



**TO:** Elizabeth A. Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** James G. Parvey, P.E., LEED AP, Division Manager, Environmental Services  
Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Director, Environmental Services  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution adopting the 2019 Urban Forest Management Plan – December 3, 2019  
**DATE:** November 5, 2019

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**SUMMARY:**

A resolution adopting the 2019 Urban Forest Management Plan which consolidates and clarifies existing City goals and policies, establishes prioritized strategies and actions for improving urban forest management, and establishes targets to assess progress annually.

**COUNCIL SPONSORS:**

Council Members Ryan Mello, Chris Beale, and Anders Ibsen; and Deputy Mayor Conor McCarthy.

**STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:**

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Ensure all Tacoma residents are valued and have access to resources to meet their needs.
- Foster a vibrant and diverse economy with good jobs for all Tacoma residents.
- Encourage thriving residents with abundant opportunities for life-long learning.
- Cultivate a vibrant cultural sector that fosters a creative, cohesive community.
- Assure outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

The Urban Forest Management Plan uses goals and policies previously approved by the City Council to identify and prioritize specific actions that will lead to the implementation of these policies and achievement of these goals. Examples of documents used in identifying these actions include the Tacoma 2025 Plan, Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, Climate Action Plan, and many others.

**BACKGROUND:**

Across the Puget Sound, urban tree canopy is declining at a rapid rate. When compared to other Puget Sound cities, the City of Tacoma has the lowest assessed tree canopy in the region. Recognizing the impacts of insufficient tree canopy, the City Council has adopted many policies specifically calling out the need for attention and resourcing to increase healthy tree canopy across Tacoma. A few of these policies include the 2008 Climate Action Plan, 2010 Urban Forest Policy Element (Comp Plan), and the 2016 Environmental Action Plan.

In early 2019, the City solicited the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), subsequently awarding the contract to urban forest and green industry planning firms, PlanIT Geo, LLC, Peninsula Environmental Group, and Conservation Technix (collectively the “Urban Forestry Team”). The Urban Forestry Team led the development of the UFMP over the past nine months with assistance from the Sustainable Tacoma Commission, internal and external stakeholders, and the public. The Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability (IPS) Committee received presentations on the plan at their August 21, October 16, and November 20, 2019 meetings.



This Plan serves as a road map outlining meaningful, high-priority actions that the City of Tacoma will take to support our community between 2019 and 2030 to strive towards our goal of a healthy, thriving 30 percent overall tree canopy coverage. This means creating greater efficiency in our City operations, standardizing our level of service to meet the needs of our community, and responding to the challenges of climate change and other environmental factors. This Plan also standardizes a reporting system for tracking progress toward our goals. In this way, it functions both as a management tool for City staff and provides transparency to the public regarding the actions the City will take to support environmental health on behalf of the broader community.

**ISSUE:**

The City of Tacoma has numerous urban forestry policies and goals developed over the years. The existing policies and goals are contained in a variety of locations such as Tacoma 2025: Shared Vision, Shared Future; One Tacoma: Comprehensive Plan; Climate Action Plan; and a number of City Council resolutions. The UFMP is designed to establish specific actions based on existing policies and goals for improving our urban forest asset.

This action is recommended to standardize a level of service to our community, increase operational efficiencies, facilitate short- and long-term sustainable urban forest planning, validate budgets and programs, and ensure equitable distribution of green resources and services for all Tacomans.

An important component of this Plan is the five-year indicator targets. These measureable targets will help the City track progress on outputs and outcomes, important, and understandable to residents. This Plan has had extensive input, both internal and external, including input from a Stakeholder Committee, the Sustainable Tacoma Commission, Department staff, other agencies and special interest groups, several public meetings, and two online surveys.

This Plan also contains the ratings from the research conducted as part of Phase 1 existing conditions and operations audit to quantify Tacoma's level of service as it relates to urban forest sustainability, management, and equity. This evaluation serves as the baseline from which progress can be measured and annually reported. Each strategy in this Plan is supported by a listing of measurements and monitoring techniques for the City to conduct to evaluate progress towards the five-year indicator targets.

Implementation of the actions in this Plan will result in co-benefits: multiple beneficial impacts to economic and social factors, beyond the anticipated environmental factors, which include community engagement, improved equity, enhanced human health, and environmental improvements.

Lastly, success of this Plan must include community engagement. Each strategy category contains information or actions the community can participate in to support the City's efforts in achieving the targets.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

The targets and actions contained in this Plan reflect adopted City policy, recommendations from the IPS Committee and Sustainable Tacoma Commission, and substantiated by public and stakeholder comment. The City Council may choose to add, delete, or amend any action or target contained in the Urban Forest Management Plan.



**RECOMMENDATION:**

A resolution adopting the 2019 Urban Forest Management Plan which consolidates and clarifies existing City goals and policies, establishes prioritized strategies and actions for improving urban forest management, and establishes targets to assess progress annually.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact from adoption of the Plan itself. Many individual actions will require enhanced funding, but those budget requests will come through the regular Biennium Budget process. The Environmental Services Department will work with all departments to ensure actions needing additional funding are identified and included.