

STUMPTOWN, from page 12

Portland. The sheer volume of development permits involving tree removal has taxed the limited staffing with the expertise in tree preservation, protection and planting. It has also meant the city has had to skimp on the funding education and outreach necessary to help Portlanders understand tree policies and help steward the urban forest.

A fifth shortcoming of the 2010 tree reforms relates to how street upgrades and improvements fail to accommodate large healthy trees. Development along unimproved streets usually triggers required upgrades to install curbs, sidewalks and, sometimes, bioswales. Developers must meet the Bureau of Transportation's design standards. These standards rarely allow or require flexible designs to avoid tree removal or alternative surfacing to protect tree roots. Where new tree planting is required, street improvement standards often don't provide enough soil volume to allow the growth of large healthy trees. The conflict between curbs, sidewalks and trees is particularly acute in East Portland

Five simple policy improvements would protect large healthy trees in Portland.

1. Establish specific tree preservation standards for large, healthy native trees, at least 35 inches in diameter.
2. Increase requirements for tree replacement and fee in lieu of planting or preservation. Tree replacement should be graduated based on the size and species of trees removed in order to better compensate for the loss of the environmental functions they provide.
3. Develop new street improvements standards that allow the retention of large, healthy trees. Establish a tree soil volume standard to ensure street trees in newly improved streets have room to grow.
4. Actually apply new tree reforms citywide by requiring industrial development to meet tree density, preservation and planting requirements.
5. Fully fund implementation of code enforcement and tree-related outreach and education programs.

neighborhoods where there are many unimproved streets often flanked with large healthy trees.

So what is to be done? Fortunately, lots. The many efforts of neighbors to rally and organize to protect trees are already having an impact.

As result of the clear threat to large healthy trees from recent development,

Commissioner Fritz has asked a special tree policy oversight committee to look at new measures to better protect and preserve large healthy trees. Their recommendations will likely eventually find their way to the City Council.

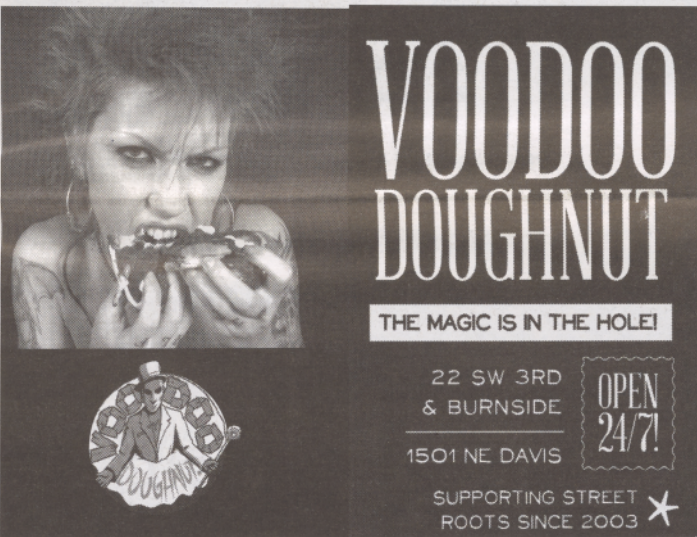
Portlanders wanting to lend their voice will soon have an opportunity. The Urban Forestry Commission is hosting a special

public hearing Tuesday, Aug. 4, 6-8pm at 1900 SW 4th Room 2500A. The goal is to give Portlanders an opportunity to express their desire to remedy the shortcomings of the citywide tree code. People who can't make the Aug. 4 hearing may send written testimony to Mieke Keenan at mieke.keenan@portlandoregon.gov by Sept. 9, and cc: Commissioner Dan Saltzman at dan@portlandoregon.gov and Commissioner Amanda Fritz at amanda@portlandoregon.gov.

Policy makers or lobbyists who would block or obstruct tree policy reforms in Portland should take note. The concerns created by policies that allow the loss of large, healthy trees in Portland's neighborhoods will not likely go away.

Nor will Portlanders' visceral love of the trees so define our city's unique sense of place. If Portlanders' voices are heard, "urban living" in Portland will continue to mean having large healthy trees in our urban midst.

Jim Labbe is the urban conservationist with the Audubon Society of Portland.



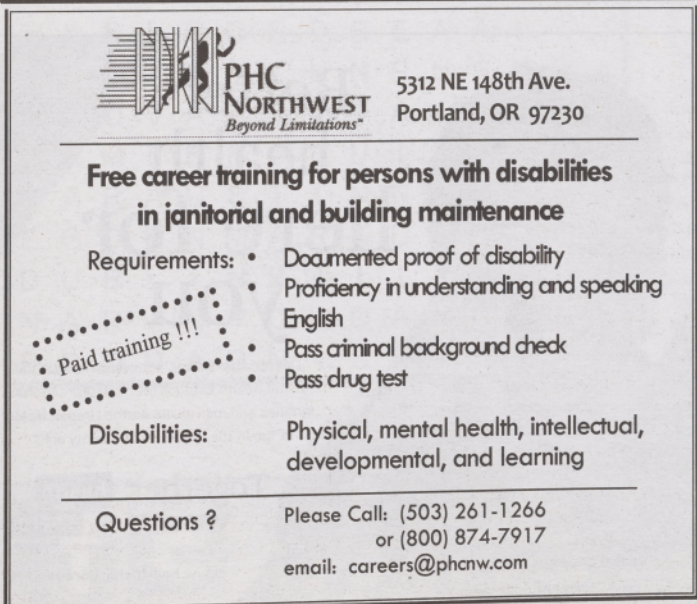
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Find us at these locations:

City Team, 526 SE Grand Ave.
August 12.....8-10 a.m.
August 26.....8-10 a.m.

Clackamas County Community Corrections-Transition Center, 1024 Main Street 97045
August 11.....1-3 p.m.

Lloyd Center, 2nd Floor by Cinnabon
August 5.....11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
August 12.....11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
August 19.....11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
August 26.....11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Portland Rescue Mission, 111 W Burnside
August 6.....8-10 a.m.
August 13.....8-10 a.m.
August 20.....8-10 a.m.
August 27.....8-10 a.m.

Union Gospel Mission, 3 NW Third Ave.
August 18.....2-4 p.m.
August 25.....2-4 p.m.

Virginia Garcia, 1151 N Adair Street
August 14.....11 a.m.-3 p.m.



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