

When Citizens Have Their Say: Adjusting Urban Forest Management to Account for the Public's Values

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and

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Abstract:

- **Urban-forest managers take their management directions from many sources - their own personal biases, their bosses' values (e.g., city councils), other professionals, nursery-stock providers, urban citizens, and others. Our review of urban-forest management plans in Canada shows that most of them are dominated by approaches to addressing environmental problems. However, our data on citizen values related to trees in the city, collected using multiple methods, betray a strong bias toward psycho-social values. We therefore posit the following question: if the citizens' psycho-social values were taken as explicitly into consideration as environmental values, how might urban forest management be different? Perhaps such management would pay more attention to, among other things, naturalization of urban-forest conditions, with strengthened networks of pocket parks and treed corridors. Improved canopy cover would be targeted at playgrounds and other outdoor recreational spaces as well as at convalescence facilities. We explore these concepts in the context of managing urban forests in Canada (*and Europe!*).**

Questions to be addressed:

- Whose value sets drive contemporary urban-forest decision-making in Canada?
- Whose value sets SHOULD drive such decisions?
- Why might urban forest management need adjustment?
- How do we know what are the values of the citizenry?
- What are the citizens saying about what they value about urban forests?
- What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?
- How can we improve urban forest management via citizens' values?

Sources of my inspiration . . .

- **Research on urban forest values**

- Peckham, S.C., P.N. Duinker, and C. Ordóñez. 2013. Urban forest values in Canada: views of citizens in Calgary and Halifax. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*: in press.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ufug.2013.01.001> .

- **Research on urban-forest management plans**

- Ordóñez, C. and P.N. Duinker. 2013. An analysis of urban forest management plans in Canada: implications for urban forest management. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 116:36-47. doi:

[10.1016/j.landurbplan.2013.04.007](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2013.04.007)

Sources of my inspiration . . .

- **Preparation of urban-forest management plans:**
 - NIPpaysage Landscape Architects, Ekistics Planning and Design, P.N. Duinker, Black Spruce Heritage Services, Form:Media, and LandDesign Engineering Services. 2008. Point Pleasant Park Comprehensive Plan. Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax, NS.
 - HRM Urban Forest Planning Team. 2012. Halifax Regional Municipality Urban Forest Master Plan: Draft of August 2012. Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax, NS. 450 pp.
 - Victoria Park in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island - ongoing

Sources of my inspiration . . .

- Personal observations across Canada and Europe



If I had one on my laptop, a map of Europe would appear here!

Whose value sets drive contemporary urban-forest decision-making in Canada?

- **Technical people** – arborists, planners, landscape architects, nursery people, professors, etc.
 - Standards, professional viewpoints
- **Bosses** – politicians, senior municipal officials, developers
 - Budgets, political preferences
- **Property owners**
 - Pressure for or against trees
- **Citizens**
 - Daily appreciators (or not) of trees in the city



Whose value sets **SHOULD** drive such decisions?

- **The citizens, of course!**
- **Why?**
 - **Democratic principles (participation)**
 - **Citizens are the main consequence-takers**
 - **Happiness for city councillors and senior staffers**

Why might urban forest management need adjustment?

- Canopy cover is admittedly never enough
- Environmental services and technical considerations dominate program design
- Urban forests are under siege
 - Budgets
 - Insects and diseases

How do we know what are the values of the citizenry?

- Various cities undertake public-participation programs, esp. at the time of management planning
- We have been undertaking research!

Our research methods

| Method | Calgary | Winnipeg | Fredericton | Halifax | Colombia |
|--------------------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|
| Diaries and focus groups | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Interception surveys | | √ | √ | √ | |
| Photo-based interviews | | √ | | | |
| Walkabout interviews | | | | √ | |
| Online survey | | | | √ | |

What are the citizens saying about what they value about urban forests?

- **Contrast with greyscape → green = calm**
- **Aesthetics – sights, sounds, smells**
- **Sense of place and connection**
- **Feelings of well-being and happiness**
- **Closeness to nature**
- **Freshness of the air**
- **Environmental stewardship**
- **Shade and coolness**

What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- **More canopy cover (of course!)
 - Where a tree can grow, there should be a tree!**



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What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Probably less of the left picture . . .
- And more of the right picture!



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Treed pocket parks everywhere!



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Treed corridors



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Depart from non-natural patterns



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Depart from non-natural patterns



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

- Trees to shade playgrounds



What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?



NINEWELLS GREENWAY AND ARBORETUM WALKS

Ninewells Hospital Arboretum Walks

Welcome!
Now you are free to explore the network of paths and enjoy one of the finest collections of parkland trees in Dundee, many of which are over 200 years old! This parkland is the setting for Invergowne House, but is now part of the grounds to Ninewells hospital.

The lush grassland beneath the shelter of these trees was formerly wood pasture, used as a sheltered place for animals to graze. Now the Arboretum is managed for a healthy and sustainable woodland, and as a place for people to come and relax.

Arboretum
Woodlands make a vital contribution towards biodiversity, providing a range of habitats for a rich variety of wildlife. Walking round the Arboretum you will see many types of broadleaf trees, especially oaks, beech and sycamore, but also chestnuts, maples, lime and walnut. There are also a few conifers to be found, including a couple of cedars.

Although the Arboretum floor is currently dominated by grasses, there are some open woodland flowering plants colonising the parkland, such as wood anemones and hughes.

Trees is a well established bird population to be heard in the Arboretum, and also present – but very shy! – are red deer and rabbits. There are grey squirrels, but because they damage trees and spread disease to the native red squirrels, they are actively managed.

A range of trees that you can walk during your walk.

Logos: NHS, Dundee City Council, Ninewells Hospital

What adjustments seem warranted if citizen values are paramount in decision-making?

Ninewells Hospital and Woodland



How can we improve urban forest management via citizens' values?



- Engage citizens deeply and frequently in conversations and other exchanges about what they value with respect to trees in the city
- Help citizens appreciate a fulsome range of ways they could value trees in the city
- Respond to citizen values with urban-forest compositions and structures that cater to their value sets



My street in Halifax



90-yr-old
American
Elm



European
Beech, I
planted,
on city
property!

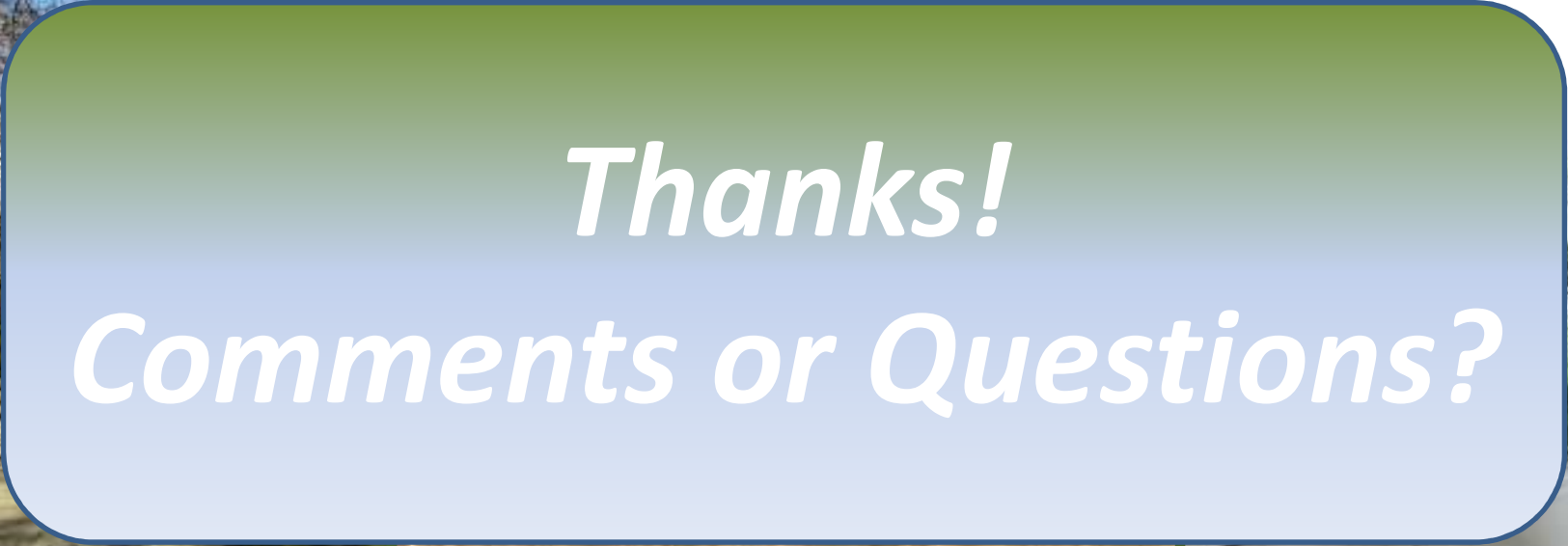


Red
Spruce,
Yellow
Birch,
and
White
Birch in a
clump,
on my
property



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Thanks!
Comments or Questions?

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