Columbus Urban Forestry Master Plan

Public Tree Code Input Summary Report

This document provides a summary of the initial comments received as part of the Public Tree Code Revision project via the ColumbusUFMP.org website form. This form was open from January 12 - February 4, 2022. A total of 210 comments were received. Quantity on comments received by neighborhood follows:

Qty	%	Area
39	19%	Clintonville
26	12%	Olentangy West / University District / Fifth by Northwest
18	9%	Far Northwest/Northwest
14	7%	Dublin Road / Franklinton / Harmon Road
14	7%	Harrison West / Victorian Village / Italian Village / Milo Grogan / Fort Hayes / Downtown
12	6%	German Village / Brewery District
12	6%	North Linden / South Linden / State of Ohio
10	5%	Hayden Run/ Far West
10	5%	Northeast / Airport / East Columbus
10	5%	Northland
7	3%	South Side
7	3%	Far East
6	3%	Near East / Wolfe Park / East Livingston Avenue
4	2%	West Scioto
4	2%	Greater Hilltop
3	1%	Far North
3	1%	Mid East

2	1%	Westland
1	0%	Rocky Rock-Blacklick
1	0%	North Central
0	0%	Southwest
0	0%	South East
0	0%	Far South
7	3%	Other: Upper Arlington, Westerville, Ashland, MA., Hilliard, Gahanna, Grandview, Worthington

Recurring Themes / Findings

A full compilation of all comments have been submitted to the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department for use in drafting a revised public tree code.   For ease of consumption, all comments were grouped into the most prevalent themes or topics, as shown in the table below. These are described in more detail in the following pages.

Theme or Topic	# of Comments	% of All Comments	Theme or Topic	# of Comments	% of All Comments
Specifics on What to Plant	120	57%	Education Needed	21	10%
Right Tree Right Place	*38*	*18%*	Process Improvements	20	9%
Natives	*37*	*17%*	Utilities	20	9%
Invasives	*13*	*6%*	Sidewalk Conflicts	16	8%
Wildlife	*11*	*5%*	Address Inequities	14	7%
Plant for Climate	*10*	*5%*	Maintenance for Low Income	12	6%
Diversity	*8*	*4%*	Making/Finding Space for Trees	9	4%
Food Forest	*3*	*1%*	Establish Young Trees	8	4%
Need to Protect Trees	69	33%	Against Private Property Regs	6	3%
Development	55	26%	Rental Properties	5	2%
Proactive Care Needed	43	20%	Concern on 4' minimum	4	2%
Tree Replacement	39	18%	Subcommission	4	2%
Need for More Planting	34	16%			

Specifics on What to Plant (120 comments, 57% of respondents)

Over half of respondents cited preferences or requests for changes in what type or species is planted throughout Columbus. The most prevalent comments were related to ensuring the right tree is planted in the right place (space to grow, less infrastructure conflicts), as well as calls for more native trees to be used. Other subcategories of what to plant included calls for prohibiting planting of invasives, planting trees for wildlife, for adapting to climate change, and ensuring a diversity of trees planted. Sample comments in each subcategory follows:

Right Tree Right Place (38 comments)

- *Planted, public trees should reflect "the right tree in the right place" mentality. Too often, it seems that cities leave a legacy of messy or invasive tree species, only to tear them down years later and replant. Establish a canopy that is appropriate for central OH and will last for decades to come.*

- *Planning starts with determining where trees are most needed and choosing the type of tree that best fits the neighborhood and growing conditions, which includes not only moisture and light requirements but also the amount of space in which trees are planted. There are many trees in my neighborhood that, as they mature, are too large for the narrow tree lawns in which they were planted. Their roots cause sidewalks to heave and buckle, creating trip/fall hazards, and relegating sidewalk repair to property owners, who had no voice or decision in the tree planting.*

- *Plan ahead to avoid having to trim around lines and wires*

- *Consideration should be paid to trees, public or private that have become disruptive to sidewalk bricks. Trees that may have been planted without regard to future size; therefore, ruining the areas around them.*

- *Downtown I see a lot [of] trees planted in the sidewalk with no soil or nutrients around. Just concrete. This makes no sense and the trees always look unhealthy.*

- *The section about prohibited species needs clarity as now it seems to apply to both street trees AND parks. It prohibits many native species that while they make terrible street trees (catalpa, mulberry, willow, etc) are perfectly fine, even beneficial, to have in parks... especially our own Glen Echo Park where the native mulberry feeds birds and willows help stabilize the banks of the stream. Additionally, the prohibited species list SHOULD include invasive species like Bradford Pear and Norway Maple. Design guidelines should also be part of the code, giving guidance about appropriate species.*

Natives (37 comments)

- *Prioritize the use of native trees in street plantings.*

- *There should also be a diversity to the trees planted, focusing on native Ohio trees, as well as both male and female species where applicable.*

- *It is important we plant only trees that are native to this area to prevent invasive species and to conserve what wildlife we have.*

- *Please consider including a requirement which regulates the types of trees which can be planted, such that we prioritize native species and/or those which will thrive in Central Ohio and not become nuisance trees.*

No More Invasives (13 comments)

- *Stop planting invasive trees and/or trees that are on the invasive watch list. There is never a reason to plant an invasive or potentially invasive tree. There are plenty of other tree species available.*

- *Callery pear is also an invasive species, and should not be planted ornamentally. The ones we currently have don't pose a huge threat, but we shouldn't be planting more.*

- *I am disturbed by the virulent spread of callery pear trees along I-70 and elsewhere. They are crowding out native serviceberries and crabapples among others. The public tree policy needs to emphasize natives because birds, butterflies, and moths need native trees. The policy should also prioritize the removal of non-native invasives and their replacement by native trees.*

- *A big issue I see for maintaining a healthy tree canopy is the presence of invasive honeysuckle. Especially along the Olentangy, large areas are completely overrun with honeysuckle, making it difficult for young trees to compete. We have honeysuckle too, and in some cases it has been trimmed up like a tree because it has gotten so big.*

- *Continue efforts to enhance the riparian zones around Columbus waterways. Several areas are choked with invasive honeysuckle and are in need of active management to ensure continued growth and development of the overall canopy.*

- *Restart massive removal of invasive honeysuckle bushes to allow native plants and trees to grow.*

For Wildlife (11 comments)

- *I'm hoping your experts will stress sustainable native species that will require less maintenance and provide habitat & food for native insects, birds, and other pollinators.*

- *It is important we plant only trees that are native to this area to prevent invasive species and to conserve what wildlife we have.*

- *Ideally, trees would be native species that are wildlife friendly.*

- *It will help owls, songbirds, and bugs to leave dead trees around: these are called snags.*

- *Non-native trees do not support wildlife, e.g., insects and birds, the way native trees do.*

To Adapt to Climate Change (10 comments)

- *Plan and plant with predicted climate shifts in mind.*

- *We must increase the tree canopy, especially in low tree density areas of the city. This will help mediate climate change and will also improve the quality of life and health for the residents.*

- *With the changing climate more attention needs to be given to the variety of trees and bushes being planted. The city needs to plant native trees and bushes which are also beneficial to pollinators.*

- *I feel that we need to increase our tree canopy, especially in areas where the tree canopy is sparse. This will help (1) offset greenhouse gas emissions, and the resulting global warming, (2) help keep the city cooler, and provide other health and social benefits as well. We have a low amount of tree canopy in Columbus compared to other Midwestern cities.*

- *New trees should be only natives that are chosen for climate change adaptability.*

Diversity (8 comments)

- *Also require that tree plantings are diverse and not just 1 or 2 species.*

- *Please plant other trees besides Japanese Lilac. Sure, it looks great, but we need hardy, pest-resistant native species to build up the canopy and support native wildlife.*

- *Vary species of trees in street plantings. In my neighborhood, when ash trees were replaced, the workers planted whatever came next in the truck. We ended up with, for example, eight Kentucky Coffee trees in a row. This type of planting will not mitigate problems like we saw with the Emerald Ash borer in the future.*

- *There should also be a diversity to the trees planted, focusing on native Ohio trees, as well as both male and female species where applicable.*

Food Forest (3 comments)

- *I believe it is necessary to plant trees that fruit to provide access to food for both humans and animals alike.*

- *At a time when cities around the country, including ours, are reshaping their landscapes to be less human-friendly (see: anti-homeless architecture), Columbus should make a push in the right direction by deliberately tailoring our tree planting for human use and*

enjoyment. Why shouldn't someone enjoy an apple from the tree lawn while they wait for their bus?

- *We want to ensure alignment between the UFMP and the Columbus & Franklin County Local Food Action Plan (columbus.gov/LFAP). Columbus City Council adopted the LFAP in 2016 as a policy guide for future local food systems policies and programs. This plan connects to the UFMP in that we want to ensure that fruit trees, fruit parks, and food forests are encouraged and allowed within the city code. To discuss this further please contact the city-county Local Food Team - myself (baestabr@franklincountyohio.gov) and Karima Samadi at Columbus Public Health (KRSamadi@columbus.gov)*

Need to Protect / Concerned with Losses (69 comments - 33% of respondents)

Just over one-third of the comments received cited a level of concern about the loss of trees, often mature trees, in Columbus. Sample comments follow:

- *Although new trees are exciting, it is these older ones that provide the most value.*

- *Another thing, which I'm sure others have shared, is the need to protect mature trees. They are difficult, if not impossible to replace. Perhaps there could be a rule about not cutting down trees over a certain size/age for construction or utility work, or requiring a certain permit to do so?*

- *Existing, mature healthy trees within our parks - especially our historic parks - need to be protected and appropriately maintained with regular trimming and fertilization. We shouldn't lose these trees due to neglect. Heritage trees that are decades or centuries old cannot be easily replaced. When one of these trees is lost it is a profound loss to the park.*

- *Too little is being done to protect old growth trees in the development process. Replacement trees, if they even happen, are an insufficient remedy for large, established old trees.*

- *Preserving the trees we already have is paramount, and that is going to take a lot of coordination between departments, and possibly a strengthened city code with changes in language.*

- *I will just reiterate that we need much more protection for current trees. In my old neighborhood in Old North, a developer clear cut five consecutive lots over the decade I lived there, and zoning and code enforcement were both unable and uninterested in*

doing anything to prevent them from clear cutting and paving backyards. We need green space in this city.

- *Please pursue measures to protect old growth trees! They add beauty, character, and carbon protection to our urban areas. Please pursue planting new trees and creating green spaces within the city as well. These spaces are so important for everyone to have access to, regardless of zip code.*

- *The city is becoming less attractive as it ages due to the loss of these older trees. New plantings cannot compare to the coverage and majesty of mature specimens.*

Development Related Comments (55 comments, 26% of respondents)

While not relevant to this public tree code revision effort, one quarter of the comments received focused on the need for tree protections during development. Sample comments include:

- *Developers don't seem to be required to contribute significantly to the tree canopy, particularly in all the apartment and multi-family building complexes that are springing up all over Columbus.*

- *I will just reiterate that we need much more protection for current trees. In my old neighborhood in Old North, a developer clear cut five consecutive lots over the decade I lived there, and zoning and code enforcement were both unable and uninterested in doing anything to prevent them from clear cutting and paving back yards. We need green space in this city.*

- *Additionally, these real estate companies and developers need incentives to both maintain existing neighborhood trees, and encouragement to plant more trees on their properties; as the cost of clogged gutters and invasive roots, and other tree issues can add up and cut into profits. So there either needs to be a carrot or a stick approach to incentivize them to be good tree stewards.*

- *Local commissions such as Victorian Village Commission need to have regulations that have teeth so that the developers cannot just clearcut trees.*

- *There need to be protections in place to prevent mature trees from being cut down for development or at least plans to plant several new trees nearby if trees are cut down for development.*

- *It is absolutely critical that we stop granting variances to real estate developers. Specific set-asides for trees need to be required of all new developments - and major re-developments.*

Proactively Care / Remove (43 comments, 20% of respondents)

One-fifth of respondents cited a need for better care of existing trees. Sample comments follow:

- *Without a viable maintenance plan, planting more trees seems short-sighted.*

- *Trees that are planted must be maintained and monitored as any other public owned investment. Perhaps an adoption campaign could be developed so neighbors near trees could look out for them. I would happily adopt a row of trees near my home.*

- *If the city is going to do better with its trees, it cannot be done without increasing the budget. There are not nearly enough personnel, particularly trained arborists, to supervise work and check the health of trees.*

- *Moreover, it is critically important to plan sustainable hearty species, provide care and maintenance I.E. WATERING and weeding on a regular basis.*

- *The forestry department does not seem to have the resources necessary to maintain current mature trees. Those valuable resources are further damaged by inexpert or excessive trimming.*

Replacement Required (39 comments, 18% of respondents)

Many comments were received citing the need for replacement plantings. These included general statements on the need for replacement, as well as various levels of replacement levels (inches of trunk diameter, quantity of trees, etc.) and that replacements need to be planted immediately after removal (currently citing a long lag time between removal and replanting). Sample comments follow:

- *Commit to replacing ALL city trees that must be removed for various reasons with MORE trees than have been removed. Don't just replace trees, but EXPAND the number of trees planted.*

- *When it comes to tree replacement requirements, there should be better public guidance on the best trees and planting locations for that replacement. The difference between a tulip tree and a redbud is significant. Less affluent homeowners who are forced to pay thousands of dollars to have an old tree maintained or removed are often hesitant to replace it with another potential financial burden. They don't necessarily have the resources to know that a durable native dogwood planted away from pipes and wires doesn't have that associated financial risk.*

- *The City needs to replace the tree lawn trees it cuts down within two years.*

- *Public trees should be replaced. It is so sad to go down streets in German Village that are now barren because trees are gone and not being replaced. And by replaced, I mean something larger than a tiny four foot tree. We need our trees!*

- *It has come to my attention that one of the roadblocks to planting new street trees is grinding the stumps from prior trees that were cut down. In some cases, YEARS go by after cutting a tree down before it is replaced. The timeline between cutting a tree down, grinding the stump, and replacing the tree should be much shorter. In fact, I would argue that a tree should NOT be cut down until the city has the resources to grind expeditiously and replace.*

- *Require that priority be given to replacing trees in the same neighborhood as those removed.*

- *Require utility companies that fail to protect trees by damaging their roots to pay to have them replaced. We've lost dozens of trees in our neighborhood due to their negligence.*

- *The Columbus tree replacement formula needs to be updated -1. require more new trees/cut ones . 2. Increase bounty value price per tree for each that cannot be replaced. 3. Ensure replaced trees go back within the general area from where they were removed. 4. The minimal size of tree that's qualified & counted need to be reduced. 5. Carbon capture of small trees doesn't exist until they get much bigger & mature.*

More Planting (34 comments, 16% of respondents)

Many comments called for an increase in tree planting overall. Sample comments include:

- *I spend a great amount of time at Griggs Reservoir park. There are numerous places in the park where native and site compatible trees can be planted. It appears to have been years since trees were added. The Griggs reservoir is a tremendous, missed, opportunity to plant a future tree canopy.*

- *Now that The Historic Sheep Farm, 58 acres on W. Case Rd, is coming online as a Columbus Park I see great opportunity to plant lots of trees ? on the site!*

- *I would love for all parks to massively increase the amount of trees they have.*

- *In North Linden, neighborhood areas are okay, but more commercial areas have no trees at all.*

- *I lived in a neighborhood where we were devastated when several mature locust trees were sacrificed to level the sidewalks. I hope for more thoughtful planting of trees so something like that doesn't have to happen again.*

- *Live in the Far West, but work downtown. I would like to see more trees in urban neighborhoods. More trees help keep the heat down in summer months with natural shade.*

- *There are plenty of spaces already cut out of the side walks all over the south side; however, most have no tree planted and the ones that are planted are either dead or dying.*

- *Currently there are many parks within the city in which trees have been removed due to disease/storms, or where there is plenty of open space. This would provide a great opportunity for the city to plant more trees where they would not result in damage to private property.*

- *We need a large-scale tree planting program for our important urban corridors like Summit, 4th, Main St., Broad St (east and west), Cleveland Avenue. This is so important in 'lifting up' economically depressed neighborhoods.*

- *I chose my home in Franklinton partly because of existing green spaces and trees. Makes life so pleasant for walking and community. Let's plan for more trees, and a conscious effort to manage the trees we have in the best ways*

- *There are not enough large trees in my neighborhood.*

- *There are lots of missed opportunities for tree planting in city rights of way. For example, West North Broadway has a large grass median that would be perfect for tree planting as is done in suburbs like Dublin. All grass areas in rights of way should have trees except near intersections where visibility is needed.*

- *More resources need to be dedicated to planting trees now. This is not something the city should do slowly. Engage the community upfront to recruit their assistance in this process.*

- *Please plant trees in Franklinton. My neighborhood is essentially treeless. As you know this results in a very unhealthful environment that is also plain ugly.*

- *Thank you for your effort. Please plant trees!!*

- *Please pursue planting new trees and creating green spaces within the city as well. These spaces are so important for everyone to have access to, regardless of zip code. Thank you!*

- *Lots of opportunities for tree planting in medians and traffic triangles.*

- *There are a lot of gaps where there are no trees. These are ripe for having new trees planted.*

Education Needed (21 comments, 10% of respondents)

Comments called for the need for education within Columbus related to trees. Sample comments include:

- *Offer education on how to deal with tree interface issues so that people don't immediately go towards cutting them down as a solution if there is a problem. Recommend appropriate trees for different scenarios, and warn against poor choices for urban lots.*

- *It seems that people don't know very much about public trees. A restaurant near us cut down two trees that were on the street side, which opened up our home to more noise and a view of the big intersection near us. This should not have been allowed.*

- *Please include in the new plan some public service announcements highlighting the role individuals have in protecting public trees.*

- *Offer training for volunteer arborists and coordinate community maintenance of public trees.*

- *Education of city council members. Yes, I realize developers are their base constituents, and council members pretty much waive anything that will hurt fund-raising with developers. They basically grandfathered 70+ properties/developments so developers wouldn't have to have green space and parking spaces. Can it be different this time?*

- *There needs to be a stronger public education program regarding: 1) the importance of a substantial tree canopy, and 2) the best tree varieties for homeowners and landlords to plant.*

- *I've noticed that a lot of newly planted tree lawn trees die (I suspect due to lack of water). I've also seen mulch volcanos placed by the home owners. My suggestion is to provide some basic instructions for tree care that would be useful to keep the city-planted trees alive, and might also encourage more tree planting on residential yards (preferably native trees). I thought a hang tag when the tree is planted with some tree benefit facts, care suggestions, how to get a tree, and maybe a QR code to link to your website or a list of native trees.*

- *Offer maintenance workshops (similar to the Community Backyards program offered by Franklin SWCD) to teach proper planting and maintenance of trees in the public ROW. I imagine volunteer groups would be happy to work on pruning or planting crews.*

- *I have been concerned with the number of invasive species like Honeysuckle that I see lots of places. I think there needs to be education on what to plant and what needs to be removed immediately.*

- *So many homeowners do not take care of the trees on their property (many I suspect rent out these homes) and the result is usually an overgrown mess that hides the house, tears up the sidewalk, drop messes in others' yards, are dying and dropping branches, aren't native to the area and should not have been planted here...I could go on and on. A stroll through the neighborhood tells you all you need to know.*

- *There needs to be an educational campaign to help shift people's mindset and understanding of the value and usefulness of trees. So often I hear neighbors worried about trees and the conversation is almost always negative. Ignorance of their value breeds fears and worry of unlikely property damage. A campaign and empowering local neighborhood tree advocates could help proper understanding of the benefit and value to the homeowner, community, and greater ecosystem. This year alone three healthy trees on our block were cut down without a single replacement. I'm so encouraged to see this work being done and hope for a better, greener future.*

Process Improvements (20 comments, 9% of respondents)

A number of comments cited issues with existing city processes around trees. Sample comments include:

- *Notice should be required to be given to adjacent homeowners for the planned cutting down of mature / old growth street trees and a process put in place to contest the decision to remove. In many cases, homeowners find out too late in the tree removal process to assist in problem solving (such as rerouting sidewalk into yard), or any other compromise. More consideration and deliberation should be part of the tree removal process. It should not be a unilateral process undertaken by the City Forester and utility tree trimmers.*

- *The city needs a process where it can coordinate work. We aren't allowed to have streets tree because our planting strip is 4â€ too small, but when the city recently replaced the curbs in our neighborhood there was no discussion of widening the planting strip even though the street is overly wide. Thats a 30+ year decision and the investment of 10s of thousands of dollars â€" just to double down on an existing problem, it doesn't make sense.*

- *Individuals as well as neighborhoods need to be informed of plans to remove trees and given time to provide input. Last summer large trees were taken down to allow gas lines to be placed, lines that in several cases could have been placed slightly differently in order to save the trees.*

- *I heartily agree that the main culprit in destruction of trees is city electric division which tries to optimize its own department instead of optimizing the needs of the city. I mean: are leaders truly going to start leading the city as a SYSTEM, or just as individual departments each trying to optimize itself. It's time for some new thinking.*

- *I think a great way to get community involvement and build city pride would be to allow citizens to report trees that are of particular concern to them. Perhaps it's not being pruned properly, or has particular value for its location or history. This obviously would*

not be practical in the near future, but down the road, letting citizens help the city prioritize tree management could help protect the more valuable trees.

- *There needs to be a formalized process for halting tree removal. Many of our neighbors have come home to or woken up to their trees being removed either because they're supposedly compromising utility lines or for random reasons like curb work or the installation of a 5G tower. There are no protections for this when it comes to public trees and no clear way to contest it if you are given notice.*

- *Also, there needs to be a process for individuals or park friends groups to partner with City Forestry to sponsor new trees to help defray the costs. Of course, the City would approve the type and location of the trees and also the method of planting. We need to add trees to our parks to continue to renew the stock and also add to the overall canopy/shade they provide.*

- *There should be fines to businesses/individuals who cut down street trees so that a new tree can be planted. Additionally, when street trees are put in, the city should educate the people who are near the tree. For example, I requested street trees on my residential street this year. 6 months later, the trees were put in, which was great! However, I think the city could go one step further and provide letters to the residents who have homes near these trees so that they are aware of it being city property, what type of care it needs, etc.*

- *The City of Columbus should segregate the Parks and Forestry entities as a stand alone Division separate from the Recreation Division. The Division of Parks and Forestry originally was managed separately from Recreation prior to the "Mel Dodge era."   It would be appropriate to have administrators with Parks and Forestry (education and experience) credentials manage the Division (independent of staffing and programming requirements of the Recreation Department.)*

- *The Mayor of Columbus and Columbus City Council members should prioritize the hiring of a Recreation and Parks Director who meets the job description requirements put forth in City Code (not maintain an eternal interim Director who does not meet the job requirements.)*

- *Public trees should have careful consideration in every part of project planning by every city department that touches a project. Departments need to work together to provide trees with the resources they need to survive, i.e., space, adequate water and light. These public resources should not be compromised without regard to the benefits they provide to the public. City leaders need to provide adequate resources for city staff to take care of these assets so that trees receive better care. We haven't done such a good job in the past, but I am hopeful that the City is finally coming around to recognize how important these assets are to the health and welfare of residents*

- *In order to create the tree canopies that recent studies confirm contribute greatly to physical and mental health of the community there must be more coordination between departments and utilities. Also, individuals as well as neighborhoods need to be informed of plans to remove trees and given time to provide input. Last summer large trees were taken down to allow gas lines to be placed, lines that in several cases could have been placed slightly differently in order to save the trees.*

- *Columbus should making the permitting process for planting public trees much easier, including allowing organization dedicated to the urban forest cause to file applications on behalf of citizens, neighborhood associations and local stakeholders. The permitting process should consider streets who lost ally and allow citizens to assist neighbors in planting and maintaining public trees.*

- *The Dept of Public Service recently installed trees on E 6th Avenue without coordinating with the people who live here. No one who lives here was invited to provide input about the type of trees we residents wanted. The Dept of Public Service did what it wanted to do and excluded the citizenry. That is simply poor quality work by the Dept of Public Service. The Dept of Public Service needs to be overhauled. The citizens of this area had agreed on a promenade-type appearance for this section of E 6th Avenue and had contacted Chad Hoff, the City arborist. He was willing to work with us...then the Dept of Public Service came to the site and did what it wanted to do, completely disregarding what the citizens wanted. The Dept of Public Service needs to be overhauled. It needs to include resident citizens in the planning process and in the selection of City trees.*

- *I love trees, but when you planted one on the curb in front of my house I wished you would have asked first. The tree is buckling the sidewalk and who is responsible for fixing this and who is responsible for the trimming?*

- *Provide funding & incentives to encourage nonprofit partner green groups to help plant trees & pollinator gardens within public spaces. Be more flexible with permit process.*

- *DPU needs to be more accountable for removed &/or damaged parkland & city trees.*

- *You need to be extremely open with the public , and many times they will need to be educated. I am a horticulturist and try very hard to educate and it can be difficult. 1) LISTEN, 2) Communicate, 3) be fair, 4) work with the neighborhoods, 5) LISTEN*

- *Revision of current process for requesting trees. Parsons Ave (South of Livingston) and streets bordering Parsons Ave have 30-40 empty tree plots. All plots have 311 requests for install. Improvement of process for requesting street trees and monitoring if the contractor installed them would be helpful. The city should also celebrate once trees are installed. Every tree counts.*

Utilities (20 comments, 9% of respondents)

Utilities were cited multiple times as a source of tree loss in Columbus. Sample comments include:

- *When any City department or external utility company such as Columbia Gas or their subcontractors determine a mature tree must removed from public or private property, there should be a proper review and permitting process.*

- *I would re-state, that the utility companies for street lighting have ruined so many of our "tree lawn" trees. Ones that exist in the narrow strip nearest the street.*

- *Require utility companies that fail to protect trees by damaging their roots to pay to have them replaced. We've lost dozens of trees in our neighborhood due to their negligence.*

- *Fixing the city's power grid would go a long way toward making an urban tree canopy possible. In many areas of the city utility lines run along both sides of the street or along the front of a property and through the alley. If you have a utility line running on both sides of your home or business you basically can't have trees. Does the city have any ability to limit where AEP can place lines? Can the city force them to consolidate their footprint?*

- *I would also suggest an initiative by the city to bury the electrical lines, especially in the older parts of the city. Bexley has buried its electrical lines, allowing it to achieve arboretum status.*

- *I agree that in order to create the tree canopies that recent studies confirm contribute greatly to physical and mental health of the community there must be more coordination between departments and utilities. Also, individuals as well as neighborhoods need to be informed of plans to remove trees and given time to provide input. Last summer large trees were taken down to allow gas lines to be placed, lines that in several cases could have been placed slightly differently in order to save the trees.*

- *Utilities seem to have complete discretion on chopping up old trees. City projects also harm older trees that should have a higher priority in saving them.*

- *Underground utilities are worth the investment to protect against outages in bad weather as well as help protect the tree canopy.*

- *Require that utility companies (electric, cable) plant a new tree in city-designated areas for every tree they remove or significantly reduce in crown size.*

- *The gas companies putting in new lines ignore roots which just leads to slow death of the tree. All the trees taken down by the developer at Little Turtle recently is a case in point of irresponsibility, especially because many were not his. Trees have just become an annoyance to many.*

Sidewalk Conflicts (16 comments, 8% of respondents)

The conflicts between trees and sidewalks was a common thread throughout comments. Sample comments include:

- *Stop cutting down trees whose roots have lifted sidewalks. There need to be other options - fix the sidewalk, wrap it around a tree, work with adjacent property owner to receive an easement to route the sidewalk around the tree, create a curb bump out for the tree if possible drainage wise.*

- *Do NOT cut down perfectly good mature city street trees only because they are upheaving sidewalks. There are many better solutions to fix those sidewalk issues. (Rubberized mats, asphalt, rerouting walkway, etc.). Do get rid of invasive Bradford pear trees.*

- *In the decade + that I've lived on North Meadows Boulevard, I'd guess that at least a quarter of the mature street trees have been cut down either by residents or at the residents' request due to the impact of their root structure on sidewalks or to the sometimes dangerous litter of the seed balls from (I presume city-planted) sweet gum trees.*

- *I do not believe that large, shady, aged trees should be destroyed due to sidewalk disruption. Instead, these sidewalks should be repaired.*

- *I lived in a neighborhood where we were devastated when several mature locust trees were sacrificed to level the sidewalks. I hope for more thoughtful planting of trees so something like that doesn't have to happen again.*

- *When a tree has caused sidewalk heave, typically the entire sidewalk does not need to be replaced. I know the concrete companies make a lot of money doing that, but its unnecessary. Most sidewalk heaving could be dealt with by grinding down the raised portion - this would be cheaper and it would protect the tree.*

- *People hate it when the city contracts for mass cuttings along a street so that sidewalks can be repaired. A local street's homes' property values were affected two summers ago by this dumb move. The sidewalk repairs could have been done without the Sunburst Locusts trees being removed. Sure, the roots are close to the surface, but their value as beautiful, clean hardwoods was more important than three pieces of sidewalk that could have been restructured, which wasn't redone wonderfully.*

- *Trees planted by sidewalks, roads need to have a root system that does not push up the hardscape over time.*

- *In established neighborhoods, trees are often removed when they heave up sidewalks, rather than re-routing the sidewalk around the roots of an established tree.*

- *As I walk through the neighborhood, there are a number of sidewalks that need to be repaired because of three planted. Funds should be used to repair those sidewalks.*

- *Consideration should be paid to trees, public or private that have become disruptive to sidewalk bricks. Trees that may have been planted without regard to future size; therefore, ruining the areas around them.*

Address Inequities   (14 comments, 7% of respondents)

A number of respondents called for planting and canopy work in the areas within Columbus in most need. Sample comments include:

- *Please don't forget our poor neighborhoods that have long suffered from too much pavement and too little tree cover. Trees help improve health, air quality and quality of life. I want to continue to live in Franklinton with my family, but it gets harder each year that we experience this kind of inequality in our natural environment.*

- *We must increase the tree canopy, especially in low tree density areas of the city. This will help mediate climate change and will also improve the quality of life and health for the residents.*

- *I support increasing Columbus's tree canopy, for obvious reasons. Low-income neighborhoods should be given early preference, as statistics show the marked benefits to a vital tree canopy.*

- *Address the lack of trees in underserved and under-resourced areas of town.*

- *Particularly needed are trees and parks in low-income areas. This gives pride to communities, helps build neighborhood cohesiveness, etc.*

- *We need to increase the tree canopy, especially in low tree density parts of the city. This is not only important to help mediate climate change but to improve quality of life and health for the residents. In addition to planting sustainable species, care and maintenance of the trees are critical.*

- *Looking at a map of Columbus' tree canopy side by side with a racial demographics map, there is a huge disparity in tree coverage. Racial equity needs to be considered and areas that have been neglected should be prioritized.*

- *Tree cover is segregated in Columbus, along racial and income lines. Some neighborhoods, often richer and whiter neighborhoods, have plenty of trees, and others, often Black or lower-income neighborhoods, don't have enough trees. We need to focus on these areas, and invest in them, as these are often places where people are*

experiencing more stress and are at greater risk for air pollution and overheating, all things trees can help mitigate.

- *Make sure new trees are planted equitably. Every neighborhood stands to benefit from a denser tree canopy, especially neglected neighborhoods in Linden, Hilltop, Southeast, eI completely agree with the other comments I read here. I would like to add that less privileged neighborhoods tend to have far fewer trees. I'd like to see that addressed and prioritized. The research is clear on the importance of nature in our lives and especially kids' brain development and general health. And now more than ever, considering climate change, we need as many trees as we can possibly get!*

- We need a large-scale tree planting program for our important urban corridors like Summit, 4th, Main St., Broad St (east and west), Cleveland Avenue.   This is so important in 'lifting up' economically depressed neighborhoods.

- I feel that we need to increase our tree canopy, especially in areas where the tree canopy is sparse. This will help (1) offset greenhouse gas emissions, and the resulting global warming, (2) help keep the city cooler, and provide other health and social benefits as well. We have a low amount of tree canopy in Columbus compared to other Midwestern cities.

Address Maintenance and Low Income (12 comments, 6% of respondents)

Calls were made for aid or assistance for low income households to maintain existing trees. Sample comments include:

- *We also need assistance for homeowners who may not be able to afford the high cost of maintaining older, well-established trees."*

- *Tree maintenance is expensive, as I well know, and so there needs to be an education/self-maintenance program as well as some provision in the code in which a low-cost tree maintenance program must be offered before tree removal is approved.*

- *I would like affordable suggestions on how to care for trees in my yard. I live in a house built in 1950. The trees are overgrown.*

- *Less affluent homeowners who are forced to pay thousands of dollars to have an old tree maintained or removed are often hesitant to replace it with another potential financial burden. They don't necessarily have the resources to know that a durable native dogwood planted away from pipes and wires doesn't have that associated financial risk.*

- *No tree should be removed without its replacement ready to go immediately in the same spot or an equivalent one nearby.   Subsidies should be provided to residents--owners or renters--who need them and their partnership in the process earnestly sought.*

- *As for ways that you can maintain the neighborhood tree canopy; your department has no money available to low income, working families, or retirees to maintain the mature trees on their properties which contribute to this canopy. We need both legislation, and public funds*

- *As for tree preservation. Funds should be available to maintain mature trees on private property such as for tree trimming and also the cost of root maintenance which can invade sewer lines. Families are squeezed tight by rising cost. If you want to save the oldest trees, help support property owners with funds for tree maintenance.*

- *Consider a program to aid lower income families with gutter cleaning and tree trimming.*

- *As for tree preservation, funds should be available to maintain mature trees on private property such as for tree trimming and also the cost of root maintenance which can invade sewer lines. Families are squeezed tight by rising costs. If you want to save the oldest trees, help support property owners with funds for tree maintenance.*

Making or Finding Space for Trees (9 comments, 4% of respondents)

A number of comments centered on both finding more space for trees, and in some cases, calling for more creative and proactively making space for trees throughout the city. Sample comments include:

- *There is a lot of space "in the margins" - along roadways, spaces along sidewalks that used to have trees (esp. downtown), unimproved lots, etc. - where trees could be planted. Additionally, these areas are ones that would most benefit from the pollution reduction and heat mitigation provided by trees.*

- *Do not widen streets at the cost of the trees planted along them.*

- *Too many high-rise building proposals have insufficient setback to allow for street trees. In pedestrian corridors, sidewalks and right-of-ways need to be wide enough to accommodate both a wide walking path and street trees that don't block that path. If that means that streets are narrowed by a few feet, so be it. Don't be afraid to plant trees in medians, too.*

Establishing Young Trees (8 comments, 4% of respondents)

Many comments centered on working more diligently to ensure that whatever is planted actually makes it long term. Sample comments include:

- *Happy the City has done new plantings in the last few years. But, not all of the trees survive, and they are never replaced.*

- *The center median strip of Hard Road looks like a tree cemetery. The trees planted there were never watered well and properly maintained. Hard Road was designed to be a Boulevard. That never happened. The trees that remain are pitiful.*

- *Columbus needs to stop planting baby trees everywhere and ripping them out and replanting baby trees every few years. This happens quite a bit downtown along High St.*

- *I have notices that in the Northeast and Northcentral areas, the trees are planted and then there is not enough follow-up to make sure the trees remain stabilized and secure.*

- *Plans for installing new trees should also assign responsibility and a timeline for regular checkups on the planted trees, especially related to trees with staking. I've seen too many trees that are staked much longer than necessary, resulting in warped and damaged trees.*

- *Downtown I see a lot trees planted in the sidewalk with no soil or nutrients around. Just concrete. This makes no sense and the trees always look unhealthy.*

- *Lastly, the tree plantings on the Long Street and Spring Street bridges are an embarrassment to the city. Planting trees that have to be removed and replaced because they can't reach maturity is a terrible waste of city money and staff time. Park maintenance already is unable to keep up. Don't waste their time and our money with impractical landscape design.*

Against Private Property Regulations (6 comments, 3% of respondents)

A number of comments were made against private property regulations of any kind. While this is not relevant to the public tree code work, they are included here for information/use in the future. Sample comments include:

- *It's not the role of government especially city government to decide what I can plant or what I can remove from my private property.*

- *Private trees should not be regulated!*

- *If the City of Columbus decides to regulate private trees, they better be ready to settle property line disputes between property owners.*

- *I believe the city should continue focusing on public tree policy, before considering private tree legislation.*

- *As long as Council approves anything that the big developers, like Pizzuti, want, the burden will be solely on the homeowner and small landowners. It will create another disproportionate burden on those that can least afford it. Our insurer threatened to drop our coverage unless we cut down an old walnut tree in our yard. It required a professional and was expensive. If the City was involved, it would have been even more*

expensive and time consuming. We replaced that tree in the yard, and the wood is now a beautiful banister and railing in our third floor attic.   What if there was a conflict between what the City wanted and the insurer's demands? That could get to be a very expensive fight. Saving trees sounds great, but homeowners need to be able to make their own decisions about their own properties. As noted in other comments, the City has made plenty of bad decisions on trees in the public right of way in the past. Now they want to impose their decisions and motivations on me as a homeowner?! No thank you.

- *I'm against private land permits. I get that we want to protect trees but that's a bit much. People should be able to do what they want on their land. However maybe some areas with 150 year old trees could be designated as historical tree sanctuaries? Thus, those would need to be kept?*

Rental Properties (5 comments, 2% of respondents)

Rental properties and actions of landlords came up as a source of issue or concern in tree loss in Columbus. Sample comments include:

- *You should also incentivize rental property owners to plant trees on their property, maybe through a tax break program or even by providing insurance for tenant damages up to $1000. Think outside the box!*

- *Rental properties and developers are the biggest threats to trees in my part of the city. There needs to be stricter regulation and enforcement of tree maintenance and tree removal for landlords and developers.*

- *Landlords are not taking care of landscaping around their properties. Arlington Avenue between Cleveland and Genesee have a dozen or so mature Oaks and the leaves are never cleaned up from the streets and create a massive mud and leaf dam.*

Concern with 4' Minimum (4 comments, 2% of respondents)

Comments were made referencing the 4' minimum tree lawn width in place. Sample comments include:

- *The rules about what type of tree and how much space is needed to plant in tree lawns needs to be revised. Last we spoke to the Forester they told us under 4' of space could no longer get a shade tree, this eliminates a good portion of the city. Redbuds, while lovely trees, do not make good street trees because they never grow tall enough to actually shade much of the street let alone nearby houses and are disease prone.*

- *Finally, please CHANGE the policy that does not allow trees to be planted in any right of way that is less than four feet. Smaller trees can be planted in such spaces and will also contribute to cooling and be part of the tree canopy.*

Subcommission (4 comments, 2% of respondents)

There were a few comments providing suggestions for use and make up of the Columbus Tree SubComission. They include:

- *The Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission charter (administrative code) should be revised to mandate a Certified Arborist is continually a member of the Commission.*

- *The new sub commission should have at least a few qualified professionals serving on it who don't work for the city. We have a major land grant university in town, so it shouldn't be hard to get some actual experts to serve on the sub commission (forest ecologists, botanists, landscape architects).*

- *The tree commission should put together material for residents about tree preservation and maintenance, especially best practices about where to plant new trees and how to build around (and preserve) old heritage trees. Many European and US cities have these.*

- *The tree commission needs to have knowledgeable people serving. I would like to see members of the Ohio State University be invited, especially persons specializing in ecology, geography, and landscape architecture.*