

Louisville Urban Forest Master Plan
Advisory Group (AG) Workshop #1: The Trees
COMPILATION OF RAW COMMENTS RECEIVED

May 23, 2024

Attendees: Total 81 total in attendance.

AG members participated in three 15-minute discussions. Raw comments are recorded below from small group facilitators and larger group discussions. A summarized and themed set of notes will be developed in a separate document.

Discussion #1: Priorities and Goals

Where do we want to be? What are our future goals? What does it look like when we succeed? Raw comments across all breakout groups:

- Culture and education
- Funding and infrastructure
- Streamlining the process to incentivize business involvement
- Extensive pre existing requirements, don't over complicate regulations
- Engage with trees community, don't put burden on businesses
- Incentives work well
- Education and engagement are important for HOAs, small cities. Many small cities aren't involved in conversations.
- Focus on existing neighborhoods with no tree canopy. Esee with education and engagement
- Public education for contractors/planters, ensuring protections for mature trees
- Create a culture shift in how we view trees, bring more investment and awareness to canopy
- Fear of property damage
- Need necessary infrastructure to support tree canopy, staff & funds
- Meet 45% comp plan tree canopy countywide - 2040
- Meet 50% for Floyd Fork area
- Preservation is more important than tree planting. Particularly in less urban areas
- Reassess where we are - doubt about accuracy of 39%. Done without leaves
- Tree plan needs to take into account climate change
- Marginalized communities need to be at
- Inverse relationship between lot size and desire for trees (smaller lots - less interest)
- Need more knowledge, interest and awareness in trees. Benefits, for example

- Marketing campaign for trees
- Landowners don't know enough about trees. More knowledge about benefits should be goal
- Downtown improvements need trees
- Parks need trees and other areas in lower income areas
- As natural as possible before humans disturbed it
- Canopy needs to be shade, not ornamental
- Inventory so we know what we have
- Sustainable funding for maintenance and installation
- Design projects to be low-maintenance, low water demand so public works/transportation/utilities can keep up
- Protect canopy we have (expanding tree wells, etc)
- More sustainable planting plan - soil space, overhead space, maintenance around the trees
- Reduce heat island effects - canopy goal. You can feel it. Not cooking - you feel like you want to be on the street. Visual and tactile. Create more filtered sunlight
- Maximize shade
- Preserve mature trees
- Improve community mindset - changing perceived barriers into opportunities
- No support for private tree/landowners - fund?
- More outreach to have the public buy-in.
- Assets need to be taken care of
 - Potentially protected from administration shifts
 - Private industry should be incentivized to help (more private partnerships)
- Workforce development for project and maintenance
- Right conditions
- Sustainable species selection - what could be used after it falls?
- Be proactive not reactive
 - Cyclical system
 - Leadership and community support (\$\$)
 - Equitable development
- Maintenance that comes with the implementation of these goals
 - Sustainability of this project/maintenance
- Diversity of age accountability
 - Focusing on replanting in areas of Louisville that trees cannot repopulate on their own
 - Sustainability of tree planning
- Heat mitigation in inner city
- Strategically planting trees - lawn maintenance: planting plans

- Expanding right tree, right place. Set of shared guidelines all planters have access to.
- Education and support and outreach- spreading knowledge and awareness, tree adoption, tree care
- Addressing ordinances
 - Discouraging public foraging
- Fruit trees and soil mitigation for more trees
- Growing people's perceived values of trees
 - Educating the public
- Putting the right trees in the right place for a canopy that effectively manages heat island & storm water run off
- Increased funding to care for an maintain trees (long-term maintenance)
- Increased diversity of trees for sustainability
- Canopy that manages:
 - Effectively helps with heat island
 - Managing storm water run off
- Well laid out systematic, step-by-step plan
- More even tree canopy
- Dog walking corridor – trees in every area
- Plan is integrated with all other plans
- Improving infrastructure around trees for them to grow
- More utilities underground
- Downtown: plant trees everywhere possible
- Increasing tree canopy in redlined areas
- Improve health outcomes through increasing canopy
- More accurate data and ways to track tree canopy
- Diversifying tree canopy
- More accountability in caring and maintenance for trees for trees by orgs and corps
- Resources for home owners and communities to care for trees
- Education for homeowners and other citizens on urban canopy, caring for trees
- Policy surrounding tree species (regulating invasive species)
- More trees downtown
- Education at all levels (public and private) on tree maintenance, gardening, etc.
- Protection for small, young trees
- Establishment of fruit forests
- See as much tree canopy over impervious surface. Need to find shade. Focus on areas that stand to benefit the most from improved canopy, which are where we have poor air, soil, and water quality

- Focus on heat tolerant native species and preserve trees worth saving - open to selective cultivars, “nativars”
- Have a utility; government that understands, appreciates, promotes, supports and invests in a robust tree canopy
- Education on the health, economic, environmental benefits shared with public and community leaders
- Canopy of 50% and keep growing
- Urban heat island awareness
- Increased canopy, decrease heat island, inviting downtown
- West of 9th street looks like tree scape of other areas - less division
- Increase trees (better cared for): less power outages - right tree, right place
- Engage LG&E - where to bury lines - help in areas that need the most. Prevents some limiting factors - low canopy areas
- Invasive removal
- Engage with west louisville - beautify, not gentrify. Increase public awareness of needs
 - Citywide ambassador program - neighbors helping neighbors
 - Educate on tree care and selection
- Lou Med is creating a greenspace in other pocket park - want medical district to be more welcoming - create wellness vibe
- How do trees affect lighting and infrastructure
- High canopy=less crime=more investment. More canopy could lead to more investment
- Investing in low canopied areas that are low income
- Holistic investment
- Education and outreach
 - importance of tree and how to care for
 - Ambassador program - to be able to depend on neighbors
- Community outreach
 - Police aren't' concerned about east end
 - How to better invest and development of areas with tree
- Get trees and other things for healthy neighbors
- 40% canopy - how do we also include inequities across the city? Ex: each neighborhood - how do we get #'s up - progress goals
- Is the an “impact zone” - impervious surfaces and heat zones as target
- Communities living there are happy with tree canopy (and progress goals)
- Defining roadways - where we know we have unequal trees - have these areas fully planted, for example
- Goals of (planning and zoning) for all business, communities, and tree canopy groups working to support - way to get to “net zero” goal
- Need trees growing in areas hardest to grow trees - how to get right trees in right area

- How to improve soils in areas more susceptible to heat and drought
- Maintenance - how to respond to lack of funding from homeowners to maintain the trees
- Wrap around services are needed, for example: leaf maintenance, need to go with planning and maturity in places
- Process need to stop of - filling holes and cement and covering soil and grass - conservation easement to allow trees to mature
- Plan to look at circularity - think about the end and work back
- Economic opportunity from wood waste to create job opportunity, economic value and fund cycle of regeneration
- Treated as true investment it is infrastructure
 - Mitigation of stormwater
 - Heat island
- Cheapest way to solve
- Tree equity
- Improving air quality by combatting climate change with trees
- More diverse tree population
- Educating, especially young people, on importance
- Part of every budget discussion
- Much better condition of trees
- Education on proper maintenance and care of trees
- More nature space available for people
- More partnerships with businesses
- ownership/adopt a neighborhood programs
- More robust forestry program in the city
- Trees for health
- Equity
- Climate (tree diversity, pollution/health)
- Diversity soil and climate
- Tree resources across city budgets
- Condition of trees - maintenance, more robust forest program
- Security
- Avenues of support and homeowner maintenance assistance

Discussion #2: Challenges

Based on the goals and priorities that were shared, what are going to be the roadblocks to solving them? What challenges do we have now and in the future?
Raw comments across all breakout groups:

- Lack of incentives

- Need for leadership that follows through
- Dedicated funding
- Lack of funding
- Opposition to plantings
- Soil quality on development sites. Soil often has to be removed and is sometimes sold off - organic soil doesn't work well with commercial development
- Sustainability of planting sites
- Private-public collaboration issues from lack of education or information
- Lack of education in general
- Cultural issue - how do engage with different groups to get them involved at a grassroots level, need to understand how trees affect us collectively
- Find a way to make people care about trees, it's a low priority generally
- Incentives
- Old cities has a lot more barriers to creating thriving trees
- Regulating hurdles in the way
- Cost of tree removal, plantings, maintenance
- Money. Cost of maintenance, planting, etc.
- Increased costs to developers for trees
- No single message or simplicity in importance of trees. Complications in messaging. Knowledge is a challenge.
- Time it takes for trees to grow.
- Land development Code challenges on trees
- How to address challenges (tree maintenance, leaves, allergies) versus benefits
- Enforcement of existing tree regulations require more staff
- Getting everyone involved in trees to work together. Lack of coordination is a challenge.
- Maintenance of trees in general is a challenge
- Utility conflicts
- Not enough soil space
- Difficulty of maintenance
- Mindset - the earth is here for us to take advantage of
- Funding - not enough \$ for safety/maintenance of street trees - convincing people we need it.
- People expect city services to come from nothing
- No perceived value to trees - either ecologically or monetarily. Both to developers and homeowners
- Current zoning requirements - so much parking spaces and not building tree planting wells with sustainability in mind. Too car-centered society.
- Lack of enforcement of what zoning is in place
- Lack of awareness
- Difficult to use tree funds cause they're isolated to council district

- Current build - expensive to depave
- Current tree planting standards don't give trees enough space. Not sustainable - tree verges, parking lot islands, developer regulations.
- Limiting ourselves to planting on streetside/verges are inadequately designed
- Species selection/availability
- Existing infrastructure (powerlines, etc)
- Money
- How many trees to be accountable for?
- Lack of interest/how to make people care
- How to move away from reactive
- Climate change
- Lack of data
- No GIS support
- Coordination challenges
- Ordinances, public opinion, powerline pathlines, existing larger trees, deers
- Public opinion - mowers harming trees improper maintenance techniques, ignorance/malicious intent
- Diseases and pests
- How to enforce proper techniques - ordinances, public knowledge
- Disturbances
 - Follow-up plan for human disturbances to urban areas
 - Repair: areas that are damaged and not currently protected
- Public perception and misconception of trees
- Education and common consensus - sharing resources, data. Eliminating silo effect between organizations
- Institutional limitations around planting
- Public mentality - cultural perceptions
- Inclusion in grassroots and public in knowledge
- Including information, ex: tree list including size/height/requirements
- Eliminating silos between gov, private, and public organizations
- Oversimplification of knowledge available to public
- Not enough money
- Not enough education, resources, educators
- Advertisement
- Stakeholder buy-in
- Resistance to new trees/adding trees
- Not understanding important of trees
- Lack of central org/body to bring resources together
- Public will
- Cleaning gutters
- Lack of enforcement
- Funding

- Lack of education and awareness
- Accountability can be expensive/taxing
- Public disapproval of trees
- Limited man power and skilled workers in industry
- Urban development
- Disinvestment and disenfranchisement
- Limited by pace of policy change (slow moving) and JCPS
- Lack of concern by policy makers (not a high priority for them)
- Challenges silos in which government works
- No understanding of importance of trees
- Climate change
- Absentee ownership
- Lack of availability of the trees we need
- Lack of funding
- Greedy developers
- Fractured maintenance
- Lack of enforcement of the existing regulations
- Inadequate or outdated regulations
- Lack of data
- Lack of public support
- Lack of education, awareness, impact as it relates to public health
- Utility placement
- Climate change impacts - moved from zone 6-7
- Lack of localized seeds and tree production
- Property owners to maintain border of ROW trees
- Fear of trees in general - particularly canopy trees
- Lack of trust in these processes
- Finding people willing to participate - getting the buy-in because there are “larger” problems - gun violence, etc.
- Buy-in from development community
- Lack of ordinances, difficult to strengthen due to powers fighting
- Financial problems - for mitigating loss
- Lack of resources or data and being able to present
 - How to find volunteers/people to educate
 - Not having people who know trees/horticulture
- Flow to prioritize trees -have to take away from other areas
- Getting low canopied areas to a baseline/average
- People have “favorite” trees, they are attached to trees even if they aren’t the best ex: bradford pear
- Older people have certain perceptions b/c trees are “messy” or fear of falling - people will cut trees down for no reason, don’t like

- A lot of pavement - enormous amount in downtown. Too many parking lots, have to cut out wells which are expensive to cut
- Not having corridor for deers
- Lack of knowledge and manpower for tree care
- Hard to bury lines - construction and expensive
- Cost of tree care too expensive for those that fall "in between" not poor enough for assistance but still a major burden
- People feel like you're selling something
- Cost of funding for maintenance, planting/sidewalk cuts - too much pavement
- Prioritizing trees over other issues our city is facing
- Lack of trust from low income communities - don't believe in authority full like "selling"
- Lack of data
- Education - challenge of awareness of importance and value of the trees - people don't realize importances
- Change culture - want trees other places but not in my yard
- Affordability to have trees - make sure we have funding to help landowners to take
- It cost money - assumptions of who is responsible for maintenance
- Change culture - government can't do it alone. Work on ordinance and regulations
- Pattern of land use changes - as cities transform so will the canopy
 - Need incentives to keep trees in places and planting trees
 - Community needs to share commitment
 - Tax break for homeowners
 - Plant trees, reduce your mowing
- No motivation/incentive for public to plant trees
- People don't always want trees - how to put multiple strategies together
- Data needed - build out information
- Saving the rainforest vs backdoor
- This perception that trees will take care themselves
- Funding structure that brings everyone together under the same umbrella
 - Organization feel competitive for dollars- philanthropy
 - How create own funding with entrepreneurial opportunities around waste
- Pay and skill for jobs to maintain, coordination, public safety. Lose talent to private sector that pays more \$\$
- Climate change and unknown rate of change
- Car-centric city, lack of space
- Current natives may not survive
- More pollution
- Nursery availability and size

- Invasive controls
- Community buy-in/value
- Individual costs (money and time)
- Lack of data
- Lack of education/prioritization/unknowing
- Funding/money
- Poor soils/obstructions
- Oversight
- ordinances/codes
- Lack of arborists/workforce
- data/assessment/identification
- Delivery method, how to reach people
- Digitized collaboration
- Funding workforce
- Inconsistent messaging
- Getting people to value trees
- Challenges to education
 - Budget
 - People to educate others
 - Coordination between organizations
 - Consistency in messaging
- Challenges to improving condition of trees
 - Lack of arborists
 - Money
 - Knowing where problem trees are
- Challenges to “Trees for Health”
 - Car-centric city/parking lots
 - Climate change/changing habitat
 - Availability of needed species
 - Invasive controls
 - Openness to good non-natives

Discussion #3: Solutions/Ideas

Knowing our goals and priorities and considering the many challenges identified, what are some solutions we could use? Raw comments across all breakout groups:

- Fund programs and regulations that address urban heat island and lack of trees in older, urban neighborhoods with some \$ going to new development
- Establish a new local funding mechanism - local option tax?

- Treat green infrastructure as regular infrastructure build govern collar stuff
- Incentivize tree plantings for water uptake
 - Tax incentives
 - Or some funding mechanism
 - Peer cities have a small urban forestry tax
- Examine funding sources from other cities
- Have a leader champion dispersing funds to needed areas in the public and private sphere
- Local option sales tax
- Put trees in with other infrastructure, don't treat it as separate item
- Complete inventory & coordination between different tree-planting groups
- Highlight how trees have positive effects for public health, safety, etc. Stress the positives
- Educate decision makers and policy makers
- Partnerships between corporate and other groups and tree advocates to discuss the benefits. Having a unified message
- Bring in land development people locally who will help educate. Bring in expertise
- Tree advocates work at other levels of government or funding options. State government leaders or local options for sales taxes, for example.
- Get neighborhood association and suburban cities involved. Develop a citizen forester/tree advocate in each of them.
- Larger well size - no mowing around trees - low maintenance
- Bury powerlines
- Development plan/zoning amendments that are sustainable - not putting trees in tiny parking lot islands of death
- Pervious pavement
- Better and more careful maintenance - dangers of weed whips, lawnmowers, car wrecks, mulch volcanoes - Education of city staff and citizens
- Change mindset - nurture tree health = nurture human health = nurture environmental health
- Turn trees we take down into specialty wood sellers. And other wood utilization
- Carbon offset program
- Central/single voice within forestry - some central person/entity to sign off on all tree things
- Community education through realtors packet that explains trees in neighborhood, who is responsible for what spaces. Already doing something similar in historic preservation areas
- Success plans for subdivision trees - like when an old buffer zone hasn't been maintained
- Enforcement of current/improved zoning/development processes

- Education. We think cost of maintenance is expensive now, but it will cost more in the long-term if we don't do it. How much is it costing to do a poor job/maintenance? How do we communicate that?
- Demanding sustainable development
- Look for unconventional methods to fundraise and be cost effective - more microforests, less buildings
- Incentivize private companies with skin in the game to participate - who else is benefiting from this without funding it?
- Adequate data and analysis to communicate/make more money
- Coordinate by 1 entity
- Outreach campaign
 - Effort around getting information to the public
 - Multi-media
 - Prompt more conversation
- Time (week, month) dedicated to hosting the public to spread knowledge - coordinated outreach
- Outreach in places that don't normally have tree awareness
- Tree tax - ex: soda tax for public place, cigarette tax. Taxing something "unhealthy" to give back to something healthy
- "Make it cool in Louisville"
 - Outreach to keep youth home based
 - Get Louisville youth involved in Louisville urban forest work
- More accessibility for organizations
 - Central digital repository for organization and public to access/update
 - We are all on the same page - projects, ordinances
 - Pay for someone to be in charge of this
- One head organization leading the admin work
 - Coordinating, meeting, running databases
 - Backbone organizations
 - Independent
- Build culture around sharing
- Build network for communication
- Model around making the people in the organization equal
 - To be part of it, you have to give into it. Everyone has skin in the game
- Tree selection flow chart - easily understood flow-chart the public can use for personal tree selection
- Seed money for one central org to coordinate resources, education
- Change tree ordinance -from the abutting property owner's responsibility to city's responsibility
 - Would have better quality trees
 - City funds and maintains within urban services district
- Allow tree loving community to have input

- Metro Urban Forestry Division Expansion
 - Tackle confusion w/Public Works
- Pursue State, Federal, Private Philanthropic Money
- Well laid out systematic, step-by-step plan
- Collaboration across sectors and govt depts
- Professional development surrounding nature
- Neighborhood association collaboration
- Community buy-in
- Applying for grants and federal funding
- Charging a green tax
- Building trust with community
- Community based solutions
- Including tree canopy in budget spending
- Using medical marijuana tax dollars for tree canopy
- Establishment of regulating body
- Increasing public awareness and education
- Assistance with planting and managing trees
- Collaborating with school system to educate youth
- Research cities who have done this work (nashville)
- Opportunity to educate the public - on the benefits of particularly large trees
- Robust funding of forestry/arborists
- Community leadership program
- NYC tree keeper program as example to build capacity
- Updated land development code - specifically for parking lots
- Building more tree nurseries
- Grow our own trees utilizing cuttings/seeds from local trees
- Overarching tree committee to manage data. Central location/entity
- Motivating volunteers
- Political will power
- Utilize neighborhood associations for outreach
- Have attractive workshops
- Use vacant lots/open green spaces for nurseries
- Cost share program/grants to plant, remove, maintain
- Rebates and incentives for home
- Revise ordinances, zoning - need regulatory teeth
- Training programs
- Workforce development for people struggling
- Larger canopy trees are less expensive
- Partner with nurseries to lower costs - city helps fund
- People who sell trees - collect data on where going
- Advisory council to provide info to lower level groups

- Incorporate edu pieces in JCPS, edu and importance. Students engage with tree more to tell parents
- More orchards - to kill 2 birds with one stone
- Have “like minded” orgs work together
- Create ecosystems of knowledge
- Communications outreach team to coordinate
- Stats on how trees help
- Edu and tracking
- Creating an app
- Working with landscapers
- Take people to other parts of town to see other tree canopies, both positive and negative. People need to get out of their bubble - how to convince them
- Re-entry jobs - workforce development. Helps multiple issues - tree care, jobs, education
- Look at enforcement/ordinances and make sure they are in place for our master plan. What’s point of plan if it won’t be followed through
- Incentives for planting as well as educating earlier - more tree knowledge in JCPS
- Umbrella structure to connect all organizations
- Philanthropists to provide funding along with government
- Review regulation and tree ordinances to show government to support effort - enforce ordinances (can’t do without human resources)
- Policy needs review - tree ordinance.
 - Shouldn’t be conflicting with regulations
 - Make easy people - hear them, assist them vs. punishing people not being able to meet ordinance when people can’t afford
 - Put in place systems to support
- Tree champions - people that live in areas to advocate them and encourage them to learn and support ordinances - help people that are interested and willing to do the work
- Programs that turn tree waste into value added products and entrepreneur
- Investment in youth development programs
 - Business development opportunities
 - Turning tree waste into jobs
 - Diver
 - Develop workforce, local business, and communities
 - Make business in community
 - They can also be the front line of education/awareness
 - Introduce young people to environmental opportunities and job force
- Leadership voice in city with right person in the city to drive the conversation (with long-term committed money to keep programs going) (lacking local leadership)

- Urban forestry dept treated as elevated to aid communication with other partners
- How repurposing what we are taking down
 - How bringing the end product to another use
 - How utilize
- Collaborative grants (with umbrella organization) to leverage philanthropic dollars already being spent to get 1-for-1 match from federal government
- Carbon products that can keep carbon in “waste wood” find way to work with companies to raise funds through carbon credits
- Horticultural programs at colleges
- Hard luck at land development code - no clearcutting
- Create a comprehensive, inclusive plan
- Get young people involved
- Get influencers (local) to promote, ambassadors
- Municipalities take responsibility, include JCPS & transportation agencies
- K-12 curriculum around trees, landscaping, forestry, environment
- Incentivize people to make it a priority
- Public education/awareness campaigns
- Prioritize accurate data
- Green roofs, rooftop nurseries
- Partnerships - identifying needs, development codes, money, schools
- Public education/awareness
- Tailored audience-specific education
- Workforce - farmed education, maintenance, tree inventory
- Start by identifying the needs
- Tech college horticulture program - workforce
- Land development code - no clear-cutting
- Focus on problem - process of goals, policy, and enforcement
- More young people influencing w rPSAs, Audience-directed education
 - Involvement of community partners
 - Led by agencies, colleges, JCPS, DOT
- JCPS for environmental education programs
- Money - partnerships, associations
- Utilizing on spaces we have