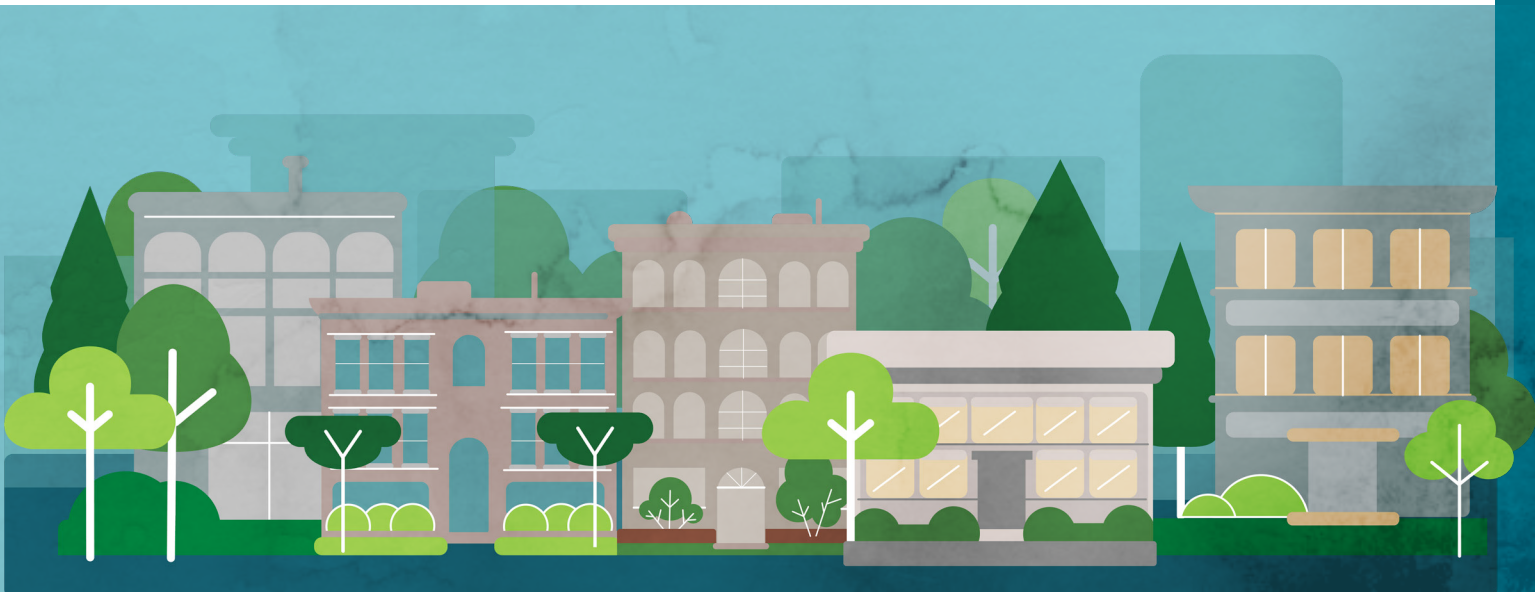# Tacoma Urban Forest Management Plan

## 2023 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, improvment 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 2023 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 2023 progress made towards that goal in red, yellow, or green, as well as a bulleted list update of the 2023 status for each action.

Frequently Used Acronyms

Programs:
- GCT- Grit City Trees
- TCP- Tree Coupon Program
- GB- Green Blocks
- CTP- Community Tree 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 2023 Progress Level

**Significant Progress**   **Some Progress**   **Little to No Progress**

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### 5-7 Management & Policy

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2025**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

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### 14-16 Inventory & Planning

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

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### 11-13 Funding & Authority

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2027**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

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### 8-10 Capacity & Training

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2026**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

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### 17-19 Risk & Disaster Management

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2030**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

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### 20-22 Community Engagement

**Annual**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2023**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

**2028**

Description of action.
- 2023 progress update.

# Executive Summary

## 2023: A Year of Promising Growth

2023 saw major strides toward achieving goals within Tacoma's Urban Forest Management Plan. It was a landmark year for policy updates and strengthening partnerships in stewardship of our collective urban forest. In an effort to improve equitable, community-focused urban forestry outcomes, City Council passed funding to establish the Community Tree Program, a partnership between the City of Tacoma's Urban Forestry team and the Tacoma Tree Foundation. The goal of this Program is to enhance community engagement, education, growth, and stewardship of Tacoma's urban forest by reducing barriers and expanding programming to underserved and overburdened neighborhoods throughout Tacoma (learn more on page 22).

There were over 5,600 trees planted or distributed through programs and community forestry events, a 15% increase over 2022, but still only half of the estimated 10,500 trees needed each year to reach a 30% overall canopy by 2030.

Title 9, the Right-of-Way section of Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) underwent a significant overhaul related to street trees, increasing protections for existing trees and reinforcing planting requirements for street tree removals. With the creation of TMC chapter 9.20 "Urban Forestry", City Council reaffirmed Tacoma's commitment to protecting and enhancing Tacoma's urban forest.

The updates to TMC 9.20 Urban Forestry generally include:

- Updated permit requirements for pruning, removal and planting of street trees
- The establishment of a Heritage Tree Program
- Updated policies and procedures for discretionary review of requests to prune trees on public real property
- Updated provisions for enforcement for violations; and,
- An updated appeals process to ensure consistency with other areas of TMC.

The establishment of a Heritage Tree Program provides a mechanism for community members to identify and nominate Tacoma's oldest, largest, and most unique trees for public recognition on both public and private properties. Preserving our heritage trees helps to conserve the scenic beauty and natural environment of Tacoma, prevent erosion and sedimentation in waterways, encourage quality development, provide shade and wildlife habitat, counteract pollutants in the air, reduce heat island effects, and decrease wind velocities and noise. Heritage trees connect the past to the present by preserving historic trees for the enjoyment of future generations. In 2024 we plan to raise the profile of these special trees, cataloging and showcasing them through an interactive map tour.
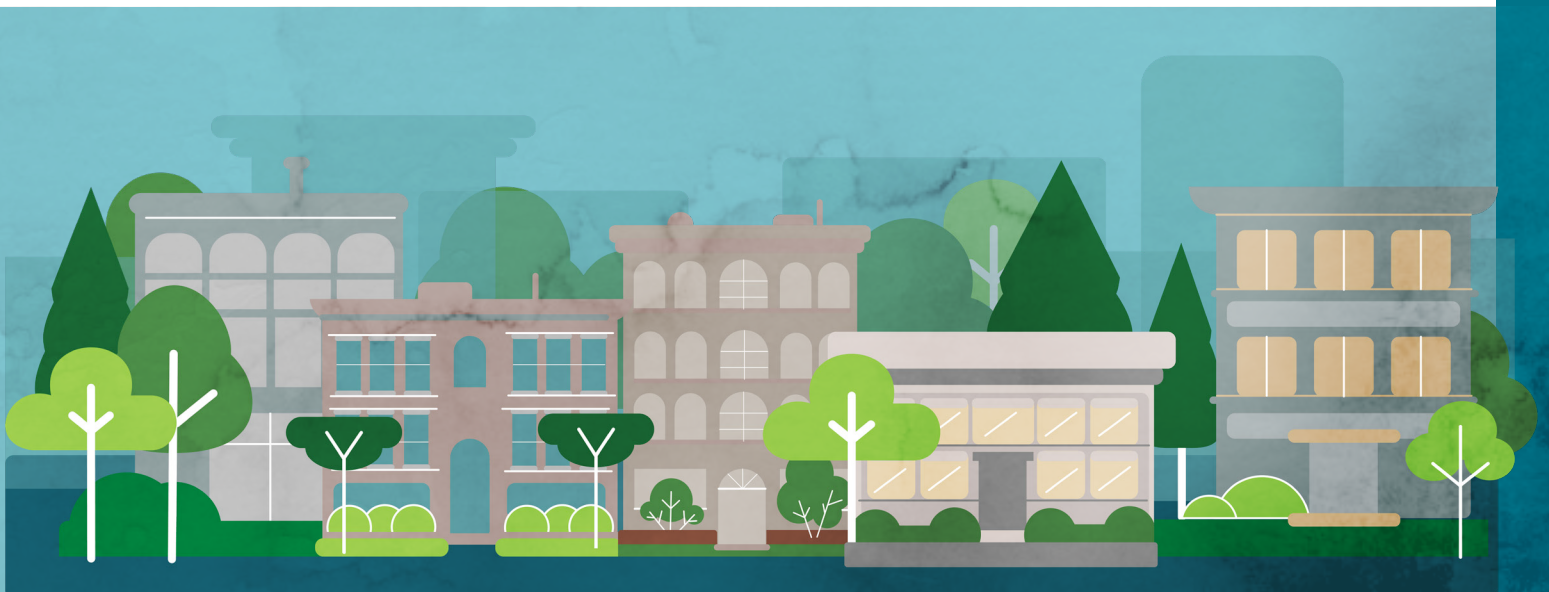
# Management & Policy

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.

- RTRE permit applications approved: 45 for removal of trees and 42 for planting of trees in the right-of-way in 2023* *Does not include trees as part of development permitting*

### 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 manages two tree planting incentive programs: Grit City Trees (GCT), a free street tree giveaway program, and the Tree Coupon Program (TCP), a discounted tree program in collaboration with local and regional partners.

- The City partners or co-manages several programs, including: Branch Out, the Urban Tree Sale, and Green Blocks: McKinley Hill

- For 2023, the total number of trees planted or distributed across all programs was: **5,607**

- Number of trees planted breakdown by program/ project: (1,253 (TCP), 115 (GCT), 281 (Branch Out), 228 (Green Blocks), 2,396 (TTF other), 1,059 (City projects), 165 (MPT), 110 (PCD))

## 2020

### 1B.3 Hazardous Tree Assistance

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

- Program covers all costs of mitigating the hazard for qualifying participants, including replacement planting.
- UF worked alongside NCS to remove 14 hazardous trees in historically underserved communities in 2023.
- 136 trees along McKinley Ave between Upper Park Ave & E 48th were pruned through this program.

### 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.

- Establisment of TMC chapter 9.20 Urban Forestry adopted by City Council in Dec. 2023 with implementation set for 2024.

### 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, adopted in Dec. 2023 with implementation set for June 2024.

### 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 worked with PDS staff to develop clearer permitting processes for trees in the ROW with anticipated adoption in 2024.

# Management & Policy

*Hazardous tree removal in McKinley*

## 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 pilot protocols to accompany the implementation of the Hazardous Tree Assistance Program wherein the mill processed wood waste generated from removal of 6 of the 14 hazardous trees removed and put it to its highest and best possible use, diverting waste from the landfill.



*Wood waste from a hazardous tree in South Tacoma*

### 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.

- Updates to post-planting care requirements for trees planted in the right-of-way were included in update to TMC Title 9.



*Volunteers planting trees at S 72nd & D St in South Tacoma*

# 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.

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.

"Trees provide shade, improve air quality, reduce flooding, and mitigate the urban heat island effect....Improvements to Tacoma's urban forest support the City's Climate Action Plan by mitigating Tacoma's carbon footprint and fighting against global warming."
-Tacoma Deputy Mayor
Kristina Walker

# Capacity & Training

## Annual

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

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

- Branch Out: a citywide tree planting and giveaway was held in November at Stafford Elementary. 281 trees were planted or distributed.
- South Sound Sustainability EXPO was held in Tollefson Plaza on April 22nd.
- In February, over 100 volunteers gathered to plant 60 trees at the Madison School in the Tacoma Mall Neighborhood.
- Green Tacoma Day, held October 14th, featured restoration and planting events across the city as well as tree planting through Green Blocks McKinley Hill hosted at Blix Elementary through the Community Tree Program.

## 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.
- PW and UF developed a business case outlining the needs for an arborist crew to support implementation of the UFMP.
- UF developed a business case and fiscal note to accompany TMC 9.20 adoption to support hiring an arborist within PDS to assist in implementation of the updated TMC 9.20

### 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 WA Invasive Species Council to host an Urban Forest Pest Readiness Workshop at Center for Urban Waters on June 13th as well as a DNR-led pruning workshop at Wright Park on Sep 6th 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.
- All Urban Forestry staff have attained the ISA Arborist credential.
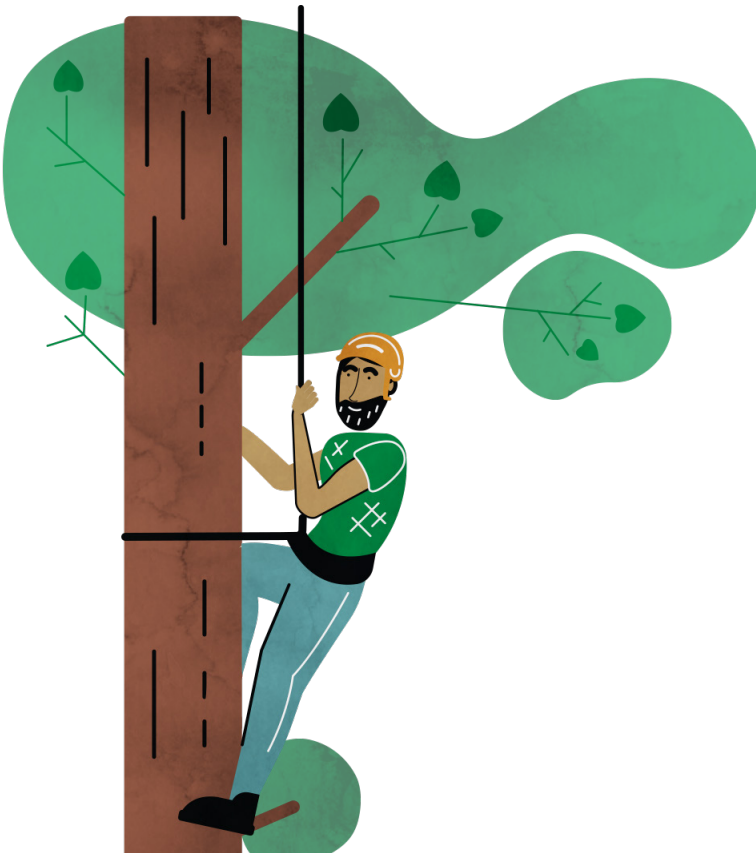
# Capacity & Training

## 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.

- Improvements to watering coordination and tree inspections across City capital construction projects.

### 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: PNW Intl Society of Arboriculture Conference, Urban Forest Pest Virtual Summit, and the Emerging Leader Training through Core Consulting.

## 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 2023 was 3.



*City and partner staff attending a tree pruning workshop in Wright Park led by WA DNR*

# 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.
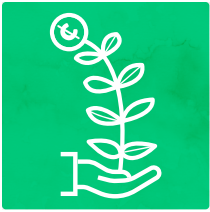
# Funding & Authority

## 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 2023, marking the 30th 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.

- Dedicated funding to establish the Community Tree Program

## 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.

- McKinley Ave from E Wright Ave to E 38th St, identified in the UFMP, received preventative tree maintenance for public safety and tree health in 2023.

### 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.



*Volunteers planting trees at S 72nd & D St in South Tacoma*

# 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.

- With the Community Tree Program budget, increased from $4.01 (2018) to $4.25 per capita

### 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.

- Community Tree Program encouraged tree stewardship at 13 community events across 5 neighborhoods.
- The City's Neighborhood Planning Program focused community engagement in the Proctor and McKinley Neighborhoods, leading to community tree planting efforts in both neighborhoods.
- In addition, UF staff and partners participated in community events in Downtown Tacoma, Tacoma Mall Neighborhood, South Tacoma, South End, McKinley, Lincoln District, Proctor, and Hilltop.

### 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.

- 136 right-of-way trees pruned along McKinley Ave, a priority maintenance corridor.

## 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. 2023 there were over 20,500 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 2023, a cohesive, comprehensive inventory of trees in Tacoma remains incomplete.

The City acquired 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.
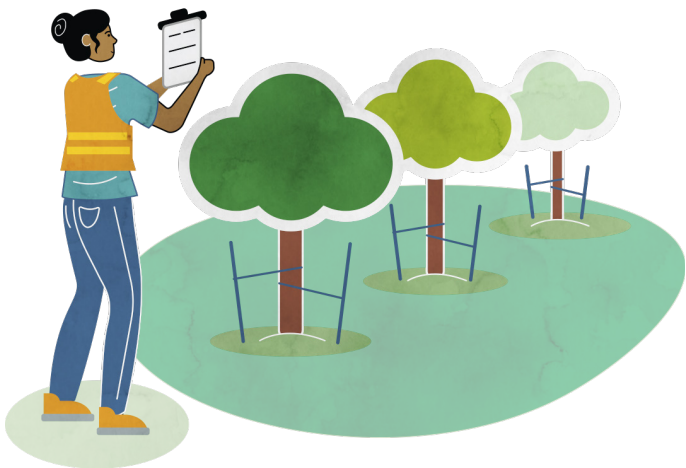
# Inventory & Planning

## 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).
- Trees planted through Grit City Trees, Branch Out, Green Blocks, and as part of City 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 for City projects 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.
- McKinley Hill neighborhood was the focus of 2023.

### 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 the Urban Tree Sale, a partner program with the City.
- TTF conducted a training for volunteers to become Tree Stewards.
- TTF offered workshops in English and Spanish to help people participate in Grit City Trees.
- Branch Out event offered language services with translators on site and 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 factors in 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.



*Volunteers planting trees in the Tacoma Mall*

# 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.

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.
- Pest Readiness Workshop through the WA DNR, WA Invasive Species Council, and WSU Extension was held on June 13th. Attendees included: City staff, MPT, PCD, TTF, and WA Conservation Corps

### 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.
- Discussions began with WA DNR to prepare for Emerald Ash Borer arrival in Washington.
- Regular communication with WSU Extension on emerging pests and diseases.

## 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 righ-of-way in priority corridors, continued from 2022, focused on McKinley Avenue for 2023.



*A hazardous tree in the Hilltop neighborhood removed through the Hazardous Tree Assistance program. Wood from this tree was enrolled in the Urban Wood Reuse Pilot where the salvageable portions of its trunk became benches in Job Carr Park.*

### 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.

- 136 right-of-way trees pruned, 6 dead/diseased trees removed and replaced along McKinley Ave., a priority maintenance corridor.



*A row of dead/severely declining Western red cedars in the McKinley neighborhood*

# Community Engagement

Plan Actions & Progress Tracker



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

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

## 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 2023, resulting in events such as Branch Out, WA DNR-led pruning training, the South Sound Sustainability EXPO for Earth Day, and stewardship events for Green Tacoma Day, such as Green Blocks McKinley.
- The Community Tree Partnership led community engagement efforts with a coalition of partners in the McKinley Hill 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 on community members 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.

- Surveys conducted with participants of Grit City Trees, Tree Coupon Program, and the Community Tree Program.

### 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.

- Heritage tree program included in updates to Title 9 Right-of-Way Code, adopted Dec. 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 2023, updates to the Title 9 Right-of-Way Code were adopted that included a removal on the prohibition of planting food-producing trees within the ROW.

# Community Engagement

*Young volunteers planting trees in the Tacoma Mall neighborhood*

## 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.

- Tacoma Tree Foundation held a community planting event at Mt. Tahoma High School in April.
- The EnviroChallengers administer interactive tree curriculum to middle school students across the district.
- The Tacoma Mall Greening Project team hosted a large tree planting event at the Madison School in February.

### 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 McKinley Hill neighborhood.
- UF worked to improve language access by coordinating with local Language Ambassadors to transcreate program education materials into 4 additional languages: Vietnamese, Russian, Ukrainian, and Spanish.

## 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.

- The Community Tree Program team worked alongside the City's Neighborhood Planning Team to coordinate engagement and programming in the McKinley Hill and Proctor neighborhoods.

# Community Engagement

*Volunteers planting trees in the Tacoma Mall*

## 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 Central Tacoma, Hill Top, Downtown, Eastside, South End, and McKinley Hill 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.

- As part of the newly established Community Tree Program, Tacoma Tree Foundation hosted a stewardship appreciation event at the Union Club in December to honor urban forest volunteers.

## 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.
- The University of Washington-Tacoma is pursuing installation of a micro-forest on their campus.
- Tacoma Community College manages a well-treed campus.
- Work with Tacoma Public Schools remains piecemeal and project-based.

# Community Engagement In Focus:
## Community Tree Program Year One

*Residents receiving trees through the Green Blocks McKinley*

In an effort to improve equitable, community-focused urban forestry outcomes, the City of Tacoma solicited proposals for a partnership program between the City's Urban Forestry Program and a local nonprofit. The goal of this Program is to enhance community engagement, education, growth, and stewardship of Tacoma's urban forest by reducing barriers and expanding programming to underserved and overburdened neighborhoods throughout Tacoma.

Through a competitive solicitation process, the Tacoma Tree Foundation was awarded the contract for the Community Tree Program.

Critical components to the Community Tree Program include:

• **Community-centered Approach:** authentic relationship building with diverse audiences is critical to develop equitable engagement strategies that will allows us to reach, involve, and engage underrepresented and overburdened communities.

• **Trainings and Workshops:** will aim to expand knowledge and enhance the technical skills of individuals involved in community greening efforts such as planning, tree selection, planting, care, and maintenance of Tacoma's urban forest.

• **"Full Service" Tree Planting Programs:** Green Blocks and Branch Out will be annual programs offered through this partnership.

• **Volunteer Engagement:** a robust number of volunteers and tree stewards are needed to facilitate the preservation, planting, and care of Tacoma's urban forest.

• **Community Outreach and Feedback:** generating interest in current and new programming along with conducting surveys will allow us to update approach and service delivery to address community feedback.

• **Community Appreciation:** Celebration of our community and taking time to reflect on achievements throughout the year is critical for continued engagement.

For more information on the Community Tree Program, visit: cityoftacoma.org/communitytreeprogram