

Urban Forest Plan

Phase 3: Plan Development Draft Plan

April 15, 2024



Overview

1. Project overview
2. Draft Urban Forest Plan
3. Key Considerations
4. Next steps



A brief introduction to our team

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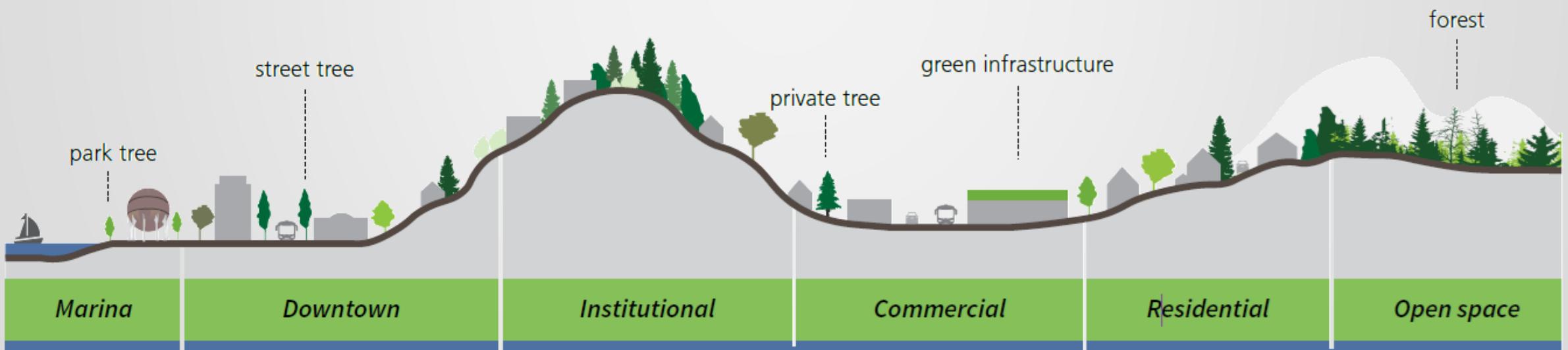
City Departments

Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department,
Planning and Community Development Department, Fire Department, Mayor's Office of Climate

What is the urban forest?

“All trees, vegetation, soils, associated natural processes, and cultural elements, found in towns, cities, and other communities where people reside.”

Components of Bellingham's urban forest



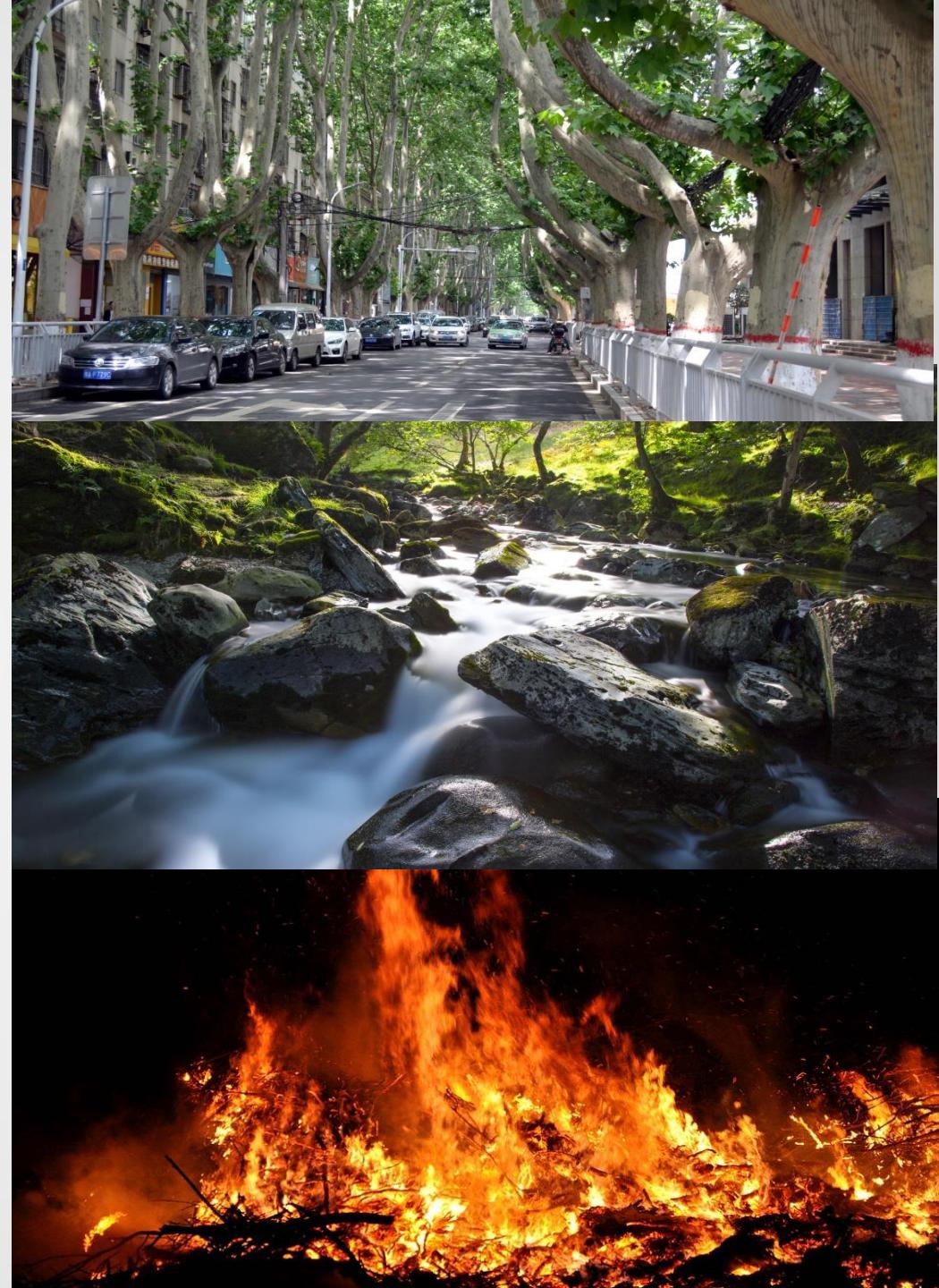
Helps meet Climate Action Plan goals

- Natural System Protection and Restoration Measure
 - Carbon sequestration through
 - Protecting and conserving forests, street trees, and landscape practices
 - Restoration of degraded lands



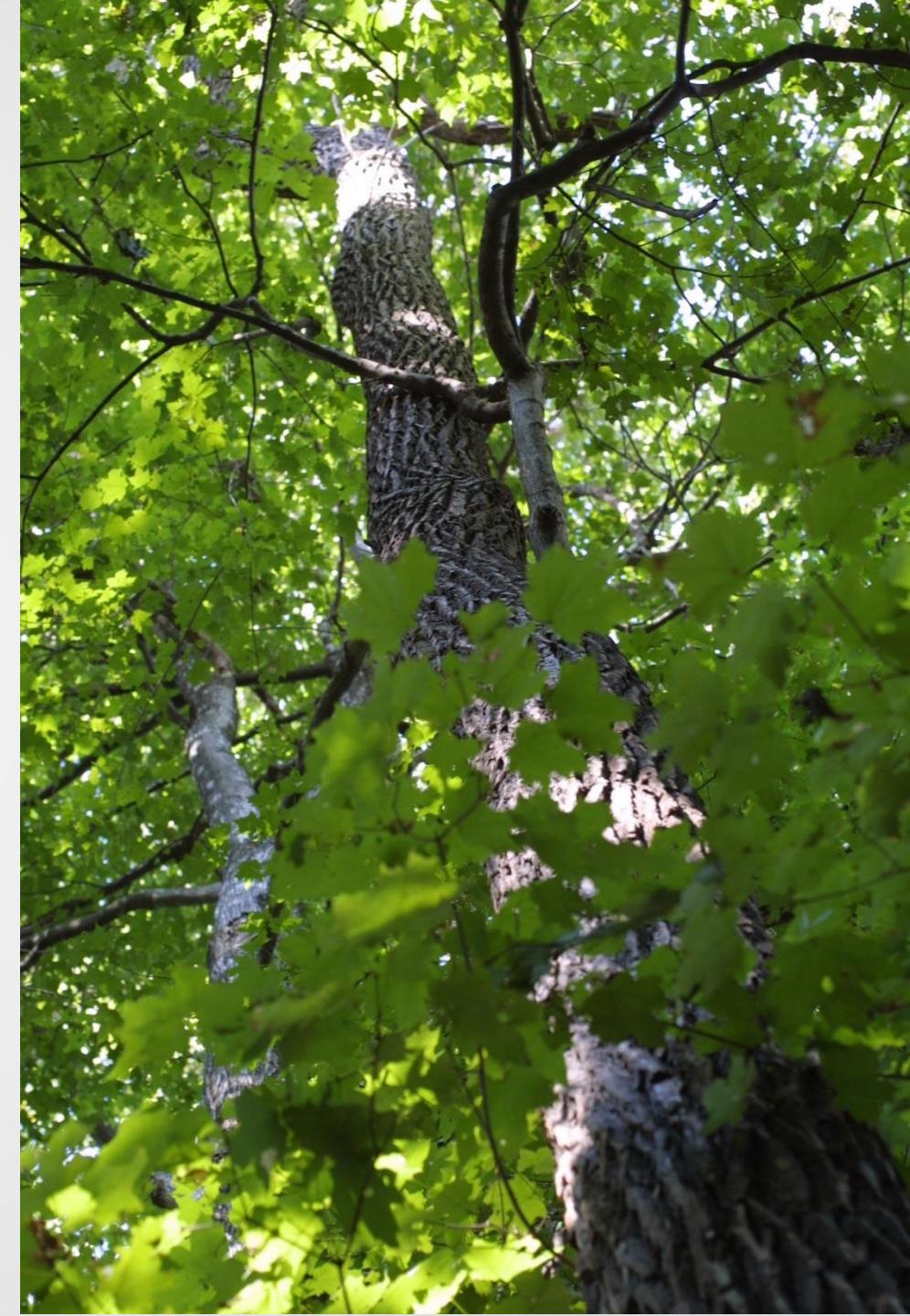
Helps with Climate Adaptation

- Shade for streams, lakes, wetlands
- Shade to reduce heat island effects
- Habitat diversity and resilience
- Reduce wildfire risk



Urban Forest Plan

Create a strategic plan that helps maintain a healthy and desirable urban forest through well-coordinated, consistent, efficient, and sustainable long-term urban forestry management.

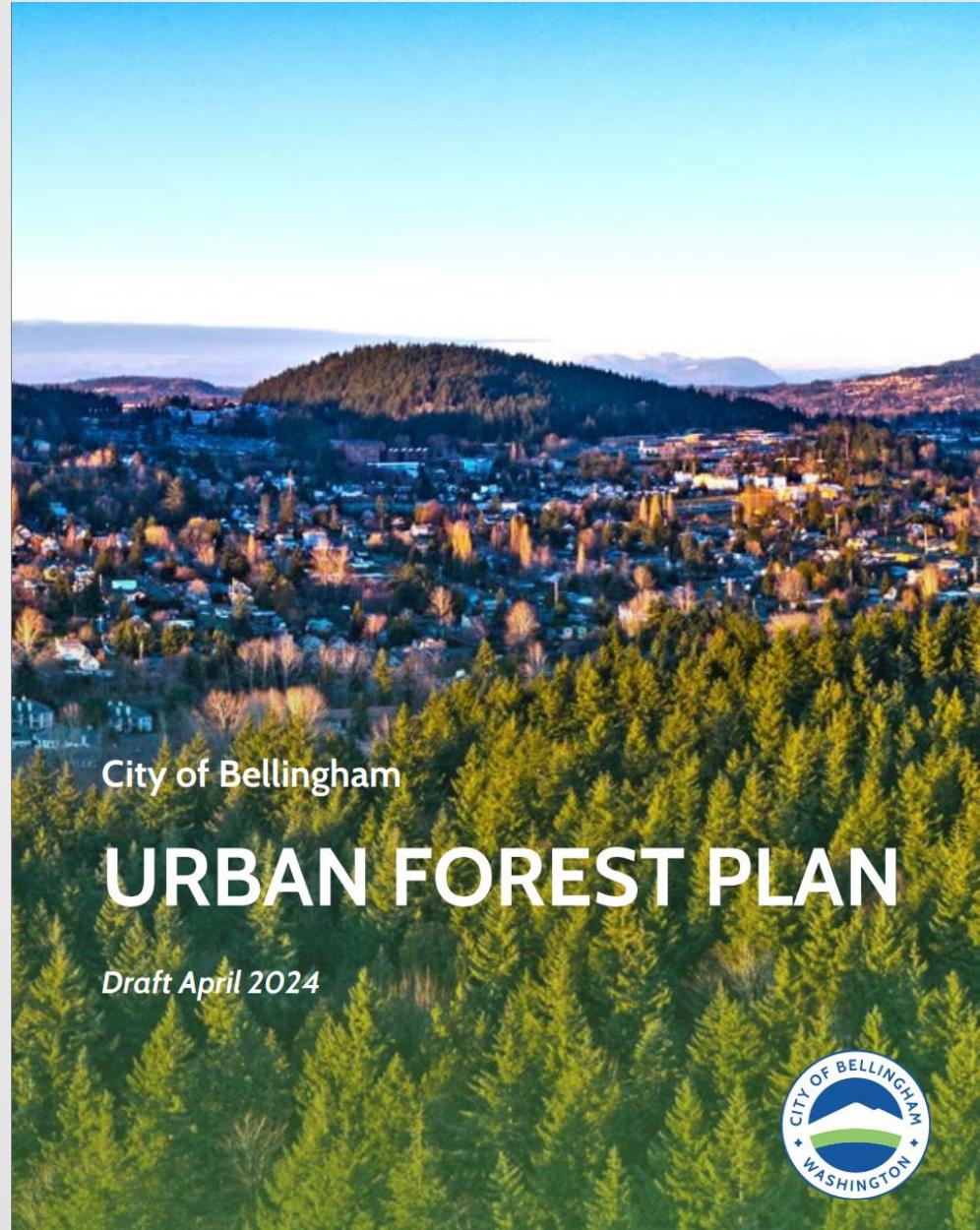


Scope of work and timeline



2024 – also implementing early actions!

Draft Urban Forest Plan



Draft Urban Forest Plan

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Urban Forestry 101	2
1.2 Importance of the urban forest	4
1.3 The planning process	12
2. BELLINGHAM'S URBAN FOREST	14
2.1 A brief history of forest management in Bellingham.....	14
2.2 Canopy cover.....	17
2.3 Street trees	20
2.4 Forested areas	21
2.5 Tree equity	22
2.6 The urban forest in your neighborhood.....	23
3. EXISTING MANAGEMENT CONTEXT	26
3.1 Roles and responsibilities	26
3.2 Existing regulations and policies	27
3.3 How are we doing with urban forest management?.....	31
4. VISION, GOALS AND TARGETS	33
4.1 Six Goals.....	34
4.2 Setting a canopy cover target	35
5. ACHIEVING OUR GOALS: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES	39
5.1 Goal 1: Protect and expand the urban forest	40
5.2 Goal 2: Protect and restore priority habitat areas.....	43
5.3 Goal 3: Manage the urban forest in alignment with best practices	46
5.4 Goal 4: Adapt the urban forest for climate change resilience	48
5.5 Goal 5: Collaborate with diverse people and organizations	52
5.6 Goal 6: Monitor performance, adapt strategies	56
6. 10 YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	57
6.1 Action Plan.....	57
6.2 Monitoring Plan.....	63
7. REFERENCES	63

Draft Plan: Vision

An aerial photograph of a diverse forest landscape. The foreground is filled with a mix of evergreen and deciduous trees, some showing autumn colors. In the middle ground, a large, open green field stretches across the horizon. The background features a range of hills and more forested areas under a bright, slightly cloudy sky.

Bellingham's healthy and resilient urban forest enhances the quality of life for all residents, supports associated ecological functions, and contributes to the climate mitigation and adaptation needs of our entire community

Draft Plan: Goals



1. Protect and expand the urban forest in alignment with community values as established in the Comprehensive Plan



2. Protect and restore priority habitat areas, movement corridors, and forests



3. Manage the urban forest in alignment with best practices to support healthy and safe trees



4. Adapt the urban forest for climate change resilience



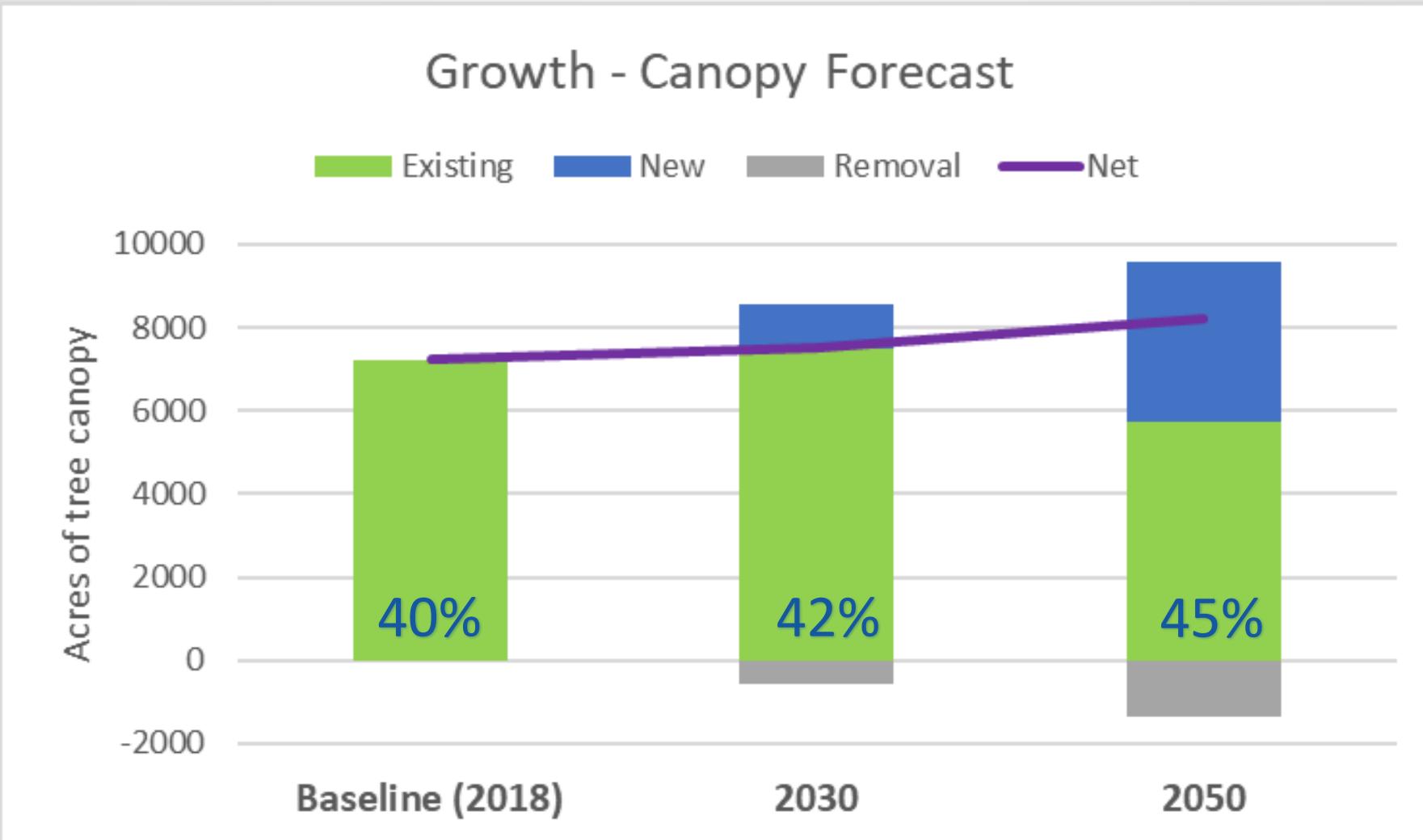
5. Collaborate with diverse people and organizations in urban forest management



6. Monitor performance, adapt strategies

Draft Plan: Target

45% Canopy Cover



Draft Plan: Report Card

Based On: Sustainable urban forest management framework, best practices, academic research, Sustainable Forestry Initiative's Community Forest Standards

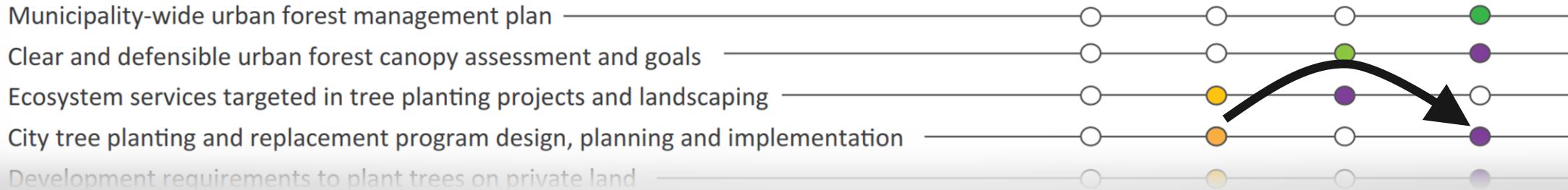
Urban Forest Report Card

- Not Assessed
- 2023 program grade (in colour)
- 2033 ambition (if advanced from 2023)



EXERPT:

GOAL: PROTECT AND EXPAND THE URBAN FOREST



Draft Plan: Implementation

Action Plan

- 10+ years
- Actions for all 6 goals



- Costs



- Timeframe



- Responsible entity

Monitoring Plan

- Progress toward 45% citywide canopy cover by 2050



- Performance indicator



- Method



- Timeframe

Draft Urban Forest Plan

Goals, Strategies, and Actions	Cost	Timeframe	Responsibility
1. PROTECT AND EXPAND THE URBAN FOREST			
1.1 Improve policy, regulations and processes guiding tree protection and planting, including protection of individual, valued trees			
1. Consider adding policies in the Comprehensive Plan update to address tree canopy goals and strategies to achieve those goals	\$	Establish	PCD
2. Consider adding canopy cover goals by park in the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan update	\$	Establish	PRD
3. Evaluate codes to enhance urban forest expansion	\$	Establish	PCD
4. Evaluate codes to enhance urban forest protection and introduce an Exceptional Tree Ordinance	\$	Quickstart	PCD
5. Update tree protection standards for park trees, street trees and trees protected through development to improve consistency and reflect best practices	\$	Establish	PCD/PRD
6. Update street tree permit standards and policies to clarify information for the public, and proactively identify streets/locations that can and cannot support planting by residents	\$	Establish	PCD/PRD
7. Consider the impacts to the urban forest when updating Fire Code or if Wildland Urban Interface Code is implemented	\$	Establish	PCD/FD
8. Replace City trees removed for public works at 1:1 or paying cash in lieu of planting if a Tree Bank is available	\$\$\$	Establish	PWD/PRD

Draft Urban Forest Plan

Goals, Strategies, and Actions	Cost	Timeframe	Responsibility
3. MANAGE THE URBAN FOREST IN ALIGNMENT WITH BEST PRACTICES			
3.1 Establish a sustainable urban forestry program aligned with best practices			
30. Create an Urban Forester position to lead implementation, establish an Urban Forestry department, and consider adding an interdepartmental staff position to support grant applications, deliverables and budgets	\$\$\$\$	Establish, Build, and Strengthen	PWD/PRD
31. Develop an annual urban forestry operations budget	\$\$\$	Establish, Build, and Strengthen	PWD/PRD
32. Apply for available State and Federal grants to support urban forest inventory, risk assessment and planting initiatives, prioritizing areas with low tree equity	\$	Establish	PWD/PRD
33. Evaluate appropriate staffing needs to support planting, protecting and proactively maintaining Bellingham's urban forest.	\$\$\$	Establish, Build, and Strengthen	PWD/PRD
34. Expand the City street tree maintenance list to include street trees in low Tree Equity, areas that have issues related to public safety and tree health, and trees installed as a requirement of development.	\$\$\$\$	Establish, Build, and Strengthen	PRD
35. Expand the City maintenance list to include all street trees.	\$\$\$\$	Build, and Strengthen	PRD
36. Explore the feasibility of expanding nursery capacity, and having a stockpile of trees ready to plant each year in the fall	\$	Establish	PWD /PRD



Draft Plan

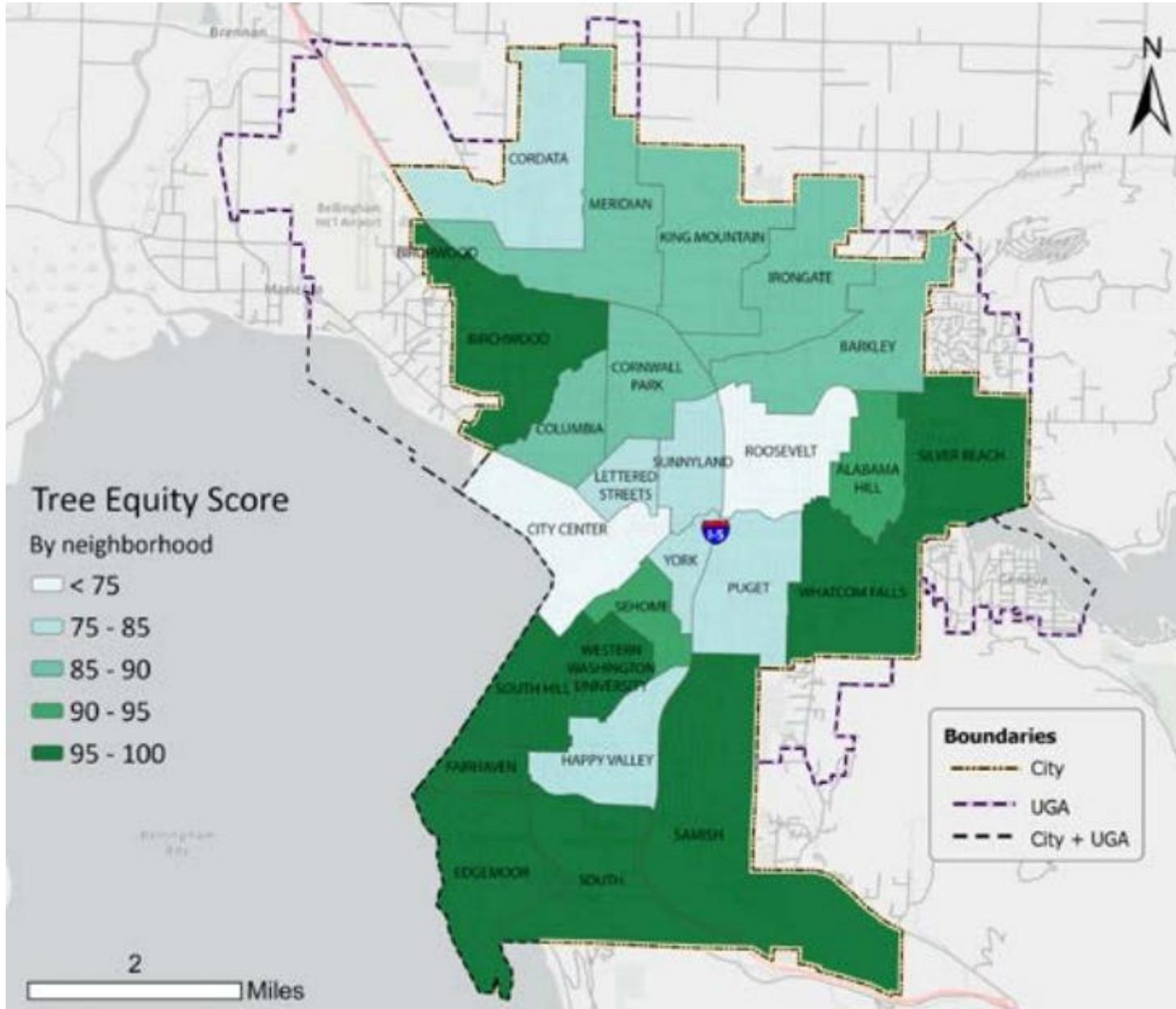
45% Canopy Cover target

Considerations

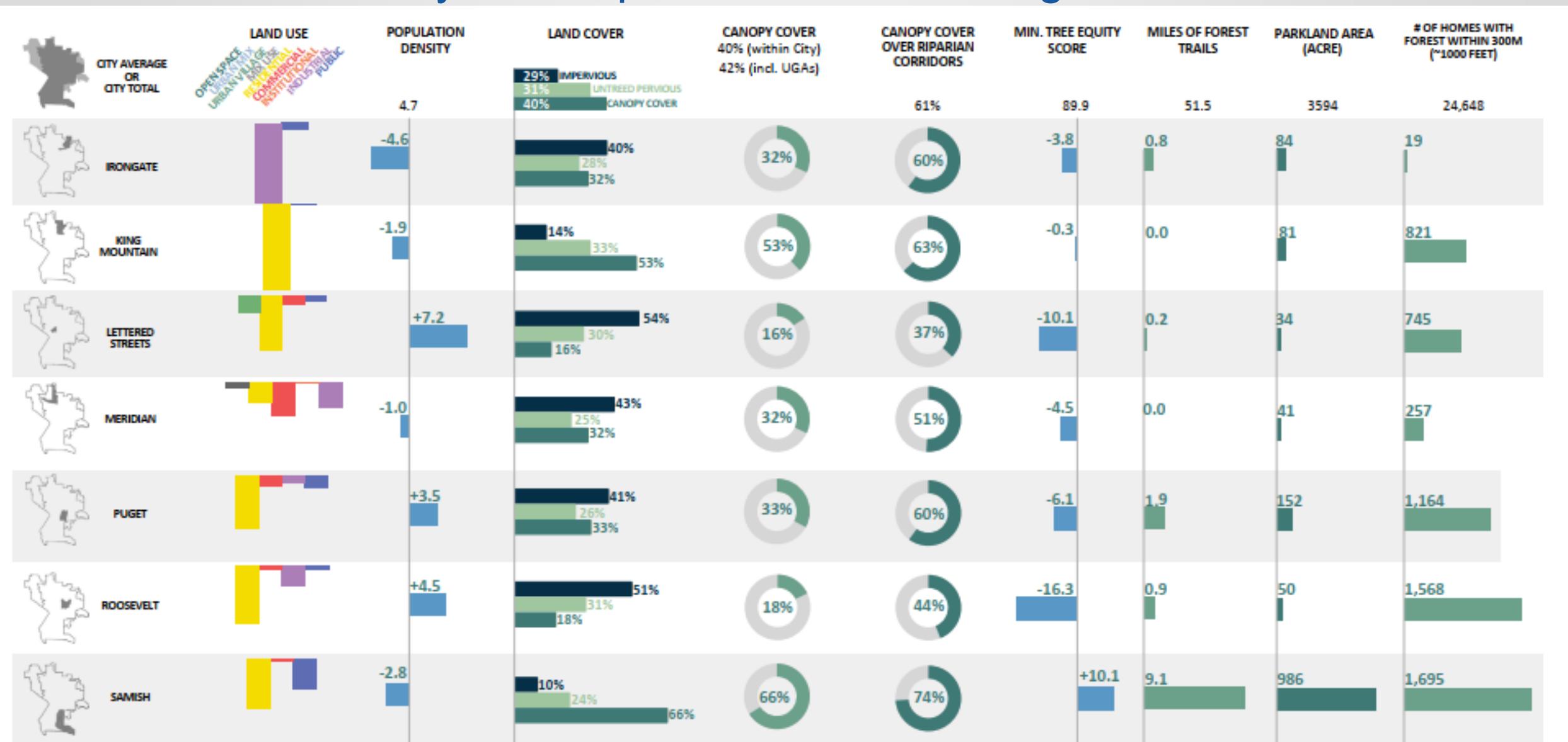
- Equity
- Land Use
- Multiple Values
- Cost



Equity: expand tree benefits to areas with low tree equity



Land Use: Recognizing land uses and urban design characteristics vary. It is important to use the “right” tree for the location



Multiple Values:

Offset canopy losses and accommodate multiple community values (housing, transportation, climate, safety, jobs, recreation AND forest management)

Example: Mixed Use Low Density



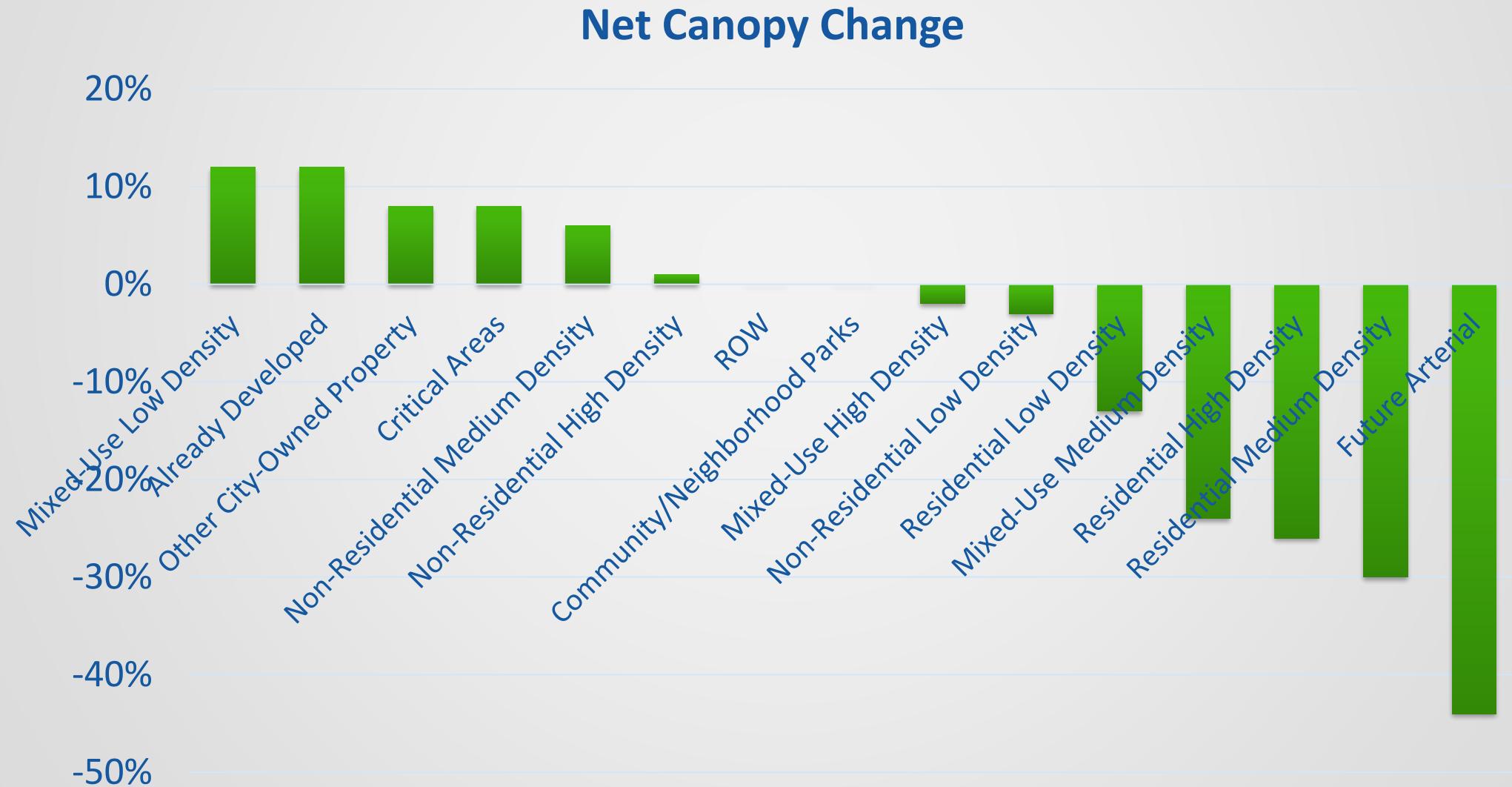
Multiple Values: Offset canopy losses and accommodate multiple community values

LAND USE INFORMATION		2018 CANOPY COVER	URBAN FOREST PLAN	NET CHANGE
Land use	Total area of strata (ac.)	%	Target %	%
Critical Areas	5423	49%	57%	8%
Already Developed	5193	23%	35%	12%
ROW	2380	22%	22%	0%
Other City-Owned Property	1358	69%	77%	8%
Community/Neighborhood Parks	1252	81%	81%	0%
Residential Low Density	745	48%	35%	-13%
Non-Residential Low Density	735	23%	20%	-3%
Residential Medium Density	431	55%	25%	-30%
Mixed-Use Medium Density	154	39%	15%	-24%
Mixed-Use High Density	132	12%	10%	-2%
Residential High Density	118	41%	15%	-26%
Future Arterial	51	64%	20%	-44%
Non-Residential Medium Density	6	9%	15%	6%
Mixed-Use Low Density	2	8%	20%	12%
Non-Residential High Density	2	9%	10%	1%
Bellingham TOTAL	17982	40%	45%	5%

Multiple Values: Offset canopy losses and accommodate multiple community values

LAND USE INFORMATION	2018	URBAN	NET CHANGE
	CANOPY COVER	FOREST PLAN	
Total area			
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Bellingham TOTAL	17982	40%	45%
			5%

Multiple Values: Offset canopy losses and accommodate multiple community values



Cost: Fund and resource an excellent urban forest program while limiting financial impacts

Additional Funding for Implementation

\$100,000

Quickstart (2024)

**\$25 -30 Million
(\$5-6/yr)**

Establish (yrs 1 – 5)

**\$50-55 Million
(\$10-11/yr)**

Build (yrs 6 – 10)

**\$11-12 Million
/yr**

Strengthen (> 10 yrs)

Cost: Fund and resource an excellent urban forest program while limiting financial impacts

Goals, Strategies, and Actions	Cost	Timeframe	Responsibility
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Cost: Fund and resource an excellent urban forest program while limiting financial impacts

	Establish (yrs 1 – 5)
Goal 1	\$ 870,000
Goal 2	\$ 30,000
Goal 3	\$ 25,781,440
Goal 4	\$ 40,000
Goal 5	\$ 150,000
Goal 6	\$ 70,000

Cost: Fund and resource an excellent urban forest program while limiting financial impacts

Additional Funding for Implementation

\$100,000

Quickstart (2024)

**\$25 -30 Million
(\$5-6/yr)**

Establish (yrs 1 – 5)

**\$50-55 Million
(\$10-11/yr)**

Build (yrs 6 – 10)

**\$11-12 Million
/yr**

Strengthen (> 10 yrs)

Draft Plan

45% Canopy Cover target

- Aspirational
- Requires joint effort by public and private sectors
- Requires financial investment



Next Steps:

Community Feedback on Draft Plan

April 15 – May 15

- Online report
- Engage Bellingham
- Open House
- 3 Small Group Sessions

visit cob.org/UFMP to access all
opportunities



Next Steps:

Council Presentations

Summer 2024

- Engagement Summary
- Final Plan





Urban Forestry Management Plan

The City of Bellingham is creating an Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP). The purpose of the UFMP is to create a strategic plan that helps maintain a healthy and desirable urban forest through well-coordinated, consistent, efficient, and sustainable long-term urban forest management. See below to learn more about Bellingham's urban forest.

Project Status

Phase 3 (Plan Development) is underway.

Phase 2 (Community Values) concluded in 2022. The City is in the process of preparing a draft Urban Forestry Management Plan using the input received in Phase 2. There will be opportunities for community feedback on the draft plan before it is finalized and presented to City Council. We expect Phase 3 to continue into 2024. Please [sign up to receive email updates](#) about the UFMP process and feedback opportunities.

Questions?

Public Works Department
Planning and Community Development Department
Parks and Recreation Department
Fire Department

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