

Urban Forest Plan

Phase 3: Plan Development Engagement Update

June 17, 2024



An aerial photograph of a town nestled in a valley, surrounded by dense evergreen forests. In the background, a large body of water is visible under a clear blue sky with a hint of sunset. The foreground is dominated by a thick forest of tall evergreen trees, with some houses visible in the lower left corner.

Overview of the Engagement

Phase 3 Engagement

- April 15 – May 15, 2024
- Invited community members to review and share feedback on the draft Plan
- Various promotional methods (e.g. emails, social media, news releases, and posters) for broad engagement. Direct contact with more than 13,500 people.



Who We Heard From

- **464** survey respondents
- **17** attendees at the online input session
- **41** participants of the technical workshops (3 in total)



Who We Heard From

Survey respondents

- 91% lived in Bellingham.
- 47% resided in postal code 98225, all codes represented.
- 83% were homeowners, and 17% rented a home.

Online input session attendees

- Residents, park stewards, environmental group members, students.

Technical workshop attendees

- Intended for tribes, professionals, NGOs, and interest groups
- Represented tree care and arboriculture, real estate, engineering, land use planning, architecture, construction, and environmental not-for-profit sectors, and the general public.

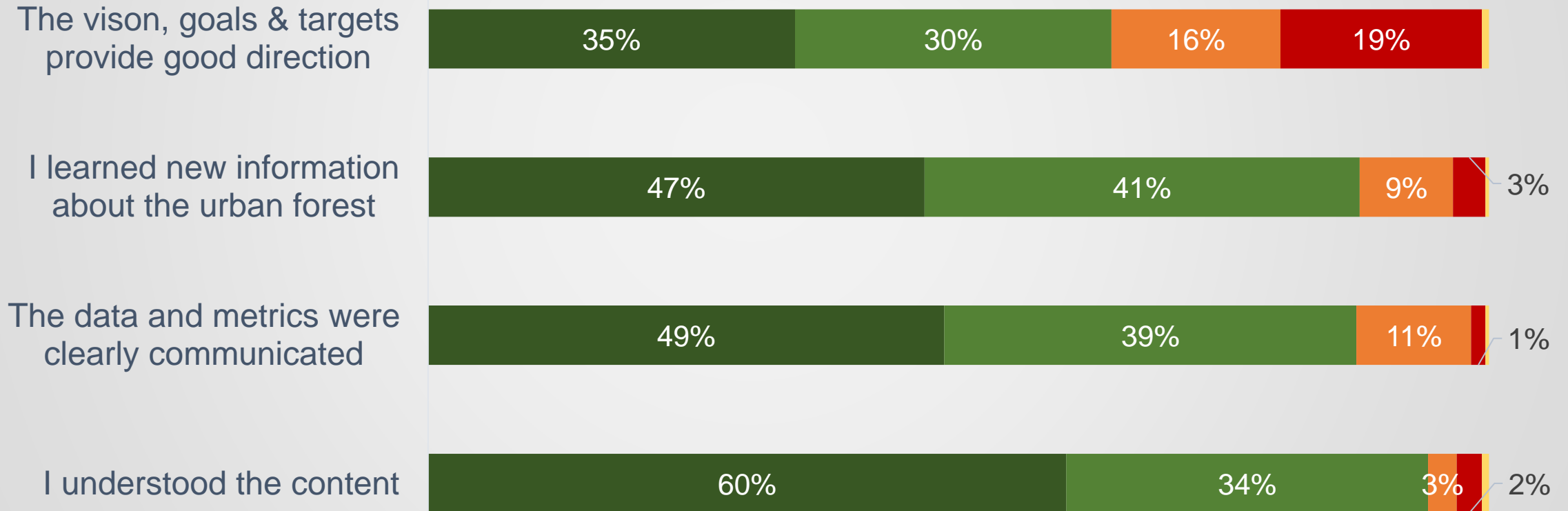


A photograph of a lush forest. The foreground is filled with green ferns and large, bright green leaves. The background shows tall trees with dense foliage. A semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text "What We Heard" in white.

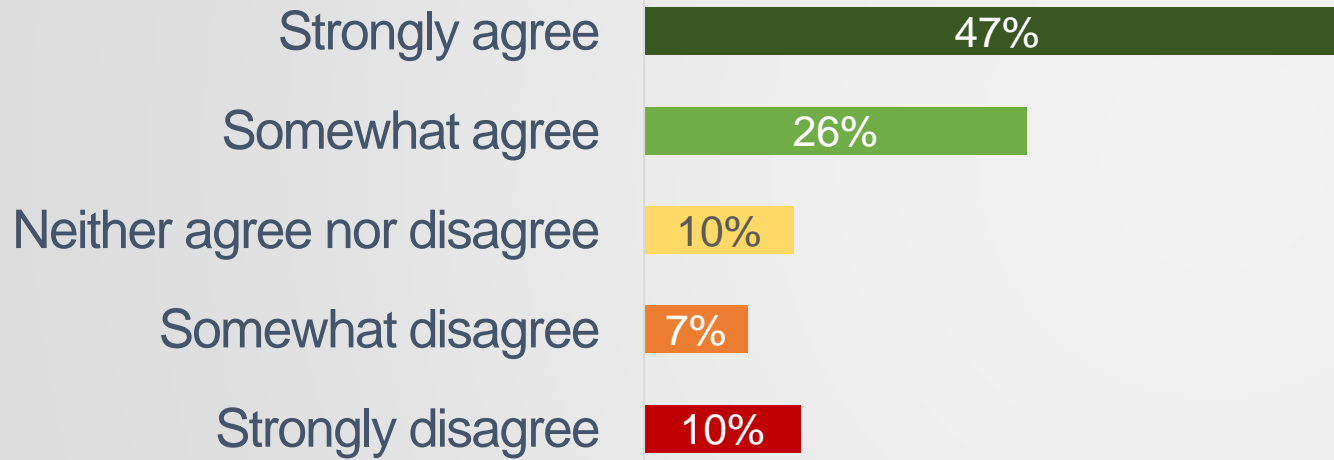
What We Heard

Feedback on the Urban Forest Plan

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Not sure



Feedback on the Urban Forest Plan

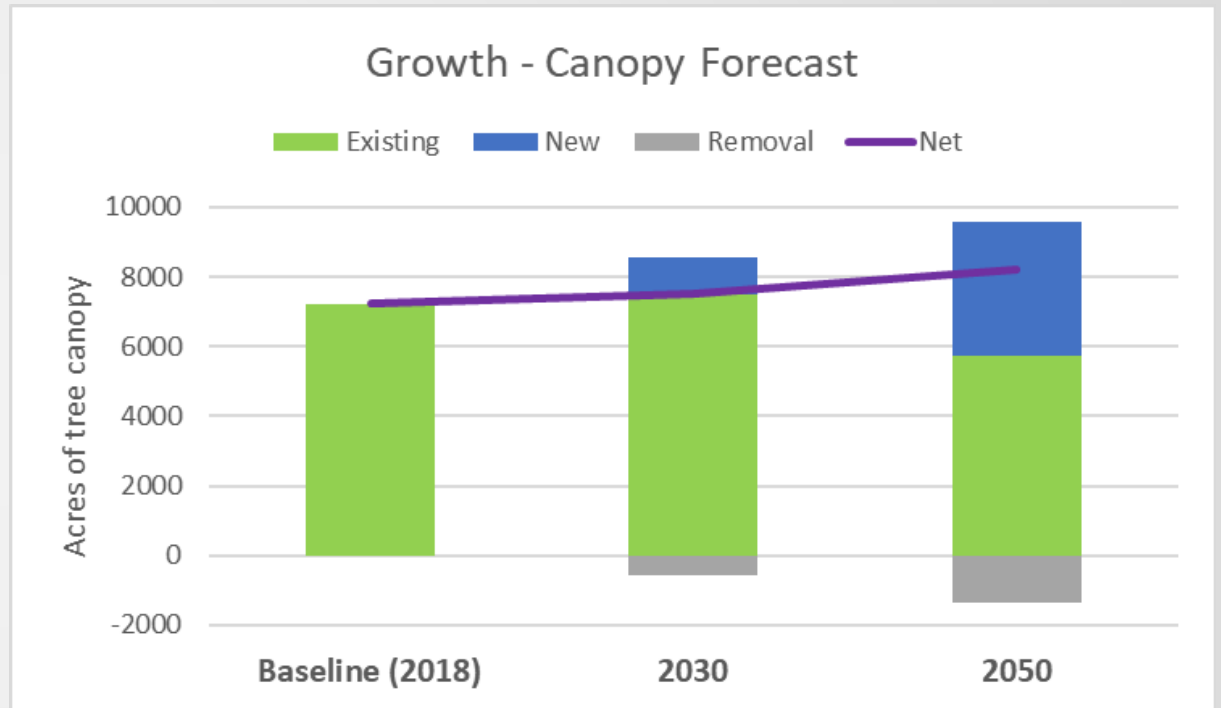


DRAFT VISION STATEMENT

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.

Feedback on Canopy Target

- Supported by 73% of survey respondents, while 21% disagreed
- Technical workshop participants suggested providing more context



CANOPY COVER 40% → 45%

Feedback on Urban Forest Goals

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Not sure

Goal 1: Protect and expand the urban forest in alignment with community values



Goal 2: Protect and restore priority habitat areas, movement corridors, and forests



Goal 3: Manage the urban forest in alignment with best practices



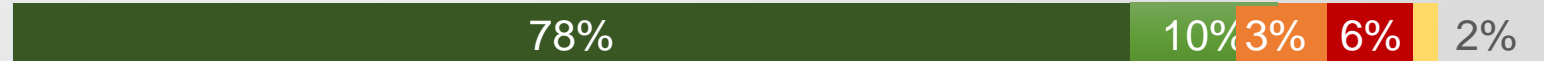
Goal 4: Adapt the urban forest for climate change resilience



Goal 5: Collaborate with diverse people and organizations

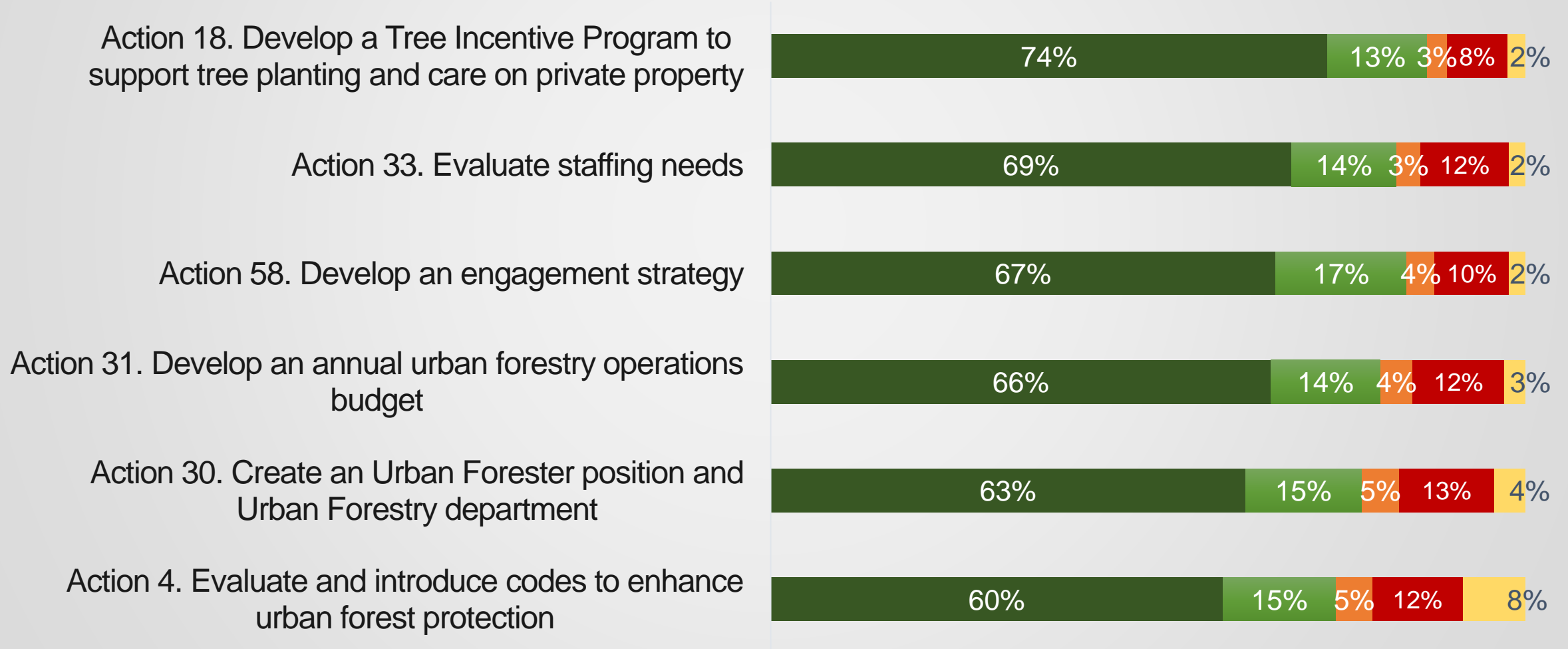


Goal 6: Monitor performance and adapt strategies



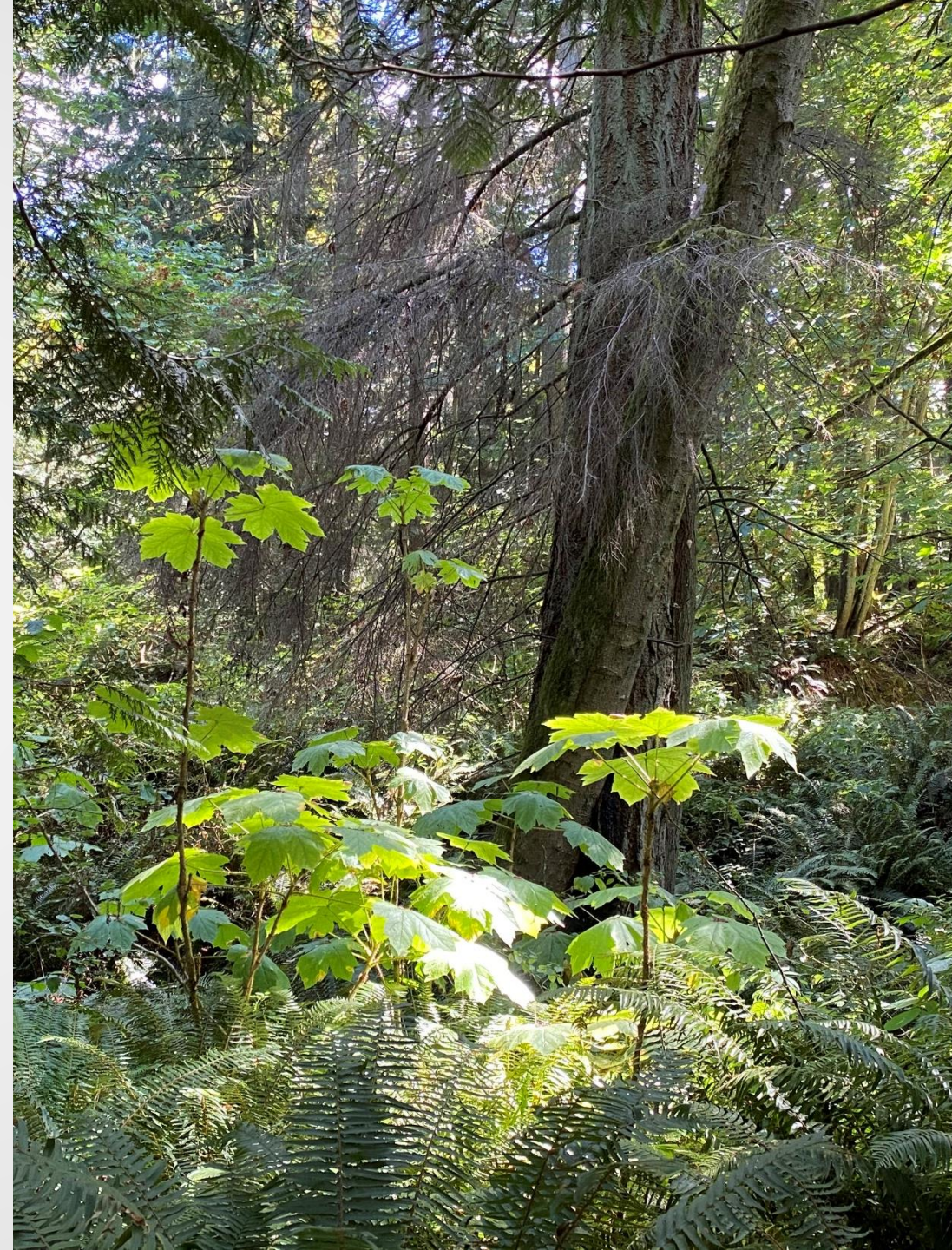
Feedback on 'Quick Start' Actions

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Not sure



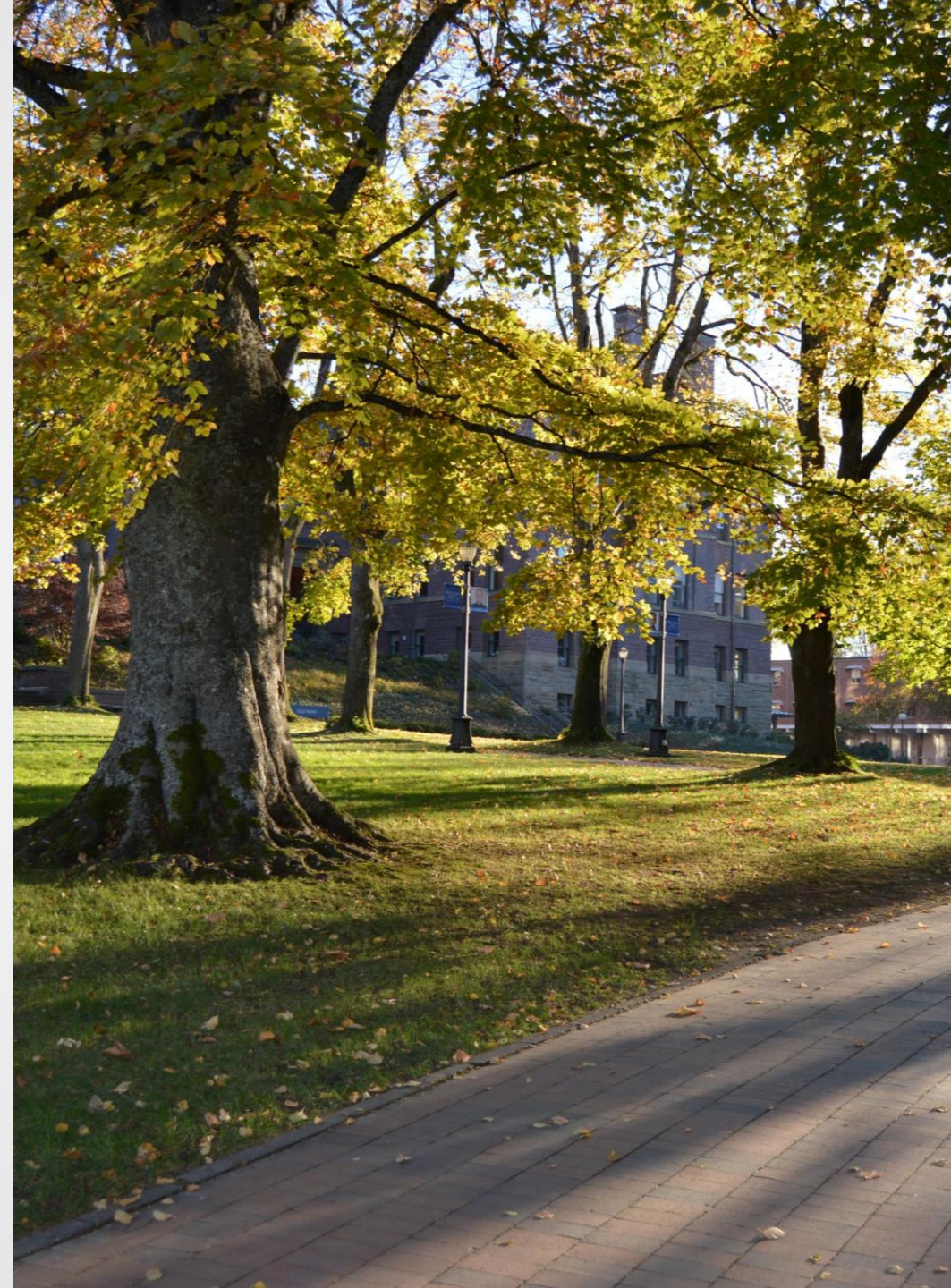
Additional Feedback

- **Integration with other strategic plans and processes** | more detail on compliance and connection with the Growth Management Act, Climate Action Plan, Lake Whatcom Management Program and Comprehensive Plan
- **Public process** | open discussion and consultation before decision-making
- **Balancing priorities** | eco-centric, more discussion on achieving a balance between increasing tree canopy and addressing housing affordability



Additional Feedback

- **Canopy target** | multiple canopy targets for sub-areas, more peer city comparisons to provide context
- **Metrics and methods** | expand land use categories, more detail on assumptions for canopy projections
- **Plan implementation** | more detailed actions, cost estimates, and monitoring



Additional Feedback

- Tree protection | increased tree protection for mature trees
- Additional actions | various actions suggested



Thank you! Questions?

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

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