

**City of San Diego
Community Forest Advisory Board**

MEETING MINUTES
August 8, 2012
Civic Center Plaza Building

Convene: Anne Fege, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:45 a.m. The purpose of the meeting was to gather information for the draft Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP). No regular business was conducted at the meeting.

Attendees: Members – Anne Fege, Fausto Palafox, Robin Rivet, Jon Becker, Jake Banfield-Weir, Victoria Heithaus, Mary Johnson, Tershia d’Elgin

[Not Present] – Stephen Lamprides, Craig Jones

Guests – John Melvin and Lynnette Short (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection-CalFire), Guy Pruess (Skyline/Paradise Hills CPG), Ty Sterns (Urban Corps), and Jim Stone (Walk San Diego)

City Staff – Drew Potocki, Alex Hempton, Craig Hooker, Jeff Harkness

Parameters of UFMP. The plan needs to clearly identify the scope, including trees on public property and/or private property; whether city open space is included or excluded; and number years it covers. The plan should connect to (not repeat or revise) other city plans, such as climate action plans, Multi-species Conservation Plans, and park plans. A rough outline and first draft was provided and reviewed, and considerable guidance offered by Lynnette Short and John Melvin.

Benefits of trees, chapter 1. Include recent research on the effect of street trees on retail sales, property values, and tax revenue based on increased property values. This section should also include threats to the health and integrity of the City’s urban forest. The benefits of the City’s trees are estimated in the San Diego Tree Map, based on calculations set up in iTreeStreets model in www.itreetools.org. Ask Walk San Diego to summarize findings from local “walkability audits,” that all highlight the benefits of trees and shade.

Sources of information for urban forest assets, chapter 1. The San Diego Tree Map (www.sandiegotreemap.org) has individual tree data that was obtained from the parks department, maintenance assessment districts, street trees, and other sources. It uses formulas from the i-Tree Eco model in www.itreetools.org. It may be incomplete or inaccurate because some trees may not be entered (i.e. Balbao Park), some may already be removed, and others may have grown since the last inventory.

State-level analyses of tree cover were completed by the USDA Forest Service, including California (Novak and Greenfield 2010). It uses formulas from the iTree Canopy model in www.itreetools.org. Tree, shrub, grass, and non-permeable surfaces are derived from satellite or aerial photography captures all trees (not just those entered into database) but with low resolution.

It may be important to compare the tree inventory data, the satellite-based tree cover estimates, and the actual/complete field inventory of trees. Field data from randomly located plots in a community could be collected (perhaps with Urban Corps teams), and [i-Tree Eco](http://www.itreetools.org) used to calculate

tree numbers, biomass, and tree cover. The data for each of these plots would be compared to the data from the tree inventory and the tree cover estimates.

Current policies and regulations, chapter 2. The Policies Working Group will review the draft text on what to include (delete or add some) for this UFMP. They will also identify policies that need to be changed, and will be reviewed in light of California Urban Forest Management Act of 1978, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=prc&group=04001-05000&file=4799.06-4799.12>.

Analyses, chapter 3.

- Compare the tree cover in various communities, with demographic profiles (income, diversity). Refer to the Parks for Everyone report (The San Diego Foundation 2010) that identifies neighborhoods where residents have low access to green space (less than 3 acres/1000 people).
- Calculate the street tree density in various communities. The number of trees in each planning community (from San Diego Tree Map) can be converted into the number of trees per street mile by dividing by the miles of streets from a “streets” layer. Drew and Craig will work with GIS staff (perhaps Alex Maguel) to pull these layers and report by community.
- Compare tree cover, tree cover per capita, and other information from other cities (data files for California at <http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/35993>).
- Analyses of urban forest management programs in 20 cities are posted at http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/uesd/uep/research/studies_detail.php?ProjID=151.
- Consider this a needs assessment. What is the canopy cover desired? What street tree density is desired? How many trees are needed to achieve these, and where are the vacant/plantable sites? What are the management actions and costs for maintaining this urban forest?
- Gather examples of tree planting and urban forestry initiatives that other cities have successfully implemented

Costs of managing trees, chapter 3.

- Data from Streets division, historical information, line items in City’s budget
- Get cost data from recent contracts to MADs and parks, and bids from new citywide treecare contract (when awarded)
- Review budget history (last decade) to provide information on costs of managing the City’s trees. Some of this is being assembled by the Finances Working Group of CFAB, based on data requested from and provided by various City staff
- Review and apply research/publications relating to benefits and costs of urban forests, at <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/uesd/uep/research/studies.php?TopicID=2>.

Tree management activities and organization, chapter 3.

- Consider roles of various departments, both in the City and in other cities
- Address coordination among planners, engineers and arborists
- Consider technical/arborist direction for tree maintenance programs (by City staff, in most cities), and oversight of City crews and contractors
- Consider technical and contractual approach to tree maintenance (is contractor paid for each tree trimmed, or paid the same for each tree assessed whether it is trimmed or doesn’t need trimming?)

- Enforcement of development permits. Since 1985, the City has required commercial and residential development to maintain the landscape elements that were approved. This includes maintaining trees (trimming, watering) and replacing if removed or dead, but has not been enforced.
- Consider additional actions that will be required for “complete streets” under January 2012 law that requires cities to include complete streets policies in their General Plan revisions.

Action plan, chapter 4.

Still need to outline this, look at UFMPs from other cities

Possible grant for UFMP elements. CalFire has issued a request for proposals that include preparation of a municipality’s UFMP, to be submitted by September 19, 2012. Guidelines at http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/CALFIRE_UFGrants_Mgmt.Plan_2012_2013.pdf , and the application is posted at

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/downloads/CAL%20FIREConceptProposal12_13_Mgmt.pdf.

Ongoing efforts (such as this UFMP effort) may increase likelihood of funding. A list of conditions must be met for a proposed urban forestry management plan to be eligible for a grant. Some are already met, others will require some decisions by City staff or City Council and must be confirmed when the formal proposal is submitted on in early 2013 (based on CalFire review of the pre-proposal and invitation to submit a formal proposal). These conditions are the most critical:

- Grant requests must be for establishing a new management plan or updating an existing management plan.
- Applicant must show proof of having an existing urban forester, arborist, or other qualified position responsible for urban forest resources.
- The applicant has complied (and will comply) in all respects with all applicable local and county ordinances, and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- There shall be a provision for periodic review of the management plan.
- Grant recipient must demonstrate how they will implement and utilize the “Management Plan”.
- Grant recipient must agree to refer to the “Management Plan” as a guiding policy document in an ordinance, a general plan element, or another binding way as approved by CalFire staff.
- Grant recipient must provide an electronic and printed copy of the “Management Plan” to CalFire Urban & Community Forestry at the conclusion of the grant.

Draft sections of UFMP. The following sections need to be revised and submitted to the Chair by September 15, who will assemble them in a draft revised UFMP by October 1 and forward to CFAB members. They will be discussed briefly and then adopted at the October 11 meeting.

- Benefits of urban trees, chapter 1 (Education/Outreach Working Group)
- Tree inventory and tree cover, chapter 1 (Robin, Drew and Anne)
- Policies and regulations, chapter 2 (Policies Working Group)
- History of urban forestry funding, chapter 3 (Finance/Partnerships Working Group)
- Calculation of street tree density in various communities (Drew, Craig, perhaps Alex Maguel)

Community Forest Advisory Board
August 8, 2012 meeting, page 4

References:

- The San Diego Foundation. 2010. Parks for everyone: Green access for San Diego County. 24 p. http://www.sdfoundation.org/Portals/0/Newsroom/PDF/Reports/parkforeveryone_finalsm.pdf. Accessed 8/9/12.
- Nowak, D.J. and E.J. Greenfield. 2010. Urban and community forests of the Pacific region: California, Oregon, Washington. Gen. Tech. Rep. NRS-65. Newtown Square, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northern Research Station. 38 p. At http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/pubs/gtr/gtr_nrs65.pdf. Accessed 8/9/12.

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 pm.