



**City of Seattle**  
Urban Forestry Commission

---

**Joshua Morris** (Position 7 – NGO), Co-Chair  
**Alicia Kellogg** (Position 2 – Urban Ecologist) • **Becca Neumann** (Position 4 – Hydrologist)  
**David Baker** (Position 8 – Development) • **Nathan Collins** (Position 9 – Financial Analyst)  
**Timothy Randazzo** (Position 10 – Get Engaged) • **Jessica Jones** (Position 12 – Public Health)  
**Lia Hall** (Position 13 – Community/Neighborhood)

*The Urban Forestry Commission was established to advise the Mayor and City Council concerning the establishment of policy and regulations governing the protection, management, and conservation of trees and vegetation in the City of Seattle*

**Approved meeting notes**

October 9, 2024, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.  
Via Webex meeting and in-person at the  
Seattle Municipal Tower, Room 1876 (18<sup>th</sup> floor)  
700 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Seattle

(206) 207-1700  
Meeting number: 2503 580 2233  
Meeting password: 1234

**Attending**

Commissioners

Josh Morris – Co-Chair  
Alicia Kellogg  
Lia Hall  
Becca Neumann  
David Baker  
Nathan Collins  
Timothy Randazzo

Absent

Jessica Jones

Guest

Akshay Iyengar – CBO

Public

Cindy Kozak  
Steve Zemke  
Nolan Rundquist  
Dave Gloger  
Dave Moehring  
Sandy Shettler  
Michael Oxman

Staff

Lauren Urgenson – OSE  
Alan Guo – OSE  
Sharon Lehrman – OSE

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at: <https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>**

**Call to order:**

Josh Morris called the meeting to order, offered a land acknowledgement, conducted a roll call of the commissioners, and reviewed the agenda.

**Public Comment:**

Michael Oxman noted that Mayor Harrell has asked departments to cut their budget by 15%. Michael also noted that the Parks department spends about \$4,000 per tree for the 500 trees planted in 2024. Michael noted that to reach 30% canopy goals, there would need to be about 80,000 new trees assuming that there are no trees removed. Michael stated that single family residential (SFR) lots are being covered with 6 homes and trees can only be planted between houses and tend to only be shrubs. Michael also stated that City will be under-tree'd while there are many tree removal applications and wants to communicate to City Council that the situation is not working well.

Steve Zemke talked about the Omnibus Bill passing while several amendments were not passed. Steve brought up the issue of basic tree protection area – modified and asked for alternative site designs to help save trees. Steve also mentioned to look at the tree ordinance.

**UFC Commissioner and Coordinator updates:**

Alicia Kellogg asked for update on the interviews for the vacant commissioner seats. Lauren Urgenson gave an update on the interview process and timeline for the 6 positions that are open. Lauren emphasized that the team would try to make nominations to Council at 11/20 Land Use meeting.

Josh wanted to share that the Urban Forestry symposium is on 10/22 and that it brings together urban forestry experts from the region.

**City budget presentation:**

Sharon Lehrman gave an introduction about the Office of Sustainability and Environment (OSE), Healthy Communities, and the budget.

Akshay Iyengar gave a presentation about the CBO and their role during the budget process.

Josh asked if there was any context for the Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) besides for the budget. Josh asked about the process of a biennial budget vs a single year budget. Akshay stated that the biennial budget is for the framework of the two years while the City Council needs to approve the budget each year.

Sharon gave a background presentation about Urban Forestry at the City of Seattle, the responsibilities of each department, and the activities that they engage in (direct management, policy and planning, and community engagement). Sharon introduced the 2024 budget in relation to direct management, policy and planning, and community engagement.

Josh asked Sharon what they believe the necessary funding for Urban Forestry would be to meet all the goals. Alicia asked if there was a graph/trends over time about budgets and changes for Urban Forestry

Akshay gave an overview about the budget changes in 2025 for Urban Forestry including budget adds for OSE adding climate change data analysis and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) constructing a tree nursery. Akshay noted some non-direct impacts in the budget changes including Parks department reduction in land acquisition funding and Seattle City Light's (SCL) addition for vegetation management.

Sandy Shettler asked why SPU would need their own nursery as opposed to the using nurseries in the private sector. Lauren answered that it has become difficult to source certain trees due to climate change impacts on tree nurseries and they need to be sourced by themselves.

#### *Presentation Q&A*

Josh asked about revenues in 2024 and if there was a modification to add expected payment in lieu fees from the tree protection ordinance. Josh wanted to follow up on the UFC's May letter of recommendation and ask about tree fees and where the money from the fees goes to.

Akshay did not have an immediate answer and noted that they will follow up.

Josh asked if there were any positions that were reduced that were Urban Forestry based.

Akshay responded that there were position cuts in the proposed budget but none of them that had a direct impact towards Urban Forestry.

Josh asked about the Bargaining Wage Allocation items in the budget.

Akshay responded that the items were the wage increases for City workers under the collective bargaining agreement.

Josh asked about bonds and ways for the City to increase revenue funding for services used.

Lia Hall reemphasized a comment in the chat about the Trees for Neighborhoods monitoring statistic that 90% of planted trees survive past the establishment period.

Lauren responded that the 90% data point comes from a UW study where randomly selected trees from Trees for Neighborhoods were monitored for survival. Lauren also noted that Trees for Neighborhoods will try to increase their tree planting from 1000 to 1300.

Josh asked if the budget assumes that the Move Seattle Levy doesn't pass and asked if the Move Seattle Levy will increase Urban Forestry budget.

Akshay responded that the budget does not include the Move Seattle Levy.

#### **UFC Next Steps:**

Alan Guo, Sharon, and Lauren gave a summary of the 2025-2026 Biennial recommendations written by the UFC in May. They also provided a timeline for potential next steps that the UFC can conduct for the budget process including sending a letter of recommendation to City Council by 10/16.

Alicia noted that they have trouble contextualizing the budget and believe that the UFC has a lack of the background knowledge for how the budget works. They stated that they don't know how to respond to the budget.

Josh briefly explained the context of funding Urban Forestry and its importance to the budget and UFC recommendations.

Josh noted that they would like to write a letter of recommendation on the budget because the budget is the most important aspect the UFC can work on.

Lauren noted that there were two clear additions to the budget regarding urban forestry in the SPU nursery and OSE climate data and reporting. Lauren mentioned an that endorsement could be a possibility for the letter of recommendation or suggested that the UFC could focus on areas of work in specific departments.

Lia Hall asked if the UFC should bring up other funding sources for urban forestry in the letter of recommendation.

The commission agreed that they would hold a special budget meeting on 10/16 at 4PM to vote on a letter of recommendation for City Council.

**Adoption of August 14 and September 11 meeting notes:**

Josh read comments in the chat.

The UFC adopted the August 14 meeting notes.

The UFC adopted the September 11 meeting notes under the condition that grammatical and formatting edits be made.

**Commissioner and co-chair roles discussion:**

Josh mentioned that the co-chair role for 2025 will be opening, and nominations can be forwarded to Lauren. Josh noted that November meeting would include co-chair nomination pitches and voting would be held in December. Josh gave a brief description of the co-chair responsibilities.

**Subgroup reports:**

The UFC decided to wait until the November meeting to report on subgroup updates.

**NOTE: Meeting notes are not exhaustive. For more details, listen to the digital recording of the meeting at:** <https://www.seattle.gov/urbanforestrycommission/meetingdocuments>

**Public Comment:**

Michael Oxman wanted to go back to the climate data analysis and reporting and believes City should go to an ecosystem model instead of individual tree stem model for reporting. Michael stated that soil, water, air, animals should also be looked at under canopy. Michael mentioned that he filed a complaint about too many buildings on a lot which led to no space for trees. Michael got a message from SDCI that they were backlogged for 67 days and a permit got issued without any violations. Michael noted that residents are forced to do repeat violation complaints.

Steve Zemke wanted to follow up on the idea that tree canopy is only one issue. Steve mentioned that canopy volumes should also be accounted for. Steve also stated that it is important to note that SDCI was derelict in reporting how many trees were removed and replanted. Steve wanted to mention how sparse SDCI budget is and how the City can verify what is going on, on the site.

Josh read comments in the chat.

**Adjourn:**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:08PM.

**Meeting Chat:**

steve zemke 10/9/2024 3:16 PM • Urge Commission to look at areas in Tree Protection Ordinance that need to be modified to increase tree protection. These im

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 3:19 PM • Basic Tree Protection Area defined by the 2023 Tree Protection Ordinance is defective because it uses a static measurement defined as a foot of root zone radius per inch of trunk diameter measurement. This erroneously removes discretion by the arborist to evaluate suitability of the soil to accomodate excavation of root, with probable survivalbility of the tree.

Alicia Kellogg (she/her) 10/9/2024 3:20 PM •

<https://botanicgardens.uw.edu/education/adults/conferences-symposia/urban-forest-symposium/>

Joshua Morris | Position #7 (NGO Rep) 10/9/2024 3:20 PM •

Urban Forest Symposium | University of Washington Botanic Gardens (uw.edu)

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 3:22 PM • This defective ordinance artificially inflates the size of the actual tree protection that arborists derive from the ANSI Standards developed by the international Society of Arboriculture. Failure of the City of Seattle to use the standards and specifications developed by the ISA also extends to the faulty tree valuation Directors Rule.

steve zemke 10/9/2024 3:25 PM • nclude remove the language in 25.11.070 that says during development the basic tree protection area cannot be modified. This turns the decision on developers deciding whether or not to save large trees and gives no say to SDCI. Also need to look at requiring more than 1 tree for replacemnt of trees eg 2 trees for 12-24", 3 for 24 to 30", and 1 additional tree for each 6" increase in diameter. What cannot be replaced on site would require in lieu fee for city to replace elsewhere. Also look at giving SDCI Director authority to require an alternative site design if it would help to save trees. Just a few suggestions to consider for ecommendations to Mayor and City Council to amend existing ordinance.

Lia Hall #13 10/9/2024 3:45 PM • Is the monitoring limited to Street Trees?

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 3:46 PM • Please fact-check Lerman's 90% survival rate claim for SDCI trees planted.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 3:47 PM • I think the monitoring is just for Trees For Neighborhoods. I have not seen any SDOT-planted trees being monitored in my sample of about 20 street trees. I asked about it and was told that although it was planned, staffing issues came up.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 3:48 PM • Sharon, do you know how many Trees for Neighborhood trees were distributed in the last round? Thank you.

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 3:50 PM • SLI OSE-301-A-002-2023 is required by Council

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 3:56 PM • That SLI was preceded by a Parks discrepancy in funding of the Green Seattle Partnership, and the acreage remaining unmanaged at the conclusion of the 20-year timeline.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:01 PM • I have a question about the tree nursery. Is there an analysis/evidence that this is cost effective and that the private sector can't meet this need more efficiently?

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 4:02 PM • Is the addition of Climate Data Impact Analysis and Reporting similar to the Natural Capital Assessment, which was a 2015 SLI, and included \$50,000 in the 2018 budget?

steve zemke 10/9/2024 4:02 PM • SDCI's review of site plans and tree protection areas - estimate of how much funding goes to SDCI for reviewing and protecting trees during development and planting new trees on site as well as reviewing tree removals by private homeowners?

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:04 PM • My understanding of the nursery stock shortage is that it's temporary (i.e. last 2-3 years) due to pressure on stock from wildfire replanting. It would be good to have an industry analyst assessment of this as a solution because it seems expensive given our resource constraints.

Alicia Kellogg (she/her) 10/9/2024 4:11 PM • At the Ecological Restoration Symposium earlier this year, there was a panel of nursery owners/professionals who were all trying to warn about an impending "gray wave" with no backfilling in place. I have also heard reports from other restoration professionals about challenges sourcing plants over the last 10-20 years, and I know that King County has started to look at options to start their own nursery as well because of these issues.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:06 PM • Good to hear about SCL funding. Right now they have very long cycles in between pruning, so they over-prune because they know they won't be back for a few years. On Mercer Island they prune annually (I believe) which is better for the trees.

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 4:09 PM • It would be great if the budget presentation included a list of the number of staff positions for each department.

steve zemke 10/9/2024 4:11 PM • Only 2 in lieu fees were reported in last year according to SLI report to city council. Supposibly developers removing tier 2 trees are replanting a tree on site but ? what data is available on this since no reporting seems to be ab on trees replaced on site only trees removed. Need to get data on this

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:15 PM • Can you please share how many Trees For Neighborhoods trees were distributed in the last round?

Iyengar, Akshay 10/9/2024 4:19 PM • Thank you everyone.

Becca Neumann 10/9/2024 4:20 PM • I need to leave. Sorry to miss the end of the meeting.

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 4:27 PM • Slide showing UFC 2025 Budget Recommendations should say why PlantAmnesty withdrew from the Heritage Tree Committee program, because the July 2023 Tree Protection Ordinance removed protections for Heritage Trees, by allowing 85% lot construction, and removed ability to modify Tree Protection Area dimensions.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:29 PM • Thank you Josh!!!

Timothy Randazzo 10/9/2024 4:32 PM • I agree with Alicia's sentiment, for me, it would be helpful to understand what the historical funding has looked like, and how the 2025 budget relates to it. I would like to join the subcommittee

Alicia Kellogg (she/her) 10/9/2024 4:35 PM • be right back, there's someone at my door

Michael Oxman 10/9/2024 4:36 PM • Parks acquisition budget cut down to only \$1 million dollars has brought the fox home to roost in our parks. We have been a growth economy since the adoption of the Parks District system 7 years ago. At the time, we were promised this new property tax for Parks District funding would not supplant General Fund sources. Yet, here we are, the General Fund acquisition item is being reduced, with no mention of the existing 2024 allocation, leaving an inability to compare the significance of this issue.

steve zemke 10/9/2024 4:37 PM • On data collection need to include both detailed information on tree removal during development as well as trees planed

Nathan Collins 10/9/2024 4:38 PM • I'm having trouble with audio but would also like to take part in this subcommittee as well

steve zemke 10/9/2024 4:43 PM • ...trees planted, including species. This data on trees planted by developers has not been aggregated anywhere I am aware of. Previously all depts reported yearly to OSE on trees removed and replaced. SDCI was the exception in not submitting reports despite the large number of trees removed and required planting both during development and outside development on private property.

Sandy Shettler 10/9/2024 4:44 PM • Welcome and thank you for volunteering!!

steve zemke 10/9/2024 4:48 PM • Good to post draft notes on website prior to meeting so public can also review draft notes. That was previously dne. Thanks.

Alicia Kellogg (she/her) 10/9/2024 5:00 PM • I need to head out, thanks all!

Timothy Randazzo 10/9/2024 5:05 PM • I also need to head out - thanks everyone!