



Urban Forestry Work Plan

January 2025 through December 2026

Michael Carey; Urban Forest Program Manager
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Draft



TACOMA'S URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

A sustainable urban forest is rooted in **effective policy, planning, & technical services**, **proactive tree healthcare** & **stewardship & engagement**.

Our core focus: increase tree canopy for stormwater management, climate resiliency, and improved community health outcomes, with specific emphasis on historically underserved communities.

- Facilitating tree planting and preservation on both municipal and private construction projects
- Providing public incentive programs to support community tree planting and tree healthcare
- Supporting the public with technical assistance, education, and opportunities to engage with the community
- Advising long-range planning, current planning, code, and policy development



URBAN FORESTRY BASELINE SERVICES

- Internal support services to 25 workgroups across 10 City Departments including:
 - Operations, Tree Hazards, & Risk Management
 - Planning & Design
 - Data & Information Technology
 - Outreach, Communication, & Marketing
 - Neighborhood Revitalization
 - City Code, Policies, & Standards
- External support services to community, developers, permittees, contractors, government, and NGOs
- Coordinating planting events with partners
- Informing policy and planning, e.g., Comprehensive Plan, Subarea Plans, and Municipal Code
- Delivering public incentive programs
- Community workshops and volunteer events
- Scientific research informing BMPs
- Local & regional partnerships and committees
- Managing public hazard, liability, nuisance, and risk
- Representing the City in litigation involving trees
- Leveraging grants and alternative funding to maximize community impact



2025/2026 Council Priorities

- Home in Tacoma Implementation (trees and landscaping)
 - Urban Forest Manual: update to reflect new TMC
 - Standards Committee: update standard details, ROW Manual, & Specifications
 - Permitting: develop new submittal checklists, tip sheets, and permit system improvements
 - Staff training & technical guidance
 - Plan review, administration, and enforcement
- Urban Hardwood Utilization Study
 - ES Urban Forestry and Solid Waste to develop program assessment and action strategy
- Trees & Construction Operations Plan
 - Consultant procurement to author Manual to address how the City and development community approach “conflict trees”, or the conflict between existing mature trees during public and private right-of-way construction projects
 - Implementation following adoption of Plan



2025/2026 Council Priorities (continued)

- Construction Arborist
 - Hire and onboard new Construction Arborist position
 - Review plans & provide design services for ES & PW capital construction projects for compliance with City codes and standards for trees and landscaping
 - Conduct & coordinate tree inspections for construction impacts through staff and on-call contractors
 - Liaison for community concerns/complaints regarding tree removals and planting
 - Develop standard plans and technical specifications
- Arborist Crew
 - Hire and onboard 2 new arborist positions
 - Develop work plan, asset management program, and coordinate tree work



2025/2026 Council Priorities (continued)

- Private Development Tree Mitigation (In-Lieu) Program
 - In-lieu fees collected from private development must be spent on tree planting and maintenance in the same watershed as the development
 - Will require tree planting program design, coordination, and execution
- SafeTREE Routes to School – Urban and Community Forestry Grant
 - Tree planting, education (in schools), and public engagement
 - 2 SRTS corridors planted per year, along with educational programming in adjoining schools
- Green Infrastructure Workforce Development Program
 - 2 cohorts per year; 8-week duration per cohort
 - Pilot phase to end in 2025, rolling into a permanent program in 2026



New Requirement - **STORMWATER PERMIT**

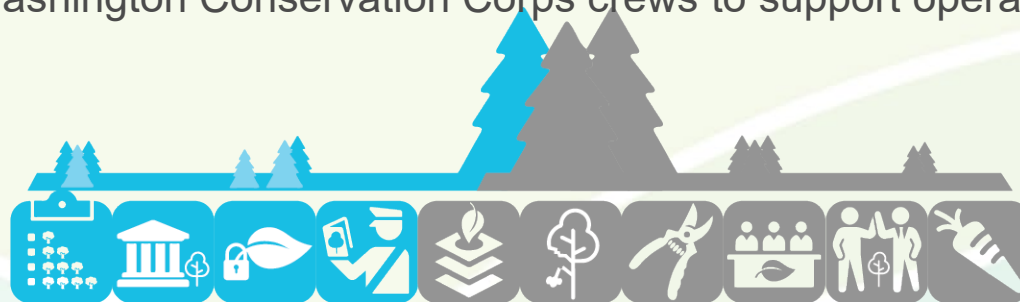
July 1, 2024 – Phase 1 Municipal Stormwater Permit Regulatory Compliance:

- New Mapping, each Permittee shall:
 - Map tree canopy to support stormwater management on Permittee-owned or operated properties. Permittees shall develop and follow a methodology to intentionally identify canopy for stormwater management purposes, which may be updated annually or as needed.
 - Map overburdened communities in relation to stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities, outfalls, discharge points, and tree canopy on Permittee-owned or operated properties.
- Stormwater Planning, each Permittee shall:
 - Adopt and implement tree canopy goals and policies to support stormwater management. Permittees shall consider how existing or future tree canopy can support stormwater management and water quality improvements in receiving waters. Establish a long-term (e.g. 5, 10 year or longer) goal of canopy, existing or future projection, to be used for stormwater management that is appropriate to the jurisdiction. Specific considerations related to canopy for stormwater management on Permittee-owned or operated lands shall include (but are not limited to):
 - (a.) Maintaining or increasing canopy in overburdened communities
 - (b.) Maintaining existing mature canopy.
 - Document considerations, reasoning, and rationale for goals and policies.
- LIDAR Analysis and Planning
 - New Tree Canopy and Landcover Analysis data coming in March 2025
 - Update tree planting prioritization analysis to integrate stormwater and new LIDAR



Ongoing Support - **TECHNICAL SERVICES**

- Long-Range Planning
 - SME for long-range plans including the Comprehensive Plan, Tideflats Subarea Plan, South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Subarea Plan
- Current Planning
 - Plan review for exceptions to zoning standards and complex plan review; consult private development adjacent to existing trees; and support critical areas permitting and violations
- Capital Construction
 - Capital Project assistance, design, planning, and assessments
- Legal
 - City representative for claims related to trees, including trip and fall lawsuits
- Plant Holding Facility (Tree Nursery)
 - Provide trees to City projects and programs; allow partners to store trees at our facility
 - Co-manage the Washington Conservation Corps crews to support operations at the nursery



Ongoing Programs - **TREE HEALTHCARE**

On-Call Tree Assessment & Tree Work Contracts

- Manage the City's contracts for on-call tree assessments, including hazard tree inspections and construction adjacent to existing trees

Hazardous Tree Assistance Program

- Manage Hazardous Tree Assistance program in support of Code Compliance team

Urban Hardwood Reuse Program

- When trees need to be removed in the public right-of-way, coordinate the removals with local urban hardwood reuse company to keep the wood out of the waste stream

Cross-governmental Plant Healthcare Trainings

- Coordinate and host annual trainings for field staff with City of Tacoma, Metro Parks, Tacoma Public Utilities, Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma Tree Foundation, Department of Natural Resources, Washington Invasive Species Council, & Department of Agriculture



Ongoing Programs - PUBLIC INCENTIVES

Grit City Trees

- Free street tree program for Tacoma residents
- Provides 200-300 street trees per year
- Priority for tree planting is within moderate, low, and very low opportunity neighborhoods (Equity Index)

Tree Coupon Program

- Subsidized tree program for Pierce County Residents
- Partnership with 8 local nurseries to provide a coupon for \$30 off per tree purchased
- 2,000 to 3,000 coupons distributed annually
- 1,500 to 2,500 trees planted annually

Branch Out

- Partnership with COT, Tacoma Tree Foundation, Pierce Conservation District, and local CBO within a target neighborhood to distribute between 250-500 trees



Ongoing Programs - **PUBLIC INCENTIVES**

Green Blocks

- Partnership with Tacoma Tree Foundation
- Deep engagement in 1 to 2 priority neighborhoods annually to distribute 250-300 trees per neighborhood
- Services include:
 - Flyers, door knocking, and workshops to assist with tree selection
 - Utility locate assistance
 - Permit submittals
 - Delivery of trees and materials (TAGRO, stakes, ties, and watering supplies)
 - Community tree planting event to provide planting assistance

DePave

- Partnership with Pierce Conservation District
- Community nominated underutilized impermeable surfaces (like paved planting strips)
- Community removes pavement and replaces with sustainable infrastructure, including tree planting, rain gardens, or community gardens.



Ongoing Programs - STEWARDSHIP & ENGAGEMENT

Community Tree Program – Urban Forestry in partnership with Tacoma Tree Foundation

- **Community-centered Approach:** authentic relationship building with diverse audiences is critical to develop equitable engagement strategies that will allow 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 Programs:** Green Blocks and Branch Out offered annually through 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.



Ongoing - REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Green Stormwater Infrastructure Workforce Development and Career Pathways Coalition

- Cross-sector and cross-jurisdictional coalition focused on workforce development and employment for GSI in Central Puget Sound
- Focus areas include:
 - Mapping the current landscape of GSI workforce development
 - Building coordination and collaboration between the different efforts
 - Focusing on in-the-ground project implementation work/ careers
 - Building a cohesive and equitable workforce from training to employment to long-term careers

Wa Department of Natural Resources Tree Equity Collaborative

- First statewide partnership focused on Tree Equity
- The Collaborative aims to expand neighborhood tree cover by engaging cities, community organizations and stakeholders to build more rigorous and inclusive urban forestry programs across the state





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