

# **San Francisco Urban Forestry Council**

## Brief overview of the UFC's history for 2013 strategic planning work

The UFC was formed from an earlier community group called the San Francisco Tree Advisory Board. In April of 2003, the Urban Forestry Council held their first meeting.

The mission of the Urban Forestry Council is to guide the stewardship of San Francisco's trees by promoting a healthy and sustainable urban forest that benefits all San Franciscans while ensuring public health and safety.

### **UFC Ordinance and Scope:**

Codified in 2003, Chapter 12 of the Environment Code created the Urban Forestry Council, with the goal of improving forestry management and oversight, to enhance the size and health of San Francisco's urban forest. In 2008, the UFC membership was amended by ordinance to its current makeup with the goal of increasing the UFC's effectiveness.

Due to significant input by the Council, in 2006 the Landmark Tree Ordinance was passed to amend the Department of Public Works Code. The ordinance was championed by the UFC as a way to protect trees on private property. The UFC is identified as the first level review for Landmark Tree Applications and charges the UFC with making recommendations to the Board of Superiors on whether the tree should be given Landmark Status, which provides the highest level of protection to trees in San Francisco.

In 2006 the UFC adopted the City's first Urban Forest Plan, which was developed under contract with HortScience. The modest budget for the project proved to be insufficient for the UFC's and the Planning Department's overall goals for the project. Following the UFC's adoption of the Urban Forest Plan, they passed a resolution in 2007 giving the responsibility for further development of the Urban Forest Plan to the Planning Department.

Current UFC annual projects include reviewing Landmark tree nominations, reviewing and updating the List of Recommended Street Trees and Annual State of the Urban Forest Report. The Council also reviews and provides comments on large-scale area plans and design elements on an ad-hoc basis.

In the past, the Council sponsored an annual tree care workshop for city employees, based on the City's adopted Pruning Standards, which the also UFC developed. The Council has also participated in the City's Annual Arbor Day celebration, supported the development and adoption of tree disclosure forms for constructions areas, provided comments that were incorporated into the Green Landscaping Ordinance, adopted recommendations for addressing Pine Pitch Canker, provided comments on DPW's tree maintenance transfer plan, and provided comments on the Recreation and Open Space Element.

### **UFC Budget and Staff Support:**

The UFC code notes that staffing is essential to the ability of the Council to meet their goals. City Departments were asked to support the work of the UFC by providing funding to SF Environment to support the UFC's work. In the Council's first year, four city departments provided funding to support the Council, for a total of \$95K. The following year (fiscal 2004-2005) six departments each provided \$25K for a total budget of \$150K that fiscal year; these agencies were SFPUC, the Port, DPW, Redevelopment, RPD, and Planning.

Funding has dwindled over time. In fiscal year 2012-2013, the UFC is budgeted at \$51K. This budget includes work-ordered funding of \$25K received from the Recreation and Park Department and \$25K received from the Public Utilities Commission. An additional request for \$1K is also made to a department that has not provided funding for many years. The Planning Department has committed to provide \$25K next fiscal year, bringing the UFC budget to a projected \$76K for fiscal year 2013-2014.

Originally, the UFC had one full-time, high level coordinator staff position to support programmatic work, along with support from SF Environment's Commission Secretary. Early on, the high level coordinator reduced to approximately half-time schedule and the department used the savings to hire an additional entry level full-time staff person. For a period of time, the UFC had 1.5FTE staff support, which was reduced to 1FTE when the high-level coordinator position resigned. When the budget dwindled further, the remaining staff position was retained through assigning that staff a portion of non-UFC related program work. Subsequent and current program staffing has included non-urban forestry work scope to make up for the funding shortfall.