

Task Force on Urban Tree Planting Best Practices

Minutes

Monday June 23, 2025, – 10:12am-12:51pm

Via Zoom Platform & In Person

[Recording of Meeting can be obtained by sending request to Joe Rainey JRainey@coj.net]

Commissioners:

Susan Fraser, Chair, Tree Commission Member
Curtis Hart, Tree Commission Member
William Burke, Tree Commission Member
Nina Sickler, Director of Public Works

Non-Member attendees:

Jeff Lucovsky, PDDS
Jonathan Johnston, Parks
Nancy Powell, Scenic Jax
Dana Doody, Jacksonville Arboretum

Advisors:

Justin Gearhart - City Arborist
Shannon MacGillis - Office of General Counsel

Staff: Joe Rainey - Executive Assistant Mowing and Landscape

1. Call to Order

Conducted by Chair

2. Roll Call and Verification of Quorum

Conducted by Chair

Commissioners present:

Susan Fraser - present
William Burke - present
Nina Sickler - present at 10:58am

Quorum present (3, in person): Yes, at 10:58am

3. Call for Public Speakers (online & card): None

4. Submittal of speaker cards

5. Issue: Approval of Minutes of May 14, 2025 Task Force Meeting

***Tabled until arrival of Sickler (quorum).**

Motion: Approve, as presented.

Moved by: William Burke

Second: Nina Sickler

Vote: June 23, 2025 minutes approved, unanimous.

6. Overview of Approach- 2025 Updates to Mitigation by Degree of Urbanization

i. Fraser: PowerPoint presentation: Urban Tree Planting Standards meet Reality A detailed presentation of local and non-local sites with photos showing good and bad installations, site limitations, soil conditions, and best practice options. Review of tree planting application specification standards. **Fraser:** Concerns with disconnect between design and planting relating to quality and accuracy of install parameters. **Colburn:** There is a need for inspections to confirm install is done to specification.

Discussion: Overview of standards for planting in urban areas in relation to James Urban in relation to City of Jacksonville urban tree planting objectives. present alternative solutions to inherent issues indicative to Jacksonville's urban planting environment.

ii. William Burke: Presentation: Spatial Analysis

Selections of large non-Live Oak options and locations provided with measurements for discussion. (diagrams provided on video) **Powell:** What are other cities doing? How are they overcoming similar issues?

iii. Colburn: PowerPoint presentation: Design standards for Planting in Increasingly Urbanized Sites PowerPoint provided in supplemental documents

Presentation of graph on Slide 3, relating ultimate tree size to soil volume. Sourced to James Urban, Colburn described the impact of providing a soil volume that was constrained on the maximum tree canopy/spread and DBH for any tree planted in that volume. Example from the table illustrated that 1000 CF of available soil volume would limit the tree planted in that volume to a maximum of 16 inch DBH and a canopy of 800 square feet in area.

Discussion: Regarding application process and acceptable parameters. Using the table on the PowerPoint display, **Fraser** agreed the information allowed the Task Force to understand how the standards that may be adopted would affect the ultimate tree canopy that could be achieved. The Tree Commission can use the table to back solve for the desired tree canopy/spread; if the goal is to achieve a spread in a location of 30 feet, the table allows assessment of the success of the proposed soil volume in achieving this goal.

Gearhart: It sounds like it's kind of transitioning into a not necessarily dictating the soil volume directly but it's trying to dictate what size do we want?

Fraser: No, we're trying to say that if we're going to make an investment in a tree planting we want whatever we plant to be able to achieve a certain spread - it is a policy decision for the Tree Commission to decide if it's going to be a shade tree it's going to be planted so as to achieve some minimum spread. The table allows assessment of the proposed soil volume to determine if that minimum spread is possible.

Sickler: Now do we want to decide, what are we going to define in the urban area in terms of a minimum DBH and a canopy or is it certain types of trees for certain categories of trees? **Amended:** Decided "to discern certain types of trees for certain locations and/or for certain situations."

Discussion: continues conversation regarding locations, species and plan of action regarding how to address and best implement a tree planting model that works with Jacksonville's unique urban environment.

ADJOURNMENT

END OF MEETING 12:51PM