a list of elements they want to see in the Plan:
 - Actions that are grouped and lettered/numbered by section
 - The lead/relevant bureaus for each action in a column
 - The "why this matters" column--important to educate and build buy-in
 - Funding and resource status/gaps--we recommend adding anticipated funding source(s) to this column
 - The action-specific timelines that specify start and end years or whether an action is ongoing
- **Timing of CAC review of the Plan:** some participants wanted to see a draft of the Plan earlier, ahead of the public draft.

Discussion #2: Tree Canopy Goals

Staff shared the recommended approach for tree canopy goals and asked if participants had any initial questions or feedback.

- Participants were curious who was involved in developing the goals, and whether the Portland Clean Energy Benefits Fund (PCEF) Equitable Tree Canopy (ETC) Work Group was engaged.
- One participant commented on the challenge of finding space to plant trees in the eastern neighborhoods and asked whether the City could partner with businesses, PBOT, and other property owners.
- One participant was curious about whether the tree canopy goals considered other ways to provide shade, aside from trees.
- Participants asked whether the canopy goals allowed for for different types of ecosystems and wanted to make sure these were factored in to the percentages, especially ecosystems that don't have dense canopy.
- One participant asked if the goals assume that the City takes full control of street tree maintenance in the next five years.
- Participants liked how ambitious the goals are for the eastern and inner districts, and asked about the considerations for the Central City and Rivers areas being lower. There was interest in increasing the goals for those areas.
- **One participant said they'd like to** see an additional goal that is much more immediately measurable; “we will be planting over 100,000 trees over x years and they will have a xx survival rate”. The participant expressed the importance of measuring tree planting and survivability.

Discussion Questions: Does this approach make sense overall? Does it seem fair or just? How does the approach of holding the

Western areas constant sit with you? Does the balance between Inner Neighborhoods and Eastern Neighborhoods seem right?

- Overall, participants felt like the approach makes sense. They were curious to hear whether canopy decline was considered and they wanted more clarity on the boundaries of the pattern areas on the west side.
- Participants shared that education about proper tree care for residents and community stewardship are critical for achieving the canopy goals.
- Participants were also concerned about the impact of projects from key players, like PGE, on the canopy goals, particularly in Forest Park.
- One participant expressed support for protecting canopy in Forest Park and delaying growth of the western pattern area so that other pattern areas can catch up.

Discussion #3: Community Advisory Committee Reflections on the Process

During the last part of the meeting, CAC members were asked to reflect on the process of being a part of the CAC for the Plan. They were asked to reflect on what they enjoyed about the process and what worked well. Then, they were asked to share things they didn't like and suggestions for improvement.

Question 1: What did you enjoy about this process? What went well?

- **Participant:** I liked you heard from everyone, everyone in the group weighed in at some point in the process, even if it wasn't at every meeting. The people who where here wanted to be here, and were obviously really interested in and cared about

what we were talking about. The facilitation was a factor in this. Having an activity to ground us at the beginning worked well, and I always learned something. I didn't feel like my time was wasted, and I looked forward to coming back.

- **Participant:** It's really evident to me that the facilitators and their support staff did a lot of behind the scenes work so the meetings ran more smoothly and there wasn't a lot of wasted time. I really felt heard. I felt that the facilitators valued my input. I learned a lot from other people of the committee.
- **Participant:** when we began, I wondered how much of the community voice would be reflected, but I have seen what we have said reflected in the documents we have seen. The format of meeting in person initially was a great way to format this and the later zoom meetings we did worked well because we built those relationships in person. Also liked the format of the Zoom meetings, they had a lot of opportunity for engagement and discussion, not just listening to staff talk.
- **Participant:** I was excited to come back each time, because I felt like I was able to weigh in on important issues each time. We were able to see how our work was impacting the project. It is great to see diverse community members being brought into the process in this way, it has not always been this way and I really appreciate having these kinds of spaces now.
- **Participant:** we had transparent conversations about the process. I felt like I saw the results of my feedback in the work that you brought to us in each meeting. I love the diversity of this space - people from all walks of life. I learned a lot about trees!
- **Participant:** this didn't feel like a box checking exercise, and I felt like we were heard.

Question 2: What could we improve?

- **Participant:** this committee's task was to be the community voice but if the committee itself is getting to view the draft at the same time as the rest of the public, then it seems like the purpose of CAC is less substantive.
- **Participant:** The big spaces between meetings was hard - there was too much time and it was hard to catch up.
- **Participant:** Consider having trainings or other ways of engaging this group and giving them a chance to be involved in between now and the next time. In particular things related to Plan implementation.
- **Participant:** I noticed that the committee was selected with intention of including people for whom English wasn't their first language, but the meetings may have been challenging for those folks, or limited people in the feedback that they could offer.
- **Participant:** It could be helpful to go around and call people by name, to encourage them to have the space to speak up - but give people the option to pass if they don't want to speak.

Meeting Design and Engagement Accountability Measures

- The meeting was held virtually and designed to prioritize bringing people together and two-way communication rather than just sharing information from City staff.
- Project staff worked to accommodate CAC members' schedules and accessibility needs and provided communication leading up to and in follow up of the meeting.
- Stipends were offered to participants to compensate them for their time.
- Qualitative data was collected and valued as inputs into the project's process.