



# State of Tacoma's Urban Forest

City of Tacoma | Environmental Services Department

**Infrastructure Planning and Sustainability**

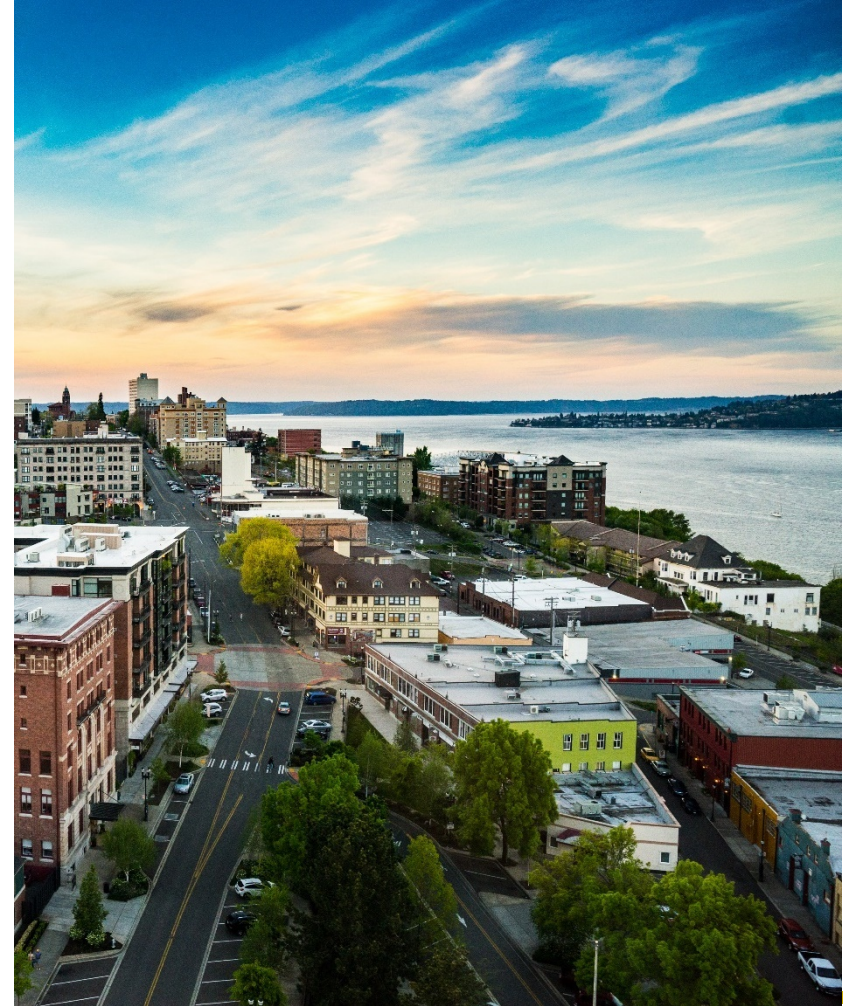
**April 25, 2018**

**ITEM 3**



# OVERVIEW

- Urban Forest Benefits
- Current State of the Urban Forest
  - Puget Sound
  - Tacoma



# TREES ARE GOOD



A healthy urban forest:

- Promotes well-being
- Boosts the economy
- Helps children learn
- Improves safety
- Mitigates pollution
- Manages stormwater



Adapted from *Outside Our Doors* (The Nature Conservancy, 2017)



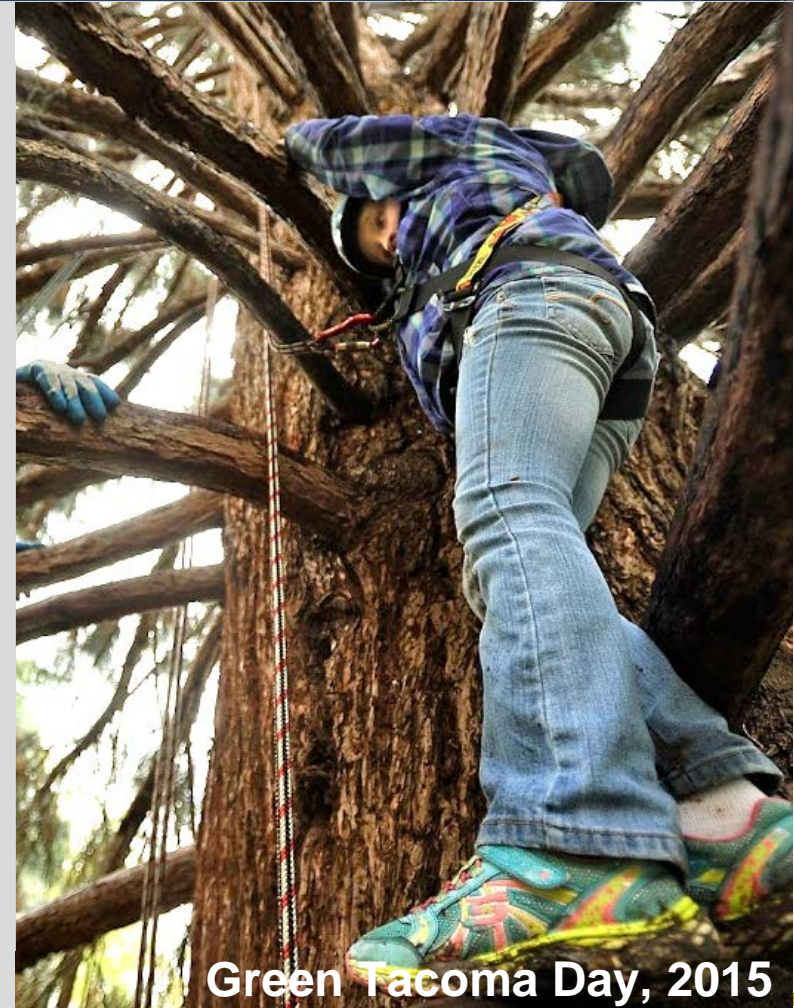
# URBAN FOREST: HEALTH



Disease prevention  
& health promotion

- Obesity
- Childhood learning
- Mental health
- Urban heat island

Residents are  
**3X**  
**more likely**  
to be physically  
active and  
**40%**  
**less likely**  
to be overweight  
when living in  
areas with green  
space

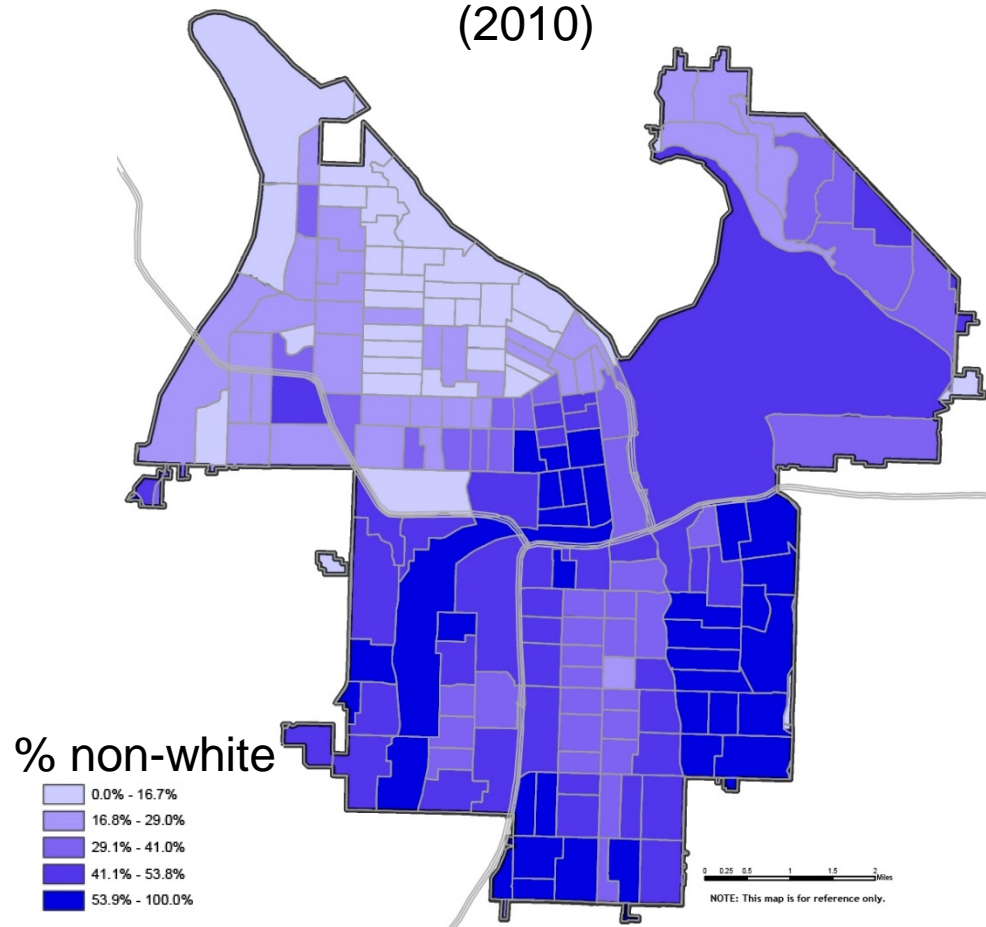


Green Tacoma Day, 2015

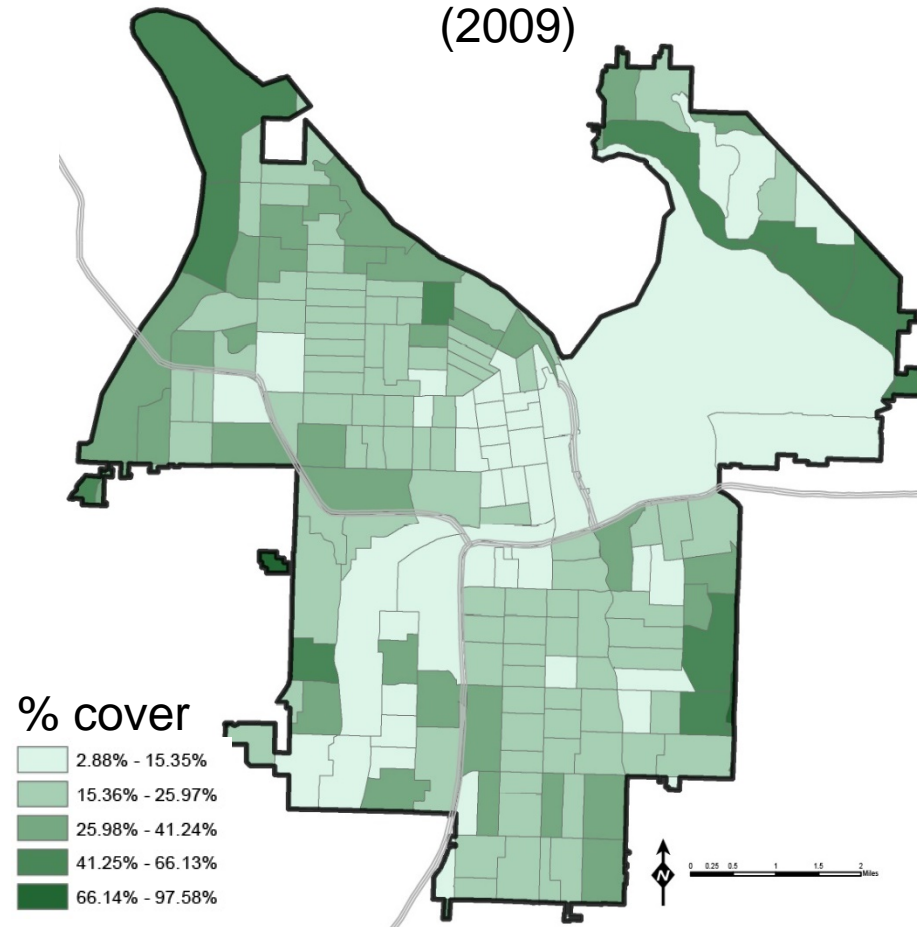
# URBAN FOREST: EQUITY



Communities of Color, Population by Block  
(2010)



Tree Cover by Census Block  
(2009)





# URBAN FOREST: COMMUNITY

## Stronger, Safer Community

- Crime reduction
- Traffic calming
- Enhancing social ties

Buildings having more nearby nature report

**48%**

**Fewer**  
property crimes &

**56%**

**Fewer**  
violent crimes



Wright Park



# URBAN FOREST: ECONOMY



Proctor Business District

Shoppers are  
willing to spend  
**9-12%**  
**more**  
on goods &  
services in central  
business districts  
with  
**high-quality  
canopy**



S. Tacoma Business Dist.



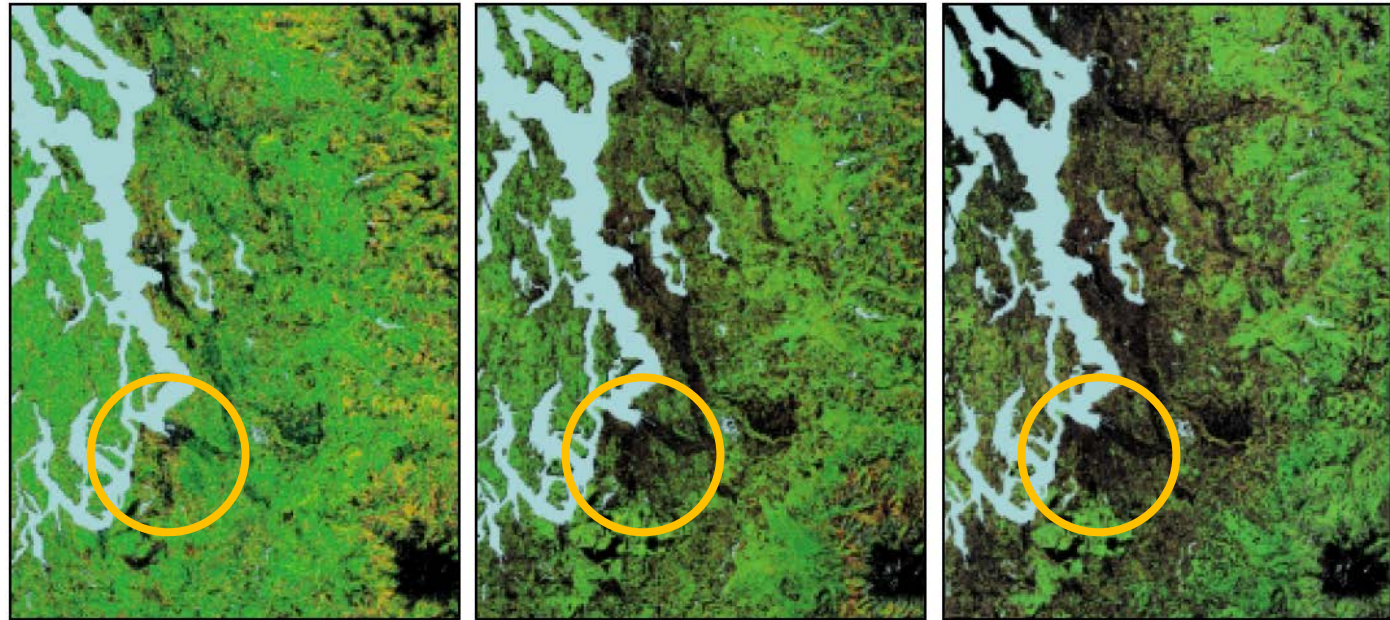


# PUGET SOUND FORESTS ARE DECLINING



Over 24 year period  
(1972-1996)

- High canopy decreased by 37%
- Stormwater runoff increased by 29%
- Canopy lost would have removed 35 million pounds of pollutants annually



Landsat MSS 1972 80 Meter Pixel Resolution

Landsat TM 1986 30 Meter Pixel Resolution

Landsat TM 1996 30 Meter Pixel Resolution

Regional Ecosystem Analysis Puget Sound Metropolitan Area  
(American Forests, 1998)



# ADOPTED POLICY



## Urban Forest Policy Element (2010)

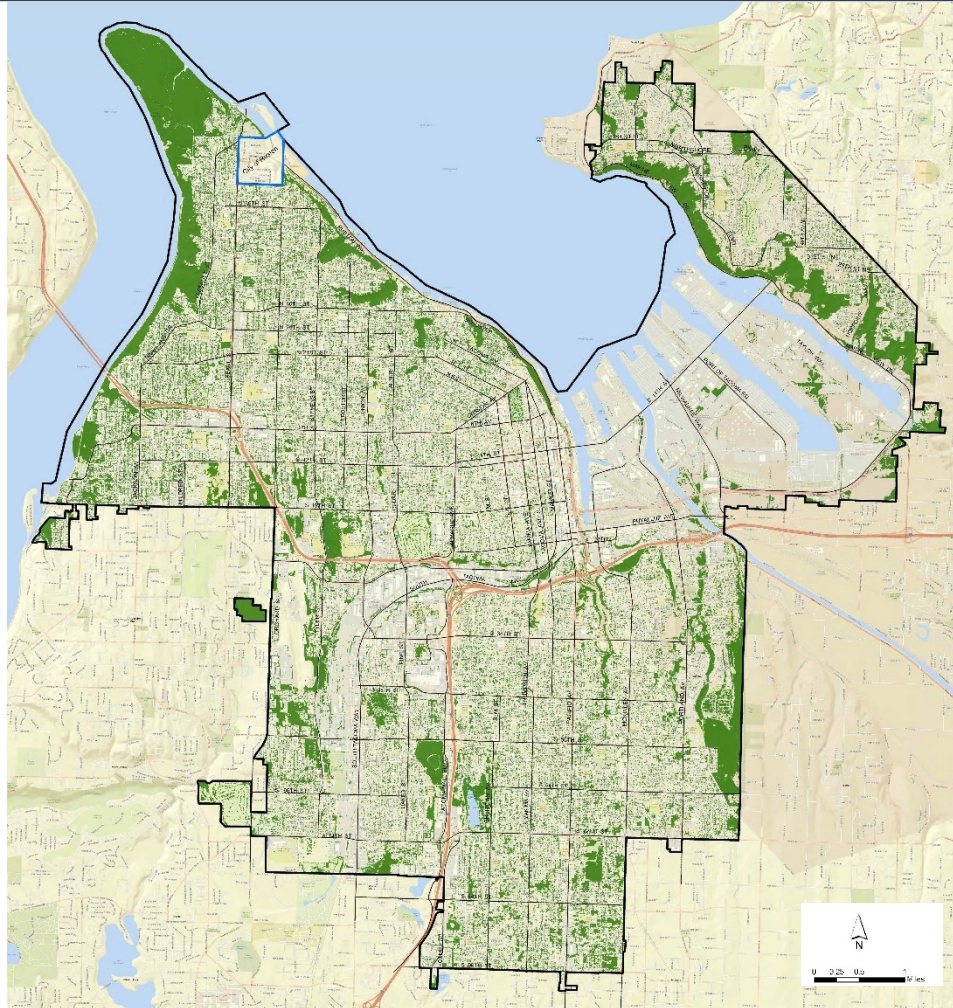
- 30% tree canopy cover goal by the year 2030, “30 by 30”
- Tree retention/preservation
- Leading by example through care of City-owned trees



## Environmental Action Plan (2016)

- Increase healthy urban forest canopy
- Improve regulations for tree protection on private property and City right-of-way.

# TACOMA CANOPY COVER



2009 canopy  
cover assessment  
shows

**19%**  
**canopy cover**

In Tacoma,

**1/2**  
**the National**  
**Average**  
(35.1%)

## PNW Tree Canopy

City	Canopy
Mercer Island	41%
Kirkland	40.7%
Bellevue	36%
Shoreline	31%
Renton	28.6%
Seattle	28%
Tukwila	25%
<b>Tacoma</b>	<b>19%</b>



# URBAN FOREST RESOURCES



Schuster Slope Tree Pruning

2014 national  
average funding  
for municipal  
forestry programs

**\$9.05**  
per capita

In Tacoma, the  
average was

**\$1.96**  
Per capita

(2011-2015)



Reed Elementary Tree Planting



# TACOMA MUNICIPAL CODE

## TMC 9.18 Trimming & Removal

- Required to obtain a permit
- Does not require preservation

## TMC 13.06.502 Landscaping & Buffering

- Requirements based on zoning and land use
- Does not require preservation

## TMC 13.11 Critical Areas Preservation

- Only TMC where tree preservation is required



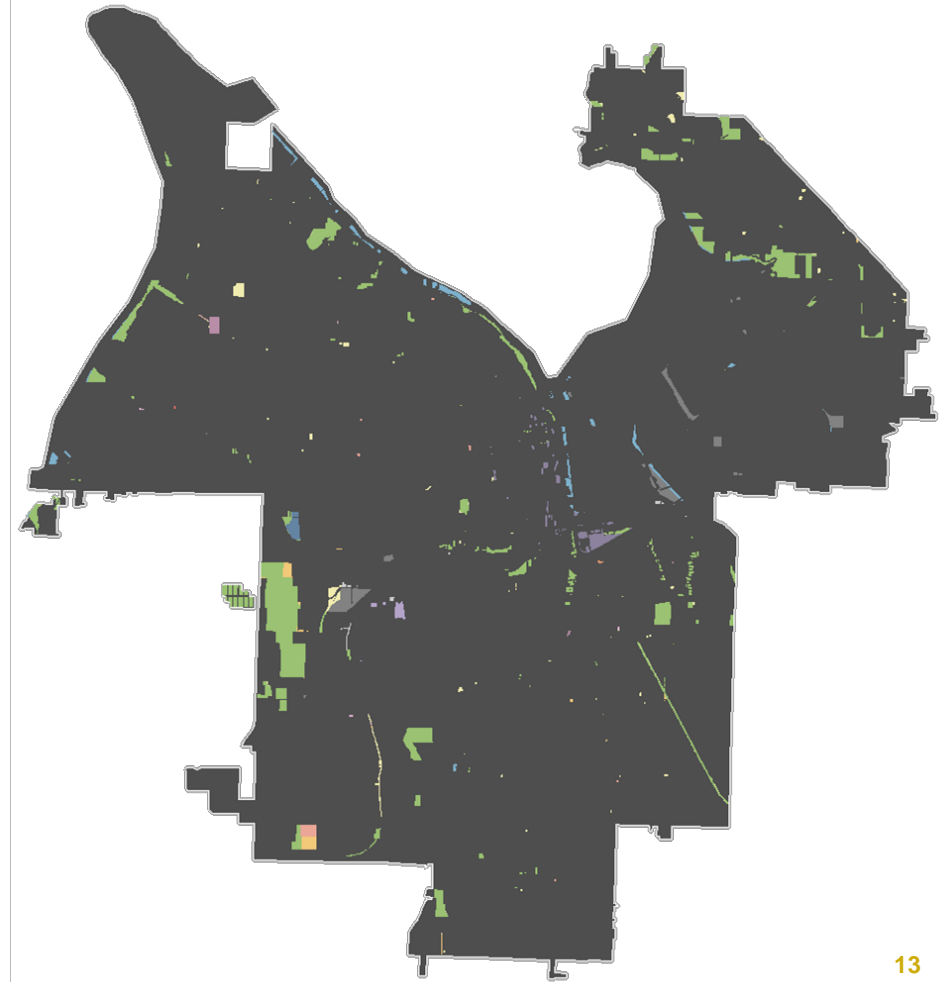




# TACOMA TREE RESPONSIBILITY



- In Tacoma the adjacent property owner is responsible for right-of-way (ROW) trees
- Across the U.S. ~64% of municipalities assume ownership/responsibility of ROW trees
- City owns ~5.5% of land area (3.6% is Open Space)

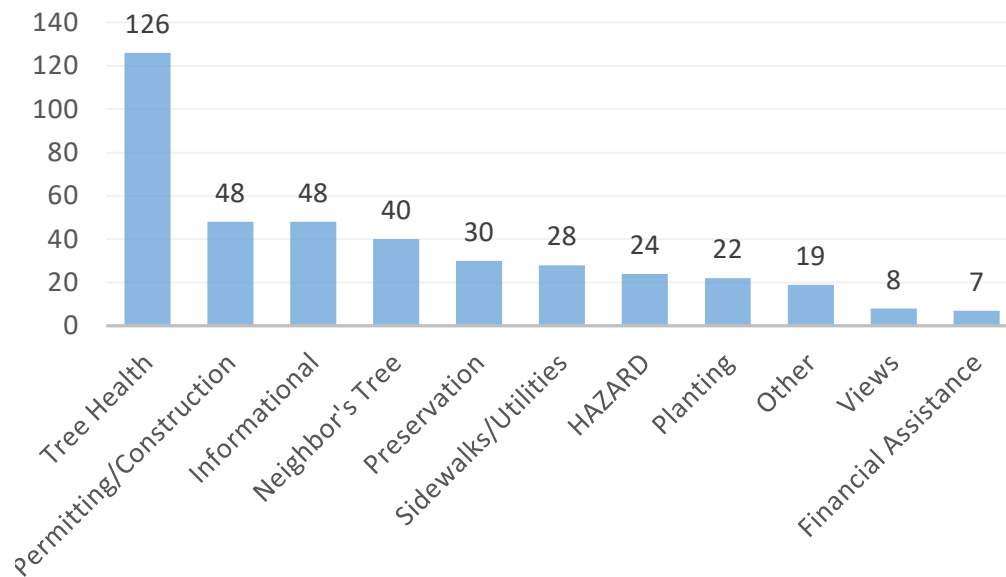




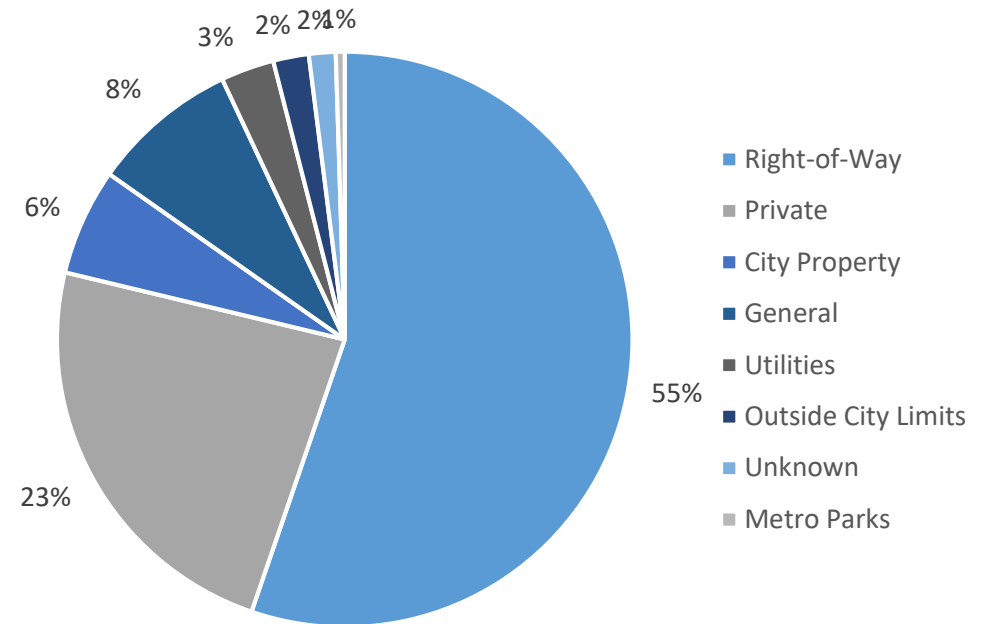
# CUSTOMER TREE CONCERNS

400 Phone Calls logged over 2 years

Phone Call Topic

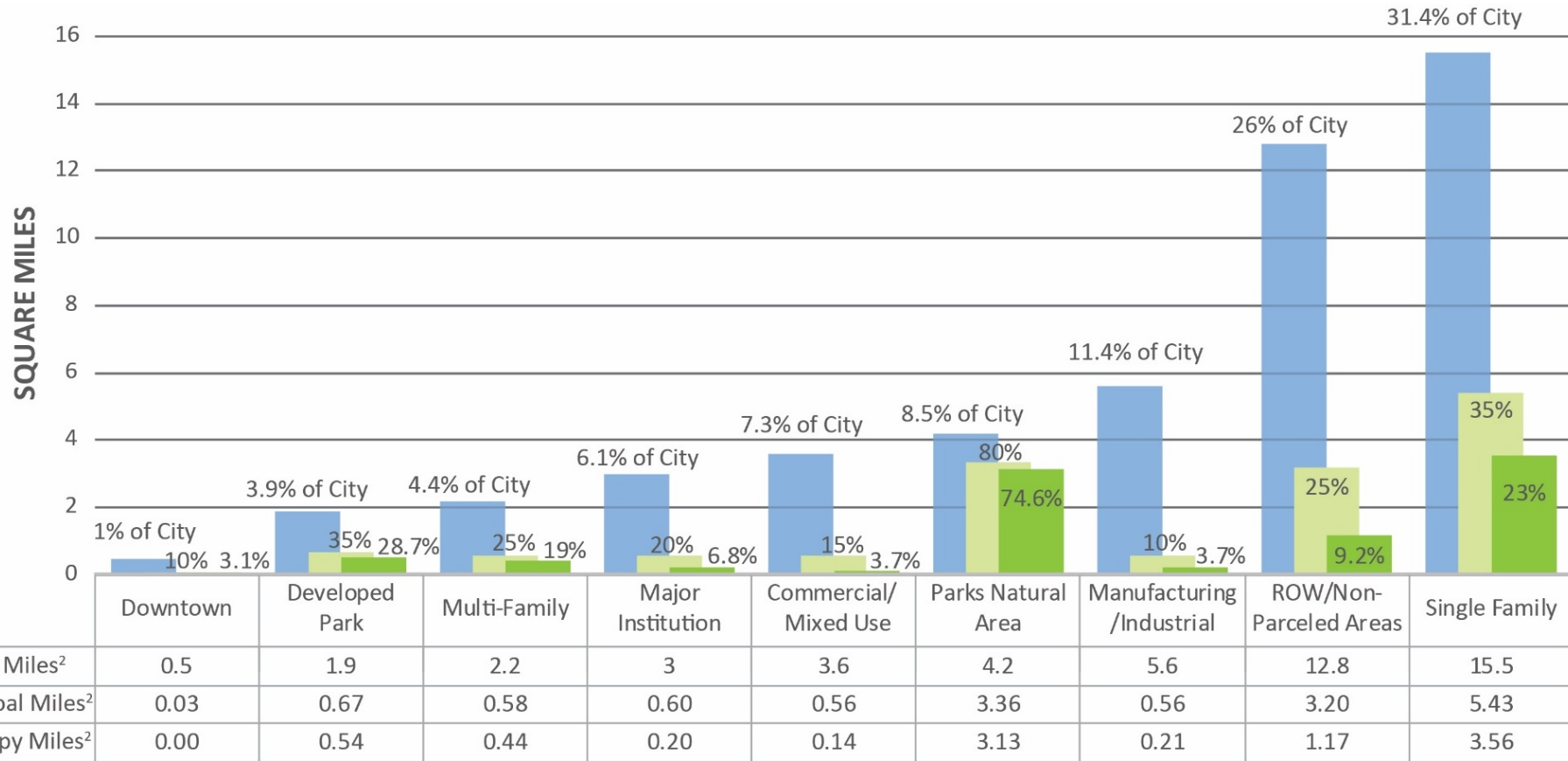


Phone Calls - Tree Location





# TREE CANOPY BY LAND USE



LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

■ Land Area ■ Tree Canopy Goal ■ Actual Tree Canopy





# ● ● ● NEXT STEPS







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