

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 17, 2024

TO: Chair Melissa Johnston and Urban Forestry Commission members
CC: Rebecca Kennedy, Community Development Department

FROM: Shilpa Mallem, Design Manager, Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

RE: **Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update**

Background

The City of Vancouver is one of eight local partner agencies on the Interstate Bridge Replacement (IBR) program, which covers a five-mile corridor and seven freeway interchanges. At this meeting, IBR staff will provide a general program overview and conduct a walkthrough of the preliminary map of the proposed program investments currently being evaluated in the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The proposed program investments associated with the Modified Locally Preferred Alternative approved in 2022, include a replacement bridge over the Columbia River, interchange and roadway improvements, extension of light rail service with two stations in Downtown Vancouver, enhanced bus services and connections, and new pedestrian/bicycle facilities such as a shared use path over the river. The presentation will focus primarily on the proposed program investments in Vancouver.

Timeline

The IBR team is preparing to release the Draft SEIS for a 60-day public comment period later in 2024. All comments received during this time will be compiled into a Final SEIS, along with responses to the comments. Based on public feedback and additional analysis, the IBR team in coordination with program partners will narrow down the design options into a single solution for moving forward into construction. The environmental review process will result in an Amended Record of Decision (ROD), which is currently anticipated to occur in 2025. The Amended ROD allows the IBR program to begin using funds for construction.

Action and Next Steps

No action is requested with this presentation. The information presented at this meeting is intended to increase awareness of the IBR program and prepare Commission members for the upcoming public comment period and subsequent steps. City staff working on the IBR program will continue to keep the Commission updated. For detailed information, please refer to: <https://www.interstatebridge.org>.

Staff Contact:

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Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update

July 17, 2024

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Lori Severino, Senior Planner, Community Development Department,
Lori.Severino@cityofvancouver.us

Attachment(s): None.

Due by noon Thursday, 12 days before item is scheduled for meeting to provide time for review and follow-up if needed



City of Vancouver Urban Forestry Commission: IBR Program Update

July 17, 2024

Katherine Kelly, Policy Advisor
Lori Severino, Senior Planner

Shilpa Mallem, IBR Design Manager



Interstate Bridge Replacement Program

- ▶ **Critical connection linking Oregon and Washington across the Columbia River**
 - Part of a vital regional, national, and international trade route
 - The only movable bridge on I-5 between Canada and Mexico
 - One span over 100 years old
 - At risk for collapse in the event of a major earthquake
 - \$1.2 million in annual Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs
 - Capital maintenance is estimated to cost over \$270 million by 2040



Initiating Efforts

- ▶ Bi-State Memorandum of Intent signed by Governors Brown and Inslee in November 2019.
- ▶ Bi-state legislative committee oversight and guidance shapes program work.
- ▶ The Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation are jointly leading the Interstate Bridge Replacement program work in collaboration with eight other bi-state partner agencies.
 - TriMet
 - C-TRAN
 - Oregon Metro
 - SW WA Regional Transportation Council
 - City of Portland
 - City of Vancouver
 - Port of Portland
 - Port of Vancouver
- ▶ Greg Johnson was hired as program administrator to lead the replacement program on behalf of ODOT and WSDOT.



Photo courtesy of Office of Governor Kate Brown



IBR Program Location

Port of
Portland



39th St  500

Fourth Plain
Blvd

Mill Plain
Blvd

Vancouver, Washington

Port of
Vancouver



Downtown
Vancouver


I-5 Bridge

Hayden
Island

Marine
Drive

N Interstate/
N Victory

Portland, Oregon

 = Interchanges less than 1 mile apart


Portland International
Airport



Purpose and Need



Safety: Narrow lanes, no shoulders, poor sight distances, bridge lifts, and short ramp distances for merging contribute to crashes.



Earthquake vulnerability:

In a major earthquake, the bridge would likely be significantly damaged, potentially beyond repair.



Impaired freight movement:

Congestion and bridge lifts slow down freight carrying goods along I-5, a critical economic trade route on the West Coast.



Inadequate bike & pedestrian paths:

Narrow shared use paths, low railing heights, and lack of dedicated pathways impede safe travel.



Congestion: Over 143,000 vehicles crossed the Interstate Bridge each weekday in 2019 with more than 10 hours of daily congestion.



Limited public transportation:

Limited transit options and existing bus service can be unreliable due to traffic congestion and bridge lifts.

Equity and Climate are Key Priorities



Members of Advisory Groups on Bridge Tour

- ▶ Maximize benefits and minimize burdens for equity priority communities
- ▶ Center equity priority community engagement and feedback
- ▶ Support state climate goals of reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and air quality improvements
- ▶ Improve infrastructure resilience to future climate disruptions

Program Schedule



Schedule will be updated as needed to reflect program changes and timeline.

What is Being Studied in the Draft SEIS?

The Modified LPA will be compared to a No-Build Alternative

▶ Modified Locally Preferred Alternative

- Improve active transportation facilities and connections
- Extend LRT from Expo to Evergreen Blvd + bus on shoulder
- Three new LRT stations
- Replace bridges over Columbia River and North Portland Harbor
- Modify seven interchanges on I-5
- Three through lanes and at least one auxiliary lane in each direction

▶ No-Build Alternative

- None of the improvements associated with Modified LPA would be implemented
- Other planned projects that are independent of the IBR program would proceed

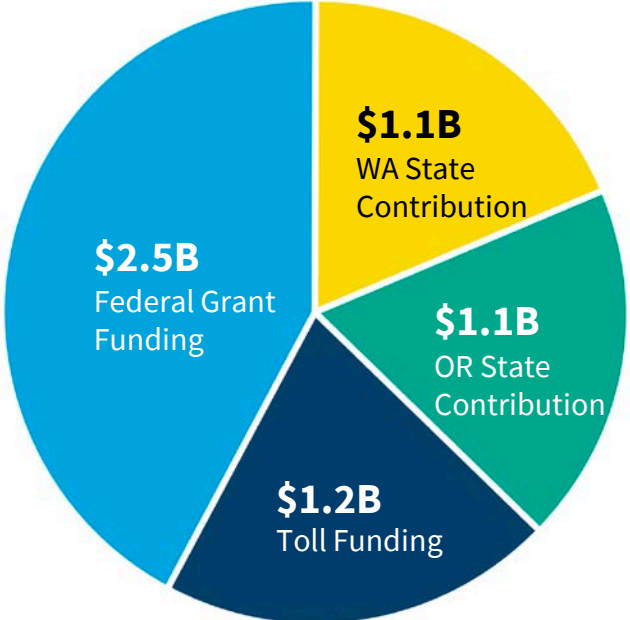
▶ Design Options being Studied

- Bridge configuration: Movable span, single-level, double-deck/stacked
- C Street ramps to/from I-5
- Inclusion of one or two auxiliary lanes
- Possible park & rides at Waterfront and Evergreen Transit stations
- I-5 alignment shift between SR14 and Mill Plain Blvd

IBR Program Funding

- ▶ Federal funds, tolling, and state funds are needed to address the estimated \$5B-\$7.5B IBR program cost.
 - Bridge tolls will help pay for the new bridge and its continued operation and maintenance through the duration of the construction loan.
- ▶ Having all non-federal matching funds in place demonstrates regional commitment and increases competitiveness in federal grant applications.

Potential Program Funding Sources



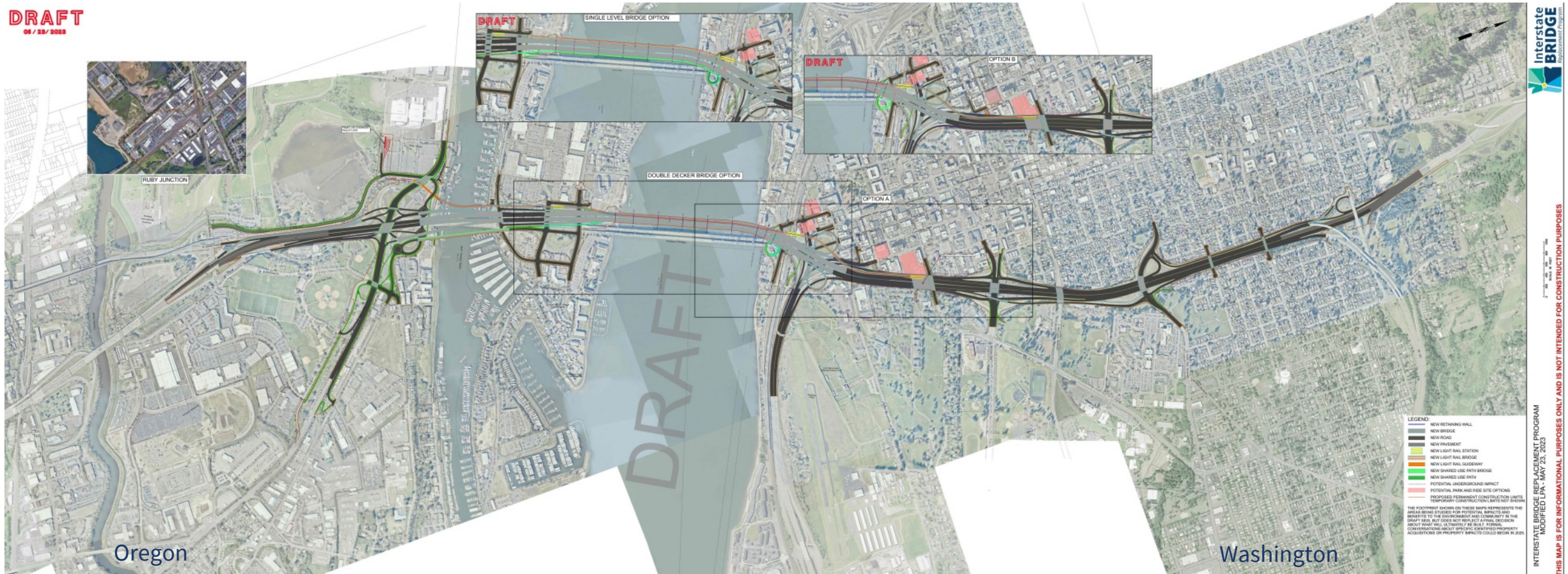
- **WA State Contribution**
\$45M in planning secured; over \$1B construction funding committed
- **OR State Contribution**
\$55M in planning secured; \$1B construction funding committed
- **Federal Grant Funding**
\$600M Mega Grant and \$1M BIP planning grant secured; pursuing remaining grant amount
- **Toll Funding**
Tolling authorized; Toll bonding authorization not yet secured

Elements of the Environmental Analysis

- ▶ Acquisitions
- ▶ Air Quality
- ▶ Archaeology
- ▶ Aviation
- ▶ Climate
- ▶ Cumulative
- ▶ Economics
- ▶ Ecosystems
- ▶ Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Environmental Justice
- ▶ Equity
- ▶ Geology and Groundwater
- ▶ Hazardous Materials
- ▶ Historic Built Environment
- ▶ Land Use
- ▶ Neighborhoods and Populations
- ▶ Noise and Vibration
- ▶ Parks and Recreation
- ▶ Public Services
- ▶ Section 4(f)
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Utilities
- ▶ Visual and Aesthetics
- ▶ Water Quality and Hydrology
- ▶ Wetlands

Program Area Map

- ▶ Investments shown represent the areas being studied in the Draft SEIS and do not reflect a final decision about what will be built.



Program area map is available at: www.interstatebridge.org/media/fnjho04j/mlpa-roll-plot-5-25-23.pdf

Stay Connected & Get Involved

- ▶ Join us for IBR office hours, in person or virtually, and get your questions answered! Visit interstatebridge.org/calendar to schedule an appointment, email info@interstatebridge.org or call
- ▶ Sign-up for our monthly newsletter: interstatebridge.org/news
- ▶ Attend a program meeting or community engagement event: interstatebridge.org/calendar
- ▶ Comments? Questions? Email info@interstatebridge.org
- ▶ Follow us on social media: @IBRprogram





Thank you!



www.interstatebridge.org

July UFC Program and Staff Reports

6. Program Updates

AmeriCorps & Friends of Trees (FOT):

AmeriCorps: Staff is recruiting and interviewing for the AmeriCorps positions for the 24-25 program year. The city will again host five members in volunteer and environmental services programs. Urban Forestry will host one position and will share an additional position with Volunteer Program to focus on Naturespaces.

Friends of Trees (FOT):

Attached is FOT's 2023 annual report

Urban Forestry Work Plan 2025-26:

The Urban Forestry Work Plan is updated to coincide with the biennial budget. Staff will begin updating the 2023-24 Work Plan for 2025-26 reflecting new program elements and the newly adopted Urban Forestry Management Plan. Staff anticipate sharing a draft with the Commission late summer/early fall.

2025-26 Budget Prep:

The city is anticipating a budget shortfall in the General, Street and Fire Funds during the 2025-26 budget cycle. Urban Forestry does not receive any funding from these three funds as the program is funded by stormwater fees. As part of this budget shortfall, enterprise funds such as water, sewer, stormwater and solid waste have been asked to plan for at least a 5% reduction. UF staff have started developing the Urban Forestry budget with the reduction to be submitted to Public Works managers this summer. The city is required to have an approved budget by fall of 2024 for the 2025-26 cycle.

Old Apple Tree Festival Prep:

Old Apple Tree Festival will be on Saturday, October 5th from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Urban Abundance is again a primary partner and will host the cider pressing booth and apple sales booth. They are building back up to capacity and are interested in hosting the hard cider tent again in the future (but not this year). Live music, arts and crafts, Old Apple Tree cuttings, and kids activities are additional highlights of the day.

Subcommittee Reports:

Outreach:

No report

Policy:

No report

Invasive:

No report

Pollinator:

No report

Corridor:

No report

8. Urban Forestry Staff Report

Since the May Commission meeting, staff has shifted gears to summer maintenance season; implementing our 5-year IRA grant; Emerald Ash Borer action items, next steps with our Urban Forest Management Plan and our workload to ensure all aspects of our program are moving forward.

We are brought on summer help to assist with summer maintenance and starting to implement our summer workforce grant. Through a federal grant, Urban Forestry developed a summer youth workforce program to provide employment and career development opportunities in the natural resources field while establishing street trees and Naturespaces sites in underserved communities. The Vancouver Environmental Youth Corps (EYC) will host two youth crews over the summer at public sites in the Fourth Plain Corridor, with aim of growing into a year-round program. Staff also participated in a separate federal grant kick off meeting with Portland-Vancouver Canopy Collective led by ELSO, Inc, a program that seeks to reduce the achievement gap in STEAM education and professions while creating a sense of belonging for Black and Brown communities in the natural and built environment. Urban Forestry is a partner to support their work in underserved communities within Vancouver.

So far, we have 41 trees identified for replacement this fall. The majority of trees failed due to vandalism and poor root stock.

Heritage Trees

Work continues on the most recent designated Heritage Trees. Staff is working on installing the Heritage Tree signs, drafting the covenants that will be recorded as well as draft the update to the Heritage Tree Inventory and updating the application.

Hazard and Invasive Assistance Program

Several trees were removed on three properties this spring. This new program supports low-income property owners with hazard and invasive tree removal or pruning to help meet the City's equity and inclusion goals. Trees that are removed, will be replanting with quality trees. This program is funded through the City Tree Fund.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Staff went out for bid to secure a contractor to treat 402 diameter inches of ash trees determined to be high priority for protection which was completed in June. Staff secured grant funding from Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) help with ash tree removal, purchase of treatment supplies and other action items to assist with implementation of our EAB management plan.

The proactive street tree program continues to move forward. In June staff completed the outreach (door hanging/mailings) to all streets for 2024. Staff has been marking trees for pruning, removal and planting opportunities along the streets that will be serviced. Next steps will be continued outreach this summer to develop planting plans along these corridors for fall/winter. It is anticipated this new program will reduce storm damage in the right of way, address social/environmental justice, and improve climate resilience.

Our site visit inspection backlog is less than 14 days (goal is 10 day response time) and hovering around 20 requests. Development and inspection request are steady. Staff is completing final site inspections for all new development to ensure quality trees are planted per the approved tree plan.

2023

Friends of Trees Vancouver Annual Report



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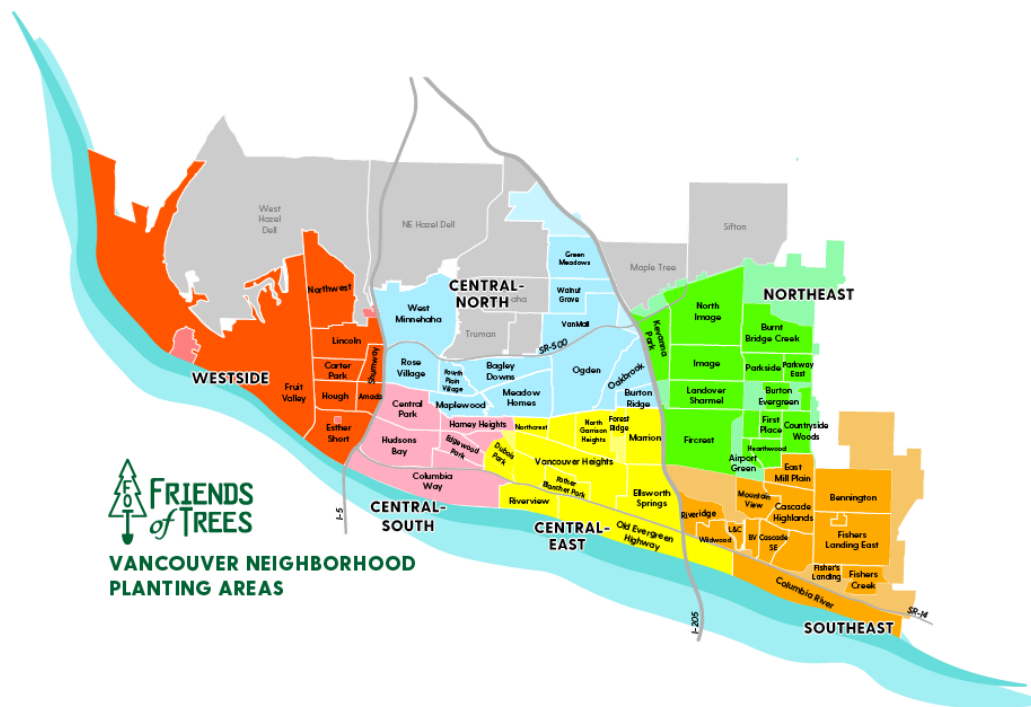
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FRIENDS OF TREES VANCOUVER

Trees play an integral role in Vancouver's infrastructure. Unlike many other investments that depreciate, a tree's value increases with each passing year. For every dollar spent on Vancouver's urban forest, \$2.50 in value is returned in benefits including stormwater mitigation, energy conservation, and pollution reduction. It is our goal to ensure that one day every single person in Vancouver, and the other communities we serve, has access to the benefits provided by trees.

Working with our partners at the City of Vancouver, Friends of Trees inspires stewardship of our community through a simple solution: *planting trees together*. We bring people together to plant and care for our urban trees in order to build and preserve community. Our model is to empower community members to help us organize and implement our neighborhood tree planting events. Through our Neighborhood Trees (NT) program, Vancouver homeowners and tenants purchase low cost, high-quality, nursery-grown street and yard trees that are planted by volunteers at our community-based, neighborhood planting events. It is through the support of the Vancouver community that we are able to work towards, and achieve, our goals.

Friends of Trees hosted 6 neighborhood planting events in Vancouver in 2023: in the neighborhood groupings of Central, Central-South, Central-North, West, Northeast, and Southeast Vancouver. Thanks to the support of volunteers and local businesses, our Neighborhood Trees program planted a total of 702 new street and yard trees in over 56 Vancouver neighborhoods.



OUTREACH + COMMUNICATION

Outreach efforts have shifted and changed over the years, primarily in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but also through the addition of new, effective methods of communication. On-the-ground outreach was conducted by our Field Technicians, Specialists, and Neighborhood Coordinators. Less direct, but equally effective, forms of

outreach conducted included mailers to neighborhoods, text messages, and yard signs. Specialists also engaged with potential “treecipients” informally at outreach events.

This season, Friends of Trees implemented “Outreach Days” - one day a week (Thursdays) was dedicated to uplifting outreach efforts in our areas of service. Vancouver benefited from these outreach days in the weeks leading up to important planting event deadlines. These days included posting event fliers, installing yard signs, and conducting door-to-door follow-ups to assist with any questions or concerns with ordering trees. Approximately 400 yard signs were placed in the front strips of properties in 2023, many of which can still be seen proudly on display around the City. A new yard sign design was rolled out in the fall of 2023 (see below).



Friends of Trees also sent targeted mailings to a portion of the neighborhoods we conduct outreach within. The total number of mailers dispersed throughout Vancouver neighborhoods in 2023 was 25,017. These mailers were targeted strategically to the following neighborhoods, amidst more general outreach: Fourth Plain Village, Bagley Downs, Maplewood, Ogden, Rose Village, Kevanna Park, Marrion, Fircrest, and North Image.

A newer method of outreach that’s proven effective in recent years is the utilization of mass text messages. We use a text message software to send approximately two order reminders for every event - one two weeks before the order deadline, and one the week of (note: week of text includes a discount code). These text messages are often the final touch needed to encourage residents to place an order. We sent a total of 10 text messages in 2023.

Outreach efforts in fall of 2023 were shaped by an assessment of the efficacy of outreach in our ‘22-’23 season - these findings provided important insights on how we could best connect with potential “treecipients.” In the ‘22-’23 season, mail campaigns yielded the highest number of sign-ups for our programming, and the highest number of orders overall. City Arborist referrals, those made by staff of the City’s Urban Forestry program, produced the highest rate of follow through in placing orders, likely because these tree orders were required through a removal/replacement permit. We were also able to note that passive outreach conducted by word of mouth, and the visuals of tree tags and yard signs, was encouragingly effective. We plan to analyze the effectiveness of outreach in our ‘23-’24 season, and make necessary adjustments to maximize our reach in this upcoming season.

VOLUNTEERING

Vancouver is growing greener thanks to the support of community members, organizations, and businesses.

With the help of our Volunteer and Outreach program, Friends of Trees successfully gathered hundreds of community volunteers to support our tree planting and maintenance efforts in 2023. This included hundreds of volunteers who came out on planting day to volunteer: signing in fellow volunteers at the registration table, moving trees and tools in the parking lot, planting trees, driving their trucks to transport trees, mulching trees, providing food to feed fellow volunteers, washing dishes, setting out food, cleaning up the staging site, etc.

This support also included volunteers who helped before and after planting day: soliciting businesses for food donations, hanging up flyers around Vancouver, canvassing door-to-door, writing grants, making phone calls and sending emails to possible recipients, tabling at events, pairing and sorting gloves, preparing crew leader clipboards, completing volunteer data entry post-planting, checking on trees, pruning trees, and more.

In total, volunteers contributed 3,209.25 throughout 2023 in support of our Vancouver work through 800 volunteer moments. Volunteers are an integral part of the success of Friends of Trees.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

In order to recruit enough volunteers, we used a multi-pronged outreach approach:

- **Targeted communications to individuals, schools, and community groups:**

Targeted communications were sent to previous season's volunteers, to Vancouver Urban Forestry volunteers and Neighborhood Tree Stewards, to Neighborhood Associations, to faculty and staff at Vancouver area high schools (emphasizing environmental clubs, Key clubs, National Honor Society chapters, students needing volunteer hours, and science classes), to engaged community groups, to local colleges, etc. Our Volunteer & Outreach program contacted 15 highschools across Clark County, as well Clark College and WSU-Vancouver. They regularly reached out to groups interested in volunteering -- a few specific groups who volunteered in 2023 include Clark County Restorative Community Service, Kyocera International, LSW Architects, Pink Lemonade Project, Vancouver Dawn Lions, and quite a few highschool clubs/groups.

- **Online engagement:** The Americorps member, Volunteer & Outreach program, FoT staff, and volunteers posted on (or with) Give Pulse (WSU), Penguin Jobs (Clark College), The Columbian, Lower Columbia Nature Network, VolunteerMatch, HandsOn Greater Portland, the City of Vancouver events calendar, Lower Columbia Nature Network Padlet, Nextdoor, Facebook, Shift2Bikes.org, etc.

- **Posting flyers throughout the community:** Flyers were posted at community hot spots including grocery stores, libraries, community boards, coffee shops, etc.

- **Tabling at community events:** In 2023, the AmeriCorps member, FoT staff, and/or trained FoT volunteer ambassadors attended community events including Vancouver Arbor Day, the Vancouver Earth Day festival, "Community Engaged Scholars" fair at WSU Vancouver, National Night Out - Vancouver, Vancouver Peace



Volunteers from Crew 'L' at our December 2023 Southeast Vancouver Planting Event

and Justice Fair, Fourth Plain Forward Multicultural Festival, the Old Apple Tree Festival, and the Vancouver Farmers' Market

- **Door-to-door outreach:** In addition to signing up potential treerecipients, outreach staff also recruited individuals to volunteer.
- **Presentations for community organizations:** FoT staff and/or the AmeriCorps members presented to the Clark Conservation District, at Vancouver Neighborhood Association meetings, at Neighborhood Tree Stewards, at Pedalpalooza, etc.

Coming out of the pandemic, 2023 showed increased community member interest in volunteering. It's great to see stronger group participation and higher planting volunteer numbers. Below is the total volunteers engaged at each Friends of Trees event in Vancouver, as well as the total number of hours dedicated by volunteers.

Date	Event	# of volunteers	# of volunteer hours
1/14/2023	Central Vancouver neighborhoods	122	498
1/25/2023	Pruning - North Image, NE Vancouver	28	117
3/4/2023	Canceled/Rescheduled - West Vancouver neighborhoods	184	714.5
3/25/2023	NE Vancouver neighborhoods	92	359.5
4/15/2023	Central-North Vancouver neighborhoods	90	381.25
5/3/2023	Pruning, West Vancouver	24	96
10/21/2023	Pruning, Vancouver Eastside	19	61.75
11/11/2023	Central-South Vancouver neighborhood planting	104	443.5
12/2/2023	SE Vancouver neighborhood planting	116	469.5
12/14/2023	Thursday planting (SE Vancouver)	10	32.5
12/16/2023	Pruning, Central Vancouver	11	35.75
	TOTALS	800	3,209.25

Hosting successful planting events involves the support of both first-time, one-off volunteers (such as treerecipients, community groups, students seeking service hours, etc.) as well as dedicated, longer-term volunteers. Two vital volunteer leadership roles that make our planting events possible are Neighborhood Coordinators and Crew Leaders.

NEIGHBORHOOD COORDINATORS

Neighborhoods Coordinators (NCs) are a vital connection to the neighborhoods where Friends of Trees plants. NCs work closely with staff to help answer questions from tree purchasers, to request food donations from local businesses, to write grants to offset tree fees, to educate their neighbors about the benefits of trees, to canvass door-to-door in their neighborhoods, to make phone calls to volunteers, to deliver mulch, and to provide that much needed link between neighbors.

In 2023, we worked with 13 Vancouver Neighborhood Coordinators whose time commitment varied between 20 and 50+ hours a planting season, bringing elevated neighborhood support in Arnada, Bagley Downs, Carter Park, Cascade Highlands, Cascade SE, Hough, Hudson's Bay, Fourth Plain Village, Lincoln, Emerald Landing, Vancouver Heights, and West Minnehaha.

Neighborhood Coordinators and neighborhood volunteers in Cascade Highlands and Lincoln wrote, received, and spent a total of two neighborhood grants for trees and watering bags from the Watershed Alliance of SW Washington in 2023, totaling \$4,590. These grants helped support the planting of 10 free trees in Fruit Valley, a high priority neighborhood for tree planting, discounted trees for all Southeast Vancouver neighbors, as well as the distribution of 124 free watering bags in Fruit Valley and the Southeast Vancouver neighborhoods.

In addition to the City of Vancouver’s financial support for trees planted through the NT program in Vancouver, residents are also charged a small amount per tree (\$35). These grants offset the cost of trees for the residents getting trees, lowering the resident cost from \$35 per tree to \$25 per tree, or making them free (in Fruit Valley). Additionally, the distribution of a free watering bag for every tree planted, funded by these grants, helps assist with summer watering. Tree purchases and community involvement skyrocketed with these reduced cost trees and the dedicated involvement of our Neighborhood Coordinators.

CREW LEADERS

As the Neighborhood Coordinators get everything set up inside on planting day, our trained Crew Leaders come in to supervise the dirty work outside – planting trees! Crew Leaders supervise and train small groups of volunteers on planting day on the proper way to plant a tree and how to work together as a team.

They are the mentors to newly-trained Assistant Crew Leaders and the liaison between the planting group, FoT, and treerecipients on planting day. Prior to co-leading a crew, new Assistant Crew Leaders attended a Vancouver-based training with FoT to learn proper planting techniques and how to guide volunteers during planting events. As part of the 2023 Vancouver training, FoT trained 35 new Assistant Crew Leaders. In 2023, we had **54 active Vancouver-based volunteers in leadership roles** (Crew Leaders, Pruning Leaders).

BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS



Engaging the community also involves engaging local businesses and organizations. The support of area businesses and organizations is pivotal to the success of Friends of Trees’ Neighborhood Tree plantings in Vancouver. Businesses and organizations supported our efforts in a variety of ways in 2023, from donating food, product, or space to volunteering to providing financial support.

Seize the Bagel, a local Vancouver bagel chain, donated over 250 bagels in 2023, which fed our hungry volunteers before our planting events.

Sponsorship of events is a valuable way for Friends of Trees to not only expand our revenue stream, but also to deepen our relationship with the Vancouver business community. In 2023, Vancouver planting events were sponsored by Laughing Planet, the Portland Timbers, Just Right Heating and Cooling, and Wyld.



TREE MONITORING + SURVIVAL

A newly transplanted tree takes 3 years to establish. Young trees require on-going care to not only survive the establishment period, but thrive, including weekly watering during our dry summer months and the addition of mulch to help regulate temperature and moisture. In order to ensure the successful establishment, and survival, of our newly planted trees, Friends of Trees has a dynamic, multi-year approach to educating tree recipients about the care of their new trees.

SUMMER INSPECTORS

At the end of each planting season, Friends of Trees hosts a Summer Inspector training in which we teach volunteers how to assess the health of each of our recently planted trees (over the subsequent hot and dry months of summer). At each home they visit they talk to tree recipients about how best to care for their tree(s) while also leaving a door hanger with tree care guidance. They stress aspects of good tree care such as sufficient watering, the importance of mulch, weed removal around the base of the trees, and avoiding bark contact with string trimmers and lawn mowers.

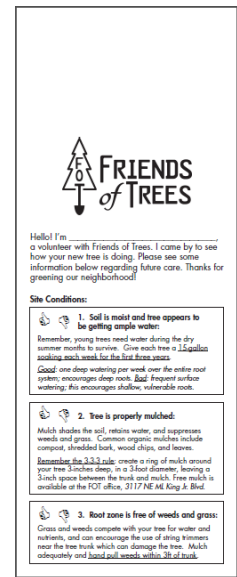
During the summer of 2023, a team of 27 Summer Inspectors completed 39 routes visiting 647 trees that were planted in the '22-'23 planting season. Inspectors checked to see that new trees were being watered, weeded, mulched, and cared for. Inspectors collected site and tree condition information, and their findings were then reported back to FoT to be analyzed. Site conditions included lack of water, lack of mulch, and whether weeds and grass were present in the root zone, important indicators of how well the young trees are being cared for. Tree conditions included damaged bark, broken/dead branches, root suckers, and a lack of leaves. All of these factors are detrimental to young trees. The underlying reason for collecting this information is to provide feedback to tree recipients on why each inspection result is important to the health of their new tree(s). However, it also informs FoT staff that there is a potential problem, which triggers a FoT staff visit to check on the tree.

In addition to the two Summer Inspectors visits, each homeowner receives a postcard and email as a reminder to begin weekly watering of their young trees. Homeowners receive this postcard and email for the first two summers after they plant their new tree(s). Friends of Trees also mulches all street trees the spring after they are planting, leaving an additional door hanger with tree care tips.

MONITORING

FoT created a weighted point system for tree assessment where site and tree condition measurements carried different point values in order to better exemplify that some conditions have a greater impact than others on the overall health rating of a tree. The purpose of this was to remove some of the subjectivity from the inspection process.

In the weighted point rating system, the sum of points is calculated as follows: 0-2=Good, 3-7=OK, 8-15=Bad, 16=Dead. For example, a tree that is dry (3), has no mulch (2), has weeds present (1), and suckers (1) adds up to a total of 7 points and is therefore rated OK, but a tree that is dry (3), has no mulch (2), and has dead branches (3) adds up to a total of 8 points and is rated bad.



Front of doorhanger left by Summer Inspectors

As the Friends of Trees planting season annually starts in fall and continues through winter, the trees inspected in the summer of 2023 were trees planted in fall of 2022 and spring of 2023 (which is why the number of trees planted number does not align with the number of trees inspected).

2023 Summer Inspections	
Good	398
OK	88
Bad	0
Dead	20
Not Inspected	138
Total	644

Of the 506 trees inspected (138 were inaccessible to volunteers**) in the summer of 2023, 96% survived their first year in the ground! The high rate of survival is amazing considering these trees are volunteer-planted and then left in the care of individual homeowners and tenants. Trees that failed due to reasons other than homeowner neglect (e.g. poor nursery stock) were replaced at neighborhood plantings in fall of 2023 and spring of 2024.

The data supports that these face-to-face reminders are instrumental in maintaining such a high survival rate. Friends of Trees aims to involve the tree recipient in the tree selection and planting day as much as possible, encouraging them to feel connected and responsible for their trees.

****New to the 2023 Monitoring Season – In an effort to improve the volunteer experience, we are asking all SI volunteers to refrain from heading into backyards.** This is for the comfort and safety of volunteers, as well as residents. Though Backyard trees were not inspected in 2023 (resulting in the high number of “Not Inspected” trees), staff will be conducting backyard monitoring in the summer of 2024. This change to our programming is still evolving.

Friends of Trees offers over 100 species and cultivars each planting season sourced from local nurseries. In 2023, homeowners chose a wide variety of species to plant, with Incense Cedar, Afterburner Black Tupelo, and Marina Strawberry Madrone being amongst the most popular species selections.

Top 10 trees planted January to December 2023	
Incense Cedar	53
Afterburner Black Tupelo	44
Marina Strawberry Madrone	40
American Yellowwood	40
Goldenrain Tree	34
Persian Ironwood	25
Oregon White Oak	23
Chinese Pistache	22
Emerald Sunshine Elm	22
Sunburst Honeylocust	21
Muskogee Crape Myrtle	20

COMMUNITY TREE CARE

Friends of Trees’ Community Tree Care program (i.e. Pruning Program), has been hosting pruning events in Vancouver since 2016. We’re grateful for the opportunity to extend our care for, and maintenance of, young trees in Vancouver beyond the 3-year establishment period. This programming has also provided existing Friends of Trees Vancouver volunteers an opportunity to deepen their tree knowledge to include young tree pruning.

PRUNING LEADERS

Drawing from our existing ranks of Crew Leaders, Neighborhood Coordinators, and Summer Inspectors, the Pruning Leader role functions as a volunteer advancement opportunity. New pruning leaders attend an online training, consisting of several video modules, and an in-person training, in which they learn how to properly prune young trees through hands-on training. In 2023, FoT trained 8 new Vancouver-based Assistant Pruning Leaders, who attended an in-person training in October. These trained Pruning Leaders then attend 2-4 pruning events annually.

8 days before a pruning event, FoT staff and volunteers spend several hours tagging 4-to-7-year old street trees that would benefit from selective pruning. FOT staff identifies, and physically tags, the trees to be pruned while also leaving a door hanger explaining the program. Adjacent properties are able to opt out of the program by

either removing the tree tags or contacting FoT. During a pruning event, groups of 3-4 Pruning Leaders (led by a more advanced Pruning Leader) prune approximately 10-20 trees per group, depending on the varied geography and nature of the trees. Prior to pruning a tree, Pruning Leaders knock on the door, inviting the tenant or homeowner to join them to learn about proper pruning. They also leave a door hanger highlighting future tree care information. This allows homeowners to be involved in the process, and informs on best pruning practices for future care. Pruners focus on removing broken or damaged branches as well as root suckers and epicormic growth, reducing or removing co-dominant leaders, lifting the canopy for clearance and visibility, and removing temporary branches. Friends of Trees does not tag or prune fruit trees.

In 2023 we hosted four Vancouver pruning events, including the in-person component of our program training. At our first event in February 2023, 28 trained Friends of Trees volunteers pruned 101 trees in the North Image neighborhood. In May, we hosted our second event, pruning 127 trees in Westside Vancouver, within the Lincoln, Carter Park, and Shumway neighborhoods, with the support of 24 volunteers. In October, at our training event, 19 volunteers supported the pruning of 96 trees in the First Place and Countryside Woods neighborhoods. Our final event of 2023 was a small event in December, where 11 volunteers pruned 26 trees in the Rose Village neighborhood.



PLs and APLs at First Place Pruning in October 2023

In 2023, Friends of Trees was able to prune 350 trees with the engagement of 82 volunteers (total of engaged volunteers at each event, may include repeat volunteer attendees). With 8 newly trained Assistant Pruning Leaders, our tree care programming continues to grow in Vancouver.

GROWING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Volunteers walked away from our events with not only a greater sense of community and information on how best to plant, and care for, their urban trees, but also a deeper sense of the impact trees make on the health and livability of our city. Our neighborhood events create a learning experience for every volunteer, and each event makes a difference in volunteers' neighborhood, in their lives, and their ways of thinking about their communities.

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