



Tree Protections Update

Photo by John Skelton



Seattle Department of
Construction & Inspections



Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment

Land Use and Neighborhoods Committee

September 24, 2021

TODAY'S PRESENTATION

Urban Forest Management Plan – **NOW FINALIZED AND AVAILABLE ONLINE!**

- Overview of Process
- Overview of Content

Tree Protections Update - Progress Made

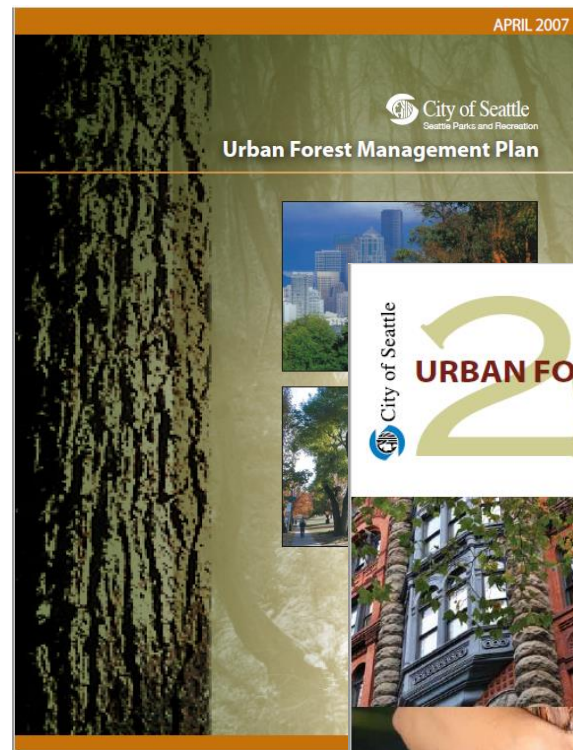
- Listening Sessions
- Department of Neighborhoods Community Liaisons
- Tree Tracking, Code Compliance Update

Next steps

Urban Forest Management Plan

Background

- First adopted in 2007
- Goal to update every 5 years
- Last updated in 2013
- Began work on next update in 2018, now finalized and available online as of Sept 14th



Urban Forest Management Plan

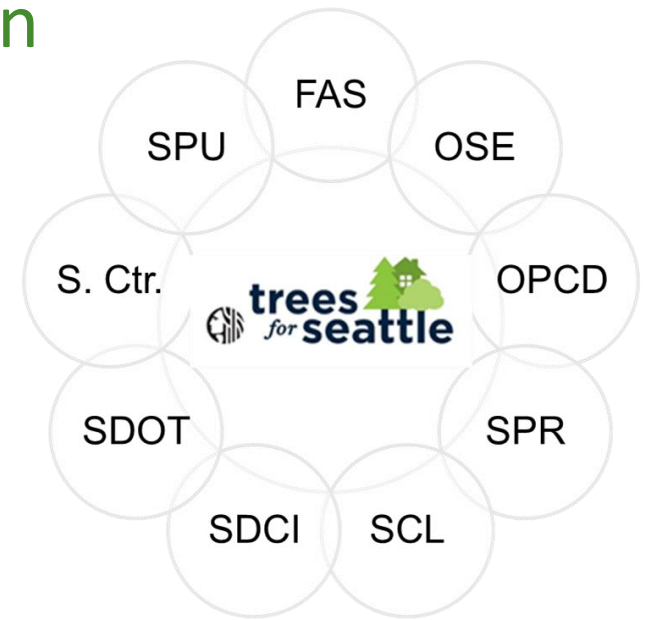
Update process

Interdepartmental team developed:

- Purpose of update and key objectives
- Plan for inclusive engagement

Public engagement – two phases:

- Inclusive engagement (2018-2019)
 - Listening sessions with key stakeholders
 - Initial assessment
- Public input (2020)
 - Presentation to Urban Forestry Commission
 - Draft plan for public comment (Fall 2020)
 - Summary and initial recommendations



Plan Highlights: Framing

- Describes urban forest management units
- Acknowledges different types of trees: public, private, right-of-way
- Connects to 2016 canopy cover assessment and other assessment/inventory efforts
- Acknowledges challenges to the urban forest



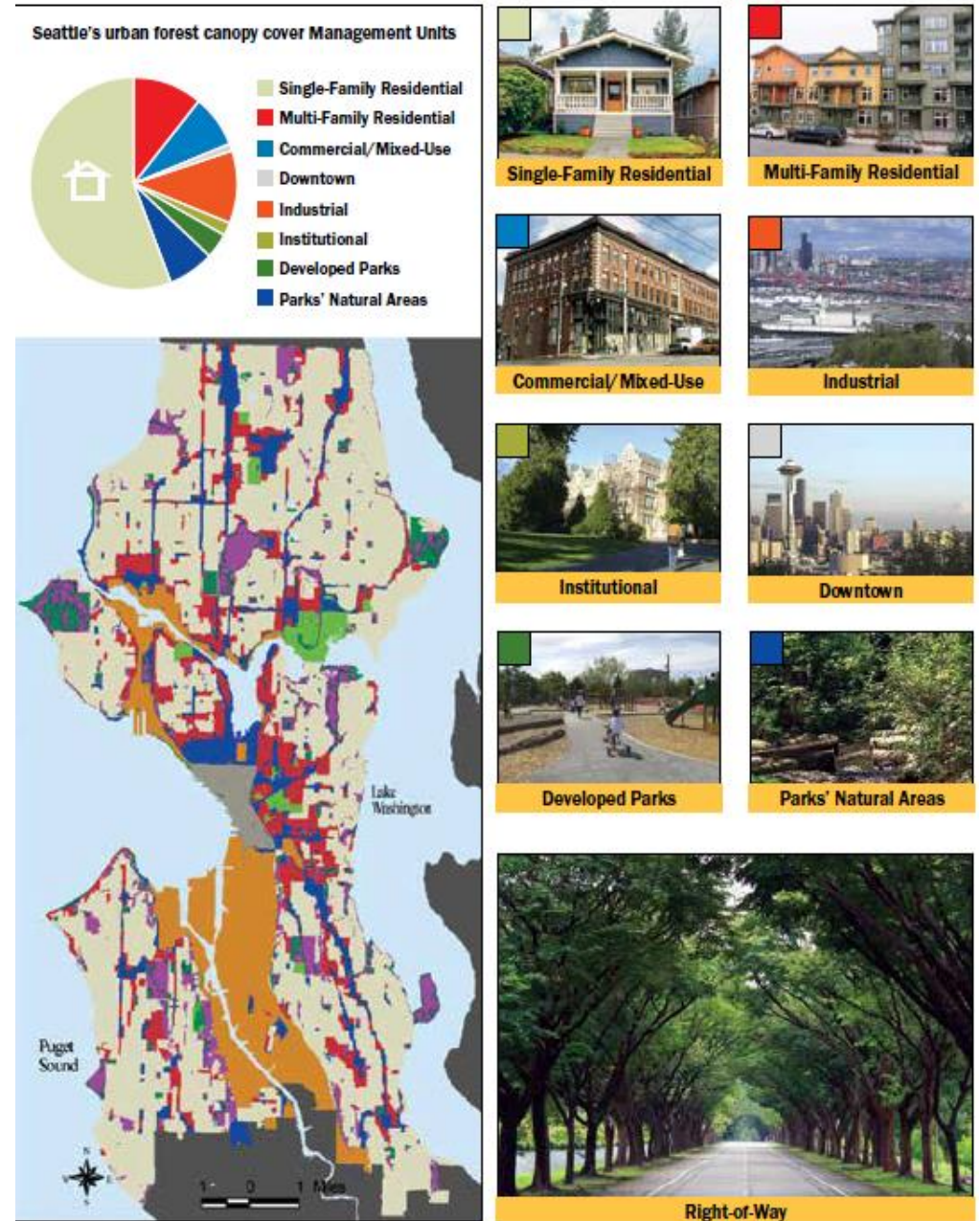
Urban Forest Management Plan

Plan Highlights: Urban Forest Management Units

Framework similar to 2013 plan

The following are the nine management units for the UFMP:

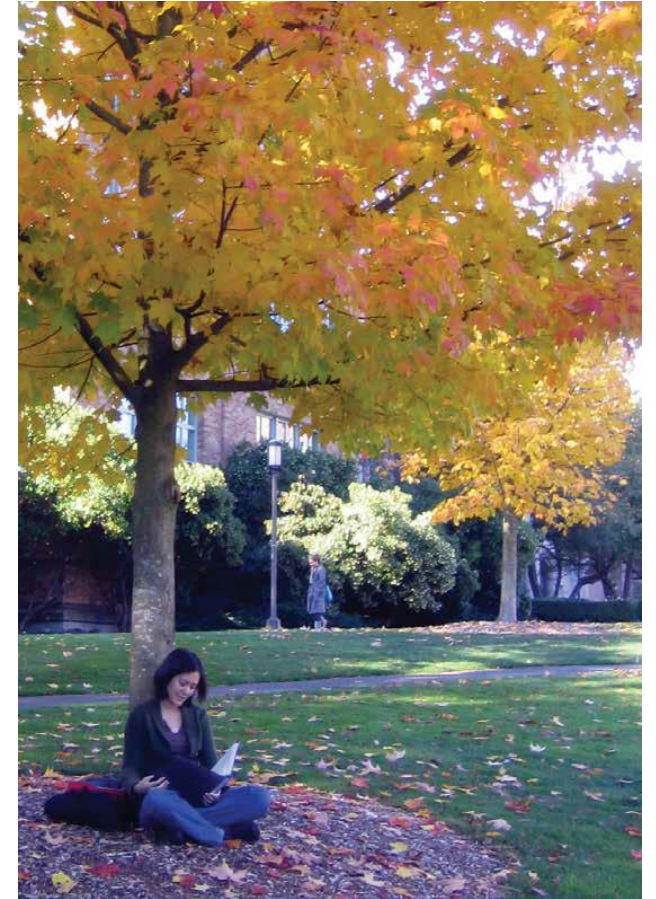
1. Single-Family Residential
2. Multi-Family Residential
3. Commercial/Mixed-Use
4. Industrial
5. Institutional
6. Downtown
7. Developed Parks
8. Parks' Natural Areas
9. Right-of-Way



Urban Forest Management Plan

Plan Highlights: Existing Management Approach

- Responsibilities by department
- Existing policies and programs
- Management of public and street trees
- Regulations and incentives

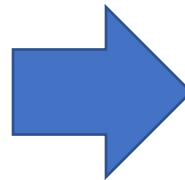


Urban Forest Management Plan

Plan Highlights: Updated Outcomes and Strategies

Outcomes

1. Racial and social equity
 - Additional emphasis in this plan
2. Ecosystems and human health
3. Human safety and property protection
4. Climate change
5. Community care
6. Balance competing priorities



7 strategies, 17 associated actions

- 5 carried over from 2013 update
- 2 new strategies to focus on environmental justice priority communities and resiliency/climate change

Urban Forest Management Plan

Plan Highlights: Strategies & Actions

Strategy 1: Consider the needs of BIPOC communities

- 1 Create a program to improve access for people in environmental equity priority communities to internships, apprenticeships, and jobs in urban forestry
- 2 Focus tree planting in environmental equity priority communities
- 3 Focus tree, landscape, and natural area maintenance in environmental equity
- 4 Explore ways to support property owners and renters in environmental equity priority communities

Strategy 2: Prepare for climate change impacts

- 5 Conduct a climate change vulnerability assessment to inform how the City's urban forestry work should respond to a changing climate, including increasing droughts and pests
- 6 Develop a list of tree species resilient to climate change and pests
- 7 Explore ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from urban forestry work

Strategy 3: Understand the condition and complexity of the UF resource

- 8 Perform a citywide canopy cover assessment every five years. Compare the results to previous estimates to understand what has changed

Strategy 4: Coordinate communication

- 9 Continue support of the Urban Forestry Core Team as the key coordination group for City-wide inter-departmental urban forestry work
- 10 Enhance coordination with federal, state, county, and local jurisdictions, and with landowner institutions such as Port of Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, hospitals, and universities

Urban Forest Management Plan

Plan Highlights: Strategies & Actions (Continued)

Strategy 5: Inspire, inform, and work with community

- 11** Create a citywide urban forestry communication strategy that will identify better ways to share information with environmental equity communities about volunteer opportunities, tree care information, regulations, incentives, and winter storms. This strategy should have a special emphasis on Native American communities
- 12 Expand volunteer programs focused on elders and children
- 13 Explore the impact of trees on allergies and opportunities to reduce tree-produced allergies

Strategy 6: Preserve, restore, and enhance the UF

- 14 Support citywide efforts to find long-term solutions to homeless encampments in urban forests
- 15 Explore solutions for conflicts between tree roots and sidewalks that support the needs of people with disabilities

Strategy 7: Regulate and provide support

- 16** Update the City's tree protection regulations
- 17 Explore ways to help property owners remove invasive plants and pests on private land
- 18 Explore ways to help property owners manage unimproved rights-of-way next to their property
- 19 Explore ways to increase canopy (tree) cover in industrial areas

Tree Protections Update

OUTREACH – LISTENING SESSIONS

JULY – AUGUST 2021

- Facilitated a series of 6 virtual online sessions with key stakeholders, including:
 - Homeowners, builders, arborists
 - Environmental groups, community organizations
 - tree service providers, real estate agents
- Groups ranging from 2-9 participants
- Structured conversation allowed for individual experiences as well as group conversation
- Currently reviewing feedback to identify themes and will prepare a summary report



Tree Protections Update

BIPOC OUTREACH – UNDERWAY

JULY – OCTOBER 2021

- Trained DON's Community Liaisons (CLs);
conducted CL orientation
- Prepared and translated outreach materials
- Tailored engagement – early Sept
- Summary reports from DON CLs – early/mid Oct
- Summary of feedback received during outreach
will be posted online once finalized in Oct/Nov



Tree Protections Update

KEY TOPICS

Both outreach processes focus on:



PROTECTING
EXCEPTIONAL
TREES



SIGNIFICANT
TREES AND
PERMITTING
SYSTEMS



VOLUNTARY
PAYMENT IN-LIEU
ALTERNATIVES



ARBORIST
QUALIFICATIONS,
REGISTRATION

TREE TRACKING, CODE COMPLIANCE UPDATE

Summary of Recent Tree Tracking Actions

- GIS analysts are making significant progress
- Data entered is supporting staff to monitor canopy coverage
- Will support data-driven decisions

Code Compliance Update

- SDCI has levied penalties ranging \$10,000 - \$99,000 under triple penalty provision for illegal tree removal, over last 3 years
- Mid-year 2021: penalties total \$38,124

Tree Protections Update

NEXT STEPS

September/October

- Conclude public outreach, including BIPOC engagement
- Complete Racial Equity analysis
- Data analysis and other technical work
- Develop initial recommendations
- Identify potential implementation and enforcement needs

November/December

- Target to issue SEPA Decision before end of year



QUESTIONS?

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