Memorandum

CITY OF DALLAS

DATE January 23, 2009

TO Honorable Members of the Quality of Life Committee: Pauline Medrano (Chair), Vonciel Jones Hill (Vice Chair), Carolyn R. Davis, Angela Hunt, Sheffie Kadane, David A. Neumann, Steve Salazar

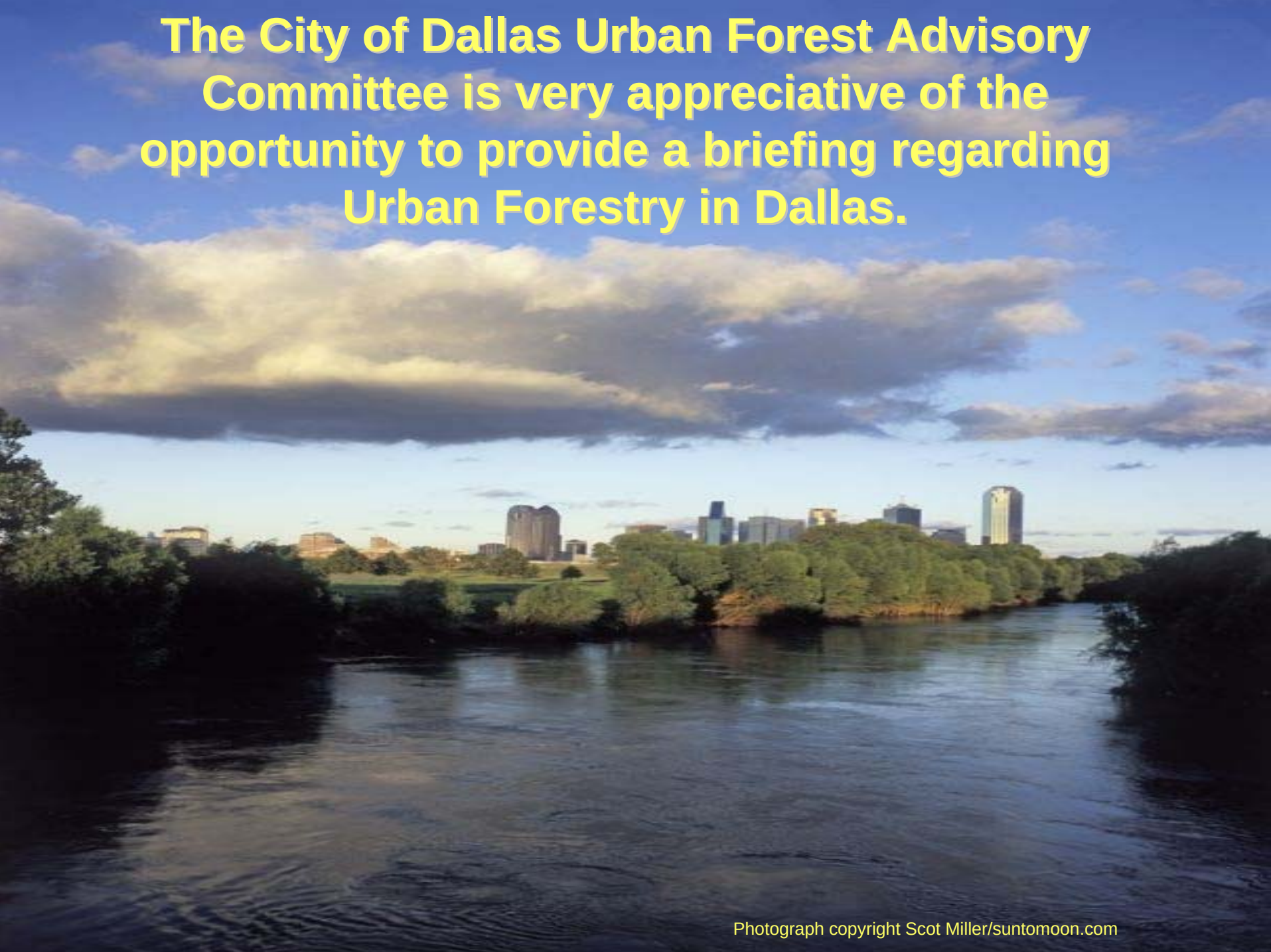
SUBJECT Urban Forestry Presentation Update

On Monday, January 26, 2009, you will be updated on urban forestry by Steve Houser, Chair of the Urban Forestry Committee. Attached is the briefing material for your review prior to Monday's discussion.

If you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Forest E. Turner
Interim Assistant City Manager

cc: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
Mary K. Suhm, City Manager
Deborah A. Watkins, City Secretary
Thomas P. Perkins, Jr., City Attorney
Craig D. Kinton, City Auditor
Judge C. Victor Lander, Judiciary
Ryan S. Evans, First Assistant City Manager
Ramon F. Miguez, P.E., Assistant City Manager
A.C. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Jill A. Jordan, P.E., Assistant City Manager
David K. Cook, Chief Financial Officer
Helena Stevens-Thompson, Assistant to the City Manager


The City of Dallas Urban Forest Advisory Committee is very appreciative of the opportunity to provide a briefing regarding Urban Forestry in Dallas.
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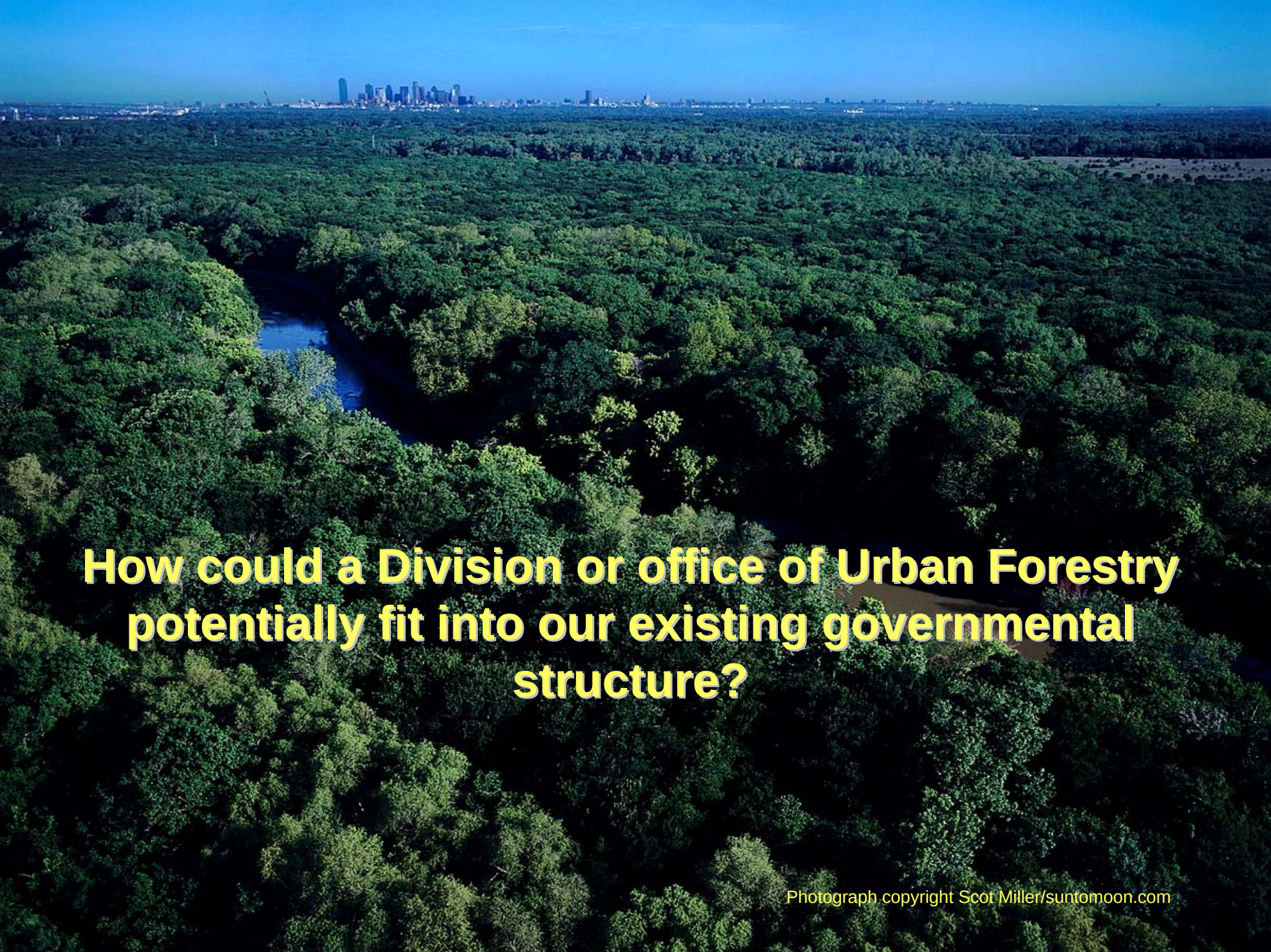
How could a Division or office of Urban Forestry potentially fit into our existing governmental structure?
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“For bureaucratic and budget issues, Urban Forestry operations are typically integrated with other services.”

“Engineering or Public Works Departments have the majority of the equipment and funding...”

According to research …
"The majority of the largest cities have Urban Forestry within the Park Department, followed closely by Public Works."

Larger Cities with Forestry in Parks:

- New York
- Los Angeles
- Atlanta
- Boston

Philadelphia and Minneapolis have a separate park commission with an integral tree function.

Seattle has staff split between transportation, parks and utility departments that work together as a “Forestry Team”.

Organizational Structure

According to research by Mr. J. James Kielbaso and Mr. John P. Giedraitis, professor of Forestry and Research Assistant, Michigan State University, the top ranked organizational structure around the nation is a “Forestry/tree unit” within parks or public works.

Then way down the list:

- Streets
- Tree Commission
- Coordinated between Streets/DPW
- Coordinated between Parks/DPW

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Management Unit Title

The most effective management programs have the management unit described as Forestry, followed by Forestry within the parks department, and trees within parks. Trees within the department of public works followed closely behind.

“For the maximum benefit to trees, it seems imperative that forestry and/or trees be specifically identified in the unit name and/or the tree manager title.”

Manager's title

The top ranked titles in the research by Mr. J. James Kielbaso were:

- Forester/Arborist
- Forestry Forman
- Tree Warden

Then way down the list:

- Parks Director
- Department of Public Works Forman
- Landscape Architect
- City Engineer
- Department of Public Works Director

Where Does Urban Forestry Fit?

Criteria utilized in judging a community's urban forestry programs:

- Systematic management
- Responsible for Street Trees
- Aware of Federal aid
- Records kept
- Records computerized
- Official trees by block
- Small tree trend
- Maintain a nursery
- City tree ordinance
- Preservation Ordinance
- Monitor pests
- Emergency plan in place
- Participate in research
- Number of full time employees
- Trees planted in last year
- Tree budget as percent of city budget
- Dollar budgeted per tree
- Percent response to budget per tree
- Number of trees maintained per employee
- Dollar per capita for tree care

Kielbaso and Giedraitis

Forestry Budgets

Research regarding forestry budget expenditures around the nation shows that they are divided as follows:

Streets, 61%	**Parks, 25%**	**Cemeteries, 2%**
Nurseries, 2%	**Public Grounds, 7%**	**Other, 3%**

By the various work account activities, the tree care budgets are divided as follows:

Supervision	**9%**	**Nursery**	**1%**	**Storm work**	**3%**
Office	**1%**	**Spraying**	**4%**	**Repair**	**3%**
Planting	**15%**	**Fertilization**	**3%**	**Stump Removal**	**4%**
Trimming	**28%**	**Watering**	**3%**	**Miscellaneous**	**2%**
Removals	**24%**				

“Next Steps”

- Determine the level of support from the Quality of Life Committee regarding an Office or Division of Urban Forestry.
- If support exists, list the broad objectives the committee wishes to accomplish.
  - Where would Urban Forestry fit into existing governmental structure?
  - What is the title of the Urban Forestry group?
  - What is their charge?
  - Who leads the group?
- Get key agencies to agree and reach consensus.
- Present the issue to Council for consideration.

As a part of Dallas' leadership in the green movement, it is imperative that we properly manage our green infrastructure to attract business and develop our tax base.

We are appreciative of the opportunity, as well as your support, for developing a sound urban forest management program which will greatly benefit future generations.

To leave a legacy of a cooler, greener and healthier city is indeed a gift worthy of consideration.