

EAST PORTLAND PARKS COALITION MEETING NOTES 7/6/2023

Announcement flyer:

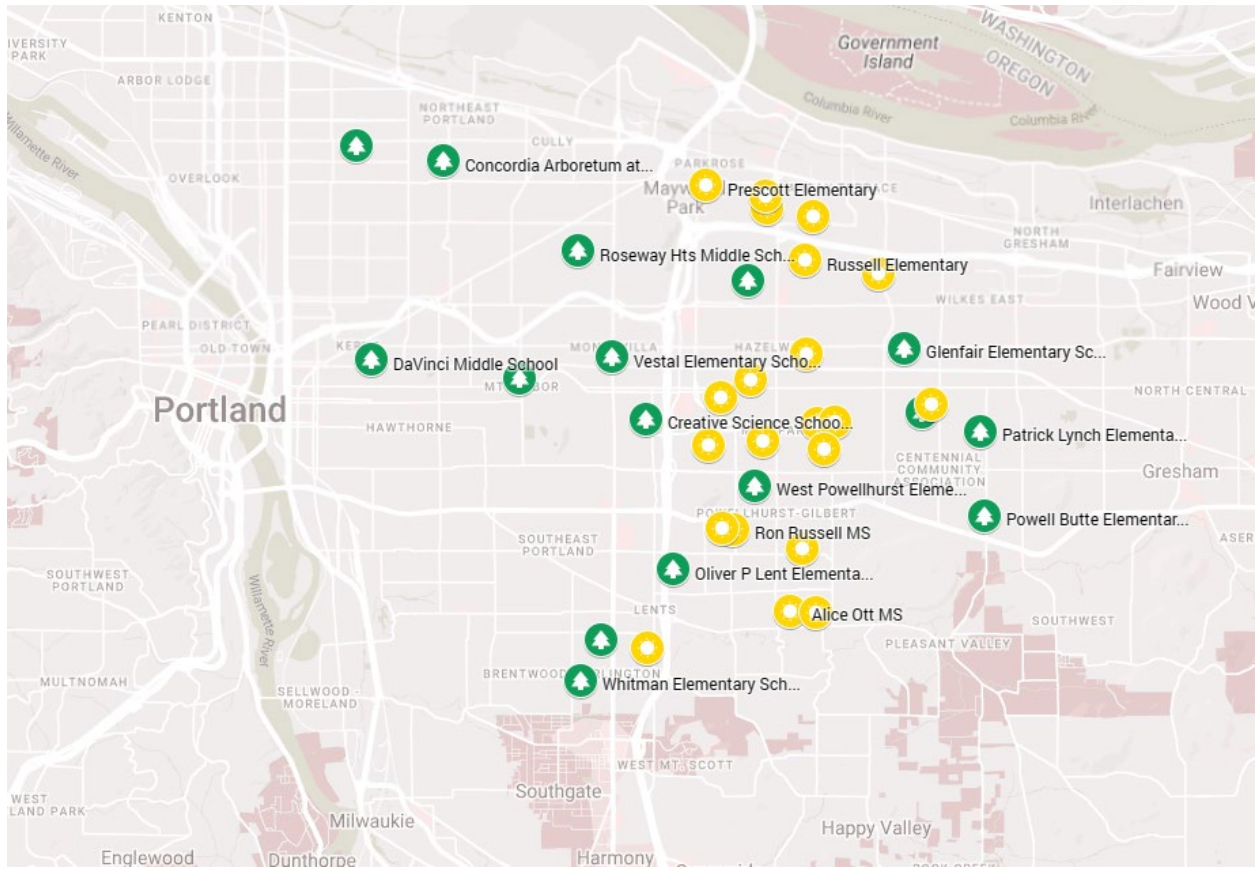
HELLO East Portland Parks Lovers

You are invited to an online meeting of the East Portland Parks Coalition that will be focused on the Learning Landscapes program in Portland's Urban Forestry Department. We are hosting this event in an effort to increase the tree canopy throughout East Portland – other groups are working with East Portland businesses, homeowners and government to increase the amount of street trees and trees on private property in the area. Schools can also join in this effort to reduce the heat island effect that can be a killer in our part of Portland. Not only for that reason, but also planting and nurturing trees are a great way for students to learn about the natural world and appreciate the benefits that we get from them.

Our guest speaker Molly Wilson will describe the Learning Landscapes program that is conducted through the PP&R Urban Forestry division. She will review the work done by the program in East Portland and throughout the city. We will then have a Q&A session with Molly. Marc Boucher-Colbert of the Franciscan Montessori School in Centennial neighborhood will also be attending to discuss the progress of the project that is currently underway at his school. If you've thought about this program, but wanted to ask some questions about it, this is your chance to do so. Also, please consider coming if you have had experience with the program in your schools that you would like to share.

Learning Landscapes Program

The meeting began with Carol Hasenberg showing a map of public schools in the area with separate designations for those with UF Learning Landscapes projects (green symbols) and those without UF Learning Landscapes projects (yellow symbols):

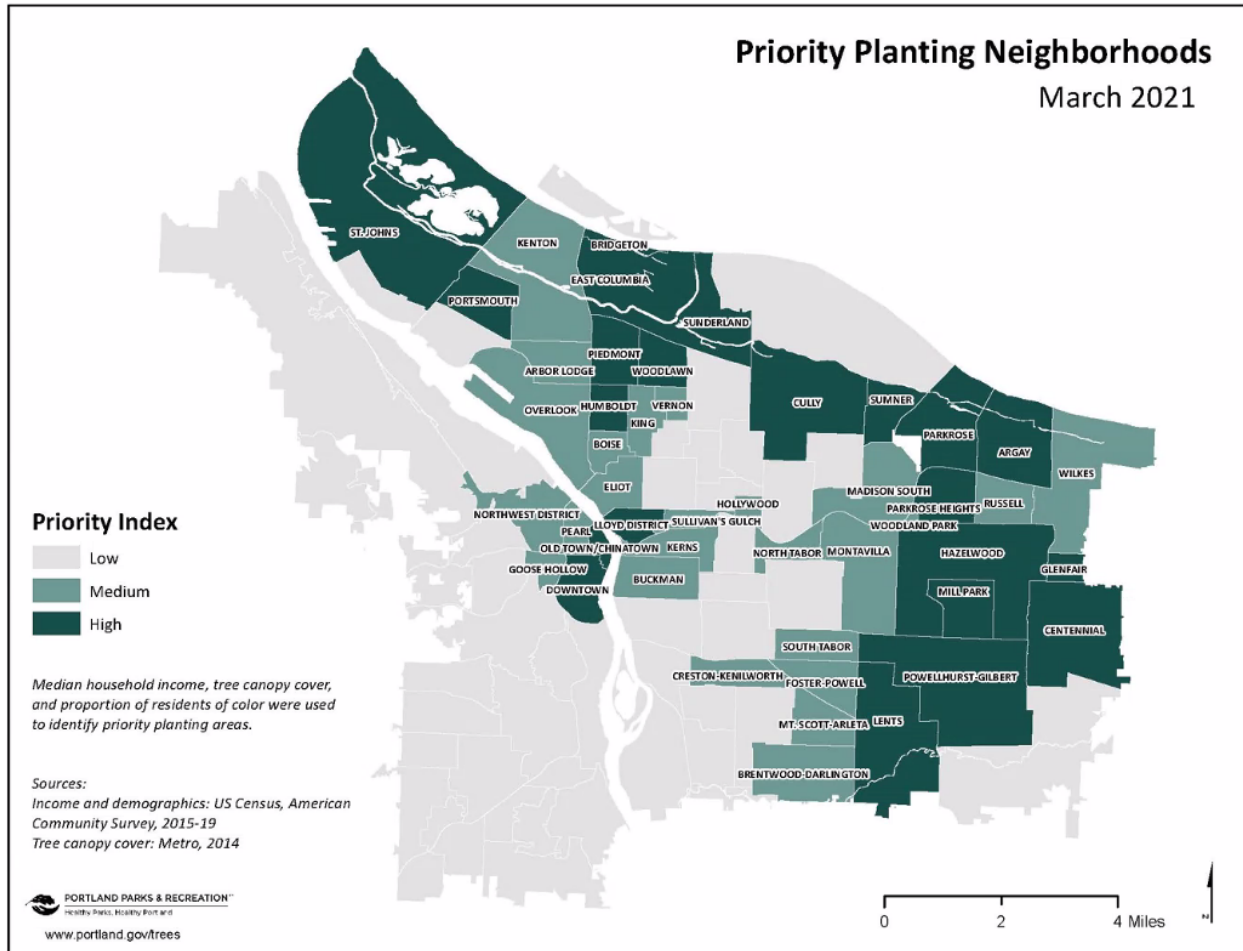


Molly Wilson and Allison O’Sullivan slide show

Molly and Allison began their program discussing what types of properties can be candidates for UF Learning Landscapes programs:

- Schools
- Businesses
- Residential complexes
- Places of worship

In other words, UF Learning Landscapes projects are available for both public and private lands which host people at home, work, school, or worship. This program is a part of a concerted effort to plant trees in the city of Portland in areas where trees are scarce. It is an effort to mitigate the heat domes created by areas with too much pavement and buildings covering the surface and too few trees. The city has prioritized the tree planting efforts in neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover, higher proportions of people of color, and lower median household incomes according to [this scheme](#):



The UF Learning Landscapes programs somewhat overlaps with the Portland BES Treebate tree planting program. Molly explained that the UF Learning Landscapes program usually does not include concrete and asphalt removal as a part of the project, although they have done work in conjunction with the depave.org group.

Tree planting is an essential tool for improving our living, learning and working environment. Benefits include providing shade and cooling -- providing shade for play and cooling for classroom spaces in relation to schools -- cleaning the air, providing UV ray protection, improving mental focus and academic performance, providing psychological benefits, and acting as a tool for environmental education.

How does the UF Learning Landscapes program work? Here are the steps taken to initiate and perform a project:

- Organization wanting trees planted will fill out an application on the website
- LL will do a site visit to assess the project possibilities and site conditions
- LL will do a planting plan and submit it for review by the decision makers of the organization receiving the trees
- LL will obtain organizational approval for the project
- LL will offer to engage in educational opportunities for students or other beneficiaries of the project

- LL will plant the trees and this may be done with volunteer help
- UF covers the cost of the planting and 3 years' worth of maintenance for the trees

Next Molly and Allison talked about the objectives and types of trees being planted. The focus of the project has been to plant large evergreen and native trees. With increasing awareness of the effects of climate change, the emphasis has become planting trees that are going to not only survive the next 3 years but also the next 30 years. The tree planting designers consider the availability of water to the trees afforded by the site, what critical areas of the site that the trees will impact, security issues concerning visibility through the plantings, etc.

A project must have a minimum of 15 trees planted, so that maintenance operations throughout the program are optimized. Trees are 5 feet to 10 feet tall when planted. They are maintained for 3 years by the program and given a structural pruning in the 4th year. At that point the property owners must maintain the trees, although they should require little in the way of maintenance for a number of years. The program will also replace trees that die during the first three years after planting, and these trees will also be given the same treatment as those originally planted.

There is no cost to participate in the program for the property owners. The tree planting and 3 year maintenance is free of charge. However, eventually the owners will need to pay for pruning and removal of the tree as it ages and dies. Upfront, the benefit to the owners is estimated in dollar values to be \$2000 per tree planted.

Molly and Allison gave examples of organizational staff they work with in developing these projects. For the large Portland Public School District, the organization is committed to developing these projects from the highest levels of management. Projects are prioritized and the Learning Landscapes designers work with several layers of authority and specialization. For smaller school districts, such as Centennial SD, the project designers work directly with school maintenance staff to create designs.

There is a lot of information about the Learning Landscapes program available on the City of Portland website.

- [Main Learning Landscapes Page](#)
- [Completed projects information flyers, including maps and planting lists](#)
- [Application for Learning Landscapes tree planting](#)
- [Other tree planting opportunities funded by the City of Portland](#)
- Contact Allison O'Sullivan for more information about the program:
 - Allison.OSullivan@portlandoregon.gov
 - [971-282-2549](tel:971-282-2549)

Along with this information, Molly and Allison recommended visiting the [Beverly Cleary school at Fernwood Tree Walk](#) for a hands on example of a planting after 8 years of growth.

Marc Boucher-Colbert and Franciscan Montessori school at SE 148th and SE Division

As an example of an ongoing school Learning Landscapes project, Marc attended the meeting to discuss his involvement and answer questions about the process of having a project built. He found out about the program while browsing the Portland website for tree programs. The private school where he works has a large parcel of property with a lot of unused space. Therefore it will be getting between 50 and 100

trees with the project. Marc likes the fact that he can custom order some of the trees for thematic plantings – he mentioned giant sequoia and redwood in particular.

In preparation for his ideas about the design program, Marc visited a large Learning Landscapes project done at [Rigler Elementary School](#) at NE 50th and Prescott. He liked that the project was done arboretum style with labels on the trees.

For the Franciscan Montessori school, the facility has a lot of advantages for growing trees. There is an arborist on staff, leaves are composted onsite and used for mulch. And with a large number of trees planted, there might be a good amount of survival data gathered for the Learning Landscapes folks. Trees will also be strategically planted to take care of shade needs for play areas. An additional advantage may be realized in discovering which trees survive in the next few years in the changing climate.

Announcements

[July 8-9 – East Portland Arts Festival – Ventura Park](#)

[July 14 – Concert in Lincoln Park sponsored by Hazelwood NA](#)

[August 18 – Movie in the Park sponsored by Argay Terrace NA](#)

[August 19 – Concert in Wilkes Park sponsored by Wilkes Community Group](#)

Next meeting will be September 7. The topic will be East Portland Community Center.

Look for easy to read schedules posted on those events for Summer 2023 in our Facebook page:

[East Portland Parks Coalition | Portland OR | Facebook](#).

Look for these notes in the East Portland Action Plan website:

[East Portland Parks Coalition | East Portland Action Plan](#)