

COMMON THEMES

This listing is organized in descending order by approximate number of references to each topic. Comments in quotations have been taken from meeting notes; they were not directly transcribed from the focus group meetings.

Public Education/Communication/Transparency about Forestry activities (trimming, removals, tree planting, UFMP development, etc.)

- “People don’t know what the plan is, what their options are. There is a need for education about public tree planting.”
- “Provide maintenance education to people (watering, mulching...).”
- “I think that many residents feel like the City touches a street or park tree 2 times, once when planted and once when they are removed...It comes down to communicating more with people whether that is through the web or other.”

Tree Selection- Diversity, using natives, right tree/right place

- “Be smart about what to plant where, on a case by case basis (don’t put fast growing trees under utility wires).”
- “Consider ecologically appropriate native species when planting. Carefully consider diversity.”

Routine Tree Maintenance and Young Tree Care

- “If you can’t maintain, don’t plant.”
- “We need better care for the trees that we already do have. New trees take a lot to make them grow.”

Volunteers

- “We need an organized approach to community members taking on tree maintenance.”

DTE- utility line clearance

- “Need better management when DTE comes through. They damage trees.”

Preservation of historic/landmark trees on public and private property

- “At some point (size/ age? other?) historic trees should be protected just like historic homes.”

Budget

- “Projects costs and funding sources are potential barriers to plan implementation.”

Consideration for competing interests

- “Defining areas where trees should be preserved vs. areas for construction.”
- “Decision to not have a tree by one homeowner may conflict with interests of others in the neighborhood (solar access, ability to grow edible plants in their yard...).”

Partnerships with non-profit organizations

- “...advocates for particular issues.”
- “...recruiting volunteers.”
- “...could provide maintenance support.”

Incentives for/assistance with private tree planting

- “Incentives to push people to the goals. If you want people to plant trees to increase canopy cover, maybe give a discount on trees, or provide volunteers to help with private maintenance.”

Long range planning

- “What can we do now? What in the future? Long range planning... (Action strategies with different phasing).”
- “People need to think about the whole tree life cycle. The beginning and the end of tree life.”

Wood utilization

- “‘End of life planning’ for trees.”

Invasive species management

- “Loss of tree cover from insects, disease. Want “no-net-loss” (right now we’re losing more public trees than we’re gaining, we need to reverse that).”

Leaf pick up and City trees

- “Without leaf removal, the leaves from the City’s trees are now the responsibility of citizens. What are the rights and obligations of the private owners with respect to trees in the right-of-way?”

Trees as a food source

UNIQUE QUOTES

Sentiment towards trees

- “Trees are like comfort food” ... “like mac and cheese or something”

Large trees vs. Small trees

- “The quantified value of large trees is something like 5x the value of small trees”

Ownership and responsibility

- “Could the City give people a choice about what tree is planted? When people are given a choice of trees they may be more likely to take ownership.”

Shrub planting

- “Forest is more than the trees; could consider shrubs as part of the urban forest. There may be a lot of opportunity for native shrub planting.”

MEETING NOTES

City of Ann Arbor
Urban Forest Management Plan
Focus Group #1
Boards/Business Organizations
Private Companies /Commercial Neighborhoods
Tuesday, February 1, 2011
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Attendees: Kay Seaser (Ann Arbor Area Convention and Visitors Bureau)
Contribution through written response: Kris Adler (Guardian Tree Experts)

Ice breaker:

What benefits provided by trees are important to you?

- Shade during the art fair. Tour groups ask specifically about this, they want shady places to sit
- Trees for recreation: visitors coming to UofM school and healthcare (once they've already been drawn here, this is something that they're interested in)
- Buffer between people dining outside and the road

Boards/Business Organizations/Private Companies /Commercial Neighborhoods Questions:

What role do you think trees play in welcoming people to our community?

- Trees provide a cozy "Main Street" feel. How they blend with the rest of the environment. The whole package (lights, trees...)
- They could play a significant role. I feel that we have some ways to go to improve the look. Consider the following:
 - o North Main Street: Linden street trees are nice along the eastern side of the road by the Lotus buildings, east side of street looks ramshackle and unkempt. Installation of a maintained tree lawn with street trees separate from the Norway maple forest coming down the hill might help.
 - o Ann Arbor Saline: Lots of cars and few trees except those growing along the ramps, perhaps working with the state to plant in those areas? Does get nicer as you drive North
 - o Washtenaw: Lots of cars, Arborland has some nicer trees. How about a center island with Oaks and maples running from 23 to Huron parkway? Lots of \$ but would be huge for retail as well.
 - o Jackson: Vets Park helps to ameliorate the tough urban landscape. Lots of cars, another stressful area to drive through at most times of the day.

Do you feel that trees help commerce in business districts and commercial areas?

Why/Why not?

- Give a "homey" community feel
- "Trees are like comfort food" ... "like mac and cheese or something"
- Yes, consider Main Street and the shade provided by the few trees there. Can you imagine Main Street with small trees or having no trees at all? I think business would be completely different without them. People would not be as likely to visit those restaurants and businesses.



Does your group/organization have written or unwritten policy, standards or guidelines that are important for us to consider in developing the plan? Would you mind making these available to us?

- The ASM, ISA, and TCIA which promotes working to the applicable ANSI standards for both safety and quality.

General Questions:

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree planting that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Diversity
- Maintenance and health (should be very high on the list once you've invested)
- Communication through community calendars of events (different groups have calendars of things going on in the community. Could put things about *public participation in the UFMP or notification of tree removals* on these types of calendars).
- I am a firm believer in the right tree right site philosophy, especially around overhead wires. If budgets are tight and funds are not available I think asking residents to pay a portion of tree planting costs is appropriate. That might encourage neighbors and neighborhoods to get creative and work with/ partner with non-profits like Global Releaf. I'm guessing it is hard to justify tree planting when there is not enough funds available for maintenance of existing trees.
- There are very few plantings around University and healthcare center, just buildings "I don't picture any trees there"

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree maintenance and removal that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- I think that many residents feel like the City touches a street or park tree 2 times, once when planted and once when they are removed. So I guess it comes down to communicating more with people whether that is through the web or other.

If the plan were to consider making modifications to current policy/requirements for trees on private land, what would you see as potential issues/opportunities?

- Private (residential) areas need to embrace trees. A co-operative effort where the City can help pay (or help with the maintenance) would help to encourage people.
- I think the city should tread pretty carefully here. Less regulation is probably better. Although we would like to see some type of attention given to old healthy trees that are removed for petty reasons or damaged during construction. At some point (size/ age? other?) historic trees should be protected just like historic homes.

What else do you want us to know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- It will be interesting to hear from business associations (Main Street, Kerrytown)
- Maybe suggest that the questions be passed out to business owners or individuals in each group.

Do everything you can to be transparent with all accounting. I'm sure budgets/ employee pay etc. are all available online but probably in different places and difficult to access. Put it all in one place so the average Joe can see what is coming in and what is going out and how that money is being spent. This will create a lot of trust between the Forestry Department and tax payers. Assume the average citizen knows nothing about this and will usually assume the worst. Continue to justify need for more funding based on value of the asset and contribution to well being of citizens and city.

MEETING NOTES
City of Ann Arbor
Urban Forest Management Plan
Focus Group #1
Public Agencies and Organizations
Tuesday, February 1, 2011
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Attendees: **John Remsberg** (Dean Fund), **Tony Catchot** (University of Michigan), **Marvin Pettway** (University of Michigan), **Harry Sheehan** (Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner), **Kevin Sayers** (Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE))

Pre-meeting discussion:

- Benchmarking management budget for other communities
- Charts are helpful to convey information about trees.
- Could plot locations of where pruning or removals will take place (by quadrant)

Ice breaker:

What benefits provided by trees are important to you?

- Stormwater interception
- Dry up the ground and allow better stormwater infiltration. (The flipside is clogged storm drains)
- Tool to communicate and rally support
- Social implications, community
- Construction impacts- need to preserve green spaces
- Need for tree preservation in spaces that provide shading and stormwater benefits
- Energy savings
- Aesthetics
- Wind
- Importance of real trees, not shrubs
- Impact they can make on people visiting an area; trees may be a key memory for visitors to our community, they make the city unique.
- Value/property value
- Reputation “tree city”

Other Agencies/Public Groups Questions:

We’d like to hear from each of you regarding what tree considerations are most important to your agency or group.

- Diversity-education
- Replanting program should locate trees strategically. Long range planning.
- Maintenance- “if you can’t maintain, don’t plant.”
- Removing trees when needed.
- Defining areas where trees should be preserved vs. areas for construction.
- Plan for diversity.
- Loss of tree cover from insects, disease. Want “no-net-loss” (right now we’re losing more public trees than we’re gaining, we need to reverse that.)
- Monoculture isn’t always a bad word. Need to understand what diversity means.
- Managing diversity



- Increasing percent canopy cover, particularly near impervious areas
- Maintaining, improving, increasing the canopy
- Types of trees and their maintenance
- Rain gardens- type of trees that work for this.
- Habitat value
- Wood utilization, what to do with trees that need to be cut down.

Does your group/organization have written or unwritten policy, standards or guidelines that are important for us to consider in developing the plan? Would you mind making these available to us?

- UM- tree policy (currently looking at restructuring it). Conservation policy- ranking of trees to be preserved.
- Campus forest management plan (UM)
- State (DNR)- nothing specific unless it's a quarantine
- Sustainable sites initiative (UM)- part of LEED building
- Certain County owned property they don't want woody vegetation along. Maintenance issue. Vegetation concerns along riparian areas, mowing is done to prevent flooding (WCWRC)
- Credit is given for natural areas (WCWRC)

General Questions:

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree planting that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Canopy cover, trees impacting shade on sidewalks and streets
- Plant small stock (easier to do it right, get more for the money), but you have to deal with the issue of people wanting instant gratification
- People need to think about the whole tree life cycle. The beginning and the end of tree life (and human life).
- Taking cuttings from older trees (nursery).
- Technical aspects of proper tree planting.
- Pay attention to the species that are planted. Appropriateness of the detail of tree planting.
- People don't know what the plan is, what their options are. There is a need for education about public tree planting. Pictures on the website would help because some people don't know tree species by name. The City should consider providing education through the water bill.
- Education materials could be provided with the notification for tree removal.
- Target education towards people who have a lot of compost- these people do a lot of yard work.
- Provide maintenance education to people (watering, mulching...)
- Educate people by using the banners on Main Street with urban forest info, direct them to the website.
- Need a counter message to the message given through the millage about street trees
- Watering the trees- gator bags.

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree maintenance and removal that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- DTE/ utilities that impact trees
- Pruning, developing a cycle for this
- Rational approach to how you prioritize removals- can base this off of inventory.
- Standards on who can do work/bid specs

- Volunteers: Organized approach to community members taking on tree maintenance
- Consideration to funding and where you are with your overall plan.

If the plan were to consider making modifications to current policy/requirements for trees on private land, what would you see as potential issues/opportunities?

- Enforcement, regulation
- Incentives to push people to the goals. If you want people to plant trees to increase canopy cover, maybe give a discount on trees, or provide volunteers to help with private maintenance.
- Stormwater management credit for tree planting, or just trees on their property (tree canopy)
- Utilizing extension services and other partnerships
- DTE management of right of ways: some residents may choose an option to pay and have trees in their front yard instead of having DTE hack them in the right-of-way.
- Ownership issues if the City helps plant on private property, the citizens need to know that it is their responsibility to maintain.
- Practical solutions to stormwater management preventing gravel from going into the sewer.

What else do you want us to know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- Need for education filtered down to the citizens.

MEETING NOTES

City of Ann Arbor
Urban Forest Management Plan
Focus Group #1
Residential Groups
Thursday, February 3, 2011
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Attendees: Gus Amaru (Sisters Lakes Watershed Conservation Association), Ann Lund (Broadway Area Neighborhood Association), Edith Bletcher (South Main Neighbors Association), Cynthia Overmyer (Broadway Area Neighborhood Association), David LeRoy (Greater Sunset/Brooks Neighborhood Association), Kathy Stroud (Traver Village), Allison Stupka (The Old West Side Association), James D'Amour (Maplewood Avenue Association)

Contribution through written response: Jim Rogers (Friends of Greenview and Pioneer Nature Area), Marian Laughlin (St. Aidan's Episcopal and Northside Presbyterian Churches), Sue Perry (Virginia Park Neighborhood Assoc)

Ice breaker:

What benefits provided by trees are important to you?

- Shade
- Oxygen
- Photosynthesis
- Aesthetics-beauty (natural aesthetics)
- Fall color from leaves
- Animal shelter/habitat
- Wind break/protection
- Clean air
- To soften developments
- Wild-crafting/Food source for people and animals
- Connection to nature
- History of the area
- Character of big/old trees
- Prevention of soil erosion
- Change of seasons (trees mark this)
- Traffic calming
- Highway noise abatement
- Buffer for pedestrians

Residential Groups Questions:

In your neighborhood do you feel there are too few or too many public trees?

- Old West Side: too few, some taken out and not replaced.
- Broadway: Good amount but could always have more, especially on Broadway Bridge. Some dying and will need to be replaced. Take care of what we have. There is room for more.
- Broadway: Norway maple are invading and taking over. Also may need to add trees in the neighborhood because there are currently trees with poor health. Trees have been taken out for utilities. More trees are needed to soften large complexes put in.
- Lakewood: The commercial part of the neighborhood (W Stadium area) is ugly, very few trees. Trees make more impact than grass and shrubs

- S Main: We have very few mature trees, other than our huge silver maples. Many mature trees are destructed by DTE (topped). Some trees are scheduled for removal. Maintenance is needed for the trees we have.
- NE Ann Arbor (Traverwood, Traver Village): Too few trees, we lost a lot to Emerald Ash Borer. Utilities are below ground so we don't have DTE issues.
- Sunset Brooks: Pruning issues. Natural Area has problems, many fallen trees; public trees in the neighborhood are good.
- Maplewood Neighborhood Association: Trees were planted haphazardly. We have a large number of maple trees. Hit hard by DTE. Hit hard by Emerald Ash Borer.
- Broadway: Many street trees on Broadway are very old and doing well. Concerned about Broadway Bridge trees.
- Old West Side: Most trees look good, but branches of some trees look scary. More concerned about condition than health
- Downtown: Many trees are in poor shape. Could store owners water them? Regarding the lights on trees going in and out, Is it just for aesthetics or commercial purposes? There is a lack of canopy cover downtown.
- The overall number of trees is probably ok, but there are too many older and declining trees, not nearly enough young or mid-age trees.
- Approaching the church coming up Broadway there appears to be a good variety of street trees with a few gaps.
- Too few trees, but it varies depending on location.
- Too few trees. We have Norway maples- invasive, honey suckle, catalpa- out

In your neighborhood, how do you perceive the condition or health of public trees?

- Maplewood: The trees we have left are in good health, but some healthy trees are planned for removal. We need more diversity of the canopy.
- Sunset Brooks: There are power lines over our public trees, now the trees grow sideways. What is the policy about restoring/maintaining trees?
- Northside: New tree plantings are dying on Plymouth Rd, Traver St and Traverwood Library. Gator bags have been left on through the winter.
- Lakewood: Some replacement trees died.
- Broadway: Many trees with branches smashed (Jones St) concerned about them falling on cars. Neilson Flower Shop crab trees look like poor condition. Large spruce trees in Broadway Park are dying. There are smashed trees on Maiden Lane. Concern that the University took out massive trees and replaced them with small ones.
- Overall, poor. No regular maintenance for years. Treated on a crisis basis only
- Most trees appear healthy.
- Generally good. Dying trees are being marked and removed in a reasonable timeframe.
- New plantings dying

Are you satisfied with the quantity and quality of trees where you work and shop in the city?

- One of my concerns is the collapse of box elders along property lines and the continuing spread of invasive species such as ailanthus, buckthorn and honeysuckle. We have been working for a number of years to reduce the number of these trees on the 5 acre property belonging to Northside Presbyterian and St. Aidan's Churches.
- I haven't noticed this much.

- Quantity yes, quality no.

What aspects of current tree planting/maintenance practices are unclear to you? Do you wish to have more information about a particular issue/concern?

- I wish there could be more cooperation on invasive species removal.
- Maintenance of trees as they affect walkers on sidewalks. Pruning is needed where tree branches are lower than 6 feet above sidewalks. If this is to be done by adjacent homeowners, it is not communicated by the City.
- It is unclear what is done by the City and what is contracted.

The City is developing some ‘Citizen-Pruner’ training, how interested would you be in participating in this type of volunteer work?

- Very interested, could do training at our neighborhood group meetings
- Include things like maintaining trees, watering.
- Regarding pruning volunteers, it is one thing to know how to prune a branch for health reasons. It is another thing to have the aesthetic judgment to trim to enhance beauty. Be careful of this!
- Yes, I’m a Master Gardener, Advanced Master Gardener and Urban Tree Steward via MSU Extension. I would like more training.

General Questions:

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree planting that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address? *Staff response at Focus Group in italics.*

- Is it (planting and maintenance) contracted out or done through the City? *Currently the Tree planting is done by City staff.*
- How does tree planting work in the City? *There is a tree planting plan. Areas to plant are identified. Goal: plant 1,000/year. Currently a choice is not given to citizens for replanting. Could pay for tree and get to choose it and then get a tax deduction.*
- Trees are inappropriately planted in the right of way. Addressing this may need to be included in the plan.
- How do we decide if a tree goes into a particular location? *Neighborhood gets lettered and you can call if you don’t want it.*
- In the City’s tree planting manual, one is straight and one is tapered. Need to be clear about the tree planting technique
- Need diversity while honoring “the look” of the neighborhood. We are overdoing some species. Diversity of trees needs to also consider aesthetics in the neighborhood.
- Are you able to keep up? So much was lost to Emerald Ash Borer.
- Is the City coordinating with WCWRC on tree planting? *State Revolving-loan Fund tree planting are done by the City, not the County.*
- I would like to see monthly stats on City website (number, location, and funding sources) for newly planted trees
- Many concerns- depth, watering, root room , etc

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree maintenance and removal that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address? *Staff response at Focus Group in italics.*

- There may be a conflict of interest with Davey Tree; are they marking trees and removing them? *The City does not contract with Davey Tree.*

- Some people like to grow their trees out and then the City came and snipped the branch. Can homeowners be notified that this will take place rather than doing it without notice?
- What should one do if they have a concern about a tree? *Put in a service request via the City website or call Forestry to put in service request.*
- What does the City do with trees planted in parks? (e.g. Broadway). We can't bring water out there. How does the Parks Department maintain these trees (particularly along streets and in parks where there are not adjacent landowners)?
- What are the rights of the landowner to care for the trees that have extended beyond the right of way and into private property? *Request a free permit through the City and then hire a contractor.*
- Without leaf removal, the leaves from the City's trees are now the responsibility of citizens. What are the rights and obligations of the private owners with respect to trees in the right-of-way?
- Will the plan have anything about expectations for 3rd party contractors?
- How does the City decide when to cut down really big trees? *Now there is a tree removal policy. We consult the inventory and take a look at it. Tree assessments are done, pictures are taken.*
- In the UFMP need to say these are our standards for tree removal, just because the homeowner wants it down doesn't mean it will come down.
- Cabling should be considered for very large trees. Landmark trees need this special attention.
- Careful consideration before removing very large/landmark trees
- Who manages and maintains the trees on City owned land that the University maintains? *The Arb is maintained by the University.*
- Decision to not have a tree by one homeowner may conflict with interests of others in the neighborhood. Need to get perspectives from many different people (solar access, ability to grow edible plants in their yard...)
- Ensuring that the budget provides for adequate maintenance, in all respects of our urban forest.
- Tree plantings and maintenance are needed along some streets that are adjacent to public land such as Greenview Park.
- DTE Procedures? Who is responsible? Road builders, bridge contractor, library, university?

If the plan were to consider making modifications to current policy/requirements for trees on private land, what would you see as potential issues/opportunities?

- Zoning permits clashing with forestry interests. Need to work together
- Permits, with prior review by the forestry department or other body, to remove trees over a certain diameter, on private property.
- Encourage landowners (especially large apartment complexes) to start removing buckthorn and honeysuckle. Also if property owners are required to replace trees the city insists on having removed, provide assistance or nursery material.
- Training and/or education for the homeowner is necessary.

What else do you want us to know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- Trees in parks are threatened; the plan needs to address the canopy in the parks.
- That there be a tree ordinance, not a policy—and that this ordinance be enforced by a board of stakeholders.



- Specifically, I would like to see street trees planted along Greenview Drive on the east side, north from Scio Church Road to Barnard Street.

What groups or individuals do you feel should be represented on the Advisory Committee during the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- City staff, public interest groups, neighborhood groups, technical-scientific folks, environmental groups, or most anyone that expresses an interest and has a reasonable stake in this plan.
- Neighborhood groups, owners of large parcels, interested citizens with an environmental background.
- The Friends of Greenview and Pioneer Nature Areas is the neighborhood group that is concerned with Greenview Park, Pioneer Woods and the undeveloped part of the Pioneer High School site.
- Master gardeners, Ann Arbor Garden Club, Co. Health Dept., 4-H Coop-Ext

Is there anything else that you would like us to know?

- My hope is for an ordinance, rather than a “plan” – something that would require adequate funding and be enforceable. I’d like us to truly merit the “tree city” designation. While I believe that staff do the best they can with the limited resources, I know they are hampered by City administrator decisions and directives. Our trees, much like our parks, roads, human services, and many other departments have suffered greatly in the past 10 years. I don’t pretend to understand all the politics and realities involved, but I know that we must, and can, do better. Trees, unlike roads or parks, cannot be readily fixed after 10 years of neglect. I’d like to be part of the solution in some small way.
- I would like to emphasize that zoning/building requirements be made to tie in with the need to landscape our city in a pleasing way. Developers too often take the cheap and easy way out; perhaps citizen-groups could suggest how a property could be made to be more appealing, thus minimizing the massive structures that are being allowed today.
- Has there been any study in the City of Ann Arbor (perhaps in conjunction with UM electrical engineers, etc) to remove overhead wiring to allow our treescape to grow naturally? What is being done world-wide to address this problem? What is the scope of solutions that have been tried? What are the casts?
- The DDA is going wild with signs downtown! Emphasize the trees; don’t outcompete them with all of these obstructions! Is Ann Arbor for its tax-paying residents or for those traveling from out of town? Many residents avoid downtown because the emphasis is on the latter. A convention center instead of a city park/commons is also going in this wrong direction. An Ann Arbor campus for WCC/City Commons/AADL Connection to WCC combination satellite would allow an urban forest design component that was more than mere tourism would be an excellent use.
- Tree pruning companies and nurseries should have representation on the UFMP groups.
- Greater emphasis on the brush species that will provide food resources within our parks. Urban forest policy should prohibit such effectively non-public uses as golf or other sport/ amusement concessions. The wild margins of city parkland should be protected as part of the urban forest.
- Don’t make changes in the neighborhoods without communicating with residents in a meaningful way.
- I’m concerned about AATA/City’s plans for the Plymouth/State corridor. Plymouth is a concrete expanse as it is. There seemed to be a hint it would be widened even more for



rail?? Our neighborhood asked for a treed divider island between opposing lanes of traffic when Plymouth Road was first built. The request stands...

- Reexamine our values. Re: our trees in relationship to movie companies, etc. Our children are being taught a false sense of values.
- What is happening at the bottom of Broadway on the large by Maiden lane? Could there be more trees in this lower area.?
- Are there any measures for controlling deer in forested areas? We have tried to plant materials bought from the Soil Cons. Service and it is difficult to protect them.
- Ann Arbor Garden Club (A2GC) is a stakeholder.
- Traver village/knoll/lakes/woods/apts/condos neighborhood association is a stakeholder.
- Budget issues
- "the plans" authority over construction projects: roads, bridges, parks, university buildings, etc. which impact on trees, the canopy, etc. And other 3rd parties: i.e. DTE etc.
- Consideration of recommendations to keep Holiday Lights on trees to be minimal.

Do you have any suggestions about how to do outreach effectively?

- A page in the observer that lists the public meetings
- Email
- Social media
- Ann arbor.com and chronicle, and monthly observer
- Farmers market
- Neighborhood Associations

MEETING NOTES

City of Ann Arbor
Urban Forest Management Plan
Focus Group #1
Non-Profit Organizations/
Environmental Organizations
Wednesday, February 9, 2011
2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Attendees: **Jeff Plakke** (Nichols Arboretum and Matthaei Botanical Gardens), **Andrea Matthies** (WildOnes), **Neal Foster** (Millers Creek Action Team, Orchard Hills-Maplewood Homeowners Association), **Joel Dalton** (Sierra Club- Huron River Chapter), **Kris Olsson** (HRWC), **Nancy Hart** (Ann Arbor Garden Club), **Bill Lawrence** (Global ReLeaf of Michigan), **Jessica Simons** (SE Michigan RC & D Council/Urban Wood Collaborative), **Michael Conlin** (Ann Arbor Tree Conservancy (AATC)), **Cynthia Rutherford** (Project Grow)

Benefits

- Habitat
- Biodiversity
- Water quality protection
- Connection to nature and history (one of our first and most dramatic)
- Aesthetics
- Sense of place
- Value of wood (after standing purpose)
- Living in, with, near trees makes our day more enjoyable
- Recreation (climbing, swinging, jumping). This is particularly important on school grounds
- Large trees vs. small trees, protection, managing stormwater runoff, processing of pollutants (smog...)
- Educational value
- Urban stormwater mitigation
- Energy conservation
- Carbon adsorption
- Shade. For example: I lost some maples from my lot and it changed from almost never using air conditioning to a lot that gets beat on by the sun. Now the ground is weedy and overrun. It is also more wet now than before.
- Communal vs. private benefits of trees. *The Urban Forest Management Plan* should include what should be preserved and planted and what should be removed.
- Soil conservation
- Increased property value
- Connection to history
- Trees help native plants survive better. Better soil, better environment to grow
- Noxious effects of trees (walnut trees, toxins, invasive species)
- Large trees drop things on the roof
- Protection

Non-Profit Organizations/Environmental Organizations Questions:

What role do you see Non-Profit/Environmental organizations playing in implementing urban forest management activities (ex: tree planting, tree trimming, etc.)?

- Not tree trimming- liability issues



- Tree planting education
- On-going sounding board. Non profits collaborate with the city
- Issue with getting buy-in from people. Responsibility for care (watering)
- Our goal is to get the city on track with where we think they should be
- Volunteers
 - o Tree planting projects
 - o Pruning (to a certain level)– they could help with growth in the way of sidewalks
 - o Watering of trees
- Problems getting homeowners to take care of their trees needs to be addressed
- Leave trees up even after they've died to provide animal habitat, as long as it isn't near a walking path. Piles of brush from pruning also provide good habitat.
- Non-profits could provide maintenance support
- Coordinate a real quantification of the benefits of trees. Net benefits. For every dollar spent on a tree, what do you get back? What about temperature values affected by trees?
- Non profits could help facilitate a survey of trees in the city (including private trees) to know how many of one tree type we have. Educational component.
- Age of trees. They'll all come down at the same time. Need diversity in age. Could have kindergartners plant a couple each year. Could have non-profits adopt a school to help.
- Nature center has an adopt-a-tree program
- Budget constraints. Need to think carefully about using city resources for anything private- but perhaps the non-profits could help with this.
- Non-profits can come in and be the advocates for particular issues. The City facilitates.
- Find funding for City employees. They can leverage grant funding.
- Ways to pilot new ideas through non-profits. E.g. itree (this quantifies the benefits that urban trees provide).
- Recruit volunteers; promote it as an opportunity for education.
- Encourage and help with growing trees on native land.
- Outreach and education- always looking for ways to keep people informed.
- A connection to UM and outreach: Volunteers from student groups around campus. Good for basic labor and larger planting projects.
- Seed collection and propagation: Nonprofits collect seed from native trees and then work with growers.
- Research: if you need to collect a lot of data
- Education coordination: help people understand the process of some things, how they work even if it's not pretty (burning)
- Collaboration and solicitation of volunteers
- Networking among nonprofits
- Nonprofit could help to get the word out about things the City is doing (public meetings)

General Questions:

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree planting that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Trees planted too close together. Need to consider proper spacing, planting for the future
- Tree maintenance from residents for newly planted trees. (currently guidelines are given. A letter is sent)
- Gator bags?



- Some problems may be that people are unable to maintain trees (health issues). They need to know there is a support person, someone they can ask for help; maybe this could be achieved through a partnership with non-profits.
- Tree version of neighborhood watch
- Citizen Tree Steward (the Citizen Pruner Program could evolve to this)
- Diversity
- Native plantings-genotype
- Replacement trees: which types are recommended and available?
- Value of large trees vs. small trees: The quantified value of large trees is something like 5x the value of small trees.
- Consideration for native vs. exotic species. (Currently the City tries to monitor species that they plant)
- Could the City give people a choice about what tree is planted? When people are given a choice of trees they may be more likely to take ownership.
- Forest is more than the trees; could consider shrubs as part of the urban forest. There may be a lot of opportunity for native shrub planting
- Consider ecologically appropriate native species when planting. Carefully consider diversity.
- Keep trending toward natives and away from exotics. It will help in the long run.
- Local growers, diversity of native species, include shrubs, sizes, ecological appropriateness

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree maintenance and removal that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Need for transparency with removals. Whatever policy is in writing should be the policy that is enacted. If there is an issue there should be an open debate about it. (e.g. if someone opposes the removal of a tree that has already been identified as a priority 2 removal)
- Could be a fast track (with checks and balances), something where citizens could ask if they can take the tree down on their own.
- “End of life planning” for trees. Communities are partnering with businesses in a way that the wood that still has value can be used. Helps create a connection to the place. There is a network with Recycle Ann Arbor that works to use wood from urban trees.
- Optimum care for various species. Right tree in the right place.
- Additional public education especially for removal.
- Replace exotics with natives, consider wood utilization/donation

If the plan were to consider making modifications to current policy/requirements for trees on private land, what would you see as potential issues/opportunities?

- Have a human contact that people can go to for info, a guidance resource, and publicize it.
- The City should act as a facilitator for economies of scale. The neighborhoods could be linked with businesses through the City to coordinate a mass buy of trees. The City doesn't even have to spend money on it, they just help by getting people organized to do one big tree purchase.
- Authority of the City is needed for condemnation of trees on private property (there are sometimes problems for abutting neighbors).
- Stormwater utility may provide a link between trees and private property; stormwater credit could be given for tree planting



- A policy is needed for trees on boundaries; this is often where invasive species get started.
- Infrastructure design of streetscapes needs to include more coordination between engineers and forestry. Have right-of-way set up in a way to accommodate utilities and sidewalk and tree planting (set up the right of way in a way that allows the road then utilities, then sidewalk and trees behind sidewalk).
- Information on natives and exotics. Trees on property boundaries?

What else do you want us to know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- The plan could address how often City infrastructure divisions (stormwater, transportation/roads, sewer, water, etc) could coordinate their policies to help encourage trees. E.g. the discussion about the engineering community wanting their easement in the ROW vs. under the street
- The plan could address the benefits and need for keeping impervious surfaces as minimal as possible, which would benefit street trees, improve water quality, etc.
- The plan could encourage not just trees but also shrubs, understory, and ground cover.
- Favor native southeast Michigan trees and shrubs grown by local nurseries if possible
- Phase out exotic species. Do not replace with exotics/replace exotics with natives as they die out
- Stagger replacements with the goal of diverse age classes/uneven aged city forest structure
- City shrub planting could add considerable value to the urban forest

What groups or individuals do you feel should be represented on the Advisory Committee during the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- UM SNRE, the stewardship network, AA NAP

Do you have any suggestions about how to do outreach effectively?

- Passing info to non-profits
- Send info to media outlets
- Gov delivery
- Social media (to lure people to the webpage).
- Network through non-profits
- Look into text notifications
- Flyers at places where people who are interested in trees would go (the garden club)
- Need a volunteer-brainstorm-marketing committee

MEETING NOTES

City of Ann Arbor
Urban Forest Management Plan
Focus Group #1
City Advisory Commissions
Wednesday, February 9, 2011
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Attendees: Jean Carlberg (Planning Commission), John Lawter (Parks Advisory Commission (PAC)), Chuck Hookham (Energy Commission), Chris Graham (Environmental Commission), Rita Mitchell (Alliance of Neighborhoods), James D'Amour (Maplewood Avenue Association)
Contribution through written response: John Mouat (DDA Transportation Committee)

Ice breaker:

What benefits provided by trees are important to you?

- Shade (this can also be a negative for solar energy)
- Mix of trees is critical
- Water management
- Renewable fuel source
- Green space
- Spiritual value (especially the old growth trees)
- Absorb carbon monoxide- reduce air pollution, use trees to clean air
- Provide mulch from the leaves to benefit gardens
- Air quality
- Aesthetics
- Traffic calming
- Habitat for animals
- Sense of community
- Impact on climate/carbon in the atmosphere
- Cooling
- Wind barriers
- Energy benefits
- Noise barrier
- Soil erosion
- Groundwater recharge (trees soak water into the soil)
- Breaking up clay soil
- Compost from leaves
- Aesthetic enhancement of the urban environment
- Environmental benefits for storm water, air, and biodiversity
- Shade and rain screening for buildings and people
- Support the image of Ann Arbor as the "tree city"

City Advisory Commissions Questions:

Are there written or unwritten policy, standards or guidelines that are important for us to consider in developing the plan? Would you mind making these available to us?

- Parks has a plan (PROs plan)
- NAP: restores and manages native forest
- Natural Features Master Plan (identify the City's natural areas and natural features). Trying to persuade people to minimize turf grass. Package this approach with the UFMP.
- Energy-solar map
- Sustainability Plan (from the Home Depot Grant- just getting underway).
- Reduce stormwater runoff, required by the State and Federal government. Planting trees with consideration to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Ordinances to require canopy cover, trees. Need changes.
- There are Creekshed plans



- Group working on supporting street trees (AATC-Virginia Park)
- Landmark trees, see to it that they are cared for
- Choosing building sites, where will utilities go, need to place trees somewhere where they will not be disturbed by this.
- As a representative of the DDA our primary interest is in overall vibrancy and health of downtown. I am not aware of any particular policies, standards, or guidelines we have regarding landscaping but a few factors to take into account for downtown may be:
 - o There is a lot of competition for the downtown streetscape including vehicles lanes, parking, taxi stands, bicycle lanes, left turn lanes, pedestrian sidewalks, sandwich boards, restaurant seating, merchant displays, bicycle parking, art fair and other events, lighting, fire hydrants, etc. The planning for locating of urban trees in this context is critical.
 - o We work with Republic Parking on plant materials at parking structures and lots
- Nitty gritty factors impacting trees such as use for holiday lighting, watering, chaining bicycles, breaking off of low lying limbs, etc. are important to address

If you believe that the City could improve the quality of the urban forest, are there specific goals/targets that it should strive for? Or are there any specific communities that we should be looking at?

- Where to put trees so that they will survive, and so that they have the impact that we want them to have. Use of private property to achieve the same thing?
- Right tree for the right place.
- Greater diversity of tree planting
- Open space guidelines to emphasize natural features
- There is a challenge in areas where there currently are not sidewalks- when those sidewalks go in, need consideration for trees.
- We need to select the most appropriate trees for the area. Need education about tree species, exotic species.
- Don't try to make blanket goals for the whole City, need it to be specific to an area
- Minimize impervious areas including turf grass; convert those areas to water absorbing plant material.
- Zoning requirements for tree planting. The City has the most leverage when projects go to site plan review. Limitation on the amount of land that can be cleared.
- DTE-better management when they come through. They damage trees.
- Be smart about what to plant where, on a case by case basis (don't put fast growing trees under utility wires).
- Can start putting utility wires underground.
- Instead of butchering the trees maybe the tree should be taken down and DTE should replace it somewhere else.

Do you anticipate any major implementation barriers (i.e. public concerns, funding questions) to adopting an Urban Forest Management Plan?

- Economic barriers
- Need transparency in the process. More focus groups, public comment at advisory committee.
- Keep website updated with materials as UFMP progresses.
- Use resources, the AnnArbor.com
- Be aggressive but realistic with the timeline
- Include funding sources in the plan
- Volunteer days for tree planting?

- Private funding- trees planted by homeowners in their front yard. Are there incentives for private tree planting? PACE?
- Who will clean up leaves?
- Sure, this is Ann Arbor after all.

General Questions:

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree planting that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Diversity
- Limited palette of trees that is available to plant. This list in our climate is more and more limited. We need better care for the trees that we already do have. New trees take a lot to make them grow.
- Routine care- could mean drip irrigation, rain gardens on property to water trees with.
- Develop design guidelines for tree care.
- Impact on sidewalks from tree roots- there may be some places you can't plant trees. Consider cultural conditions.
- Trainings. Stewards of trees, need to spread resources effectively and not overlap.
- A small group of City employees operating a volunteer program could have a huge effect.
- The UFMP should include a historic component- talk about what was here before.
- Ability to keep trees alive and thriving in an downtown urban environment
- Ongoing maintenance – who, how, etc.
- Appropriate species in terms of scale, ornamental vs. shade, attractive to birds, maintenance, etc.
- Use with other forms of landscaping (e.g. natural grasses, native species, etc.)
- Projects costs and funding sources

Are there particular issues or opportunities related to public tree maintenance and removal that you feel the Urban Forest Management Plan should address?

- Concerns about who is marking and who removes trees.
- Notice given for tree removal
- There's not enough money to keep up with what's needed, we assume that's temporary
- Need to plant tree species that will be maintained, so the newly planted trees won't die off. Could die because the soils are poor (need better soil put in) and watering for the trees.
- Private side may be able to help public, but need to know what they are allowed to do.
- Could implement signage and recognition program for groups that take on care for landscape islands. Pride in ownership.
- Opportunity to consider the appropriateness and nature of downtown parks

If the plan were to consider making modifications to current policy/requirements for trees on private land, what would you see as potential issues/opportunities?

- Threat: what 'sticks' would be used. Sanctions for an invasive or non-native tree?
- Regulation available through property and site plan process. Development review process.
- Turfgrass reduction, savannah restoration- coordinate voluntary groups. Give trees at a discount.
- Portion of the city that was once farmed. Not native trees. What do you do to restore the native landscape?
- Would not mandate anything on private property, give incentives and encouragement.

- Partner with the county. Provide a visual demonstration
- Education-include something in schools.
- Garden tour at places that have done these things successfully
- I would need to get caught up on current policy/requirements to answer this question.

What else do you want us to know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- What can we do now? What in the future? Long range planning. What will we do in the future when we have more money (action strategies with different phasing)
- Single-family and multi-family are exempt from site plan review; I don't think that they should be. Redevelopment can cause trees to die from parking on the roots.
- Would like active use of the survey and measuring the tree quality over time. Maybe some fair condition trees can be elevated to good. What are the steps to get there?
- Partnerships with landscapers to achieve this.
- Grab good elements of all different programs and make ours the best.
- Greater incentive for stormwater credits, and need education for this. Acceptance criteria need to be decreased.
- Perhaps there should be special sidewalk considerations for certain trees. Pervious pavement? Rubber sidewalks?
- I would like to see the professional planners

What groups or individuals do you feel should be represented on the Advisory Committee during the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- There are a lot of stakeholders downtown of course. One piece to think about is the role of the BIZ (Business Improvement Zone). In the last year Main Street has created a BIZ and it is the hope of the DDA that more will come along.

Is there anything else we should know about in developing the Urban Forest Management Plan?

- One piece that may be helpful for you to be aware of is that the DDA has a Transportation Committee which is concerned with both personal transportation (walking, biking, driving, etc.) as well as public transportation (busses, trains, etc.). The urban forest is relevant and I would offer that committee as a link to communicating with the DDA on this project. It may be worthwhile to ask you to meet with us at some point in the process.

Do you have any suggestions about how to do outreach effectively?

- Write a draft ordinance- indicate that you want to prohibit turf-grass in areas greater than 500 sq ft
- Tie ribbons around trees and say "come to this meeting to see what's going to happen to this tree"
- Social media- facebook, twitter
- AnnArbor.com or Ann Arbor journal to do a story to show what's going on and tie it to a meeting