

**Urban Forestry Management Plan
Urban Forestry Subcommittee Work Session
Meeting Summary**

May 17, 2010 (4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.)

Subcommittee Members Present:	Greg Bettis Glenna Borg, Vice Chair Richard Byers Mike Heilman, Chair Delwayne Rassi Keith Warren
Council Liaison:	Councilor Craddick
NRSC Liaison:	Not present
Staff Present:	Tina Osterink (Staff Liaison)
Guests:	Dennis Bachman

1. Introduction and Roll Call

The Urban Forestry Subcommittee (UFS) work session was called to order at 4:38 pm by Chair Heilman.

2. Council Update

Councilor Craddick officially welcomed Delwayne Rassi to the Urban Forestry Subcommittee after his April appointment by Mayor Bemis. She commented about the outcome of the UFMP and expressed her desire for the plan to follow through on enforcement and code issues as well as tree canopy goals. She commented that there is a lot of work to be done and we need to facilitate communication at the City level for elements of the UFMP to come to fruition. Councilor Craddick will provide a UFMP update at the May 25th Council Roundtable session.

3. Chair Update

Chair Heilman informed the group that the Nadaka Vegetation Management Plan will be on the June UFS agenda and asked if there were any surprises related to the root rot report. Tina commented that about 40 trees in the sampling resulted in root rot. The laminated root rot study will be available to UFS members in the June 21 Meeting agenda packet. Chair Heilman remarked how the earth day at City Hall was well attended with about 50 people stopping by the UFMP booth and got 11 people to take the online survey. Tina led a Significant Tree Walk on earth day. Chair Heilman welcomed Delwayne to the UFS and recognized Greg Bettis for his re-appointment.

4. UFS Meeting Process

Tina reviewed the Proposed Meeting Structure Memo that outlined meeting and voting process options. The group agreed to the following:

- Using Robert's Rules of Order to approve minutes and decisions
- Changing the meeting time to two hours yet as a group requested 1) getting started on-time at 6:00 p.m. and 2) getting right to business. There was some support for adding an extra meeting during the month if needed as we get closer to adopting the UFMP.

Councilor Craddick says it helps to have a vote for City Council to understand a committee's thoughts on a topic.

One week before the UFS meeting, Tina will send out the minutes with the agenda packet to provide enough review time and then post on the web once approved.

There being no further discussion, Dick Byers made a motion to "establish the meeting time for this committee for two hours or less as required and have the option to meet separately if needed to meet important deadlines"; there was some discussion about only holding an extra meeting when it is absolutely necessary; Greg Bettis seconded; and the motion carried unanimously, among all six UFS members present, by a hand vote.

5. UFMP Goals and Policies Recommendations

Tina reviewed the process used to draft the Goals and Policies and asked for general feedback, if these were the right Goals, and if the Policies were specific enough.

The Goals are grouped in the following categories along with the related key messages:

- Tree Resource Framework – *Trees are an important natural resource.*
- Management & Maintenance Framework- *Trees are a strategic public investment.*
- Community Framework – *Trees are vital to livability.*

Subcommittee members agreed that the Framework categories, Goals and Policies are well organized, comprehensive, fit together and easy to follow. Keith did express a funding concern and suggested the need to prioritize the policies. Dick commented about how it should be the Subcommittee's role to provide direction to City Council and to identify feasible Goals and Policies.

Councilor Craddick asked if these will become the same Goals and Policies staff will use to update the Comprehensive Plan. She requested that staff offer priorities in the action measures.

Tina clarified how staff will update the comprehensive plan Goals, Policies and Action Measures language based on the related findings of the final UFMP.

Tina then went through each Goal and summarized the scope of the associated Policies. She asked the UFS if these meet the needs and desired outcomes of Gresham's urban forest. The Goals were agreed upon by the Urban Forestry Subcommittee and specific changes are documented in the discussion below.

Tree Resource Framework: there was discussion on Goal 1 and Goal 3

Goal1. Increase understanding of the characteristics and complexity of Gresham's urban forest

Several policies in this section are evaluation and assessment in scope.

Keith would like to focus on the Policies where "you can get the most bang for your buck". For instance, the 'developing practices to monitor and improve tree resource condition' could be costly and unable to be funded within current City budget constraints.

Dick responded that part of the Urban Forestry Subcommittee's purpose is to set direction for the City and for Council whether there is money available or not. While we can supplement this information with cost estimates, the UFS needs to identify the "needs" to be the basis for Council's decisions.

Tina reminded the group that you typically get what you ask for in long range plans and Gresham's funding scenario 20-30 years from now might look different than today's; likewise, it is important to note the importance of being able to leverage the City's lack of resources by forming key partnerships.

Chair Heilman remarked that there is a lot of input in the UFMP that is beyond just the UFS and the NRSC. He also noted that City Council can approve or not approve the recommendations that come out of the UFS.

Dick commented that City Council may want to prioritize the recommendations and decide to set aside money for some of the initiatives that result from this Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Councilor Craddick suggested framing specific recommendations with the phrase; "as money becomes available, here are the top three priorities for UFMP Policies".

Tina asked the UFS if the Policies were too far reaching in scope and the group agreed that we should identify the high priority Policies as those that can be accomplished.

Councilor Craddick noted how so many of the current Tree and Vegetation Goals and Policies in Volume 2 of the Comprehensive Plan have never been acted on.

Tina noted the importance of being strategic by placing timeframes on the actionable pieces of the UFMP. She also stressed the importance of balancing the big picture focus of the plan with realistic targets.

The group discussed adding language about the Tree Mitigation Fund and agreed it should be placed in the Management and Maintenance Framework section.

Goal 3. Maximize tree canopy cover to expand Gresham's urban forest

Tina explained how canopy goals are a big focus of the UFMP and the associated Policies are evaluation in scope and address developing community based canopy targets. Subcommittee members strongly advised asking the community what their desires are for targets citywide and by land use type. The group also suggested facilitating a community-wide discussion about target tradeoffs and what it means at the neighborhood or development level.

Councilor Craddick asked if we will be developing different canopy goals for different neighborhoods. Tina responded that staff will facilitate a community-wide discussion about both developing citywide canopy targets and for different land use types. It's not clear if we will set neighborhood canopy targets.

In areas where canopy targets are set, Keith advises to ask the people who live in those areas what their desires are. Overall, the group felt it was good to keep it at the land use type levels.

Management & Maintenance Framework: there was discussion on Goals 1 - 5

Goal 1. Manage the urban forest to maximize community benefits for all

Under the first policy, the group asked to add in the following: the benefits of trees to the homeowner, business and City; cost savings or cost avoidance.

Dick mentioned it is important to balance the desire of increasing canopy cover with the need to minimize or avoid potential maintenance issues.

Goal 2. Improve interdepartmental communication and coordination to provide decision makers the information they need to implement the UFMP

Councilor Craddick expressed the importance of following through with the Policies for this Goal. Chair Heilman is glad this is a stand alone Goal.

The group discussed how it is easier to take action or make changes when the code is placed in the Gresham Revised Code rather than the Community Development Code. Councilor Craddick requested staff to provide a recommendation on where best to put tree code changes.

Goal 3. Adopt best management practices and resource management tools

The subcommittee did not agree with staff about removing "on public property" from the end of this Goal title. There was discussion on how private property is more education driven and public property is driven more by actionable steps.

Goal 4. Improve tree maintenance practices on public and private trees

The group was unsure about keeping the term “private” in the Goal title and advised adding education on strategies to encourage the planting of more robust street trees. There was discussion about the fine line between public and private property and how these Policies should reflect the two sectors. May want to focus on what is attainable in both.

Subcommittee members agreed to add a separate Goal for street trees and the need to educate the private property owner on the maintenance and care of street trees.

Goal 5. Balance community development needs with the physical needs of trees

Discussion around these Policies included questions about what is the City’s policy for documenting tree loss when knocked down in the right-of-way as recently happened with a TriMet bus. A big question was can the City recover costs if the Police reported these incidents. The subcommittee also discussed adding a transportation median width policy to this section and agreed that Fire and Police would need to weigh in on this.

Community Framework: there was discussion on Goal 2 and Goal 3

Goal 2. Increase public awareness of the urban forest as a community resource

Some members asked to add an additional Goal around street trees in this section. Others in the group requested keeping the focus of street trees in the Management and Maintenance Framework section.

Goal 3. Promote resident-government-nonprofit-business partnerships

Subcommittee members agreed to add Neighborhood Associations to the title of this Goal. Under the first policy, the Councilor Craddick requested adding “DES watershed management” as an internal funding source. There was discussion about aligning UFMP goals with DES’s goal to meet Clean Water Act requirements. They also suggested exploring both the role of Watershed Management and the funding implications.

Tina will integrate these suggestions into the draft Goals and Policies to be used in the upcoming community forum.

6. Outreach Update

Tina recently distributed an electronic copy of the Public Input Summary for the March 13 Tree Forum. Regarding the Online Tree Survey, this survey is coming to a close with about 147 respondents to date. We discussed results from Question 19 (Top 5 Urban Forestry Benefits) and 29 (Support for Urban Forestry Programs).

7. Plan Outline

Tina distributed an outline on how the UFMP will look and requested members send in feedback on the plan structure by email. The Draft UFMP is about 50% complete.

Councilor Craddick considers the progress of the UFMP reasonable and congratulates the UFS on a job well done. Moving forward, she encourages the Subcommittee to focus on what is doable for the City to pursue.

8. UFMP Action Items Prioritization Summary

The group briefly reviewed the Action Item list that summarizes staff and UFS prioritization input. It is not too late for Delwayne Rassi or Scott Fogarty to submit their comments.

Councilor Craddick referred to the short-term Actions under the Maintenance Issues column and inquired if Modifying Public Works Standards includes the City Transportation division. Tina explained that Transportation staff use the Public Works Standards, so the answer is yes. Also, she pointed out that the BMP Action Item will include all internal City divisions that deal with trees and private property owners.

In reference to the long-term funding sources Action under the Maintenance Issues column, the group asked *what is city policy when a tree is knocked down in a ROW? How aggressive are we going after insurance company? Do these incidents get reported to the Police? Once the tree is gone, how long before it is replaced?*

In a recent meeting with Gresham's Transportation staff, Chair Heilman learned that the average life of a median strip tree is seven years. Keith remarked that the insurance valuation of large trees is pretty high. Tina advised how knowing the monetary value of trees, as described in the above Goal, is key to documenting the status of Gresham's financial investment in the city's urban forest.

Chair Heilman concluded this portion of the agenda by reminding Subcommittee members that the evaluation of these action items is where the "rubber meets the road".

Tina also reminded the group that we will discuss Evaluation of Action Items in greater detail during the June 21 meeting and then take specific recommendations to City Council in September.

9. Next Steps

UFS members are strongly encouraged to attend the May 26 Community Forum on Plan Goals and Policies as well as the June 8 NRSC Meeting. Councilor Craddick noted that the UFS should engage with rather than feel they need to report to the NRSC.

There was a motion to adjourn the meeting (Greg Bettis?), which was seconded by Keith Warren. Chair Heilman adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.