

MAYOR'S STEERING COMMITTEE ON URBAN FOREST SUSTAINABILITY

January 22, 2009

FINAL VISION, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Committee completed work at its January 20, 2009 final meeting, accomplishing its purpose of developing a vision statement, goals and implementable strategies to guide urban forestry policy and management efforts within the City of Tampa in a manner that supports the *Tampa Comprehensive Plan – Building Our Legacy – A Livable City*. The elements of the planning hierarchy are provided below, including a set of priority strategies associated with each goal. In addition to the recommended priorities, “other strategies” under each goal are provided (in no particular order) for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Department.

VISION

The Mayor's Steering Committee on Urban Forest Sustainability, made up of a representative cross-section of affected parties from the private, public and non-profit sectors, offers the following vision aimed at sustaining the City's urban forest:

Maintain and expand Tampa's urban forest in recognition of the many benefits it provides, including: enhancing quality of life for present and future citizens, attaining numerous economic and ecological benefits Nature provides, and seizing opportunities to better understand our natural environment through scientific research and public education.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

BIODIVERSITY / HABITAT

GOAL: To understand and communicate the need to maintain and protect the complexity of natural systems in the urban forest so that the public will support a rich, diverse habitat.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Develop more natural parks and make use of other open areas to enhance the urban forest.**
- 2. Make the City more walkable (including wildlife corridors).**
- 3. Institute design with nature principles, e.g., graywater use, cisterns, self-sustaining systems.**

Other Strategies

Assure species selection for new plantings match soil / water conditions and space needs.

Develop guidelines and promote appropriate fertilizer and other chemicals use within the forest.

Create relationship between density and contributions to a community land bank (e.g., using Transfer of Development Rights or TDRs as an incentive).

Eliminate destructive non-native species, and study / use beneficial non-natives.

Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to correct past abuses and protect existing trees.

Encourage local growers to produce more native plants, and nurseries to sell them.

EDUCATION / RESEARCH

GOAL: To advance public appreciation of the economic, social and environmental values of Tampa's urban forest in all education settings, from in-school to adult education and public service campaigns, so as to create an ethic of individual stewardship.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Start education on the urban forest in early grades, including development of specific curricula.**
- 2. Promote the City as a living laboratory (e.g., Bayshore and the Riverwalk as object lessons in tree knowledge, planting and research).**
- 3. Use fact sheets and other methods to dispel the "danger" of trees argument.**

Other Strategies

Create a City Arboretum.

Increase training for green professionals.

Develop an awards program for outstanding development.

Institute a speakers bureau.

More localized food production.

Develop website and newsletter through Parks / Rec focused on key topics for neighborhoods.

Use City cable television to get the word out.

Develop a clearinghouse for information sources on the urban forest.

Create an Office of Interconnectivity to encourage connection of key entities in the community.

Mount a propaganda campaign for the urban forest.

Other (suggested by individual Committee members):

Living Lab – River (lower, middle, upper) and all areas of livable space as part of the ecosystem (big picture).

FOREST / TREE MAINTENANCE

GOAL: To promote proper tree care in the urban forest through education and enforcement.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Develop Urban Forest Management Plan.**
- 2. City should require certification of companies involved in tree care to enhance enforcement.**
- 3. Education by the City of citizens and community members.**

Other Strategies

Training for arborists and other professionals.

Neighborhood Tree Watch.

Hire an Urban Forester.

Use City employees to call in violations.

PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL: To create inclusive partnerships that encourage collaboration among all affected parties to benefit Tampa's urban forest.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Form specific group to promote the urban forest and its benefits (non-profit – new or existing).**
- 2. More resident involvement in development decisions (including better accessibility to ordinances, etc.).**
- 3. Carbon credits for land bank contributions.**

Other Strategies

Other (suggested by individual Committee members):

Open dialogue to discuss differences between development community and neighborhoods to find middle ground that benefits community at large.

Involve non-citizen organizations in development of living lab in their neighborhoods.

Team with Mayor's Beautification program in promoting urban forest sustainability issues and tree planting.

Runoff credits for tree preservation.

REGULATION / INCENTIVES

GOAL: To improve the policy framework for the conservation, reclamation, restoration and increase of natural resources within the urban forest.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Review and revise Chapter 13 (including a look at the process) in context of Chapter 27.**
- 2. Develop performance standards providing core for good landscape in Chapter 13.**
- 3. Give Parks Department more enforcement authority over the urban forest.**

Other Strategies

Re-inspection of landscape and site permits.

Other (suggested by individual Committee members):

Create developer incentives to preserve, protect and restore the urban forest.

Natural Resources Review Board with quasi-judicial authority to impose penalties, approve development and encourage sustainability of urban forest.

Environmental stewardship ordinance.

SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL: To promote recognition, maintenance and regeneration of Tampa's urban forest that is economically and ecologically feasible.

Priority Strategies

- 1. Right (tree) plant / right place.**
- 2. More community participation in conservation, etc. (existing conservation groups).**
- 3. Tree planting program.**

Other Strategies

Shock approach.

Community partnerships – advisory committee.

Tree replacement program.

Identify areas lacking trees.

Other (suggested by individual Committee members):

Develop development incentives and mitigation process as path to sustainability – like LEEDS certification with “carrots” for excellence.

Restoration of entire ecosystems with practices that incorporate compatibility with urban lifestyles.

Tree planting program including tree replacement and planting areas that lack trees if appropriate.