

UFTF Public Hearing Comments

Submitted by: Jeremy Kane, 6/24

In regards to **Dawn O’Kroley** email (5/15):

- I suggest that the 40% canopy coverage goal, or any canopy cover goal, be substantiated with a consideration of local data and forest characteristics. A complete canopy analysis should include at least the following statistics:
 - 1) Canopy cover percentage change over approximately the last 20, 10, and 5 years.
 - 2) Canopy cover percentages according to neighborhood boundaries.
 - 3) Canopy cover percentages according to land use types, e.g. commercial, residential, multi-family residential, park, streets, other public lands. This could be used to determine a public v. private distribution.
 - 4) Tree canopy cover percentages relative to other land cover type, e.g. water, turf, impervious surfaces.
 - 5) Canopy cover percentages relative to demographic statistics.
 - 5) A geographic analysis of planting capacity; i.e. the canopy cover maps and percentages show where trees are, but not necessarily where they can be. This could be produced by combining the results of the analysis produced in the steps above.
- Where possible, the John Nolen quotes should be included. I think they would be most pertinent in the undergrounding section.

Responses to Listening Session

- In regards to sprinkler systems, I’m not sure that a municipality can apply stricter building codes than those permitted by the state, i.e. can the city require sprinkler systems?
- In regards to **Peter Wolf**: EAB should be described as a catastrophe, and to the extent possible the opening remarks of the report should convey urgency in all matters regarding the urban forest. Also, his remarks touch on the aesthetics of street tree planting, which may not be reflected in the report as a goal, and should be. In particular, we should be careful to balance the need for species diversity with consistency of tree form, shape, and size at the block and park level. In other words, a goal of species diversity does not necessarily mean that two of the same species cannot be planted next to one another. Although we now largely see the elm’s demise as a folly of monoculture, Mr. Wolf’s comment also reflect the desirability and appeal of large, consistent canopies.
- The graphic regarding costs of undergrounding is not used in the report and should not be used in subsequent presentations.
- The possibility of conservation easements to preserve natural areas in new developments and within neighborhood development plans should be noted in the report.
- Regarding **Lance Green** (and others) about the use of ornamental and/or small canopy trees: it seems that we can provide fairly reliable statistics from the existing street tree inventory to show percentages of existing large and small canopy trees relative to one another. More reliable statistics can be generated from recent city tree purchases of nursery stock to show the same. These numbers should be included in the report. Also, smaller canopy trees can be planted quite close together, and this possibility should be explored when a smaller tree is determined to be appropriate.

- Regarding Mr. Green’s comments on stormwater: the city should take an active role in lobbying to make changes in MS4 permits so that municipalities can receive credit for additional tree planting. This is common practice in other states. And the city took a similar role in arguing for changes to how street sweeping and leaf collection can be credited for phosphorus reductions. An interagency urban watershed forestry working group that focuses on the overlap between forestry and storm water issues may be useful and timely.
- Regarding underground utilities in new subdivisions, the ISA provides the following: “Many of the utility services provided today run below ground. Tree roots and underground lines often coexist without problems. However, trees planted near underground lines could have their roots damaged if the lines are dug up for repair. The greatest danger to underground lines occurs during planting.”
- Regarding various undergrounding comments, this issue should continue to be developed with a standing working group, in addition to the stated recommendations.
- Regarding comments from **Laurie Swimm**: it has been discussed that single (and possibly two-) family homes are not subject to planning board review. But can the building permit process be amended to include information on planned tree removals and tree preservation, and then be used as a means of enforcement in cases of excessive removals?
 - I agree with the sentiment that a homeowner should not be permitted to deny tree planting, particularly if the charge of the planting is not assessed to their property taxes, as it currently is.
 - Do city public works specifications and/or zoning include provisions for soil quality/type for tree planting zones?
- Regarding comments from **Faith Fitzpatrick**: the report should be amended to include a discussion on the preservation, maintenance, growth, and connectivity of existing forested blocks in Madison. This process should include mapping of the contiguous forest areas (many will likely be on private land) and planning for their future. Some examples might include Crestwood woods, Toki School forest, municipal conservation areas, etc. Personally, I also share her skepticism that trees and tree roots increase erosion and run-off, in situations where this happens I wonder if there are contributing factors such as concentrated run-off and steep slopes. For natural resource planning, the concept of “greenways” should be more generally applied than to the current Engineering Dept properties; this may be considered in the Parks and Open Space Plan.
 - I echo Ms. Fitzpatrick regarding stormwater and forest blocks with the comments above on the city’s role in changing MS4 standards and credits.
- Regarding comments from **John Harrington**: I suggest that the current language in the report on building setbacks be amended to include a statement that future zoning amendments should increase the set back from the street as a building’s height increases. Also, the retrofitting of parking lots, e.g. West Town and East Town, is an attractive idea that could benefit city-wide flood mitigation. I’m not sure what incentives are appropriate to accomplish this. The report discussion regarding the value of trees should be amended to include the benefits outlined in Comment #1.

General Report Comments:

- The use of bolded keywords should be consistently applied through the report. I personally think they are useful for identifying topics in the recommendations sections
- The formatting and numbering for the EAB response section (pg. 25-26) is unclear and needs consolidation/clarification.
- Someone pointed out a typo around the discussion of oak wilt, but I can’t find that section.

- We should include a recommendation that current tree planting locations be preserved for future plantings and that considerations regarding sight triangles, lighting, etc. should not prohibit the re-use of that space for planting, i.e. all current tree planting locations should be “grandfathered”.