



2017 Tree Board Annual Report

In April 2017, Lake Forest Park (LFP) City Council interviewed and voted to accept Mayor Johnson ‘s candidates to form a new Tree Board, and therefore meet one of the key requirements of being a Tree City USA. The new Tree Board began regular monthly meetings in July 2017. In August, the Tree Board, after making a slight modification to the Work Plan proposed by the Planning Department, voted to approve their 2017 Work Plan, which the Planning department submitted to City Council for their approval. The board also interviewed and voted to accept a new member who lives outside the city of LFP: Tom Hanson, bringing the number from seven to eight members.

The purpose of this document is to report on Tree Board Work Plan accomplishments in 2017.

1. Tree Planting and Maintenance Events (40%)

#1 Task: Watering young trees planted by the previous Tree Board in 2016 on the Burke Gilman Trail. Beginning in August, Tree Board members worked with staff to coordinate the process of acquiring watering sources from businesses adjacent to the trail, watering supplies (City supplied buckets, wheelbarrows, 100-foot hoses, safety vests, cones, and gloves). Tree Board and citizen volunteers carried water to approximately 40 young, at-risk trees during the very hot, dry summer. The watering-parties continued bi-weekly through September. Total number of volunteer hours: 42.5.¹

Outcome: All watered trees survived. Besides watering, the fact that volunteers also removed choking invasives, tagged trees (in an effort to prevent County trail workers from mowing them down), and donated mulch made the critical difference in the trees’ survival.

Lessons Learned: Although the watering events were publicized on the city’s website, coordination with City’s volunteer coordinator might lead to more robust volunteer attendance.

#2 Task: Planting trees from Seattle City Light street tree voucher program. After discussions with the full Tree Board to explore project parameters and identify locations in the right-of-way that could benefit from having trees, a small subcommittee took on the tasks of developing project plan and creating outreach to property owners, selecting appropriate tree species, coordinating with Public Works and 811, and sourcing and storing the trees.

¹ Karen’s “pre-official” watering at 2 hrs for 5 people (e.g. 10 person-hours); Julia’s 32.5

Outcome: Project planning complete. Letters sent to 45 residents to enlist their support for watering the new trees.

Lessons Learned: Having access to the previous Tree Board’s project plans and outreach could speed project implementation.

2. Advise Council on city-wide tree canopy studies and Tree Fund spending priorities. (30%)

#1 Task: Identify parameters for 2017-2018 Tree Canopy studies. Tree Board members voted unanimously to have two studies, which would be designed to closely align with the Tree Canopy study completed by Jones and Jones in 2009 and the on-the-ground Tree Inventory Study completed by Mike Woodbury and volunteers in 2010. The Tree Inventory Study would follow completion of the Tree Canopy study. City Council accepted the recommendations.

Given the expertise on the Tree Board, the Board sent a recommendation to City Council that a member with expertise in this area should serve as liaison with the City’s Tree Canopy contractor.

Outcome: The Board reviewed the Statement of work and recommended changes, which were accepted by Aaron Halverson, lead.

#2 Task: Tree Fund spending priorities. Deferred until 2018.

Outcome: None.

3. Public Outreach and Education on Trees (25%)

Volunteers were solicited via the City’s website to help protect the city’s forested assets, by participating in watering trees planted on the Burke Gilman Trail. Watering events included discussions on the value of trees and tree care. Members of the Tree Board found opportunities to informally educate neighbors and community members on the importance of trees, as well as listen to concerns. At most Tree Board meetings, community members attend to listen and/or voice opinions.

The Tree Board also reviewed “Help articles,” created by the City’s intern, that the Planning Department will use to help developers and community members understand aspects of the Tree Ordinance.

Outcome: Development or acquisition of educational content deferred to Q2 2018.

Concerns from Tree Board members about vigorous utility pruning prompted review of Community Forest Management Plan’s coverage of the topic and contact with former City contract arborist Mike Woodbury.

Outcome: Planning Dept will resume the process of reviewing ISA best practices with the utility as outlined in the Community Forest Management Plan, as a means of re-education.

4. Be aware of opportunities and threats and advise council if the Board identifies ones that are relevant to trees in Lake Forest Park. (5%)

Citizen issues: The Tree Board members raised issues and learned informally of concerns and complaints, but no action was taken as the Tree Board did not have a process for responding.

Data issues: As the city staff continues to learn how to use new permit software, they were unable to determine how to create electronic reports specifically on numbers of trees removed and numbers of trees replanted. This will be a goal city staff will work on accomplishing in Q2 2018. In December, an intern and the Assistant Planner manually reviewed each permit application (both electronic and paper files) to compile data. A copy of the Tree Permit data report is attached.

In 2017, of 183 Tree Removal permits, 379 Significant trees (greater than 6" DBH) were removed, 91 of which were Landmark trees (greater than 24"); but the data is incomplete. Regarding trees taken without permits, there was one code enforcement hearing and the city is pursuing the 3 code enforcement cases opened in 2017.

Respectfully submitted March 7, 2018, by members of the LFP Tree Board

David Kleweno, Chair
Courtney Siebken, Vice-Chair
Julia Bent
Tyson Greer
Tom Hanson
Tim Hohn
Karen Hugg
Gordon Smith