

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

Diamond Head Consulting

Project
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Biology/
forestry lead



Mike Coulthard

Sub-consultants

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Project Advisor - Dr. Melissa McHale, Associate Professor, Forest Management, UBC

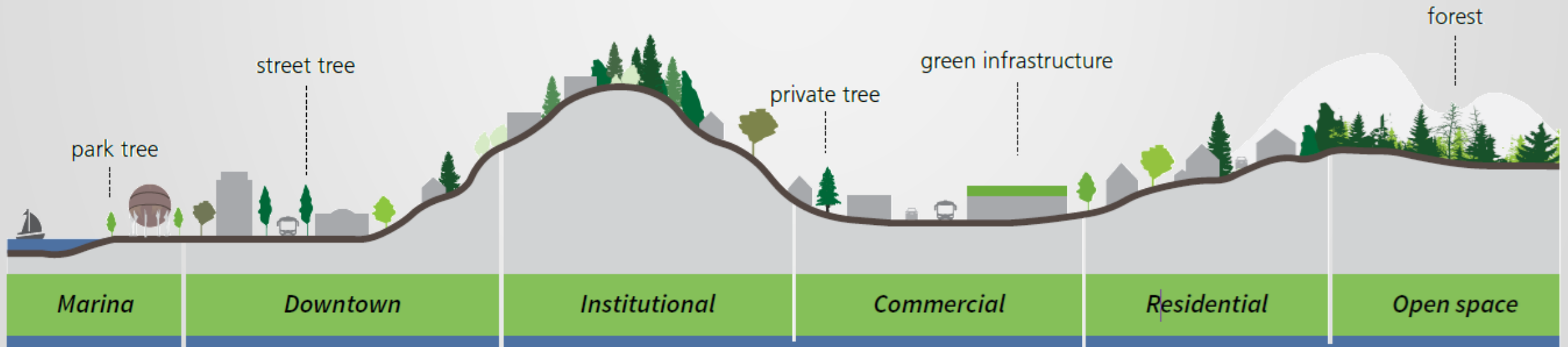
City Departments

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



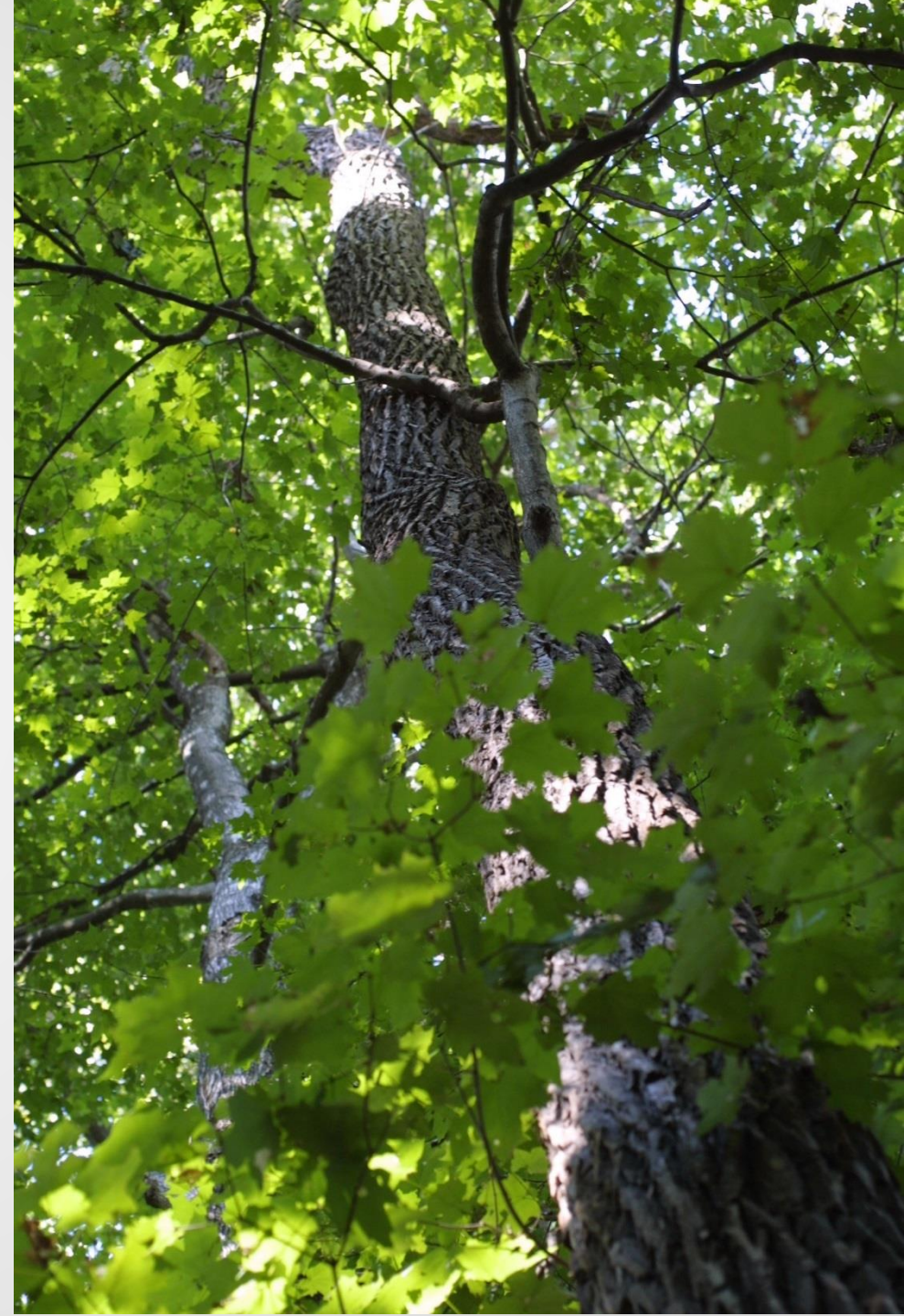
Helps with Climate Adaptation

- 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.

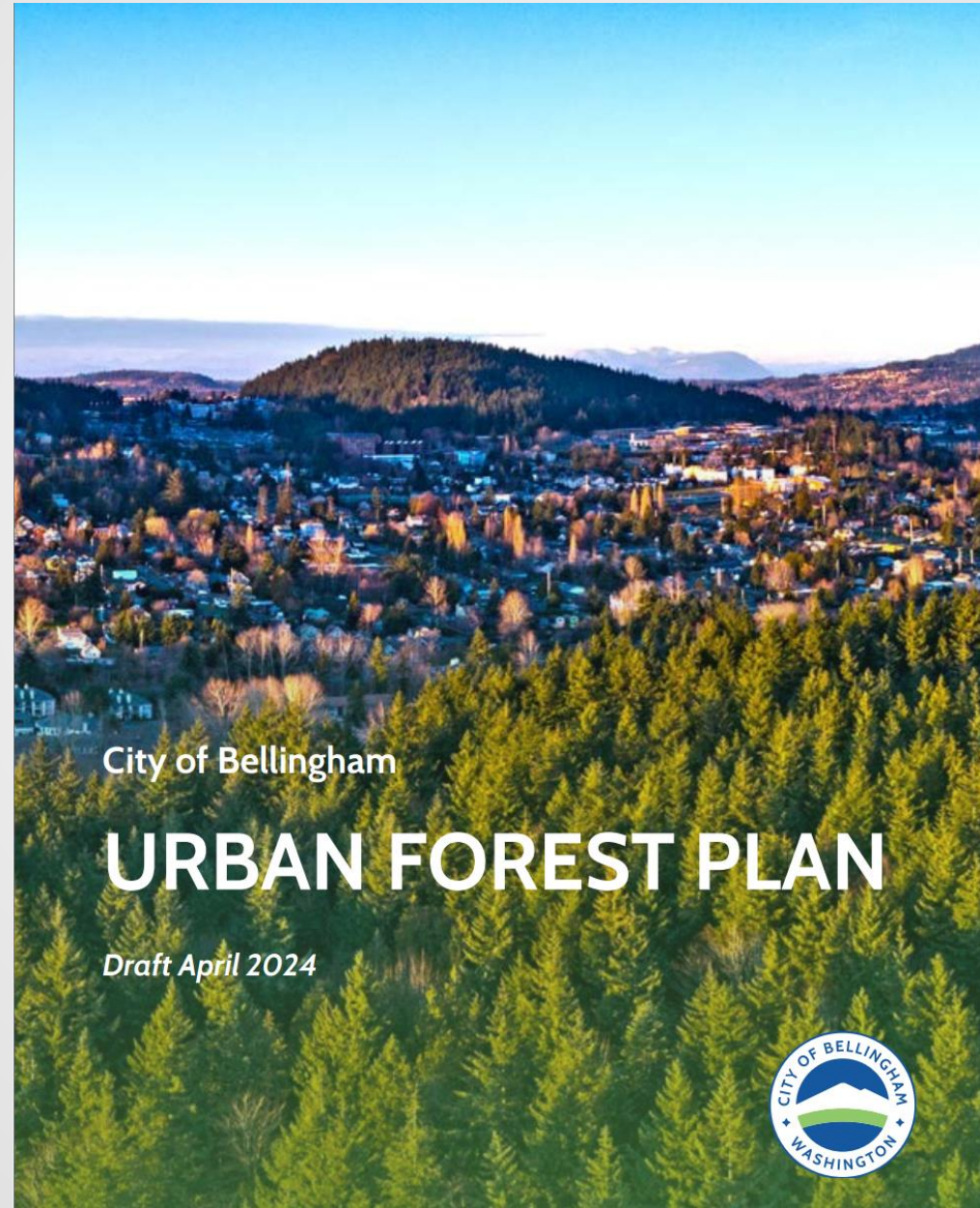


Scope of work and timeline



2024 – also implementing early actions!

Draft Urban Forest Plan



Draft Urban Forest Plan

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Draft Plan: Vision

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



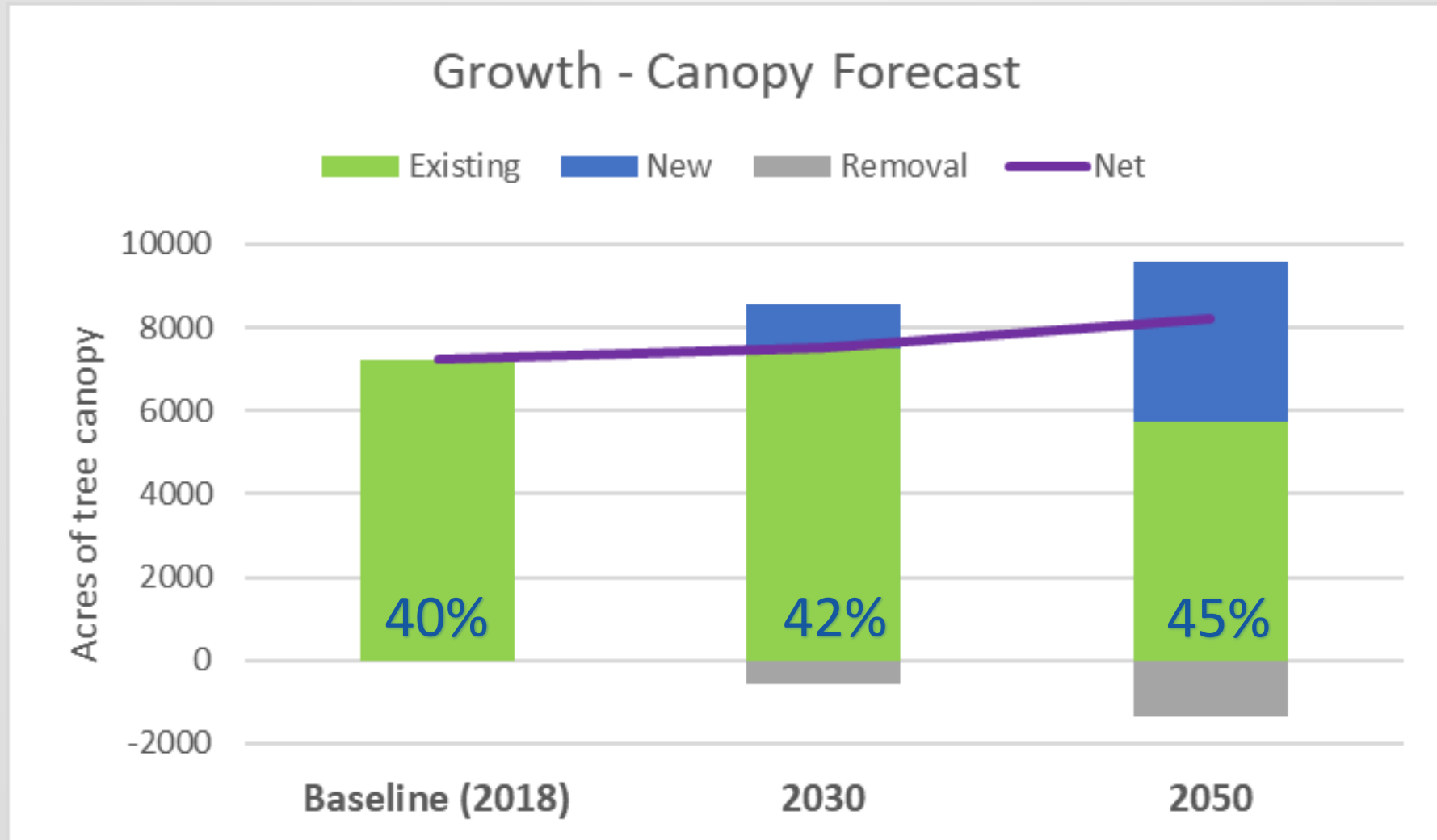
5. Collaborate with diverse people and organizations in urban forest management



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:

	Poor	Fair	Good	Optimal
GOAL: PROTECT AND EXPAND THE URBAN FOREST				
Municipality-wide urban forest management plan	○	○	○	●
Clear and defensible urban forest canopy assessment and goals	○	○	●	●
Ecosystem services targeted in tree planting projects and landscaping	○	●	●	○
City tree planting and replacement program design, planning and implementation	○	●	○	●
Development requirements to plant trees on private land	○	○	○	○

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

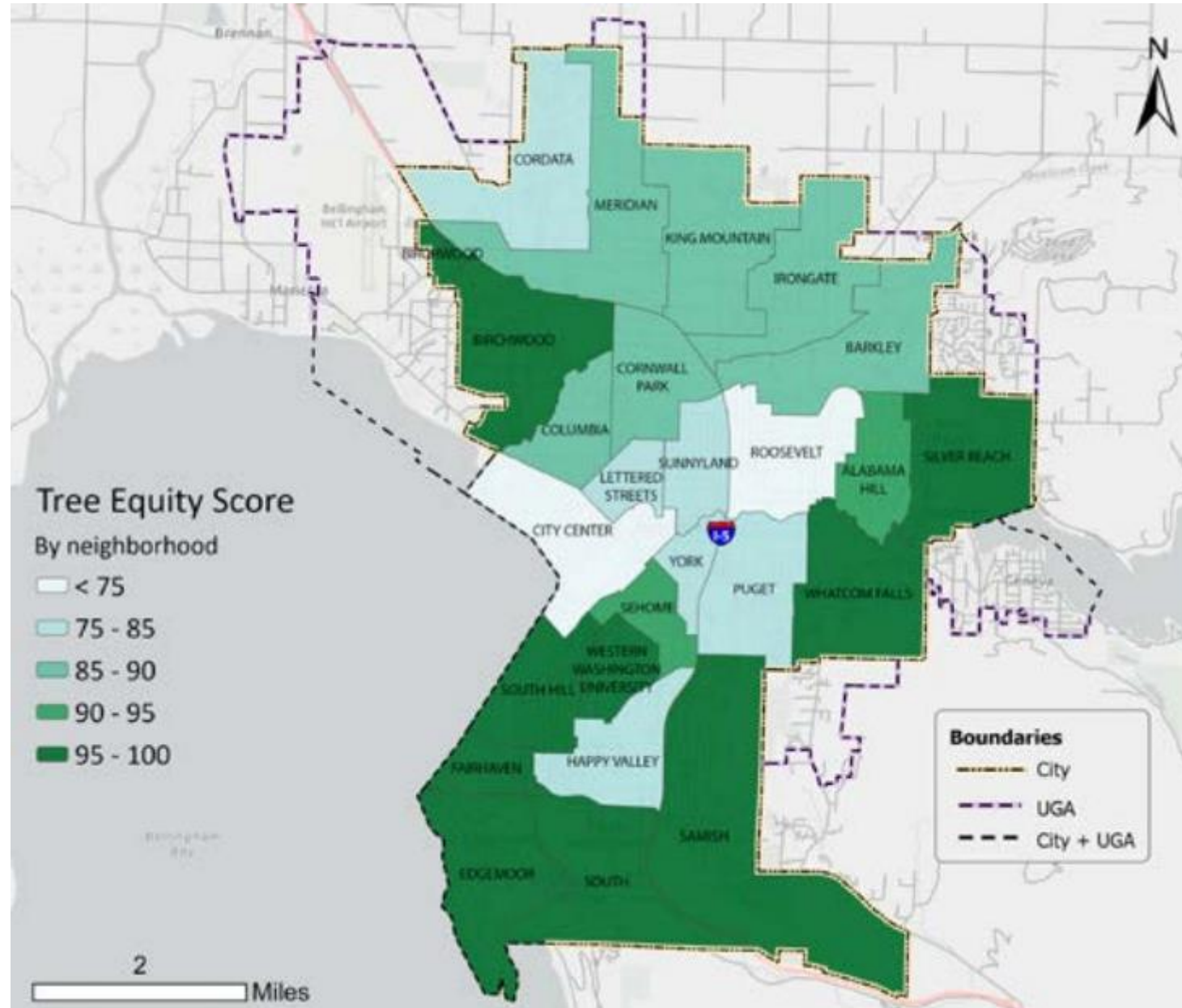
45% Canopy Cover target

Considerations

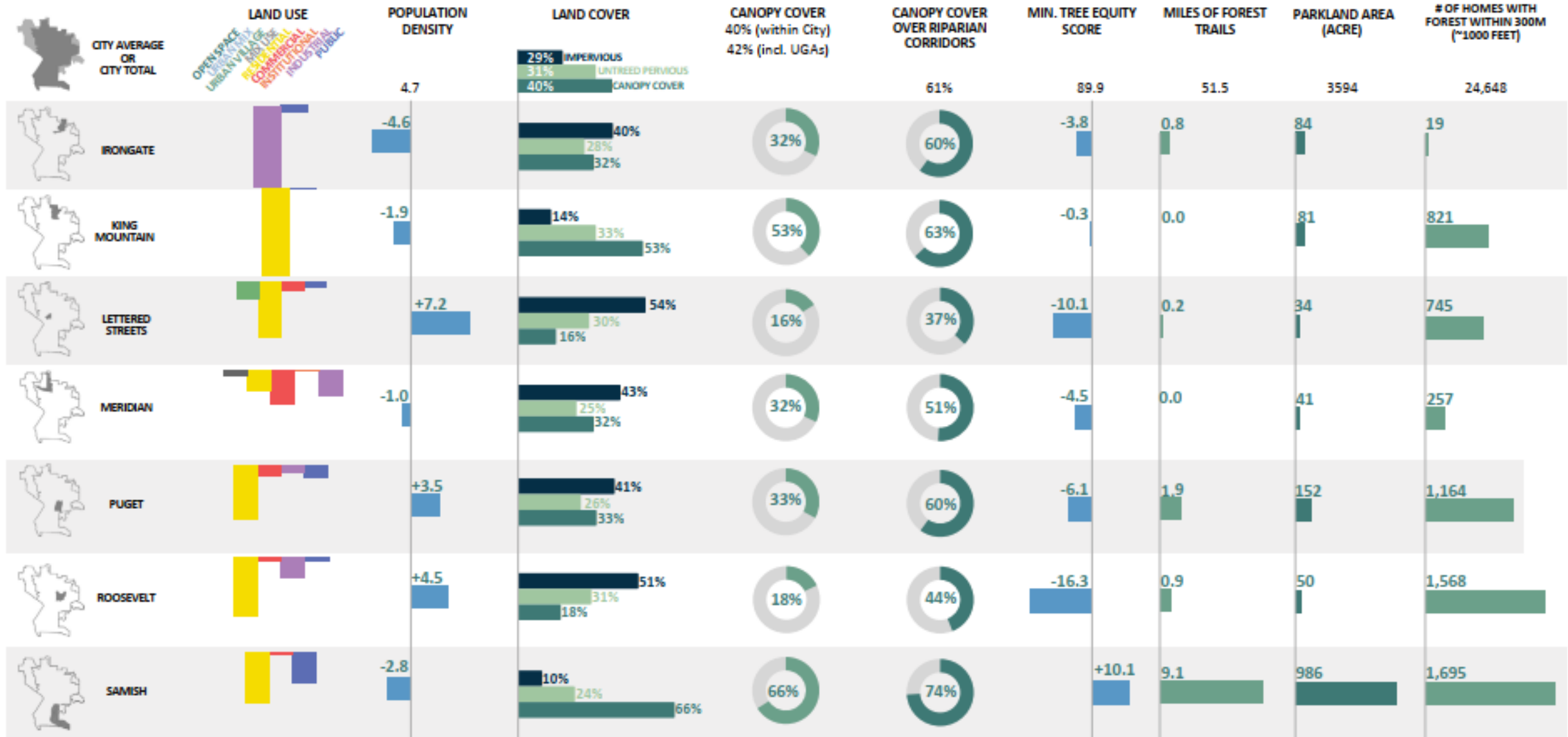
- Equity
- Land Use
- Multiple Values
- Cost



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



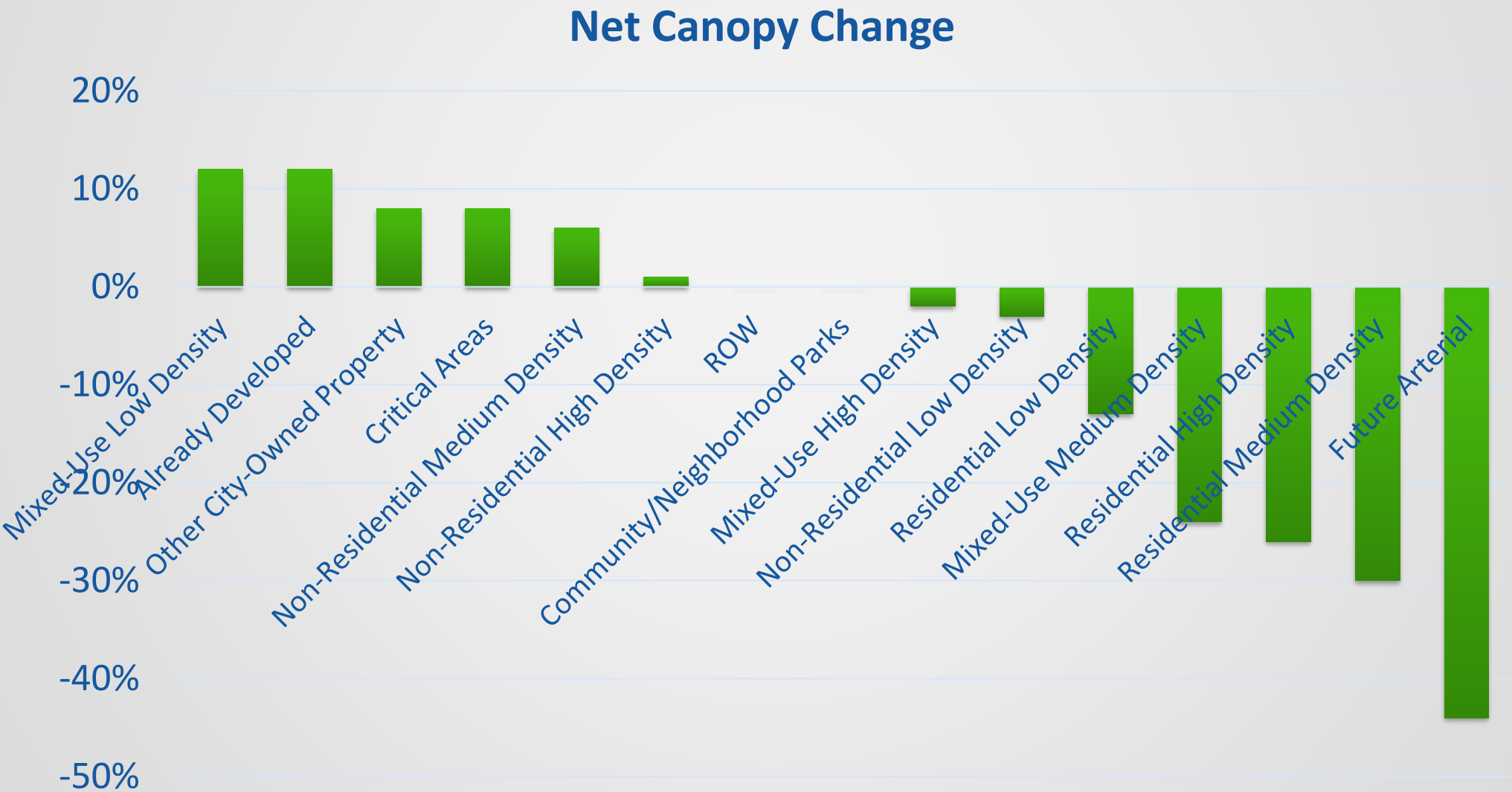
Multiple Values: Offset canopy losses and accommodate multiple community values

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

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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
1. PROTECT AND EXPAND THE URBAN FOREST			
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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

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)

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(\$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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