

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Parks Recreation and Cultural Services / Tree Board Work Plan
DEPARTMENT:	Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services
PRESENTED BY:	Dick Deal, PRCS Director Bill Clements, PRCS / Tree Board Chairman

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT:

Annually the Parks Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS)/Tree Board creates a work plan to help guide the work of the Board and staff on projects and issues that fall under the purview of the Board as identified in the Capital Improvement Plan and/or general fund operating budget. The addition of Tree Board responsibilities in 2012 has added to the work load, and it is important that the PRCS Board and staff work together to manage expectations of a community that is excited about opportunities for parks, programs and managing our environment.

Attached (Attachment A) is the 2013 PRCS/Tree Board Work Plan as approved at the January 24 PRCS Board meeting. Staff expects modifications to the work plan as unexpected opportunities arise. Tasks related to Tree Board work are identified on the plan in a bold font.

Work items on the Plan are separated into quarters to help staff manage the work load and expectations. In April there will be a transition on the PRCS Board with three to five new adult members as a result of one member relocating to another state, two long-term members needing to be replaced because of term limits (three 4-year terms), and two members with current terms expiring. Both of those members with current terms expiring are eligible for re-appointment. Staff will spend time at the April and May PRCS Board meetings reviewing current projects to update existing members and educate new members. In June staff will also provide an update on the park and recreational components of the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and seek input from the Board as staff initiates the 2014-2019 CIP process.

The work plan discussion will be shared by the PRCS Director, Dick Deal, and PRCS/Tree Board Chair, Bill Clements. In addition Elizabeth Walker, an urban tree consultant, will present the findings of her review of the 2003 Urban Forest Management Plan study the City had completed by ACRT (Attachment B). The 2003 study evaluated the majority of right-of-way trees in Shoreline and included public tree management recommendations. Ms. Walker will share her recommendations based on her review of the study and current existing conditions of the City's public trees. She will also address two work plan items that were funded by grants from the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources. One grant is for a right-of-way tree inventory and the other is for the development of an Urban Tree Management Strategy.

Both will be helpful in the development of a long range plan to care for the City's urban trees.

Although Ms. Walker's recommendations include a review of the City's street tree ordinance, many of the items suggested by Ms. Walker can be explored administratively with staff and the Tree Board as opposed to requiring Council action.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

All items identified in the work plan that require funding have been budgeted for in the 2013 – 2019 Capital Improvement Plan or 2013 General Fund Operating Budget. At this time staff does not anticipate additional funding will be needed to complete these tasks. However the development of plans or strategies identified in the work plan may require a financial commitment in a future Capital Improvement Plan or operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION

This is a discussion item and no Council acting is needed at this time.

Approved By: City Manager **JU** City Attorney **IS**

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - 2013 PRCS / Tree Board Work Plan
Attachment B – Terra Firma Consulting Assessment

2013 PRCS / Tree Board Work Plan

Approved by Board at the January 24, 2013 meeting

Q-1 January - March

- Review Shoreline Urban Forest Findings Report
- Plan Arbor Day event
- Review Earth Corps Holly Strategy
- Receive First Tree City USA Designation
- Quarterly Update on Tree Work and permit activity
- Host Sunset School Park Community Meeting

Q-2 April - June

- Training of new Board members on Parks, Arts, Tree, and Recreational work of Dept.
- **Quarterly Update on Tree Work and permit activity**
- Discuss Regional Trail Signage Strategy
- Review Shoreline Pool Assessment
- Recommend Pesticide Use Policy for Council Approval
- Shoreline CC Joint Use Agreement Review
- Appoint Arts Committee Members
- Approve Sunset School Phase 1 improvements

Q-3 July - September

- **Quarterly Update on Tree Work and permit activity**
- Review of Alcohol in Parks Policy
- **Begin Update of ROW Tree inventory (if grant received from DNR)**
- **Begin work on Urban Tree Management Strategy (if grant received from DNR or other funding source)**

Q-4 October - December

- Review Ordinance 627 and ROW Tree list
- **Quarterly Update on Tree Work and permit activity**
- Shoreline School District Joint Use Agreement Review

Tree Board Work Plan Items in **bold** print

Terra Firma Consulting

Sound ~ Sustainable ~ Strategic

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January 17, 2013

Dick Deal, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director
17544 Midvale Avenue North
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Shoreline Urban Forest Strategic Plan – Findings Report

Resource Assessment

Critical review of Tree Inventory & Management Plan (ACRT, 2003)

In 2003, the City of Shoreline contracted ACRT to “conduct a street tree inventory and develop a management plan.” I reviewed the two documents produced by ACRT and have the following findings:

- The tree inventory was partial in that no median plantings or “street trees” in The Highlands or Innis Arden were included. Still they collected data of 14,226 trees and 1505 planting sites.
- Tree locations were mapped using GPS, and these maps were supplied electronically to the City in April 2003. This information is available on the city GIS system, but has not been updated since 2003. Several trees have been removed and hundreds planted along Aurora and other ROW improvements.
- The methodology for determining which trees to include in areas with no sidewalks or planter strips assumed the edge of the ROW was 30 feet from the center line of the road. The center line is not always in the middle of the ROW and in places is 40 feet wide, not 60 ft. As a result the data should be considered a guideline with a detailed investigation as needed.
- The result on species composition was not surprising with native conifers (Douglas fir and Western red cedar) dominating. Most of these trees appear to be in unimproved ROW where there is no curb, gutter, and/or sidewalk.
- The size class distribution showed over 75% of the population was small trees (less than 12” diameter). Over the last decade we should expect some of these trees are now of significant size requiring re-evaluation.

- The methodology to determine the tree maintenance recommendations is confusing as they did specifically connect the condition status of each tree to recommendations. There was no standard hazard tree evaluation protocol given to explain the Priority ratings for removals or maintenance work.
- The methodology to determine the condition of the trees was based on criteria used for tree appraisal method, which is confusing, and their ratings appear to be inconsistent or not helpful. While they stated that “Trees ranked as ‘immediate’ have some defect or other condition that requires attention from City staff,” details of the defect are missing. Another statement “some street trees ranked ‘poor’ are expected to continue to decline over time unless extensive maintenance is performed.” It is unclear as to what would be recommended with these trees and why.
- It appears that maintenance recommendations and priorities are mixed with what is needed to reduce liability versus what is needed to improve a tree’s health.
- Based on a casual referral of the inventory, it appears that some significant trees in inventoried areas were not included.
- The Management Plan document is nothing more than a compilation of available resources around tree management at the time. There was no customization of the information for the City of Shoreline.

Windshield survey of Priority Areas

On a quick drive-by with Kirk Peterson on November 20th, it was apparent that we need to incorporate sidewalk issues on the major arterials as part of our management strategy and priorities. Without the resources to address tree issues throughout Shoreline, one strategy to consider is ROW tree maintenance on major arterials as first priority:

- East-West – 145th (north side), 155th, 175th, 185th, 205th (south side)
- North-South – 8th AV NW, Meridian AV N, 5th AV NE, 15th AV NE, 25th AV NE

Sidewalk problems can certainly be included in the street tree inventory database to help prioritize management. Public Works staff is aware of the worst areas, but because of very limited funds, has been unable to address most of the problematic sidewalk issues.

Clarify existing staff resources for urban forestry activity

After speaking with Kirk Peterson, it is clear to me that the existing staff cannot be relied upon to sufficiently handle ROW tree maintenance or respond effectively to street tree issues. The one certified arborist on the maintenance staff with the existing workload does not allow for tree work to be done adequately in-house.

Other urban forestry tasks needed to be done include Tree Board administration/support, ordinance review and amendments, tree permit review (by a qualified professional), and public outreach/education (including Arbor Day coordination) and working with Seattle City Light on tree issues affecting power lines.

Review of recent Urban Tree Canopy Report

According to the UTC report, in 2009, the City Council specifically directed the Planning Commission and staff to:

“Establish a baseline urban forest canopy city-wide. This baseline would provide the context for the Council to make a policy decision ... about a long-range City target for desired tree canopy. The target could be no-net loss of a city-wide percentage of canopy, or an increase or decrease of some magnitude, keyed to specific schedules. With such a baseline and target in place, the City could then monitor the overall City canopy, say every 5 years, to assess its health and identify any further programs or code amendments as needed.”

Also in the report’s introduction, the tree canopy assessment *“will serve as the benchmark from which to measure the success of planning and urban forestry programs and to educate the public about the many benefits of trees.”*

The use of this report and its findings will be important when developing a more comprehensive strategic plan for the City’s urban forestry program. The current canopy cover of ~30% is commendable and can be used to justify the need for funding to maintain the existing tree population as well as reduce liability and enhance the many benefits the trees provide to the community. Shoreline is fortunate to have that amount of canopy cover, but it is obvious that a strategy needs to be developed to be sure it is maintained or grows. Canopy cover is one measure, but determining the health of that cover and giving it the maintenance needed is equally important.

Recommended Actions

- Apply for a tree inventory grant with WA DNR for an initial tree inventory (10,000 trees). With this grant, Shoreline will be able to:
 - Update tree inventory data on major arterials or priority trees and areas in the city (significant sidewalk issues, large priority 1 removal trees from 2003, etc.)
 - Evaluate the software used and determine if appropriate to purchase.
 - Consider incorporating into the new Asset Management system to continue inventory collection and database management.
- Apply for a community assistance grant with WA DNR to develop a more comprehensive strategic plan for Shoreline’s Urban Forestry program. The project would include:
 - A facilitated retreat with the Tree Board to identify vision and key objectives for an urban forestry program.
 - Outline options to increase the City’s capacity to manage an on-the-ground urban forest management program (short-term, long-term, budget implications)

- Refine the city-wide goals for the urban forest program and incorporate the Urban Tree Canopy findings to support these goals and justify budget.
 - Review of city street tree ordinance to determine possible amendments to such elements as tree list, street tree categories (improved vs. unimproved ROW), and permit and review process.
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- Utilize the current tree work budget to leverage for more funding to address the high-priority tree work (safety) identified in the updated inventory; consider bidding out the work for fourth quarter 2013.

Successful awarding of the state grants will impact how the City can proceed.
If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth", followed by a long horizontal flourish.