

Urban Forestry Plan

The City of Des Moines's urban forest is a significant public asset. Understanding its value and managing it in a manner consistent with other assets is critical to good stewardship.



Membership

- UCAC members: Dave Silver, Marilyn Staples, Doug Adamson
- Marian Gelb and Susan Noland- UCAC and Park Board
- Water Works – Scott Atzen
- Greg Cloe – Public Works
- Mark Dungan – Polk County Conservation
- Jan Thompson - ISU (replacement for Cathy)
- City departments - public works, housing, economic development, planning and zoning, engineering, etc.

Phase I: City Owned Property including parks, street trees, municipal housing, Water Works, Des Moines Schools
Phase II: City-wide efforts to reforest our city

Process

Draft report completed by November of 2009 at which time it will go to the Park Board and Planning and Zoning Board for review. Public meetings will also be held and a final plan adopted in the spring of 2010.

Goals

1. Understand the characteristics and complexity of a diverse urban forest by inventory and analysis.
2. Maximize the ecological and environmental benefits of the urban forest (providing green infrastructure).
 - a. Outcomes
 - i. Improve water quality
 - ii. Improve air quality
 - iii. Cooling the urban heat island
 - iv. Providing wildlife habitat
 - v. Beautification
 - vi. Property Value
3. Facilitate interdepartmental communication and communication with other government bodies to provide decision-makers the information they need to support the urban forestry plan. Understand who does what.
 - a. Outcomes
 - i. Implement a process that new projects and development would need to undergo a review – a step in the PUD is an example or bring it to a Tree Board is another example
 - ii. Develop a map of roles and responsibilities and resources of various City departments and other government entities
4. Develop and implement resource management tools including an ability to integrate changing technology, ability to continually update this forestry plan, and the development and implementation of best management practices.
 - a. Outcomes
 - i. Increase tree canopy throughout the city by improved management of trees on public and private property, preservation and protection of existing trees and promotion new tree plantings
 - ii. Implement best management practices for management of the urban forest
 - iii. Adopt policy changes to address design guidelines, development codes, tree-planting and tree preservation requirements, etc.
5. Greater engagement of the public.
 - a. Outcomes
 - i. Enhance public awareness of the urban forest as a community resource
 - ii. Engage the community in active stewardship of the urban forest
 - iii. Promote citizen-government-business partnerships

Scope

1. Development of goals/objectives
2. Historical understanding of the importance and benefit of trees in our urban landscape (environmental, social, economic, etc.)
3. Measurement of benefits – see outcomes
4. Review and summarize other communities' urban forest programs
5. Computer software programs to aid in management of our urban canopy (GIS, I-Tree, UFOURF)
6. Inventory of current tree canopy (where, what, how, etc.)
7. Diagram organizations responsible for various aspects of management of our urban forest
8. Charting of stakeholders to provide input along the way, include summaries of the interviews in the report –
9. Recommendations to enhance our tree canopy in the areas of:
 - e. *Public policy* such as tree ordinance in the development code, design guidelines, procedures in the development process, establishment of tree-planting requirements, metrics to calculate the green infrastructure benefits
 - f. *Management* plans such as systematic pruning
 - g. *Funding* – government and private funding to insure a continuity of support
 - h. *Education* including education of public officials, planning commissions, private property owners, etc.

Partnerships/stakeholders

Those highlighted in grey are in phase 1 of interviews

- Trees Forever – inventory assistance
- DNR Forestry
- Developers (Hubbell Realty, Knapp)
- Des Moines Founders Garden Club
- Landscape architects
- Warren County Conservation
- NRCS
- MidAmerican Energy
- Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
- Metro Waste Authority
- Polk County Soil & Water
- Nurseries, Nursery Assoc.
- Realtors
- Neighborhood leaders (DSM Neighbors)
- Center on Sustainable Communities
- Community Tree Stewards
- USGBC – Iowa Chapter
- EPA
- Area universities and schools
- Elected officials
- Metro Advisory Council
- Iowa Department of Agriculture – Forestry
- IWOA – Iowa Woodland Owner Association
- Federal agencies?
- University – Drake, ISU, etc. – professors and student projects
- Special interest groups such as Central Iowa Trails Association, Central Iowa Paddlers, etc.

Updated July 22nd, 2009.