

GOALS AND POLICIES

OF THE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. GOAL – Preserve, restore, maintain, and enhance a vibrant, healthy and diverse community forest within Lake Forest Park consisting of both native and non-native landscape components.

Policies:

A. Establish a citywide minimum canopy cover standard of 43% (equal to the baseline study of 2004).

B. Adopt the American Forests Pacific Northwest Canopy Goals of 50% for Suburban Residential zones, 25% for Urban Residential zones and 15% for Business Districts as minimum benchmarks for the various neighborhoods and land uses.

C. Base decisions for preserving trees and re-vegetation on privately owned lands upon the requirements of individual lot development sites, considering criteria necessary for maintaining healthy, safe trees in a community forest. Ensure that trees planned for preservation or replanting can be integrated with expected land uses for each zoning classification.

D. Develop a Tree Planting and Maintenance program for public-owned property which prioritizes the use of native trees (conifer and deciduous); replaces dead, diseased and damaged trees; and ensures an increase the canopy cover on public properties.

E. Develop a plan for the future planting of mitigation trees (resulting from land use planning decisions) on public-owned property and on City rights-of-ways in collaboration with property owners. Provide a coordinated, deliberative approach on selection of preferred native tree species, with a diversity of species, sizes, and aesthetic quality.

F. Identify the values and services that trees provide to both property owners and to the community and use this data in developing the Community Forest Management Plan to preserve and enhance the community forest of Lake Forest Park.

2. GOAL - Create a Community Forest Management Plan that is easily understood, has community support, has clearly defined parameters for application and enforcement, is attainable, educates our citizens, and promotes pride in our Tree City USA and our City Community Wildlife Habitat certifications.

Policies:

- A.** Develop a Tree Protection and Replacement Ordinance that is easy to administer and minimizes the burden of the permit application process on the property owner.
- B.** Develop an ordinance with enforcement provisions that are fair, based upon professional evaluation, and promotes the vision of the Community Forest Management Plan. The enforcement program should include mitigation fees and fines for noncompliance. Mitigation fees shall be based upon a fair value of the trees lost, including a value for community services that trees provide, and the replacement cost of trees. Fines shall be based on noncompliance. Mitigation fees and fines shall be used to support the City’s Community Forest Management Plan through maintenance and planting of trees on public owned property and to offset the cost of providing City Arborist services to property owners.
- C.** Provide a streamlined permit process for the removal of hazard trees.
- D.** Require tree service companies that wish to do business in Lake Forest Park to:
 - Obtain a Business License for tree services in Lake Forest Park.
 - Attest that they have read and will abide by the Tree Regulations
- E.** Develop a schedule of fines for non-compliance by tree service companies.
- F.** Develop within the Community Forest Management Plan a public education feature that promotes Lake Forest Park's certification as a Tree City USA and City Urban Wildlife Habitat and provides support to citizens and community groups concerning tree issues. The education of the City’s citizens of the benefits that trees provide to the community and the proper maintenance and preservation of trees should be part of this plan.
- G.** Actively inform new residents of expectations for tree emphasis and tree regulations.
- H.** Work with private and public entities to create partnerships for developing education and community action programs promoting the value of establishing maintaining and conserving native vegetation and habitats.

3. GOAL – Recognize and address human and property safety concerns in the Community Forest Management Plan.

Policies:

- A.** Assure that public safety issues are considered by a qualified tree professional when developing plans for tree protection, preservation or landscaping design.

B. Assure that tree species are considered for their adaptation to the City’s environmental conditions, are resistance to disease, and are compatible with the planned use of the site.

C. Provide for :

- Periodic inspection and maintenance of trees on public owned land and street trees to promote healthy well-formed and functional tree resources.
- Removal and replacement of dead, dying, or diseased trees; and where appropriate leaving snags for wildlife habitat.

Provide City Arborist (s) at cost, for considerations of tree issues on individual lots during new permit applications and review.

4. GOAL – Preserve, restore, maintain, and enhance the tree canopy in developed areas by integrating the Community Forest Management Plan.

Policies:

A. Require developed residential lots to maintain a certain minimum canopy/tree count over the long term in accordance with the Community Forestry Management Plan. This minimum standard should be based upon the zoning designation, the size and design of the individual lot, and the longevity of the trees planted. The Plan shall provide a certain amount of flexibility for individual lot owners to allow for individual tastes and landscaping preferences and needs.

B. Adopt the monitoring plan in the Sensitive Area Ordinances and apply it to new trees required in landscaping plans or mitigation trees that are the responsibility of the landowner.

5. GOAL – Preserve, restore, maintain, and enhance tree canopy in new development plans by the integration of the Community Forest Management Plan principles.

Policies:

A. Coordinate the requirements of the zoning and subdivision ordinances to support Lake Forest Park’s Community Forest Management Plan:

- To provide an expectation for a certain percentage of tree cover over the long term following the development
- To promote preservation or establishment of preferred species and tree stands.

B. Use strategies such as designation of tree tracts, preserving and planting trees in common areas, and landscaping of individual lots with tree cover to meet the tree density/canopy requirement.

- C. Integrate the Community Forest Management plan early during subdivision planning to consider tree protection, tree preservation and/or replacement, prior to preliminary approval.
- D. Apply a requirement of tree count/canopy cover during plan review, prior to final approval of the Planning Department. These original requirements shall also be continuously applied to individual lots as new building permits for these lots are applied for and approved.
- E. Allow flexibility in the landscaping plan of development sites to preserve areas of native vegetation where appropriate or create areas of native vegetation.

6. GOAL - Preserve and maintain native forest components in areas conducive to the life cycle of native plants, such as critical areas (wetland and habitat areas and buffers), parks, and other areas that can be naturalized.

Policies:

- A. Preserve native trees and promote the planting of new native trees in all designated privately owned land that contains Sensitive Areas and their buffers.
- B. Preserve native trees and promote the planting of new native trees in all large buffer areas preserved or created for the separation of one land use category from another.

7. GOAL – Promote the wise and flexible use of native trees and plant species in considering the nature of the urban and suburban zoning classifications and limitations particular zones and uses have on the preservation of indigenous trees.

Policies:

- A. Encourage the retention of existing trees and tree stands to the maximum extent possible in the planning of the development of larger lot areas. The use of native conifers, where practicable, should be emphasized.
- B. Replant and maintain non-native landscaping in areas of urban density and intensity where the natural life cycle of native vegetation conflict with the built environment.
- C. Develop specific forestry landscape expectations and standards for each land use classification. The Community Forest Management Plan should consider suburban/urban requirements and limitations pertaining to community forestry. Apply these requirements when making decisions for tree preservation or replanting.

D. Recognize that development on small lots may necessitate a reduced emphasis on preserving existing trees because of the physical development constraints and higher density. These areas should be planned for intensive re-vegetation with an appropriate combination of native and non-native species.

E. Property owners should be encouraged to retain existing trees to the maximum extent possible in the development of larger lot areas. The use of native conifers, where practicable, should be emphasized. However, efforts for preservation, particularly evergreen trees, should also recognize individual preference for residential landscaping.

F. Development projects anticipating intense development with little opportunity for saving existing trees due to significant grading, utility provisions, access and parking lot area should emphasize a site design that preserves selected tree stands with dedicated tree tracts and significant replanting of preferred tree species throughout the site.

G. Emphasize preservation of existing trees, where practicable; consideration of tree health and longevity and should be emphasized as well as the re-planting of native vegetation and evergreens where re-vegetation is necessary.

H. Require use of trees in pedestrian areas, particularly where required in design criteria for pedestrian access across parking lots, to provide a canopy over walkways.

8. GOAL: Promote improved wildlife habitat in Lake Forest Park

Policies:

A. Give special emphasis to the selection of native trees and vegetation which are well adapted to our area and which will provide food and cover for birds, fish and other wildlife in making landscape planning decisions.

9. GOAL - Create a citizen advisory board for community forestry issues.

Policies:

A. Create a Community Forest Management Plan Advisory Committee as a standing committee of the Environmental Quality Commission.

B. This Advisory Committee would include selected members of the EQC Commission and the Community Services Commission, tree specialists, and citizens of Lake Forest Park who are representative of the scope of community forestry issues in our city.

C. The Advisory Committee would be directed to monitor the effectiveness of the Community Forest Management Plan and to issue a status report annually to Council.