

Planning the Urban Forest: Ecology, Economy, and Community Development

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American Planning Association

Making great communities happen

Changing Public Perceptions

Try to Imagine the U.S.:

- Before the EPA (created in 1970)
- Before climate change became an accepted priority of public policy
- When the urban forest was merely an aesthetic option for cities
 - Hey, money doesn't grow on trees!!

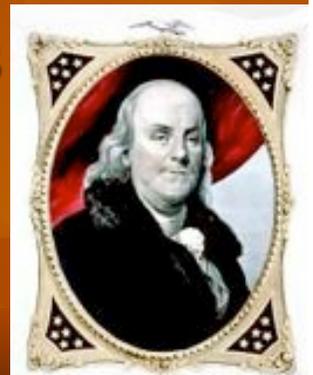


Changing Public Perceptions

Imagine Trees as a Strategic Public Investment:

- To reduce stormwater runoff
- To filter air pollution
- To improve the image of your community
- To reduce building energy consumption
- To improve urban quality of life

“A penny saved in environmental protection costs is a penny earned through wise investments.”



Planning for Urban & Community Forestry

Project Partners:

- American Planning Association
- USDA Forest Service
- American Forests
- International Society of Arboriculture



Benefits of the Urban Forest

What's right with this
picture?

What is Urban Forestry?

“A planned and programmatic approach of the development and maintenance of the urban forest, including all elements of green infrastructure within the community, in an effort to optimize the resulting benefits in social, environmental, public health, economic, and aesthetic terms, especially when resulting from a community visioning and goal-setting process.”

From the PAS Report, *Planning the Urban Forest*

Intended Audience

- urban planners working for municipalities or working as consultants to municipalities;
- planning commissioners and planning board members;
- city and town managers;
- city and town public works, engineering, and parks department managers;
- municipal arborists and urban foresters;
- developers and those in the design professions serving them.

Project Goals

- Provide the rationale and economics of adopting a green infrastructure approach to planning.
- Provide guidance on the principles and practice of sound urban and community forestry to a broad set of professional and lay public officials at the local level.
- Strengthen the relationship between urban planners, urban foresters, water quality and stormwater managers, and professional arborists.
- Provide an opportunity to exchange knowledge between urban and community forestry partners and urban planners, including allied professions such as landscape architecture and the environmental community.

Strategic Points of Intervention

- **Adopt a Green Infrastructure Approach to Plan Making**
 - *Community Visioning*
 - *Long-range plan-making*
- **Implement Best Management Practices that Promote Green Infrastructure**
 - *Preparation of ordinances, regulations, and incentives*
 - *Review and approval of applications for development*
 - *Preparation of capital improvements programs*

Bringing Nature into the City

- Defining urban and community forestry
- Why does it matter?
- Who are the players?
- What are the challenges?
- Where are the opportunities?

General Principles

- Get trees to the front of the planning/visioning process.
- Know where you came from to know where you are going Seek out private partners.
- Investing in trees makes economic sense.
- Urban forestry must be sustainable financially; find the resources to fit the plan or vice versa.

Planning Principles

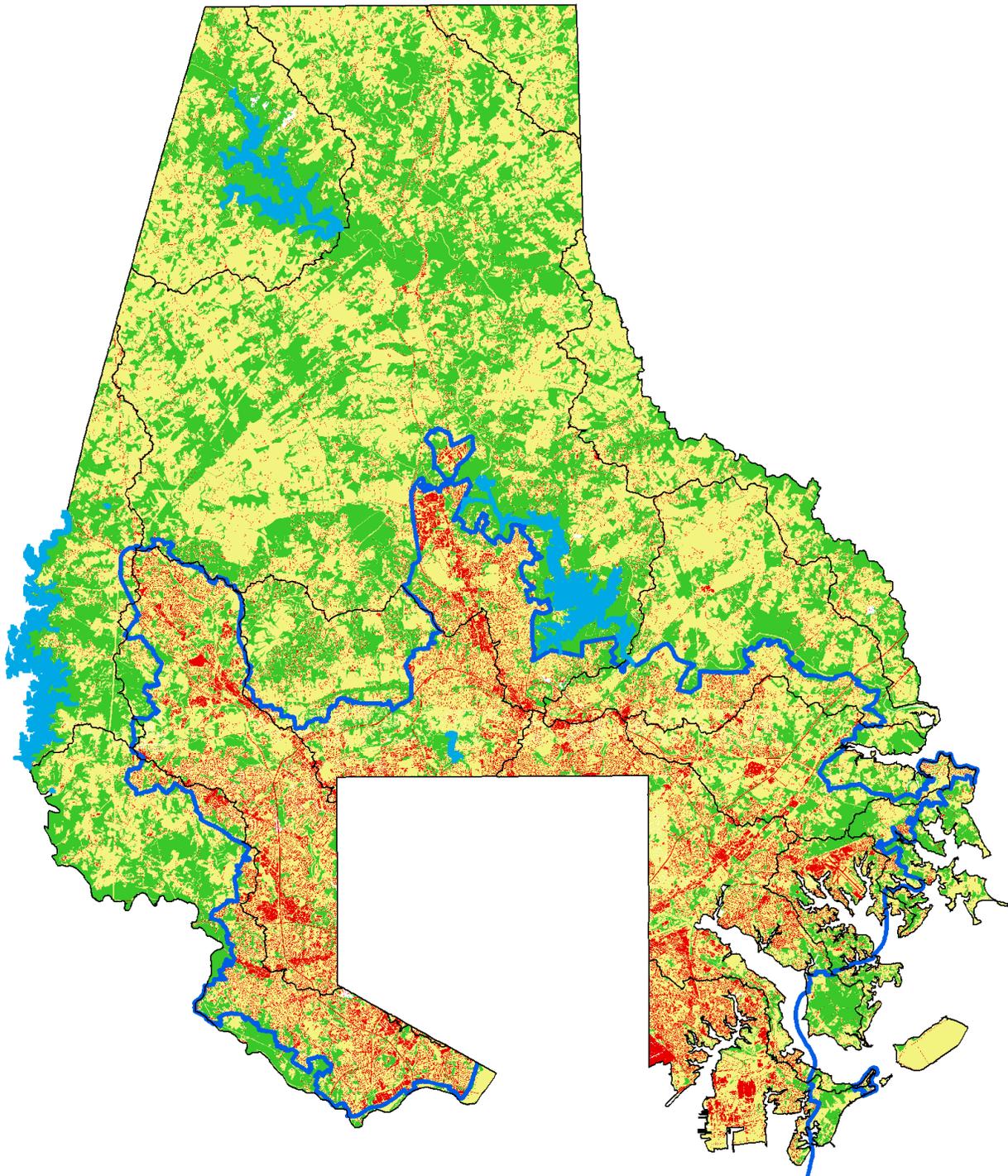
- Incorporate tree ordinance in development code; combine tree/landscape codes with planning codes; ensure consistency both vertically and horizontally with national, state, regional, and local codes.
- Collaborate with developers, greens, etc. to draft ordinance; all interested parties need to play a part in drafting any urban forestry ordinance, provisions, or guidelines.
- PUD regulations should include an urban forestry evaluation checklist or guidelines.
- No ordinance without enforcement personnel.
- Take adaptive management approach to resources.
- Plan for long-term maintenance.

Design Principles

- Use urban forestry to support other planning goals.
- Green infrastructure element, but also link throughout other elements in comprehensive plans.
- Natural environment is part of making neighborhoods livable.
- Make the place right for trees and then pick the right trees.

Case Studies

- Baltimore County
- Chapel Hill, N.C.
- Emeryville, Cal.
- Flagstaff/Coconino County, Ariz.
- Flower Mound, Texas
- Ithaca, N.Y.
- Kansas City Metro Area
- McDowell Creek Watershed, N.C.
- Minneapolis
- Olympia, Wash.
- Palm Beach County, Fla.
- Salem, Oregon
- Urbana, Ill.



- Legend**
- Forest
 - Grass and Fields
 - Impervious
 - Reservoirs
 - URDL
 - Major Watersheds

Baltimore County, Maryland



Urbana—recycling yard waste

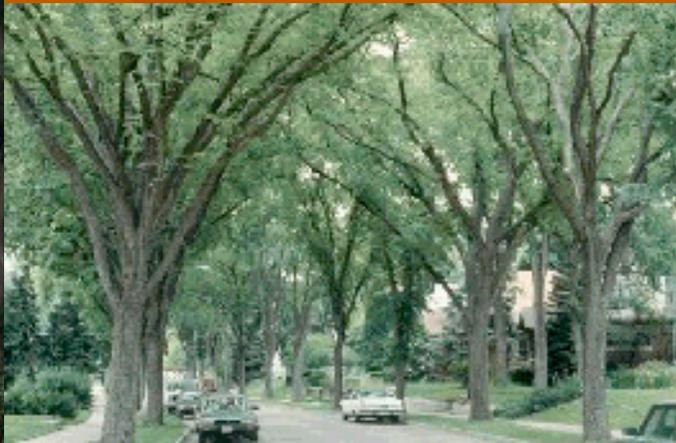
Urban and community forestry—many cities, one goal



Flagstaff--volunteers preparing prescribed fire site



Emeryville—green dense development



Minneapolis--Protecting urban tree canopy



Palm Beach County-- Restoring natural vegetation



Olympia: Holistic
planning for a forested city

Salem: Combining
urban forestry
with aggressive
environmental
protection



Flower Mound: Managing suburban growth



Ithaca: Achieving a “forest city”

Framing the Issues

- Measure progress through tree canopy goals
 - Quantify existing tree cover
 - Document conditions:
 - Climate
 - Geography
 - Land use
 - Politics
 - Establish achievable goals
- Incorporate green infrastructure into public policies

Leadership: Where do we go from here?

- Create stable and adequate funding
- Make your urban forest vision big enough
- Make the urban forest an asset
- Pay attention to the details
- Seize the day—be opportunistic!

Added Features of PAS Report

- Exemplary plans with links
- Model green infrastructure plan element
- CD-ROM version included with plan links