

June 12, 2006

Councilmember Leo V. Chaney, Jr.  
Chairperson, Quality of Life Committee  
City of Dallas  
1500 Marilla, Room 5FN  
Dallas, Texas 75201

Dear Chairperson Chaney,

The Members of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee (UFAC) wish to extend our sincere appreciation to you and the Quality of Life Committee for your commitment to tree and forest related issues. We are deeply honored by the opportunity to utilize our expertise, education and time in serving the citizens of Dallas. Our hope is that you will develop a level of trust in UFAC that will progress into a strong working relationship. When tree or forest issues arise in the future, remember you have access to an entire group of professional advisors and volunteers. As a result of our association and corporative efforts, everyone benefits in many ways.

By approving the establishment of UFAC, the council has expressed a strong vision of a cooler and greener future for Dallas. Your commitment and support for tree and forest initiatives will leave a legacy that will last for many generations. The work of UFAC will directly affect the health, well-being, quality of life and economic future of Dallas. There are no other investments that the city can make which offer the many various contributions that trees and forests make to society (see briefing materials Area 6, Benefits of Trees).

Trees and forests represent the very foundation of urban landscapes as well as millions of dollars in natural capital or green infrastructure. As such, you are wise to establish UFAC as “investment advisors” that aid in maintaining the growth of these assets and work to ensure a high rate of return on the investment.

Due to budget constraints, current forest management is largely on a reactionary basis and no citywide effort exists to replace trees that are lost or to plant new trees. The need for UFAC is great and its establishment was timely.

UFAC is charged to hold monthly meetings and conduct business relating to trees and forests that support the purpose for which we were established (see briefing materials Area 10, UFAC). Since the inception of UFAC, progress has been made in this pursuit as detailed below:

- Monthly meetings are being held on the first Tuesday of the month at 4:00 PM in the Park and Recreation Department offices at City Hall (see briefing materials Area 10, UFAC Forest Advisory Committee).

- UFAC members worked to encourage the hiring of a city forester and will work to support the position in the future.
- UFAC fully supported the replacement of trees at City Hall and the Official 2006 State of Texas Arbor Day Celebration.
- Park and Recreation Department Liaison, Mr. Michael Hellman, presented a PowerPoint presentation to the Park Board regarding UFAC and other tree/forest related successes.
- By unanimous decision, UFAC accepted a Mission Statement comprised of language from the City Council Resolution.
- UFAC is working to develop teams of volunteers that specialize in specific areas of critical importance.
- UFAC was briefed and supported the “Celebration Tree Grove” effort by the “For the Love of the Lake” organization.
- UFAC was briefed on and supported the annual Reverchon Park “Clean-up Effort”.
- UFAC reviewed and is considering a “Citizen Forester Program” to train and enlist volunteer support.
- UFAC reviewed and supported the Dallas County Master Gardener’s Proper Tree Placement and Energy Savings program.
- UFAC Members are tracking volunteer hours and will provide a year-end report to the city, including estimated value.
- UFAC activities were accepted by the North Texas Master Naturalist organization and approved for volunteer hour accumulation. This will provide access to hundreds of potential volunteers to support UFAC efforts.
- UFAC developed a PowerPoint presentation about the importance of Trees/Urban Forestry and the establishment of UFAC. As a companion piece, compiled an extensive briefing binder on these subjects and provided the presentation to the DMN Editorial Review Board.
- UFAC consulted with the Mayor in developing an Arbor Day Proclamation for 2006.
- UFAC conducted extensive investigations of “Forest Management Plans” from around the United States.
- UFAC developed a “Rough Draft Strategic Plan” for the Urban Forest that guides future UFAC actions.

The Rough Draft Strategic Plan has been approved by UFAC and awaits your committee's review and input. Since the goals of UFAC go beyond the simple management of the Urban Forest, a management plan specifically designed for Dallas and detailing more specific actions will be developed after the new "Urban Forester" is hired. The strategic plan is comprehensive in its scope and is briefly described as follows:

## Strategic Plan for the Urban Forest

**Education Goal:** To educate city officials and the public regarding the importance of healthy urban forest resources as an integral part of the city's infrastructure and the need for conservation.

**Objective:** To promote the benefits of trees/forests and increase awareness through community outreach.

- Publicity campaign regarding the benefits of trees and conservation.
- Press releases regarding timely subjects.
- Formulate Power Point presentations regarding basic forestry principles and offer them to the public.
- Raise awareness of the city's Urban Reforestation Program and the Dallas Parks Foundation.

**Education Goal:** To improve the technical knowledge and skills of the Park and Recreation Department Forestry Division personnel and other city staff who work with trees, forests and green spaces.

**Objective:** To establish permanent, ongoing training programs relating to basic tree care and maintenance.

- Search for existing training programs that may be suitable and current.
- Enlist the support of experts in various tree/forest related subjects, to review the training materials and consider donating time as teacher's.
- Support funding for the education of city officials and employees, including encouraging participation in educational seminars offered by various professional groups and individuals.

**Education Goal:** To establish citywide standards (or at least committee standards) for the planting, transplanting and basic care of trees. By establishing standards that are available to the public, UFAC will greatly expand the education of the public and increase the quality of tree care in Dallas.

**Objective:** To search for existing standards which are current and suitable for the Dallas urban forest. These standards should be part of the ongoing training programs for city departments which address tree/forest related issues.

At a minimum, establish standards in at least the following areas:

- Proper tree planting and transplanting.
- Safety training in the field of Arboriculture and Forestry.
- Proper and safe tree pruning.
- Safe tree removal.
- Maintaining natural areas.
- Identifying trees with structural hazards.

**Education Goal:** To establish citywide standards regarding construction activities and building around trees.

**Objective:** Search for realistic and economically feasible ways to build environmentally sensitive developments, including low-income housing.

- Study current standard procedures in an effort to foster creative solutions to the typical problems that arise.
- Investigate, understand and promote the use of current technology and methods successfully utilized in the past.
- Utilize the Dallas Urban Forester and the expertise of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee, to help resolve conflicts that threaten tree health.

**Fundraising Goal:** To establish a solid fundraising campaign for urban forest related objectives.

**Objective:** Identify potential federal, state or local programs offering funds to urban forest projects.

- Apply for available federal, state or local funds or grants.
- Investigate the availability of federal pollution mitigation funding.
- Establish relationships with groups, corporations and individuals that have an interest in offering financial support for urban forest initiatives. Grovel at every opportunity.
- Establish levels of sponsorship and provide recognition for significant contributions.
- Create Power Point presentations showcasing the multiple benefits of urban forestry and urging sponsorship of specific efforts.
- Investigate creative ways to raise substantial funds, with minimal effort and expense.

**Volunteerism Goal:** To promote the involvement of volunteers in urban forest related initiatives.

**Objective:** To institute various strategies that urge professionals, citizens and corporations to play important roles in the management of the urban forest.

- Establish a “Citizen Forester” program that offers training in forestry and arboriculture, in exchange for a given number of volunteer hours of service returned. A set number of volunteer hours each following year are required to maintain the status of “Citizen Forester”.
- Encourage professionals and citizens to join one of the Urban Forest Advisory Committee teams that are dedicated to critical areas of urban forest management.
- Urge the recognition of outstanding volunteer efforts by citizens.
- Develop strong, working relationships with volunteer based organizations such as: The North Texas Volunteer Center, Groundworks Dallas, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Homeowners Associations, professional trade organizations or others.
- Work with the Dallas County Youth Village and Dallas County officials in the establishment of volunteer efforts and an apprenticeship program. Youths that show an interest and basic abilities in the completion of community service projects could be considered for apprenticeship in Forestry or Arboriculture. Training could occur in conjunction with scheduled training for Park and Recreation Department Forestry personnel or other city staff. Investigation of potential funding for this type of program must be completed. It is an opportunity to give a troubled youth a direction in life as well as a potential career. For some, it could change the future.

**Forest Management Goal:** To institute a reforestation program to increase the urban forest canopy size and fill vacancies in the forest as may be required.

**Objective:** Determine the existing annual per capita expenditure by the city relating to trees and urban forestry. Encourage city officials to reach the goal of two dollars per capita required to attain “Tree City USA” status from the National Arbor Day Foundation.

- Establish annual Arbor Day celebrations and encourage Dallas citizens to plant trees.
- Utilize the Reforestation Fund to support significant planting efforts within the city.
- If city trees are inventoried or surveyed, develop schedules of removal and replacement in older forest stands. Concentrate planting efforts in areas with less canopy cover.
- Identify and coordinate city departments necessary to annually quantify expenditure data required to be recognized as a “Tree City USA”.
- Increase canopy cover to a predetermined amount, based on forest data gathered for each area of the city.

- Identify areas with larger, older trees that will require more maintenance and moderate planting or reforestation efforts, areas with younger or smaller trees will require less maintenance and more effort toward planting/reforestation.

**Forest Management Goal:** Utilize GIS sciences and current technology to quantify important data regarding the urban forest. In order to gather data to guide future forest management plans, a baseline of existing canopy cover must be established.

**Objective:** Involve the committee in tree or forest related affairs that become a concern or problematic and encourage cooperative effort on behalf of all parties involved.

- Review existing city standards, protocol, procedures and regulations relating to trees/forests and offer recommendations as may be necessary.
- Request that various officials brief the committee in an effort to assure informed decisions.
- Establish a strong working relationship with city officials in various departments and search for effective ways of coordinating tree/forest related efforts.

**Forest Management Goal:** Increase species diversity within the urban forest and encourage the public to avoid monocultures, or excessive numbers of a single species of tree.

**Forest Management Goal:** Improve the coordination and cooperation of people and organizations that influence the urban forest in various ways.

With your direction, we will continue to grow the Urban Forest into its greatest use and highest possible value. We look forward to working together to ensure that the many benefits of trees are expanded and enjoyed by all Dallas citizens.

Respectfully,

---

Steve Houser, Committee Chairperson

Cc: Councilmember Elba Garcia, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem  
Councilmember Pauline Medrano, District 2  
Councilmember Maxine Thornton Reese, District 4  
Councilmember James L. Fantroy, District 8  
Councilmember Gary Griffin, District 9  
Councilmember Angela Hunt, Vice Chairperson, Quality of Life Committee,  
District 14