

# Tacoma Urban Forest Management Plan

2022 Progress Report



# What is the Urban Forest Management Plan?

Trees in Tacoma reduce air pollution, prevent contaminated stormwater runoff from reaching the Puget Sound, cool our homes, parks, and sidewalks, reduce flooding, stabilize our hillsides, enliven business districts, and beautify our neighborhoods. However, a 2018 study of Tacoma's tree canopy revealed that at 20% tree canopy, Tacoma had the least canopy coverage of all assessed communities in the Puget Sound region.

A multi-year community engagement process, led by Urban Forestry staff in collaboration with a team of consultants, led to the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) as an ambitious, comprehensive strategy to deliver improved urban forestry services for all Tacomans.

In December 2019, Tacoma City Council passed the UFMP to serve as a road map of actions that move Tacoma towards a goal of a healthy, thriving 30% overall tree canopy by 2030. The UFMP functions as a management tool to direct City staff to improve the level of service to the community through increased tree plantings, protection of existing trees, improvement of operations and efficiency across departments, and to build and grow local and regional urban forestry partnerships.

The UFMP compliments and builds upon Tacoma's 2010 Urban Forest Policy Element of the Comprehensive Plan, 2015 Tacoma 2025 Strategic Plan, 2016 Environmental Action Plan, and the 2021 Climate Action Plan.

## How to Read the 2022 UFMP Progress Report

Actions are broken into six broad categories:

1. **Management & Policy**
2. **Capacity & Training**
3. **Funding & Authority**
4. **Inventory & Planning**
5. **Risk & Disaster Management**
6. **Community Engagement**

Within each category, actions are assigned a target year for completion between 2020 and 2030, with certain actions recurring annually. These target years will appear in bold above a list of corresponding actions. For each action there is a description of the goal and a graphic showing the 2022 progress made towards that goal in red, yellow, or green, as well as a bulleted list update of the 2022 status for each action.

### Frequently Used Acronyms

#### *Programs:*

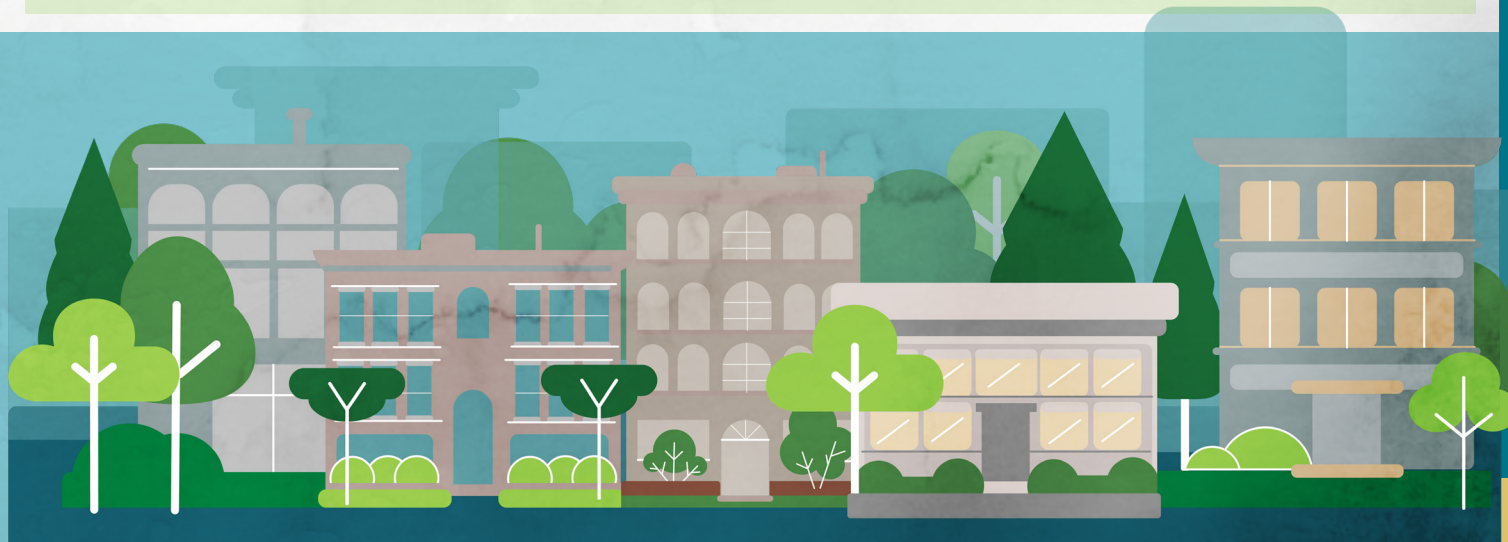
- GCT- Grit City Trees
- TCP- Tree Coupon Program

#### *Staff:*

- UF- Urban Forestry
- ES- Environmental Services
- PDS- Planning & Development Services
- PW- Public Works
- NCS- Neighborhood & Community Services

#### *Partners:*

- TTF- Tacoma Tree Foundation
- PCD- Pierce Conservation District
- MPT- Metro Parks Tacoma
- TPU- Tacoma Public Utilities
- TNC- The Nature Conservancy



**Example  
2022  
Progress  
Level**



**5-7 Management & Policy**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2025**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**14-16 Inventory & Planning**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**11-13 Funding & Authority**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2027**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**8-10 Capacity & Training**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2026**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**17-19 Risk & Disaster Management**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2030**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**20-22 Community Engagement**

**Annual**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2022**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



**2028**

Description of action.

- 2022 progress update.



# Executive Summary

## 2022: Branching Out

After significant adjustments to the Plan were made in 2020-21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic limiting nearly all in-person activities and outreach strategies, for 2022, in-person community outreach and engagement were able to resume. This resulted in a growth spurt for neighborhood greening programming, including new community planting events and tree giveaways in partnership with local and regional organizations.

Through those events and projects such as the Tacoma Mall Greening Project we were better able to increase participation in neighborhood greening efforts in historically underserved communities; most notably the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.

Community partnerships were markedly strengthened in 2022 as a more robust local urban forestry ecosystem took shape.

Professional development progressed as urban forestry trainings were held for internal and community partner staff including an Exotic Pest ID training. The return of in-person industry conferences such as the Partners in Community Forestry Conference (hosted in Seattle in 2022) and University of Washington Urban Forest Symposium encouraged networking and knowledge transfer.

A Hazardous Tree Assistance pilot was launched in recognition of the need to encourage tree planting

and proactive tree maintenance in the right-of-way, as well as the need to address public safety without placing a huge financial burden on community members.

Despite this clear progress, challenges remain. Municipal Code updates hit extensive delays, leaving Tacoma's public trees vulnerable to outdated and inadequate standards. Urban Forestry staffing capacity continues to limit advances in the level of service that the City can provide, especially in the realm of tree maintenance. Tracking of illegal tree removals remains difficult. The City's tree inventory is increasing each year, but still only represents a fraction of the total trees, leaving us with incomplete data for efforts such as increasing climate and pest resiliency, determining public health and stormwater benefits, and gauging urban wood reuse potential.

Things are trending in the right direction though as will be demonstrated in the following report.

For the 2022 Progress Report, the plan is presented with the original goal action timelines in place.

While the original timeline underwent a significant shift in 2020-21, the goals and intent of the Urban Forest Management Plan remain unchanged.





# Management & Policy

## **MANAGEMENT & POLICY GOAL:** **Tacoma's urban forest policies are the foundation for preserving the environmental benefits, management, and the character of Tacoma's urban forest.**

A strategic plan that lacks regulatory support is at risk of losing political traction, losing resources and funding, and may not have the enforcement necessary for permanent improvements. A weak or outdated policy framework jeopardizes the success of key projects.

Proper tree protection and enforcement in the right-of-way (ROW) would support a “no-net-loss” strategy for retaining urban trees by identifying and preventing unlawful removals. Strengthening Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) and improving urban forest policy would give greater weight to the City's tree canopy goals.

Alignment of policy, Code and existing plans ensures a strong connection among Tacoma's strategic urban forestry goals, and the projects and initiatives that realize these goals. The UFMP builds upon management and policy directives identified in the 2010 Urban Forest Policy Element and the 2016 Environmental Action Plan. It has also informed the development of the 2021 Climate Action Plan.

Urban forest policy updates, improvements to Tacoma Municipal Code, improved standards, and tree planting goals will provide the necessary foundation for achieving the strategies within this plan.

### **Short-Term Strategies:**

- Strengthen the Citywide tree canopy goal of 30% by 2030 by aligning urban forest policy with existing policies and plans.
- Clarify policy for urban forest management and protection.

### **Mid-Term Strategies:**

- Protect Tacoma's significant/heritage trees.
- Improve regulations and procedures to encourage tree preservation and protection on private property and in the City right-of-way.

### **Long-Term Strategies:**

- Achieve a healthy and sustainable 30% tree canopy cover citywide.
- Achieve an equitable distribution of urban forest benefits and level of service provided by the City.





# Management & Policy

## Annual

### 1D.1 Monitor Annual Tree Loss and Gain

Monitor tree loss and gain through annual tree removal and planting permit reporting.



- Permit applications approved for removal of 63 trees and planting of 93 trees in the right-of-way in 2022.

### 1E.2 Plant 2,000 Trees and Support Partner Plantings of 8,500 Trees

Planting 10,500 trees per year, alongside preservation and maintenance of existing trees will help Tacoma reach 30% tree canopy by 2030.



- The City has two tree planting incentive programs: Grit City Trees, a free street tree giveaway program, and the Tree Coupon Program, a discounted tree program in collaboration with local and regional partners.
- Two new partner programs were created in 2022- Branch Out: The Great Tree Giveaway and Green Blocks: Tacoma Mall
- For 2022, the total number of trees planted through City projects was: **797**
- Total number of trees planted through partners: **4,772** (1,835 (TCP) + 1,652 (TTF) + 320 (GCT)+ 624 (Branch Out) + 226 (MPT)+ 115 (PCD))

## 2020

### 1B.3 Hazardous Tree Assistance



A Hazardous Tree Assistance Program for low-income households will alleviate some of the burden of caring for trees in the ROW adjacent to private residential properties.

- UF worked alongside Neighborhood & Community Services to launch a pilot Hazardous Tree Assistance Program in late 2022.
- Program covers all costs of mitigating the hazard for qualifying participants and includes replacement planting for removals.

### 1E.4 Tree Risk Management Plan



Implement policy and procedures recommended in the Tree Risk Management Plan.

- No progress to report.

## 2021

### 1A.5 Create an Urban Forestry Title in Tacoma Municipal Code

Establish an Urban Forestry Title to Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) that aligns urban forestry policy with One Tacoma, updates antiquated language and inconsistencies, and requires the use of industry best practices and standards.



- Significant updates to TMC Title 9 “Right-of-Way” were initiated with anticipated adoption in 2023.

### 1D.6 Trees and Sidewalks Operations Plan



Implement the Trees and Sidewalks Operations Plan (Plan Phase 3) to eliminate improper tree removals and reduce future hardscape conflicts.

- No progress to report.

## 2022

### 1C.7 Create Heritage Tree Program

A program to establish protections for Tacoma’s most valuable trees as determined by size, age, rarity, historical significance, or ecological value.



- Program included in an update to TMC Title 9, anticipated adoption in 2023.

### 1D.8 Standard Operating Procedures and Permitting Processes Aligned with Tacoma Municipal Code

Develop standard operating procedures and permitting processes for urban forest management by 2022 that are aligned with TMC.



- UF staff are working with PDS staff to develop clear permitting processes for trees in the ROW with anticipated adoption in 2023.

# Management & Policy



2023

## 1B.9 Urban Wood Reuse



Establish protocols for tree debris management, wood utilization, and wood waste diversion for routine tree maintenance, removals, and storm response.

- Staff worked with a local mill to develop protocols to accompany the implementation of the hazardous tree assistance program wherein the mill will process wood waste generated from removal of hazardous trees and put it to its highest and best possible use, diverting it from the landfill.



## 1D.10 No Net-Loss Policy



Align tree protection and design standards in TMC 13.06.502.E with a no-net-loss policy by 2023 to achieve tree canopy goals.

- No progress to report.

2024

## 1D.12 Post-Planting Tree Care Requirements

Update post-planting tree care requirements for City projects and developers.



- No progress to report.





# Capacity & Training

## **CAPACITY & TRAINING GOAL: The City has the capacity and expertise to provide optimal levels of service for equitable urban forest management.**

The complexity of urban environments requires knowledgeable, adept practitioners to ensure appropriate care, maintenance, and resiliency. Trained staff reduces risk and future costs of maintenance, improves quality of service, and reduces threat of public hazard.

This category evaluates potential staffing levels for increased tree maintenance responsibilities in public areas to achieve targets of improved urban forest health through proper and routine tree maintenance. It also addresses continuing education and training for Urban Forestry staff to align services with industry best management practices.

Adequate staffing levels meet the needs of the community more efficiently and effectively. Staff with an understanding and training in processes affecting the urban forest are able to coordinate efforts to achieve common goals across departments at the City and through partnerships in the community.

Safe practice of arboriculture and urban forestry is critical for City staff, contractors, and the public to reduce the potential risk of public hazards.

“With temperatures rising and health and economic disparities widening, trees are no longer a ‘nice to have.’ They are a must-have.

We have a moral responsibility right now to truly address the wrongs of the past and create an opportunity not just for some, but for all in the future.”

-DNR Commissioner of Public Lands  
Hilary Franz

### **Short-Term Strategies:**

- Reach and maintain staffing levels that meet the needs of the community and provide improved care for the urban forest.
- Clarify and distinguish roles pertaining to urban forest management for efficient service.
- Acquire and maintain appropriate industry certifications and qualifications. Provide training and educational opportunities to support the goal of excellent urban forest management and care.

### **Mid-Term Strategies:**

- Acquire the resources for enhanced proactive public tree planting and maintenance.

### **Long-Term Strategies:**

- Secure staffing levels to achieve a sustainable pruning rotation for trees on public property.







# Capacity & Training

## Annual

### 2C.1 Conduct Annual Urban Forestry Events



Conduct annual urban forestry events, or partner events, especially involving youth.

- Branch Out: The Great Tree Giveaway was actually two tree planting and giveaway events held in Feb. and Nov. where over 600 trees were planted or distributed.
- South Sound Sustainability EXPO returned and was held in Tollefson Plaza on April 16th.
- Over Earth Day weekend a Pop-Up Forest exhibit was installed inside the Tacoma Mall with thousands of visitors and nearly 250 free trees distributed.
- Green Tacoma Day, held October 8th, featured restoration and planting events across the city as well as a tree giveaway at the Asia-Pacific Cultural Center hosted by TTF.
- A “Tree-or-Treat” event was held at the Madison School in partnership with a local artist and TTF.

## 2020

### 2D.2 Evaluate Urban Forest Level of Service Related to Tree Planting and Maintenance Requirements



Evaluate updated urban forest level of service as related to tree planting and protection requirements.

- No progress to report.

## 2021

### 2A.3 & 2A.4 Arborist Crew



Strengthen arborist crew needs assessment and prepare a business case detailing staff needs for arborists to support implementation of UFMP, and to address the technical forestry needs of Public Works, Environmental Services, and Planning & Development Services.

- Action delayed due to COVID-19 resourcing impacts.
- PW and UF will prepare to submit a proposed budget enhancement for the 2023-2024 budget, as resources allow.

### 2C.5 Conduct 10 Department-specific Trainings on Urban Forest Management SOPs and Work Flows



Conduct 10 Department-specific trainings and as-needed internal staff trainings regarding urban forest management standard operating procedures and workflows.

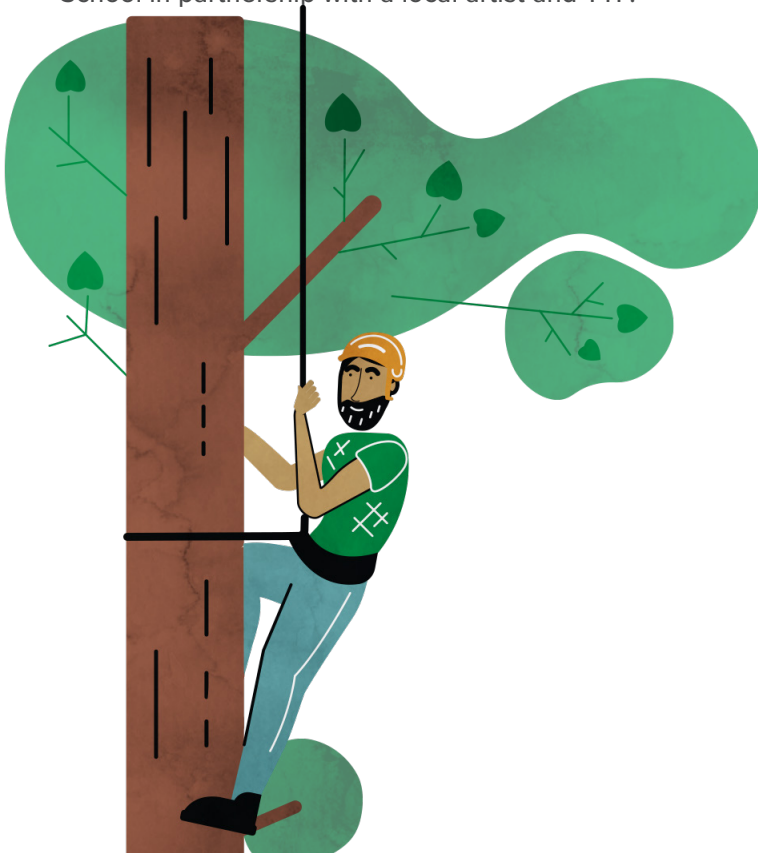
- UF partnered with WA DNR Urban & Community Forestry and WSU Extension to host an Exotic Pest Identification Workshop at Solid Waste on Aug. 31st for City and partner staff who perform tree work.

### 2C.6 UF Staff Obtain ISA Certified Arborist Credentials



Urban Forestry staff attain and maintain industry certifications such as ISA Certified Arborist accreditation.

- The Urban Forest Program Manager is an ISA Certified Arborist. Urban Forestry Analyst attained ISA Arborist credential in 2022.
- Additional UF staff are pursuing ISA certification in 2023.



# Capacity & Training

2022

## 2B.7 Fix Broken Operational Workflows in Urban Forestry



Utilize the continuous improvement framework to fix the broken pieces of operational workflows in urban forest management.

- No progress to report.

## 2C.8 Annual Education and Training Budget for UF Staff

Develop annual education and training budget for urban forestry staff that includes attendance for 2 primary staff at industry conferences per year. Staff stay up-to-date on current and potential exotic tree pest and disease threats.



- UF staff attended the following trainings/conferences: Partners in Community Forestry Conference, Urban Wood Network Conference, and the University of Washington Urban Forest Symposium.

2025

## 2E.9 Designate 9 FTEs for Management and Care of Tacoma's Urban Forest.



Designate 9 full-time equivalents by 2025, including existing staff and/or new hires, for management and care of Tacoma's urban forest. The intent of this team is to be an in-house resource for City work groups around urban forest management.

- Number of FTE Urban Forestry staff for 2022 was 3.





# Funding & Authority

## **FUNDING & AUTHORITY GOAL: City resources and authority enable equitable urban forest management for the preservation and enhancement of tree benefits.**

Tacoma's Urban Forestry Program, which has authority over day-to-day tree-related activities, and provides technical support to other City departments and work groups, is budgeted annually and is funded primarily through the City's Surface Water Utility fees and the General Fund.

UFMP Phase 1 research indicated Tacoma is well below regional averages in urban forest budget expenditures per capita and per tree, even when expenditures from partnering agencies are included. Tacoma has a strong network of engaged community residents who are in support of reallocating resources for urban forestry and tree stewardship. The actions for the Funding and Authority Chapter focus on standards, operating procedures, internal work-flows, policy, staff trainings and technical support.

Appropriate urban forest funding enables and amplifies implementation of this plan and related daily operations, resulting in better community outcomes such as increased level of service, better health outcomes, and reduced public hazard potential.

Equitable resource dispersal prioritizes environmental justice, balancing the historical distribution of resources in undeserved and lower-income areas.

Accurate accounting of urban forest practices, management, and urban forest assets enables performance and attribute-based funding.

Standard protocols established for communications among the urban forest stakeholders offer transparency and coordinate efforts.

### **Short-Term Strategies:**

- Identify appropriate resource needs and service levels for the management of trees in City-maintained areas.

### **Mid-Term Strategies:**

- Acquire additional City responsibility of street tree maintenance in prioritized corridors.

### **Long-Term Strategies:**

- Enable framework for diversified, sustained and dedicated funding to the urban forest.
- Public tree maintenance responsibility is shared by the City and its residents by City obtaining maintenance responsibility of public trees in priority areas including major arterials, business districts, regional growth areas, and historically underserved neighborhoods.





# Funding & Authority

## Annual

### 3A.1 Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA Certification



Continue to track and annually report urban forestry activities of all partners to continue support of Arbor Day Tree City USA Designation.

- Certification renewed for 2022, marking the 29th consecutive year of designation as a Tree City USA.

## 2020

### 3A.2 Urban Forest Management Funding Increase



Request annual urban forest management funding that incrementally aligns more closely with Western U.S. rates to meet the levels of service required for implementation of this Plan.

- Annual UF budget increased by \$100k in 2022.

## 2021

### 3B.3 & 3B.4 Finalize and Implement City Street Tree Maintenance Program



Finalize the priority street tree maintenance corridors that were recommended through the lens of environmental justice and equitable ecosystem services.

- Three priority corridors in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood, identified in the UFMP, received preventative tree maintenance in 2022.
- Additional corridors awaiting staff capacity.

### 3C.5 Develop or Strengthen Open Channels of Communication with Non-Conventional Urban Forestry Partners



Develop or strengthen open channels of communication with non-conventional urban forest partners.

- Regular communication with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools, NCS, and the City's Safe Routes to School program.



### Canopy Cover:

While some parts of the city have dense tree cover, it's not spread equitably, and Tacoma has the lowest assessed total tree canopy cover in the Puget Sound region.

### \*Nearby Community Canopy Cover:

Bothell 45%, Kirkland 41%, Redmond 38%, Bellevue 37%, Renton 29%, Seattle 28%, Kent 28%, **Tacoma 20%**.

\*available data collected at the time the UFMP was developed.

# Funding & Authority

## 2022

### 3A.6 Develop Business Case for Budget Increase to Recommended \$8.76 Per Capita

Develop a business case to propose 2023-2024 biennium budget enhancement request for urban forest management to increase to the recommended \$8.76 per capita.

- Annual UF budget increased by \$100k in 2022



### 3D.7 Establish Relationships with Community Organizations Across all Neighborhood Districts to Help Maintain Newly Planted Trees

Establish and sustain efforts with Neighborhood Business Districts, Neighborhood Council Districts, neighborhood organizations, and civic groups in all Tacoma neighborhoods to implement young tree maintenance approaches for the care of trees planted annually.

- UF partnered with TTF to encourage tree stewardship across many events in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood as part of the Tacoma Mall Greening Project.
- UF staff and partners participated in community events in Downtown Tacoma, Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, South Tacoma, McKinley, Lincoln District, North End, and Hill Top.



## 3D.8 Prune 600 Public Trees Each Year

Prune approximately 600 established public trees per year along target road corridors to preserve existing mature canopy and train young trees to reduce potential risk.

- 318 right-of-way trees pruned along priority maintenance corridors.



## 2025

### 3A.9 Ecosystem Benefits and Appraisal Value of Public Trees

Quantify the ecosystem benefits and appropriate appraisal values of public trees to enable completion of cost-benefit analysis.

- UF utilizes TreePlotter, an asset management program, to record inventory, track tasks, and calculate ecosystem benefits and values of trees.
- As of Dec. 2022 there were over 20,000 trees recorded in TreePlotter.
- As more of Tacoma's trees are added to the tree inventory software, a more accurate picture of ecosystem benefits will emerge.





# Inventory & Planning

## **INVENTORY & PLANNING GOAL: A comprehensive understanding of the urban forest ensures data-driven decisions, sustainable and equitable planning, and amplifies the benefits received from trees.**

Multiple datasets describe the distribution, composition, and health of Tacoma’s urban trees and canopies, which together can inform tree planting, preservation and maintenance in an equitable and sustainable fashion. In 2022, a cohesive, comprehensive inventory of trees in Tacoma remains incomplete.

The City has recently acquired innovative software for managing public trees and has pioneered tree-centric green stormwater infrastructure in the region. Comprehensive watershed planning efforts are also currently underway.

A more thorough and dynamic understanding of the public tree population can be obtained through the comprehensive inventories recommended in this chapter. Threats to the urban forest such as pests, disease, and climate disruption are jurisdictionally agnostic and require interagency, regional planning.

An inventory of Tacoma’s valuable green assets—including public trees—informs data-driven management and resource decisions.

A dynamic understanding of tree populations provides baseline information from which measurable targets and performance standards can be defined and met.

Tree inventories provide valuable information which can be used to quantify ecosystem services provided to residents, the environment, and the economy.

The urban forest is comprised of public and private trees spanning a multitude of ecosystems and land uses. Integrated plans for trees across these landscapes ensure all aspects of urban forestry are included in a cohesive, strategic plan.

### **Short-Term Strategies:**

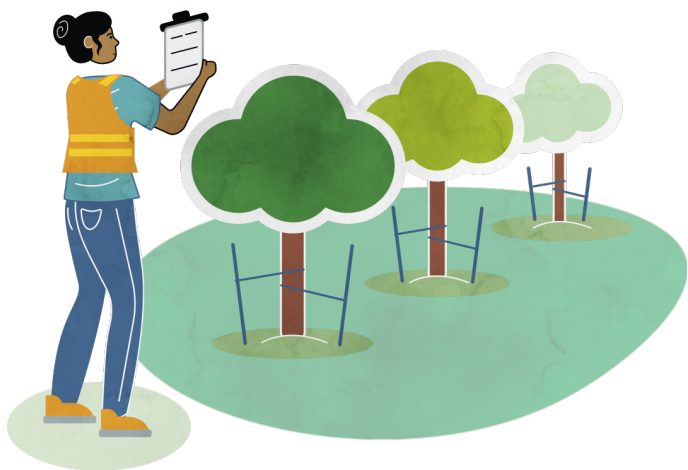
- Create and maintain a comprehensive inventory of public trees.
- Develop a strategic tree planting and maintenance plan(s).

### **Mid-Term Strategies:**

- Encourage and support other City policies and plans through the lens of urban forestry.

### **Long-Term Strategies:**

- Identify urban tree canopy cover trends resulting from the implementation of this plan and other factors.
- Understand urban forest trends and risks on private land and utilize the partnership network for improved urban forest management.





# Inventory & Planning

## Annual

### 4A.1 Inventory of Public Trees

Conduct a comprehensive inventory of public trees planted and maintained by the City, keeping the data current, and continue the cycle aligned with tree maintenance cycles (600 trees per year) and City tree planting projects (2,000 trees per year).

- 1,816 trees planted through Grit City Trees, Branch Out, Green Blocks, and as part of capital construction projects were tracked in TreePlotter software.

### 4A.2 Track Plantings, Removals, and Maintenance

Track tree maintenance, removals, and plantings in a tree inventory software program. Annually prioritize maintenance and risk-tree removals in established corridors/areas and create work orders using this program.

- Maintenance and planting activity tracked in TreePlotter software.

### 4B.3 Annual Neighborhood Strategic Urban Forest Management Plans

Develop a strategic urban forest management plan for one priority neighborhood or area per year.

- Proposed planting sites identified in the McKinley, Proctor, and Hill Top neighborhoods in 2022.

### 4C.4 Align Planting Goals with other Division Plans

Align tree planting and canopy goals with the watershed assessment, green stormwater infrastructure plans, and subarea planning efforts by providing technical assistance for the goals of stormwater management and improved water quality.

- Regular communication and cooperation with ES Stormwater Management Plan personnel as well as OEPS Climate Action Plan staff.

### 4E.5 Annual Workshop or Event for Private Landowners

Utilize partners to provide at least one annual workshop or event and provide resources to private landholders to support sustainable urban forest management and planting practices.

- PCD provided a workshop for new tree owners through their Urban Tree Sale.
- TTF offered workshops in English and Spanish to help people participate in Grit City Trees.
- Branch Out event trees were eligible to be planted on private property.

## 2020

### 4A.6 Integrate Tree Software with other City Asset Management Software

Integrate the tree inventory software program with other City asset management programs and data to align project planning, construction, and maintenance efforts with urban forest management strategies.

- Coordination of yearly watering list still using a combination of TreePlotter and manual list creation.
- Most plantings from capital construction projects across departments recorded in TreePlotter. Gaps remain.



# Inventory & Planning



**Note:**

Tacoma Urban Forestry uses TreePlotter, a web-based GIS platform, to track tree data in Tacoma. Explore for yourself at: <https://pg-cloud.com/TacomaWA/>

## 4C.8 Make UFMP Available to All Partners

Provide this Plan and supporting documents and data to relevant urban forestry and planning partners.



- UF created a public website hosting the UFMP in its entirety as well as annual progress reports.

## 2023

## 4C.8 Use UFMP to Inform Master Tree Plan

Strategically plan and prioritize street tree plantings and establish a master street tree plan by 2023 that addresses species and age diversity and balances equity and accessibility of the urban forest.



- UF and ES staff completed a Community Tree Map to inform master street tree planning in a way that addresses species/age diversity and equity/accessibility of urban forest resources.

## 2025

## 4E.9 Use Private Development Tree Data for Permit Compliance



Use the tree inventory data in private development as part of permit inspections for compliance.

- No progress to report.

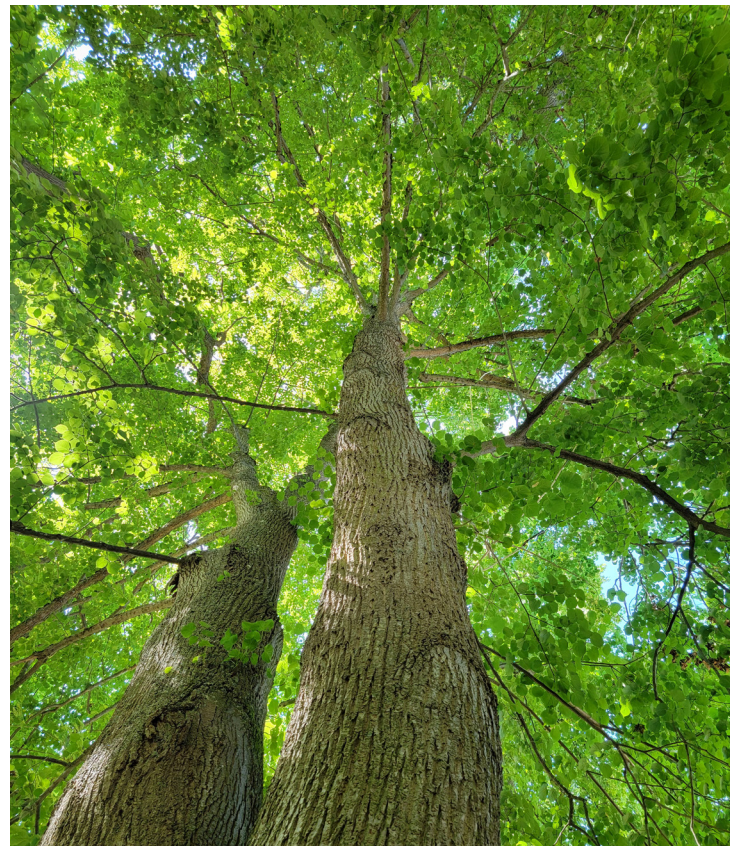
## 2030

## 4D.10 High Resolution Tree Canopy Assessment



In 2030, conduct a high-resolution tree canopy assessment Citywide and by planning boundaries to track canopy gains and losses and to inform future tree plantings and preservation.

- No progress to report.







# Risk & Disaster Management

## **RISK & DISASTER MANAGEMENT GOAL: Proactively manage tree-related risk throughout the urban forest and equip urban forest leaders with resources to address risks and disasters.**

It is the City's responsibility to appropriately manage risk in the public rights-of-way to maintain public health. Natural disasters cannot be prevented but the impact of, mitigation for, and recovery from the disaster can be controlled through appropriate planning.

Tacoma-specific standard operating plans and additional technical support for assessing potential tree risk will improve efficiency, resourcefulness and avoid tree-related risk. Accurate tree inventories of trees in rights-of-way are necessary to identify, monitor, plan, prioritize and mitigate risk. Tree canopy assessments and comprehensive tree inventories help inform Tacoma's assessment of vulnerabilities to tree pests, diseases, climate change, storm events, and invasive species. Tacoma will establish tree risk management procedures and an urban forest disaster readiness plan in Phase 3 of the Urban Forest Management Plan project.

Actively managing tree risk reduces likelihood of tree failure and potential for human or property damages. Proper planning for disaster response enables resourceful and efficient prevention and recovery procedures.

A plan that addresses harmful tree pests and diseases reduces the risk of significant loss of urban forest ecosystem services and benefits and maintains the health and sustainability of our forest as a resource.

### **Short-Term Strategies:**

- Effectively monitor threats from urban forest disturbances such as pest and disease outbreaks.

### **Mid-Term Strategies:**

- Reduce tree-related risk through risk avoidance, prioritized hazard elimination, and accurate tree inventories.
- Risks to the urban forest are properly planned for and appropriately addressed or mitigated with adequate resources to maintain public health and urban forest sustainability.

### **Long-Term Strategies:**

- Sustain urban forest resiliency through emergency preparedness.





# Risk & Disaster Management

## Annual

### 5A.1 Beginning in 2021, Assess Potential Tree Risk for All Public Trees the City Maintains

Assess potential tree-related risks for all public street trees the City is starting to maintain. Then conduct annual routine inventories in line with maintenance schedules.

- Tree assessment contractor under contract to the City to perform hazardous tree risk assessments.

### 5C.2 Annual Trainings with Partners Regarding Tree Pest and Disease Management

Work with partners to provide resources and annual training regarding tree pest and disease management as well as invasive species management.

- Exotic Pest ID training through the WA DNR and WSU Extension was held on Aug. 31st.

### 5A.6 Beginning in 2023, Plan for Long-Term Pest and Disease Management

Use Citywide tree inventory data and best available science for long-term planning and management of existing and future tree pests and diseases impacting Tacoma’s urban forest.

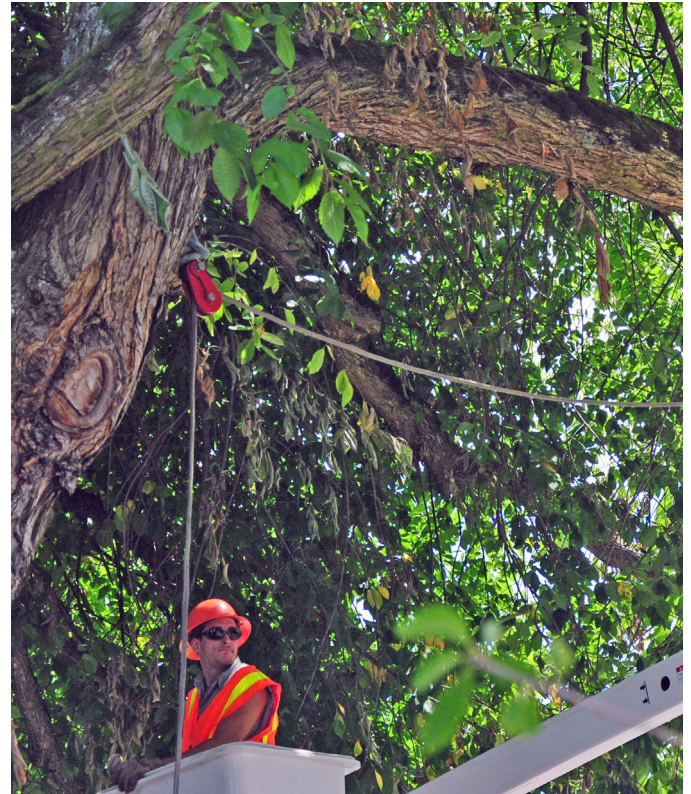
- In partnership with WSU Extension, a sentinel plot of trees was planted at the Tacoma Solid Waste Facility to monitor for exotic pests and diseases.
- Discussions began with WA DNR to prepare for Emerald Ash Borer arrival in Washington.

## 2021

### 5A.3 Use Elevated UF Staffing Levels to Assess Potential Tree Risks in Priority Areas

Use the elevated urban forest management staffing levels (see Actions 2D.2, 2A.3) for the assessment of potential tree risks in priority areas.

- Pilot program for preventative maintenance along right-of-way in priority corridors launched in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood.



### Note:

Proper tree care and pruning can prevent many of the common reasons a tree becomes hazardous. Improper pruning such as “topping” is more likely to create a hazardous tree in the future.

### 5D.4 Implement Tree Risk Management Plan

Implement the Tree Risk Management Plan that relates to planning for structural tree risks, exotic tree pest and disease threats, and disasters.

- No progress to report.

# Risk & Disaster Management

2021, 2025, 2028

## 5B.5 Mitigate High-Risk Public Trees in Newly Acquired Maintenance Areas (25% by 2021, 50% by 2025, 75% by 2028)

Mitigate high-risk trees in the City's newly acquired maintenance areas (public trees) by incrementally addressing high-risk trees annually with the appropriate maintenance activity.



- 318 right-of-way trees pruned along priority corridors, including 51 mature trees.





# Community Engagement

Plan Actions & Progress Tracker



maintenance responsibility, establishment of a heritage tree program, and allocation of resources in alignment with industry best practices, among others.

Residential property contains 44% of Tacoma's total tree canopy cover. Sustaining Tacoma's urban forest requires residential collaboration and feedback, and fostering long-term relationships to improve outcomes as the city continues to welcome more residents.

Only through robust, healthy community relationships can Tacoma reach a sustainable urban forest for generations to come.

### Short-Term Strategies:

- Continue to build trust and strong partnerships among the City, partners, and community members.
- Revisit public engagement methods to retain open lines of communication.

### Mid-Term Strategies:

- Include the community in the decision making process for urban forestry efforts throughout Tacoma's neighborhoods.
- Seek inclusive outlets for City members to actively steward and value their urban forest.

### Long-Term Strategies:

- Secure non-conventional partners in urban forestry, including public health organizations, Tribal Nations, and transportation sectors.
- Provide equitable access to urban forest resources for all Tacomans, ensuring all residents and visitors alike share the benefits of trees.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL: Sustainable urban forest management and equity is achieved through a partnership with the City and its residents resulting in improved well-being, human health outcomes, and stronger local economies.**

The City collaborates with local partners for tree planting and education events, has an extensive network of stakeholders, and engages the public through social media, websites, radio, and other communication platforms. This Plan was informed through nearly 2,000 public survey responses, public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and multiple public working group sessions.

Community feedback and concerns, gathered from surveys and meetings, surrounding urban forest operations and planning can be used to inform future urban forest management strategies. Recurring feedback includes interest in City right-of-way tree



# Community Engagement

## Annual

### 6A.1 Support and Sustain Local and Regional Partnerships



Support and sustain partnerships with local and regional participatory organizations. Encourage and support horizontal volunteer collaboration between organizations.

- Local and regional partnerships were strengthened in 2022. This manifested in events such as Branch Out, the South Sound Sustainability EXPO, the Pop-Up Forest in the mall for Earth Day and stewardship events for Green Tacoma Day; as well as tree giveaways in Tacoma Mall, South Tacoma, Hill Top, and McKinley.
- The Tacoma Tree Foundation led community engagement efforts of a coalition of partners, including Urban Forestry, to further green infrastructure in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood.
- The GRIT project, a research partnership with TNC and the University of Washington advanced their study of physical and psychological effects of green infrastructure installation in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood.

### 6C.2 Conduct Biennial Community Surveys



Conduct biannual community surveys (starting in 2021) to gauge public viewpoints and receive feedback on Plan implementation and program success.

- No progress to report.

### 6B.3 Quarterly Urban Forestry Communications



Every quarter, share informative urban forestry and tree-related content to social media, City website, and other communication platforms.

- The @TacomaSustainability and @TacomaEnviroServices social media accounts, as well as EnviroTalk and the ES Newsletter regularly featured urban forestry content such as information on Grit City Trees, the Tree Coupon Program, tree giveaways and urban forestry events and projects.

## 2021

### 6C.7 Heritage Tree Ordinance



Update role of Landmarks Preservation Commission as necessary to implement Heritage Tree Program Action described in the Management Policy section of this Plan.

- Draft language of a heritage tree ordinance was included in draft updates to Title 9 Right-of-Way Code with expected implementation in 2023.

## 2023

### 6F.8 Support Fruit Trees and Gleaning Initiatives



Identify appropriate parks, rights-of-way, and other public spaces in Tacoma that feasibly can support healthy and safe fruit trees to support gleaning initiatives. Consider the use of vacant City lots and brown-fields for community-oriented orchards in supportive neighborhoods.

- Beginning in 2020 in response to COVID-19, UF staff worked to remove prohibitions on food producing trees in the ROW, pilot an urban farm, and create clear pathways for community members to start orchards, food forests, gardens or other Community Food Growing Projects on unimproved ROW and underutilized public parcels. This required an update to Tacoma Municipal Code Title 9.
- In 2021, proposed updates to the Title 9 Right-of-Way Code underwent legal review and it was determined that the underlying Code would benefit from a full rewrite of chapters 9.18, 9.19, 9.20, and inclusion of a new 9.21.
- A package of Code updates was introduced to City Council in 2022.
- As of Dec. 2022, the Code revision process is ongoing, with anticipated adoption in late 2023.

# Community Engagement



## 2021

### 6A.4 Encourage Youth Participation in Tree Events

Encourage youth participation in Arbor Day and Green Tacoma Day events.

Encourage and provide technical support to enable tree-related curriculum and plantings at schools. Pilot high school project by 2021, all 10 high schools by 2030.

- Mt. Tahoma High School students visited the City nursery in July.
- Family-friendly tree planting event held at the Madison School in October.

### 6D.5 Create Young Adult Forest Stewards Training Program

Establish a young adult job training, urban forest stewardship program to facilitate the planting and/or care of 10,500 trees annually (City-led and partnership plantings).

- No progress to report.

### 6B.6 Prepare at least 4 Audience-specific Urban Forest Outreach and Education Materials Based on Research from this Plan



Prepare a minimum of 4 new audience-specific (business owner, developer, resident) urban forest and/or tree-related outreach and education materials based on research from this Plan.

- UF and TTF created outreach materials for many types of residents and property owners in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood.
- UF updated outreach materials for Grit City Trees and the Tree Coupon Program to improve ease of use.

## 2025

### 6E.9 Establish Non-conventional Partnerships to Serve All Neighborhoods



Establish non-conventional partnerships that serve single and/or multiple Tacoma neighborhoods. All 8 neighborhoods should be supported.

- Non-conventional partnerships helped the Branch Out events become the largest known tree giveaway in Tacoma history.
- A coalition of partners served the Tacoma Mall neighborhood in 2022 through the Tacoma Mall Greening Project.

# Community Engagement



## 6A.10 Biennial Stewardship Events in All Neighborhoods

Hold biannual tree-related stewardship events with neighborhood associations, councils, working groups, and districts in each of the 8 Tacoma neighborhoods. Use meetings to grow Grit City Tree and Tree Coupon programs and increase volunteer participation.

- Stewardship events were held in the Tacoma Mall, Hill Top, Downtown, and McKinley neighborhoods.

## 6A.11 Recognize Exemplary Urban Forest Stewards and Volunteers

Recognize exemplary urban forest stewards and volunteers representing youth, residents and business owners. Consider a tree donation or tree fund framework for costs associated with this program.

- No progress to report. The City's annual Steward Appreciation Dinner was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has not resumed.

## 2027

## 6A.12 Encourage and Support Academic Institution Strategic Urban Forest Management Plans

Encourage and support sustainable urban forest planning and practices on all academic institutions through approval of an institution-specific Urban Forest Management Plan or adoption of this Plans relevant strategies and actions. Academic institutions should have a tree inventory by 2027 and be actively contributing to Tacoma's 30% tree canopy goal.

- The University of Puget Sound (UPS) is accredited as a Tree Campus USA through the Arbor Day Foundation. UPS keeps an up to date inventory of the campus trees, and the City serves on the advisory committee to help with coordination.
- The University of Washington-Tacoma is pursuing installation of a micro-forest on their campus.
- Tacoma Community College manages a well-treed campus.