

# Public Comments

## 5/9/19 Email

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

From: noreply@cityofmadison.com <noreply@cityofmadison.com> On Behalf Of Webadmin

Sent: Thursday, May 09, 2019 11:00 AM

Subject: [Web Feedback] Public Input Meeting - Urban Forestry Task Force

Page Title: Public Input Meeting - Urban Forestry Task Force

Breadcrumbs: City of Madison » Parks » Calendar

Page URL: parks/calendar/public-input-meeting-urban-forestry-task-force

Was this page helpful to you? Yes

Why or why not? what I need to know to attend or submit comments

This feedback was submitted from:

<http://www.cityofmadison.com/parks/calendar/public-input-meeting-urban-forestry-task-force>

## 5/13/19 Email

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

From: Ronnie Hess <rlhess@wisc.edu>

Sent: Sunday, May 12, 2019 4:16 PM

Subject: Urban Forestry Task Force Draft Report Comments

Sorry but I may not be able to attend the meeting.

I would very much like to argue for the planting of more fruit trees. Please do not be discouraged from this out of concerns surrounding debris. I think you will find neighborhoods, possibly through existing neighborhood associations, very willing to ensure cleanliness at the sites. We need more rather than fewer food sources.

Thanks for your work,

(Ms.) Ronnie Hess

"The more stars in your itinerary, the less likely you are to find the real life of another country." Ruth Reichl

## 5/14/19 Email

From: [erichschmidtke@yahoo.com](mailto:erichschmidtke@yahoo.com)

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2019 1:34 PM

Subject: Urban Forestry Task Force Report - Comment

Hello,

Reading the Task Force's report, the comment I would have is that because most of the City's trees are privately owned, there should be a strong push to increase trees in yards. Maybe offer people a property tax credit of \$1/per yard tree, or some other financial incentive to get them to fill their yards with trees.

Thanks,

Erich

## 5/15/19 Voicemail

First, trees are calming, good for mental health, and good for the environment. They cool homes and are very beautiful. She really hopes that we can have canopy trees all over in Madison.

## 5/15/19 Email

From: Dawn O'Kroley

Sent: Wednesday, May 15, 2019 11:36 AM

**Subject:** Urban Forestry Task Force Draft Report

Hi and thanks to you all for this important work. I'm looking at this from the perspective as to how this report can support a department/commission's review of development. Considering the urgency and importance of this work, include goals that can be referenced by committees through the adoption of this report. Site Plan/UDC/Plan Commission review could then reference the Urban Forestry Task Force Report in addition to Comp Plan, UDC District standards, neighborhood plans, etc.

- Revise the cover page reference of a healthy tree canopy at 40% to a canopy that exceeds 40%.
- Each recommendation section should state or reference the goal of a minimum 40% tree canopy coverage. In areas with an established pattern, public and private parcels should contribute to the established pattern where exceeding 40% coverage (i.e. no reduction).

Many goals and requirements influence development and this goal should clearly be stated while individual developments are reviewed against other requirements, including setback. On page 22 the risk of not setting a goal is maintaining the same development patterns. Every part of the city should equitably have the same goal. Large institutional campus may need to be calculated differently to reflect their contribution to greenspace and the tree canopy, but the intent of this language could be misinterpreted.

- Some thoughts on specific tree placement beyond % requirement. Requirements need to also prevent the continued loss of mid-block (back yard) tree canopy to the pattern of multiple combined parcel redevelopment. City Row on Johnson Street is one example of a development review process that integrated density and affordable housing with trees both along the street (in addition to the terrace street trees) and in the center of the block (back yard).

2008 BUILD East Washington Avenue Capitol Gateway Corridor Plan Design Guideline 6 implemented trees in the setbacks in addition to the terrace street trees. I also recall UDC discussion regarding the need for street trees at the E Wilson Street development pictured on page 17 of the report.

Pedestrian scale street lighting needs to become the city standard, which is still effective below a mature tree canopy. Utilities need to be located underground.

If we're getting specific, this report could also reinforce not using stone mulch.

- To build momentum in support of this study, consider including a historical reference. Below is from 1911, Madison: a model city by John Nolen:

Goal 10: "To remove from the public streets all wires, poles and other obstructions."

Goal 11: "To pass a shade tree ordinance providing for the systematic public planting and maintenance of street trees."

From Chapter 4: "Better looking streets is another urgent need of Madison. Except around Capitol Square, I believe there are no wires underground. Elsewhere, on State Street, on the main business streets, in the principal residence sections, surrounding the parks, nearly everywhere, unsightly poles and wires appear in profusion. Some way should be found to remove gradually practically every pole and overhead wire from the streets of Madison. It is folly to reply that it is impossible when a small city like La Crosse accomplished it unaided a decade ago.

The removal of the poles from the streets would prepare the way for a better method of planting and maintaining street trees. At present the trees in the streets of Madison are not under public control and every attempt to place them there has been defeated in the city council. Seldom does one see even a single well-located, well-developed street tree and never a row of good trees a block long. Madison - and it is true of Wisconsin generally - holds tenaciously to individual rights and is less willing than cities in other parts of the country to place the care of the street trees in the hands of a properly constituted public body. It seems unnecessary to state so obvious a thing as the value of good trees in city streets, nor the impossibility of getting good street trees under individual control. In the notes at the back of this report is printed a proposed street tree ordinance, modeled after those of the more progressive cities in other parts of the country where trees are looked upon as a civic asset.<sup>4</sup>"

Thank you,

Dawn O'Kroley

646 E Gorham Street

Madison, WI 53703

## 5/15/19 Verbal Feedback at Listening Session

- When a development occurs and the developer is given extra points for preserving a larger tree, is there a time period for how long the tree has to remain? When is it assessed for preservation?
- Going in a good direction, appreciated presentation – for the Isthmus and some of the new developments, the Fire Department has some concerns about big trees near buildings. Was that a factor in the group's decisions?
- Does this mean that, if they put in sprinkler systems, more street trees can be planted?
- Peter Wolf – Incredible piece of work, especially the first part talking about importance of trees. Beautifully written, wonderfully convincing. Second part, there were good ideas for policy. Right tree in the right place. What he's missing is one way to look at ash borer thing is as a catastrophe. There is no emergency here. There are ways that the whole city can treat this as an emergency. There's a real caring in the city about trees; there are good possibilities. Other possible ways to look at things – putting canopy trees where they should be. Everywhere on the street. Don't fit the tree to fit the wires. There should be large canopy trees on every street. Marquette neighborhood used to have elms lining the whole street. Makes so much sense to have the street trees be large trees. Mayor has agreed to work with Peter on this. His evaluation is on the tall tree side. Jenifer St varies. For aesthetics, make both sides the same. Slow down on putting small trees; let them have a try to look at other solutions.
- Faith Fitzpatrick – report has a lot in it on planting new trees. However, there's a gap in protecting mature canopy trees in the City, and how those canopies are linked, creating green belts. Greenways provide a longitudinal and cross-city links. Madison is one of the few cities that doesn't have a green belt focus, like Chicago and Milwaukee. Even as the city expands, keep the corridors. Is there a place for the protection of the woods in this plan? Gems of woods exist. So many benefits to keeping those intact, from both the tree side of things and the stormwater side. Working with greenways and clear communication between the two agencies is really important.
- Working with Marquette neighborhood off and on since 2009 – we began working on the Jenifer St reconstruction project. Lots of gains have been made in protecting trees. Has there been a change in policy? Wanted to address the graphic showing undergrounding, Silva cells, planting – it's far more complex. He

recommended not using the graphic; it's inappropriate. There is far greater density, greater usage in some of the areas, and that makes shade trees even more important. Usage, tax base, proximity to important public spaces should be addressed.

- All new subdivisions since 1971, 1973 have been having undergrounded high voltage wires. That's a different kind of formula, so that should be stated to avoid urban versus subdivision. Older, downtown areas do not have alleyways. Go down E Johnson St, and you can see street reconstruction has removed trees all along one side. It's complex, and it should be reflected in these recommendations.
- Bike path corridors – does the City own the land along the bike path? Does Forestry plan for these?
- Did anyone ever think of using conservation easements to plant trees?
- Is purchasing conservation easements being explored? These would be public-private partnership.
- It is expensive to underground. During a street reconstruction, and everything is torn up, it seems like then it should be possible.
- She thought that several recommendations might require an ordinance change. Is there any way that some of the development-oriented recommendations could be spearheaded by alders?
- Lance Green – In 2016, people were coming to Sustainable Madison and saying that there are serious problems with the street trees. Then, the Task Force was formed. From his perspective, they did well. He really appreciates the neighborhood plan component. Having greenways in the neighborhood, putting it together, amending it – this is really important. Subdivisions, the new terrace requirements are excellent, plus undergrounding. Tree preservation ordinance, not sure what would be in that; the Sustainability Committee would be happy to work with Forestry on that. Equity concerns and targeting low-income neighborhoods is so important as well. Having a biennial Forestry report is very important to keep abreast on a regular basis, to track progress, actual measures. Creating a Forestry Board is really good. Public awareness is great – people know about EAB but nothing else. Developing existing areas, upping the requirements for trees, working with Fire Department are all really good ideas. In the 2012, the Sustainability Plan was adopted, which included undergrounding. It costs money. Cost will be shared by the City, as part of property tax. If we make decisions to plant ornamental trees, this might be a place that could be undergrounded. Stop planting ornamental trees in those areas. When we do road reconstructions, it comes down to money. Up the money. Undergrounding downtown. Urban heat islands need to be planted. Planting trees where they'll absorb the storm water, divert the stormwater to water the trees. Work on flooding, urban heat, forestry all at the same time.
- Great recommendations. A lot of these recommendations will do a lot to increase canopy, but when we get to the Isthmus, there was nothing that would enhance her space. What are the kinds of things we can do that might break the mold of what we always do? We need to get canopy trees where people are. Very specific ideas about re-thinking how far apart a tree is planted. Soil volume issue. Wants us to think about what that might look like. Friend moved into subdivision; every single place on his lot had a utility conflict. Explicit guidance in terms of planning for divisions to allow opportunities for planting on private properties.
- Why isn't there a canopy tree in the bottom picture? That looks like a great opportunity. Sight triangles need to be questioned. Why is sight so critical at controlled intersections?
- Player is community utility. More and more, they're being concerned about putting more carbon and always concerned about costs. Tree trimming – creating "Y" trees – has costs over time. Look for additional help with the funding from the utility companies. Savings of maintenance over 30 years – long-term thinking. Not in the report.
- MG&E – damage to wires that take repairs, storms are much less with undergrounding.
- Cost for undergrounding – how much again? Wholesale versus retail. Have to be specific. Got some costs from MG&E – around \$385,000 to do four blocks. Undergrounding just the high voltage lines was just \$192,000.
- Lot of other things on poles other than electric. One challenge of undergrounding – in an older neighborhood, transformers have to go somewhere. That seems like the worst in the world that you can look at, but it is the reality.
- People are given an option to pay for service wires to be placed underground. You can eliminate the high voltage wires, but you won't eliminate all the other infrastructure. There could still be limitations to planting.

- Inconsistent about what you can and can't plant around poles. Inconsistency about poles in general – two wires for the same things at different point. It would be helpful to have that information available. Need more information about planting.
- MG&E has diagrams and brochures about where to plant.
- The message has changed. For more than 100 years, we had wires and trees, and it was ok. Why it is no longer? We want everything to be perfect, but that doesn't mesh with a liveable, walkable environment. In consolidated urban areas, there needs to be flexibility.
- Similar questions being asked across the country. Insurance coverage had become a major factor in why small trees are planted under wires. Cost of people living in areas without shade.
- Spring Harbor neighborhood – University Ave corridor, large buildings coming. Not much set-back. It's like fighting against the machine. Disconnect with the Planning Department – they're going forward with the plans. Building haven't been built because construction workers are hard to get. It's disheartening to know that trees won't be planted.
- Is there any resource to better link communication with Planning?

## 5/16/19 Email

**From:** Laurie S

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 15, 2019 8:39 PM

**Subject:** Urban Forestry Task Force Draft Report Comments

Thanks for all the work that you all put into this draft report. I appreciate the detailed observations and could not find any of your conclusions or proposals that I disagreed with. I want to share some experiences on the block we've lived on for the past 27 years.

Sometime In the past 10 years, a developer put up 2 houses on the other side of the alley in back of our house. The houses fit into the neighborhood very nicely. And he left some green space between the buildings. When he was presenting his plan to the neighborhood he had inventoried all the trees on the property and said which ones would be eliminated and which ones would be kept. The neighborhood overwhelmingly supported the project, largely because he had figured the trees into the overall plan. Unfortunately, on the first day of work on the site, the bulldozers came in a cleared EVERYTHING, even a very large spruce tree that was supposedly going to be saved. He planted 2 trees (in replacement?)--neither is more than 15 feet after 10years. Developers need to be held accountable and be made to pay a higher price for removing mature trees so they are more motivated to save them.

I also think the utility companies need to be held accountable. These companies keep increasing their requirements for pruning and distance between their lines and trees, but what do they do to increase the number of trees? When the quality of living is decreased by limiting the height of trees, couldn't the companies responsible bear the cost of burying lines to enable more tree planting?

I also think some of your proposals need to be made into city statutes. You probably are aware of a law that exists in Portland, Oregon. This law requires that requires you to get a city permit if you cut down a tree on your property. And then you must plant a new one that also has to meet city approval. Perhaps Mayor Satya will have some other ideas via her experience on the mayor's council.

There are two property owners on our block who have requested that no street trees be planted to replace trees that have taken down in the past 20 years. That should not happen. Those trees should have been replaced. Again, it seems that this could be addressed with city laws.

And one last item--when our street and sewers were redone approximately 12 years ago, the city used gravel and a very thin layer of topsoil as they finished. The grass wouldn't even grow!! After several neighbors complained, the city came back out and took out some of the gravel and added more top soil. But as you point out, soil conditions conducive to thriving tree populations need to be put into the overall plan.

I have one question--I assume your wanting to reduce the number of years in the tree pruning cycle is so the trees won't be as decimated when they get their pruning. But that isn't very clear in the report.

Thanks again for putting together this report.

Laurie Swimm

## 5/29/19 Email

**From:** Faith Fitzpatrick <[fafitzpa@gmail.com](mailto:fafitzpa@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 29, 2019 10:55 PM

**Subject:** Urban Forestry Task Force

Hello please see below my comments for consideration from the review of the City of Madison Urban Forestry Task Force, Draft Report dated May 6, 2019. Apologies for the length and maybe some typos. Thank you for holding the listening session on 5/15/19. It was very helpful. The draft report is well written and organized, especially the recommendations.

1.Existing mature canopy forests in public green spaces (100 year old ++) -- these need to be included in the overview (p.12-13) and in the recommendations for special consideration of protection. The focus of the report is on mainly terraces along roadways or grassed areas which is great but care and protection of existing full canopy woods needs inclusion. Of special concern are woods with full canopy coverage and thick healthy soils that were preserved through European settlement, clearing for agriculture, and urban development. Their uniqueness and connectivity along drainage networks makes them especially unique gems of special preservation need. One example is the woods near Nautilus Park on the west side that were just cleared. These woods provided many hydrologic and habitat benefits that were not fully characterized or counted for stormwater BMP benefit, including an intact downstream channel after the August 2018 flood. Stormwater management's narrow view of vegetation along drainage corridors is sorely in need of updating. The statement on the top of p. 13 "Trees planted in greenways in the past has led to significant issues with erosion: shade from trees inhibits the growth of grasses, leading to bare soil and soil loss during rains". This statement, which fits for a narrow portion of small streams in the Driftless Area that had riparian prairie corridors (actually they were likely strips of wetlands), is getting wrongly over-applied to all riparian settings and is in direct opposition to all the many decades of work that were done for keeping riparian forest cover, ie buffers along stream corridors for both hydrologic and water quality benefits. The removal of a full canopy tree structure can be viewed as a violation of the Hippocratic Oath -- Primum non nocere. Endit -- "mature woods" as a category needs to be included in TMDL tool to get proper credit for TSS and TP.

Recommended publications to include ( in general the report needs citations):

Berland, et al., 2017, The role of trees in urban stormwater management: Landsc Urban Plan. 2017 June ; 162: 167–177. doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2017.02.017.

Cappiella, K., et a., 2016, Recommendations of the expert panel to define BMP effectiveness for urban tree canopy expansion, Center for Watershed protection: [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Urban\\_Tree\\_Canopy\\_EP\\_Report\\_WQGIT\\_approved\\_final.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Urban_Tree_Canopy_EP_Report_WQGIT_approved_final.pdf).

Center for Watershed Protection and U.S. Forest Service, 2017, Making Urban trees count:A Project to Demonstrate the Role of Urban Trees in Achieving Regulatory Compliance for Clean Water

Gerken Golay, M., J. Thompson, and R. Kolka. 2016. Carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus storage across a growing season by the herbaceous layer in urban and preserved temperate hardwood forests. Applied Vegetation Science, 19: 689-699.

Wu, J., T.W. Stewart, J.R. Thompson, R.K. Kolka, and K.J. Franz. 2015. Watershed features and stream water quality: Gaining insight through path analysis in a Midwest urban landscape, U.S.A. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 143: 219-229.

Wu, J.Y., J.R. Thompson, R.K. Kolka, K.J. Franz, and T.W. Stewart. 2013. Using the Storm Water Management Model to predict urban headwater stream hydrological responses to climate and land cover change. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, 17: 4743- 4752.

Gerken Golay, M., R. Manatt, C. Mabry, J. Thompson, and R. Kolka. 2013. Targeted restoration of herbaceous woodland plants: survival, growth, and reproductive success of local and non-local propagules. *Ecological Restoration*, 31: 378-387.

Gerken Golay, M.E., J.R. Thompson, C.M. Mabry, and R.K. Kolka. 2013. An investigation of water nutrient levels associated with forest vegetation in highly altered landscapes. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, 68: 361-371.

#### Curtis, Vegetation of Wisconsin Chapter 8 Southern Lowland Forests

2) Include plans for green corridors -- connected mature forests that weave from greenspace, park, private, and rail. Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis and surrounding communities have these yet we don't in Madison. This document would be a good place to give them recognition and include in a plan. A west side mature canopy forest/green corridor existed (before Nautilus woods was removed) that connected the sw side of Madison habitats to the lakeshore habitats.

3) Special consideration for vintage trees along lakeshores -- 150+ year old oaks and other riparian original trees are getting removed at a rapid rate along the Spring Harbor Neighborhood lakeshore for redevelopment. They need special consideration in zoning. Given our ample lakeshore, this setting should get special mention in this document. There are very few wooded shorelines left with natural shoreline material. Much loss has happened over the last 10 years and more is happening now.

4) University Avenue Whitney to Allen redevelopment -- urban planning is pushing new building designs ubiquitously close to the street without consideration of the need for plantings of large terrace trees. This section of University Ave needs special consideration in planning because of the contaminated drinking water supply well, local springs, harbor and lakeshore. Much of the street is in a 2- to 10-yr time of travel to the well. This area could benefit much from full size trees along the terrace without power lines as well as the center median. Instead small ornamental trees were planted. Also of consideration is evergreens which would have the most benefit for spring thaw and snowmelt. They are not included in possible trees because of street "pollution", yet private single family residences on University Avenue have mature white pines. Again the "list" is too narrow for special situations, especially where the quantity and quality of stormwater is at a critical stage. The plans are approved but construction not started. This is a forever decision for such a critical zone in direct conflict with the draft report's recommendations. Is there anything that can be done?

5) Linkage to neighborhood planning documents -- Thank you for including this in the list of recommendations that "Planning documents, such as Neighborhood Development Plans and Neighborhood Plans, should include an existing tree canopy inventory and identify areas for tree preservation. As appropriate it is recommended that existing plans be amended to address this issue" (p. 19). I am proposing that Spring Harbor Neighborhood Association Board evaluates this recommendation and takes action on it to have our plan amended.

6) Street design recommendation -- The recommendations reflect the great deal of thorough research that was done for street terraces and it is greatly appreciated. Of special note is a 12 ft recommendation for arterial streets.

7) Canopy coverage (p. 22) -- this would be a good place to not just talk about the percent of cover but it is equally important to take advantage of locations where connectivity or setting give it even more of a benefit for water quality, stormwater saving, and terrestrial to riparian habitats.

8) Forestry operations and public lands recommendations (p. 24) -- goals and recommendations are great but could be made stronger by including a plan to get mature woods in the toolbox for stormwater credit. Instead of looking at forest management as hard on existing maintenance budgets it would be better to compare the difference for maintaining a mature forest over the amount of mowing and heavy machinery usage to keep spaces in grass. The parks conservationist needs to be included in discussions with city forestry and engineering to get the best combination of ecosystem benefits and human quality of life.

9) Emerald ash borer response (p. 25) -- need more consideration of mature ash trees in greenspaces for treatment options. There may be special areas that give more cost benefit if trees are treated and maintain a mature canopy.

Respectfully,

Faith Fitzpatrick

## 5/30/19 Email

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **JOHN A HARRINGTON** <[jaharrin@wisc.edu](mailto:jaharrin@wisc.edu)>

Date: Thu, May 30, 2019 at 10:00 AM

Subject: comments on task force report

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Urban Forestry Task Force Draft Report on Madison's urban forest. The report covers the importance of the urban forest and has, what I consider, some very appropriate recommendations that the City should attempt to implement. I do have some comments though, that emphasize stressing to a higher level the importance of the urban forest, large canopy trees over smaller "ornamental" trees and a very major need to prioritize tree placement equally with utility and sidewalk placement as a very important part of the urban infrastructure, particularly as this City looks to be more sustainable and "green."

I would encourage the following points to be given greater emphasis in the report.

1. Emphasize the importance of large canopy trees as a priority infrastructure piece on par with the siting of walks, building setbacks, street lamps and utilities.

Each of the above are essential, yet trees should not be put on the back burner until these other pieces are sited. For example, we would not build a street today without light standards, but we often will do so without trees as no place has been left for them to grow (terraces too narrow, buildings sited too close to street, distance from light standards to be maintained, bike racks, etc). The lighting provides safety, visibility and an aesthetic, all highly valuable. The benefits of trees are equally as important and numerous. Research from the National Forest Service and the University of Georgia show that *large* canopy trees 1) increase retail traffic over streets that have no trees and or are planted to smaller ornamental trees, 2) enhance residential values, benefit mental health, reduce morning and evening glare and may contribute to reduced traffic speed, when trees are spaced and arranged appropriately; 3) sequester carbon and trap particulates, 4) mitigate stormwater, 5) mitigate the urban heat island effect; 6) provide wildlife habitat including that for pollinators and song birds; 8) provide directional cues; 9) enhance and define the street edge; and 10) enhance aesthetics. To acquire these benefits requires creative thinking in where we place street trees and how we place streets in relation to buildings. One note on stormwater: Trees capture considerable rainfall along their trunks and branches as well as leaves. In the *average* precipitation event, less than half of the rainfall may reach the ground under a full canopied tree and that which does is slowed considerably. Tree roots are excellent at capturing rainfall as well. The crux is soil compaction. In forested areas that have not been grazed minimal runoff or erosion occurs in an average rainfall event. The trick is to develop solutions that prevent soil compaction under trees.

2. Emphasize the importance of larger canopy trees over that of ornamental. Multiple studies demonstrate that each of the above benefits increase exponentially with tree size. The dollar value of these benefits are significant and need to be included when determining the costs of burying or relocating overhead power lines that exist in terraces. USDA



Forest Service studies suggest that a 77 cm diameter tree removes approximately 70 times more air pollution annually than trees with diameters of 8 cm or less.

3. City zoning needs to reflect the city vision for trees and the environment that is required for trees to grow. For the city to grow large canopy trees along streets a minimum building to tree distance is 15' plus additional footage from the tree to the street. As buildings increase over 4 stories this distance also needs to increase, particularly on west and east street edges East Washington is an excellent example where the draft master plan vision was originally for double rows of canopy trees along the street edge. Due to the zoning setback this prohibited such use in many locations and resulted in single rows of trees or the use of narrow columnar trees, which although provide an aesthetic, provide few of the other amenities discussed above. Where buildings with 7 stories occur and with the top 3 stories stepped back further, canopy trees need a minimum 22' away from the building face along east- and west-facing edges and a 16' distance from south-facing edges. As building height increases, these distances need to increase as well. These distances may not always be practical in older areas that are being revitalized, but the point is that as buildings increase in height, distance from street to building must increase as well, if we wish to have canopy trees as part of our environment.

4. Emphasize the below ground needs of large canopy trees. A 16" diameter tree requires 1000 cubic feet of soil to grow in. Considering that tree roots typically feed within the top 18" of the soil and seldom extend below 3', a soil bed needs to have an outer dimension that is greater than 10' x 30'. To obtain that in a city business district means attention to the soil situation under pavements that will allow for oxygen to reach roots and for soils to drain. This may require porous surfaces or soil replacement, but in some cases could require the use of structural soils or silva cells or the equivalent. The cost for these is not inexpensive but should be similar to the cost for a lamp post and its installation.

5. Recognize in actions that the urban forest and the City goals for it are as, or more, dependent on trees occurring on private lands as they are on public lands. Recommendation #6 on page 23 is important to increase canopy cover but should go further with the goal of increasing tree diversity. Although diversity goals for the urban forest on public lands appear to be meeting city goals, it is less clear that this is occurring on private lands where the majority of the urban forest exists. City programs that assist private land owners in understanding the need to plant greater diversity in their neighborhoods and direct them to resources for selecting trees may prove beneficial. Programs that encourage landscape architects and nurseries to encourage diversity in neighborhoods are also important. Recommendation 3 on page 24 is to inventory trees on all city-owned properties, I encourage the City to institute a program for a similar inventory on private lands, with landowner permission, is as important. The goals for the urban forest will not be accomplished unless the City acknowledges that the trees on private lands are a major part of accomplishing diversity, storm water benefits, UHI benefits, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, etc. Without knowing what the urban forest is on the majority of land in the city, planning for the future urban forest is at a tremendous disadvantage.

6. Strong incentives are required to protect larger canopy trees from removal. Ordinances that include a charge for removal of trees are often based on each inch increase in DBH. A major problem with such ordinances has been that the fines are insufficient, to the extent it becomes cheaper for a developer to remove a tree and pay the penalty, than to strategize how to work around a tree. UDC and Planning commissions were able to stop several large bur oaks from removal during the the project review for Grand Commons. The developer came back with plans to save and protect these trees, but if the two commissions hadn't caught these, due to citizens bringing it these commissions' attention, they would have been removed. Unfortunately, larger trees along Bedford Street, were removed and trees along Doty Street had all limbs cut off from there south side for a development that was allowed to occur close to the street edges due to the zoning setback. The trees were in the way and they would be replanted is the typical response given by a developer. Given the time it takes for tree to grow to resupply the benefits that are lost, zoning needs to rethink how easy it is for a developer not to have to plan for existing trees that occur on a lot.

7. The idea that only buildings can provide a street edge has led to set backs that result in major sections of streets bare of trees and not one that citizens, in general, appear to embrace. But are buildings the only way to create a street edge? Large evenly spaced trees created edges throughout history along roads, alleys, and promenades. Large canopy trees lining streets work with architecture to reinforce strong edges that also appeal to citizens moving along sidewalks

and cars on the streets. We moved away from this patterns as terraces were narrowed to allow for increased street widths and a planning mantra that buildings need to be built to the street to create an edge arose. But is this true? The reliance on buildings only to create a street edge is not a sustainable vision. Buildings, alone, do not mitigate stormwater, reduce UHI, or enhance walkability.

8. The recommendations for requiring an existing tree plan for all proposed developments is important, but it would be beneficial if this were to extend to adjacent properties in order to ensure diversity throughout the neighborhood. A developer can provide a landscape plan that includes species diversity for the site under review, but if all other properties have the same species composition then the neighborhood is not really diverse.

9. Last, one additional recommendation could go a long way to mitigate stormwater runoff and enhance aesthetics of large surface lots, that is developing a grant, similar to the City's facade grants, that would help landowners to redevelop older surface lots and bring them into conformance.

As the city evaluates the need to be sustainable, to address stormwater and UHI, considerations beyond engineering solutions need to be part of the strategy. Too long the City has stated the desire for a strong urban forest but has instituted obstacles for creating one, in part because trees have been a low priority in the development process. They need to be considered major infrastructure and not to be located in the only remaining sites left that can support them after all other infrastructure is in place. Our planning process as where to place trees should not be targeted to the only remaining spaces left after all other infrastructure is in place. That is self-defeating.

We have made it too easy to take out large trees that are perceived to be in the way of development. The thought that trees are replaceable, that they can be replanted is a fallacy in terms of benefits we seek. Small trees, beyond a small aesthetic, do not provide the benefits of a 20-30 year old tree. If we are constantly removing trees as we develop we will never obtain the benefits that a street or property with large canopy trees makes possible.

Sincerely,

John Harrington

Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture

Rm 25C Agricultural Hall

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## 5/30/19 Email

**From:** Gary Tipler <[garytip8778@gmail.com](mailto:garytip8778@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, May 30, 2019 11:40 AM

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Urban Forestry Task Force Comment

Dear members of the Task Force, Parks Commission and Alders,

I attended the public meeting only a couple weeks ago. I'm sorry that it appears that there is still much confusion about the reasons and costs for "partial undergrounding of the high-voltage line" and undergrounding wires. The first one accomplishes the planting of full canopy shade trees. The second one accomplishes that, but is more attractive. Time is essential. We can't be held back by the call for undergrounding to be translated into the aesthetic approach online, justified by higher expense estimates. We need the effects of large trees sooner than later.

From the public meeting it appears that the evaluation of whether to use partial undergrounding of the high-voltage line was weighed against the value of planting trees in places where there are no wires (subdivisions built since 1973(?) and elsewhere).

This evaluation is flawed.

The graphic that reflects that evaluation was shown. It compared costs of full undergrounding.

There should be a cost to value comparison with density and tax base as factors... not only cash costs.

Other values that must be considered include:

the high density;

highly active locations -- for pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles;

the higher preponderance of concrete in some urban locations (heat islands);

and the higher value of lands (taxation).

Each canopy tree in the suburbs may serve one person, but in a high density area may serve a multitude of people.

Thank you for your consideration.