

Urban Forest Stewardship Plan
Quick Actions Implementation Strategy
12-31-13

Background

Seattle recognizes the value and benefits of the urban forest and the need for an integrated and adaptive approach to hands-on maintenance and caring of our trees. In 2007, the Urban Forest Management Plan was created with the goal of increasing the City's tree canopy cover to 30 percent by 2037.

To clearly convey the importance of engaging Seattle residents and organizations along with City staff in the care of our urban forest, the term stewardship was incorporated in the title of the Plan's first update.

The 2013 Urban Forest Stewardship Plan (UFSP) sets the framework in which to identify priorities and guide urban forestry policies and programs. The UFSP was developed by the Urban Forest Inter-departmental team working closely with the Urban Forestry Commission, City Council staff, and Seattle residents.

The UFSP builds on the original 2007 Plan and establishes a more comprehensive set of goals:

1. Create an ethic of stewardship for the urban forest among City staff, community organizations, businesses, and residents.
2. Strive to replace and enhance specific urban forest functions and benefits when trees are lost, and achieve a net increase in the urban forest functions and related environmental, economic, and social benefits.
3. Expand canopy cover to 30 percent by 2037.
4. Increase health and longevity of the urban forest by removing invasive species and improving species and age diversity.

The Plan's Action Agenda

An important element of the UFSP is the Action Agenda which establishes the steps required to implement the plan's goals. There are over 100 action items with short-, mid-, and long-term time-frames. The actions have been grouped according to the plans' strategies and encompass community stewardship, urban forest resource knowledge, departmental coordination, resource management, and regulation. Over 70 actions are recommended to be completed by 2018.

UFSP Adoption

On September 16, 2013, the UFSP was unanimously adopted by City Council. Resolution 31477 instructed City Departments with urban forestry responsibilities to move forward quickly on the following actions:

- A. Identify programs, strategies and communication requirements to strengthen public outreach, education and engagement, building on efforts already underway.

- B. Action Agenda Item R2 to update the existing regulatory framework to promote the Plan's goals and mitigate the impacts of development while providing flexibility for property owners to balance multiple goals and competing uses.
- C. Provide initial recommendations to implement funding-related Action Agenda Items P24, P25 and P27 to explore coordinated approaches to seeking funding from private sources, possible creation of a tree donation account, and creative urban forestry financing mechanisms (such as the use of Parks Levy funds for tree maintenance on parklands).
- D. Action Agenda Item I6 to further explore using the concept of eco-hoods as geographic areas for urban forest management.
- E. Action Agenda Item U13 to develop a methodology and decision tool for replacement over time of the functional benefits lost when mid- and large-sized trees are removed.
- F. Action Agenda Item C4 to develop decision-making tools related to tree retention or removal decision where infrastructure conflicts exist.
- G. Action Agenda Item C5 to develop a monitoring framework and set of indicators to track progress toward the Plan's goals.
- H. Action Agenda Item I13 to work with local universities, agencies and research organizations to pursue the Plan's research agenda including developing more detailed methods for quantifying storm water and water quality benefits of trees.

UFSP Implementation Strategy

City Council instructed departments to provide an implementation strategy, schedule, outline of policy decisions and cost to accomplish each of the above mentioned actions.

The enclosed table provides the implementation strategy details.