



# Citywide Tree Policy Review and Regulatory Improvement Project

Recommended Draft to the  
Portland City Council  
February 2, 2011



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.



# Presentation Roadmap

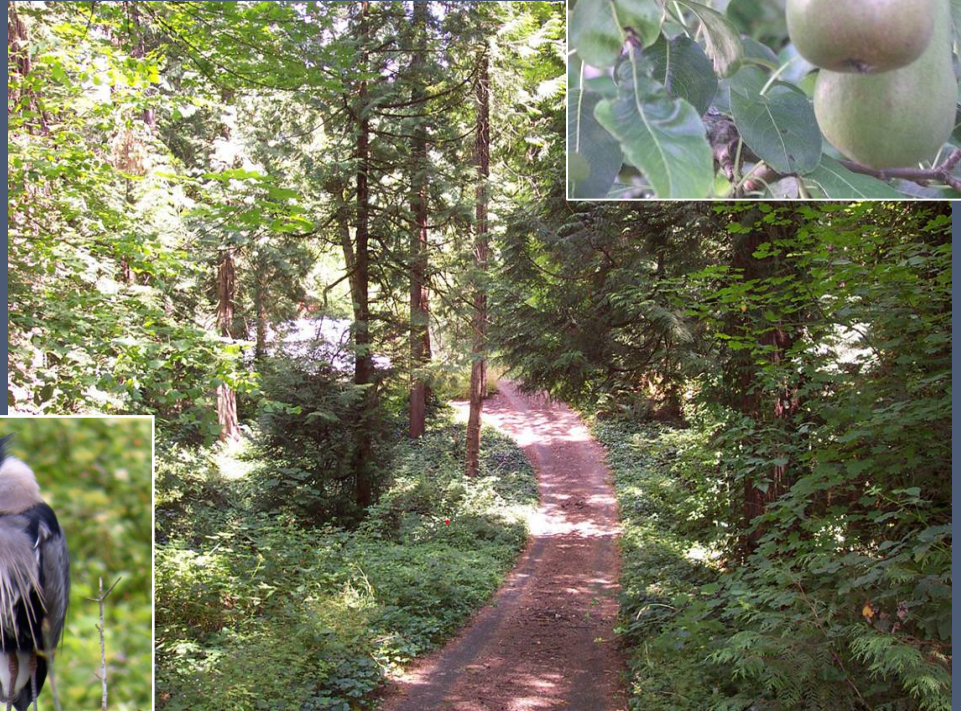
1. Value of urban trees
2. What's the problem?
3. What's the charge?
4. Project approach
5. Project proposal
6. Project benefits
7. Implementation strategy
8. Amendments





# Value of urban trees

1. Cleaner, cooler air, water
2. Food, habitat for wildlife & people
3. Reduced energy demand & CO2 emissions



# Trees Benefit All Portlanders

1. Distinctive neighborhoods
2. Healthy living
3. Vibrant business districts
4. Higher market property values

*Annual environmental benefits:  
\$38 million*

*Urban forest replacement value:  
\$5 billion*

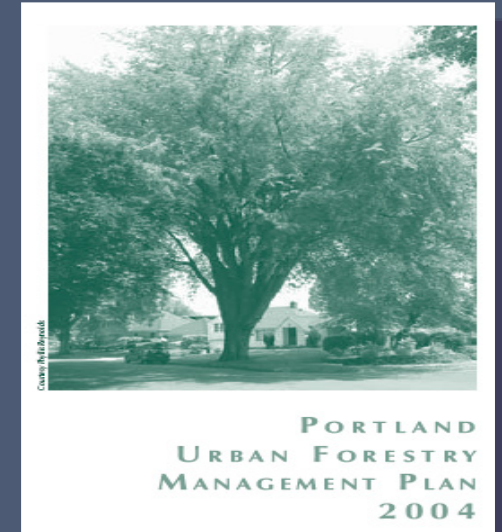
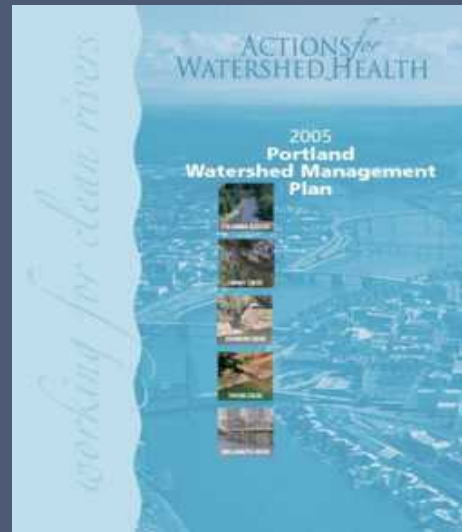
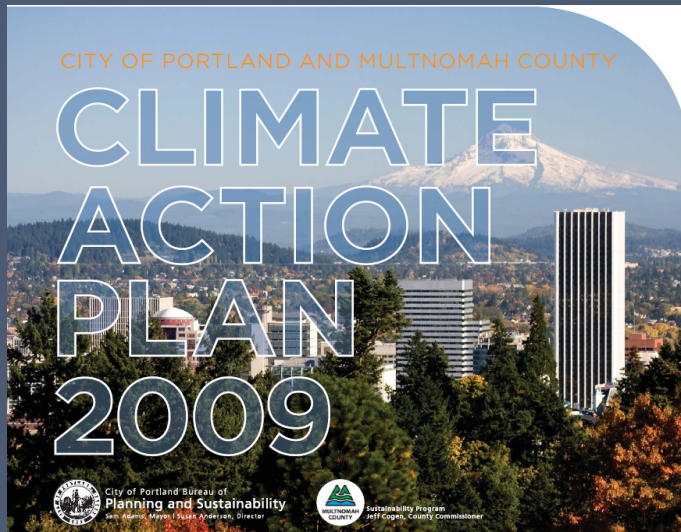




# What's the Problem?

## Portland's tree regulations:

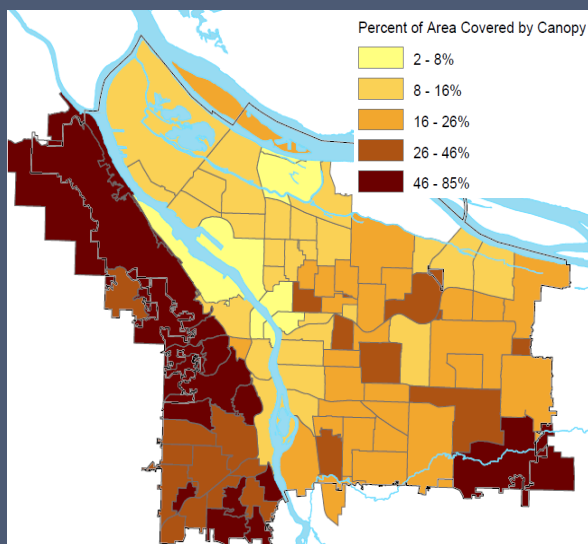
- inconsistent
- opaque
- user-unfriendly
- ineffective and out of sync



# What's the Problem?

## Portland's urban forest:

- >6000 acres short of tree canopy goals
- >100,000 new households by 2035
- tree canopy disparities/inequities



Canopy cover by neighborhood



Canopy distribution 2002





# What's the charge?

2007 Urban Forest Action Plan directs project to:

1. Review City tree policies, rules and procedures
2. Create cohesive, consistent regulatory framework
3. Protect/enhance the urban forest thru development



# Project Approach

1. Inter-bureau coordination
2. Collaborative scoping
2. Review local tree programs
3. Stakeholder participation
4. Early vetting
5. Urban Forestry Commission and Planning Commission partnership



Photo of PC/ UFC hearing by Toshio Suzuki, Friends of Trees



# Project Proposal “in a nutshell”

1. Consolidation and restructuring new *Title 11 Trees*
2. Trees and Development
3. Trees Absent Development
4. Customer Service Improvements



# Title 11, *Trees* – a paradigm shift

1. Code consolidation & restructuring
2. Trees as citywide asset
3. Elevated Urban Forest Program
4. Holistic framework
  - public/private trees
  - projects and permits
  - enforcement
  - specifications





# Trees and Development

*Practical, quality tree preservation & replenishment*

## 1. Capital and public works projects

- routine, early consultation w/UF
- clear, reasonable mitigation



# Trees and Development cont'd

## *Practical, quality tree preservation & replenishment*

1. Flexible development & site standards
2. Land divisions & land use reviews
3. Building permit standards – applies to all development types



Tree Density - baseline canopy; by development type

Tree Preservation – economic incentive to retain trees

Standards - “clear and objective” - no review, no public appeals







# Trees and Development cont'd

*Practical, quality tree preservation and replenishment*

## 4. Trees in **existing** environmental zones & plan districts

- clarifies
  - tree replacement (non-natives, transition areas)
  - water body setbacks
- consistent planting requirements



# Trees Absent Development

## 1. Standardized, streamlined permit system (all trees)

- Type A – “cut a tree, plant a tree” no review
- Type B – review/appeal, scaled replacement
- City Forester may adjust replacement
- New Urban Forest Appeals Board - efficient





# Trees Absent Development cont'd

## 2. Street

- 30' old, line trees
- new trees



# Trees Absent Development cont'd

## 3.Private trees

- Simple, fair, ensures replacement
- Keep 12" diameter threshold for currently regulated lots
- New Type A homeowner permit for trees  $\geq 20''$  diameter
  - no review, no public appeal, no "no"
  - cut a tree, plant a tree
  - City Forester may waive replacement
- Streamlined permit to prune in environmental overlay zones

### Tree Size Thresholds in Other Cities:

- West Linn (6" / 12")
- Gresham (8")
- Lake Oswego (5")
- Rivergrove (11.5")
- Atlanta, GA (6")
- Austin, TX (8-19")
- San Francisco, CA (12")
- Toronto, Canada (12")
- Vancouver, Canada (8")



# Trees Absent Development cont'd

4. Programmatic Permit for public agencies
  - Routine maintenance or enhancement activities
  - Valid for up to 5 years





# Customer Service Improvements

## *Better access to the City and tree information*

- Single point of contact
- Permit tracking system upgrades
- 24-hour tree hotline
- Community tree manual
- Neighborhood Tree Plan



# Project Benefits

## 1. Improved tree canopy

- quantity (~100 acres/year)
- quality (larger trees, groves, natives)
- distribution (developing areas, tree deficient areas)

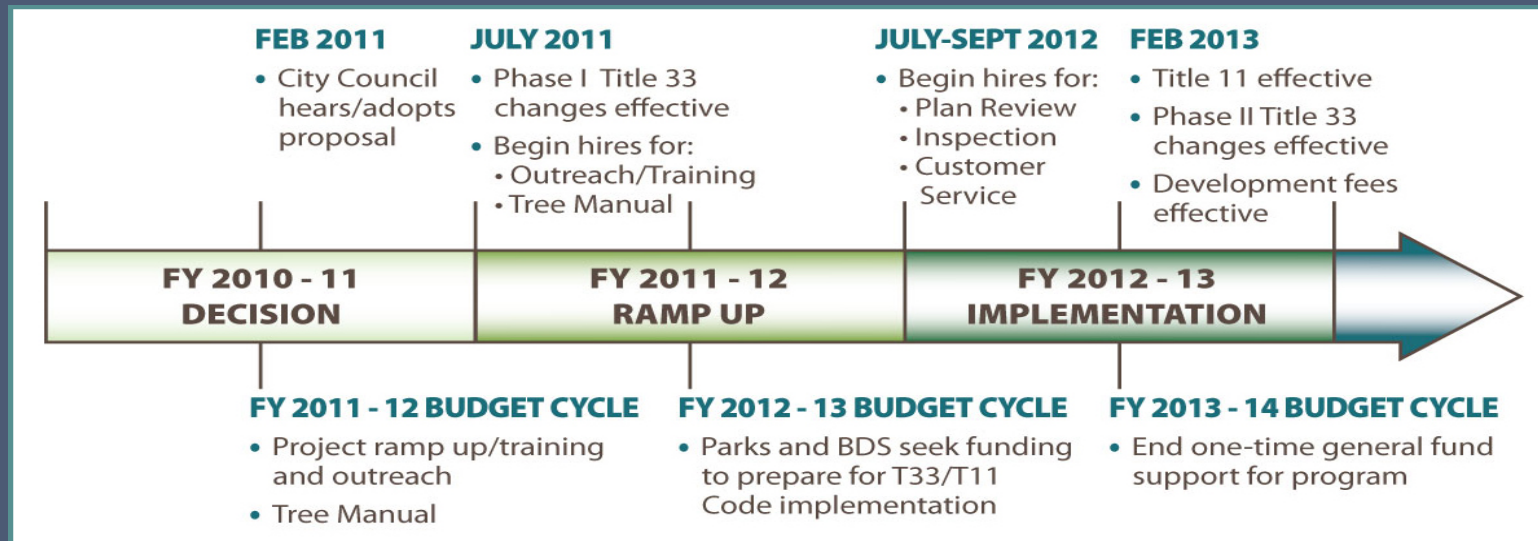
## 2. Consistent, balanced framework - supports multiple goals



# Implementation Strategy

**Staffing** +5.5 FTE (when in full swing)

- 3.5 FTE – development / CIP (BDS , Parks , infrastructure bureaus
- 2.0 FTE - tree permit; single point of contact (Parks)





# Substantive Amendments

1. Planning and Sustainability Commission to hold public hearing and recommend to City Council on Title 11 amendments relating to development and enforcement.
2. Exempt industrial, employment and commercial zones without existing landscaping requirements from Title 11 Tree Density and Tree Preservation standards.  
*(Return to City Council with recommendations when issues raised in LUBA North Reach River Plan Remand are resolved)*
3. Re-adopt Comprehensive Natural Resource Plan option – 10 year master plan for sites with natural resource zoning

