UFC Street Tree Policies

THE URBAN FOREST COUNCIL RECOMMENDS THAT THE PLANNING
COMMISSION ELEVATE THE VISIBILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF STREET TREES
IN THE GENERAL PLAN; URGES CITY DEPARTMENTS TO ESTABLISH STREET
TREE POLICIES AND INTEGRATE STREET TREES INTO PLANNING, OPERATIONS
AND PERMITTING DECISIONS; AND URGES THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS TO WORK WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES OPERATING IN SAN FRANCISCO TO IMPLEMENT THESE
RECOMMENDATIONS.

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way provide environmental and socio-economic
benefits to the community; and

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way increase property values, and enhance
neighborhood character, livability and sense of place; and

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way calm vehicular traffic, reduce traffic noise, and
encourage pedestrian activity; and

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way reduce levels of atmospheric carbon that lead to
climate change; and

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way improve air quality, and public health by
absorbing gaseous pollutants, intercepting dust, ash, and smoke, and releasing oxygen through
photosynthesis; and

WHEREAS, Trees in the public right-of-way reduce storm water runoff through the
interception and storage of rainfall on leaf and branch surfaces, thereby reducing runoff volumes,
delaying the onset of peak flows, limiting the need to expand storm drainage systems; and reducing soil erosion; and

WHEREAS, Urban forest benefits increase with tree number and size, and therefore mature trees have a high value and should be conserved; and

WHEREAS, Appropriate planning, planting and maintenance of street trees provides City residents and visitors with economic, social, ecological and aesthetic benefits, as well as contributing to public health, welfare and safety; and

WHEREAS, The full benefits of the City’s urban forest are not being realized because:

a. Trees are not valued sufficiently as the City grows and develops.

b. Projects such as utility undergrounding, curb cuts for new driveways and large transportation projects are limiting the opportunity for new trees by eliminating planting sites.

c. Plans and designs for projects are not maximizing new installations of trees.

d. Trees do not always receive adequate maintenance that will ensure their health and longevity; and,

e. Trees are not always selected, planted and established properly.

WHEREAS, The General Plan currently encourages the City to maintain and expand the urban forest; and

WHEREAS, Each City department charged with the care of street trees needs to develop policies and procedures that address the importance of trees and conform to the City’s vision for street trees;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Urban Forest Council urges City agencies to recognize that street trees are a significant and highly visual portion of the urban forest, and a vital infrastructure element essential to the quality of life in the urban environment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in order to maximize the environmental and socio-economic benefits that trees provide, the Urban Forest Council recommends that the Planning Commission elevate the visibility and importance of street trees in the General Plan; and that City Departments and other government agencies operating in San Francisco establish street tree policies and integrate them into planning, operations and permitting decisions; and that the Mayor and Board of Supervisors work with City departments and other government agencies operating in San Francisco to implement these recommendations so that:

a. Street trees are recognized as living infrastructure elements that appreciate in value and should be integrated in the planning and development of projects affecting the public right-of-way.

b. Existing trees should be valued as an asset in new development, and their protection and conservation must be a priority.

c. Projects should be planned so that planting sites are conserved, and new projects should maximize the opportunity to plant trees.

d. Trees should be adequately maintained to ensure their health and longevity in order to maximize the environmental and socio-economic benefits they provide.

I hereby certify that this resolution was adopted by the Urban Forest Council at its regular meeting on November 14, 2003. //Emily Rogers//

Council Secretary
VOTE:

Ayes: Carolyn Blair, Jose Campos, Jane Herman, AnMarie Rodgers, Francesca Vietor, Michael Sullivan, Larry Costello, Paul Sacamono, and Terry Milne.

Noes: None

Absent: Kelly Cornell and Milton Marks, III