



**City of Spokane  
Citizen Advisory Committee to the  
Urban Forestry Tree Committee**

3 p.m. Tuesday, September 2, 2025  
Hybrid in-person and WebEx virtual meeting  
Katie Kosanke - Urban Forester

**Committee Members:**

- X Kris Neely – Chair
- Tim Kohlhauff – (Absent - Excused)
- X Beth LaBar
- Guy Gifford – (Absent – Excused)
- X Cindy Deffe
- X Joe Zubaly (Joined 3:16 p.m.)
- X Matt Stewart
- Justyce Brant – (Absent - Excused)
- X Ben Kappen
- X Logan Callen
- X Kathryn Alexander

**Parks Staff:**

Katie Kosanke  
Amber Ramirez

**Guests:**

Scott Mills  
Ryan Schulte  
Mary Stohr

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by committee chair Kris Neely who opened the meeting with introductions.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from **July 2025** will be reviewed for approval at the October (September 30<sup>th</sup>) meeting.

**Discussion Items:**

1. Ceremonies, Appointments, Announcements

- Paul Lower, the downtown representative, resigned from the committee due to accepting a position out of state. Once his replacement is hired, they will likely fill the downtown representative position on the committee.
- Joe Zubaly resigned from the committee and advised that this would be his last meeting.

**Public Comments:** None

**Standing Report Items:**

1. Community Assembly – No report.
2. Staff Report - Katie Kosanke provided a staff report update.
  - a. **DSP Contract Education and Outreach** – The downtown grant project is a collaborative program with abutting property owners. Urban Forestry is working on an Education Outreach Program with Downtown Spokane Partnership (DSP). DSP's green and clean team will be out during the hot summer months, monitoring trees to catch issues, and will provide temporary watering. Part of the grant will assist with formalizing an agreement to have DSP provide watering to all downtown trees that are exhibiting drought stress on a weekly basis, provide temporary watering if needed and DSP will reach out to abutting property owners, property managers or tenants to advise them if there is an issue which needs attention. Free replacement trees will be offered again this fall to downtown property owners who hire a certified and licensed arborist to plant the tree or use the new pilot program and have a city arborist oversee the planting to assist in offsetting replacement costs.

The new pilot program (a 1-year program) is a resolution that was approved by City Council due to many challenges growing trees downtown and will supply support from a city arborist to abutting property owners if they hire a landscaper or have a property manager or someone else complete the planting. A city arborist will provide guidance on correct species and proper planting and help abutting property owners or property managers to navigate the process and get in touch with the correct department for other items, such as obtaining obstruction permits, contacting the water department, or obtaining information about sidewalk and tree grate issues, etc. Educational materials and an informational brochure will help advertise the new pilot program. An article will also be featured in the Business Journal.

- b. **PEI Education and Outreach** – Some funds were allocated through the grant for educational outreach to schools. Urban Forestry is working with Pacific Education Institute (PEI) to propose continuing education for teachers, which was previously completed on a smaller scale and now would be offered district wide. This would also assist in getting momentum for the SpoCanopy program and help educate people within the neighborhoods about the benefits trees provide.

**c. UF Crew**

- Urban Forestry is hiring one new seasonal employee.
- Recent Projects
  - Removal of dead trees throughout the park system
  - There is a significant burn area along Fish Lake Trail where dead trees that are within striking distance to the trail are being removed, with a few being left for wildlife habitat. Urban Forestry is working to clean up the area, and natural regeneration will occur.
  - Clearance pruning will be done next week on trees near the BNSF Railroad by Mission Park/Whittier Pool.
  - Pruning and a few dead tree removals were done in Redband Park area for the new zipline project.
  - Miscellaneous tree work was completed at Riverfront Park including several dead tree removals.

- UF will be transitioning soon to Fall Planting. Plantings will include miscellaneous trees throughout the park system, new and replacement trees, donation trees, a small project at the Indian Trail Library and lilac plantings through a donation by the Spokane Indians Baseball Team.

d. **Fuels Reduction / Nick Jeffries** – Nick Jeffries with the Spokane Fire Department is the lead on Fuels Reduction projects. He has spoken at Neighborhood Groups and to Friends of the Bluff. Fuels Reduction projects have been ongoing over the summer months and benefit forest health and fire safety by helping keep ladder fuels low. Fuels Reduction work this Fall will continue on a larger scale with contractors doing work on the South Hill Bluff.

e. **Interns/Apprentices**

- WSU – Tim Kohlauff provided an intern from WSU. The intern worked Fridays in August and was able to complete updating the majority of the downtown tree inventory. That data will help inform where free trees program information should be mailed to.
- SCD – Matt Stewart provided two apprentices from the SCD apprentice program to work on the Urban Forestry crew, two days a week for four weeks. UF provided training and hands-on field experience to the apprentices. They did chipping work, assisted with work on the Fish Lake Trail and Zipline projects, and spent several days weeding and mulching at Finch Arboretum.

f. **Other Items**

- Educational information on Powdery Mildew went out in the District 3 newsletter.
- Out There Outdoors Magazine contacted Urban Forestry regarding the Parks Rx program in Washington State and mentioned the SpoCanopy Program. UF provided them with information on the SpoCanopy Program and pictures to be featured in their magazine.
- Summer Camps took place this summer over seven weeks at Finch Arboretum with 142 kids signed up. The Recreation Department provided UF a contribution of a percentage of the registration fees, which amounted to approximately \$3,500 for the Finch Fund. The recreation department will also be adding a camp for Spring Break due to program popularity.
- Parks Planning is working on a concept design for the Willow project. Several concepts are being considered, and several minor changes are being made. Katie will likely share the concept information at the next meeting.
- UF is working on some accessibility improvements at Finch Arboretum and will be adding curb cuts and additional accessible parking spaces. The plans, created by Parks Planning, are ready and will go to permitting for review and approval.

UF is aware of dead trees at Coeur d'Alene Park and is working to develop a course of action. Katie will report findings to the committee in the near future.

**Old Business:**

## 1. IRA/USDA/USFS Grant Update – Amber Ramirez

Amber Ramirez provided an IRA/USDA/USFS Grant update.

The City of Spokane received a 6 million dollar grant to improve canopy across the city in certain areas as designated on a Federal Map.

- a. Work is currently in process to remove over 400 dead and dying trees in right-of-way areas, primarily in parking strips. Three hundred removals have been completed, and there are approximately 138 more to complete. Tree removals are currently being done in the Bemiss and West Central neighborhoods, and removals will be completed next in the Cliff Cannon and Emerson Garfield neighborhoods. Additional tree removals may be added to the removal list as they are found and reported. Three contractors are working on removals and several high-risk tree removals were completed within one day.
- b. Pruning work will take place next. Pruning will primarily address major needs such as clearance and safety issues. Major pruning was completed at Grant Park last week with 31 trees pruned to remove hangers, large dead limbs, and clearance for safety and improved vision throughout the park. Pruning of very low branches and for safety issues was also recently completed at Fire Station 1. Nine trees were pruned for clearance and visibility throughout the Fire Station 1 parking lot. Plans are in process for residential pruning in 2026 and vetting of neighborhoods are planned to identify major pruning needs.
- c. Tree planting is being done through the grant, with 334 trees planted to date. A fall planting of 15 trees by volunteers, and an additional 15 trees will be planted by volunteers in the Spring. The trees are being generously provided by the Spokane Conservation District, and the species being offered are Class I: Crabapple and Serviceberry, Class II: Catalpa, Kentucky coffeetree, Ginkgo, and Silver linden, and Class III: Red oak.
- d. Through the grant \$100,000 was allotted over the 5 years for tree work on school properties. Urban Forestry is working with the school maintenance team to identify needs. Twenty-two dead or dying trees in high-use areas were removed at seven schools within the CJEST area, and 3 large Siberian elm trees with a large amount of dead and broken branches over a picnic table area were pruned at On-Track Academy. UF will work with the public schools' maintenance team next year for clearance pruning needs to address issues along school bus routes, school walking routes, and other high priority needs identified by the SPS maintenance team.

Additional discussion took place regarding SpoCanopy tree planting, how citizens can sign up for a free tree, and the need to continue getting the word out about the program. Amber has given presentations to most of the neighborhood councils and will be presenting at the Cliff Cannon Neighborhood Council meeting tonight.

Katie shared a grant success story. UF was recently contacted by a homebound resident on a Friday, advising he was notified by a neighbor that his street tree was about to fall on the sidewalk. Katie went to assess and arrived at the location within 20 minutes. The whole top of the tree had fallen off onto the sidewalk, and another top of the tree was compromised, and it was determined that the rest of the tree needed to be removed. Katie contacted Amber to inquire if the grant could assist with the removal of this tree. Amber was able to have a contractor out on the following



Monday to remove the tree. Typically, if there is a dead tree street-side Urban Forestry sends a notice to the abutting property owner to remove and replace the tree. In this situation, due to the grant, UF was able to assist with this removal. The owner expressed great thanks as they wouldn't have been able to have it taken care of otherwise.

A question was brought up regarding trees and sidewalks. Katie explained that trees can generally be retained and that the Development Services Department allows deviations such as sloping up and over roots or deviating sidewalks around roots. She also advised that there is emphasis on planting the right tree in the right place.

## **New Business:**

### **1. For the Love of Trees: A Tree Protection Ordinance for Spokane** – Mary Stohr, Chair – The Friends of Spokane Trees (FOST)

Mary advised the current ordinance protects right-of-way trees and heritage trees and does not protect trees on private property. The Friends of Spokane Trees (FOST) is working on developing a tree protection ordinance (TPO) that would include all trees and would protect trees on private property. She indicated many cities around the country have this type of ordinance, including Seattle, Portland, Olympia, and Austin, TX. FOST will be studying these city ordinances and also examining Spokane City Councilman Paul Dillon's tree ordinance which is going before the city planning commission. They will compare its provisions and requirements to best practices identified by Lynn Fitz-Hugh and FOST's own analyses of TPOS.

Mary advised a tree protection ordinance would help protect mature trees, which provide many benefits, and would help meet the city's canopy goal of having 30% canopy cover by 2030 in every neighborhood, which she indicated may not be reachable if mature trees aren't protected. She stated that forest and urban trees capture about 30% of the carbon dioxide in the world, so fewer trees equal a hotter earth and city. In addition, Mary advised new infill laws leave little room for trees and that some key changes to the infill law and the development of a Spokane TPO would provide a greater balance and "standing" for trees.

Further discussion took place regarding if there is a need for a tree protection ordinance for trees on private property. Katie reminded the committee to share that the group previously did a piece on making informed decisions on tree removals, especially after storms. She also advised the development code has an incentive to retain trees on private property, but often with what is being proposed it is not possible or realistic due to trees having roots that are far-reaching and often, people are left with a dead tree after construction.

During this Conversation, committee members inquired about unpermitted mature tree removals along Esmerelda Golf Course. Katie stated that information is still being collected as to what happened. Kris invited Golf staff to the next committee meeting to talk about what happened and plans for replacement trees. The preservation group encouraged possible fines for the violation.

### **2. Finch Willow Update and Tree Trot Fun Run Fundraiser** – Katie Kosanke

The Tree Trot Fun Run Fundraiser is being held at the Finch Arboretum on Saturday October 4 to raise funds for the Willow nature-based project. Committee members can sign up for registration if they are interested. There will also be a virtual option, and people will receive a t-shirt. UF is seeking sponsors and volunteers. If committee members know of any potential sponsors or want to volunteer let Katie know.

**Other Program and Partnership Ideas:** Kathryn Alexander with Soil Smart would like to do a soil laboratory where people can bring soil/compost and look at it under a microscope. It was determined that this could be good for her to have at the Fall Festival.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is 3 p.m. September 30, 2025.

# FOR THE LOVE OF TREES: A TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE FOR SPOKANE

BY THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE  
TREES (FOST)

MARY K. STOHR, CHAIR  
NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 21, 2025 AT 1:11PM,  
ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, WELCOME CENTER  
CONFERENCE ROOM  
EMAIL ME IF INTERESTED IN ATTENDING:  
[MARYACJS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MARYACJS@GMAIL.COM)





# **AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- **Why Spokane Needs a Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO)**
- **Background (For the Love of Trees)**
- **Potential Ordinances as Models and Best Practices**
- **Councilor Paul Dillon's Ordinance**
- **QUESTIONS????**







## WHY SPOKANE NEEDS A TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE (TPO)

- **Mature Tree Advantage** (provide more canopy cover, reduce heat index, capture more carbon, provide homes for birds, squirrels and other creatures)
- **Spokane's Canopy Goal** is that “every neighborhood ... have 30% canopy cover by 2030” ([Urban Forestry SpoCanopy Program - City of Spokane, Washington](#)). A goal that is likely unreachable unless mature trees are protected.
- **Looming Environmental Disaster and the Vital Role of Trees.** Forests, including urban trees capture about 30% of the carbon dioxide in the world so fewer trees equals a hotter earth and city ([City Trees and Soil Are Sucking More Carbon Out of the Atmosphere Than Previously Thought | The Brink | Boston University](#))
- **Attempts to Supercharge Development in the City Leaves Little Room for Trees.** The infill law allows 20 foot parcels [down from 50], additional ADUs, 3 foot setbacks [rather than 5], and additional financial incentives.
- **Creation of a TPO is not a move to end development or infill, but rather a pro trees move.** Some key changes in the infill law and the development of a Spokane TPO would provide greater balance and “standing” for trees.



BACKGROUND (FOR THE LOVE OF TREES)

THE CURRENT SPOKANE TREE ORDINANCES PROTECT MEDIAN TREES, AND A FEW RIGHT-OF-WAY AND HERITAGE TREES, BUT NOT MOST TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY NO MATTER THEIR AGE, SIZE OR TYPE

SPOKANE'S RELATIVELY NEW INFILL LAW (2019) ALLOWS DEVELOPERS AND OTHERS WHO CLEAR THEIR PRIVATE PROPERTY TO DESTROY ALL (OR NEARLY ALL) OF THE EXISTING TREES ON THAT PROPERTY. AS HAPPENED IN SPRING 2025 TO ALMOST ALL OF THE TREES PICTURED BELOW (FROM A PROPERTY ON 27<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE)

SPOKANE'S ECO ANXIETY CAFÉ (LEARNED OF TPOS IN SEATTLE AND PORTLAND)

THE HOPE FOR CREATION COMMITTEE AT ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL MISSION AND INVOLVEMENT-- FIRST TOOK ON THIS ISSUE

THE CREATION OF THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE TREES (SIMILAR GROUPS EXIST ON THE WEST SIDE AND IN PORTLAND) MEANT TO INCLUDE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTERESTED IN SAVING TREES IN SPOKANE.





**BEST PRACTICES FOR CITY TREE ORDINANCES (RECOMMENDATIONS)**  
**BY LYNN FITZ-HUGH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIENDS OF TREES ACTION GROUP OF**  
**RESTORING EARTH CONNECTION**

- Adopt a tree permitting system
- Adopt a minor and major permit system
- Hazard and sick trees
- Adopt a point system over a canopy measurement system. You can set canopy goals for different types of zoned areas as well
- Require replacement for trees removed
- Create an enforcement system
- Consider how permit fees and fines may be able to help fund the additional staff needed
- Create a designation system
- Licensing for tree professionals.
- Address equity issues
- Make sure that building codes also support your tree canopy goals.
- Use your webpage about tree permitting as an opportunity to educate the public about trees
- FOST MIGHT ADD: REQUIRE A CENSUS OF TREES AND MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION OF PROGRESS EACH YEAR

# **CURRENTLY FOST IS EXAMINING SPOKANE CITY COUNCILOR PAUL DILLON'S TREE ORDINANCE BEFORE THE CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- WE ARE COMPARING ITS PROVISIONS AND REQUIREMENTS TO  
BEST PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY LYNN FITZ-HUGH AND OUR OWN  
ANALYSES OF TPOS (SEE PREVIOUS SLIDE).**
- COUNCILOR DILLION HAS AGREED TO ATTEND OUR NEXT  
MEETING TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS.**







*THANK YOU FOR LISTENING  
AND FOR CARING ABOUT  
PROTECTING THE TREES IN  
OUR COMMUNITY*

## THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE TREES (FOST)

Mary K. Stohr, Chair

Next meeting: September 21, 2025 at  
1:11pm, St. John's Cathedral, Welcome  
Center Conference Room

Email me if interested in attending:  
[maryacjs@gmail.com](mailto:maryacjs@gmail.com)



# *QUESTIONS???*





# FOR THE LOVE OF TREES: A TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE FOR SPOKANE

BY THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE  
TREES (FOST)

MARY K. STOHR, CHAIR  
NEXT MEETING: SEPTEMBER 21, 2025 AT 1:11PM,  
ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, WELCOME CENTER  
CONFERENCE ROOM  
EMAIL ME IF INTERESTED IN ATTENDING:  
[MARYACJS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MARYACJS@GMAIL.COM)





# **AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS**

- **Why Spokane Needs a Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO)**
- **Background (For the Love of Trees)**
- **Potential Ordinances as Models and Best Practices**
- **Councilor Paul Dillon's Ordinance**
- **QUESTIONS????**







## WHY SPOKANE NEEDS A TREE PROTECTION ORDINANCE (TPO)

- **Mature Tree Advantage** (provide more canopy cover, reduce heat index, capture more carbon, provide homes for birds, squirrels and other creatures)
- **Spokane's Canopy Goal** is that “every neighborhood ... have 30% canopy cover by 2030” ([Urban Forestry SpoCanopy Program - City of Spokane, Washington](#)). A goal that is likely unreachable unless mature trees are protected.
- **Looming Environmental Disaster and the Vital Role of Trees.** Forests, including urban trees capture about 30% of the carbon dioxide in the world so fewer trees equals a hotter earth and city ([City Trees and Soil Are Sucking More Carbon Out of the Atmosphere Than Previously Thought | The Brink | Boston University](#))
- **Attempts to Supercharge Development in the City Leaves Little Room for Trees.** The infill law allows 20 foot parcels [down from 50], additional ADUs, 3 foot setbacks [rather than 5], and additional financial incentives.
- **Creation of a TPO is not a move to end development or infill, but rather a pro trees move.** Some key changes in the infill law and the development of a Spokane TPO would provide greater balance and “standing” for trees.



BACKGROUND (FOR THE LOVE OF TREES)

THE CURRENT SPOKANE TREE ORDINANCES PROTECT MEDIAN TREES, AND A FEW RIGHT-OF-WAY AND HERITAGE TREES, BUT NOT MOST TREES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY NO MATTER THEIR AGE, SIZE OR TYPE

SPOKANE'S RELATIVELY NEW INFILL LAW (2019) ALLOWS DEVELOPERS AND OTHERS WHO CLEAR THEIR PRIVATE PROPERTY TO DESTROY ALL (OR NEARLY ALL) OF THE EXISTING TREES ON THAT PROPERTY. AS HAPPENED IN SPRING 2025 TO ALMOST ALL OF THE TREES PICTURED BELOW (FROM A PROPERTY ON 27<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE)

SPOKANE'S ECO ANXIETY CAFÉ (LEARNED OF TPOS IN SEATTLE AND PORTLAND)

THE HOPE FOR CREATION COMMITTEE AT ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL MISSION AND INVOLVEMENT-- FIRST TOOK ON THIS ISSUE

THE CREATION OF THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE TREES (SIMILAR GROUPS EXIST ON THE WEST SIDE AND IN PORTLAND) MEANT TO INCLUDE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTERESTED IN SAVING TREES IN SPOKANE.





**BEST PRACTICES FOR CITY TREE ORDINANCES (RECOMMENDATIONS)**  
**BY LYNN FITZ-HUGH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FRIENDS OF TREES ACTION GROUP OF**  
**RESTORING EARTH CONNECTION**

- Adopt a tree permitting system
- Adopt a minor and major permit system
- Hazard and sick trees
- Adopt a point system over a canopy measurement system. You can set canopy goals for different types of zoned areas as well
- Require replacement for trees removed
- Create an enforcement system
- Consider how permit fees and fines may be able to help fund the additional staff needed
- Create a designation system
- Licensing for tree professionals.
- Address equity issues
- Make sure that building codes also support your tree canopy goals.
- Use your webpage about tree permitting as an opportunity to educate the public about trees
- FOST MIGHT ADD: REQUIRE A CENSUS OF TREES AND MEASUREMENT/EVALUATION OF PROGRESS EACH YEAR

# **CURRENTLY FOST IS EXAMINING SPOKANE CITY COUNCILOR PAUL DILLON'S TREE ORDINANCE BEFORE THE CITY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- WE ARE COMPARING ITS PROVISIONS AND REQUIREMENTS TO BEST PRACTICES IDENTIFIED BY LYNN FITZ-HUGH AND OUR OWN ANALYSES OF TPOS (SEE PREVIOUS SLIDE).**
- COUNCILOR DILLION HAS AGREED TO ATTEND OUR NEXT MEETING TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS.**







*THANK YOU FOR LISTENING  
AND FOR CARING ABOUT  
PROTECTING THE TREES IN  
OUR COMMUNITY*

## THE FRIENDS OF SPOKANE TREES (FOST)

Mary K. Stohr, Chair

Next meeting: September 21, 2025 at  
1:11pm, St. John's Cathedral, Welcome  
Center Conference Room

Email me if interested in attending:  
[maryacjs@gmail.com](mailto:maryacjs@gmail.com)



*QUESTIONS???*







# 5K FUN RUN FUNDRAISER

Join us at beautiful Finch Arboretum for this 5k trail run to support fundraising efforts for the Willow nature based playground project!

**9AM - COMPETITIVE RACE (NOT TIMED)**  
**NOON - FAMILY FRIENDLY TRAIL RUN/WALK**

**\$30 ADULT / \$20 YOUTH UNDER 16 YEARS OLD**  
**PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE A CUSTOM T-SHIRT!**  
**PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED AT [SPOKANEREC.ORG](https://spokanerec.org)**

