

Urban Forestry Management Plan Outline

1. Introduction

a. Mission Statement:

*“**The mission** of the St. Charles Tree Commission is to establish and sustain a healthy and long-lived urban forest that will benefit the community both today and for generations to come. This will be achieved through citizen education and involvement that complements the care of public trees by the Public Works Department, guidance from the Tree Commission, and support of the City Council.”*

b. Vision Statement:

*“**The vision** of the St. Charles Tree Commission is a healthy urban forest, comprising diverse tree species that support associated native flora and fauna. In addition, the Commission envisions citywide stewardship will become the lifestyle of an informed public, actively engaged in the care of the environment.”*

2. History

a. History of St. Charles (As documented on the City of St. Charles website):

St. Charles has a land area of 15 square miles. Located in both DuPage and Kane County, the City of St. Charles is 35 miles west of downtown Chicago. State Highways 25, 31, 38 and 64 cross St. Charles, as do county thoroughfares Randall and Kirk Roads. Lights of St Charles, by Brian K Murphy Over 2,100 businesses employ over 34,200 people, consisting of a balanced mix of retailers, restaurants, and manufacturing facilities. They are assisted by an active Chamber of Commerce, a full service Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Downtown St. Charles Partnership.

Did you know that the City of St. Charles was recently named one of the “150 Great Places in Illinois”? The award was presented to the City in 2008 for the combined architectural work of the City Municipal Center, the Main Street Bridge, and the historic Hotel Baker. The St. Charles Municipal Building was built in 1940 as a donation from Col. Edward J. Baker and Mr. and Mrs. Lester J. Norris. With its prominent location on the east bank of the Fox River along Main Street, and its large 84’ tower, the Municipal Center is one of the most memorable buildings in town.

“The Fox River may physically divide the City, however at the same time the river brings us together,” said Mark Koenen, Director of Public Works. “The Main Street Bridge, re-constructed in 1997, connects the circa 1940 Municipal Center on the east bank with the 1928 Hotel Baker on the west bank. All three

structures (bridge, hotel, and municipal center) contribute to the heritage of the City and are noteworthy architectural treasures,” he said.

- b. History of the St. Charles Tree Commission as provided by Comm. Myers:
- 1998 Peter Grathoff wanted a Tree Commission (TC) to fulfill Tree City USA requirements
 - First Tree Commission Members: Peter Grathoff, Suzi Myers,(complete list coming)
 - 1998 Arbor Day held at City Hall tree planted in honor of John Duestch
 - 1999 STC officially became Tree City USA
 - 1999 Arbor Day held in Mt. Saint Mary Park---Peter Grathoff awarded Tree Stewardship Award (very first recipient)
 - This was the first planned Arbor Day celebration by the Tree Commission
 - Arbor Days held in various locations until Lincoln Park became official site in (2001?)
 - Tree Commission worked on Tree Ordinance which was adopted by City Council in 1986. Revisions were recorded in 1988, 1992, 1998 and 2007. In 2007, the revision to the Tree Ordinance included the verbiage to add small ornamental in the City right-of-way. A definition of “right-of-way” was also included.
 - T C marched in Saint Patrick’s Day parade first couple of years the parade existed
 - TC did a mapping of future tree plantings sites for city
 - Set up some model areas along Prairie Street and Fox Chase Blvd so citizens could see how mulching should be done
 - Wrote articles for “In the Den” to educate public
 - Over the years, gave various free videos and curricular materials concerning trees to all District 303 schools for their libraries.
 - Contests for Arbor Day including Biggest Tree, essays of various natures, coloring and photo.
 - Since early 2000, TC has had yearly joint meetings with Batavia
 - List current TC and of persons who have served on the Tree Commission over the years
- c. History of St. Charles Trees

The history of St. Charles is rooted in its trees.

When Pottawatomi Indians made their summer camps near the bend in the Fox River, magnificent trees grew in the river valley. Towering red oaks, great walnuts, sycamores, and many other species of hardwood trees thrived in the rich alluvial soil. To the west stretched the vast prairie, an ocean of grasses as far as the eye could see. Islands of trees dotted the prairie sea. These groves of thick-barked trees withstood the flames of prairie fires that regularly swept across the landscape.

Like the Pottawatomi, European-Americans were drawn to the natural resources in the area. Water and wood were necessities for settlement, and St. Charles had both in abundance. Established as a city in 1834, St. Charles drew heavily on its timber resources for construction, cabinetry, and fuel and other products.

The nineteenth century was a time of tremendous change. Political, economic and social forces changed the country, and drastic ecological upheaval occurred in the process. In the short span of 150 years, Illinois underwent a complete transformation from wilderness to agriculture, industry, and development. The great prairie was broken by the plow. Forests were cleared. Woodlands were grazed. Wetlands were drained. And, the landscape was forever changed. By the turn of the century, the once-limitless prairie was gone and little virgin timber was left standing.

Change in the twentieth century continued apace. By the 1980's there was a trend toward an increase in the number of forested acres in the state. The composition and structure of wooded land changed, however. This was true in St. Charles as elsewhere in Illinois. [Oaks – maples; hazelnut – buckthorn. Invasive species, lack of fire...]

A new type of forest has emerged: the urban forest.

3. Diversity

- a. Tree Inventory
 - i. Past (Consider adding information within an appendix for reference)
 - ii. Present (Consider adding information within an appendix for reference)
- b. Future (Long Range)

4. Maintenance

- a. Ordinances
- b. City Programs
 - i. 50/50 Parkway Tree Program:

The City offers trees for planting in the parkways through its “50/50 Parkway Tree Planting Program.” All requests must have an approved parkway review before an order will be placed. Trees are planted during the spring or fall planting seasons. The City’s tree consultant will plant, mulch and provide a gator bag (where necessary) to assist with watering needs of the tree. The gator bag is the property of the City of St. Charles. Each tree delivered is balled and burlaped with average size being 2.5” in diameter. Larger size trees are available at an *additional* cost of \$100 per 1/2 inch diameter upgrade. Species vary upon availability and diversification needs in your area. Each tree is covered by a one-year warranty.
 - ii. Private Nuisance Removal Program

5. Special Projects

- a. Parks (Langum Woods)

- b. Emergency Management Plan/Guidelines
 - i. Infestations
- 6. Education
- 7. Publicity
- 8. National Program Involvement
 - a. Arbor Day
 - b. Tree City USA / Tree Line USA / Growth Award
- 9. Urban Forestry Cost/Benefit Analysis
- 10. Resident Requests

Note: *Critical Points to Start With* - Chairman Bangs explained the focus should be on the following five outline points:

- i. Introduction with Mission and Vision Statements
- ii. Diversity - detailing what has been done and future plans
- iii. Special Projects
- iv. Emergency Management Plan/Guidelines – for storm related events
- v. Resident Request – a definition of the procedure that residents would follow to make requests of the Tree Commission

Revision: 1/10/14 – Tree Commissioners discussion to add information under History sections 2a, 2b, and 2c

Revision: 11/14/13 – Tree Commissioners discussion to add information under the History and Diversity sections

Revision: 9/12/13 – Tree Commissioners discussion to reword mission and vision statements

Draft created: 5/16/13 – Chairman Bangs and Commissioner Myers