Community Forest Planning: Lessons Learned

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The Vision: What We Plan For

- Healthy urban forest ecosystems
- Stable and cohesive forest canopy
- A safe, attractive environment
- Trees creating sense of place
- Maximize net benefits
- Coordinated and efficient management
- Ample funding
- Public recognition
The Reality: What We Settle For

- Little public awareness of benefits
- Fragmented responsibilities
- Inadequate budgets
- Continued “downsizing” of street trees
- Removal rates exceeding planting rates
- Escalating costs and foregone benefits
Common Elements in Urban Forest Management Plans

- Mission/Vision
- Environment & History
- Vegetation Resource
- Design Goals
- Planting Goals
- Plant Palette
- Management Goals
- Maintenance Goals and Standards
Into the Black Hole: Life History of Four California Urban Forest Plans

- What Worked and Why?
- What Failed and Why?
- Lessons Learned for Making Strong, Implementable Plans
- Plans for:
  - Lafayette
  - Oakland
  - Santa Cruz
  - San Francisco
Trees for Lafayette

- 1975 by Russ Beatty
- Response to Rapid Growth
- Educational (non-regulatory)
- Broad Citywide Vision
  - History
  - Streetscape Guidelines
  - Prominent Tree Groves
  - Planting/Preservation/Maintenance
  - Tree Selection Guide
Boundary and road edge tree planting conflicts with topography and native vegetation.


Random planting of rounded tree forms arranged in groupings sympathetic to both topography and native tree masses.

Mt. Diablo Boulevard concept planting scheme.
Four tree types mixed arbitrarily on one street

Excessive, unplanned variety along commercial streets.

Trees used without purpose or function

Single species on narrow streets

Variety within a unified planting scheme along commercial streets.

Small trees for enrichment

Dominant tree

Multiple tree selection on wide streets
Implementation Results

- **Success**: Streamside Restoration
  - Clear goal, plan review process worked

- **Failures:**
  - Heritage tree program
  - Education program
  - EBMUD planting
Oakland Greenstreets

- 1982 by Urban Trees Design Group
- $450,000 CDBG funding
- Rebellion Against 1948 Plan
- Planting Contracted to Non-Profit
- Reference Document for Tree Selection/Care
  - Environmental data
  - Administrative procedures
  - Tree planting instructions
  - Trees for major streets
  - Trees for neighborhoods
  - Management and maintenance
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>From High Street to 68th Avenue</th>
<th>From 68th Avenue to San Leandro border</th>
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</table>
| Predominantly commercial  
Narrow street with close, continuous frontages  
Narrow sidewalks  
Heavy bus traffic  
Little room for street tree planting | | Commercial and residential mix  
Wide median strip of heavily compacted soil  
(formerly a railroad track)  
Median strip sparsely planted |

| EXISTING TREES | Median Strip:  
Deodar Cedar  
*Platanus acerifolia* ‘Bloodgood’  
London Plane Tree  
Camphor |

| CONSIDERATIONS | Needs tall and narrow tree suited to limited space  
Planting design seeks to enhance park-like feeling of open space in median strip and make use of existing plantings |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREE RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
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| DOMINANT | *Eucalyptus nicholii*  
Nicol’s Willow-Leafed Peppermint  
*Platanus acerifolia* ‘Bloodgood’  
London Plane Tree |
| SUBDOMINANT | *Pinus pinea*  
Italian Stone Pine  
*Quercus agrifolia*  
Coast Live Oak |
| ACCENT | *Eucalyptus ficifolia*  
Scarlet-Flowering Gum  
*Prunus serrulata* ‘Kwanzan’  
Doublepink Flowering Cherry  
*Prunus yedoensis* ‘Akebono’  
Akebono Flowering Cherry |
| SPACING | 30’ - 45’ maximum  
40’ - 60’ between groups |
| ALTERNATION | Random  
Random sub-dominant and accent trees for median strip  
Dominant tree for street sides |
**Acer platanoides**

**BOTANICAL NAME:** Acer platanoides  
Acer platanoides  
“Schwedleri”

**COMMON NAME:** Norway Maple  
Schwedler’s Maple

**GEOGRAPHIC ORIGIN:**  
Europe and Asia Minor

**SHAPE:** Round-headed

**DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:**  
Clean, dark green leaves cover tree in very dense manner  
Very little light penetrates to the ground  
Leaves unfold light bronze, turn to darker bronze, and then to dark green by middle of season  
Yellow or bronze-red autumn color

**ADVANTAGES:**  
Highly adaptable  
Used for many years as street tree throughout midwest  
Considered somewhat old-fashioned

**DISADVANTAGES:**  
Recently out of style and favor because of density  
Casta dark shade  
Subject to aphids  
Integrated Pest Management or other method of control may be required

**COMMENTS:**  
Plant in non-alkaline soil  
Prune regularly to open up crown

**EXAMPLES:**  
Dimond Avenue block adjacent to Dimond Park  
(Acer platanoides, Norway Maple)
Implementation Results

Success
- Restored sense of community
- Tree planting: 62% major streets, 17% other

Failures
- Strong design form
- Management
  - Useful life span
  - IPM
  - Computer database
  - Contract growing
- Maintenance
- Administrative Center
Santa Cruz County Urban Forestry Master Plan

- Wolfe Mason Assoc. 1992
- Economic Development
  - Visual identity and beautification
  - Major street planting with redevelopment
  - Other streets planted by neighborhood volunteers
- Sophisticated Plan
  - Purpose
  - Guiding principles
  - Overall design theme
  - Management program
  - Volunteer program
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Implementation Results

- **Success**
  - Planting goals (8 of 12 projects)
    - 700 trees mitigating redevelopment impacts
  - Management: work scheduling, training, inspection

- **Failures**
  - Design goals (many deviations)
  - Management
    - IPM
    - Computer database
    - Ordinance changes
    - Train building inspectors
  - Volunteer program
    - Limited outreach
    - Lack of structure and leadership
The Trees of San Francisco

- 1991 by Dept of Public Works and City Tree Advisory Board
- Goal: Maximize resources and guide development of the urban forest
- Elements:
  - Background & History
  - Goals
  - Objectives and Policies
  - Tree Management Plan (Design)
  - Plan Implementation
20'-30' diameter .......... 15'-20'
30'-40' diameter .......... 20'-25'
40'-50' diameter .......... 25'-35'
Implementation Results

- **Success**
  - Tree planting: 75% (3,700/yr)
  - Coordination: planting and maintenance
  - Management
    - Computer database
    - Work scheduling, training
    - Recycling
    - Tree Corps

- **Failures**
  - Design: site conditions not addressed
  - Management
    - Useful life span
    - IPM
    - PG&E notify of intent to prune
What Worked?

- Broad Goals Met
- Tree Planting (50-70% of goal)
- Management
  - Scheduling work
  - Training
  - Heritage tree program
What Didn’t Work?

- Design Goals
- Inter- and Intra-agency coordination
- Management
  - Diversity and Useful Life Span
  - IPM
  - Computerized tree database
  - Contract growing
  - Education programs
Lessons Learned

- Clear and Consistent Goals
- Keep it Simple
- Identify Strong Supporters
- Obtain Initial Funding
- Link Design, Management, Enforcement
- Find an Imagined Enemy
Management Plans

Communicate with officials and leverage success to increase legitimacy

Increase public activities, collaboration, and improve access to information

Build an evaluation culture with plans, data collection, assessment, & reporting

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