



Section 2: Tigard's Urban Forest

A defining community feature of Tigard is its trees and the urban forest they create. Unlike natural forests or managed timberland, Tigard's urban forest is a mosaic of native forest remnants and planted landscape elements interspersed with buildings, roads and other elements of the urban environment. The protection, management, and enhancement of this resource is important not only for Tigard's aesthetic identity and sense of place, but for the social, ecological, and economic services it provides to the community.

Trees and other types of vegetation are integral to the quality of Tigard's aesthetic, economic, and natural environments. Plants provide variation in color, texture, line and form that softens the hard geometry of the built environment. They also enhance the public and private realm through the provision of shade from the sun and wind, providing habitat for birds and wildlife, enhancing community attractiveness and investment, improving water quality and soil stability, and promoting human health and well-being.

Tigard's trees and native plant communities have experienced significant disruption and displacement, first by agriculture and logging in the 19th century, and by increasingly dense urban development in the 20th Century. Competition from introduced invasive species such as English ivy, reed canary grass, and Himalayan blackberries has made it difficult for remaining native plant communities to thrive. However, remnant stands of native tree and associated plant communities still remain within the City Limits. Trees are important members and contributors to natural resource systems including upland habitat areas and plant communities, and functioning riparian corridors including the Tualatin River, Fanno Creek and its tributaries, and their adjacent flood plains and wetlands.

In addition to remnants of the native forest, Tigard possesses a large number of



mature and outstanding specimens of native and non-native trees planted when the area was rural country-side in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Aerial photos demonstrate that increasingly more trees were planted on both public and private property during a period of large lot residential subdivision development from the late 1940's through the 1970's, many of which survive to this day.

Community attitude surveys reveal that Tigard Citizens place high value on the protection of trees and are concerned about the impact of development upon existing tree resources. Community surveys conducted in 2004 and 2006 show that residents value their neighborhood as a suburban retreat, a place that allows for views of trees and other natural areas. The 2006 Community Attitudes Survey found “the protection of trees and natural resource areas” as rating the highest of all “livability” characteristics posed to the respondents, scoring 8.4 out of 10 points. Preservation of trees and other natural resources scored higher on resident’s livability index than neighborhood traffic (8.2), maintaining existing lot sizes (7.8), pedestrian and bike paths (7.7), and compatibility between existing and new development (7.6). A follow-up question contained in the 2007 survey revealed that 84% of Tigard Residents supported regulations to protect existing trees, with only 6% strongly disagreeing and 9% somewhat disagreeing. In addition, 90% of Tigard residents thought the City should take the lead in preserving open space. These values are also shared by residents of adjoining jurisdictions who maintain, or have begun significant updates to, their tree protection ordinances.

The City of Tigard has been a Tree City, USA since 2001 because of aggressive programs to plant trees on public property. In partnership with Clean Water Services, the City of Tigard is in the early stages of a series of stream restoration and enhancement projects intended to improve water quality, reduce erosion, and provide shade, structure and food sources to fish and other wildlife. Projects currently underway within the City’s floodplains and riparian areas will result in the planting of approximately 100,000 native trees over a 10 year period (Fiscal Years 2001-2011). Through volunteer projects, cooperative efforts with non-profits, contract services, and the labor of Public Works crews, thousands of young trees are annually planted on public property.

Not including restoration projects, the City’s Public Works Department annually plants approximately 250 new or replacement trees on public lands, distributes approximately 50 street trees each year to private property owners through the Street Tree Program, and plants an addition 25 trees in celebration of arbor day.



Native species are given preference and are regularly planted along trails, riparian areas, and in new park and green space areas. The objective is to increase the total number of trees, particularly in areas where summer shade is desired such as picnic areas and next to sidewalks. Money is budgeted each year to maintain new trees being established and to remove hazard trees located on public property. As more public property is added and trees grow older, the number of hazard trees pruned or removed each year will continue to grow. The level of new tree planting is limited by the maintenance capacity of City work crews.

Conditions and circumstances have significantly changed since the adoption of Tigard's Comprehensive Plan in 1983. Rapid urban development has resulted in a general perception that the City has experienced a significant loss of tree canopy, and other vegetation essential for wildlife habitat, erosion control, slope stability, water quality, air-quality, and community aesthetics. Driving this perception are METRO land use regulations, failed annexation efforts and changing market conditions resulting in higher density development than was anticipated in 1983, further challenging the City to protect trees and canopy cover while accommodating new development. Additionally, the City does not currently have a comprehensive tree management and urban forest enhancement program to address these issues in a unified and consistent manner. As a result there is general feeling among residents, developers, and other stakeholders that the existing regulatory structure is not adequate and hinders both the strategic protection of trees and the orderly urbanization of the City.

The City has historically relied upon its Development Code to manage and protect trees on private property, particularly heritage trees and those located within steep slopes, wetlands, and other sensitive lands. Existing regulations require new development to protect and/or replace existing trees wherever possible, to pay into a mitigation fund when trees are removed, and to plant new street trees and landscape trees as part of all new construction. In addition, trees within vegetated corridors surrounding wetlands, riparian corridors, and other natural bodies of water are also protected by Clean Water Services as part of their stormwater management program. These regulatory structures do not recognize or protect existing trees outside of those areas, and offer little protection unless a development action is pending, or prior conditions of development approval designated the affected tree(s) for future protection. As a result, the existing regulatory structure does not encompass a significant number of trees across the city, which may be removed by the property owner without City consultation or permit. Additionally, because the City does not have a compre-



hensive tree removal consultation or permit system, protected trees (such as street trees) have been removed despite existing regulations or restrictions in force.

KEY FINDINGS:

- A defining community feature is Tigard’s urban forest, a mosaic of native forest remnants and planted landscape elements interspersed throughout the City.
- This urban forest provides social, economic, and ecological services that create public and private value to residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Mature and well-managed trees provide the maximum public benefits.
- The City continues to allocate staff and resources to tree planting, tree maintenance, and outreach activities. Additionally, new development is required to install street trees, landscape trees, and trees for mitigation purposes.
- The existing urban forest continues to experience significant disruption and displacement through the conversion of land to more intense urban land uses and competition from invasive species.
- Existing tree regulations are dispersed throughout the code; applied by multiple divisions in a non-unified and inconsistent manner; and sometimes conflicting between different code sections.
- The City does not presently have a comprehensive and unified process to monitor tree removal and enforce existing tree protections outside of development permit review. Furthermore, landowners are not always aware of regulatory protections applicable to their property or street trees adjacent to their property.
- Community attitude surveys reveal that Tigard residents place high value on the protection of trees within the community, that they are concerned about the impact of development upon existing tree resources, and are strongly in favor of a regulatory structure that would protect additional trees.

GOAL:

- 2.2 To enlarge, improve and sustain a diverse urban forest to maximize the economic, ecological, and social benefits of trees.

POLICIES:

1. The City shall maintain and periodically update policies, regulations and standards to inventory, manage, preserve, mitigate the loss of, and



enhance the community's tree and vegetation resources to promote their environmental, aesthetic and economic benefits.

2. The City's various codes, regulations, standards and programs relating to landscaping, site development, mitigation, and tree management shall be consistent with, and supportive of, one another; administration and enforcement shall be regulated and coordinated by the variously impacted departments.
3. The City shall continue to regulate the removal of trees, within environmentally sensitive lands and on lands subject to natural hazards.
4. The City shall ensure that street design and land use standards provide ample room for the planting of trees and other vegetation, including the use of flexible and incentive based development standards.
5. The City shall require the replacement and/or installation of new street trees, unless demonstrated infeasible, on all new roads or road enhancement projects. Trees should be planted within planter strips, or at the back of sidewalks if planter strips are not feasible or would prohibit the preservation of existing trees.
6. The City shall establish and enforce regulations to protect the public's investment in trees and vegetation located in parks, within right-of-ways, and on other public lands and easements.
7. The City shall conduct an ongoing tree and urban forest enhancement program to improve the aesthetic experience, environmental quality, and economic value of Tigard's streets and neighborhoods.
8. The City shall continue to maintain and periodically update approved tree lists for specific applications and site conditions, such as street trees, parking lot trees, and trees for wetland and riparian areas.
9. The City shall discourage the use or retention of invasive trees and other plants through the development review process.
10. The City shall require the appropriate use of trees and other vegetation as buffering and screening between incompatible uses.
11. The City shall develop and implement a citywide Urban Forestry



Management Master Plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES:

- i. Develop and implement a comprehensive, coordinated update and enhancement of all tree related regulations, standards, programs, and plans.
- ii. Develop and implement an inspection and enforcement program that will ensure ongoing maintenance of trees and other vegetation required by development approval, with particular attention to challenges introduced by the change of ownership of affected properties.
- iii. Develop and implement an inspection and enforcement program that will ensure non-development related tree management and removal complies with the City's tree protection ordinances such as heritage trees, street trees, and trees on sensitive lands.
- iv. Inventory and evaluate street tree, parking lot and landscape area plantings that have failed to thrive, and determine if site conditions or management practices can be modified, and/or if trees can be planted elsewhere in order to satisfy conditions of development approval or provide the benefits expected of the original planting.
- v. Develop and maintain, as part of the City's GIS and permit systems, a publicly accessible inventory of tree plantings, permitted removals, and the state of the City's urban forest.
- vi. Develop and distribute educational materials and programs regarding City policies, regulations, and good arboricultural practices for the general public, developers and city staff regarding tree planting, maintenance, and protection. Materials should be published in both paper and electronic media and in multiple languages. Particular focus should be given to new property owners who may be unfamiliar with the City's regulations and development related restrictions affecting their property.
- vii. Encourage and promote the removal of nuisance/invasive plants,



and the installation of trees and vegetation that are low maintenance, drought tolerant, site appropriate, and require minimal chemical applications. Strategies could include the production and distribution of approved tree lists to area nurseries, landscaping companies, libraries and similar businesses and public resources.

- viii. Utilize approved tree and plant lists that emphasize long lived evergreens, broad-spreading deciduous varieties, and native species, but allow flexibility to choose a wide variety of species that are proven suitable for local climate conditions and for specific uses and locations.
- ix. Encourage efforts by community groups and neighborhoods to plant trees and undertake other projects, such as restoration of wetlands and stream corridors.
- x. Maintain a list of invasive plants, discourage the sale and propagation of these plant materials within the City, promote their removal, and prevent their reestablishment or expansion.

GOAL:

- 2.3 To balance the diverse and changing needs of the City through well-designed urban development that minimizes the loss of existing trees to create a living legacy for future generations.

POLICIES:

- 1. The City shall develop and implement standards and procedures designed to minimize the reduction of existing tree cover, with priority given to native trees and non-native varieties that are long lived and/or provide a broad canopy spread.
- 2. In prescribing the mitigation of the impacts of development, the City shall give priority to the protection of existing trees, taking into consideration the related financial impact of mitigation.
- 3. The City shall develop policies and procedures designed to protect trees, including root systems, selected for preservation during land



development.

4. The City shall address public safety concerns by ensuring ways to prevent and resolve verified tree related hazards in a timely manner.
5. The City shall develop and enforce site design and landscape requirements to reduce the aesthetic and environmental impacts of impervious surfaces through the use of trees and other vegetation.
6. The City shall, in order to preserve existing trees and ensure new trees will thrive, allow and encourage flexibility in site design through all aspects of development review.
7. The City shall require all development, including City projects, to prepare and implement a tree preservation and landscaping plan, with the chosen trees and other plant materials appropriate for site conditions.
8. The City shall continue to cooperate with property owners, businesses, other jurisdictions, agencies, utilities, and non-governmental entities to manage and preserve street trees, wetlands, stream corridors, riparian areas, tree groves, specimen and heritage trees, and other vegetation.
9. The City shall require, as appropriate, tree preservation strategies that prioritize the retention of trees in cohesive and viable stands and groves instead of isolated specimens.
10. Applications for tree removal and tree management plans shall be reviewed by a certified arborist employed or under contract to the City.
11. The City shall recognize the rights of individuals to manage their residential landscapes.

RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES:

- i. Develop and implement regulations, standards, and incentives to encourage developers to transfer density, seek variances and adjustments necessary to preserve trees and natural open space in a manner that optimizes tree preservation and protection.



- ii. Develop tree-mitigation regulations and standards to guide the City in assessing fees or compelling compensatory action resulting from violation of its tree protection standards and/or conditions of development approval. Consideration shall be given to off-site mitigation on both public and private lands, and the maintenance of a publicly accessible registry of mitigation sites both historical and potential.
- iii. Conduct surveys, workshops, and/or other public outreach strategies to identify and implement an appropriate strategy and form for tree protection regulations outside of the development review process.
- iv. Encourage other jurisdictions operating within and adjacent to Tigard to prepare and implement a tree preservation and landscaping plan as part of all development and infrastructure projects.
- v. Develop standards and procedures to identify and abate tree related hazards on both public and private property..