



Mountlake Terrace City Council
Regular Meeting Agenda
Thursday, September 18, 2025, 7:00 PM
City Hall and via Telephone or Teleconference

AGENDA

1. Call to Order – Flag Salute – Roll Call
2. Late Changes to Agenda
3. General Public Comment
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Payment of Claims
 - b. Meeting Minutes
 - c. Professional Services Agreement with All Together, LLC, for Citywide Branding, Placemaking, and Marketing Strategy
5. Proclamation for Constitution Week
6. Review, Public Hearing, Vote on Ordinance Adopting Urban Forest Management Plan
7. Presentation on Public Safety Costs
8. City Manager’s Report
9. Council Liaison Reports
10. New Business
11. Adjournment

To listen to the meeting via telephone, call 1-253-215-8782. To watch the meeting online: 1) Go to <https://zoom.us/join>; 2) Enter meeting ID 810 1113 9518 and click “join”. No passcode needed.

To make a public comment remotely (Zoom or telephone), in person, or in writing, please refer to the Public Comment and Public Hearing Testimony Protocol on the city website <https://www.cityofmlt.com/129/Agendas-and-Minutes>.

No person shall make personal attacks, or threatening remarks while addressing the Council which disrupts, disturbs, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting. All hate speech will be construed as threatening remarks.



MOUNTLAKE TERRACE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 4, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Mountlake Terrace City Hall and
via Telephone and Teleconference

1. Call to Order – Flag Salute – Roll Call

Mayor Matsumoto Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

City Clerk Jennifer Joki called roll for City Council.

Councilmembers Present

Councilmember Murray
Councilmember Paige
Councilmember Ryan
Councilmember Sonmore
Councilmember Woodard
Mayor Pro Tem Wahl
Mayor Matsumoto Wright

Councilmembers Absent

None.

Guests Present

FIFA Seattle Senior Vice-President of External Affairs Dylan Ordoñez

Staff Members Present

City Attorney Hillary Evans (via Teleconference)
City Clerk Jennifer Joki
Community and Economic Development Director Christy Osborn
Deputy City Manager Carolyn Hope
Economic Development Manager Ryan Doss
Recreation and Parks Director Jeff Betz

2. Late Changes to Agenda

None.

3. General Public Comment

- MLT resident John Blechschmidt commented on the rodent problem and crime in the city.

4. Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda, items a- b was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, and passed by vote; 7-0.

- a. Approval of Payment for 2025 Claims
- b. Meeting Minutes for 8/21/2025 and 8/28/2025

5. Proclamation for National Hispanic and Latino Heritage Month

Mayor Pro Tem Wahl read the proclamation aloud and presented it to the Principal of Mountlake Terrace Elementary School Keira Anderson. Anderson introduced their school's Dual Language Teacher Anabel Hovig and PTA member Ana Alcazar, and gave a brief statement.

6. Proclamation for Welcoming Week

Councilmember Rick Ryan read the proclamation aloud and presented it to the Vice-Chair of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission Teresa Courtney who spoke a few words.

7. Presentation on FIFA World Cup 2026

Economic Development Manager Ryan Doss and FIFA Seattle Senior Vice-President of External Affairs Dylan Ordoñez

Doss introduced Ordoñez who presented on this item to include getting ready for the FIFA tournament in Seattle in 2026, tournament schedule, stadium information, training sites, event footprint in Washington, fan celebration site at Seattle Center, fan events, mobility, city playbooks, milestones ahead, and event poster.

Doss and Ordoñez heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding the large impact and opportunities this provides to the area, encouraging community involvement, information for community participation, FIFA volunteer opportunities, long-term impacts on the area, 3rd of July event in MLT, light rail goes beyond King County, MLT code for short-term rentals, bike share program, draw for teams and times, branding for MLT to encourage visitors, coordination with neighboring cities, and Climate Pledge Arena.

8. Review, Public Hearing, and Vote on Adoption of Resolution Accepting the Property Annexation Petition for 24229 48th Ave W

Community and Economic Development Director Christy Osborn

Osborn presented on this item to include the purpose and process for the property annexation, history of this item at council, and next steps.

A motion to open the public hearing was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl and approved by vote, 7-0. The public hearing was declared open.

Public Hearing Testimony: None.

A motion to close the public hearing was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl and approved by vote, 7-0. The public hearing was declared closed.

A motion to adopt the Resolution Accepting the Property Annexation Petition for 24229 48th Ave W was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, approved by vote; 7-0.

9. Review and Vote on Adoption of Ordinance Amending Code Language Regarding Business License Requirements

Community and Economic Development Director Christy Osborn

Osborn presented on this item to include the purpose, recommendations, municipal code threshold, and change in state law.

Osborn heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding the threshold, benefits to businesses, and how long the current threshold has been in place.

A motion to adopt the Ordinance Amending Code Language Regarding Business License Requirements was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, approved by vote; 7-0.

10. Review and Vote on Adoption of Amended Resolution Accepting Washington State Department of Transportation Funds

Recreation and Parks Director Jeff Betz

Betz presented on this item to include the history, purpose, funding, process, and construction.

A motion to adopt the Amended Resolution Accepting Washington State Department of Transportation Funds by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, approved by vote; 7-0.

11. City Manager's Report

Deputy City Manager Carolyn Hope's report included:

- Chamber of Commerce Wag Fest is this Saturday
- Terrace Talk with the City Manager and our Police Department next Wednesday
- MLT Police Commander King is working with South County Fire on Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program for Mountlake Terrace
- Community Ambassador Program has launched and recruitment underway
- Mountlake Terrace swim teams are back at the pavilion pool
- Police Department building air conditioner software is being fixed
- Kudos to Public Works Water Division and Information Technology teams who received a positive letter from the Washington State Department of Health after the routine sanitary survey.

12. Council Liaison Reports

Councilmember Murray's report included:

- August 26 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission meeting
- August 28 Council work session
- August 30 One-year anniversary of light rail opening
- September 3 Puget Sound Regional Council Economic Development District Board

meeting

- September 29 – October 5 Week Without Driving

Councilmember Woodard's report included:

- August 23 "Get Sauced" Chamber of Commerce hot sauce competition event
- August 28 Council Finance Subcommittee meeting

Councilmember Ryan's report included:

- August 23 "Get Sauced" Chamber of Commerce hot sauce competition event
- September 6 Set up for the Arts of Terrace Show begin, Awards and Reception on September 19, Art Show open to the public on September 20

Councilmember Sonmore's report included:

- Law Enforcement Officer/Firefighter Disability/Retirement Board and Recreation and Park Advisory Commission meetings are next week
- July 23, August 27, and September 24 Fiscal Sustainability Taskforce meetings

Councilmember Paige's report included:

- August 23 "Get Sauced" Chamber of Commerce hot sauce competition event
- Follow up regarding Meeting with the Director of Domestic Violence Program Lauren Steiger and The Getaway Tavern owner

Mayor Pro Tem Wahl's report included:

- September 3 Snohomish County Cities and Towns Executive Board meeting

Mayor Matsumoto Wright's report included:

- August 23 "Get Sauced" Chamber of Commerce hot sauce competition event
- August 25 Snohomish County Conservation Futures Board dinner
- September 3 South Snohomish County Mayors meeting
- September 3 Alliance for Affordable Housing meeting
- September 4 Community Transit Board meeting

13. New Business

- Councilmember Sonmore commented on an email from a resident regarding light rail noise and light pollution and other issues and on the public comment regarding rats and other complaints, someone potentially killing crows in the area, and requested the protocol for when something stolen then seen on an online marketplace.
- Councilmember Paige asked if the city knew Flock had an agreement with Homeland Security and Customs and Border Control when signed the agreement with Flock, and commented on lack of trust in the Flock company.
- Councilmember Sonmore commented on Flock used in other cities and protecting the community, and what Washington State does with data collected from road cameras.

- Councilmember Ryan commented on the Art Show Reception and Awards Ceremony at 6:30 p.m. on September 19 and seeking volunteers this Saturday to help set up the Art Show
- Councilmember Woodard commented on the Traffic Engineer response to speed limit change when cross over 48th at 236th
- Councilmember Sonmore requested the report on failing intersections, accidents, speed limits, etc. like they used to receive.

14. Adjournment

Mayor Matsumoto Wright adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

These minutes are subject to approval at the next City Council meeting.



MOUNTLAKE TERRACE CITY COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MINUTES

September 11, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Mountlake Terrace City Hall and
via Telephone and Teleconference

Councilmembers Present

Mayor Matsumoto Wright
Councilmember Murray
Councilmember Paige
Councilmember Ryan
Councilmember Sonmore
Mayor Pro Tem Wahl

Councilmembers Absent

Councilmember Woodard

Guests

All Together, LLC Brand Strategist Kristian Gist (via teleconference)
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission Chair Scott Matsuda
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission Vice-Chair Teresa Courtney
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commissioner Vonita Francisco
PlanItGeo Urban Forestry Planner Matt Urmson (via teleconference)

Staff Members Present

City Clerk Jennifer Joki
City Manager Jeff Niten
Communications and Community Engagement Manager Sienna Spencer-Markles
Deputy City Manager Carolyn Hope
Economic Development Manager Ryan Doss
Recreation and Parks Director Jeff Betz
Stormwater Program Manager Patrick Hutchins

1. Call to Order

Mayor Matsumoto Wright called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Attendance Roll Call

City Clerk Jennifer Joki called roll.

A motion to excuse Councilmember Woodard was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, and passed by vote; 6-0.

3. General Public Comment

All public comments submitted in writing were provided to Council.

- MLT resident Adam Cickay commented (remotely) on Covid19 and in opposition to the Flock Security Camera agreement.

- MLT resident Gillian Levine commented (remotely) in opposition to the Flock Security Camera agreement.
- MLT resident Susan Kuhn commented in support of the Urban Forest Management Plan.
- MLT resident Audrey Meyer commented in support of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

4. City Manager's Report

City Manager Jeff Niten

Niten's report included:

- Next Community Conversation is on October 2 at the Ballinger Senior Center
- Chamber of Commerce Wag Fest event was successful with an estimated 3,000 people in attendance
- Lodging Tax Grant Funding application period opened on September 10 and goes through October 22

Niten heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding amount in the Lodging Tax Grant Fund, continuation of the grant fund after the redevelopment of the hotel, and the Lodging Tax Grant Fund budgeted amount increase.

5. Review Ordinance Adopting Urban Forest Management Plan

Stormwater Program Manager Patrick Hutchins

Hutchins introduced Matt Urmson of PlanItGeo who presented on this item to include why trees matter, what we learned from the data, plan's vision, goals, and key findings, five urban forest goals, and strategies for implementation.

Hutchins and Urmson heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding trees removed for car wash, development removing trees, fee in lieu of tree removal (money goes into tree fund), developers replanting trees, tree equity score, community surveys and respondents, plan goals, climate change and impact on the plan, funding, appreciation for the work on this plan, mistakes cities make with planting wrong kind of trees, and the heritage tree program.

6. Review Professional Services Agreement for Citywide Branding

Economic Development Manager Ryan Doss and Communications and Community Engagement Manager Sienna Spencer-Markles

Doss and Spencer-Markles introduced Kristian Gist of All Together then presented on this item to include the purpose, council goals, background, scope and timeline, financial and budget implications, and staff recommendation.

Doss, Spencer-Markles, Niten, and Gist heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding choosing an out-of-state consultant, how this plan is different from previous ones, cost analysis, attracting business developers with branding, number of businesses wanting to be in Washington state, space available for development, sense of identity, need right developer to appreciate Mountlake Terrace, marketability, talk with other client's customers regarding results, other customers similar to Mountlake Terrace, metrics for success, part of the World Cup marketing, community engagement, cohesive brand identity, economic development branding and marketing, long-term branding, work in

suburban communities, and help with Town Center development.

7. Presentation on Asset Management Practices: Property Management
Recreation and Parks Director Jeff Betz

Betz introduced Facilities Supervisor Floyd Garrigues then presented on this item to include the purpose, council goals, facility condition assessment, facilities reviewed, financial and budget impacts, and next steps.

Betz and Garrigues heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding the City Hall fix-it list, future costs, preventative maintenance schedule, grant money for repairs, Real Estate Excise Tax as main funding source, partnerships, grant writer, grant schedule, budget choices, councilmembers educated on issues to assist with decisions, tracking and inventory platform, and eye-opening presentation.

8. Review Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan
Deputy City Manager Carolyn Hope

Hope introduced Matsuda, Courtney, and Francisco and all presented this item to include council goals, legislative history, acknowledgements, purpose, definitions, demographics, internal analysis of city operations, external analysis of community members' experiences, and what people love about Mountlake Terrace.

A motion to extend the meeting to 10:25 p.m. was made by Mayor Pro Tem Wahl, seconded, and approved by vote; 6-0.

Hope, Matsuda, Courtney, and Francisco continued the presentation with what residents love about Mountlake Terrace, action plans, and next steps.

Hope, Matsuda, Courtney, and Francisco heard and responded to questions and comments from council regarding online survey, appreciation for the work on this plan, how the survey questions were determined, and funding to accomplish action steps.

9. Review September 18, 2025 Meeting Agenda
The agenda was reviewed by council.

10. Council Comments
Councilmember Murray mentioned Saturday city events, National Day of Service and Luminaria Walk.

Councilmember Ryan recognized today is 9/11.

11. Adjournment
The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 10:16 p.m.

These minutes are subject to approval at the next City Council meeting.



STAFF REPORT

To: Mountlake Terrace City Council

From: Ryan Doss, Economic Development Manager, Sienna Spencer-Markles

Meeting Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: Professional Services Agreement with All Together, LLC, for Citywide Branding, Placemaking, and Marketing Strategy

Required Reviews:

Ryan Doss	Created/Initiated - 09/08/2025
Jeff Niten	Approved - 09/08/2025
Sirke Salminen	Approved - 09/12/2025
Hillary Evans	Final Approval - 09/12/2025

Council Goal(s):

Growing our Vibrant Community

Legislative History:

The City Council reviewed the proposed Professional Services Agreement with All Together, LLC at its September 11, 2025 Work Session meeting.

Subject Summary:

This item provides the City Council with an opportunity to authorize the City Manager to sign the attached Professional Services Agreement with All Together, LLC, pursuant to the City's Request for Proposals for City-Wide Branding and Identity Development, Placemaking, and Strategic Marketing Consulting Services.

The consultants will support the city of Mountlake Terrace in developing a comprehensive and implementable brand identity that reflects the city's unique strengths, community assets, and future vision. The brand will be adaptable across departments, scalable for future growth, and effective across both digital and traditional platforms. It will also guide implementation in high-visibility areas such as Town Center, the light rail station area, and major corridors, while establishing a framework for neighborhood branding in areas like Melody Hill, Gateway, and Lake Ballinger.

In addition, the new brand identity will provide the basis to create the strategy for placemaking and wayfinding implementation and will be foundational to a top-level economic development marketing plan that supports business attraction and investment. A strong, cohesive, and aspirational brand will enhance community pride, tell Mountlake Terrace's story, and position

the city as a vibrant, inclusive, and investment-ready community within the region.

The project advances the City Council’s 2025–2029 Strategic Plan goal of “Growing Our Vibrant Community” and fulfills the Economic Development Strategic Plan (2024–2029) Objective 1.1, Action 1.1a, which calls for establishing and promoting a unified City brand and marketing strategy, engaging partners such as the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Alliance Snohomish County (EASC), and supporting neighborhood identity efforts.

The full scope of work is included in the Request for Proposal and amendments (Exhibit A of the agreement). Generally, the consultant will:

- Discovery and Community Listening – Kickoff, community survey, stakeholder sessions, cultural asset discovery, and market positioning.
- Brand Development – Brand story, visual identity system, neighborhood sub-brand concepts, wayfinding, and placemaking guidelines.
- Marketing Strategy and Implementation – Marketing roadmap, brand guidelines, collateral templates, and a digital asset library.

It is anticipated that this work will be completed by October 31, 2026.

The City issued the Request for Proposals on June 4, 2025, and received 23 submissions by the closing date of July 3, 2025. A staff evaluation committee reviewed and scored proposals based on qualifications, approach, and alignment with City priorities, and conducted interviews with finalists. Following this process, All Together, LLC was selected as the most advantageous proposer due to their expertise in municipal branding, inclusive engagement strategies, and strong track record supporting communities experiencing transit-oriented growth.

Financial/Budget Impacts:

Budget Amendment Required? No

Budget and Sources:	\$68,920.00 - General Fund
Expenditure:	
New Appropriation Required + Sources:	

Community Notifications:

City Council Agenda

If "Other," please specify:

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Attachments:

1. Professional Services Agreement with All Together, LLC

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

This Agreement (“Agreement”) is dated effective this ____ day of _____, 2021. This Agreement is by and between the City of Mountlake Terrace, a Washington municipal corporation (“City”), and All Together, LLC (“Contractor”), collectively known as the parties (“Parties”).

A. The City seeks the professional services of a skilled independent contractor capable of working without direct supervision in the capacity of City-Wide Branding & Identity Development, Placemaking, and Strategic Marketing Consultant Services and is familiar with the City’s municipal code, resolutions, regulations, and policies.

B. The Contractor, by entering into the Agreement, represents that it has the requisite skills and experience necessary to perform and provide such services in a competent and professional manner.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises set forth herein, the Parties agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Services.

1.1 Services. Contractor shall provide the services and equipment as specified pursuant to the terms more specifically described in “Exhibit B – Scope of Services,” and “Exhibit C – Request for Proposal,” attached hereto and incorporated by this reference (“Services”), in a manner consistent with the accepted practices and standards for other similar services, performed to the City's satisfaction, within the time-period prescribed by the City and pursuant to the direction of the City Manager or his or her designee.

1.2 Compliance with Laws. Contractor shall comply with and perform the Services in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and City laws, including, but not limited to, the City of Mountlake Terrace’s Municipal Code, and all other City resolutions, standards or policies, as now existing or hereafter adopted or amended.

1.3 Performance Standard. In the performance of services under this Agreement, Contractor and its employees or designees, promise to exercise the degree of skill and care required by customary and generally accepted practices, standards, and procedures adopted by Contractors’ rendering the same or similar type of service. All duties shall be performed in the manner consistent with those customary and generally accepted practices, and the Contractor shall be responsible for the professional and technical soundness and accuracy of all work and services furnished pursuant to this Agreement.

2. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence upon the effective date of this Agreement and shall expire on October 31, 2026.

3. Termination. Prior to the expiration of the Term, this Agreement may be terminated immediately, with or without cause by the City upon prior written notice to the Contractor. If the Agreement is terminated after partial performance, the City will be obligated to pay only for that portion of the total work authorized under this Agreement that is satisfactorily completed. The Contractor may terminate this Agreement only upon sixty (60) days prior written notice to the City.

4. Compensation.

4.1 Total Compensation. In consideration of the Contractor performing the Services, the City agrees to pay the Contractor in an amount not to exceed a maximum sum of \$68,920.00 on a time and materials basis according to the rates provided in "Exhibit A - Budget, Billing, and Milestones."

4.2 Method of Payment. City will be billed no more often than monthly. Invoices shall contain an itemized breakdown of the services performed on a project basis during the time covered by the invoice. City will pay Contractor by warrant or check within thirty (30) days of the receipt of an invoice. A finance charge of one percent (1%) per month [twelve percent (12%) per annum] will accrue on any unpaid balance outstanding for more than forty-five (45) days.

4.3 Contractor Responsible for Taxes. The Contractor shall be solely responsible for the payment of any taxes imposed by any lawful jurisdiction as a result of the performance and payment of this Agreement.

4.4 Reimbursement of Expenses. The City of Mountlake Terrace is not liable to Contractor for any expenses paid or incurred by Contractor unless otherwise agreed in writing.

5. Contractor to Direct Work. Contractor shall control and direct the performance of the work or project of Contractor pursuant to this Agreement, subject to the City of Mountlake Terrace oversight. The City of Mountlake Terrace reserves the right to inspect, review, and approve of the work or project of Contractor to assure that it has been completed as specified, before payment.

6. Warranty. The Contractor warrants that it has the requisite training, skill, and experience necessary to provide the Services and is appropriately accredited and licensed by all applicable agencies and governmental entities, including but not limited to being registered to do business in the City of Mountlake Terrace by obtaining a City of Mountlake Terrace business registration if required by municipal code.

7. Security and Damages. The Contractor shall be responsible for security of its equipment and assumes all risk of damage, theft or loss to Contractor's equipment and supplies occurring from any nature whatsoever. Additionally, Contractor shall be responsible for any maintenance costs and repair costs resulting from any damage or loss from any source whatsoever to its equipment or supplies. Contractor agrees that neither damage to or loss of its equipment shall be applied to or claimed against City property, City liability insurance or commission revenues owed to the City.

8. Independent Contractor/Conflict of Interest.

8.1 Independent Contractor. It is the intention and understanding of the Parties that the Contractor shall be an independent contractor and that the City shall neither be liable for nor obligated to pay sick leave, vacation pay or any other benefit of employment, nor to pay any social security or other tax, which may arise as an incident of employment. The Contractor shall pay all income and other taxes as due. Industrial or any other insurance, which is purchased for the benefit of the Contractor, shall not be deemed to convert this Agreement to an employment contract.

8.2 City's Right of Supervision and Inspection. Even though Contractor is an independent Contractor with the authority to control and direct the performance and details of the work authorized under this Agreement, the work must meet the approval of the City and shall be subject to the City's general right of inspection and supervision to secure the satisfactory completion thereof.

8.3 Work Performed at Contractor's Risk. Contractor shall take all precautions reasonably necessary and shall be responsible for the safety of its employees, agents and subcontractors in the performance of the work hereunder and shall utilize all protections reasonably necessary for that purpose. All work shall be done at Contractor's own risk, and Contractor shall be responsible for any loss or damage to materials, tools, or other articles used or held for use in connection with the work.

8.4 Conflict of Interest. The Contractor may or will be performing professional services during the term for other parties and that the City is not the exclusive user of services the Contractor will provide, provided, however, that such performance of other services shall not conflict with or interfere with Contractor's ability to perform the Services. Contractor agrees to resolve any such conflicts of interest in favor of the City.

9. Indemnification.

9.1 Contractor Indemnification. Contractor shall defend, indemnify and hold the City, its officers, officials, employees and volunteers harmless from claims, injuries, damages, losses or suits including attorney fees, arising out of or resulting from the acts, errors or omissions of the Contractor (or its employees, agents, representatives, subcontractors/ subconsultants) in performance of this Agreement, whether such claims sound in contract, tort, or other legal theory, except for injuries and damages caused by the sole negligence of the City. The Contractor's duty to defend and indemnify pursuant to this Section is not in any way limited to, or by the extent of, insurance obtained by, obtainable by, or required of the Contractor. Should a court of competent jurisdiction determine that this Agreement is subject to RCW 4.24.115, then in the event of liability for damages arising out of bodily injury to persons or damages to property caused by or resulting from the concurrent negligence of the Contractor and the City, its officers, officials, employees, and volunteers, the Contractor's liability, including the duty and cost to defend, hereunder shall be only to the extent of the Contractor's negligence. It is further specifically and expressly understood that the indemnification provided herein constitutes the Contractor's waiver of immunity under Industrial Insurance, Title 51 RCW, solely for the purposes of indemnification. This waiver has been mutually negotiated by the Parties. If, and to the extent, Contractor employs or engages

subcontractors or subconsultants then Contractor shall ensure that each such subcontractor and subconsultant (and subsequent tiers of subcontractors and subconsultants) shall expressly agree to defend and indemnify the City to the extent and on the same terms and conditions as the Contractor pursuant to this Section 9. The provisions of this section shall survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement.

9.2 Records Request. When the City provides the Contractor with notice of a Public Records Request, Contractor agrees to save, hold harmless, indemnify and defend the City, its officers, agents, employees and elected officials from and against claims, lawsuits, fees, penalties and costs resulting from the Contractor's violation of the Public Records Act RCW 42.56, or Contractor's failure to produce public records as required under the Public Records Act. Records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings have been resolved even though such litigation, claim or audit continues past any formal retention period imposed by Washington State Archives, grant or other applicable law or regulation.

9.3 Survival. The provisions of this Section shall survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement with respect to any event occurring prior to such expiration or termination.

10. Discrimination Prohibited and Compliance with Equal Opportunity Legislation. In all Contractor services, programs or activities, and all Contractor hiring and employment made possible by or resulting from this Agreement, there shall be no discrimination by the Contractor or by Contractor's employees, agents, subcontractors or representatives against any person because of sex, age, (except minimum age and retirement provisions), race, color, creed, national origin, marital status, religion, sexual orientation or the presence of any disability, including sensory, mental, or physical handicaps, based upon a bona fide occupational qualification in relationship to hiring and employment. This requirement shall apply, but not be limited to the following: employment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. The Contractor shall not violate any of the terms of Chapter 49.60 RCW, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or any other applicable federal, state or local law or regulation regarding non-discrimination. Any material violation of this provision shall be grounds for termination of this Agreement by the City and, in the case of the Contractor's breach, may result in ineligibility for further City agreements.

11. Confidentiality.

All information regarding the City obtained by the Contractor in performance of this Agreement shall be considered confidential. The Contractor shall safeguard all written information submitted by the City to the Contractor in connection with the services performed by the Contractor under this Agreement to at least the same extent as the Contractor safeguards like information relating to its own business or profession. Breach of confidentiality by the Contractor will be grounds for immediate termination.

12. Work Product and Ownership of Records and Documents.

All originals and copies of work product, including records, files, documents, reports, plans, sketches, layouts, designs, design specifications, computer disks, magnetic media or material which may be produced or modified by the Contractor while performing the services shall belong to the City. At the termination or cancellation of this Agreement, all copies of any such work product remaining in the possession of the Contractor shall be delivered to the City and shall become the property of the City. Files containing the written record of the Contractor's services shall be delivered to the City.

13. Insurance.

13.1 Insurance Term. The Contractor shall procure and maintain for the duration of the Agreement, insurance against claims for injuries to persons or damage to property which may arise from or in connection with the performance of work hereunder by the Contractor, its agents, representatives, or employees. Contractor shall comply with the following conditions and procure and keep in force during the term of this Agreement, at Contractor's own cost and expense, the following policies of insurance with companies authorized to do business in the State of Washington, which are rated at least "A" or better and with a numerical rating of no less than seven (7), by A.M. Best Company and which are acceptable by the City. Contractor's maintenance of insurance as required by the Agreement shall not be construed to limit the liability of the Contractor to the coverage provided by such insurance, or otherwise limit the City's recourse to any remedy available at law or in equity.

13.2 Minimum Scope of Insurance. Contractor shall obtain insurance of the types described below:

a. Automobile Liability insurance covering all owned, non-owned, hired and leased vehicles. Coverage shall be written on Insurance Services Office (ISO) form CA 00 01 or a substitute form providing equivalent liability coverage.

b. Commercial General Liability insurance shall be written at least as broad on ISO occurrence form CG 00 01 and shall cover liability arising from premises, operations, stop-gap, independent contractors and personal injury and advertising injury. The City shall be named as an additional insured under the Contractor's Commercial General Liability insurance policy with respect to the work performed for the City using an additional insured endorsement at least as broad as ISO CG 20 26.

c. Workers' Compensation coverage as required by the Industrial Insurance laws of the State of Washington.

d. Professional Errors and Omissions Insurance. If both parties agree that the Services do not warrant Contractor providing Professional Errors and Omissions Insurance, Section 13.3.d. may be stricken if this section is initialed by both Parties: _____

13.3 Minimum Insurance Limits. Contractor shall maintain the following insurance limits:

a. Commercial General Liability. \$2,000,000 combined single limit per occurrence for bodily injury personal injury and property damage; \$2,000,000 general aggregate.

b. Automobile Liability. \$1,000,000 combined single limit per accident for bodily injury and property damage.

c. Workers' Compensation. Workers' compensation limits as required by the Workers' Compensation Act of Washington.

d. Professional Liability/Contractor's Errors and Omissions Liability. Insurance shall be written with limits no less than \$2,000,000 per claim and \$2,000,000 policy aggregate limit.

13.4 Notice of Cancellation. In the event that the Contractor receives notice (written, electronic or otherwise) that any of the above required insurance coverage is being cancelled and/or terminated, the Contractor shall immediately (within forty-eight (48) hours) provide written notification of such cancellation/ termination to the City.

13.5 Verification of Coverage. In signing this Agreement, the Contractor is acknowledging and representing that required insurance is active and current. Contractor shall furnish the City with original certificates and a copy of the amendatory endorsements, including but not necessarily limited to the additional insured endorsement, evidencing the insurance requirements of the Agreement before commencement of the work.

13.6 Insurance Shall be Primary - Other Insurance Provision. The Contractor's insurance coverage shall be primary insurance as respect to the City. The Contractor's Automobile Liability and Commercial General Liability insurance policies are to contain, or be endorsed to contain that they shall be primary insurance as respect to the City. Any Insurance, self-insurance, or self-insurance pool coverage maintained by the City shall be excess of the Contractor's insurance and shall not contribute with it.

13.7 Claims-made Basis. Unless approved by the City all insurance policies shall be written on an "Occurrence" policy as opposed to a "Claims-made" policy.

13.8 Failure to Maintain Insurance. Failure on the part of the Contractor to maintain the insurance as required shall constitute a material breach of contract, upon which the City may, after giving five business days' notice to the Contractor to correct the breach, immediately terminate the contract or, at its discretion, procure or renew such insurance and pay any and all premiums in connection therewith, with any sums so expended to be repaid to the City on demand, or at the sole discretion of the City, offset against funds due the Contractor from the City.

13.9 Full Availability of Contractor Limits. If the Contractor maintains higher insurance limits than the minimums shown above, the City shall be insured for the full available limits of

Commercial General and Excess or Umbrella liability maintained by the Contractor, irrespective of whether such limits maintained by the Contractor are greater than those required by this contract or whether any certificate of insurance furnished to the City evidences limits of liability lower than those maintained by the Contractor.

14. Maintenance/Inspection of Records.

14.1 Maintenance and Inspection. The Contractor agrees to maintain books, records, and documents which sufficiently and properly reflect all direct and indirect costs and expenses allowable under this Agreement related to the performance of the Services and maintain such accounting procedures and practices as may be deemed necessary by the City to assure proper accounting of all funds paid pursuant to this Agreement. These records shall be subject, at all reasonable times, to inspection, review or audit by the City, its authorized representative, the State Auditor, or other governmental officials authorized by law to monitor this Agreement. If any litigation, claim or audit is commenced, the contractor shall cooperate with the City and assist in the production of all such documents.

14.2 Public Records. The Parties agree that this Agreement and records related to the performance of the Agreement are, with limited exception, public records subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act RCW 42.56. Contractor acknowledges that any record, document, work product or correspondence created by contractor may be subject to the Public Records Act.

Further, in the event of a Public Records Request to the City, the City may provide the Contractor with a copy of the Records Request and the Contractor shall provide copies of any City records in Contractor's possession, necessary to fulfill that Public Records Request. If the Public Records Request is large the Contractor will provide the City with an estimate of reasonable time needed to fulfill the records request.

15. Dispute Resolution.

15.1 Informal Resolution. In the event of a dispute, a party shall notify the other party of the dispute with as much detail as possible. The City and Contractor shall use good faith efforts to resolve the dispute within ten (10) business days. If the Parties' business representatives are unable to resolve the dispute, or agree upon the appropriate corrective action to be taken, within such ten (10) business days, then either party may initiate mediation. Both Parties will continue without delay to carry out all their respective responsibilities under this Agreement. The Parties shall share the mediator's fee and any filing fees equally. The mediation shall be held in the place where the mediator is located, unless another location is mutually agreed upon. Agreements reached in mediation shall be enforceable as settlement agreements in any court having jurisdiction thereof.

15.2 Injunctive Relief. Nothing contained in this Section shall limit or delay the right of either party to seek injunctive relief from a court of competent jurisdiction, whether or not such party has pursued informal resolution in accordance with this Section.

16. Compliance with Grant Terms and Conditions. Contractor shall comply with any and all conditions, terms and requirements of any federal, state or other grant that wholly or partially funds Contractor's work hereunder.

17. General Provisions.

17.1 Entire Agreement. This Agreement contains all of the agreements of the Parties with respect to any matter covered or mentioned in this Agreement and no prior agreements shall be effective for any purpose. All attachments and addendum are incorporated herein by this reference, and shall be a part of this Agreement.

17.2 Modification. No provisions of this Agreement may be amended, modified or an additional obligation assumed by either Party except by written agreement signed by the Parties.

17.3 Full Force and Effect. Any section or provision of this Agreement which is adjudicated invalid or illegal shall in no way affect or invalidate any other section or provision hereof and such other sections or provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

17.4 Subletting/Assignment. Neither the Contractor nor the City shall have the right to sublet, transfer or assign, in whole or in part, any or all of its obligations and rights hereunder without the prior written consent of the other party.

17.5 Attorney Fees. In the event either party brings a lawsuit to enforce the terms of this Agreement, or arising from a breach of this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to its costs and attorneys' fees for bringing or defending against the action.

17.6 No Waiver. Failure or delay of the City to declare any breach or default immediately upon occurrence shall not waive such breach or default. Failure of the City to declare one breach or default does not act as a waiver of the City's right to declare another breach or default.

17.7 Governing Law and Venue. This Agreement shall be governed by, construed, and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington; venue shall be in Snohomish County.

17.8 Authority. Each individual executing this Agreement on behalf of the City and the Contractor represents and warrants that such individuals are duly authorized to execute and deliver this Agreement on behalf of the Contractor or the City.

17.9 Notices. Any notices required to be given by the Parties shall be delivered at the addresses set forth below. Any notices may be delivered personally or may be deposited in the United States mail, postage prepaid, to the address set forth below. Any notice so posted in the United States mail shall be deemed received three (3) days after the date of mailing.

17.10 No Third Party Beneficiary. It is the specific intent of the Parties, and all Parties agree, that this Agreement shall not confer third party beneficiary status on any non-party.

17.11 No Joint Venture. This Agreement does not create a partnership or joint venture, and in carrying out this Agreement, the Parties shall act in their individual capacities and not as agents, employees, or partners of one another.

17.12 Survivability. The obligation of Contractor under all provisions of this Agreement, which may reasonably be interpreted or construed as surviving the completion, termination, or cancellation of this Agreement shall survive the completion, termination, or cancellation of this Agreement.

17.13 Contractor Payments. In the event the Contractor fails to pay any taxes, assessments, penalties, or fees imposed by any governmental body, including a court of law, then the City shall have the right but not the obligation and the Contractor authorizes the City to deduct and withhold or pay over to the appropriate governmental body those unpaid amounts upon demand by the governmental body. It is agreed that this provision shall apply to taxes and fees imposed by City ordinance. Any such payments shall be deducted from the Contractor's total compensation.

Executed on the dates written below.

CONTRACTOR

CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

By:

By:

Name, Title

Jeff Niten, City Manager

Address:

23204 58th Avenue W
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

Date: _____

Date: _____

Approved as to form:

Hillary J. Evans, City Attorney

Exhibit A
Budget, Billing, and Milestones

Exhibit A: Budget, Billing, and Milestones

A1. Total Budget & Billing

The total budget for this project is not to exceed \$68,920.

Per Section 4.2 of the agreement, the contractor can bill no more than monthly for time and materials incurred during that reporting period, with a total project billing of up to \$65,670 in labor costs and \$3,250 in expenses.

A2. Budget & Milestones per Phase of Work and Task

Per Section 2 of the agreement, this agreement expires on October 31, 2026. The interim deliverable costs and milestones are listed below.

Phase	Cost	Schedule
1: Discovery & Community Listening	\$23,760	August – November 2025
2: Brand Development	\$28,380	December - March 2026
3: Marketing Strategy & Brand Implementation	\$13,530	April – June 2026
Subtotal for Labor	\$65,670	
Expenses	\$3,250	
Total	\$68,920	

A3. Billing Rates

Employee Name	Title	Hourly Rate
Rachael Aziz	Principal	\$200
Kristian Gist	Brand Strategist	\$185
Robin Marquand	Designer	\$135

EXHIBIT B

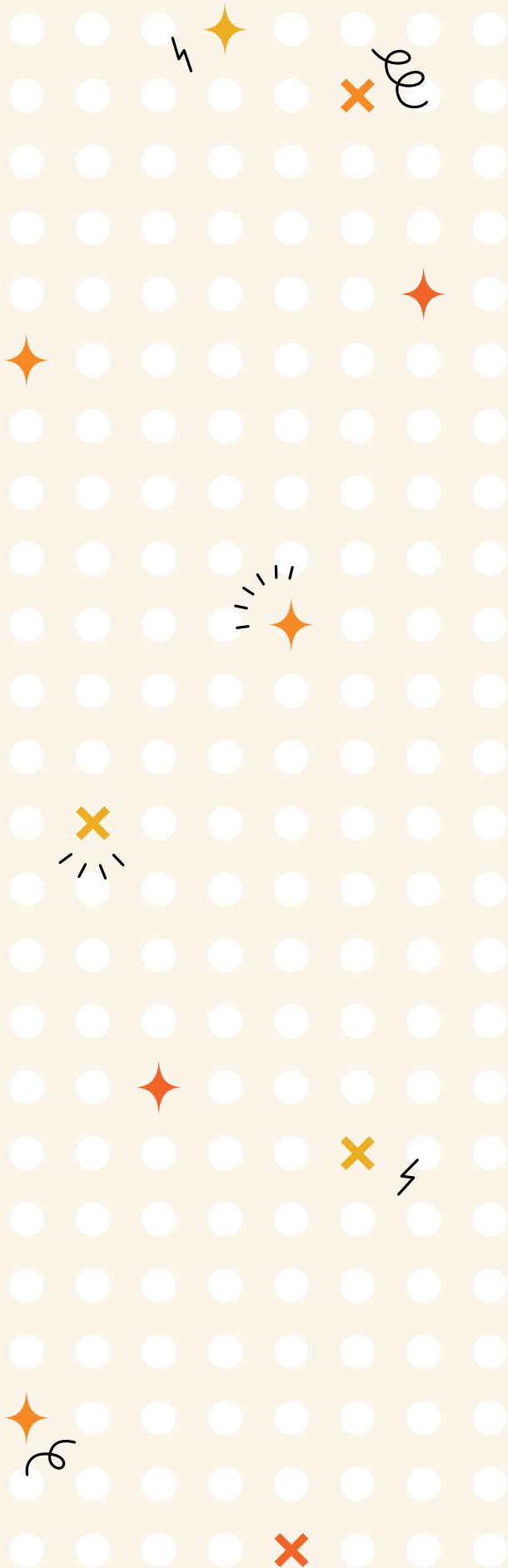
Scope of Services

IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT,
PLACEMAKING, AND
STRATEGIC MARKETING FOR

City of Mountlake Terrace

All
Together.

JULY 2, 2025



All Together.

is a design studio focused on community engagement, branding, and placemaking. Our engagement results in joyful experiences for communities and their stakeholders through the built environment, branded communications, or programming that captures the spirit of the place.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*From the very beginning of each project, we craft a strategic and fully inclusive **engagement process**—from one-on-one conversations to engaging group conversations to broad-reaching online platforms.*



BRANDING & COMMUNICATIONS

*We work to instill pride in a sense of place and ensure all project deliverables capture the essence of a place and its people through powerful narrative, **creative messaging and beautiful design**.*



PLACEMAKING & STORYTELLING

*We ensure communities **tell their story** through programming and the built environment.*

ALL TOGETHER IS A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP
INCORPORATED IN ILLINOIS. WE ARE A REGISTERED WBE/DBE
WITH THE CITY OF CHICAGO.

We branded Obama's pride and joy and a national monument...



... and we shaped the future of Chicago with the City's first master plan since the 1960s.



We captured the identity of one of Indy's cultural district with a rich history...



... and helped tell the stories of a vibrant community and former Underground Railroad site in Kansas City, Kansas.



Introduction & Design Philosophy

Mountlake Terrace stands at a defining moment.

With Link light rail now connecting your community to the broader region, thousands of new visitors are discovering what residents have always known—that MLT is a place worth calling home. This influx of attention creates an opportunity to reshape perceptions and fuel economic growth.

All Together specializes in exactly this type of transformation. We're urban planners, brand strategists, and designers who understand that successful municipal branding must honor a community's authentic character while positioning it for its next chapter.

Your RFP resonates deeply with our work and here's why:



WE NAVIGATE AND LEVERAGE PIVOTAL MOMENTS.

Our portfolio includes extensive work with cities navigating similar shifts—where transit investments create new possibilities, where diverse populations need to see themselves reflected in their community's story, and where economic development requires both resident pride and external investment attraction.

For Mountlake Terrace, this means creating a brand that honors your working-class roots, celebrates your multicultural community, and positions MLT as a vibrant, transit-accessible destination ready for its next chapter.

WE ENGAGE AND LISTEN.

Throughout our work, we prioritize inclusive processes that center community voice and reflect authentic diversity. We understand that meaningful brand development requires deep listening, particularly in communities like MLT, where multiple languages are spoken and various cultural perspectives enrich the community fabric.

Our engagement strategies are designed to reach beyond typical stakeholder groups, ensuring that brand development truly reflects the full spectrum of





community voices. We work closely with municipal partners to identify trusted community connectors, utilize multiple engagement formats (in-person and virtual), and provide translation support to ensure broad participation. This inclusive approach results in brands that residents genuinely recognize and take pride in.

WE KNOW HOW CITIES WORK.

As urban planners and creatives, we understand the unique challenges of governmental branding—from navigating municipal budget constraints to creating flexible brand systems that serve multiple departments. Our experience with economic development organizations, tourism boards, and regional partnerships positions us to deliver a brand that works for City Council presentations, developer recruitment, and neighborhood pride-building alike.

WE FOCUS ON ACTIVATION.

Our approach to placemaking integrates visual identity with the built environment, creating cohesive experiences that help people navigate, understand, and connect with place. We've developed scalable wayfinding systems and placemaking strategies that work across diverse contexts—from intimate neighborhood settings to major civic corridors. This holistic approach ensures that brand identity isn't just something people see, but something they experience as they move through and engage with your community.



In summary, this work excites us.

We are passionate about helping communities like Mountlake Terrace discover and amplify their unique stories. Through our collaborative approach, we aim to craft a memorable brand identity that not only celebrates what makes MLT special but also supports sustainable growth.

Approach & Scope

A successful brand captures the soul of a place. This project is about more than creating a cohesive visual identity. It's about amplifying what makes MLT distinct: its tight-knit community spirit, its diverse voices, its strategic location, and its bright future as a destination worth discovering.

Our approach celebrates the human stories that make places memorable. We will work collaboratively with City leadership, residents, and stakeholders to create a brand that honors MLT's roots while positioning the community for growth. This isn't just a branding process—it's a partnership to help Mountlake Terrace tell its most compelling story.

The result will be a flexible, scalable brand system that unifies the City while celebrating neighborhood uniqueness, supports economic development goals, and creates lasting civic pride.

PHASE 1

DISCOVERY + COMMUNITY LISTENING

August - November 2025

Task 1.1: Project Kickoff & Alignment

Host a project kickoff meeting with City staff to confirm goals, expectations, timeline, and roles. Establish shared understanding of deliverables and identify key stakeholder groups. We recommend forming a Project Team that includes city staff, council members, and community partners to provide feedback throughout the process.

Task 1.2: Brand + Communications Audit

Review MLT's existing brand identity, messaging, and communications materials across all channels, including the current logo, website, signage, and digital platforms. Assess current photography assets and gaps.

Task 1.3: Community Survey

Design and launch a community survey to gather input on brand perceptions, community values, and growth priorities. Support outreach through City channels and community networks to ensure strong, representative participation.

Task 1.4: Community + Cultural Asset Discovery (TRIP 1)

Research Mountlake Terrace's unique history and evolution, from quiet residential community to emerging transit-oriented destination. Conduct a guided tour with City staff to understand key locations, institutions, and community gathering spaces. Explore how the city's diverse cultural landscape and proximity to Seattle inform its identity.

Task 1.5: Stakeholder Listening Sessions (TRIP 1)

Facilitate 6-8 listening sessions with diverse community voices, including City leadership, Planning Commission, advisory commissions, residents, business owners, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County (EASC), and the development community. Sessions will uncover existing perceptions, aspirations, and the role community pride plays in shaping MLT's future. These sessions will be a combination of in-person and virtual conversations.

Task 1.6: Market Positioning + Audience Analysis

Analyze MLT's position relative to neighboring communities and comparable transit-oriented cities, while defining key audiences for economic development including potential businesses, developers, investors, and visitors. Identify what makes Mountlake Terrace unique—its community character, business environment, accessibility, and growth potential—and translate these insights into core positioning opportunities and targeted market strategies aligned with MLT's strategic plans.

Task 1.7: Strategic Visioning Workshop (TRIP 2)

Facilitate a collaborative virtual workshop with the Project Team to align on strategic priorities, audience personas, and messaging direction. Share discovery insights and early themes that will guide brand development.

Task 1.8: Presentation to City Leadership

Present comprehensive discovery findings virtually to City leadership and Council, including community insights, competitive analysis, and brand positioning recommendations. Gather feedback to inform Phase 2 development.

Approach & Scope (continued)

PHASE 2

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

December 2025 - March 2026

Task 2.1: Brand Platform

Develop MLT's brand story that connects its heritage with its future vision. Create storytelling frameworks and sample content that City staff can use across communications channels. Include guidance for highlighting community diversity and economic development opportunities.

Task 2.2: Logo Enhancement + Visual Identity System

Working within the requirement to retain the existing logo, develop creative enhancements and flexible applications that improve functionality across signage, digital, and print uses. Design complementary visual elements, including typography, color palette, and graphic system. Present three distinct approaches with multiple rounds of collaborative refinement.

Task 2.3: Brand System + Neighborhood Strategy

Create a scalable brand architecture that serves the unified City identity while allowing for neighborhood distinctiveness. Develop recommendations for sub-area identity development (Melody Hill, Gateway, Cascade View, Lake Ballinger, Cedar Terrace), including high-level visual concepts and naming considerations that demonstrate how the broader brand system adapts at the neighborhood level. Provide comprehensive recommendations for how the brand works across departments, future district branding initiatives, and partnership communications.

Task 2.4: Brand Development Presentation (TRIP 3)

Present refined brand concepts and system strategy to the Project Team and City Council for review and final input before moving to implementation planning.

Task 2.5: Wayfinding System Design

Develop a wayfinding strategy that enhances navigation while reinforcing brand identity. Design a family of signage types, including gateway signs, wayfinding directionals, and district identifiers. Create conceptual designs that can be implemented by City staff.

Task 2.6: Placemaking Design Guidelines

Create a visual framework for placemaking elements, including street furniture, lighting, public art considerations, and environmental graphics. Develop guidelines that support a cohesive aesthetic while allowing for neighborhood character and future development flexibility.

PHASE 3

MARKETING STRATEGY + BRAND IMPLEMENTATION

April - June 2026

Task 3.1: Marketing Strategy

Develop a marketing roadmap with near- and long-term strategies for business attraction, visitor promotion, and community pride building. Include channel recommendations, content strategies, partnership opportunities, and key performance indicators (KPIs) with measurement tools for evaluating brand success. Create a phased implementation plan that City staff can execute over time, prioritizing high-impact applications and providing timeline recommendations for brand deployment across all channels.

Task 3.2: Brand Application Templates

Work with staff to create a select number of branded collateral templates to work from as a baseline in the creation of future collateral. This could include presentation design, flyer design, postcards, or maps. Provide City staff with tools for consistent brand implementation across platforms.

Task 3.3: Brand Guidelines

Deliver a brand guide covering all visual elements, messaging standards, photography direction, and application guidelines. Include "dos and don'ts" for City staff and external partners with clear usage standards.

Task 3.4: Digital Asset Library

Provide an organized digital toolkit including logo files, templates, and brand assets accessible across City departments. Deliver files in multiple formats optimized for various applications. Provide a brand training session for key City staff to ensure successful adoption and consistent application.

Cost Estimate

Mountlake Terrace Brand

Wednesday, July 2, 2025

Work Scope/Phases/Tasks/Hours/Fees

ALL TOGETHER

Staff Hours

PHASE ONE	Task 1.1: Project Kickoff & Alignment	12
	Task 1.2: Brand & Communications Audit	8
	Task 1.3: Community Survey	12
	Task 1.4: Community + Cultural Asset Discovery (TRIP 1)	30
	Task 1.5: Stakeholder Listening Sessions (TRIP 1)	16
	Task 1.6: Market Positioning + Audience Analysis	16
	Task 1.7: Strategic Visioning Workshop (TRIP 2)	32
	Task 1.8: Presentation to City Leadership	18
	<i>Phase One Subtotal Hours</i>	<i>144</i>
	<i>Phase One Subtotal Professional Fee</i>	<i>\$23,760</i>

PHASE TWO	Task 2.1: Brand Platform	32
	Task 2.2: Logo Enhancement + Visual Identity System	40
	Task 2.4: Brand System + Neighborhood Strategy	24
	Task 2.5: Brand Development Presentation (TRIP 3)	20
	Task 2.6: Wayfinding System Design	32
	Task 2.7: Placemaking Design Guidelines	24
	<i>Phase Two Subtotal Hours</i>	<i>172</i>
	<i>Step Two Subtotal Professional Fee</i>	<i>\$28,380</i>

PHASE THREE	Task 3.1: Marketing Strategy	24
	Task 3.2: Brand Application Templates	24
	Task 3.3: Brand Guidelines	18
	Task 3.4: Digital Asset Library	16
	<i>Phase Three Subtotal Hours</i>	<i>82</i>
	<i>Phase Three Subtotal Professional Fee</i>	<i>\$13,530</i>

Total Hours 398

Subtotal Professional Fee \$65,670

Subtotal Professional Fee = \$	65,670	Blended Hourly Rate
Expenses* \$	3,250	
Total Project Budget = \$	68,920	
		\$165

*Includes flights and hotels for three trips



RACHAEL AZIZ AICP

PRINCIPAL • DESIGN

PROJECT MANAGER

Contact

-  847.261.4047
-  raziz@alltogetherstudio.com
-  /rachaelkelsey
-  alltogetherstudio.com

Education

- DePaul University**
Master of Sustainable Urban Development
- University of Wisconsin - Madison**
Bachelor of Fine Arts
Minor in Business

Affiliations

- Adjunct Faculty Member — DePaul University, Sustainable Urban Development Program
- CNU IL Board Member
- American Planning Association
- AIGA Chicago
- Center for Neighborhood Technology Young Innovators
- SEGDC Chicago

About

Rachael is a designer and AICP-certified urban planner with a passion for creating place-based brand identities that are rooted in empathy, equity, and storytelling. As a co-founder of All Together, she leads branding and experiential marketing campaigns that bring visibility, pride, and clarity to communities of all sizes.

With a background in both planning and design, Rachael's work lives beyond the screen—on signage, public art, wayfinding systems, and along trails and streetscapes across the country. She is known for her thoughtful engagement style, her ability to put stakeholders at ease, and her talent for transforming community insight into visual systems that resonate.

Rachael is trained in ICA's Technology of Participation and brings an inclusive, people-first lens to every step of the branding process—from discovery to rollout.

Project Experience

PLACE BRANDING + COMMUNICATIONS

- Village of Glenview Rebrand | Glenview, IL *Ongoing*
- Lake Plain Brand Positioning | Lake County Forest Preserves | Lake County, IL *Ongoing*
- Visit Oak Park Rebrand | Oak Park Area CVB 2025
- West St. Paul | City of West St. Paul, MN 2025
- Brown County Branding | Action Brown County, IL 2024
- Enjoy Evanston District Branding | City of Evanston, IL 2024
- Park Ridge Rebrand | City of Park Ridge, IL 2024
- Northeast Kansas City Heritage Trail Brand | MARC, Kansas City, KS 2022
- Downtown Evanston Rebrand | Downtown Evanston | Evanston, IL 2022
- Central Street Evanston Rebrand | City of Evanston | Evanston, IL 2022
- Downtown Lemont Branding + Communications | Village of Lemont | Lemont, IL 2021
- Antioch Marketing Strategy | Village of Antioch | Antioch, IL 2021
- Historic Pullman Foundation Brand | Pullman National Monument | Chicago, IL 2021
- Clark Street Brand Guide* | Rogers Park Business Alliance | Chicago, IL 2019

PLACEMAKING & STORYTELLING

- Downtown Racine Racineassaince | WEDC | Racine, WI 2024
- Adventures in Stockton | Galena Country Tourism | Stockton, IL 2023
- Uncover Antioch Scavenger Hunt | Village of Antioch | Antioch, IL 2022
- Argyle Lantern Installation | Uptown United | Chicago, IL 2021
- Winter Games Activations + Programming | City of Evanston | Evanston, IL 2021
- Lunar New Year Activation | Uptown United | Chicago, IL 2021
- Joy on Central Activation | Central Street Corridor | Evanston, IL 2020



MARISA SCHULZ LEED NCI

PRINCIPAL • STRATEGY

Contact

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-  alltogetherstudio.com

Education

University of Texas - Austin
Master of Community and Regional Planning

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Bachelor of Arts in English
Minor in Spanish

Affiliations

- Adjunct Faculty Member —
DePaul University, Sustainable Urban Development Program
- Lambda Alpha International —
Ely Chapter
- Congress for New Urbanism
- American Planning Association
- Urban Land Institute
- CNU Central Texas —
Former Board Member

About

Marisa is an urban planner, writer, and facilitator with over 20 years of experience leading place-based communications projects across the public, private, and civic sectors. As a co-founder of All Together, she brings a unique ability to translate complex community narratives into clear, compelling brand strategies rooted in engagement and equity.

From Detroit to Austin to Santiago, Chile, Marisa has worked alongside communities to ensure their voices shape how places are seen, valued, and invested in. Her work has been featured in national outlets including *Bloomberg*, *The New York Times*, and *USA Today*, and she has branded major planning studies that helped drive public support and implementation.

Marisa is also an educator and certified facilitator through the National Charrette Institute. She brings depth, clarity, and care to every project—ensuring the resulting brand reflects not only where a place is going, but who it's for.

Project Experience

BRANDING

- Village of Glenview Rebrand | Glenview, IL *Ongoing*
- Visit Oak Park Rebrand | Oak Park Area CVB *Ongoing*
- West St. Paul | City of West St. Paul, MN *Ongoing*
- Park Ridge Rebrand | City of Park Ridge | IL 2023
- Northeast Kansas City Heritage Trail Brand | MARC, Kansas City, KS 2022
- Downtown Evanston Rebrand | Downtown Evanston | Evanston, IL 2022
- Central Street Evanston Rebrand | City of Evanston | Evanston, IL 2022
- Illinois Housing Council Rebrand | IHC | Chicago, IL 2022
- Downtown Lemont Branding + Communications | Village of Lemont | Lemont, IL 2021
- Historic Pullman Foundation Brand | Pullman National Monument | Chicago, IL 2021
- Organizational Branding | Illinois Science & Technology Coalition | Illinois 2021
- Antioch Marketing Strategy + Brand | Village of Antioch | Antioch, IL 2021

PLANNING + ENGAGEMENT

- Uplift Cook Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy | Cook County, IL *Ongoing*
- Chicago Central Area Plan | City of Chicago | Chicago, IL *Ongoing*
- Downtown Durham Blueprint 2035 | Downtown Durham, Inc. | Durham, NC 2025
- Nassau County, FL Branding | Nassau County, FL 2024
- LaSalle Reimagined | City of Chicago | Chicago, IL 2024
- Odawa Prosperity Project | Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians | MI 2024
- We Will Chicago Master Plan | City of Chicago | Chicago, IL 2023



All Together.

KRISTIAN GIST

BRAND STRATEGIST

Contact

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in [/kristiangist](https://www.instagram.com/kristiangist)

🌐 alltogetherstudio.com

Education

DePaul University
Bachelor of Science in Business
Management and Entrepreneurship

About

Kristian is a brand strategist and copywriter who specializes in helping organizations uncover and articulate their most authentic stories. With over a decade of experience spanning marketing, sales, and strategic planning, she brings a multidisciplinary lens to every project—bridging creative messaging with real-world impact.

Kristian's work is rooted in community, with a strong focus on elevating minority- and women-owned businesses. Her storytelling strategies have helped brands land national media placements, secure millions in funding, and form transformational partnerships. Whether shaping a new identity or refining a brand's voice, Kristian brings clarity, empathy, and intention to her work.

For municipalities and mission-driven organizations, she offers a strategic voice that aligns messaging with values—ensuring the brand resonates with internal stakeholders and the broader public alike.

Project Experience

PLACE BRANDING + COMMUNICATIONS

- Village of **Glenview Rebrand** | Glenview, IL *Ongoing*
- **Lake Plain Brand Positioning** | Lake County Forest Preserves | Lake County, IL *Ongoing*
- **We Rise Together** | Chicago Community Trust | Chicago, IL *Ongoing*
- **Visit Oak Park Rebrand** | Oak Park Area CVB *Ongoing*
- **Enjoy Evanston District Branding** | City of Evanston, IL *2024*
- **Downtown Evanston Rebrand** | Downtown Evanston | Evanston, IL *2022*
- **Downtown Lemont Branding + Communications** | Village of Lemont | Lemont, IL *2021*
- **Global Girls Foundation, + Christina Nairobi Branding + Website** | NYC, NY *Ongoing*
- **My Happy Flo Branding + Creative Direction** | My Happy Flo | Atlanta, GA *Ongoing*
- **SPACE Branding + Creative Direction** | Miki Clayton Talent | Washington, DC | *Ongoing*
- **Relentless Achiever Branding + Product Dev.** | Relentless Achiever | London, UK *2022*
- **High Impact Moments Branding + Product Dev.** | New York, NY *2022*
- **Today I Did It Right Branding + Product Development** | T/D/R | Lund, Sweden *March 2021*
- **Play Like a Girl Rebrand + Email Marketing + Lead Generation** | Nashville, TN *2021*

PLACEMAKING & STORYTELLING

- **Downtown Racine Racineassaince** | WEDC | Racine, WI *2024*
- **Adventures in Stockton** | Galena Country Tourism | Stockton, IL *2023*
- **Beck Park Heritage Storytelling** | City of Evanston | Evanston, IL *2024*



ROBIN MARQUAND

DESIGNER

Contact

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in [/robin-marquand](#)

🌐 alltogetherstudio.com

Education

Maryville University of Saint Louis
Bachelor of Fine Arts,
Graphic Design

Saint Louis Community College
Associates of Architecture

Awards

2025 St. Louis ADDYs:

Gold, Social Media
Single Execution
Parks in Your Palm
Enterprise Holdings

Judges Citation,
Hand Craft Work
Parks in Your Palm
Enterprise Holdings

Silver,
Art Direction
Parks in Your Palm
Enterprise Holdings

About

Robin is a multidisciplinary designer with a background in both architecture and visual communication. She brings a systems-thinking approach to branding, combining thoughtful strategy with bold, inclusive design. Her work is rooted in storytelling and community engagement, often using illustration and playful visual language to create accessible, people-centered identities.

At All Together, Robin contributes to the development of brand systems that are flexible, meaningful, and visually cohesive—always with an eye toward equity and authenticity. Her interest in disability justice and mutual aid shapes her design values, and her curiosity about place makes her a natural fit for projects like where history, identity, and future vision intersect.

Project Experience

BRANDING + COMMUNICATIONS

- Village of Glenview Rebrand | Glenview, IL *Ongoing*
- Lake Plain Brand Positioning | Lake County Forest Preserves | Lake County, IL *Ongoing*
- Downtown Lemont Branding + Communications | Village of Lemont | IL *Ongoing*
- We Rise Together | Chicago Community Trust | Chicago, IL *Ongoing*
- Visit Oak Park Rebrand | Oak Park Area CVB 2025
- Digital Farming Sustainability Identity Design | Bayer | St. Louis, MO 2024*
- Parks in Your Palm Social Execution | Enterprise Holdings | St. Louis, MO 2024*
- National Parks Week Concepts + Execution | Enterprise Holdings | St. Louis, MO 2024*
- Cinematic Castles Social Execution | Enterprise Holdings | St. Louis, MO 2024*
- Terrain Identity Expansion | Terrain | St. Louis, MO 2023*
- New Business Models New Identity Expansion | Bayer NBM | St. Louis, MO 2023*
- Food Security Campaign | Bayer | St. Louis, MO 2022*
- In-Office Mural Design + Execution | Panzura | St. Louis, MO 2021*
- ThriveBook Passport Style Vegan Booklet | Personal Project | St. Louis, MO 2019 -2020*

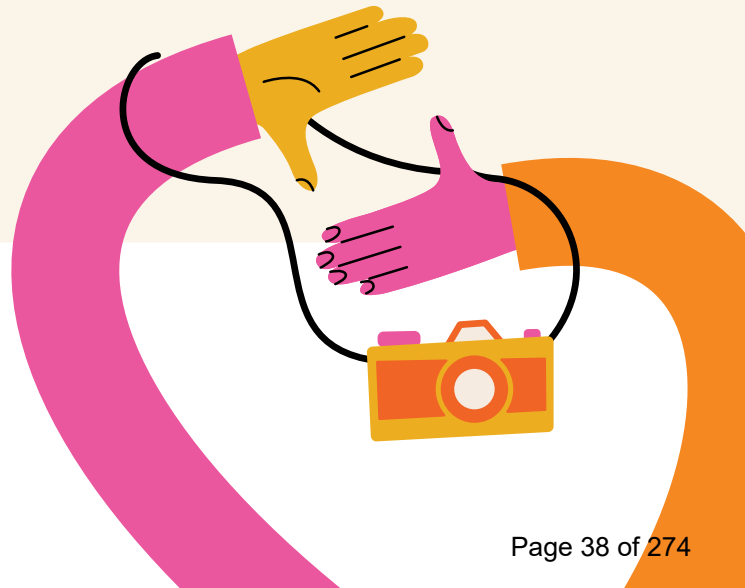
**Completed while at a former employer*

Portfolio & Supplemental Materials

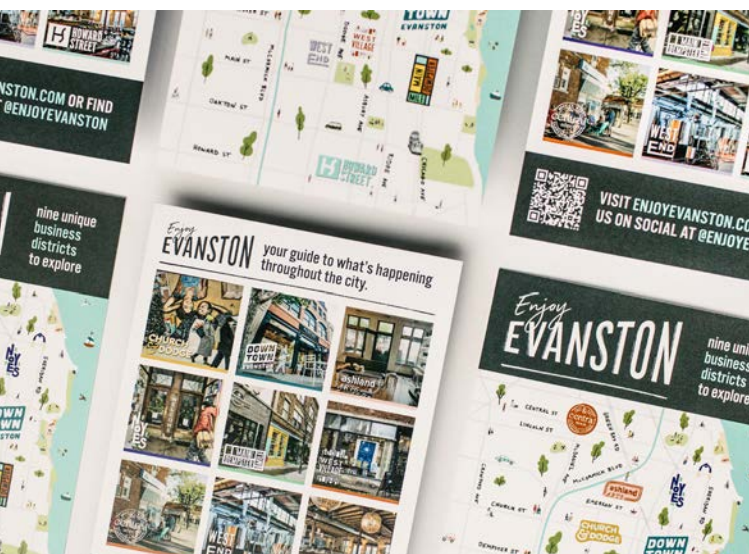
Our work & references

WE'VE CREATED
BRANDS FOR
CITIES, DISTRICTS,
NATIONAL MONUMENTS,
& DESTINATIONS.
ALL TOGETHER.

You'll find a sample of our
work on the following pages.
Click [here](#) for more eye candy.



Enjoy EVANSTON



ENJOY EVANSTON BRANDING + COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Uniting districts. Celebrating identity.

How do you connect people to place—and to the businesses that bring a city to life? With Enjoy Evanston, the City of Evanston set out to create a shared identity across all ten of its business districts, bringing them together under one cohesive brand and communications hub.

The brand was born from a citywide effort to reimagine Evanston's commercial corridors. With Enjoy Evanston, that vision became visible: in unified street pole banners across the city, in coordinated social media channels, on a central website offering business news, local spotlights, and events, and through a comprehensive gateway signage system. We designed four distinct sign types—kiosks, over-the-street signs, vertical gateways, and murals—that could be customized for each district while maintaining visual cohesion. Each district retains its unique personality—but now has a shared platform that amplifies it.

One particularly meaningful update: the Howard Street corridor now carries the same branding on both the Evanston and Chicago sides of the street. A simple change, but a powerful one—signaling alignment, investment, and a sense of belonging that crosses boundaries.

Enjoy Evanston is more than a marketing campaign. It's a way to help people recognize the character of a place, feel pride in where they shop and gather, and see their city investing in the neighborhoods they love.

Details:

Start Date: December 2023

Completed: November 2024

Reference:

Katie Boden

Economic Development Coordinator

City of Evanston

kboden@cityofevanston.org

847.448.8132

Enjoy
EVANSTON

With ten unique business districts, we have something for everyone to enjoy in Evanston!

WHETHER YOU'RE A LONG-TIME RESIDENT OR A FIRST-TIME VISITOR, ENJOY EVANSTON IS YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CITY.

@EnjoyEvanston

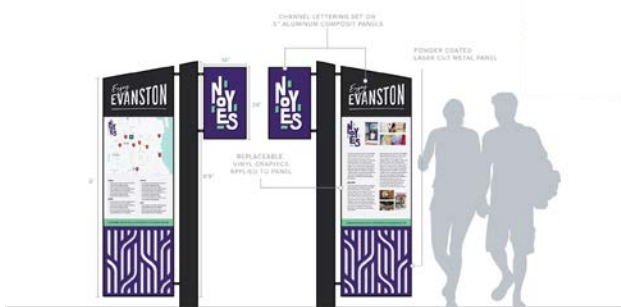
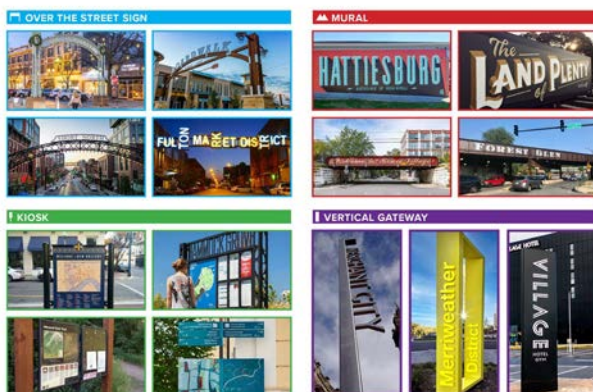


Evanston is one of America's best places to live, but also a place to explore. Our city has ten neighborhoods and commercial districts, each with a distinct personality and flavor. From the artistic energy of West Village to the lakefront charm of Central Street, from Downtown's bustling corridors to the creative spirit of Ashland Arts—every corner tells a different story. We invite you to step outside your door, discover what each district is all about, and see how individual character creates collective strength. Because when we celebrate what makes each place unique, we amplify what makes Evanston extraordinary.

Enjoy Evanston

OVERARCHING SIGNAGE TYPES

Enjoy
EVANSTON





CITY OF PARK RIDGE REBRAND AND MARKETING STRATEGIES *CITY OF PARK RIDGE*

Lifting up the love of a community.

All Together was brought on as a strategy and design partner to help the City of Park Ridge tell its story through visual and messaging campaigns.

We worked with residents, business owners, the Chamber, community organizations and elected officials to rebrand the City and its individual business districts for residents and visitors alike.

The results? A unified branding system and an implementation guide that will help the City launch the brand, coordinate with multiple brand ambassadors, and continue to tell its story to different target audiences long into the future.

It's Wholeheartedly, Park Ridge.

Details:

Start Date: January 2023

Completed: November 2023

Reference:

Leisa Niemotka

Administrative Services Manager

City of Park Ridge

lniemotka@parkridge.us

Cost:

\$81,620 for City branding and
business district marketing



Park Ridge offers the best of both worlds—a deep heritage with an eye to the future. Our timeless qualities and destination-worthy offerings keep people coming back, whether looking for a place to call home or dining al fresco on a summer evening. Next door to Chicago with boutique shopping and tree-lined streets, Park Ridge is a modern heirloom. A place where people come together, take great pride in their city, and fall in love for the first time or all over again.

*Wholeheartedly
Park Ridge*



DO WEST *of* **CHICAGO**



EXPLORE OAK PARK & BEYOND BRAND STRATEGY

DUE WEST OF CHICAGO

Crafting a regional identity that captures the charm, character, and complexity of Chicago's Near West communities.

Just west of Chicago lies a collection of communities steeped in history, full of local flavor, and brimming with personality—but a fragmented identity made it difficult for visitors to understand the full picture. All Together partnered with Visit Oak Park, the state-certified convention and visitors bureau for Western Cook County, to lead a comprehensive rebrand that would unify the region and position it as a must-see destination.

We guided the organization through a full naming process, landing on Explore Oak Park & Beyond—a brand that balances Oak Park's recognition with the promise of something more. We developed a fresh visual identity, playful messaging, and flexible campaign language that speaks to food lovers, families, cultural travelers, and outdoor explorers alike. From community-informed storytelling to an action-oriented tagline—Do More, Just Due West—we built a brand that invites visitors to discover everything this region has to offer.

Details:

Start Date: August 2024

Completed: April 2025

Reference:

Annie Coakley

Executive Director

Explore Oak Park & Beyond

annie@visitoakpark.com

Cost:

\$77,540 for rebranding and campaign conceptualizing



Just due west of Chicago, you'll find an area steeped in some of Windy City's greatest hits. It's the kind of place where internationally renowned architecture, myriad cultures, hundreds of miles of trails, and the best-of-the-best Italian beef all come together under the soft glow of vintage signs. You'll arrive in districts that grew up and around the train—places where legendary figures and gangsters called home or an escape. You'll explore destination-worthy shops, a smorgasbord of global cuisine, and streets that fill up with year-round cultural festivals, races, and holiday events. Here, just due west, you'll discover some of the best things about this area have been preserved for you to sip, sample, and dive in.

Do more, just due west.



WEST ST. PAUL BRAND REFRESH

WEST ST. PAUL, MN

Embracing the Weird and Wonderful

West St. Paul doesn't need a new logo—it needs a brand that captures its authentic personality and brings it to life in everything from city events to community storytelling. All Together worked with the City to develop a cohesive brand strategy that builds on what makes West St. Paul special: its scrappy spirit, cozy charm, and willingness to stand out.

At its core, West St. Paul is a place that embraces its quirks and isn't afraid to be a little different. It's a tight-knit community that offers both the warmth of a small town and the convenience of being minutes from the Twin Cities. It's also a city that moves forward with grit and heart, making things happen with optimism and a little bit of hustle.

Rather than designing a brand-new logo, we refined and expanded the existing visual identity, introducing new colors, fonts, and flexible design elements that allow the City to lean into its playful side when the moment calls for it. The result is a brand that feels official when it needs to, but never boring. From marketing materials to placemaking strategies, this framework gives West St. Paul a clear, confident voice and a visual identity that reflects its energy, history, and future.

Details:

Start Date: November 2024

Completed: Ongoing

Reference:

Eric Weiss

Parks, Recreation, Environment & Sustainability Director

City of West St. Paul

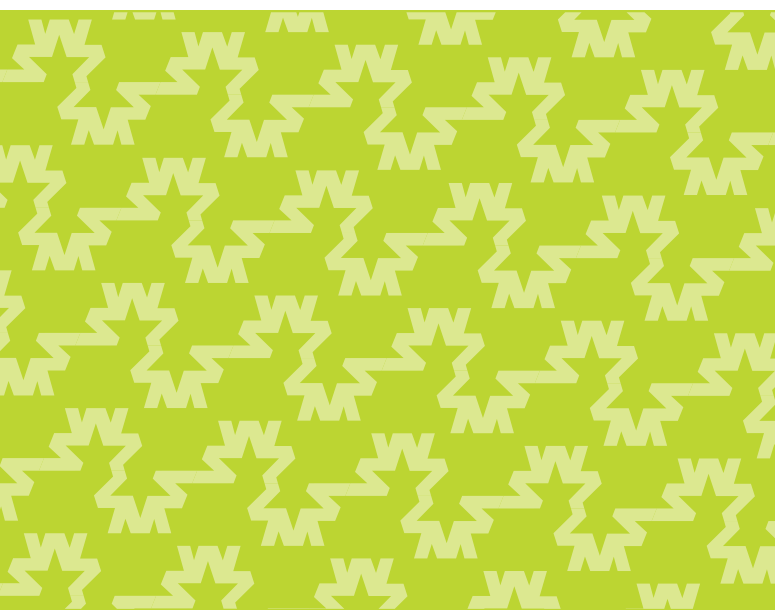
eweiss@wspmn.gov

Cost:

\$23,000 for brand refresh,
messaging, and council engagement

WiSPs

curious little creatures
native to West St. Paul



West St. Paul is where hometown charm meets big-city convenience. It's the best of both worlds, just minutes from the bustle of St. Paul and Minneapolis, but with room to stretch your arms.

We're a first-ring, first-tier city, and we're not afraid to stand out. In fact, being a little different is what makes us special. Here, you'll see how the unique and quirky are celebrated as you explore our local stores, festivals, and many neighborhoods.

At the heart of West St. Paul is a spirit of optimism and action. This is where big ideas take shape, and where hardworking folks roll up their sleeves to bring them to life. WSPaulites are people who show up—supporting local businesses, volunteering for events, or boldly re-imagining what comes next.

The best part? In West St. Paul, neighbors aren't just neighbors. We're diverse people who will lend you a cup of sugar, shovel your walk, or let you in on one of our inside jokes. We'll make you feel like you've lived here forever—whether you've been here a decade or only a day.

Welcome to West St. Paul. where weird meets wonderful.



VILLAGE-WIDE REBRANDING & MARKETING

ANTIOCH, ILLINOIS

Boosting hometown pride and destination tourism.

All Together was engaged by the Village of Antioch to create a comprehensive marketing strategy. Over time, their brand and their messaging had become diluted by a number of different brand ambassadors without a consistent narrative and visual identity.

Our work included a logo refresh, an updated messaging framework, a destination tourism campaign, and a plan for improved communications throughout the Village for residents and tourists alike. All these materials had to capture the spirit of Antioch—relaxed, nostalgic, and big-hearted. The marketing strategy also balanced the wealth of recreational amenities in the area with the locally-owned shops, eateries, and pubs that set this place apart.

While being in Antioch can feel like a walk down memory lane, we also needed to draw attention to the future. To investment in downtown, the Chain of Lakes as a regional tourism hub, small business and industries, and the next generation of people and families that will continue to keep Antioch authentic by nature. The results? A new Communications Director, [a destination tourism website](#), celebration of the new brand throughout the Village and its multiple departments, and experiential marketing and placemaking initiatives led by All Together.

Details:

Start Date: March 2021

Completed: September 2021

Reference:

Jim Moran

Communications Director
Village of Antioch
jmoran@antioch.il.gov

Cost:

\$50,000 for brand refresh, marketing strategy and website structure.

ORIGINAL



REFINED



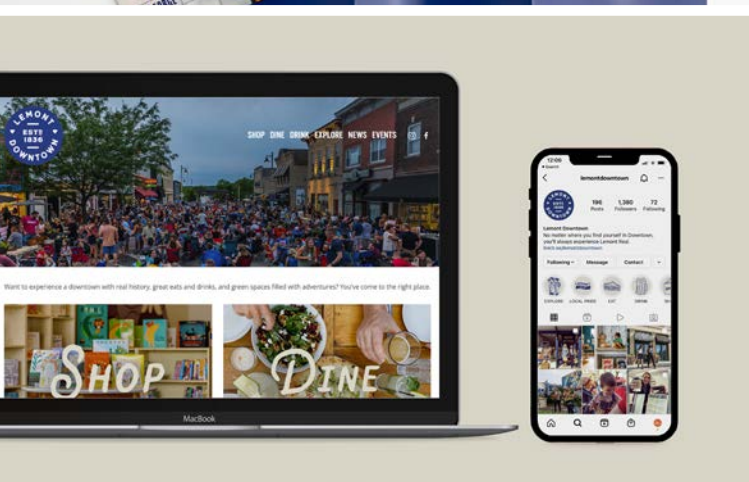
Whether you're here for a lifetime or a day, Antioch is a place to breathe easy.

Its access to the Chain of Lakes and thousands of acres of wooded preserves-coupled with its laid-back, small-town vibes-are an antidote for the overloaded.

Lose yourself in nature by hiking the preserves, horseback riding and cross-country skiing along the State Park trails, or simply looking up at the hundreds of stars in our expansive night skies. Make your way down Main Street, taking in the character of downtown's churches and historic buildings-home to locally-owned shops, eateries, and pubs. Or connect to the people that make this place feel like home at one of Antioch's concerts, parades, or events that fill the streets and parks.

While being in Antioch can feel like a walk down memory lane, you'll also experience an energy pointing to the future. To investment in downtown, small business and industries, and the next generation of people and families that will continue to keep Antioch authentic by nature.





DOWNTOWN BRANDING & COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

LEMONT, ILLINOIS

Celebrating what's real about this downtown.

Inspired by the legacy of hustle in its hills, quarries, and canals, our team designed a comprehensive brand system and communications strategy for Downtown Lemont. Our process included extensive stakeholder outreach and collaboration with Lemont business owners, residents, and organizations. The area—brimming with outdoor recreational spots like The Forge—is a hot spot for adventure seekers, historic architecture lovers, and Chicagoans who want a view with their beer. Along the way, we collected stories, kayaked the waterways, and fell in love with the genuine vibe of this town. This brand showcases that you can't fake real, and you don't have to when you're Lemont.

Since the brand, we've redesigned [Lemont Downtown's website](#), launched a number of placemaking initiatives, and even designed a mascot. The results? 44% increase in total website users since brand launch, +277% subscriber growth for e-newsletter, a 54% increase in Facebook followers, and 230,000 *new* visitors to downtown in 2021. Due to our marketing efforts, Lemont was listed as one of the top daytrips from Chicago by TimeOut.

Details:

Start Date: April 2021

Completed: September 2021 (ongoing retainer with the Village for marketing + placemaking support)

Reference:

Jason Berry

Economic Development Director

Village of Lemont

JBerry@lemont.il.us



You can't fake real, and you don't have to when you have the most picturesque terrain in Chicago and the best outdoor activities in the Midwest. Our downtown eateries, taverns, and shops are nestled into our hills and housed in original limestone buildings stamped with the names of families who have been here for generations. In these buildings, you'll find local makers who took a leap to create one-of-a-kind food, shops, and adventures. We're continuing this legacy of hustle into the future by investing in recreation, transit-oriented development, and state of the art waterfront parks. No matter where you find yourself in Downtown, you'll always experience

LEMONT REAL.

"All Together has been an excellent partner in our work promoting the North Shore. Their branding and placemaking work in Downtown Evanston and Central Street has been a huge asset to attract people to these areas. Marisa and Rachael bring creativity, thoughtfulness, and professionalism to their work. Who knew that rainbow stripes down the sidewalk would become the backbone of Central Street district? Their work is rooted in joy, and they are a joy to work with."

GINA SPECKMAN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO'S NORTH SHORE CONVENTION + VISITORS BUREAU



"All Together was simply wonderful to work with from start to finish on our rebranding. They were so thoughtful in interviewing our stakeholders and surprisingly, we learned so much about ourselves in the process. They created a flexible design and messaging system that our multifaceted organization could collectively embrace yet celebrate individually - not an easy task. It's like they captured all of our unique voices and designed an anthem of visual understanding for our innovation ecosystem."

COLLEEN EGAN | PRESIDENT + CEO, ILLINOIS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COALITION



"I'm really lucky I get to work with an imaginative and caring team! I want my community to be great, and All Together does too. When I saw the work they were doing, I said to myself: I want that. Since then, they've helped the Village of Lemont position its historic Downtown as a destination-worthy adventure in the Chicagoland region. Our website traffic has doubled, or social media presence has soared, and thanks to their efforts, we were listed as one of Time Out's Best Day Trips from Chicago."

JASON BERRY | ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, LEMONT, IL

Contact

WAYS TO REACH US



@alltogetherstudio



raziz@alltogetherstudio.com



linkedin.com/company/
all-together-studio



847-261-4047

HAPPY TO BE WORKING WITH YOU!

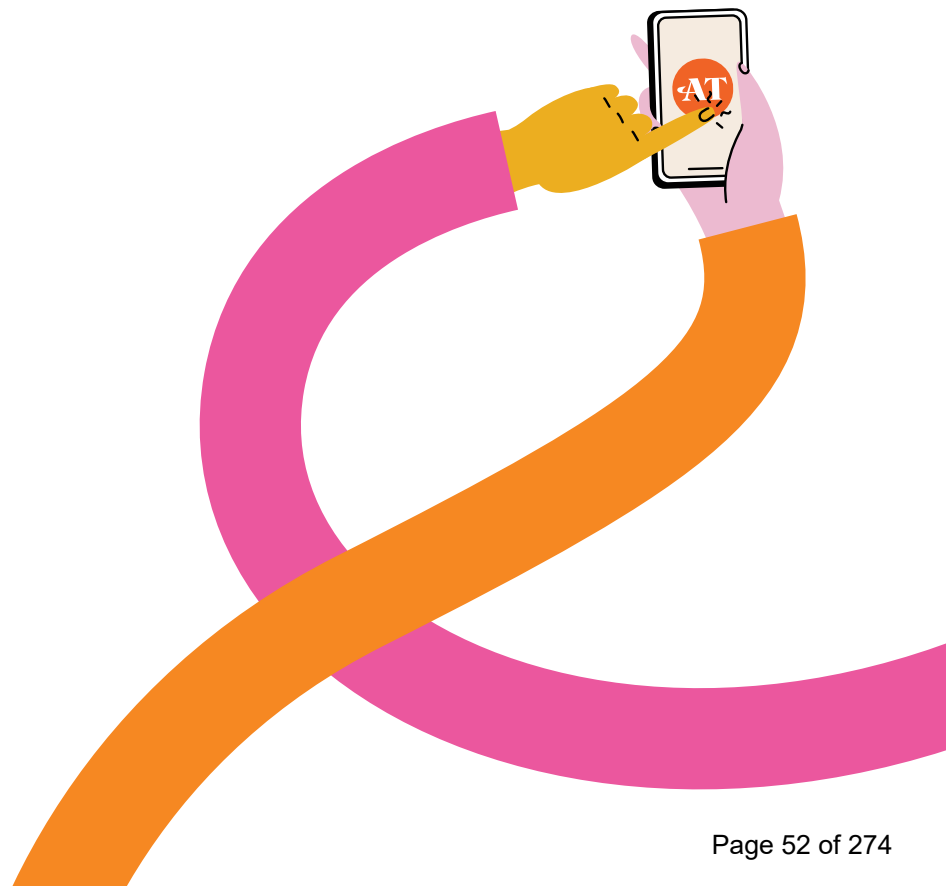


EXHIBIT C
Request for Proposal

Request for Proposals:

City-Wide Branding & Identity Development, Placemaking, and Strategic Marketing Consulting Services

June 04, 2025

1 Introduction

The City of Mountlake Terrace is seeking professional consultant support for the following initiatives:

- Develop City-wide brand identity and create the strategy for placemaking/wayfinding implementation.
- Apply the brand identity to an economic development marketing strategy.

The selected consultant (“The Consultant”) will provide expertise to the City in developing a comprehensive and implementable brand identity that reflects Mountlake Terrace’s unique strengths, community assets, and future vision. This strategy should be adaptable across City departments and operations, scalable to support future growth, and effective across a wide range of communications platforms, both digital and traditional. The new brand identity will then be used for a top-level economic development marketing plan.

The Consultant shall have experience working with governmental agencies or regional economic development organizations in municipal branding, design and placemaking, and destination marketing, particularly within the context of economic development strategy. The Consultant shall also have experience in facilitating an inclusive and collaborative creative process with government agencies, community members, and business stakeholders.

This work is estimated to take approximately 10-12 months. The budget for this work is between \$60,000 and \$70,000, depending on the proposed deliverables and approach. The final scope and budget will be negotiated between the Consultant and the City.

2 Background

Founded in 1954, Mountlake Terrace is located approximately 13 miles north of downtown Seattle and has a residential population of 24,260. Around 39 percent of residents identify as people of color, with the largest groups being Hispanic or Latino, Asian, Black, and individuals identifying with two or more races. Nineteen percent of the community is foreign-born, and the predominant languages spoken are English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Residents living with a disability make up 8.5 percent of the population, while approximately 6.5 percent live below the poverty level.

As of 2022, Mountlake Terrace supported 8,372 jobs, with the primary employment sectors being Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate, as well as a range of service industries. Together, these sectors account for approximately 5,822 jobs—roughly 70 percent of total city employment. The city is also home to more than 560 businesses. Additionally, the recent opening of the Mountlake Terrace Light Rail Station marks a new chapter in the city’s growth, with thousands of new visitors contributing to the potential for reshaping public perceptions.

Mountlake Terrace has traditionally been known as a quiet, primarily residential community within the Seattle metropolitan area, with strong working- and middle-class roots. While historically focused on serving local households, the city's business presence has remained modest, earning it a reputation as a suburban bedroom community. However, with the adoption of the Town Center Subarea Plan in 2007 and its update in 2019, significant redevelopment of the 82-acre subarea surrounding the Mountlake Terrace Transit Center has begun.

With the opening of Link light rail in August 2024, the city saw an influx of visitors, creating a pivotal moment to reshape perceptions and fuel future growth. Building on this momentum, Mountlake Terrace is entering a transformative phase, setting the stage for sustainable and inclusive growth. This evolution is guided by several key strategic frameworks, including:

- [Comprehensive Plan 2044](#)
- [City Council's Strategic Plan \(2025–2029\)](#)
- [Economic Development Strategic Plan \(2024–2029\)](#)
- [Town Center Subarea Plan \(2007 and 2019\)](#)
- [Main Street / Town Center Revitalization \(Main Street / Town Center Development Project | Mountlake Terrace, WA / PowerPoint Presentation\)](#)

These documents collectively shape a long-term vision for equitable, inclusive economic opportunity and vibrant community life. Branding plays a critical role in communicating this vision to current and future residents, visitors, businesses, and investors. The Economic Development Strategic Plan specifically highlights branding and marketing as essential tools for business attraction, retention, and community identity-building.

As Mountlake Terrace continues to define and promote its unique identity, strategic branding will support efforts to recruit new businesses that will enhance the local economy. It will also help attract specialty and destination retail to draw regional visitors and promote commercial real estate development, including mixed-use projects and the development of hotels or motels to accommodate long-term growth.

Anecdotally, residents have expressed that feeling proud of where they live is important to them. And they have a desire to retain the tight-knit / small town community feel that MLT currently has, even as the city grows.

The new brand identity will influence and guide the development of a coordinated marketing strategy that promotes a unified brand and message. This strategy will be implemented in collaboration with local and regional partners, including the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Alliance of Snohomish County (EASC), members of the development and brokerage community, regional business associations, and other community stakeholders and leaders.

Looking ahead, Mountlake Terrace is expected to see increased demand for retail offerings by 2035, including: fast casual restaurants (7), health and personal care stores (5), clothing stores

(3), auto parts stores (3), superstore (1), grocery store (1), furniture store (1), and a full-service restaurant (1). A focused branding and marketing approach will be crucial in attracting and supporting these business types while positioning Mountlake Terrace as a vibrant, livable, and economically resilient community.

Currently, the City faces challenges with inconsistent brand usage and a lack of cohesive visual and messaging standards. While the existing City logo will be retained, there is a need for a comprehensive refresh of branding and design elements—one that reflects both unity and neighborhood distinctiveness.

This City-wide branding initiative will focus on elevating Mountlake Terrace's identity, particularly in high-visibility areas such as the Town Center/Main Street, the vicinity of the light rail station, and major corridors like 220th Street SW.

The initiative will also lay the foundation for neighborhood branding in areas such as Melody Hill, Gateway, Cascade View, Lake Ballinger, and Cedar Terrace (referred to as sub-areas).

The final brand system should:

- Embrace a unified City identity while celebrating neighborhood uniqueness
- Enhance signage coherence, for gateways, wayfinding, City buildings, and parks
- Extend seamlessly across media, platforms, and civic functions
- Support storytelling and positioning for residents, visitors, and economic partners alike

A strong, cohesive, and aspirational brand will help Mountlake Terrace amplify its message, communicate its values, and position itself as a vibrant, inclusive, and investment-ready community within the region.

3 Scope of Work

To provide City-wide branding, identity development, placemaking, and economic development marketing services, the Consultant will work in close partnership with City leadership, staff, and stakeholders to develop a comprehensive and implementable branding strategy that reflects Mountlake Terrace's unique identity, community assets, public and stakeholder feedback, and future goals.

The Consultant will be responsible for guiding the branding process, which should include the following elements:

1. Discovery, Research & Community Engagement

- Conduct an in-depth assessment of Mountlake Terrace's past history, current image and identity, including the evaluation of existing branding materials, community perceptions, and stakeholder input. Take into consideration the city's reputation among its neighbors and positioning within the Greater Seattle Region.

- Facilitate community engagement activities, such as surveys, focus groups, and/or interviews, to gather insights from residents, businesses, and key stakeholders about their perceptions of the city and the growth that they would like to see. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to Mountlake Terrace residents, City Council, Planning Commission, Recreation and Park Advisory Commission, Arts Advisory Commission, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission, Mountlake Terrace High School, Mountlake Terrace Chamber of Commerce, Economic Alliance Snohomish County, the development and brokerage community, and regional business associations.
- Conduct data gathering to measure preferences, perceptions, and sentiment using engagement tools.
- Ensure the inclusion of diverse voices in the engagement process to reflect the city's demographic makeup.

2. Brand Development

- Identify and utilize Mountlake Terrace's strengths in order to tell the story of the city that reflects its current assets, growth goals, and aspirational vision for the future – with a nod to its history.
- Identify and develop key messages that convey a desirable destination for residents, visitors, businesses, developers, and investors.
- Incorporate assets of the current brand that make sense and align with the new brand (current logo, website, etc.)

3. Wayfinding Design & Placemaking Strategy

- Create a visually compelling and adaptable brand identity, including typography, color palette, graphics, and design guidelines.
- Develop City-wide signage and wayfinding branding designs. These visual elements should align with the new Mountlake Terrace brand while celebrating the individuality of its neighborhoods and should enhance accessibility.
- The brand identity should be easily recognizable and scalable brand system for use across a variety of applications, including signage, marketing materials, and digital platforms.

4. Implementation Guidelines

- Develop a “Dos & Don'ts” brand/style guide for City staff and external partners to use as a resource.
- Identify and prioritize key areas for future brand application, such as Town Center/Main Street, light rail station area, major corridors, and neighborhood branding.

- Incorporate branding elements into strategic recommendations for economic development marketing efforts.

5. Brand Governance & Performance Measurement

- Develop a brand governance framework that outlines standards for maintaining and evolving the brand over time.
- Provide potential performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to measure the success of the branding effort and its impact on business attraction, community engagement, and economic development.

Final Deliverables

- Develop a cohesive and aspirational City brand to elevate the City and attract development and investment.
- Deliver a final brand strategy document which should include the brand narrative, positioning, and placemaking design guidelines. This should apply City-wide, with special attention to Main Street / Town Center, Melody Hill – 220th corridor, Gateway sub-area, and other designated neighborhoods/ sub-areas.
- Deliver a brand guide for City staff and external partners to guide future planning and development (overall aesthetic, light fixtures, signage, standards, cohesion.)
- Deliver strategic recommendations for economic development marketing efforts. These recommendations will be used to:
 - Recruit new businesses to enhance the local economy
 - Target specialty and destination retail to draw regional visitors
 - Promote commercial real estate development to expand business infrastructure
 - Support tourism initiatives to attract visitors
 - Encourage "shop local" initiatives and supporting small businesses in the community

4 Estimated Budget

The City will enter into a professional services agreement, as provided in Attachment A, which will address compensation. The available compensation is \$60,000 - \$70,000. Costs in excess of this amount will require additional budget authorization by the City Council. The final fee, scope, and methodology for this work will be negotiated after selection of the Consultant. Mountlake Terrace staff recognize that this work may take longer and require a phased approach. There may be options for additional funding and tasks in the future.

The City shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the Consultant for preparing or submitting its response to this Request for Proposal (RFP).

5 Project Schedule

This project is estimated to take between 10-12 months. Optional tasks may have later dates. The detailed milestones will be negotiated between the Consultant and City

6 RFP Coordinator & Communications

All proposer communications/questions concerning this RFP should be directed in writing to the RFP Coordinator listed below. Unauthorized contact regarding this RFP with other City employees may result in disqualification. Any oral communications will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the City.

Name: Sienna Spencer-Markles
Title: Communications and Community Engagement Manager
Address: City of Mountlake Terrace
23204 58th Avenue West
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043
Telephone: (425) 744-6271
E-mail: SSpencer@mltwa.gov

To reply to this RFP, please electronically submit the items described in Section 9 and direct all inquiries to the MLT City Branding RFP Project Manager: Sienna Spencer-Markles, Communications and Community Engagement Manager, at SSpencer@mltwa.gov. Responses received after the deadline, as defined below, will be returned to the sender unopened.

7 Consultant Selection Schedule & Process

The following dates are for informational purposes and may be adjusted by the City as needed. All deadlines on the listed dates are at **4:00 p.m. PST**. Proposers are encouraged to be available for interviews between July 21st - August 1st.

Event	Date
Release RFP	June 4
Proposer Questions (if any) Due <i>Send questions to the project manager listed above with the title "Questions for MLT City Branding RFP"</i>	June 11
If needed, questions and responses will be posted by and on cityofmlt.com/Bids.aspx	June 13
Proposal Responses Due	July 3
Review RFPs	July 9
Notify finalists of interviews	July 18
Interviews with Evaluation Committee	July 21 – August 1
Negotiation of Contract through	August
Work begins	September (TBD)

Proposers have no right to withdraw or modify their submitted proposal for any reason whatsoever after the time set for the opening thereof, unless the award of the Contract is delayed

for a period exceeding forty-five (45) calendar days from the time set for opening of the proposals.

Evaluation of the qualifications will be made by an Evaluation Committee (“the Committee”) from various departments. The Committee may request interviews with one or more proposers. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the Committee will determine the most qualified organization based on all materials and information presented. The City will then begin the negotiations for an agreement with the Consultant.

After selection, the successful proposer and the City will enter into a professional services agreement, which may be subject to approval by the City Council. The City may also decide not to award a contract. The City shall not be bound or in any way obligated until both parties have executed the Contract. The City reserves the right to award the contract to the next most qualified proposer, if the successful proposer does not execute a contract within thirty (30) days after notification of the award of the bid.

8 Eligibility

Minority, women, and veteran owned businesses are encouraged to apply. Proposers (individual or firm) must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A minimum of three (3) clients your project team has worked with, including governmental agencies, boards, commissions, or potentially non-profit and for-profit entities. Preference will be given to firms with experience working with governmental organizations.
- Able to meet with staff, community and stakeholders with a mix of in-person and virtual options.
- Available by phone or video call for regular project management check-ins.
- If selected, the Consultant will be required to obtain a City of Mountlake Terrace business license.

9 Submittal Requirements

Proposals must include the information outlined below to demonstrate the consultant’s qualifications, experience, and approach. For clarity and alignment, the submittal requirements are organized according to the Selection Criteria factors used in the evaluation process. Responses should be clear, well-organized, and limited to 8–10 pages (excluding portfolios or supplemental materials). There is no regional requirement; however, familiarity is strongly preferred.

A. Design Philosophy (15 points)

Describe your philosophy and creative approach to City-wide branding. The City is seeking a consultant who can articulate a thoughtful and inclusive vision that connects design with civic identity, placemaking, and storytelling. Include the following:

- Description of your overall approach to branding projects
- Your philosophy on branding municipalities and placemaking
- Examples of creative collaboration with diverse stakeholders

B. Experience & Capabilities (25 points)

Demonstrate your firm's qualifications, range of experience, and proven results in branding, design, and engagement. The City values relevant past work, depth of experience, and strong client references. Include the following:

- Familiarity with the region.
- Experience with branding, digital and physical design, scalable placemaking/wayfinding, and brand marketing materials.
- Experience working with governments, tourism or economic development entities, nonprofits, or philanthropic organizations.
- Experience incorporating community feedback and working with DEI-centered branding.
- Examples of relevant work (attach as portfolio or supplemental materials).
- Three references for similar projects completed in the last five years, including:
 - Project name, timeframe, and budget
 - Client organization name
 - Contact name, email, and phone number
 - Summary of project, key successes, and challenges

C. Key Personnel (25 points)

Provide details on the staff who will be assigned to the project, their roles, and their qualifications. The City values relevant individual experience and team structure. Include the following:

- Summary of key staff roles and responsibilities for this project.
- Individual qualifications and relevant experience.
- Projects each key team member has worked on (may overlap with the references listed above).

D. Approach to Scope of Work (25 points)

Outline your process and methodology for delivering the project. The City is seeking a well-structured, inclusive, and adaptable approach to the work. Include the following:

- Proposed process and timeline for executing the branding project.
- Approach to discovery, stakeholder engagement, and public input.
- How your firm incorporates feedback and adjusts throughout a project lifecycle.

E. Ability to Meet Schedule (10 points)

Demonstrate your firm's capacity to deliver the project on schedule and within budget. Include the following:

- Proposed fee structure and milestone schedule.
- Examples of previous work delivered on-time, particularly for similar clients or projects.

F. Additional Information (Not Scored)

These items will not be scored but are required to complete your proposal. Include the following:

- Statement on any real or perceived conflicts of interest and your plan to mitigate them, if applicable.
- Any additional information deemed pertinent to consultant selection.

10 Selection Process and Review Criteria

Qualifications will be evaluated to receive up to 100 points based on the criteria and calculated weight factors noted in the table below:

Selection Criteria

Factor	Score
Design Philosophy	15
Experience and Capabilities, including References	25
Key Personnel	25
Approach to the Scope of Work	25
Ability to Meet Schedule	10

11 General Conditions

- a) Evaluation of the qualifications will be made by an Evaluation Committee that is likely to include staff from various departments. The Committee may request proposals and/or interviews of one or more proposers. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the Committee will determine the most qualified organization based on all materials and information presented. The City will then begin the negotiations for an agreement with the selected Consultant.
- b) Any proposer failing to submit information following the procedures provided in the RFP may be disqualified.
- c) The City reserves the right to request clarification of information submitted and request additional information from the proposer.
 - i. To change the solicitation schedule, issue addenda to the solicitation, or cancel the solicitation at any time before the submittal deadline.

- ii. To award the contract for services addressed by this RFP to one or more proposer, or to reject all the qualifications, at any time, without penalty.
 - iii. To waive immaterial irregularities contained in the solicitation. The City will notify proposers eliminated from further consideration by mail or email.
 - iv. To award any contract to the next most qualified firm if the selected Consultant does not execute the contract within thirty (30) calendar days after the contract was awarded.
- d) Qualifications remain confidential until the closing deadline after which qualifications are considered a public record subject to public disclosure under RCW 42.56, the Public Records Act. Proposing firms shall mark as “proprietary” any information that the proposer believes meets the exemption under RCW 42.56.270(1). The City will consider this designation in response to public records requests.
- e) Any qualification submission may be withdrawn, either personally or by written request, at any time before the time set for the submittal deadline.
- f) The City of Mountlake Terrace, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, Subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in Federally-assisted programs of the Department of Transportation, issued under such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will confirm that in any contract entered into under this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises as defined at 49 CFR Part 26 will have an opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of color, ethnicity, gender, national origin, race, or religion in consideration for an award.
- g) The Consultant shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, Executive Orders, guidelines, rules, and regulations affecting its performance. The firm shall comply with the applicable provisions of the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and, if manufactured or stored in the State of Washington, the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) and the standards and regulations issued thereunder and certifies that all items furnished and purchased shall conform to and comply with said law, standards and regulations. The firm shall certify that it has complied and shall continue to comply during the duration of this contract, with the United States Immigration and Control Act of 1986 in that every employee of the firm is eligible for employment in the United States.
- h) Proof of application or receipt of a City of Mountlake Terrace business license will be required prior to receipt of a fully executed contract. Consultants may obtain information for licensing on the City of Mountlake Terrace website.
- i) Attachment A includes the Contract for Services, which will be used to engage the selected Consultant with the City for the work outlined in this RFP. Please review the language, including the insurance requirements.

Responses to Questions related to the Request for Proposals:
**City-Wide Branding & Identity Development, Placemaking,
and Strategic Marketing Consulting Services**

June 13, 2025

Submitted Written Questions Related to City-Wide Brand Identity Development,
Placemaking, and Strategic Marketing RFP (June 13, 2025)

1. Question about section 9E: Where you mentioned including the proposed fee structure, do you want a proposed budget with our estimates based on the scope of work, by section? Or are you hoping to see how we charge clients (hourly rates, monthly billing, etc.)?

The first option is preferred: a proposed budget with estimates based on scope of work.

2. Will the city give equal consideration to a Canadian firm?

Yes, the City will give equal consideration to a Canadian firm. While familiarity with the Puget Sound region and the community of Mountlake Terrace is preferred, it is not required. All proposals will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in the RFP.

3. The RFP refers to a brand guide for City staff and external partners to guide future planning and development, inclusive of signage, standards. Is the City looking for a family of sign types to be designed so they can be implemented by City staff? Or, is the intent to develop high-level concepts for sign types that will be further developed later?

Ideally, we would like to come away from this project with a family of sign types to be designed so they can be implemented by City staff.

4. Is the City looking for a wayfinding strategy (i.e., a planning framework that outlines how people navigate public spaces—such as principles for sign placement, destination hierarchy, and user experience), or signage design (i.e., the visual development of specific sign types, including layouts, typography, and application of the brand to physical signs)?

We are seeking both a wayfinding strategy and signage design.

5. Does the City currently have any existing wayfinding signage or digital tools in use that need to be referenced, evaluated, or integrated into the proposed strategy?

The city does not have a unified wayfinding signage guide. We do have a general communications style guide and a handful of digital tools, like brand colors and logo, that should be referenced, evaluated and/or integrated into proposed strategies.

6. The RFP references “placemaking design guidelines” and also refers to a “placemaking strategy.” Can you describe what you mean by Placemaking in this context? Is the expectation to deliver a conceptual design framework (e.g., themes, materials, placemaking identity cues) or a location-specific set of recommendations for elements like street furniture, lighting, and public art?

We are seeking both a placemaking design guidelines for future use and a conceptual design framework.

7. Branding System & Logo Flexibility: The RFP notes that the existing City logo will be retained, while also identifying a need for refreshed branding and design elements. To ensure visual cohesion across varied applications, is there flexibility to recommend enhancements such as encapsulating the existing logo mark within a defined shape or lockup system (e.g., badge, container, or framing device) that allows it to function more effectively across signage, digital, and print uses?

Yes, there is flexibility to recommend enhancements that support visual cohesion and improve the functionality of the existing logo across various applications. Proposals that thoughtfully incorporate the existing logo mark within a defined shape or lockup system such as a badge, container, or framing device are encouraged. This is especially true if they enhance consistency and adaptability for signage, digital, and print uses. We realize that keeping the current logo can be limiting but we want to allow for as much creativity, shape-shifting, and enhancements as possible, while maintaining visual cohesion across the board.

8. Wayfinding File Format & Fabrication Standards: For the wayfinding and signage design components, does the City have existing specifications or fabrication standards (e.g., dimensions, materials, mounting requirements) that the consultant should align with? Additionally, are there preferred deliverable formats for final signage design files—such as DWG, DXF, DWF, AI, EPS, PDF, or SVG—to support future production and implementation?

We intend to discuss wayfinding fabrication and formatting during the course of the project. There are a lot of factors to take into consideration, and we seek input from the consultant on how to resolve issues having to do with fabrication/budget uniformity across departments.

9. Performance Metrics and Brand Impact: Could the City clarify what types of KPIs or measurement tools it envisions for evaluating the success of this initiative (e.g., brand adoption, business attraction, business participation, resident surveys, stakeholder sentiment, engagement metrics)?

The City did not specify particular KPIs or measurement tools in the RFP, as we are interested in receiving recommendations from the selected consultant.

10. Stakeholder Coordination Responsibility: Will the City help coordinate outreach to key stakeholders — including advisory commissions and local organizations—with our counsel and recommendations, or will this coordination be the responsibility of the consultant?

Yes, the City anticipates a collaborative approach to stakeholder outreach. While the consultant will be responsible for executing the engagement efforts, the City will provide coordination and support in connecting with key stakeholders, including advisory commissions, City staff, City council, and local organizations. We welcome your recommendations on the most effective outreach strategies and look forward to working together to ensure successful community involvement.

11. Scope Clarification – Fabrication & Production: Can the City confirm that the physical fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage, as well as any physical production or printing of materials, will be managed and funded separately by the City and are not expected to be included within the consultant’s proposal scope or budget?

Correct. The City can confirm that the physical fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage, as well as the production and printing of materials, will be managed separately and funded through future initiatives. These tasks are not expected to be included within the consultant’s proposal scope or budget. The City would also appreciate any recommendations regarding funding strategies for these future initiatives.

12. Visual System Applications – Uniforms, Templates, and Specialty Items: While the RFP emphasizes a scalable and cohesive brand identity, we’d like to confirm whether the City envisions the visual system being extended to specialty items such as apparel, uniforms, patches, or embroidered treatments.

The City envisions the brand identity system to be scalable and cohesive across a variety of applications. This may include specialty items such as apparel, uniforms, patches, embroidered treatments, merchandise, and swag. We encourage proposals to consider these potential uses to ensure flexibility and consistency across all brand touchpoints. We emphasize long-term planning and future-thinking for the brand.

13. Graphic Templates: Are there expectations for delivering branded templates for internal City documents or presentations? If so, does the City have a preferred platform for these assets (e.g., Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or Google Suite)?

Graphic templates are a secondary priority as we have City staff that can develop templates going forward using the new branding. We use Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Canva.

14. File Format Preferences for Final Deliverables: Does the City have any preferences for how final brand assets and documentation should be delivered—e.g., web-based brand portals, digital toolkits, printed brand guides?

We would most likely use digital toolkits, printed brand guides, and files accessible across our internal shared drives and/or OneDrive/Sharepoint.

15. Can you share the reasoning behind keeping the existing logo?

The existing logo was redesigned in recent years, and retaining it helps maintain brand recognition and continuity. Additionally, making significant changes to the logo would lead to high costs associated with replacing the logo on uniforms, vehicles, signage, and other materials. The City seeks to refresh and unify the overall brand identity while preserving the existing logo to balance cost efficiency with a fresh, cohesive look.

16. Are you open to recommendations for any adjustments/edits to the logo?

While the City intends to retain the existing logo, we are open to thoughtful recommendations for adjustments, color shifts, or edits that enhance its usability and alignment with the refreshed brand identity. Any proposed changes should respect the core elements of the current logo and consider practical factors such as consistency and cost.

17. The RFP emphasizes the distinctiveness of (Mountlake) Terrace's neighborhoods and mentions Melody Hill, Gateway, Cascade View, Lake Ballinger, and Cedar Terrace as sub-areas. Are these sub-areas the key neighborhoods that make up the City, or should the final brand encompass a broader set of neighborhood identities?

The "sub-areas" mentioned in the RFP (Melody Hill, Gateway, Cascade View, Lake Ballinger, and Cedar Terrace) are planning terms that are also commonly referred to as neighborhoods.

However, many residents may or may not identify with these names and often refer to their neighborhood based on the City park or local landmark closest to them. Naming and any potential changes to these sub-areas or neighborhoods are overseen by the City's Planning Commission.

Through this RFP, the City looks forward to receiving recommendations that can be developed collaboratively with the Planning Commission on neighborhood branding, name changes, and other identity considerations.

One of our key goals is to resolve a handful of name discrepancies with several locations.

18. Does the City have up-to-date photography, or is it interested in investing in it as part of/in addition to brand development?

The City values images as a key component for Communications and Economic Development. The City has existing photography going back many years, including video footage, drone photography, and drone videos. We are currently building our image library to cover all four seasons and popular places. Our library lacks hi-res/print quality images.

We may be interested in investing in updated/high-quality images as an addition to this RFP or as a future initiative to the brand development process. Strong visual content is important to effectively represent Mountlake Terrace, especially to capture the City's ongoing and recent growth and to support the refreshed brand identity.

19. Does the City anticipate any aspects of the project such as discovery, stakeholder engagement, or presentations requiring in-person participation, or can the work be conducted fully remotely? We've found success with both in-person and remote models and are happy to align with the City's

preferences. A remote-first approach can also help maintain cost-efficiency within the proposed budget.

The City anticipates a combination of both in-person and remote participation throughout the project. While some aspects such as stakeholder engagement and presentations may benefit from in-person meetings to foster stronger connections and collaboration, the City is also open to remote options to maintain flexibility and cost-efficiency. We are happy to work with the consultant to find the best balance that meets project goals and budget considerations.

20. Are there any planned public meetings, presentations, or Council work sessions that the consultant is expected to attend? If so, should those be in-person or virtual?

The consultant may be expected to participate in a limited number of public meetings, presentations, or Council work sessions as part of the project. The format of these meetings, whether in-person or virtual, will depend on the City's schedule and preferences at the time. The City will work with the consultant to provide timely notice and coordinate participation accordingly.

21. The RFP outlines a list of stakeholders for community engagement and input gathering. To help us plan the most effective approach, can you clarify whether these stakeholders will serve in an advisory/input capacity only, or if any of them will be involved in formal decision-making or consensus-driven approvals throughout the process?

The stakeholders listed in the RFP are primarily intended to serve in an advisory and input capacity to ensure broad community perspectives are considered. Formal decision-making and consensus-driven approvals will remain the responsibility of the City Department Directors and City Manager, with final approval likely required from the City Council. We encourage collaboration with stakeholders to gather valuable feedback while the City leads the final decisions.

22. What level of support does the City plan to provide in recruiting participants for stakeholder input activities (e.g., scheduling focus groups, distributing surveys)?

The City will provide collaboration and support in recruiting participants for stakeholder input activities, including assistance with scheduling focus groups, distributing surveys, and/or making connections with key community members, organizations, and advisory bodies. The City will collaborate with the consultant to determine the most effective outreach strategies and help ensure strong participation.

23. Are there any specific branded collateral pieces the City expects to be included in the deliverables such as PowerPoint templates, email signatures, business cards, letterhead, or other document

templates? If so, would you be open to us including a budget estimate or range for those collateral items in our proposal, so we can ensure the scope and pricing align with your expectations?

We are open to reviewing anything the consultant recommends as far as branded collateral pieces, including templates. Our priority is external brand templates vs. internal.

24. To confirm the project scope, is the City seeking strategic recommendations only for economic development marketing such as messaging, positioning, and channel guidance, or does the City anticipate the selected consultant will also be responsible for implementing any marketing materials or outreach efforts?

The City is primarily seeking strategic recommendations for economic development marketing, including messaging, positioning, and channel guidance. Implementation of marketing materials or outreach efforts is not expected to be within the scope of this project but may be considered in future phases. The consultant's focus should be on providing a clear and actionable strategy.

25. Given the 25MB limit on email attachments, would the City be open to us including a link to a Dropbox or Google Drive folder as part of our submission, just to ensure we can provide full-resolution creative samples without compressing or omitting materials?

Yes, the City primarily uses OneDrive/Sharepoint for sharing large files. We can also do Google Drive, Dropbox, FTP or similar cloud storage folder as part of your electronic submission. This will allow you to provide full-resolution creative samples without the need to compress or omit materials. Please ensure that all shared files are accessible without restrictions.

26. Could you clarify the expected level of deliverables for the neighborhood branding (e.g., Melody Hill, Gateway)? Should we propose visual identity recommendations for each neighborhood or simply a strategy to guide future neighborhood-specific branding?

The City is primarily seeking a strategy to guide future neighborhood-specific branding. However, high-level visual and name identity recommendations for key neighborhoods, such as tone, themes, or illustrative concepts, are welcome if they help demonstrate how the broader brand system could adapt at the neighborhood level. Detailed brand packages for each neighborhood are not expected within the scope of this project.

27. Is the City expecting conceptual designs for signage and placemaking as part of this project, or is this limited to design guidelines and recommendations to inform a future wayfinding project?

The City does expect conceptual designs for signage and placemaking as part of this project. These concepts will help visualize how the brand identity can be applied in the built

environment and will serve to inform future implementation efforts, including a separate wayfinding project. Detailed construction documents or fabrication-ready files are not required at this stage.

28. To what extent should the proposal address brand rollout support? Are you seeking initial implementation tools (e.g., collateral templates, sample messaging), or only strategic guidance?

The City is seeking both strategic guidance and a set of initial implementation tools to support brand rollout. This may include items such as collateral templates, sample messaging, and recommendations for application across various platforms. While full-scale implementation is not expected within the scope of this project, the proposal should provide a foundation that enables the City to begin rollout effectively and consistently.

29. The RFP mentions the possibility of phasing. Are there any specific deliverables the City considers essential in the \$60,000–\$70,000 range, versus those that could be considered for future funding?

The deliverables outlined in the RFP are the expected outcomes of this first phase and should be achievable within the \$60,000–\$70,000 compensation range. At this time, the City is prioritizing completion of these core deliverables as part of the current scope. Any potential future phases or additional work would be considered separately, depending on available funding and project needs.

30. Are there any target number of focus groups, interviews, or surveys expected?

We'll provide a list of interviews/stakeholders to the consultant when project work gets underway. Deciding on the amount of surveys and engagement will be a collaborative process.

31. Is the consultant responsible for participant recruitment, translation, or hosting?

The City will provide collaboration and support in recruiting participants for stakeholder input activities, including assistance with scheduling focus groups, distributing surveys, and/or making connections with key community members, organizations, and advisory bodies. The City will collaborate with the consultant to determine the most effective outreach strategies and help ensure strong participation.

We work with a translation service so consultant is not responsible for translations.

32. Will outside partners be engaged directly during this process by the consultant or the City will have its own contacts, platforms or events made available for the consultant for this discovery phase?

See answer to question #31.

33. How many draft and final brand assets should be presented?

This will be determined during project work.

34. What would be the approval process for these assets? Who all will be involved in the approval process?

Formal decision-making and consensus-driven approvals will remain the responsibility of the City Department Directors and City Manager, with final approval likely required from the City Council.

35. How many rounds of feedback are expected during the brand development phase and who will be included in review cycles?

This will be determined during project work.

36. Who will be the decision-maker(s) at each project milestone (e.g., creative approvals, engagement planning, final brand selection)?

See answer to question #34.

37. Will external parties like Chamber of Commerce or EASC be involved?

Yes, they are considered a stakeholder and will be interviewed for their input.

38. How many wayfinding design are expected (e.g., how many signage types, sizes or locations)?

This will be determined during project work.

39. Can you please provide a list of digital branding deliverables. Examples: Website redesign? Social media templates? Email marketing assets?

We do not have a list of digital branding deliverables as it is not a priority for this project. The Final Deliverables are outlined in the RFP.

40. How will different departments (e.g., planning, parks, public works) be brought into implementation conversations? Will consultant be expected to present to each?

The cadence of the meetings with different departments will be discussed and decided during the contract negotiation phase. We envision touchpoints with departments along the way.

41. Will the City require a brand asset portal (e.g., downloadable templates, logos, style guide)? Should this be included in the proposal?

An accessible style guide is one of the deliverables listed for this project.

42. Are there any existing systems (CMS, signage software, GIS, digital kiosks, etc.) the new brand must integrate with or influence?

Yes, that will be part of the discussion with departments.

43. Will the City be using a CRM, email marketing platform, or event system that the marketing strategy should align with? Kindly specify related systems and tools used, reporting frequency, and mention if the ownership of data/tracking will reside with the city or the consultant?

For this project, we are specifically focusing on a new Economic Development marketing strategy.

44. Do you have preferred report formats?

No.

45. What level of involvement is expected from City staff or commissions? Will a project manager or communications staffer serve as a day-to-day liaison?

Yes, the contact listed on the RFP will serve as the project manager for the consultant.

46. Will there be additional phases beyond this project, such as fabrication, marketing campaign execution, digital rollouts, or brand training? If so, should we include optional pricing?

You are welcome to include any effort you feel is important. Whether you wish to include it within the budget scope or as an additional spend for future consideration is up to you.

47. Will the City help facilitate engagement with historically underrepresented communities (e.g., via translation, trusted community partners, in-language facilitators)?

Yes, we will discuss community engagement and outreach strategy.

48. Have any neighboring cities or regional peers launched similar branding or economic development efforts in the past 3–5 years that this initiative hopes to distinguish itself from or complement?

That will be something we can discuss during the discovery phase.

CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

PROCLAMATION

Constitution Week

WHEREAS: September 17, 2025, marks the two hundred thirty-eighth anniversary of the drafting of the Constitution of the United States of America by the Constitutional Convention; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting and proper to accord official recognition to this magnificent document and its memorable anniversary; and to the patriotic celebrations which will commemorate the occasion; and

WHEREAS, Public Law 915 guarantees the issuing of a proclamation each year by the President of the United States of America designating September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week,

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mayor Kyoko Matsumoto Wright, on behalf of the Mountlake Terrace City Council, do hereby proclaim the week of September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week, and ask our citizens to reaffirm the ideals the framers of the constitution had in 1787 by vigilantly protecting the freedoms guaranteed to us through this guardian of our liberties, remembering that lost rights may never be regained.

PROCLAIMED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2025.

MAYOR: _____
Kyoko Matsumoto Wright

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk



STAFF REPORT

To: Mountlake Terrace City Council

From: Patrick Hutchins, Stormwater Program Manager

Meeting Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: Review, Public Hearing, Vote on Ordinance Adopting Urban Forest Management Plan

Required Reviews:

Jennifer Joki	Created/Initiated - 09/10/2025
Gary Schimek	Approved - 09/11/2025
Sirke Salminen	Approved - 09/11/2025
Hillary Evans	Approved - 09/11/2025
Carolyn Hope	Final Approval - 09/11/2025

Council Goal(s):

Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency and An Informed and Engaged Community

Legislative History:

Input from the Recreation and Park Advisory Commission (RPAC) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission (DEIC) included in plan development.

Presented to the Recreation and Park Advisory Commission on 5/13/25

Presented to the Planning Commission on 7/14/25

Public Hearing at the Planning Commission on 9/8/25

Presentation to City Council on 9/11/25

Subject Summary:

The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) is a guidance document similar in scope to the Stormwater Comprehensive Plan that will guide the city's strategies for managing trees throughout the city. The city was awarded a \$119,900 Washington Department of Natural Resources Grant to prepare this plan.

Trees provide an estimated \$2.5 million annually in stormwater, carbon, and pollution prevention services to the city at no cost. In addition, trees add character to the community, provide mental and emotional health benefits, and provide habitat for diverse species. Developed in collaboration with other city departments and the community, the plan focuses on five goals with specific, measurable, achievable and timed recommendations for their implementation. The goals are Engage, Maintain, Grow, Retain, and Know.

Recommendations include continuing to support a well-established park and forest volunteer

community, additional staff or contractors to bring tree expertise to the city, regular monitoring and inventory of the city's trees, and a stepped approach to regulating the removal of trees within city limits. This final recommendation begins with homeowner and city staff education, steps up to technical assistance with some updates to the tree code, and concludes with a full tree permit. Where the city ends up on this spectrum is dependent on community and council input and conditions as development advances throughout the city.

The plan centers on marginalized communities through a focus on tree equity. By analyzing the abundance of trees relative to potential planting area, and indexing that against a variety of social, ethnic, ability, and economic factors, the plan lays out a process for planting and preserving trees where they will have the greatest positive impact.

Adoption of an Urban Forest Management Plan is recommended in Vision 2044's Environment Element, Policy EN-2.1. Mapping the urban forest canopy is a requirement of the city's National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permit with the Department of Ecology.

A budget amendment associated with recommendations from the Urban Forest Management Plan will be presented at a later date pending adoption.

Financial/Budget Impacts:

Budget Amendment No
Required? _____

Budget and Sources:	N/A
Expenditure:	N/A
New Appropriation Required + Sources	N/A

Community Notifications:

City Council Agenda

If "Other," please specify:

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

Presented to Recreation and Park Advisory Commission on 5/13/25

Presented to Planning Commission on 7/14/25

Public Hearing at Planning Commission on 9/8/25

Attachments:

1. Mountlake Terrace UFMP Presentation
2. Mountlake Terrace UFMP 05.2025

3. Estimated Costs for UFMP Implementation
4. Mountlake Terrace Urban Tree Canopy Assessment Report 05.2025
5. Mountlake Terrace_Tree_Inventory_Summary_Report 02.2025
6. MountlakeTerrace_Executive_Summary_Report 08.2025
7. Mountlake Terrace UFMP Draft Ordinance

Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan



Agenda

- 01 Introductions
- 02 Why the Urban Forest Matters
- 03 What We Learned from Data & the Community
- 04 The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings
- 05 Strategies for Implementation



Introduction

Project Team:



Funds for this project were provided by the State of Washington Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program.



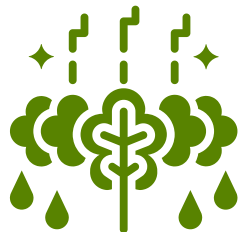
Why the Urban Forest Matters in Cities

Why Trees Matter

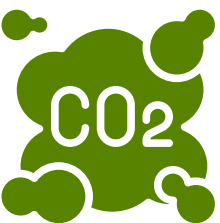
- Improve public health, mental well-being, and air quality
- Cool neighborhoods and reduce stormwater
- Increase property values and community livability
- Trees are vital “green infrastructure”



Bolster property values



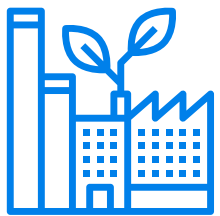
Clean the air and intercept stormwater



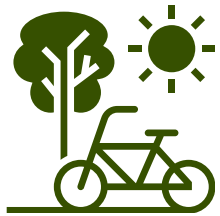
Positively influence climate to ensure sustainability



Reduce stress and improve the quality of life



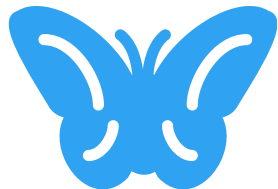
Save energy and lower energy costs for buildings



Decrease urban heat islands



Boost local and regional economies



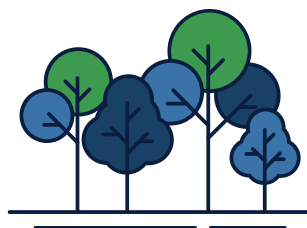
Protect wildlife and restore ecosystems

What We Learned from Data & the Community

BY THE NUMBERS



6,830 trees
inventoried



89 Genera

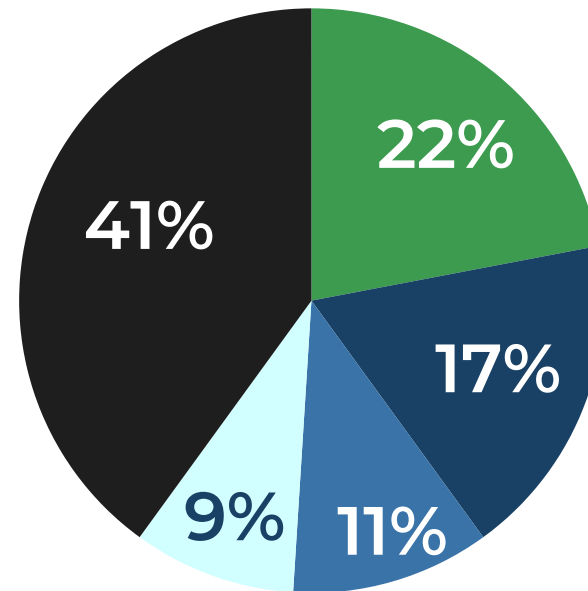


98% of trees
are alive



~225 Unique
species

Common Genera



Other
common
genera
41%

Acer
(maples)
22%

Thuja
(arborvitae)
17%

Prunus
(cherries, plums)
11%

Pseudotsuga
(Douglas firs)
9%

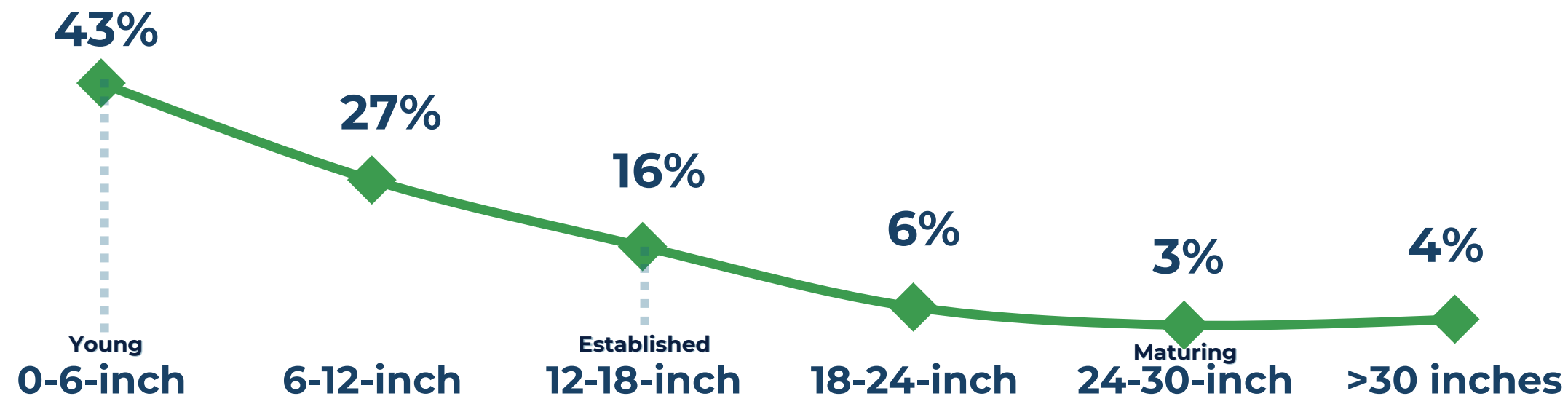
COMPOSITION

Common Species

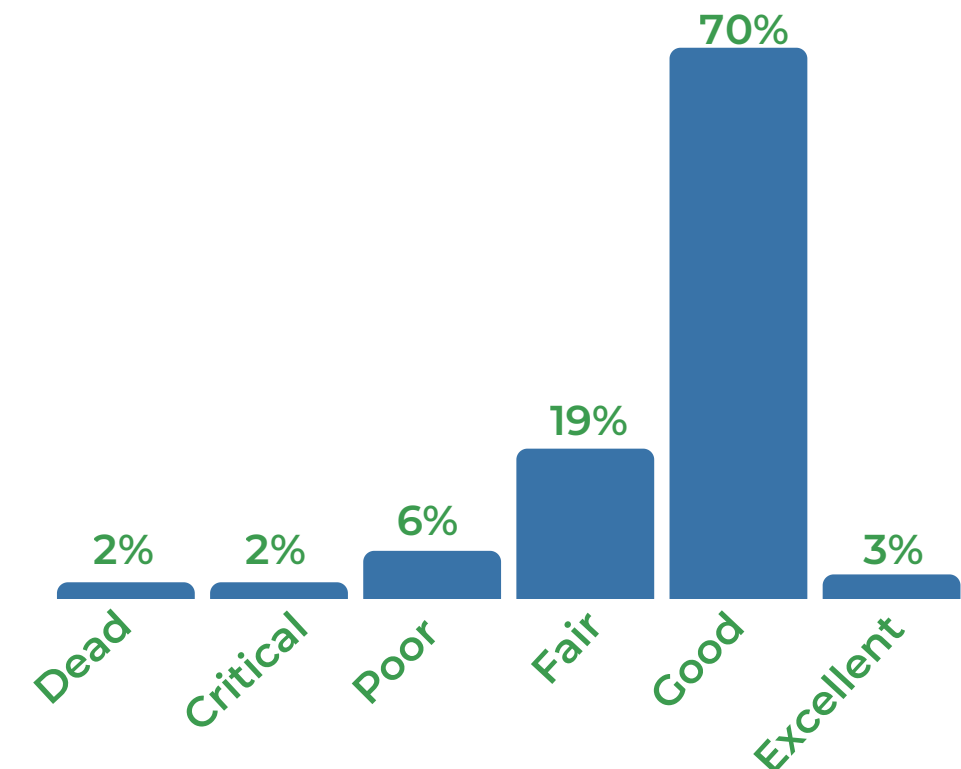
Arborvitae	13%
Douglas fir	9%
Japanese maple	5%
Sweet cherry	4%
Red maple	4%
Bigleaf maple	4%
Western red cedar	3%
All others	57%

TREE SIZE CLASSES

(measured at diameter at standard height or "DSH" measured 4.5-feet above natural grade)



TREE CONDITION



What We Learned from Data & the Community

ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS PROVIDED BY INVENTORIED TREES



OVERALL ECO BENEFITS

Annual value of ecosystem services provided by the City's trees

Annual Value **\$121,800**



CARBON SERVICES

86,080 pounds of carbon sequestered

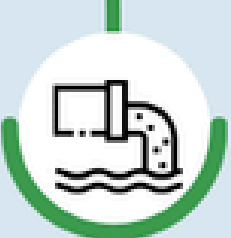
Annual Value **\$18,600**



AIR QUALITY

3,584 pounds of pollutants removed from the air

Annual Value **\$69,100**



STORMWATER SERVICES

1.2 million gallons of stormwater diverted

Annual Value **\$34,100**

CITYWIDE ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS PROVIDED BY TREES



OVERALL ECO BENEFITS

Annual value of ecosystem services provided by the City's trees

Annual Value **\$2,529,859**



CARBON SERVICES

1.4 million pounds of carbon sequestered

Annual Value **\$116,697**



AIR QUALITY

62,779 pounds of pollutants removed from the air

Annual Value **\$136,283**



STORMWATER SERVICES

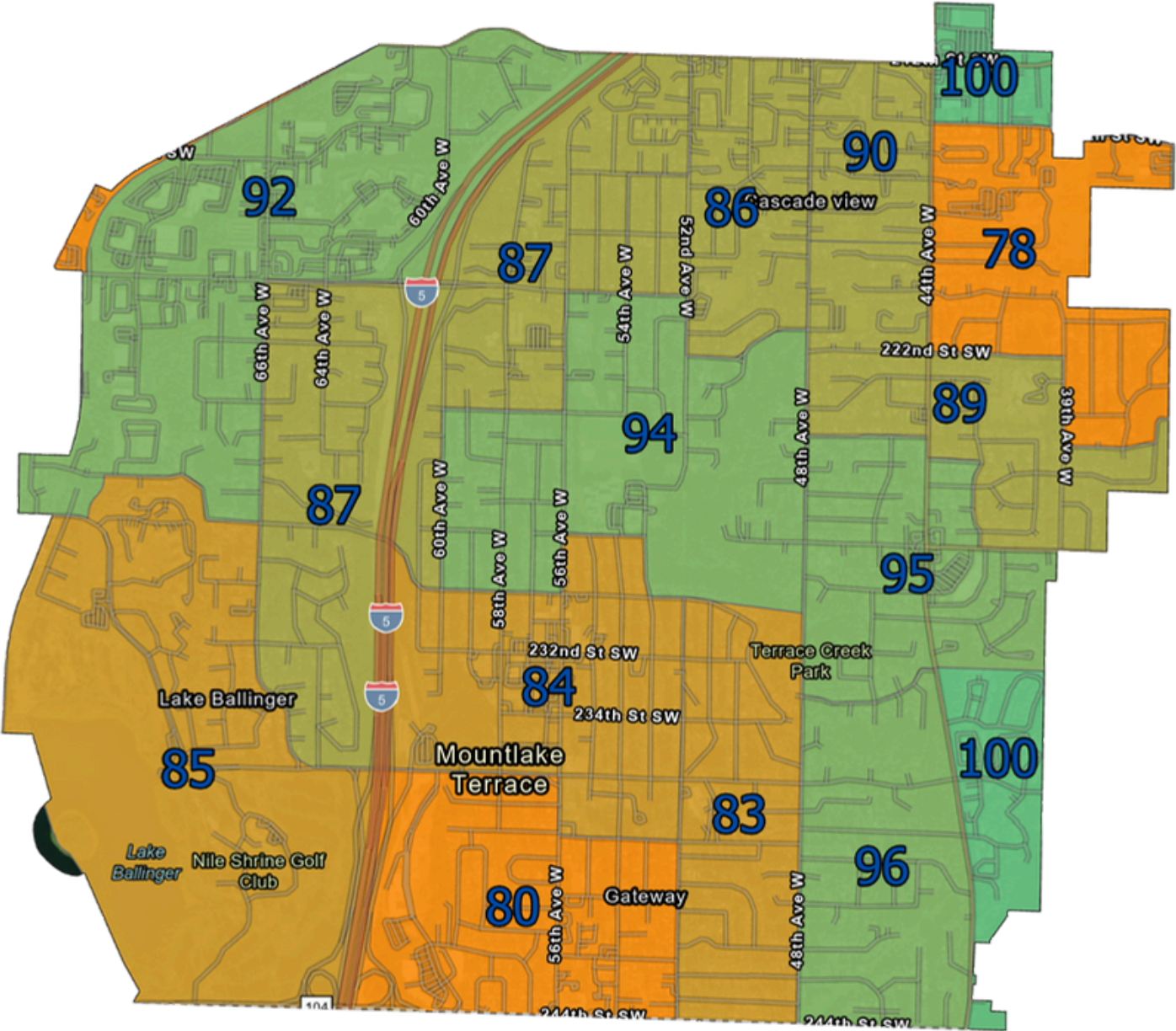
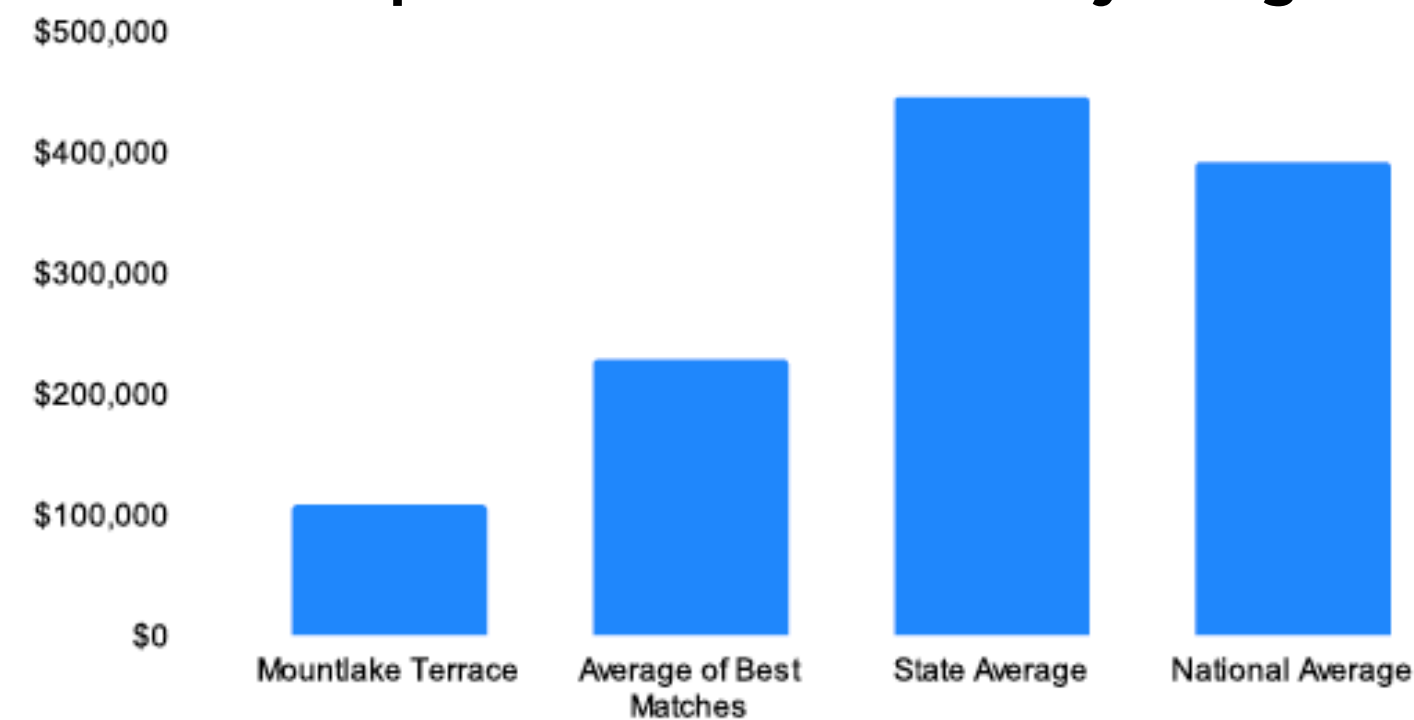
255 million gallons of stormwater diverted

Annual Value **\$2,276,880**

What We Learned from Data & the Community

Key Challenges

Comparison of Urban Forestry Budgets



Right-of-Way



Root Barriers



Suspended Paving



Structural Soils

The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Our Long Term Vision

- Grounded in community values, equity, and resilience
- Aligns with the Sustainability Strategy and Comprehensive Plan

A VISION FOR MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S

URBAN FOREST



“Mountlake Terrace is a city where a flourishing urban forest and a thriving tree canopy enrich the health, environment, and beauty of our community, ensuring every resident enjoys their benefits.”



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Our Five Urban Forest Goals

- **Engage:** Education, outreach, and volunteerism
- **Maintain:** Proactive and safe tree care
- **Grow:** Expand canopy in high-need areas
- **Retain:** Protect existing trees through policy and planning
- **Know:** Use data and monitoring to adapt



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Engage Goal: Build Community Stewardship

- Outreach strategy, Tree Ambassador and Tree Steward programs
- Provide technical guidance to residents
- Multilingual education and outreach
- Partnerships with schools and community orgs



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Maintain Goal: Care for What We Have

- Address maintenance needs before issues arise
- Improve pruning cycles and staff training
- Reduce preventable defects and risk
- Invest in long-term tree health



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Grow Goal: Expand Canopy Strategically.

- Plant at least 137 trees/year to meet goals
- Focus on heat-prone, underserved neighborhoods
- Use climate-resilient and diverse species



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Retain Goal: Preserve Existing Trees

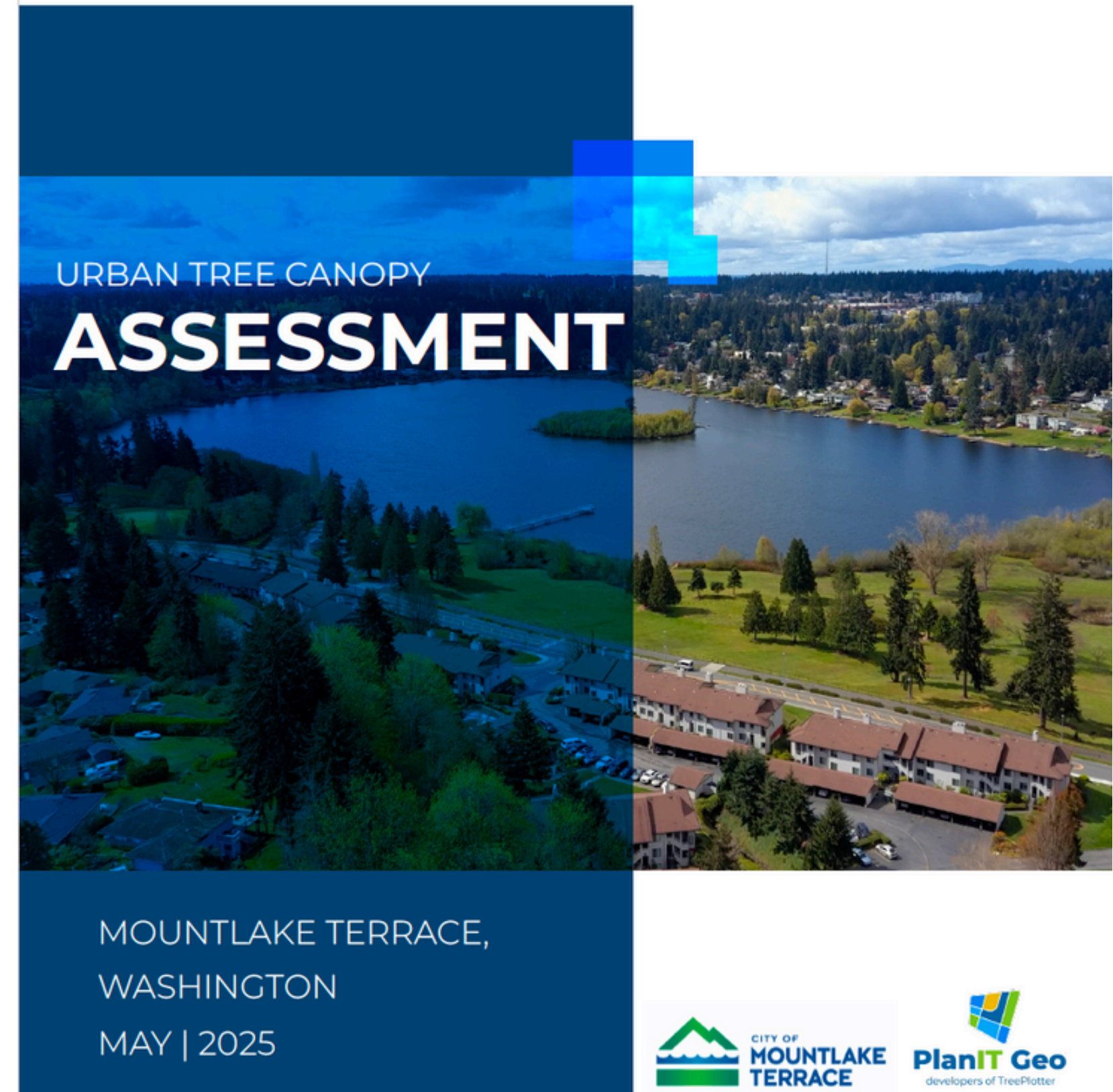
- **Strengthen protection policies and permitting standards**
- **Encourage tree preservation in development**
- **Support property owners with retention resources**



The Plan's Vision, Goals, and Key Findings

Know Goal: Use Data to Guide Decisions

- Update inventory in real time and canopy data every 2 years
- Track performance metrics and adjust strategies
- Support transparency through public reporting



Strategies for Implementation

How We Get There

- Coordinate across departments and city initiatives
- Align UFMP with the Comprehensive and Parks Plans
- Monitor, adapt, and report progress regularly
- Accountability



Strategies for Implementation

What Success Looks Like

- A healthier, more diverse, and better-distributed tree canopy
- Increased community involvement and tree retention
- Strong alignment with City policies and climate goals



Strategies for Implementation

Call to Action

- **Help share and support this Plan across departments and the public**
- **Encourage stewardship through local programs**
- **Be a champion for trees in Mountlake Terrace**



Strategies for Implementation

Why Adoption Matters Now

- The Plan supports climate, equity, and livability goals
- Builds on community input and technical best practices
- Establishes proactive budgeting, grant applications, and staff alignment
- Adoption shows commitment to a greener healthier future



Questions?



Thank You!

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URBAN FOREST **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**MOUNTLAKE TERRACE,
WASHINGTON**
MAY | 2025



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URBAN FOREST **MANAGEMENT PLAN** CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON

MAY 2025



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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City of Mountlake Terrace

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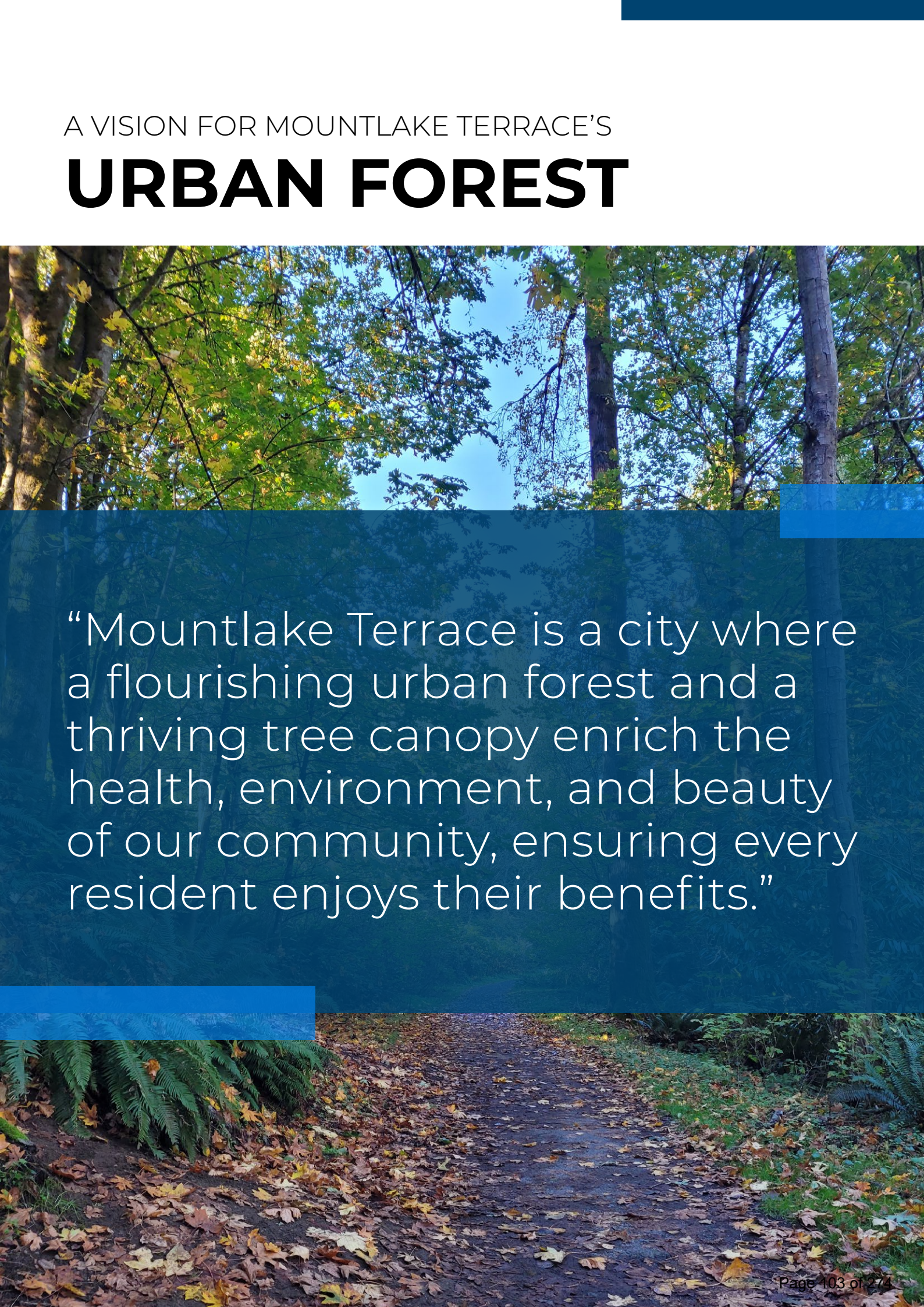
UFMP Project Team

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A VISION FOR MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S

URBAN FOREST

The image is a composite of two photographs. The top half shows a dense canopy of trees with green and yellowing leaves against a blue sky. The bottom half shows a dirt path covered in fallen yellow and brown leaves, flanked by green ferns and other foliage. A semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing white text.

“Mountlake Terrace is a city where a flourishing urban forest and a thriving tree canopy enrich the health, environment, and beauty of our community, ensuring every resident enjoys their benefits.”

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GLOSSARY AND

INDUSTRY TERMS

The following terms appear throughout the Urban Forest Management Plan or are essential for understanding and supporting its effective implementation.

Term	Definition
10-20-30 Rule	A commonly used rule which states that urban or municipal forests should comprise no more than 10% of any particular species, 20% of any one genus, or 30% of any single family.
American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA)	American Society of Consulting Arborists. ASCA represents Consulting Arborists—the authoritative experts on trees, and whose objective, comprehensive viewpoint ensures the safety, health, and preservation of trees. Members have an extensive level of knowledge and experience.
ANSI	American National Standards Institute which defines the standards and best practices for arboriculture. Includes but not limited to ANSI A300, ANSI Z60.1, and ANSI Z133.
Arboriculture	The cultivation, management, and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants. The science of arboriculture studies how these plants grow and respond to cultural practices and to their environment. The practice of arboriculture includes cultural techniques such as selection, planting, training, fertilization, pest and pathogen control, pruning, shaping, and removal.
Arborist (Certified Arborist)	An individual who has demonstrated arboricultural knowledge and competency by obtaining a current International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) arborist certification, or a Registered Consulting Arborist (RCA) with the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA).
Arborist (City Arborist)	The person designated as such by the City of Mountlake Terrace.
Ball & Burlap (B&B)	A method of preparing trees for transplanting, typically used for larger-caliper trees that are field grown. The tree is dug with a portion of its root system intact, and the root ball is securely wrapped in burlap and often tied with twine or placed in a wire basket to maintain its shape during transport and planting.
Bare Root	Type of tree for planting that has a complete root system but no soil, typically smaller caliper trees and seedlings.
Best Management Practices (BMPs)	The practice, or combination of practices, that is determined to be an effective and practicable (including technological, economic, and institutional considerations) means of applying arboriculture and urban forest management techniques.
Biomass	All parts of the tree; leaves, stems, branches, roots, tree trunks that make up a tree's biomass.
Branch Bark Ridge	A ridge of bark in a branch that marks where branch and trunk tissues meet and often extend down the trunk.
Branch Collar	Trunk tissue that forms around the base of a branch between the main stem and the branch or a branch and a lateral. As a branch decreases in vigor or begins to die, the collar usually becomes more pronounced and more completely encircles the branch.
Caliper	Used to measure the dimensions of an object. Caliper is typically used for trees less than 3 inches in diameter. Caliper is measured at 4.5 feet above soil line for trees greater than 1 inch in diameter and measured at 12" above natural grade for seedlings or trees less than 2 feet in height.
Canopy (Tree Canopy, Tree Canopy Cover, Urban Tree Canopy)	Canopy refers to the leaves and branches of a tree or crown. Tree Canopy Cover or Urban Tree Canopy refers to the layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that provide tree coverage of the ground when viewed from above.
Carbon Sequestration and Storage	Carbon sequestration is the removal of carbon dioxide from the air by plants. Carbon storage is the amount of carbon already bound up in the parts of woody vegetation.

Term	Definition
Codominant Stems	Two or more main stems of a tree that are of equal or nearly equal size and originate from the same point on the trunk, which can lead to structural weakness and increased risk of failure.
Compaction	Compression of the soil structure or texture by any means that creates an upper layer of impermeable soil. Compaction is damaging to roots and the health of a tree.
Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees (CODIT)	Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees. CODIT occurs when a tree is wounded. The tree reacts and protects itself by slowing or preventing the spread of disease and decay by forming different types of “walls” around the wounded area.
Condition	Overall health of the tree based on observations of the canopy, stem, and other observable features as determined by an arborist.
Condition Rating	A classification of tree health based on foliage, structure, and wood condition such as excellent, good, fair, poor, and dead.
Coniferous	A tree or shrub that bears cones and typically has evergreen, needle-like, or scale-like leaves, meaning they retain their foliage throughout the year.
Containerized	Type of tree for planting that has a complete root system and soil within a container of varying sizes depending on the tree's size (height and stem caliper).
Crotch	The angle formed at the attachment between a branch and another branch, leader, or trunk of a woody plant.
Crown	The leaves and branches of a tree or shrub; the upper portion of a tree from the lowest branches on the trunk to the top.
Crown Cleaning	Selective removal of dead, dying, diseased, and weak branches from a tree's crown. No more than 25% of the live crown should be removed in any one year, even for young trees.
Crown Dieback	A condition where the branches at the top of a tree lose vitality, often due to stress or disease.
Crown Raising	The practice of removing branches from the bottom of the crown of a tree to provide clearance for pedestrians, vehicles, buildings, lines of sight, or to develop a clear stem for timber production.
Crown Reduction	Most often used when a tree has grown too large for its permitted space. This method, sometimes called drop crotch pruning, is preferred to topping because it results in a more natural appearance, increases the time before pruning is needed again, and minimizes stress. Crown reduction pruning, a method of last resort, often results in large pruning wounds.
Crown Thinning	Primarily for hardwoods, thinning is the selective removal of branches to increase light penetration and air movement throughout the crown of a tree.
Cultivar	A plant variety that has been selectively bred for specific traits, such as disease resistance or aesthetics.
Dead Tree	A tree that is dead or that has been damaged beyond repair or is in an advanced state of decline. This definition may include a tree that is “dying”.
Deciduous	A tree or shrub that sheds its leaves annually.
Diameter at Standard Height (DSH)	The diameter of the tree trunk at four and one-half feet (or 54 inches) above natural grade level. The diameter may be calculated by using the following formula: $DSH = \text{circumference at 4.5 feet} / 3.142$ ($D=C/\pi$). To determine the DSH of multi-trunk trees or measuring trees on slopes, consult the current Guide for Plant Appraisal published by the Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers. Formerly Diameter at Breast Height (DBH).
Dormant	Having normal physical functions suspended or slowed down for a period of time. During dormancy, plants stop growing and conserve energy until better conditions present themselves. This happens naturally as seasons and weather changes. And it can also be artificially controlled.
Drip Line	An area encircling the base of a tree, delineated at a minimum extent by a vertical line extended down from the outermost branch tips to the ground.
Drought Tolerance	The ability to which a plant maintains its biomass production during arid or drought conditions.
Ecosystem	A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Term	Definition
Ecosystem Services	Benefits trees provide to the environment, such as stormwater management, carbon sequestration, and air quality improvement.
Evergreen	Relating to or denoting a plant that retains green leaves throughout the year. See also coniferous.
Family	A taxonomic rank in the biological classification system that groups related genera (plural of genus).
Genus (Plural: Genera)	A rank in the biological classification system that groups species sharing common characteristics.
Green Waste	Primarily plant-based materials generated from gardens, parks, and landscaped areas, including items like grass clippings, leaves, branches, and weeds.
Hardscape Damage	Damage caused by tree roots or growth to sidewalks, roads, or other infrastructure.
Hazardous (Tree)	A tree that possesses a structural defect which poses an imminent risk if the tree or part of the tree that would fall on someone or something of value (target).
Heritage Tree	Trees designated by a municipality to have cultural, historic, or social value to the city that receive protection beyond that of other Protected Trees.
Impervious (Impermeable)	Not allowing fluid to pass through, typically used when referring to stormwater management.
Infrastructure	The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, power supplies, trees) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.
Integrated Pest Management (IPM)	Integrates cultural (growing) practices, monitoring, threshold and life cycle analysis, and chemical application strategies to effectively manage urban forest pest populations in an ecologically-sound manner.
International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)	International Society of Arboriculture. The organization promotes the professional practice of arboriculture and has a certification program for various levels and practices of arboriculture.
Invasive Species	Non-native species that spread aggressively, outcompeting native species and causing ecological disruption.
Leader	A dominant upright stem, usually the main trunk.
Mitigation	The replacement of a tree authorized for removal by the City of Mountlake Terrace.
Native Species	Species naturally occurring in a specific region, contributing to local ecosystem balance.
Nursery Stock	The type of tree prepared by a nursery or garden center. All trees, shrubs, ornamental plants, grass sod, foliage plants, or marsh plants grown or propagated for sale or distribution. Trees are typically prepared as containerized, ball & burlap, or bare root.
Pathogen	Organisms or agents, such as viruses, bacteria, fungi, or parasites, that can cause illness or disease in a host (tree).
Photosynthesis	The process by which green plants and some other organisms use sunlight to synthesize foods from carbon dioxide and water. Photosynthesis in plants generally involves the green pigment chlorophyll and generates oxygen as a byproduct.
Plant Hardiness Zone	Geographic area defined as having a certain range of annual minimum temperature, a factor relevant to the survival of many plants.
Public Tree	A tree growing within the street right-of-way (outside of private property), public property, or easements. In some cases, property lines lie several feet behind the sidewalks or the edge of the paved street.
Resilient	Able to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions. Referred herein as a tree's ability to withstand tree pests and diseases, the effects of climate change, and other factors.
Right-of-Way ("ROW", public ROW)	The area on, below, or above a public roadway, highway, street, public sidewalk, alley, waterway, or utility easement in which the municipality has an interest.
Risk (Tree Risk)	The likelihood of property damage or personal injury from a hazard tree.
Root Ball	The mass of roots growing from the trunk of a tree, including the surrounding soil.

Term	Definition
Root Collar	The junction between the root of a plant and its stem, often indicated by a trunk flare.
Soil Horizon	A layer parallel to the soil surface whose physical, chemical and biological characteristics differ from the layers above and beneath. Horizons are defined in many cases by obvious physical features, mainly color and texture.
Soil Structure	The way individual particles of sand, silt, and clay are assembled. Single particles when assembled appear as larger particles. These are called aggregates. Aggregation of soil particles can occur in different patterns, resulting in different soil structures.
Species	A level of biological classification referring to a group of organisms capable of interbreeding.
Species Diversity	A measure of the variety of tree species in an area.
Stormwater (Storm Water)	Surface water resulting from heavy falls of rain or snow that is either captured in a city's system or results in runoff. The heaviest volumes of stormwater typically result from impermeable (paved) surfaces.
Street Tree	A public tree adjacent to roadways within the public right-of-way, adjacent to private streets, and may include trees within medians.
Structural Defects	Physical flaws in a tree, such as cavities, decay, or codominant stems, that may compromise its stability or health.
Suckers (Sprouts, Sucker Sprouts)	Upright shoots that develop on the trunk and branches of trees (sprouts and shoots) or shoots that grow from roots or the base of the tree (suckers). Typically a result of a tree that is stressed or has suffered some sort of trauma.
Sustainable	Ability to meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
Taxonomic	Related to taxonomy, the scientific system of classifying and naming organisms based on shared characteristics. This system organizes life into hierarchical ranks such as kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species.
Topping (Heading Back, Stubbing, Lion-tailing, Pollarding)	Severe types of pruning that involves cutting back large-diameter branches or truncating the main stem. This method of pruning usually produces less desirable results than more moderate pruning with respect to the tree's natural form and which are generally hazardous to the overall health and stability of the tree. Topping of public and protected trees is prohibited and highly discouraged for private trees.
Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)	Unless otherwise specified by the City Arborist or hired Certified Arborist, the area of temporary fenced tree enclosure. Within the TPZ, roots that are critical for tree survival are typically found in the upper three-foot soil horizon and may extend beyond the drip line area. Protecting the roots in the TPZ is necessary to ensure the tree's survival. The TPZ is a restricted activity zone where no soil disturbance is permitted, unless otherwise approved. The TPZ must be identified for each tree and shown on all applicable plans for a development project. The TPZ is based on the tree's drip line measured at the outermost edge of the tree canopy.
Tree Risk Assessment Qualification	A voluntary qualification program by ISA designed to train and assess candidates in a specialized field of arboriculture, specifically tree risk assessments.
Urban Forest	All trees that grow within a city, town, or a suburb; on both public and private property. In a wider sense, it may include any kind of woody plant vegetation growing in and around human settlements. Urban forests play an important role in the ecology of human habitats, such as the beautification of the urban environment, benefits to the climate and economy, and shelter to wildlife and recreational areas.
Urban Forester	An individual applying urban forest management and planning.
Urban Forestry	The care and management of single trees and tree populations in urban settings for the purpose of improving the urban environment. Urban forestry involves both planning and management, including the programming of care and maintenance operations of the urban forest. It advocates the role of trees as a critical part of the urban infrastructure. Practitioners plant and maintain trees, support appropriate tree preservation, conduct research and promote the many benefits trees provide. Urban forestry is practiced by municipal and commercial arborists, municipal and utility foresters, environmental policymakers, city planners, consultants, educators, researchers and community activists.

Term	Definition
Wound	An opening that is created when the tree's protective bark is penetrated, cut, or removed, injuring or destroying living tissue. Pruning a live branch creates a wound, even when the cut is properly made.
Woundwood	Differentiated woody tissue, also referred to as a callus roll, which forms after callus has formed around the margins of a wound. Wounds are closed primarily by woundwood through the compartmentalization of the decay process.
Xeric Plants	Plants that evolved in regions with lower precipitation, thus requiring less water throughout the growing season than most residential landscape plants.



2025
Urban Forest
Management Plan

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

The Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan (“UFMP” or “Plan”) is the City’s first comprehensive, long-term strategy for protecting, maintaining, and expanding its urban forest. Developed in partnership with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and shaped by data, industry best practices, and community input, the Plan outlines a clear path toward a greener, healthier, and more resilient future for the trees of Mountlake Terrace.

The city’s urban forest spans all landscapes—including trees along streets, parks, open spaces, trails, waterways, residential yards, and commercial properties. While the Plan primarily focuses on publicly managed trees, it recognizes that all trees, regardless of ownership, contribute to the health, sustainability, and benefits of the urban forest. Together, these trees form vital green infrastructure that supports the community’s well-being and environmental resilience.

PURPOSE AND VISION

Mountlake Terrace envisions a city where a thriving urban forest enhances health, beauty, and environmental quality for all residents. The UFMP serves as a foundational tool to guide tree-related decision-making across city departments and support sustainable growth, climate adaptation, and community livability.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Urban forest volunteer contributions totaled nearly 2,800 hours in 2022, which is double the state average and 8 times the national average. Community members, advisory commissions, city staff, and volunteers provided key insights throughout the planning process and shaped this Plan through over 400 survey responses, multiple workshops, and focused feedback.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Tree Canopy:** Mountlake Terrace has 32% canopy cover, with the potential to expand by another 4.5% through targeted planting.
- **Tree Inventory:** A 2024 inventory documented 6,830 publicly managed trees.
 - 73% of trees are in good or excellent condition
 - 70% of trees have a Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) of 12 inches or less, with an average DSH of 9 inches.
- **Tree Management:** 63% of inventoried trees had tree issues that are preventable or correctable and are primarily human-caused.
- **Tree Diversity:** Maple (22%) and cedar (17%) dominate the street tree population, indicating a need to increase species diversity for long-term resilience.
- **Environmental Benefits:** The city’s canopy provides an estimated \$2.5 million in annual ecosystem services, including stormwater management, air quality improvements, and carbon sequestration.
- **Tree Equity:** The city’s Tree Equity Score is 87 (out of 100), signaling strong but uneven access to canopy benefits. Canopy expansion efforts will focus on underserved neighborhoods with higher temperatures and health burdens.

GOALS AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Plan is built around five overarching goals:

- **Engage:** Strengthen community stewardship through outreach, education, and volunteerism.
- **Maintain:** Ensure proactive, safe, and effective tree care and maintenance.
- **Grow:** Expand the urban tree canopy with strategic planting, prioritizing equity and climate resilience.
- **Retain:** Preserve existing trees using informed policy, incentives, and sustainable development standards.
- **Know:** Leverage data and monitoring to inform management, track progress, and guide adaptive strategies.

Each goal includes actionable strategies, timelines, and targets—such as planting at least 137 trees annually in addition to tree removal mitigation plantings to meet canopy objectives and expanding community programs like the Tree Ambassador initiative.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan was based on answering four key questions:

- What Do We Have?
- What Do We Want?
- How Do We Get There?
- How Are We Doing?

This structure, termed "adaptive management," is commonly used for resource planning and management and provides a useful conceptual framework for managing Mountlake Terrace's urban forest resource (Miller, 1988).

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

The UFMP outlines an implementation roadmap for progressing towards each goal. These strategies include:

- Interdepartmental coordination among Public Works, Parks, Stormwater, and Planning.
- Staffing recommendations to increase capacity as the urban forest grows.
- Integration with other city planning efforts (Comprehensive Plan, Parks Plan, Sustainability Strategy).
- Regular updates to the urban tree inventory and canopy assessments every two years.
- Community engagement and reporting mechanisms to monitor progress.

The Mountlake Terrace UFMP is both a blueprint and a call to action. With thoughtful implementation and sustained collaboration, the city can ensure that its trees remain an equitable and growing part of the urban landscape for generations to come. The Plan's goals address trees on both city-owned and private properties, with tailored strategies for each. On public land, recommendations focus on increasing the city's capacity through additional staffing or support from trained community volunteers to care for and maintain trees. On private property, the Plan emphasizes preservation through behavior change campaigns and public education, with potential updates to city code or permitting processes as needs and resources evolve.

INTRODUCTION

In 2024, the City of Mountlake Terrace (“city”) committed to developing the city’s first Urban Forest Management Plan (“UFMP” or “Plan”). The contents of this Plan reflect a shared commitment from the city, its partners, and the community to manage and grow a sustainable and equitable urban forest.

This UFMP orients Mountlake Terrace’s urban forestry program for success, using a framework of goals, objectives, actions, and strategies for implementation. Recommendations are based on data analysis, stakeholder input, an urban forest program audit, benchmarking, best management practices, and industry standards.

The Plan is intended to be used as a long-range planning document as well as a tool that is revisited periodically and adapted to reflect changes in Mountlake Terrace over time.



ABOUT MOUNTLAKE TERRACE AND ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Mountlake Terrace, a city of approximately 21,660 residents (2023 data), is located in southern Snohomish County, Washington, just 13 miles north of Seattle. Situated on a plateau with views of the Olympic and Cascade mountain ranges, the city is bordered by Brier, Lynnwood, Edmonds, Shoreline, Lake Forest Park, and unincorporated King County. Lake Ballinger, a 100-acre lake with surrounding parkland, provides recreational opportunities, while the city’s mix of single-family neighborhoods, multi-family complexes, and commercial areas balances residential and economic development. Well-connected by highways and transit, Mountlake Terrace is further enhancing accessibility with the 2024 addition of a Sound Transit light rail station.

Originally home to the Snohomish people, the area was later logged by the Puget Mill Company in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The land was converted into stump ranches, small farms, and eventually suburban developments. In 1949, developers transformed the area into an affordable housing community for returning veterans, leading to incorporation as a city in 1954. Today, Mountlake Terrace blends its historical roots with forward-thinking growth, supported by ongoing downtown revitalization efforts and infrastructure improvements.



Despite urbanization, Mountlake Terrace retains key natural features that shape its identity, including Lake Ballinger, Hall Creek, McAleer Creek, wetlands, ravines, and terraces. These features are part of Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 8, supporting biodiversity, managing stormwater, and providing green spaces. While the construction of Interstate 5 and suburban expansion altered much of the natural landscape, the city is now focused on restoration and conservation. Sustainable policies prioritize compact community design, resource efficiency, and habitat restoration. Initiatives such as urban forestry programs, wetland rehabilitation, and increased canopy cover aim to enhance biodiversity and mitigate urban heat islands.

Mountlake Terrace's commitment to balancing growth with conservation ensures that its natural assets remain protected and restored for future generations. By integrating proactive management and community engagement, the city is fostering a more sustainable, resilient urban forest while preserving its ecological heritage.

WHY IS THIS UFMP IMPORTANT?

The trees we plant today are intended for future generations. They are critical infrastructure that must be preserved and planned for. The City of Mountlake Terrace maintains over 6,830 street trees (2024), in addition to trees in parks and natural spaces. When proactively maintained, these public trees bring long-term value and benefits to the community to promote a sustainable and resilient future. This 2025 **Urban Forest Management Plan provides a strategic and systematic framework for the stewardship, enhancement, and utilization of trees within the urban areas of Mountlake Terrace.** It serves as a roadmap to guide decision-making and actions related to the urban forest while also integrating with city initiatives in support of economic development, transportation, parks and recreation, urban planning, and the goals of property owners.

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“Urban trees and forests are considered integral to the sustainability of cities as a whole. Yet, sustainable urban forests are not born, they are made. They do not arise at random, but result from a community wide commitment to their creation and management.”

CLARK et al., 1997, *A Model of Urban Forest Sustainability*

BENEFITS AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S TREES

Urban forests are crucial to enhancing urban life, offering aesthetic beauty, improved property values, and community health benefits. They provide essential environmental services like air purification, stormwater mitigation, cooling shade, and biodiversity support. Economically, trees increase property values and lower energy costs, while socially, they offer recreational spaces, boost mental health, and encourage active lifestyles. Mountlake Terrace's UFMP emphasizes sustaining these benefits. Recognizing urban forests as part of essential green infrastructure, municipalities invest in urban forestry to create livable communities. As cities expand, enhancing green infrastructure—such as parks, woodlands, and natural areas—is vital for maintaining clean air, water, and overall quality of life. Unlike traditional infrastructure, green infrastructure gains value and enhances environmental services over time, positioning open spaces and parks as community necessities.



MENTAL HEALTH

People without views of nature from their desks claimed 23% more sick days than workers with views of nature.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Planting and protecting trees provides habitat for hundreds of birds and small animals.



ENERGY SAVINGS

Residents and businesses can save up to 50% on hot-day energy bills.



CLEANER AIR

Roadside trees reduce nearby indoor air pollution by more than 50%



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Contiguous tree canopy is estimated to intercept 4" of rain over 1 acre in a typical year—about 108,000 gallons.

CARBON SERVICES

In one year, an acre of mature trees absorbs the amount of CO₂ produced by a car driven 26,000 miles.

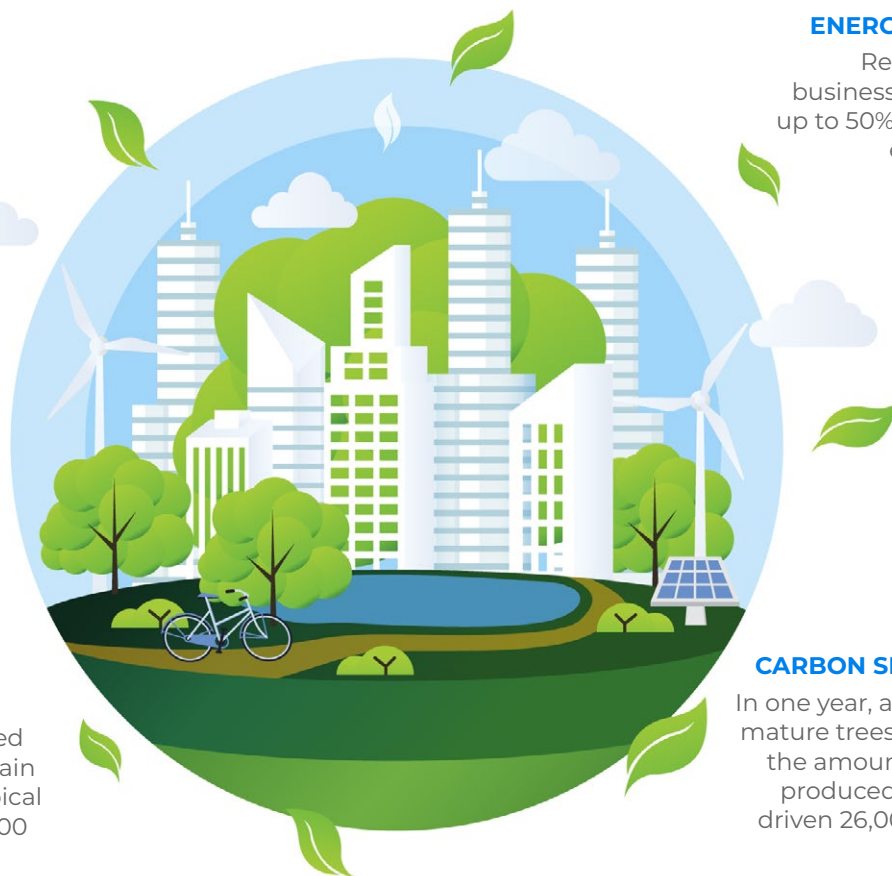


Figure 1. Benefits and services of Mountlake Terrace's trees.

A CLOSER LOOK AT TREES IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

Trees—whether shade, flowering, fruit-bearing, or those with vibrant fall colors—offer diverse benefits to the urban ecosystem by enhancing tree canopies, parks, and green spaces. While many environmental benefits are measurable, others are experiential, like the tranquility of a tree-lined trail.

Mountlake Terrace's urban forest provides numerous social and health benefits. Park and boulevard trees foster community engagement and a sense of belonging, offering spaces for social activities and relaxation away from city life's hustle. Research indicates that urban greenery reduces stress, improves mental well-being, and promotes physical activity, leading to healthier, happier communities.

Additionally, Mountlake Terrace's urban forest encourages environmental education and volunteering, inspiring residents to learn about nature, participate in tree planting, and engage in environmental stewardship.



Mountlake Terrace's urban forest significantly enhances social interactions, well-being, health, and community engagement, contributing to a more livable city. Studies link trees and vegetation in parks to increased neighborhood safety and social activity, strengthening social ties among residents (Kim et al., 2020).

Nature encounters in urban areas improve attitudes, reduce stress, enhance attention, and boost cognitive performance (Wolf et al., 2020). Tree canopies and green spaces encourage physical activity, with higher green space percentages near homes correlating with better reported health, especially among the elderly and lower socioeconomic groups (Ulmer et al., 2016). **Residents in greener areas are three times more likely to be physically active.**

Urban nature exposure, such as viewing trees from windows or walking in tree-lined areas, is vital for mental well-being, increasing happiness and reducing stress (White et al., 2013). Tree cover near schools improves student performance, with children showing better focus after walks in green areas compared to non-green urban settings (Taylor et al., 2009).

Trees and green spaces are associated with increased longevity, reduced cancer and heart disease risk, lower anxiety and depression, enhanced immune function, and reduced stress hormones. A 2016 study found a 12% lower mortality rate among those with significant greenery near their homes (James et al., 2016). Additionally, hospital patients with nature views had shorter stays than those with views of buildings (Mihandoust et al., 2021).

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“Trees and vegetation increase the quality of life at all levels and are especially valuable in an urban setting. Proper stewardship of trees and other vegetation in the community will help to maintain and/or improve the economic, social, built, and natural environments.”

Mountlake Terrace Comprehensive Plan 2017

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF TREES

Research from the past few decades has provided extensive data on the environmental benefits of urban forests, offering valuable insights for urban forest researchers, managers, and practitioners. This data helps communicate the benefits of trees to residents and stakeholders, supports the integration of trees into infrastructure design such as stormwater management, and guides strategies to address inequities.

A 2025 tree canopy assessment, covering the entire area within Mountlake Terrace's city limits, found that 32% of the city (868.5 acres or 1.4 square miles) is covered by tree canopy. Additionally, a 2025 tree inventory assessed the composition and structure of all publicly managed trees, providing data to calculate various benefits of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

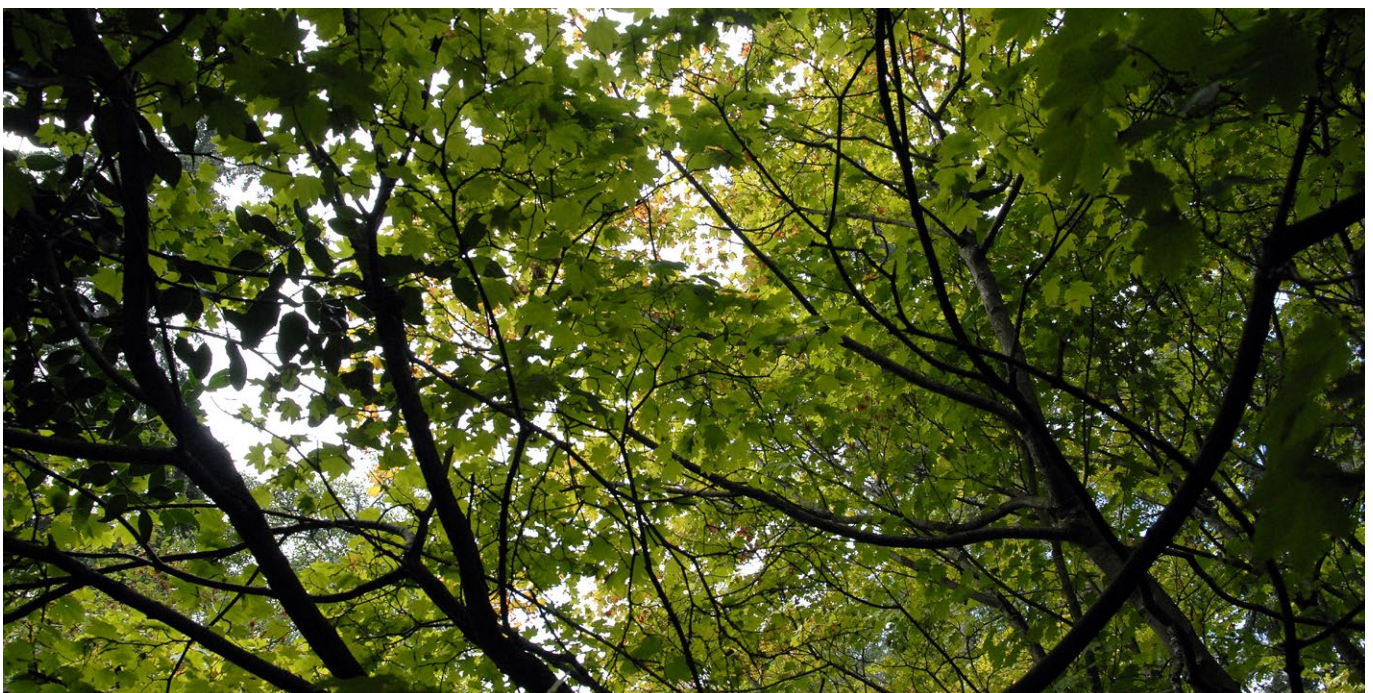
Citywide Tree Canopy Benefits

The citywide tree canopy, covering both public and private lands, provides an estimated annual ecosystem benefit of \$2,529,859 through improved air quality and reduced stormwater volumes.

Specifically, Mountlake Terrace's 868.5 acres of tree canopy capture 62,779 pounds of pollutants annually, including carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, fine and coarse particulates, and sulfur dioxide.

- Carbon monoxide *1,678 pounds*
- Nitrogen Dioxide *15,280 pounds*
- Ozone *26,982 pounds*
- Fine particulates (PM2.5) *644 pounds*
- Coarse particulates (PM10) *17,134 pounds*
- Sulfur dioxide *1,061 pounds*

The USDA Forest Service's i-Tree research estimates this pollution removal is valued at approximately \$136,283 annually. Additionally, Mountlake Terrace's trees absorb about 255 million gallons of stormwater each year, valued at \$2,276,880, and sequester 1.4 million pounds of carbon, valued at \$116,697. Future updates to the 2025 tree canopy assessment should include further ecosystem benefit calculations and analyses of changes in canopy cover and associated benefits.



MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON

CITYWIDE ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS PROVIDED BY TREES

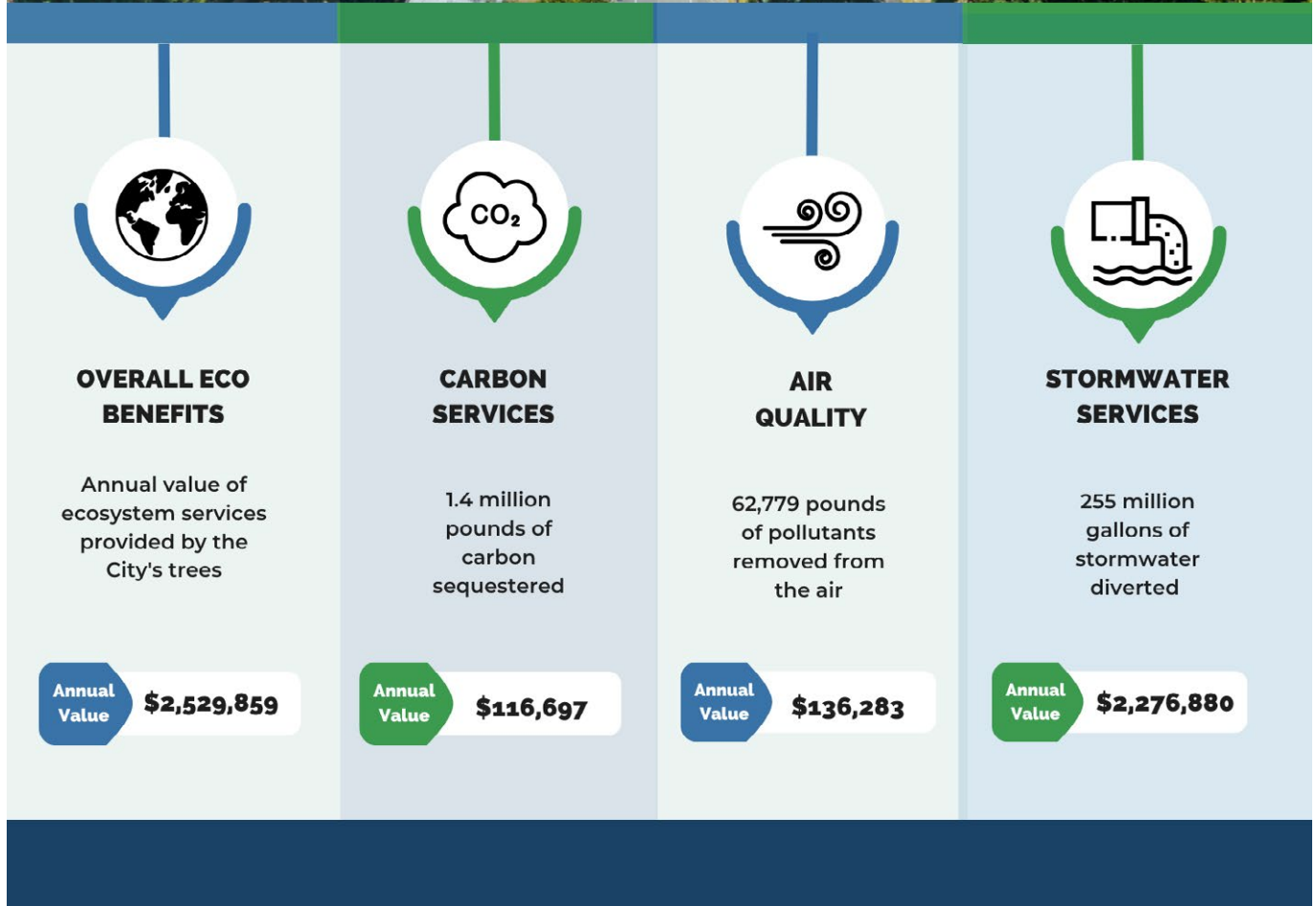


Figure 2. Estimated annual benefits of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

Public Tree Benefits

The inventory of 6,830 publicly managed trees in Mountlake Terrace shows these trees provide annual benefits totaling \$121,800. They capture over 3,584 pounds of air pollutants, sequester 86,080 pounds of carbon, and prevent more than 1.2 million gallons of runoff each year. The replacement value of Mountlake Terrace's public tree population is estimated at \$12 million, with a carbon storage value of \$802,000 for the 1,900 tons of carbon stored. On average, the replacement value and cumulative benefits amount to \$1,874 per tree and \$591 per capita (based on the 2023 population). Proper management can increase these values, while declining tree health and cover can reduce them.

CHALLENGES FACING MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S URBAN FOREST

OVERVIEW

Urban trees in Mountlake Terrace face many challenges, including pests and diseases, climate change, pollution, compacted soils, limited growing space, development pressures, vandalism, and resource constraints—issues common to urban forests worldwide. Addressing these challenges requires strategic planning and proactive care to maximize the benefits trees provide. Additionally, long-term threats such as climate change, extreme weather, and invasive pests demand mitigation, adaptation, and recovery strategies to ensure the resilience of the urban forest. In particular, new state zoning requirements will require careful balancing with tree canopy preservation and growth. This Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) outlines maintenance and planting recommendations that support proactive, strategic planning to safeguard Mountlake Terrace's tree canopy.

A well-funded urban forestry program with dedicated staff and adequate resources is essential for effective tree maintenance, risk management, and community engagement. Investing in these efforts will help strengthen stewardship, improve environmental sustainability, and enhance the long-term health of the city's urban forest.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is expected to bring rising temperatures, prolonged heat, shifting precipitation patterns, and increased pest and disease pressures, all of which will impact Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. Many established trees may struggle to survive over the next 50 to 75 years, requiring proactive planning to maintain a resilient tree canopy.

The region is already experiencing faster-than-expected warming, as reflected in recent updates to the USDA Plant Hardiness Zones. Adapting to these changes will require climate-informed species selection, tree preservation efforts, and strategic urban forestry practices to support long-term canopy health and community resilience.

ANNUAL ECOSYSTEM BENEFITS FROM TREES

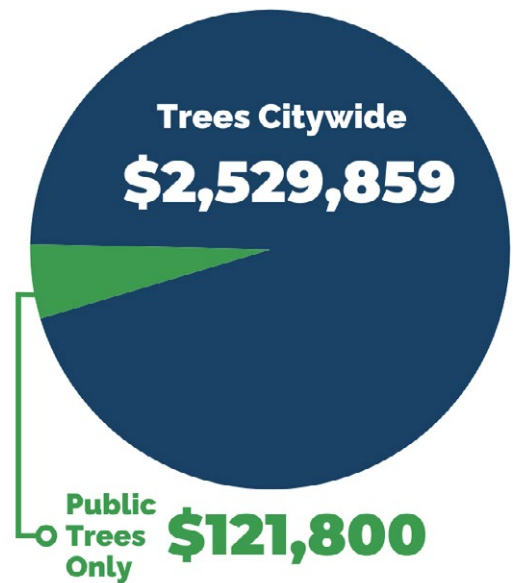


Figure 3. Estimated annual ecosystem benefits provided by inventoried public trees compared to benefits from the citywide tree canopy.

PESTS AND DISEASES

When a pest or disease invades an urban area, damaged trees lose their vigor, leaving them weakened and vulnerable to additional urban threats. Unfortunately, widespread impacts that are left unaddressed lead to an unhealthy urban forest, requiring expensive maintenance or removal and the potential for high-risk situations. Every pest and disease impacts tree species differently. They can travel and adapt quickly, and the threat they pose can vary greatly depending on the climate. Mountlake Terrace's street tree inventory was cross-referenced with three separate databases (Washington Department of Agriculture's Division of Insects, Pests, and Weeds online portal, the US Forest Service's Alien Forest Pest Explorer map, and i-Tree's Pest and Host Matrix) to determine which pests and diseases are of greatest concern. This analysis identified pests and diseases known to be present at the county, state, or regional level, meaning they are in proximity to Mountlake Terrace but have not been confirmed within city limits. These threats were evaluated based on their known host species and their potential impact on the inventoried tree population.

Several high-risk pests and diseases have the potential to impact the city's urban forest:

- Heterobasidion root disease endangers 15.7% of trees, with losses estimated at \$4.18 million.
- Armillaria root disease poses a risk to 12.8% of trees, representing a potential loss of \$3.75 million.
- Fir engraver beetle poses a risk to 9.6% of trees, equating to a \$2.59 million potential loss.
- Douglas-fir beetle threatens 8.9% of trees, with an estimated loss of \$2.5 million.
- Bronze birch borer endangers 1.2% of trees, with an estimated loss of \$75,975.

In addition to existing threats, several destructive pests are expected to arrive in the next decade. Emerald ash borer (EAB) has already killed millions of ash trees across the Midwest and East Coast, causing over \$4 billion in damages. While ash trees account for a small portion of the city's inventory (20 trees), their presence in the broader urban forest is unknown. Mediterranean oak borer, recently detected in California and Oregon, carries a fungus (*Raffaelea montetyi*) that causes oak wilt, a serious disease affecting oak trees. While 65 oaks are recorded in the inventory, they likely represent a larger portion of the citywide urban forest.



Fir engraver beetle, Bronze birch borer, and Emerald ash borer. Source: Bugwood.

To protect Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, pest and disease management must remain dynamic, proactive, and adaptable to evolving threats, research findings, and available resources. Regular monitoring, early detection, and strategic maintenance are critical for minimizing risks, ensuring tree health, and safeguarding the city's green infrastructure for future generations.

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONFLICTS

In urban environments, trees compete for space with pavement, utilities, signage, buildings, and transportation infrastructure. As tree roots seek nutrients and moisture, they can push against sidewalks and roads, causing pavement upheaval, which poses safety concerns and requires costly repairs. Ensuring adequate planting strip width for the tree at full size and sufficient soil volume can support healthy tree growth while minimizing infrastructure conflicts.

As the city continues to grow, increasing infrastructure demands put trees at risk of removal to accommodate new buildings, roads, and utilities. The trees that are retained on development sites still face other risks. Without proper regulations and enforcement, poor construction practices can lead to soil compaction and root damage, making it difficult for trees to access essential nutrients and water. Sustainable growth requires thoughtful planning that balances development with ecological integrity and quality of life.

Altered Soils and Tree Health

Urban trees often struggle to grow in compacted soils, which are altered during construction. Healthy soil should contain about 50% pore space for air and water, essential for root growth. However, construction soils often have less than 25% pore space and organic matter combined, making it difficult for trees to thrive. Addressing soil health through proper soil preparation and management practices is critical for long-term tree success.

Competition for Space

Conflicts between trees and hardscapes or utilities arise when trees are not given adequate space for their roots and canopy to grow. In the right-of-way, trees often compete with signage, streetlights, underground utilities, and overhead power lines. As trees outgrow their space, their roots can lift sidewalks, leading to costly repairs or even tree removal.

To prevent future conflicts, streetscape design must consider the mature size of trees and incorporate technologies that allow them to thrive in urban environments. The city has regulations and best management practices (BMPs) to address these issues. Innovative sidewalk and planting designs can help reduce tree-infrastructure conflicts while maintaining a healthy, sustainable urban forest. Examples of these solutions are illustrated in the graphic below:



INTERNAL CHALLENGES FACING MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S URBAN FOREST

Managing Mountlake Terrace's urban forest requires proper and timely tree care in accordance with best management practices. However, challenges such as limited financial and operational resources, and the increasing impacts of climate change create barriers to sustaining and expanding the city's tree canopy. Ensuring a resilient urban forest also depends on strategic tree planting programs that enhance canopy cover and maximize environmental benefits. Additionally, revitalizing community tree stewardship through education and engagement is essential for long-term urban forest sustainability. Addressing these internal challenges will require a combination of policy updates, funding strategies, and community involvement to effectively protect and grow Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

THE TIME IS NOW



It is critical for Mountlake Terrace's environment, economy, and community well-being that the city act now to sustainably manage the urban forest. The city has a Comprehensive Plan for how Mountlake Terrace will grow and change with development. Just as important, the city's Sustainability Strategy lays the foundation and precedent for sustainable management of the city and its assets in the face of climate change. Mountlake Terrace's Urban Forest Management Plan supports and builds on the goals and policies of these plans and supplements those with vital analyses, studies, metrics, and strategies relating to the city's natural environment and specifically, the urban forest.

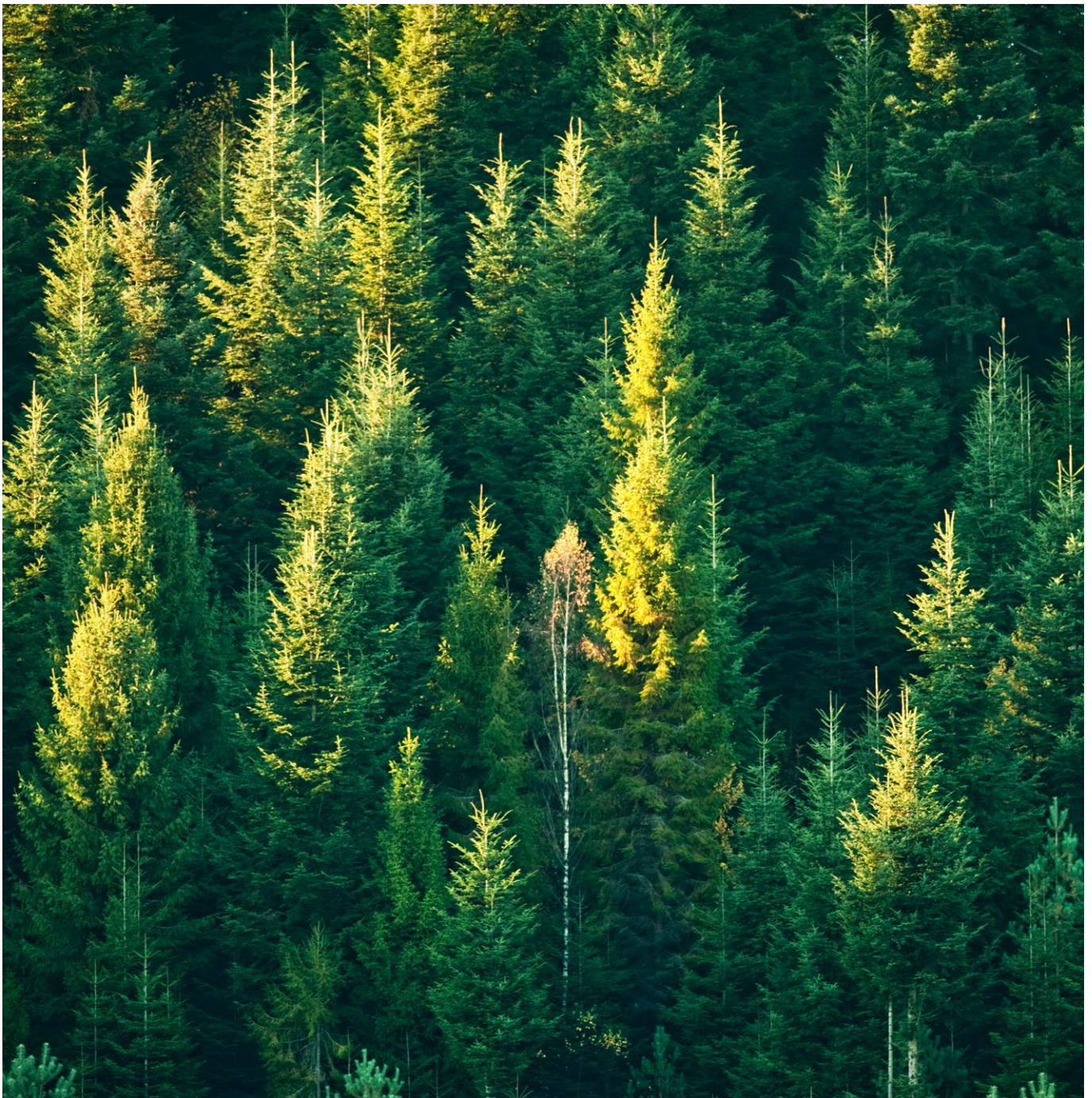
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"Green spaces and connections provide many benefits, including opportunities for people to enjoy and connect with nature, places to play and exercise, the ability for people to walk or bike instead of driving their cars, protection of important habitat for native plants and animals, and improvements to water quality by managing stormwater and filtering pollutants."

City of Mountlake Terrace Sustainability Strategy 2008

Mountlake Terrace's UFMP provides the roadmap with goals and supporting recommendations to manage, grow, preserve, and strengthen the urban forest through invigorated partnerships that align with city and community priorities. The following section of this Plan, "[What Do We Have?](#)", is an overview of the current state of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest and will serve as a baseline to measure future progress. Following the current state of the urban forest is an overview of Mountlake Terrace's priorities for the urban forest, "[What Do We Want?](#)", identified through community and stakeholder input which informed the Plan's goals, strategies, and priority actions. The "[How Do We Get There?](#)" section details the implementation guidelines, and the "[How Are We Doing?](#)" section and supporting resources in the Appendices provide additional information and studies to support adaptive management and monitoring of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Let's begin by exploring Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.



WHAT DO WE HAVE?



Figure 4. Illustration of the types of trees in Mountlake Terrace.

TREES THAT MAKE UP MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S URBAN FOREST

When the term infrastructure is used, often roads, bridges, power lines, and storm drains come to mind. However, infrastructure includes trees that line streets, shade parking lots, and enhance parks and backyards. These trees, collectively known as the urban forest, provide essential benefits that help Mountlake Terrace function. Services generated by trees in Mountlake Terrace provide immense value to the city. Like other city infrastructure, urban trees require management and maintenance to succeed.

The urban forest comprises trees across all city landscapes including streetscapes, parks and open spaces, trail and waterway corridors, commercial and residential properties, and others. While the Plan primarily addresses public trees, all trees across ownership types contribute to overall urban forest health, sustainability, and associated benefits.

To present an analysis of the current conditions of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, tree populations in these landscapes are characterized by the type of setting and land ownership type (public or private) and the responsibility for maintenance (city, property owner, or other). In the following section, analyses are first summarized for the public street tree population, and private trees are then incorporated into the summary by describing the citywide urban tree canopy cover.

Public trees are trees along streetscapes, in medians, parks, open space and natural areas on city-owned land. The city is primarily responsible for the maintenance of these trees and analyses in the Urban Forestry Management Plan focuses on public street trees.

TREE INVENTORY OVERVIEW

Mountlake Terrace's urban forest is a diverse ecosystem of young and mature trees across various species, each contributing unique functions and benefits. Cultivating a resilient and diverse urban forest requires a thorough understanding and management of this tree population. In 2024, an extensive inventory documented 6,830 street trees on public property.



The inventory collected data to inform the current structure, characteristics, and maintenance needs of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, guiding actionable recommendations in this Plan. It is important to note that this analysis, conducted in 2024, reflects a snapshot in time. As tree conditions are dynamic, ongoing maintenance and natural changes may have altered tree condition, size, or maintenance needs since then.

Additional summaries and analyses from the 2024 public tree inventories are provided in a separate report, which includes recommendations for the strategic stewardship of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. This Plan centers on city-managed public trees under city jurisdiction, presenting data on tree composition, structure, and maintenance needs. The insights gained from this data were integral in shaping strategies for sustainable management of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

PUBLIC TREE POPULATION

Table 1. The status and count of public trees in the inventory database.

Public Trees in Inventory	
Number of Alive Trees:	6,723
Number of Dead Trees	107
Total Data Points:	6,830

Species Diversity

Species composition data are essential since the types of trees present throughout the city dictate the amount and type of benefits produced, tree maintenance activities required, budget considerations, and influences species selection for future plantings.

The 6,830 publicly managed inventoried trees consist of 89 unique genera and approximately 255 different species and cultivar classifications. Of the 89 unique genera, Acer (maple) comprise the highest amount with 1,502 trees (22 percent), followed by Thuja (cedar) with 1,154 trees (17 percent), Prunus (cherries, plums, apricots) with 757 (11 percent), and Pseudotsuga (Douglas fir) with 602 trees (9 percent). Among the approximately 225 unique tree species, arborvitae (Thuja spp.) represents the largest portion, making up 13% (897 trees) of the total tree population. This is followed by Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii) with 9% (602 trees) and Japanese maple (Acer palmatum) at 5% (340 trees). Sweet cherry (Prunus avium), red maple (Acer rubrum), bigleaf maple (Acer macrophyllum), and western red cedar (Thuja plicata) each comprise 4% of the population, with 275, 261, and 254 trees respectively. The top ten most prevalent species comprise 50 percent of the total publicly managed inventoried tree population. The remaining 50 percent is composed of other species that are primarily Norway maple, apple, Pacific madrone, red alder, vine maple, Leyland cypress, weeping Japanese maple, blue spruce, and European white birch— each with at least 70 trees or more.

Composition of Street Trees by Common Name

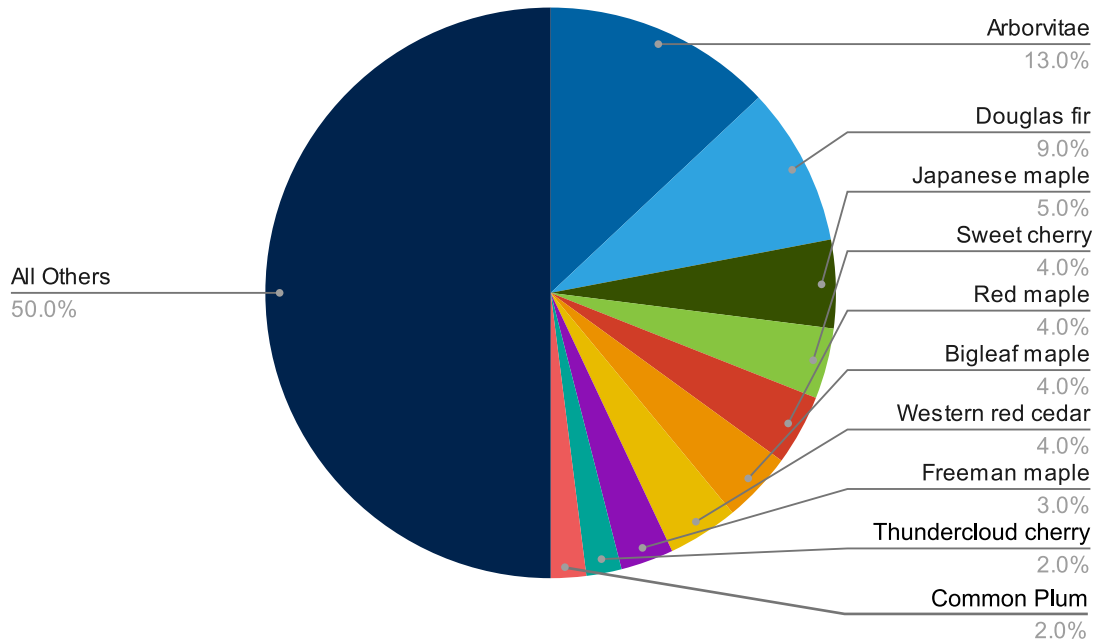


Figure 5. Summary of tree species composition for inventoried street trees by common name.

Size and Relative Age Distribution

The distribution of public tree ages and size classes influences the structure of the citywide urban forest and impacts present and future management costs. **An unevenly aged urban forest offers continued flow of ecological benefits and a more uniform workflow, allowing managers to more accurately allocate annual maintenance schedules and budgets.**

To optimize the value and benefits of Mountlake Terrace's trees, the urban forest should have a high percentage of large canopy trees to provide greater ecosystem benefits. At the same time, there must be a suitable number of younger, smaller trees in the urban forest to eventually replace large and mature trees in decline. Having a healthy percentage of young trees in the urban forest will ensure a sustainable tree population for decades to come. Below, Mountlake Terrace's urban forest structure is compared to an industry-recommended "ideal distribution" (McPherson et. al, 2011).

City Distribution and Ideal Distribution

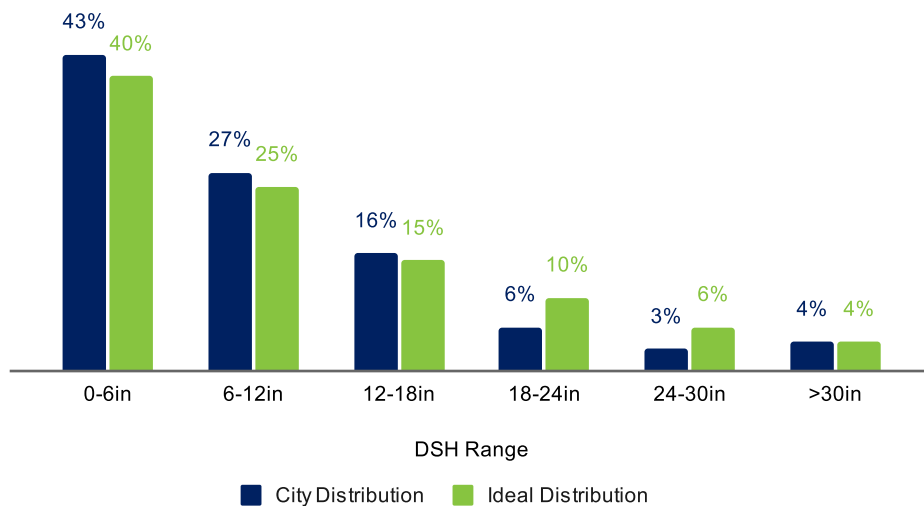


Figure 6. Comparison of size distribution of Mountlake Terrace's inventoried publicly managed trees to an ideal distribution.

The age distribution of Mountlake Terrace's inventoried tree population (blue bars) closely aligns with the ideal distribution (green bars). However, this inventory represents only a portion of the urban forest. As shown in Figure 6, 70% (4,828 trees) have a DSH (diameter at standard height) of 0 to 12 inches, indicating a predominance of young or small-statured trees, essential for a healthy urban forest. Larger trees, 24 inches DSH or greater, make up only 7% (453 trees). Additionally, trees in the 18 to 30-inch DSH range account for 9% (617 trees), which is 7% below the ideal distribution. The average DSH for the entire population is nine inches, and the largest recorded DSH is 68 inches.

Condition

An analysis of tree condition can indicate how well trees are managed and are performing given site-specific conditions. Understanding current and changing conditions plays an important role in planning, budgeting, and resource allocation. Tree maintenance needs are assigned for public safety reasons and by tracking these needs, managers are better equipped to manage Mountlake Terrace's public trees and the citywide urban forest.

The inventory of public trees was analyzed to identify potential trends in tree condition and make management recommendations to improve condition or minimize tree deterioration. Each inventoried tree's health was evaluated by ISA Certified Arborists based on the condition of the wood, foliage, and structure.

The data show a majority of the trees inventoried are classified as being in "Good" condition, comprising 70% or 4,753 trees, followed by those in "Fair" condition comprising 19% (1,291 trees). Only 388 trees are noted as being in "Poor" condition, 104 trees are classified as being 'Critical' condition, and 107 trees are classified as dead/removal required.

RELATIVE PERFORMANCE INDEX

In addition to understanding the overall condition of the public tree population to inform management strategies, an analysis of performance was conducted for the ten most prevalent tree species using the Relative Performance Index approach.

Relative Performance Index (RPI) is a comparison of a species' condition rating of "Good" and the tree population's "Good" rating. Using the percent of "Good trees" for a given species divided by the tree population percentage of Good trees gives a value of equal to 1, less than 1, or greater than 1. A value equal to 1 means the particular species is as healthy as the overall tree population. A value less than 1 means the species is not as healthy as the overall tree population. A value greater than 1 means the species is healthier than the overall tree population. RPI answers the question of how well a species is performing in terms of health compared to the entire inventoried population.

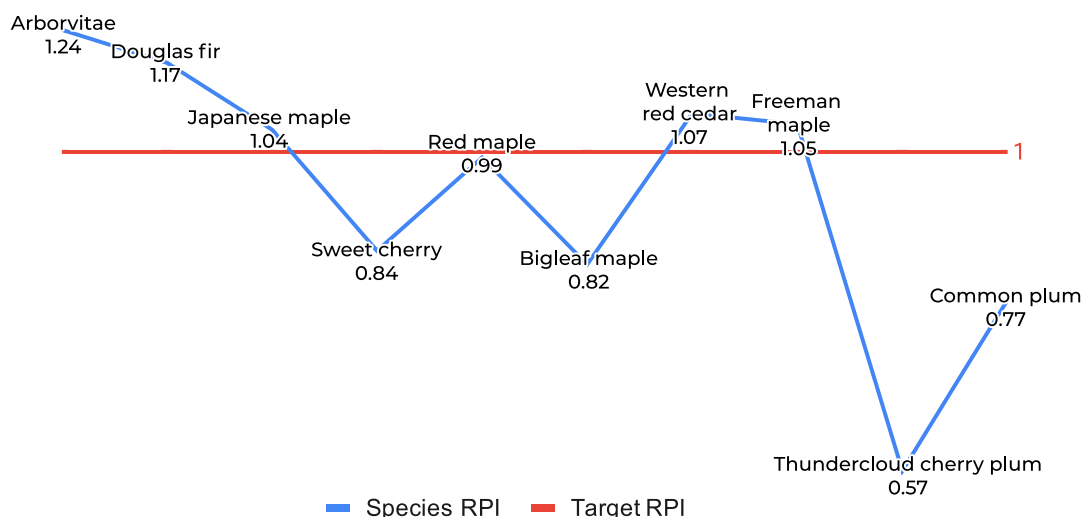


Figure 7. Summary of the Relative Performance Index (RPI) for Mountlake Terrace's top ten species.

For the street tree population, arborvitae, Douglas fir, Japanese maple, western red cedar, and Freeman maple are performing better than the overall tree populations. Bigleaf maple, sweet cherry, red maple, thundercloud cherry plum, and common plum are underperforming and are in the poorest condition of the top ten most prevalent tree species.

Observations and Defects



Examples of codominant stems and deadwood. Source: PlanIT Geo.

Tree observations were recorded during the 2024 inventory to further describe a tree's health, structure, or location when more detail was needed. A total of 21 unique observations were included in the inventory.

A total of 3,506 trees were recorded as having one or more defects (51% of all inventoried trees), with a total of 6,141 unique observations being recorded during the tree inventory. Poor structure was the most frequent observation (14% or 970 trees). Deadwood (12% or 845 trees), co-dominant stems (11% or 743 trees), and improperly pruned (10% or 705 trees) were the next most frequent observations.

Maintenance Needs

The tree inventory conducted in Mountlake Terrace assessed the management needs of each tree following CAL FIRE standards. Certified arborists evaluated the condition of every tree and determined its management priority based on overall health and the severity of any defects observed. Each tree was assigned to a specific category, including removal, priority pruning (with classifications such as high, medium, or low), and routine pruning. These categories help prioritize the timing and level of care required to maintain tree health and ensure public safety. By adhering to this standardized approach, the city can address tree management needs systematically and in accordance with best practices. The overall goal is to promote the health and longevity of the urban forest while addressing any safety risks efficiently.

The inventory classified each of the 6,830 trees with a corresponding maintenance recommendation. The majority of trees (45%, or 2,884 trees) were identified as small trees in need of routine maintenance, while 55% (3,736 trees) were large trees also requiring routine maintenance. This means that most trees need regular pruning to correct structural issues or manage growth that could obstruct traffic, cause safety hazards, or interfere with infrastructure.

Several trees in Mountlake Terrace's urban forest were also classified as requiring immediate or near-term action. Priority 1 Removal was assigned to 5 trees (<1%) that present immediate risks due to severe structural defects, disease,

or other hazardous conditions, necessitating prompt removal to prevent damage or injury. Priority 2 Removal affects 38 trees (1%), which are not immediately dangerous but show signs of significant decline, requiring removal in the near future. Priority 3 Removal applies to 91 trees (1%) that, while not urgent, may need removal over time due to ongoing decline or conflicts with infrastructure.

Regarding pruning, Priority 1 Prune was recommended for 5 trees (<1%) that pose immediate risks due to broken or hazardous limbs, requiring urgent pruning to prevent accidents. Priority 2 Prune applies to 71 trees (1%) that need pruning to mitigate moderate risks, such as structural weakness or interference with buildings or streets and should be addressed soon to maintain overall tree health and safety.

SUMMARY OF TREE INVENTORY ANALYSIS

Understanding the extent, structure, condition, characteristics, and maintenance needs of public trees enables Mountlake Terrace's team to effectively budget, plan, and address maintenance and planting needs in a sustainable, safe, and equitable manner. The city undertook a comprehensive tree inventory as part of this Plan, and it is essential that the city maintain the data and routinely update the inventory.

Challenges such as pests and diseases, invasive plant species, climate resiliency, among other threats to the urban forest can be addressed for private trees by providing resources, education, training, and other support to property owners to support growing a sustainable and resilient urban forest.

As stated at the beginning of this section, additional summaries and analyses of the public tree inventory from 2024 are provided in a separate report, Tree Inventory Summary Report January 2025.

TREE CANOPY

OVERVIEW

An assessment of tree canopy cover citywide provides data and information to develop goals and strategies relating to tree planting, preservation, tree equity, and risk management along with the data to support community outreach and education. These urban tree canopy assessments, referred to as "UTC Assessments" or "Tree Canopy Assessments" provide the information for long-term planning and serve as a measurement of change and progress over time.

This information can be utilized with other city planning efforts for sustainability, equity, human health, climate resiliency, stormwater management, water quality, wildlife preservation and enhancement, air quality improvements, development guidelines, and more.

UTC assessments provide a baseline understanding of existing canopy cover across the entire city. In addition, these assessments provide an analysis of possible planting areas citywide and by various planning boundaries. This assessment for Mountlake Terrace represents an important step in understanding current conditions of the urban forest, its tree canopy distribution and value, and the importance of urban forestry during planning processes. This baseline assessment should be utilized in measuring progress resulting from implementing this Plan.

URBAN TREE CANOPY FINDINGS

The City of Mountlake Terrace partnered with PlanIT Geo, Inc. to complete a detailed Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Assessment to support the development of this Urban Forest Management Plan. Using high-resolution 2023 aerial imagery from the USDA's National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP), remote sensing technologies, and GIS techniques, PlanIT Geo mapped and measured land cover types across the city. This assessment quantified existing urban tree canopy, identified Possible Planting Areas (PPA), and analyzed trends to inform future urban forest management strategies. Full results of the UTC Assessment are available in the supplemental document, Urban Tree Canopy Assessment.

2025 UTC Findings – Citywide

The 2025 UTC Assessment revealed that 32% of Mountlake Terrace's land area, approximately 833 acres, is covered by tree canopy. An additional 18% of the city, roughly 464 acres, was identified as suitable for future tree planting (PPA). The remaining 50% of land was classified as unsuitable for planting, primarily due to the extent of impervious surfaces. Comparisons with 2011 canopy data show a net canopy loss of just two acres over a 12-year period, indicating relative stability but highlighting pressures from aging trees, development, and storm events.



Figure 8. Land cover classes identified in the 2023 assessment imagery, including tree canopy, shrubs, other vegetation, bare soil and dry vegetation, impervious surfaces, and water.

The figure below illustrates canopy coverage relative to total city land area, including water bodies which account for 3% of the city's area. Buildings and paved surfaces dominate at 43%, while tree canopy accounts for 32%. Low-lying vegetation, including lawns and bushes, makes up 22%, with smaller portions attributed to bare soil and shrub/scrub vegetation.

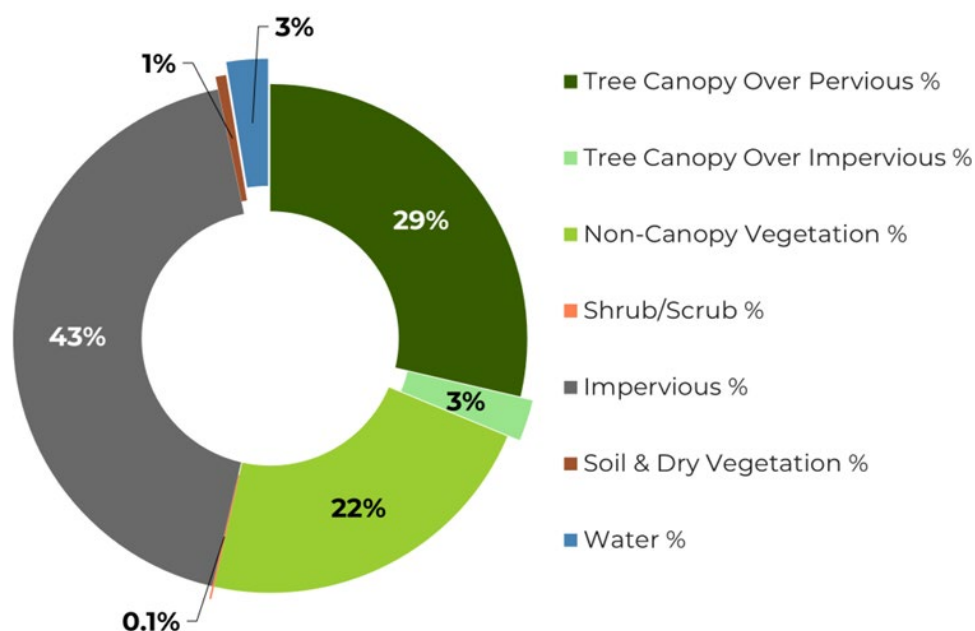


Figure 9. Land cover distribution within Mountlake Terrace city limits.

Single-family residential districts (RS 7200, RS 8400, RS 4800) are critical to the city's urban forest, currently supporting 52% of the total canopy and containing 75% of the city's plantable space. Parks and recreation areas, although covering only 17% of city land, contribute 20% of the existing canopy and have shown canopy gains over the past decade. Most canopy (92%) is found over pervious surfaces such as yards and open spaces, with only 8% extending over impervious surfaces like roads and sidewalks. These findings emphasize the importance of expanding canopy coverage around impervious areas to support urban cooling, stormwater management, and community livability.

Citywide Canopy Loss

At the time of data collection, Mountlake Terrace experienced a net decrease in canopy cover, with losses slightly outpacing gains. The primary causes of canopy loss can be grouped into the following major categories of loss:

- **Aging Neighborhoods:** Many of the city's mature trees were planted during the 1950s housing boom, as Mountlake Terrace rapidly developed to meet post-war demand. These trees, now 60–70 years old, are reaching the end of their natural lifespan. As they age and die, they are removed for safety or health reasons, and the loss is not always offset by new plantings.
- **Urban and Transportation Development:** Rapid population growth and urbanization have transformed large residential lots and open spaces into denser multi-family housing and infrastructure projects. Notably, the construction of the Sound Transit light rail along the I-5 corridor has required the removal of many mature trees. As neighborhoods redevelop, the existing tree canopy is often reduced, leaving residents with less buffer from noise and pollution.
- **Storm Damage and Environmental Stress:** Mountlake Terrace's parks and open spaces have lost trees due to storm events, including wind, snow, and flooding. These weather events can break limbs, uproot trees, and accelerate the decline of already aging or vulnerable species like alder and cottonwood. Storm-related tree loss is compounded by the challenges of climate change, which brings more extreme weather and stresses trees further.

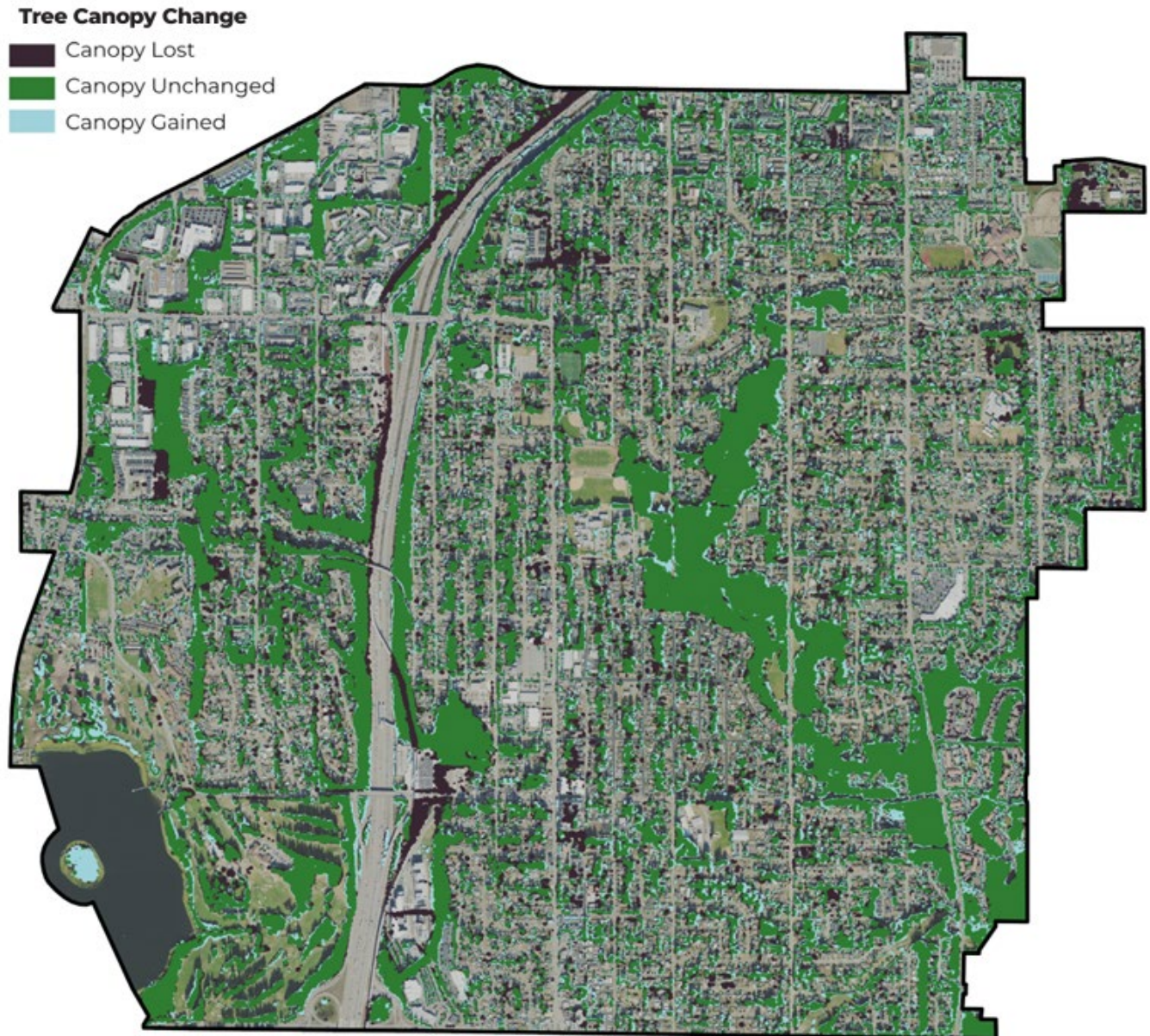


Figure 10. Granular canopy change throughout Mountlake Terrace.

Priority Planting Areas

The UTC Assessment also identified priority planting areas based on a combination of existing canopy cover, urban heat island effects, and socioeconomic vulnerability indicators, including poverty rates, unemployment levels, and the concentration of youth and seniors. Single-family residential zones, particularly the RS 7200 district, offer the greatest opportunities for expanding canopy coverage. Despite experiencing a recent 3% decline in canopy cover, the RS 7200 district contains approximately 181 acres of plantable space, representing a significant opportunity to enhance tree canopy and strengthen community resilience.

Table 2. Tree canopy potential in acres and percent in Mountlake Terrace.

ZONING CLASS	CANOPY %	PLANTABLE SPACE %	IMPERVIOUS %	NET CANOPY CHANGE %	RELATIVE CANOPY CHANGE %
Community Business District	24	7	69	5.4	29.4
General Commercial District	20	10	69	-2.0	-9.0
Freeway/Tourist District	26	1	64	-2.0	-6.9
Light Industry/Office Park District	34	5	60	0.2	0.6
Mobile Home Park	18	15	66	5.3	43.4
Public Facilities and Services	28	7	62	-12.1	-30.1
Recreation and Park District	50	12	10	2.9	6.3
Multiple-Household Residential Low Density	37	15	42	3.2	9.3
Multiple-Household Residential Medium Density Dis*	33	15	50	3.0	10.0
Single-Household Residential Districts (RS-T)	26	28	45	-6.6	-20.0
Single-Household Residential Districts (RS 4800)	32	31	36	-1.7	-5.1
Single-Household Residential Districts (RS 7200)	33	29	36	-1.1	-3.3
Single-Household Residential Districts (RS 8400)	38	19	33	0.5	1.2
Special Development District Commercial/Residenti*	18	5	77	4.2	30.8
Special Development District/Residential	61	2	30	5.6	10.1
Town Center (TC-1)	35	23	41	-10.0	-22.4
Town Center (TC-2)	27	14	59	-1.2	-4.2
Town Center (TC-3)	29	13	57	-5.9	-16.8
Town Center (TC-R)	19	14	67	-2.4	-11.0

Future efforts to support urban forest health should focus on residential planting initiatives, incorporating tree requirements into redevelopment projects, and enhancing community engagement programs to promote private tree planting and stewardship. These strategies will help Mountlake Terrace mitigate the impacts of urbanization and climate change while increasing the health, resilience, and equity of its urban forest.

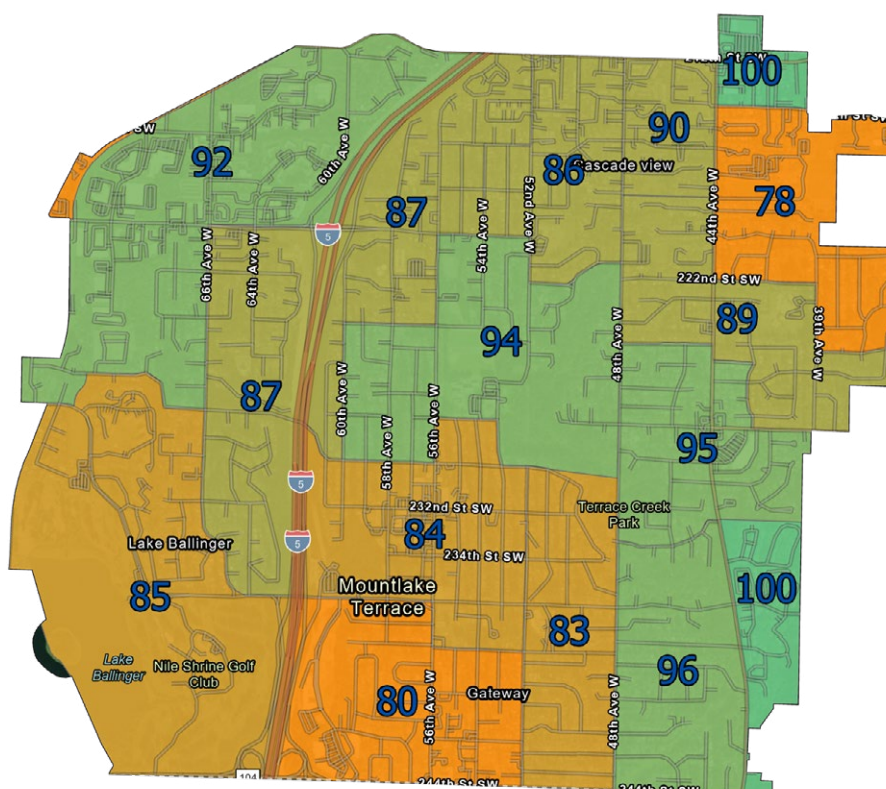


Figure 11. Map showing the Tree Equity Score for Census Block Groups (CBGs) within Mountlake Terrace, WA.

Tree Canopy Equity

Tree canopy is rarely distributed equitably across city landscapes and ownership types. The American Forests organization created the Tree Equity Score (TES, www.treeequityscore.org) tool to measure tree equity across 150,000 U.S. neighborhoods and 486 municipalities in urban areas. Each community's TES indicates whether there are enough trees for everyone to experience the health, economic, and climate benefits that trees provide.

The scores are based on how much tree canopy and surface temperature align with income, employment, race, age, and health factors. A 0- to-100-point system makes it easy to understand how a community is doing. With the knowledge the score provides, Mountlake Terrace's community leaders, tree advocates, and residents alike can address climate change and public health through the lens of social equity, attract new resources, factor the scores into technical decisions, guide implementation of the 2025 Urban Forest Management Plan, and track progress toward achieving tree equity.

A score of 100 represents tree equity. **Based on a 2025 analysis, Mountlake Terrace's overall tree equity score is 87 out of 100.**

The map illustrates Tree Equity Scores for each of the 15 Census Block Groups (CBGs) within Mountlake Terrace. None of the CBGs have achieved a perfect tree equity score of 100, and none fall below the threshold score of 75. The majority, 8 CBGs, fall within the 80-89 score range. The lowest ranked CBG falls within the 70-79 range, presenting a chance for the city to foster equitable tree canopy expansion.

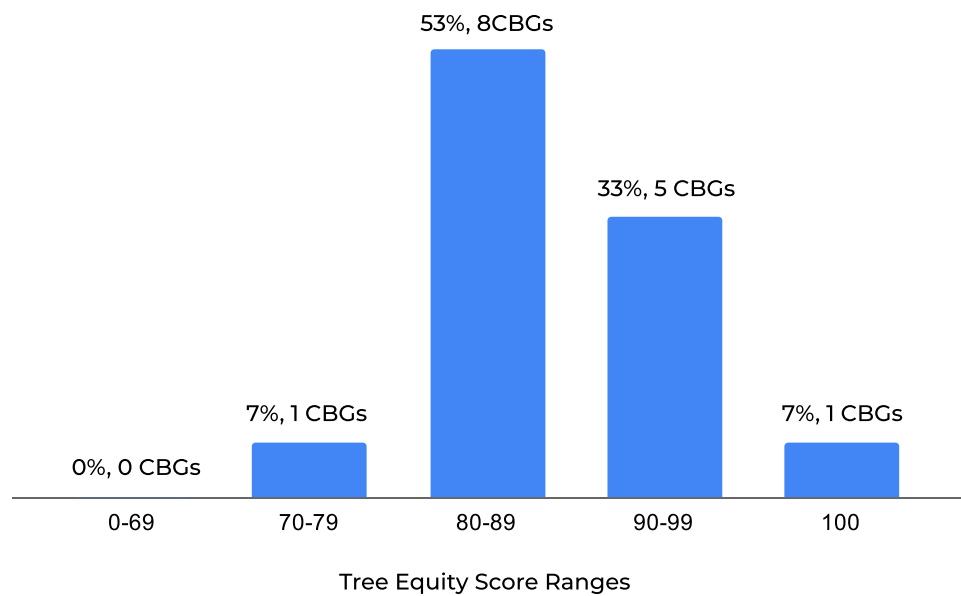


Figure 12. Count and percent of Census Block Groups by Tree Equity Score ranges.

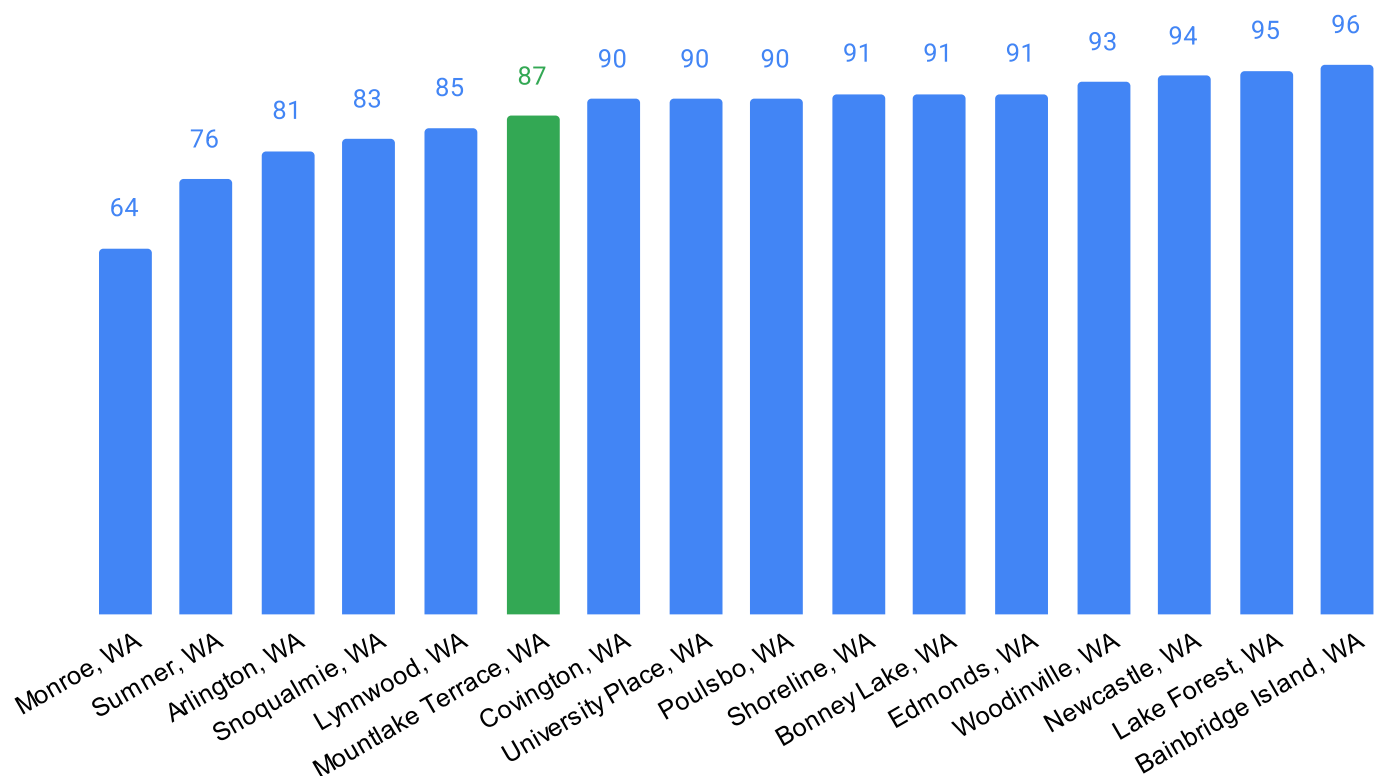


Figure 13. Comparison of Tree Equity Scores for select Washington cities based on a 2024 study.

Compared to other cities in the state, Mountlake Terrace’s Tree Equity Score of 87 is in line with the average of 87 for 16 Washington cities assessed as part of the study.

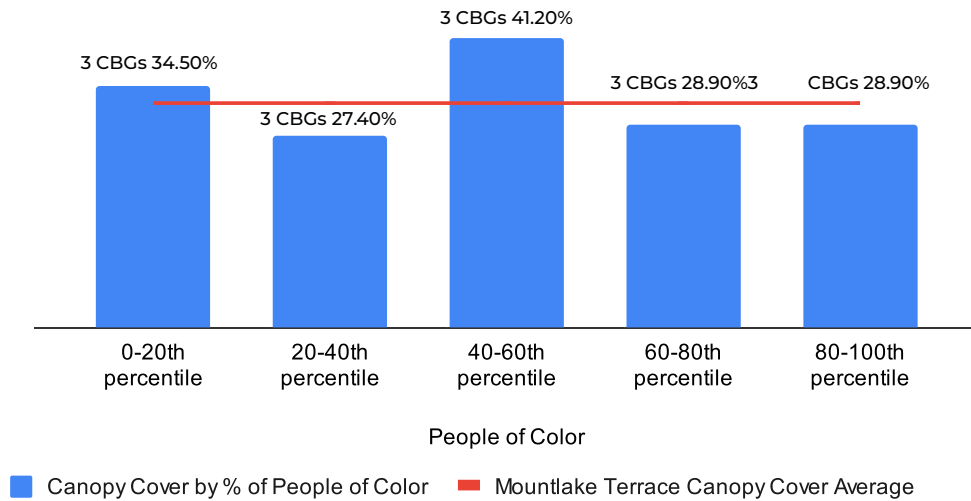


Figure 14. Canopy cover (%) and count of Census Block Groups by ranges of people of color. Source: American Forests' Tree Equity Score Tool.

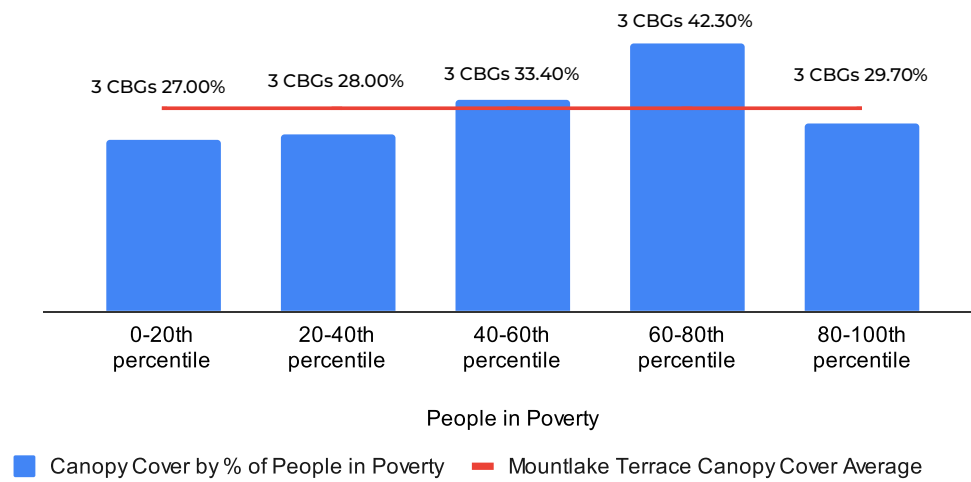


Figure 15. Canopy cover (%) and count of Census Block Groups by ranges of people in poverty. Source: American Forests' Tree Equity Score Tool.

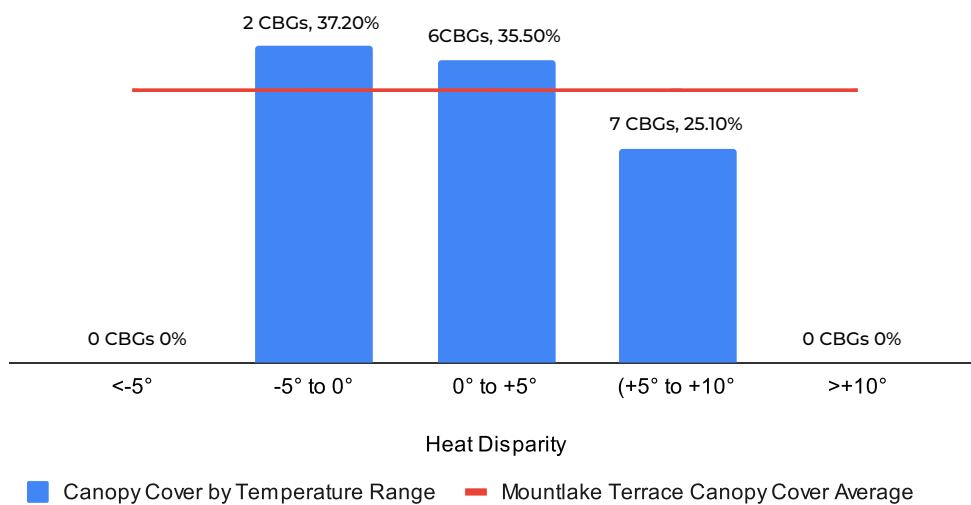


Figure 16. Canopy cover (%) and count of Census Block Groups by temperature ranges in degrees Fahrenheit. Source: American Forests' Tree Equity Score Tool.

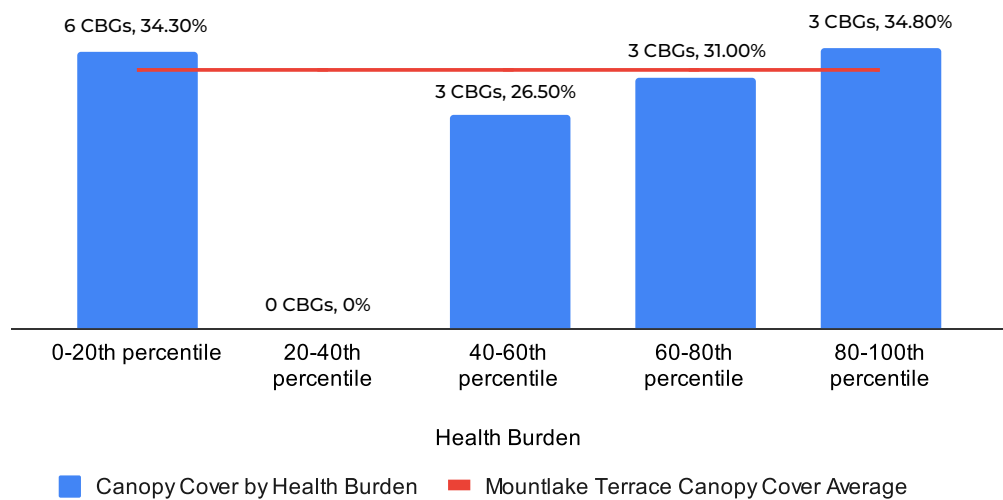


Figure 17. Canopy cover (%) and count of Census Block Groups by health burden.
Source: American Forests' Tree Equity Score Tool.

The distribution of tree canopy in Mountlake Terrace shows noticeable differences that align with sociodemographic patterns, underscoring the need to consider tree equity in urban forest planning. Data indicates that tree canopy coverage tends to be lower in CBGs with higher proportions of people of color, which may result in unequal access to the environmental and health benefits that trees provide. Similarly, canopy cover varies across CBGs with different poverty levels. While tree canopy is generally greater in more economically disadvantaged areas compared to affluent areas, the three CGBs with the highest poverty rates have slightly less canopy than the citywide average, though still more than wealthier areas. These patterns may be influenced by factors such as development intensity and land use differences across CBGs.

In terms of temperature, cooler CBGs, those experiencing lower temperature increases, average 1.5 times more tree canopy than the seven CBGs where temperatures are 5 to 10°F higher than the urban area average. This pattern underscores the critical role of trees in mitigating urban heat islands and improving environmental conditions in vulnerable communities.

When broken down by environmental justice scores, the trends become clearer. For example, the CBG with a score of 75-79, representing some of the most socioeconomically and environmentally impacted areas, experience above-average temperatures (+7.1°F) and have high proportions of people of color (49.8%). Conversely, CBGs scoring over 90 have fewer environmental stressors, with a temperature reduction of -3.8°F below the urban area average, yet still show disparities in canopy distribution.

The data emphasizes that equitable tree canopy distribution is essential for promoting environmental justice and improving quality of life across all CBGs. By prioritizing tree planting and maintenance in areas with higher poverty rates, greater proportions of people of color, and higher temperatures or health burdens, Mountlake Terrace can address disparities, enhance urban resilience, and ensure that all residents benefit from the environmental, social, and economic value of trees.

CURRENT TREE MANAGEMENT IN MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

The City of Mountlake Terrace manages its urban forest through a range of policies, regulations, and programs. Various city departments contribute expertise, resources, and perspectives to support effective urban forest planning and management.

Mountlake Terrace has been recognized as a Tree City USA for five years, reflecting its growing commitment to maintaining and enhancing its urban canopy. As one of Washington's newer Tree City USA communities, the city continues to strengthen its dedication to urban forestry and sustainable tree management.

PROGRAMS FOR MANAGING MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S TREES

Summary of Programs and Services

The City of Mountlake Terrace manages its urban forest through several departments, each playing a critical role in tree care, maintenance, and planning.

The Public Works Department oversees trees in the public right-of-way (ROW) through its Streets Division field crews, who respond to fallen trees and ensure clearance in city-managed areas. The Stormwater Division's Environmental Programs Manager, formerly the Stormwater Program Manager, has been instrumental in developing the city's first UFMP and will lead its implementation.

The Recreation & Parks Department is responsible for trees located in parks, along trails, and within city open spaces adjacent to private property. Their responsibilities include tree planting, watering, pruning, and removal as needed to maintain safe and healthy green spaces.

The Community & Economic Development Department plays a key role in ensuring that tree-related regulations are followed during development. Planners coordinate the review of tree plans through third-party consultants to ensure compliance with city requirements and best management practices.

The Engineering Services Department is responsible for design and construction standards and perform design reviews that involve trees and their related infrastructure. Engineers also approve right-of-way design and street tree placement.

As the city moves forward with its UFMP, these departments will continue to collaborate, ensuring that tree management aligns with broader environmental, recreational, and development goals to sustain and enhance Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.



Staffing Levels for Urban Forest Management

Many cities face challenges in maintaining adequate staffing and resources for urban forest management. While available funding may address immediate needs, long-term initiatives critical to sustaining the urban forest are often overlooked. Determining and maintaining optimal staffing levels is essential for program efficiency and depends on several factors, including the number of public trees, municipal code responsibilities, internal and external expectations, public service requests, and operational demands. Understaffed programs often struggle with excessive overtime, low morale, absenteeism, employee burnout, and difficulties in training and relief coverage.

Currently, tree care in Mountlake Terrace is managed on an as-needed basis, with no dedicated full-time staff or allocated hours. Despite this, the city's commitment to public health, climate action, and equity continues to drive demand for urban forestry programs. As the City's urban forest grows and matures, increased staffing will be necessary not only to support future expansion but also to maintain current conditions. With 63% of inventoried trees exhibiting preventable or correctable issues, additional capacity is essential to provide the level of care needed to sustain a healthy and resilient urban forest. Any implementation of new permitting requirements would also necessitate significant investment in staffing and funding to support effective planning and compliance efforts across both the Community and Economic Development and Public Works Departments.

Enhancing efficiencies and capacity within existing workloads can be achieved by clarifying roles, responsibilities, and workflows among city departments. Periodic reviews of program structure, staffing needs, and service levels can help streamline operations, improve communication, and enhance workflow efficiency. Many cities improve urban forestry management by consolidating tree programs under a single division or section, allowing for better coordination, cost reduction, and improved service delivery. Establishing a clear organizational structure with defined operating procedures will be essential in managing increased service demands while maintaining a sustainable and resilient urban forest.

Budget and Funding

To inform the development of this plan, Mountlake Terrace's urban forestry budget was benchmarked against national and state averages, as well as comparable cities in Washington. This analysis provides insight into how the city's funding aligns with broader trends and highlights opportunities for growth.

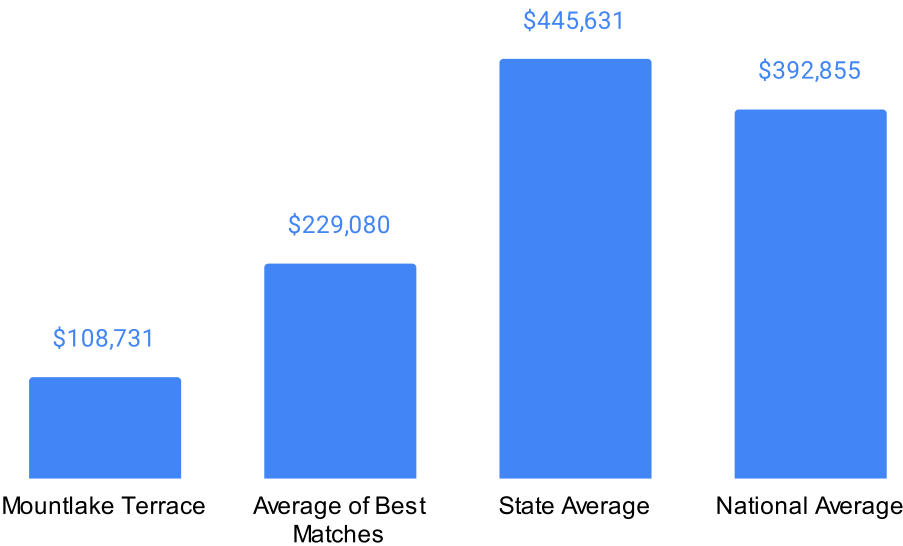


Figure 18. Comparison of urban forestry budgets in 2022.

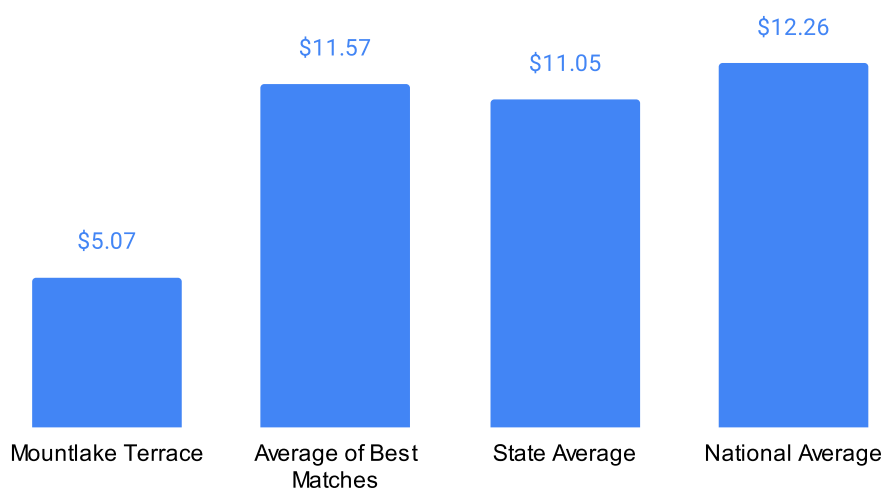


Figure 19. Comparison of urban forestry budgets per capita in 2022.

Figures 18 and 19 illustrate Mountlake Terrace's total urban forestry budget and per capita spending compared to regional, state, and national averages (Hauer, et al., 2014). The city's urban forestry budget is \$108,731, ranking fifth lowest among 16 regional municipalities of similar population size and proximity. On a per capita basis, Mountlake Terrace allocates \$5.07 per resident, significantly lower than:

- The average of best-matched cities (\$11.57 per capita)
- The Washington state average (\$11.05 per capita)
- The national average (\$12.26 per capita)

While these figures indicate room for potential budget growth, it is important to recognize that Mountlake Terrace's urban forestry program is relatively young. The existing budget is a strong foundation for a developing program, and as the city expands its urban forestry efforts, additional funding may help align with state and national benchmarks to further support tree maintenance, planting, and community engagement initiatives.

To further these efforts, the city has established a new tree fund, financed through a tree fee-in-lieu program associated with development activity. This fund will be used to support the urban forest and advance the goals and recommendations outlined in this UFMP, ensuring continued investment in tree preservation and canopy expansion.

Public Tree Maintenance and Planting

Historical records on tree pruning, planting, and removals have been inconsistent in Mountlake Terrace. According to Tree City USA reporting for 2022, the city planted zero trees, pruned 205 trees, and removed 17 trees. However, this data does not specify whether the work was conducted by the Streets or Parks divisions. In 2023, the city made significant progress, planting over 100 trees in the public right-of-way (ROW) through a Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grant, further expanding the urban canopy.

Tree maintenance, including pruning and removal, is primarily reactive. When a tree is reported as a potential hazard on public property, an on-call contract arborist, working through the Streets or Parks divisions, assesses the situation and determines whether action is needed. There is no formalized process for routine pruning or proactive tree management; instead, maintenance is addressed on an as-needed basis in response to resident complaints or observed risks.



Establishing a structured tree management program with regular assessments, proactive maintenance schedules, and improved recordkeeping will enhance the efficiency, safety, and long-term health of Mountlake Terrace’s urban forest.

Volunteer Efforts

Mountlake Terrace demonstrates a strong commitment to a vibrant and sustainable urban forest through active community engagement and volunteer efforts. The Ivy League volunteer group mobilizes volunteers to remove ivy and other invasive species from city parks, helping to restore and protect natural spaces. Additionally, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission (RPAC) serves as the Tree Board, ensuring the city meets Tree City USA requirements. The RPAC/Tree Board plays a key role in reviewing staff proposals and advising on tree fund priorities and tree-related initiatives.

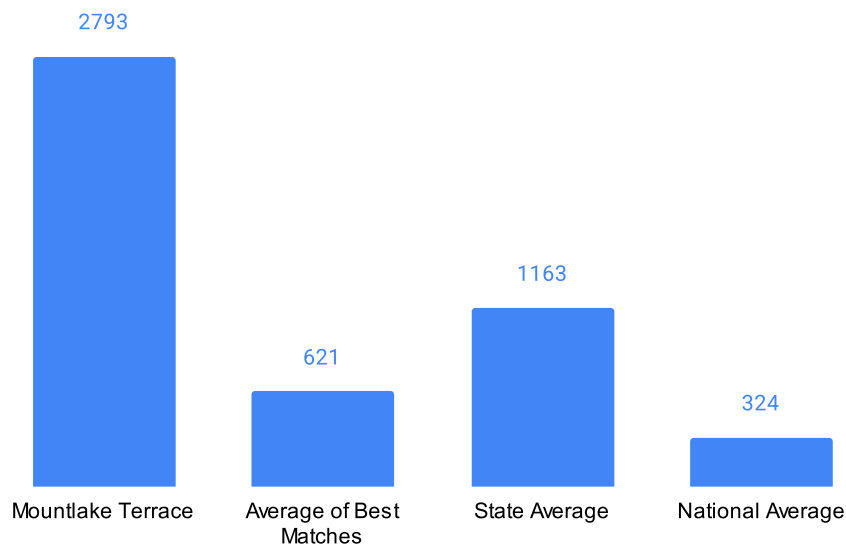


Figure 20. Comparison of volunteer hours in 2022.

Mountlake Terrace leads in volunteer participation compared to benchmark cities, with 2,793 volunteer hours recorded in 2022—the highest among peer cities. In contrast, the average for comparable cities is 621 hours, the state average is 1,163 hours, and the national average is 324 hours (Arbor Day Foundation, 2022). This high level of engagement highlights a dedicated community invested in urban forest stewardship, positioning Mountlake Terrace as a leader in public participation and tree care.



Tree-related Plans and Regulations in Mountlake Terrace

Evaluating the alignment of existing policies and plans in Mountlake Terrace with urban forest management elements ensures a strong connection between programs that manage the urban forest and the initiatives that support them. Proper alignment reduces the risk of wasting resources and enables key projects that support urban forestry goals.

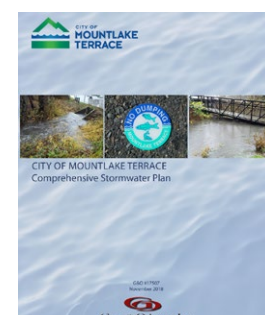
Plans and ordinances cannot live in isolation. Cross-examining various plans, documents, and codes brings to light any projects or initiatives that misplace resources or create conflicting priorities. The information discovery process reviewed and indexed documents, plans, and codes to develop an aligned Urban Forest Management Plan.

RELEVANT PLANS AND STUDIES

City of Mountlake Terrace Vision 2044 Comprehensive Plan (2024): The Vision 2044 Comprehensive Plan establishes goals, policies, and benchmarks to guide the future development of Mountlake Terrace. The Plan provides policy guidance for the long-term preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and how the built environment should co-exist with the natural environment. Aligned policy suggestions include: developing an Urban Forest Management Plan, which defines tree canopy goals; establishes how success is measured; identifies incentives and support opportunities; and encourages the retention of heritage trees through the city's Heritage Tree Program.



City of Mountlake Terrace Comprehensive Stormwater Plan (2024): The Comprehensive Stormwater Plan provides guidance for the design, construction, management, and maintenance of the city's storm system to meet future needs. The Plan makes ample references to the importance and benefits of urban trees, the activities of the Trees for Terrace program, and highlights the Urban Forest Management Plan project as a way for community members to get involved.



City of Mountlake Terrace Recreation, Parks, & Open Space Plan (2022): The purpose of the Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan is to create goals, policies, and objectives to direct the city's development and acquisition of new recreation facilities, parks, and open spaces, as well as the renovation of existing facilities over the next twenty years. One of the objectives for parks and natural areas is to improve the condition of city-owned natural areas through the restoration of urban forests.



City of Mountlake Terrace Sustainability Strategy (2008): The Strategy affirms the city's commitment to taking care of the environment, economy, and community livability and establishes a series of goals, action strategies, and implementation steps to achieve that vision. Goal 4 is most aligned with urban forestry: Enhance and Expand the city's Green Spaces and Systems. The first action strategy is to protect and enhance the city's tree canopy, and lays out tree policy requirements that remain key strategies to preserving Mountlake Terrace's urban tree canopy.



The relevant plans and studies are summarized above to demonstrate the parallels among urban forestry and other planning efforts in the city. The Urban Forest Management Plan's long-term framework aims to complement goals and policies within these city plans and studies that pertain to trees in Mountlake Terrace. This evaluation of existing resources serves to reduce conflicting priorities in the city.

TREE ORDINANCES IN MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

In 2023, the city adopted Ordinance 2838 which amended tree codes in the Mountlake Terrace Municipal Code (MTMC) to better align with city and regional goals. Code changes included a new minimum tree retention standard, additional tree preservation and frontage improvement standards, and a new standard for replacement based on the size of tree removed.

The primary code chapters relating to trees include:

MTMC Chapter 16.30 Tree Management – This code chapter establishes policies, regulations, and standards for the management of trees on city-owned public property and rights-of-way. The chapter also establishes a process for preservation and protection of heritage trees on public and private property, with oversight provided by a Tree Board.

MTMC 19.130 Landscape Development and Site Buffering –This code chapter provides landscape development, site buffering, and maintenance requirements for proposed and existing developments, except single-household residences. Urban forestry related requirements include:

- Spacing and size requirements for newly planted trees
- Key definitions, such as “significant tree” and “qualified arborist”
- Inventory, retention, and replacement requirements for significant trees on proposed site developments
- Protection standards for retained tree during construction
- Fee-in-lieu option for tree replacements
- Establishment and funding sources for a city tree fund
- Enforcement and penalties for unauthorized tree removal

MTMC Chapter 16.15 Critical Areas – This chapter designates and classifies ecologically sensitive areas to protect their functions and values, while also allowing for reasonable use of private property. It includes standards for tree maintenance and removal of trees found to be hazardous.

MTMC Chapter 15.05 Building Code –This chapter identifies references, standards and procedures to implement building codes within the city. Tree related requirements include prohibiting the removal of trees greater than 15ft high on undeveloped land parcels without prior approval and allowing un-permitted planting and maintenance of trees within the public right-of-way.

Recommended Tree List – The Mountlake Terrace Urban Forestry webpage provides a PDF list of recommended and prohibited trees. Prohibited tree species cannot be planted in the street right-of-way or over public utilities.

RESILIENCE OF THE URBAN FOREST

SPECIES DIVERSITY

A resilient urban forest is one that can withstand environmental stressors, pests, and disease while continuing to provide essential ecological benefits. Biodiversity is a key factor in urban forest resilience, and the 10-20-30 rule serves as a guideline for achieving a balanced tree population. This rule states that no single species should comprise more than 10% of the total tree population, no single genus should exceed 20%, and no single family should make up more than 30%. A diverse urban forest reduces the risk of widespread loss from pests and disease, ensuring long-term sustainability.

10-20-30 Rule

The “10-20-30” Rule addresses the importance of tree diversity in a city’s street tree plan. Because we can never predict when and if some new disease might pop up, the best we can do is prepare and provide safeguards. Since insects and diseases generally affect certain tree species and their close relatives, having a diversity of street trees will help to lessen the chances of major canopy loss.

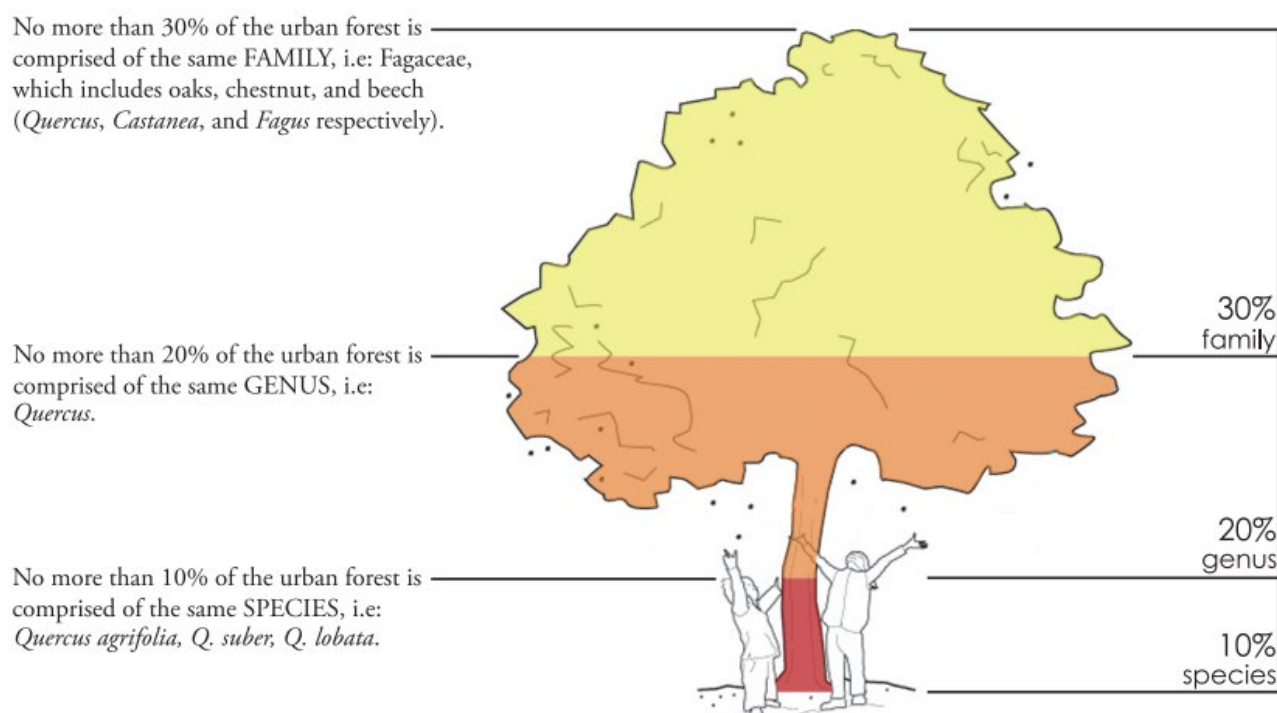


Figure 21. The 10-20-30 Rule.

Analysis of Mountlake Terrace’s public tree inventory indicates that family composition remains within the recommended limits, but some concerns exist at the species and genus levels. Arborvitae exceeds the 10% species threshold, and *Acer* (maple) surpasses the 20% genus limit. The over-representation of maples, although no individual species exceeds 10%, highlights the need for greater species diversity to mitigate future risks. Expanding the selection of trees beyond the *Acer* genus will strengthen the urban forest’s resilience against pests and climate-related challenges.

TREE SIZE AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

A balanced distribution of tree ages and sizes is essential for maintaining long-term canopy cover and managing urban forest maintenance costs. In Mountlake Terrace, trees with a Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) of 24 inches or more account for just 7% of the street tree inventory—falling short of recommended targets for larger, canopy-contributing trees. When looking at the broader size class of 18 to 30+ inches, these trees make up only 9% of the population, which is approximately 7% below the ideal distribution for mid- to large-sized trees.

Although the largest trees—those over 30 inches—currently meet target levels (4%), the gap in mid-sized trees suggests a potential decline in future canopy if those trees aren't maintained and preserved. Proactively caring for trees in the 18 to 30-inch range is critical to helping them reach full maturity, thereby avoiding sudden canopy loss and the higher maintenance costs that come with replacing large trees as they decline.

To sustain a healthy and resilient urban forest, the City should regularly update its tree inventory to track species diversity, size distribution, and maintenance needs. Ideally, updates should occur in real time as trees are planted, maintained, or removed. Industry best practices recommend conducting a comprehensive inventory reassessment every three years, though this timeline would require additional investment of funds for staff or consultant efforts. Maintaining accurate and up-to-date inventory data supports more strategic planting and preservation, helping ensure a diverse age structure and a more stable urban canopy over time.

TREE HEALTH AND MAINTENANCE PRIORITIES

Inventory data indicates that a significant number of trees in poor condition may be recoverable with proper intervention. Trees classified for immediate removal should be addressed as a priority, while those rated as "poor" should be further evaluated for potential restoration through targeted maintenance or structural support. Additionally, some species show lower Relative Performance Index (RPI) scores, meaning they may be more susceptible to local pests, disease, or environmental stressors such as compacted soil, drought, or poor site conditions. Identifying low-performing species can help guide future planting decisions toward trees better suited to Mountlake Terrace's urban environment.



A notable finding from the inventory is that 63% of recorded tree issues are preventable or correctable and are primarily human-caused. Structural defects, such as poor branch attachments and codominant stems, could have been avoided with proper young tree pruning. Many trees exhibiting poor root systems likely suffered from inadequate nursery stock selection, improper planting techniques, or compacted soils. Hardscape damage from tree roots could have been prevented by selecting species appropriate for urban planting sites and ensuring sufficient soil volume and root space.

The impact of deferred maintenance is also evident in the data. Approximately 60% of observed tree defects—including crown dieback, girdling roots, included bark, and improper past pruning—could have been mitigated through proactive pruning and regular maintenance cycles. Implementing best management practices (BMPs) and establishing a structured tree care program will reduce future maintenance costs, improve tree health, and extend the longevity of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

MOVING TOWARD A RESILIENT URBAN FOREST

To ensure long-term sustainability, Mountlake Terrace must prioritize diversifying tree species, maintaining a balanced age structure, and implementing proactive maintenance strategies. Regular monitoring of large trees will help balance the risks and benefits associated with mature specimens, while targeted tree preservation efforts will sustain vital canopy coverage. Addressing deferred maintenance and implementing best practices for young tree care will prevent future structural issues and reduce long-term costs.

As of this report, the City of Mountlake Terrace's Public Works Department has taken action to address Priority 1 and Priority 2 trees for public safety. Moving forward, enhanced data collection, preventative maintenance, and strategic tree planting will strengthen the resilience of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, ensuring it continues to provide environmental, social, and economic benefits for future generations.

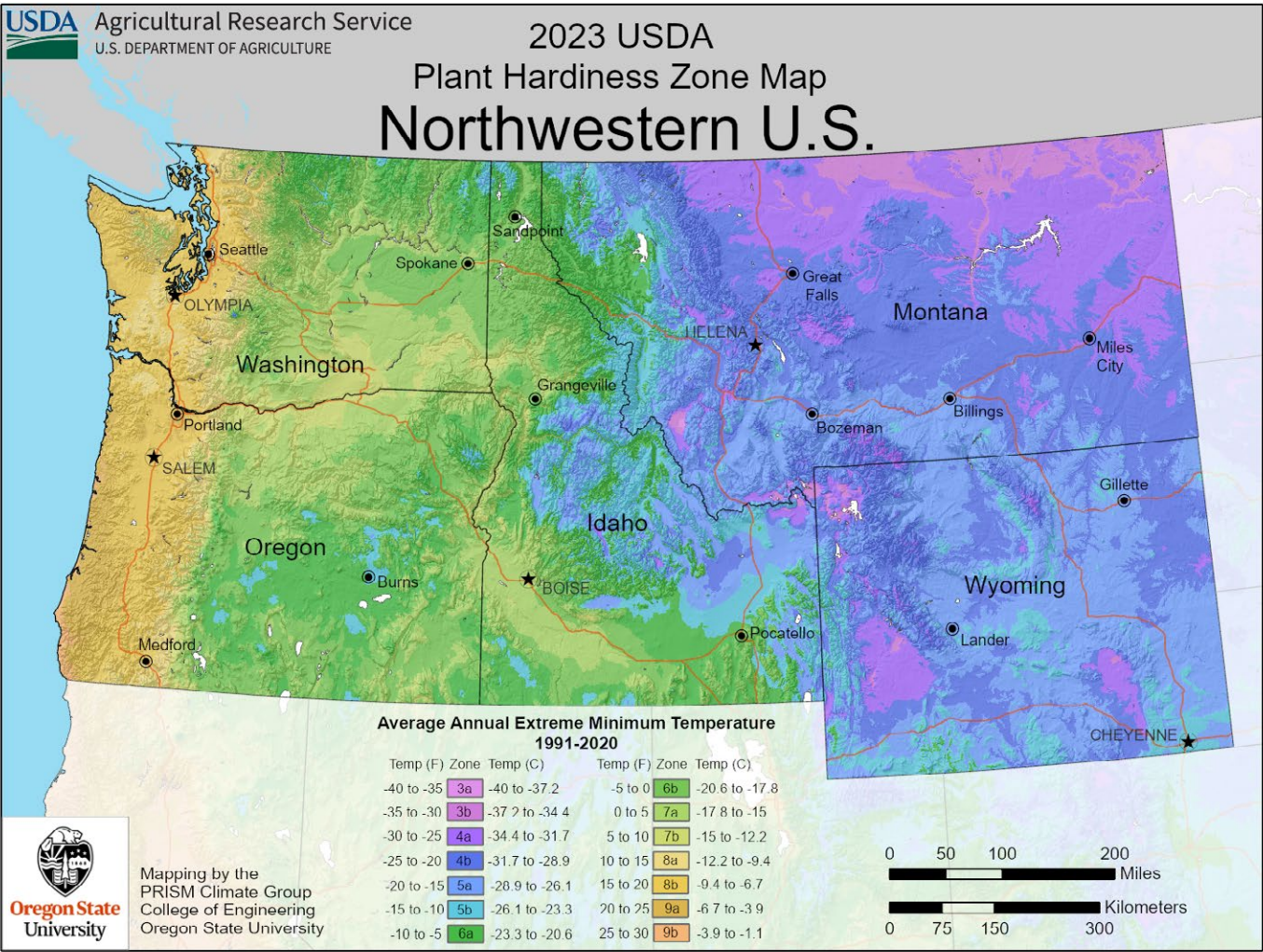
CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is already impacting Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, and its effects will only intensify in the coming decades. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, shifting precipitation patterns, and stronger storms will stress both new and established trees. These environmental changes will reduce water availability, alter plant communities, and create favorable conditions for pests and diseases. Without a long-term, proactive strategy, Mountlake Terrace risks higher maintenance costs, increased tree failures, and significant environmental and public safety impacts.

Many established trees may struggle to survive over the next 50 to 75 years due to warmer winters, shifting precipitation patterns, and increased threats from pests and diseases. Ensuring a resilient urban forest requires long-term planning and proactive species selection to adapt to these changing conditions.

Mountlake Terrace is currently classified in USDA Plant Hardiness Zone 9a (20°F to 25°F), but projections indicate a shift to Zone 10a (30°F to 35°F) or 10b (35°F to 40°F) by the end of the century. While this shift suggests a climate more similar to present-day southern Florida, it is important to note that hardiness zones are based solely on average minimum winter temperatures, not on overall climate conditions such as summer heat extremes, precipitation, or humidity. For example, Seattle and Tucson share the same hardiness zone, despite their vastly different rainfall patterns, elevation, and growing conditions.

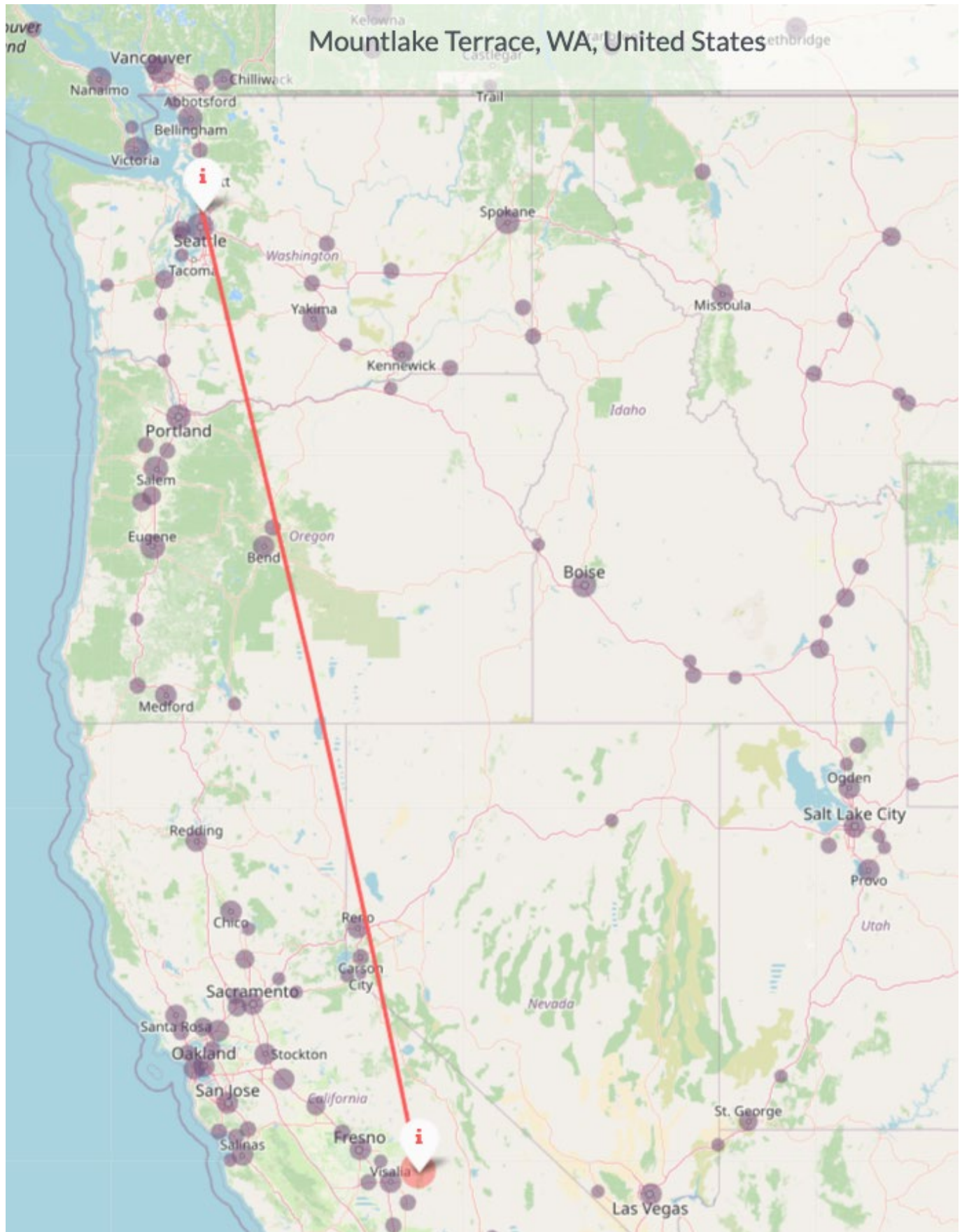
Climate change is occurring faster than previously predicted. The 2023 USDA Hardiness Zone update revealed that Mountlake Terrace had already reached Zone 9a—a shift that was not expected to occur until the late 21st century under worst-case scenarios. This accelerated warming trend highlights the urgency of preparing the urban forest for future conditions.



USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map of the northwest region. Source: U.S Department of Agriculture.

While hardiness zones serve as a useful reference for winter cold tolerance, they do not account for drought stress, heatwaves, or extreme weather events—all of which influence tree survival. To ensure the long-term resilience of Mountlake Terrace’s urban forest, species selection must consider a broader range of climate factors beyond winter temperatures. **Identifying trees that can tolerate both higher heat and changing precipitation patterns will be essential to sustaining the city’s canopy and enhancing urban climate resilience.**

To better understand future climate conditions, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) has developed a tool that models projected climate shifts. According to their research, under worst-case emissions scenarios, Mountlake Terrace’s 2080 climate will resemble present-day Three Rivers, California. While Three Rivers shares some temperate conifer species with Mountlake Terrace, its ecosystem is primarily Mediterranean forests, woodlands, and scrub. This suggests that the city will experience significant shifts in plant communities, requiring careful planning to select resilient tree species that can tolerate future conditions.



Map showing Mountlake Terrace, WA, and its projected future climate analog, Three Rivers, CA.
Source: University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science.

Urban Heat

Mountlake Terrace, like many cities, is experiencing rising urban heat due to climate change. The urban heat island effect occurs when buildings, roads, and other hard surfaces absorb and retain heat, increasing local temperatures. Reduced tree canopy and higher emissions further intensify these effects, posing health risks, particularly to vulnerable populations.

Without intervention, urban heat will increase tree stress and mortality, slowing growth and reducing air quality. The impacts of heat on trees include:

- **Increased stress on trees:** Urban heat adds additional stress to trees already facing air pollution, drought, and pests stressors, making it more difficult for trees to survive and thrive.
- **Reduced tree growth:** Urban heat can slow down tree growth, which can lead to a decline in the overall health of the urban forest.
- **Increased tree mortality:** Urban heat increases the risk of tree loss, which can lead to gaps in the urban forest.
- **Reduced air quality:** Urban heat tends to hold pollutants in the atmosphere, worsening air quality. This places an additional burden on trees' air purifying capabilities while also having a negative impact on human health and the environment.
- **Changes in plant communities:** Urban heat can lead to changes in the composition of plant communities, as some species are more tolerant of heat than others. This can lead to a loss of biodiversity in the urban forest.

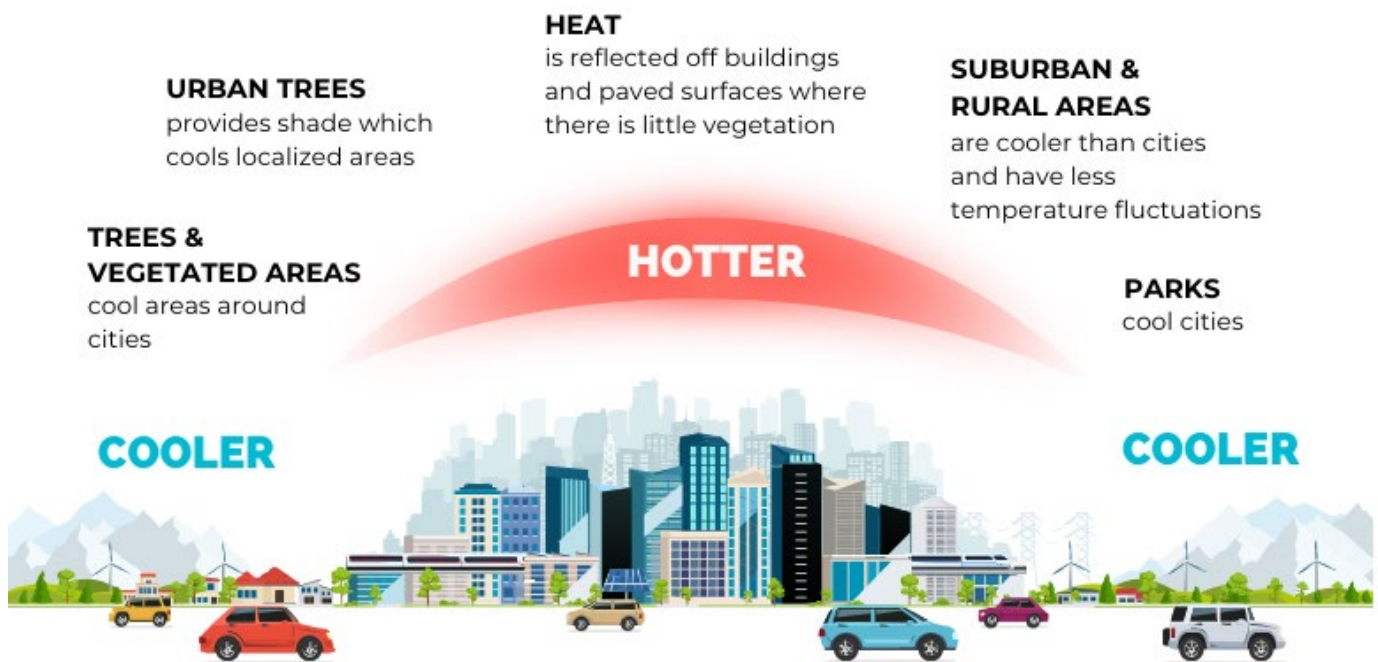


Figure 22. Illustration of the urban heat island effect.

Adapting to Changing Plant Communities

As Mountlake Terrace's climate shifts, the city must proactively plan for changes in plant communities. Urban foresters and planners must select tree species that will thrive in the climate 30 to 50 years from now, considering factors like soil conditions, water needs, and pest resistance. This may involve gradually phasing out species unsuited to future conditions while introducing species from warmer, drought-prone regions.

While plant hardiness zones are valuable, they do not account for microclimates, soil composition, and extreme weather events. Trees from warmer zones may struggle to establish if unexpected cold snaps exceed their tolerance, leading to poor growth and higher mortality rates. To ensure long-term success, Mountlake Terrace must:

- Diversify tree species to reduce vulnerability to pests, disease, and climate stress
- Monitor tree health and performance under changing conditions
- Collaborate with cities in warmer climates to learn from their urban forestry strategies.

As climate change alters local growing conditions, some tree species are struggling to adapt. Western red cedar, a culturally and ecologically significant species in Washington, is showing signs of stress and decline across the region. To ensure a resilient urban forest, the city can prioritize the preservation of healthy, high-value western red cedars while gradually replacing declining or dead trees with incense cedar or other climate-adapted alternatives. Selecting drought-tolerant species will support long-term forest stability as environmental conditions continue to shift.

Water Efficiency in a Changing Climate

Historically, the Pacific Northwest has not faced severe water shortages, but declining precipitation and rising temperatures will make water management increasingly important. Newly planted trees require 5–10 gallons of water per week to establish, and even mature trees will need supplemental irrigation during droughts.

To support water efficiency and tree health, Mountlake Terrace should:

- Promote deep, infrequent watering to encourage deep root growth and drought resistance
- Monitor trees for drought stress (e.g., leaf scorch, canopy dieback)
- Implement smart irrigation technology to reduce water waste
- Transition to water-efficient landscaping, replacing traditional turf with native and drought-tolerant plants.

Sustainable landscapes function as mini-watersheds, retaining and filtering stormwater, reducing resource consumption, and creating habitats for wildlife. By incorporating native grasses, wildflowers, and drought-tolerant plants, these landscapes are replacing traditional turf grass in many areas—reducing water usage, green waste, and maintenance costs. Prioritizing native and water-efficient plantings in yards, gardens, and public spaces ensures that valuable water resources can be reserved for irrigating trees, particularly during droughts or water restrictions.

While programmable spaces—such as sports fields, gathering areas, and outdoor event spaces—may still require turf grass, not all areas need to maintain traditional lawns. The American lawn, though deeply embedded in cultural aesthetics, is not environmentally sustainable. Transforming non-programmable spaces—such as schoolyards, hospital grounds, church properties, and residential or commercial landscapes—into xeric or water-efficient landscapes can maximize the urban forest's benefits. This shift not only enhances stormwater runoff reduction, carbon sequestration, and air filtration but also improves mental health, recovery rates, and learning outcomes.



Figure 23. Comparison of traditional landscapes and sustainable landscapes.

Source: The Garden Project, Santa Monica, CA.

A study from Santa Monica, California, compared sustainable and conventional landscapes, highlighting the efficiency of drought-resistant methods. The sustainable landscape:

- Used 89% less water (6,000 gallons vs. 57,000 gallons)
- Produced 70% less green waste (200 pounds vs. 670 pounds)
- Required 80% fewer maintenance hours (15 hours vs. 80 hours)

This research underscores the value of sustainable landscaping in conserving natural resources, reducing maintenance costs, and supporting a thriving urban forest. By embracing water-efficient landscapes, Mountlake Terrace can enhance urban tree health, improve environmental sustainability, and create healthier communities for future generations.

URBAN TREE PESTS AND DISEASES

Tree pests and diseases are a natural part of ecosystems, but their impact is being intensified by climate change. **In urban environments, where trees already face stressors such as compacted soil, pollution, and limited growing space, pests and diseases exacerbate decline.** While some pests and diseases can attack even healthy trees, stressed trees are particularly vulnerable. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and shifting seasonal patterns create conditions that accelerate the spread and severity of infestations.

Tree pests in Mountlake Terrace fall into two categories: native and invasive. Native pests, such as the Douglas-fir beetle, fir engraver, bronze birch borer, and spruce beetle, are commonly found in surrounding natural areas. These pests typically follow cyclical population growth but can infiltrate the urban forest through wildland-urban interfaces (WUI), open spaces, and the transportation of firewood or woody debris. Regular monitoring of these populations,

using data from the Washington DNR and the Washington Department of Agriculture's Division of Insects, Pests, and Weeds, is essential for proactive urban forest management.

Invasive pests, however, pose an even greater risk, as native trees have not evolved natural defenses against them. Two highly destructive invasive species—the Mediterranean oak borer and the emerald ash borer (EAB)—are advancing toward Mountlake Terrace. EAB has already caused billions of dollars in damage across North America, wiping out entire ash tree populations. Early detection, preparedness, and management strategies will be crucial to protecting the city's urban forest. Strengthening tree health through diverse plantings, proactive maintenance, and pest-resistant species selection will help mitigate future threats and increase the resilience of Mountlake Terrace's tree canopy.

Armillaria Root Disease

Armillaria root disease, also known as shoestring root rot, is a widespread and destructive fungal infection that threatens 12.8% of Mountlake Terrace's inventoried trees, with potential losses estimated at \$3.75 million (U.S. Forest Service, 2025). The disease primarily attacks tree root systems, often going undetected until significant damage has occurred. It can infect both living and dead trees, weakening their structural integrity and making them more susceptible to secondary pests and environmental stressors. It thrives in moist conditions and spreads through root-to-root contact or by rhizomorphs bridging gaps between trees, making it a persistent threat in urban and forested environments. This disease affects a wide range of tree species, including both hardwoods and conifers, posing a significant challenge for urban forest management. In the Pacific Northwest, it is especially damaging to Douglas-fir, grand fir, subalpine fir, and noble fir plantations, particularly in stressed environments or where improper planting practices have been used (Dunster & Edmonds, 2014). In the 2024 inventory, seven trees were indicated as having fungal growth and 628 were identified as having cavity decay. While cavity decay can be caused by several factors, it is a symptom of armillaria root disease. The city should further assess trees identified with cavity decay to determine the presence of this disease.



Armillaria fans under bark.
Source: Bugwood.org

Bronze Birch Borer

The bronze birch borer (*Agrilus anxius*) is a destructive beetle that primarily infests weakened birch trees, particularly in urban environments where drought, soil compaction, and heat stress make trees more vulnerable. This pest has been identified in Mountlake Terrace and threatens 1.2% of the inventoried tree population, with potential losses estimated at \$75,975 (U.S. Forest Service, 2025). Native to North America, this pest has been documented since the late 1800s, with outbreaks worsening due to changing climate conditions and hotter, drier summers. Adult beetles are slender, bronze-colored, and about ½ inch long, causing minimal damage as they feed on leaves. However, their larvae inflict severe harm by burrowing beneath the bark and feeding on the cambial layer, which disrupts the tree's ability to transport water and nutrients. Infestation symptoms often begin with yellowing leaves and dieback at the tree's crown, progressing downward as the larvae create winding galleries under the bark. Over time, affected branches and trunks may swell or develop D-shaped exit holes where adults emerge. In later stages, infested trees exhibit significant canopy loss and appear to be dying from the top down. In Washington State, this pest is a known threat to European white birch (*Betula pendula*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and white-barked Himalayan birch (*Betula jacquemontii*), species commonly found in Seattle and surrounding urban areas. As of 2024, 51 trees were identified as having pests in the inventory. Of those trees, 37 are European white birch, with 24 of those having additional comments indicating the presence of bronze birch borer.



Bronze birch borer. Source:
Bugwood.org

Douglas-fir Beetle

The Douglas-fir beetle (*Dendroctonus pseudotsugae*) is a significant pest affecting Douglas-fir trees across Oregon and Washington, particularly targeting large-diameter trees (8 inches or greater). In Mountlake Terrace, this beetle threatens 8.9% of the inventoried tree population, with an estimated loss of \$2.5 million (U.S. Forest Service, 2025). The beetle is most active following environmental disturbances, such as windthrow, drought, fire damage, or defoliation, and primarily attacks weakened or recently downed trees. Douglas-fir beetles typically attack individual trees but can cause group mortality during outbreaks. These beetles overwinter as adults or larvae beneath the bark and emerge in spring (April–June) to attack new trees. A secondary, smaller flight occurs in July–August.



Adult Douglas-fir beetle.
Source: Colorado State University

Fir Engraver

The fir engraver beetle (*Scolytus ventralis*) is a significant secondary pest affecting true fir species, particularly grand fir, white fir, and Shasta red fir. While normally targeting weakened or stressed trees, prolonged drought, root disease, or defoliation events can lead to large-scale outbreaks, resulting in widespread tree mortality. In Mountlake Terrace, fir engraver beetles threaten 9.6% of the inventoried tree population, with a potential economic loss of \$2.59 million (U.S. Forest Service, 2025). Fir engraver beetles typically attack trees from June to August, with peak activity in July. Infestations can be difficult to detect initially, as external symptoms often take a year to develop. Fir engraver outbreaks often correlate with root disease, as weakened trees provide ideal breeding conditions. The beetles also infest fresh windthrows and recently cut logs, making logging operations a potential source of population surges. Fir engraver beetle activity is most prevalent east of the Cascade Mountains and in southwestern Oregon, where periodic droughts and selective logging can create conditions conducive to outbreaks. Recent hot and dry summers in Washington have weakened Douglas-firs and true firs, allowing secondary bark beetles, such as fir engraver, to establish in trees that would historically resist infestation. These conditions have led to an increase in beetle populations and expanded host tree mortality.



Fir engraver beetle. Source: Bugwood.org

Heterobasidion Root Disease

Heterobasidion root disease, formerly known as annosus root disease, is a significant threat to Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, affecting 15.7% of the city's inventoried tree population, with potential losses estimated at \$4.18 million (U.S. Forest Service, 2025). This fungal disease spreads through airborne spores and root-to-root contact, leading to root decay, tree mortality, and structural instability. It is widely distributed throughout Washington and Oregon, affecting a variety of conifer species, including fir, hemlock, pine, and spruce. Diagnosis is challenging as symptoms vary, but indicators include canopy thinning, root decay, and the presence of fruiting bodies on tree bases or stumps (Dunster & Edmonds, 2014). Advanced decay can cause structural failure, posing a safety hazard in parks, rights-of-way, and public spaces. In the 2024 inventory, seven trees were indicated as having fungal growth and 628 were identified as having cavity decay. While cavity decay can be caused by several factors, it is a symptom of heterobasidion root disease. The city should further assess trees identified in the inventory to determine the presence of this disease.



Fruiting bodies of heterobasidion root disease in tree cavity. Source: Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbooks.

Mediterranean Oak Borer

The Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB) is an invasive ambrosia beetle that primarily infests oak species, posing a serious threat to urban and natural forests in the Pacific Northwest. Native to Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa, MOB was first detected in the United States in 2019 in California and has since spread into Oregon. Though it has not yet been found in Washington, its proximity and ability to spread through firewood and wood products raise significant concerns for the state's oak populations.

Washington's only native white oak, the Garry oak (*Quercus garryana*), is already a species of conservation concern, and many urban areas have planted over 20 additional oak species that could also be vulnerable. Oaks play a critical role in the environment, providing wildlife habitat, stormwater management, and climate resilience. In Mountlake Terrace, there are 65 inventoried oaks, likely representing only a portion of the city's overall oak population. The potential impact of MOB's arrival could be significant.

MOB beetles are tiny (1/10 inch long) and bore into tree trunks, introducing fungal pathogens (*Raffaelea montetyi*) that cause oak wilt. This infection disrupts the tree's vascular system, leading to canopy decline and eventual death. Since its initial detection in Troutdale, Oregon, in 2018, MOB has been found in Multnomah, Clackamas, Marion, and Washington counties, with over 30 infested trees identified near Wilsonville in 2023. While MOB has yet to be detected in Washington, its steady movement northward makes early detection and monitoring critical.



Female Mediterranean oak borer. Source: Washington State University Extension

Emerald Ash Borer

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an invasive wood-boring beetle from Asia, has been devastating ash trees (*Fraxinus spp.*) across North America since it was first detected in Michigan in 2002. The beetle has now reached Oregon, with its first confirmed sighting in Forest Grove in 2022. Though not yet present in Washington, its westward expansion threatens the state's native Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) and cultivated ash trees in urban landscapes.

Ash trees are critical components of urban forests, riparian ecosystems, and wetland habitats, and their loss could have severe ecological and economic consequences. While ash trees make up only a small percentage of Mountlake Terrace's inventoried trees, their broader presence in urban and natural forests remains largely unknown.

Adult EAB beetles are small (½ inch long), metallic green, and leave distinctive D-shaped exit holes in tree bark. However, the larvae cause the most damage by tunneling beneath the bark and disrupting nutrient and water transport, ultimately leading to tree decline and death within 3–5 years.

The detection of EAB in Oregon has raised concerns about its inevitable spread into Washington. While the beetle naturally moves at a rate of about one mile per year, its spread is greatly accelerated by human activity, such as transporting firewood, logs, or untreated ash products. In response, Oregon enacted a quarantine in Washington County in December 2022, restricting the movement of ash and other susceptible tree species. However, continued vigilance and proactive management are essential to slow its northward spread.



Emerald ash borer. Source: Bugwood.org

English Ivy

English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is an invasive evergreen vine that poses serious ecological and structural risks to urban forests and should also be considered a tree pest due to its capacity to damage and kill trees. Commonly planted for its year-round foliage and adaptability, English ivy has escaped cultivation and become widespread in the Pacific Northwest, including Mountlake Terrace.

Ivy spreads aggressively through vegetative growth and seed dispersal by birds, rapidly covering understory vegetation and climbing into the canopy. Once established, it shades out native plants, suppresses regeneration, and competes with trees for water and nutrients. Its dense growth can suffocate tree trunks, limit photosynthesis, and add significant weight, increasing the risk of storm damage and tree failure. Deciduous trees are particularly vulnerable in winter months when leaf loss allows ivy to thrive in full light. Additionally, ivy mats provide shelter for pests and rodents, conceal tree health issues, and can damage bark and structures with its clinging rootlets.

English ivy also poses human health risks—its berries and leaves are toxic to people and animals, and its sap can cause skin irritation. Eradication is labor-intensive and costly, requiring persistent mechanical removal and long-term site monitoring. Despite these impacts, English ivy continues to be sold and planted, contributing to its spread across urban and natural areas.

Effective management includes prohibiting new plantings, encouraging removal on public and private lands, and replacing it with ecologically appropriate alternatives. Due to its impacts on tree health, regeneration, and maintenance costs, English ivy should be a priority species for control in Mountlake Terrace’s urban forest. In the most recent inventory, 195 trees (3% of the publicly managed tree population) were noted as having some form of vine infestation—underscoring the need for targeted action.



**English Ivy. Source:
Washington State Noxious
Weed Control Board**



INVASIVE TREE SPECIES

Invasive plant species thrive due to their adaptability, rapid reproduction, and lack of natural predators, allowing them to outcompete native vegetation and disrupt ecosystems. In Mountlake Terrace, four species found in the city's tree inventory—cherry laurel, Portuguese laurel, English holly, and European mountain ash—are listed as invasive. While these species represent only a small portion of the inventoried trees, their actual presence in the urban forest is likely much larger, posing a significant ecological threat. Additionally, tree-of-heaven and black locust, two other highly invasive species, were not identified in the city's inventory but are present in the urban forest.

The classification and regulation of these species vary across state and county lists, including those maintained by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board, King County Noxious Weeds, Snohomish County Noxious Weeds & Invasive Species, and EarthCorps' Invasive Trees of the Puget Sound. Some species are unlisted, others are monitored, and a few are actively regulated. To safeguard Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, the city should track and assess the spread of invasive trees, prohibit future plantings, and implement removal strategies to reduce their ecological impact.

Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), originating from China, is a fast-growing deciduous tree, reaching heights of 70 feet and crown widths of 80 feet. This species prospers in harsh conditions, such as poor, compacted soils, and withstands heat, drought, and pollution, posing problems in both urban and natural landscapes. It reproduces through wind-dispersed seeds and asexually via root sprouts, with female trees producing numerous seeds. The leaves are dark green with a unique lanceolate shape and teeth at the base; the bark is light brown to pale gray and fissured.

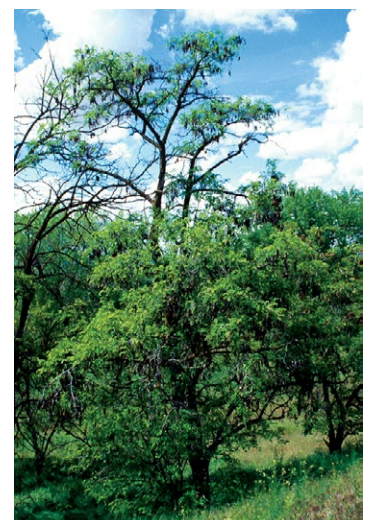
Tree-of-heaven, which aggressively invades roadsides, railways, and woodland edges, can damage infrastructure with its roots, has brittle wood, and competes with native species. It also facilitates the spread of the spotted lanternfly. In Washington, where it is classified as a "List C" species in the Noxious Weed Act, effective control includes preventing establishment, promoting healthy native vegetation, and removing seedlings. While no biocontrol agent is yet approved, methods like hand-pulling seedlings, cutting older trees followed by herbicide treatment, and cultural management strategies are recommended for its control.

Black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), also known as false acacia, is a weed of concern in King County, though it is not listed as a noxious weed by Snohomish County or the Washington State Noxious Weed List. While its control is not required, it is strongly recommended, particularly in areas where natural resources are being protected. New plantings are discouraged due to its aggressive growth and ability to spread rapidly. Native to central and eastern North America, black locust has become highly invasive outside its natural range, particularly in prairies, meadows, forest edges, and riparian habitats. It thrives in well-drained soils and full sun, spreading both by seed dispersal and extensive root suckering, which allows it to form dense stands that crowd out native vegetation. Its ability to fix nitrogen can also alter soil chemistry, further disrupting native ecosystems.

Black locust is a deciduous tree that can grow 40 to 100 feet tall, with pinnately compound leaves composed of 7 to 21 oval leaflets. The bark of younger trees is smooth and brownish-green, while older trees develop thick, deeply furrowed bark with a rope-like texture. In spring, the tree produces fragrant white flowers in drooping clusters, each with a distinct yellow spot on the uppermost petal. These flowers develop into smooth seed pods, 2 to 4 inches long, containing 4 to 8 seeds,



Tree-of-heaven. Source: Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.



Black locust tree. Source: Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board.

though a thick seed coat often limits successful germination.

As an early successional species, black locust thrives in disturbed areas such as roadsides, old fields, and degraded woodlands. Its interconnected root system allows it to rapidly sprout new growth, making it challenging to control. Given its invasive nature and potential ecological impact, Mountlake Terrace should monitor its presence, prohibit new plantings, and implement management strategies to limit its spread, particularly in areas critical to habitat restoration.

Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), also known as English laurel, is a weed of concern in King County and listed on the Monitor List by the Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board. While control is not required, it is recommended, and new plantings are discouraged due to its invasive nature. This fast-growing evergreen is among the most prevalent invasive species in Seattle's parks and forests, where it outcompetes native vegetation and alters natural ecosystems.

Native to Europe and Asia, cherry laurel thrives in Washington's west-side forests, spreading aggressively as birds disperse its seeds. It shades out native shrubs and tree seedlings, preventing forest regeneration and replacing canopy trees over time. Additionally, all parts of the plant are toxic if ingested. Cherry laurel grows up to 30 feet tall as a tree or multi-stem shrub, with thick, glossy green leaves and fine-toothed edges. It produces fragrant white flowers in spring and dark purple fruit in late summer. It spreads both by seed and vegetative growth, forming dense thickets. Cutting alone is ineffective, as it resprouts vigorously from stumps and roots. It thrives in full sun to deep shade and adapts to various soil conditions.

Often confused with Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*), cherry laurel has been recorded in 17 locations in Mountlake Terrace, though its actual presence is much greater. To protect urban forests, the city should monitor its spread, prohibit new plantings, and implement management strategies to prevent further establishment.

Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica*), an invasive evergreen tree, is often overlooked as a threat to urban forests. Native to Spain and Portugal, it has become widespread west of the Cascades, commonly planted as a hedge, specimen tree, or garden tree. However, it readily spreads into forests, where it thrives in low light, outcompetes native species, and reduces biodiversity. Birds contribute to its spread by eating and dispersing its toxic berries.

This species features leathery, dark green leaves (up to 5 inches long) and produces small white flowers on 5-10 inch spikes in late spring, followed by red to dark purple fruit. Though slower-growing than cherry laurel, Portugal laurel is highly adaptable, tolerating heat, sun, wind, and drought. It is classified as invasive by the U.S. National Park Service in Oregon and Washington and should not be allowed to spread beyond gardens or yards.

Its toxic leaves contain cyanide, making burning or crushing unsafe, and its berries are also poisonous to humans. Like other non-native laurels, it is difficult to remove, as it resprouts aggressively from root suckers when cut. With 10 inventoried trees in Mountlake Terrace, its presence is likely greater. The city should monitor its spread, discourage new plantings, and implement removal strategies to protect native ecosystems.



Large cherry laurel bush.
Source: King County.



Portugal laurel. Source
Washington State
University Extension.

European mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*) is a deciduous tree with orange-red berries that attract birds and spread its seeds. Native to Eurasia, it has escaped cultivation and established in urban forests and natural areas, outcompeting native vegetation. Listed as a weed of concern in King County and on Washington's Monitor List, its control is recommended but not required, and new plantings are discouraged. With 58 inventoried trees in Mountlake Terrace, its true presence is likely higher.

This 15 to 40-foot tree has light gray bark, pinnately compound leaves with 11-15 serrated leaflets, and clusters of white flowers in spring. In late summer, it produces red-orange berries that birds disperse widely. Invasive in multiple states, European mountain ash spreads aggressively, establishing in forests, meadows, and urban areas where it crowds out native species. Control efforts focus on removing berries before they ripen and discouraging new plantings. Monitoring is key, especially near protected natural areas.



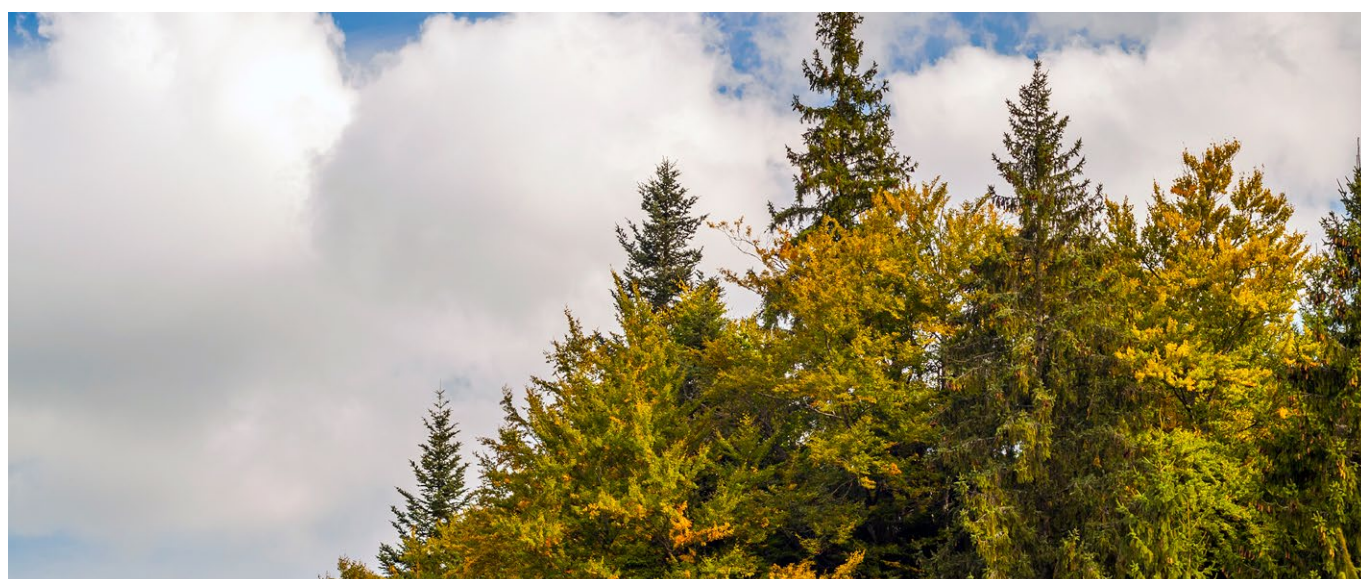
Fruit of the European mountain ash. Source: Bugwood.org.

English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is an invasive, shade-tolerant evergreen tree that thrives in the Pacific Northwest, where it outcompetes native vegetation and alters forest ecosystems. Though not listed as a noxious weed in Washington, it is recognized as invasive by multiple counties, municipalities, and organizations due to its ability to spread aggressively through both bird-dispersed seeds and vegetative reproduction. Holly can form dense understory thickets, disrupting forest regeneration and reducing biodiversity by shading out native plants. In urban settings, it is difficult to control because cutting stimulates regrowth, and its deep root system makes removal labor-intensive.



English holly. Source: Bugwood.org.

Within Mountlake Terrace's inventoried street tree population, 62 English holly trees have been recorded, highlighting its established presence in the city's urban forest. Holly is particularly problematic in forested parks, greenbelts, and riparian areas, where its rapid growth and ability to flourish in both shaded and disturbed environments allow it to spread unchecked. Research indicates that disturbance, such as timber harvest or land clearing, accelerates holly's invasion, leading to increased fruit production and faster growth in open areas. Effective management strategies include preventing new plantings, removing immature trees before they establish extensive root systems, and using targeted herbicide treatments for mature individuals. Given its potential long-term impacts, Mountlake Terrace should monitor and manage holly to prevent further spread and protect native forest structure.



URBAN FOREST PROGRAM AUDIT

To develop a UFMP that reflects the community of Mountlake Terrace, 33 local documents, plans, and resources were gathered and reviewed by applying the U.S. Forest Service's Urban Forest Sustainability and Management Audit's Discovery Matrix. This matrix includes a total of 11 urban forest categories, each containing a multitude of supporting elements. All of Mountlake Terrace's resources were reviewed and assessed for each of the categories and supporting elements.

The primary objectives of the audit include:

- *Provide program direction to increase efficiency*
- *Conduct a gap analysis of management practices and urban forest health*
- *Provide strategic direction to improve the health of the urban forest*
- *Optimize management for environmental justice and equitable distribution of resources*

URBAN FOREST AUDIT PROCESS

The process of analyzing the urban forest involved extensive information and document gathering and research to identify policies, practices, programs, and standards pertaining to categories of urban forest sustainability and management as defined by Clark et al. (1997), Kenney et al. (2011), and the Forest Service.

Each element was ranked or scored based on the consultants' evaluations in 2024 for the Urban Forest Management Plan. All available documents and plans were reviewed and tallied in the audit worksheet as part of the information discovery phase. Based on the evaluation of the documents and outcomes of all planning processes (i.e., research, city staff interviews, urban forest benchmarks, data analyses, and community engagement) each subcategory within the 11 categories was "ranked" using the following system:

RANKING	DESCRIPTION	POINTS
Not Practiced	Doesn't exist or is not practiced	0
In Development	In development as part of or aside from this Plan	1
Adopted Practice	Routinely practiced	2

The points were then totaled for an overall rating to provide a summary of the city's level of achieving each category of urban forest management and sustainability.

This audit or "gap analysis" provides a data-driven approach to growing and shaping different aspects of the City of Mountlake Terrace's urban forestry program. It also enables effective monitoring of the Plan's strategies, as audit categories can be revisited at key intervals during Plan implementation to measure progress and adapt strategies accordingly. The Implementation section includes guidance and strategies for completing updates to the audit as progress is made in the city's urban forestry program. It is recommended the city's Tree Board or Environmental Programs Manager complete a bi-annual audit to inform any alterations to actions and strategies.

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S AUDIT RESULTS

Mountlake Terrace scored 54% in terms of urban forest sustainability and management, as defined by the U.S. Forest Service, partners, and planning consultants. The average score from 26 similar audits completed by the urban forestry consultants is 63%. This comparatively lower ranking is to be expected of a city in the process of elevating their urban forestry program from a base level to a more advanced and sustainable level. While all areas of urban forestry require improvement under the guidance of an urban forestry program manager, significant improvements could be made in the Professional Capacity and Training, Funding and Accounting, Inventories, Urban Forest Management Plans, Risk Management, and Disaster Planning categories — all of which are below the city's overall audit score of 54%.

An evaluation of Mountlake Terrace's practices across 129 subcategories, organized under 11 main categories, shows that the city meets adopted common practice in 46 of these areas, which is about 36%. Another 18% of the subcategories, totaling 47, are currently in the process of being developed. Mountlake Terrace scored 139 out of a potential 258 points. This equates to a performance score of 54%, with the specifics depicted in subsequent figures.

INTERPRETING THE URBAN FOREST AUDIT SCORES

The Urban Forest Audit System should serve as a baseline assessment from which progress can be measured and strategies can be adjusted using an adaptive management approach. Overall, Mountlake Terrace scored a 54 out of 100 based on the consultants' evaluation. The scores resulting from the evaluation are informative but should not be considered a definitive assessment or a reason for excessive action due to a currently low score or inaction due to a high score. The following provides an interpretation of the scores for the city to consider when implementing the Plan's corresponding actions.

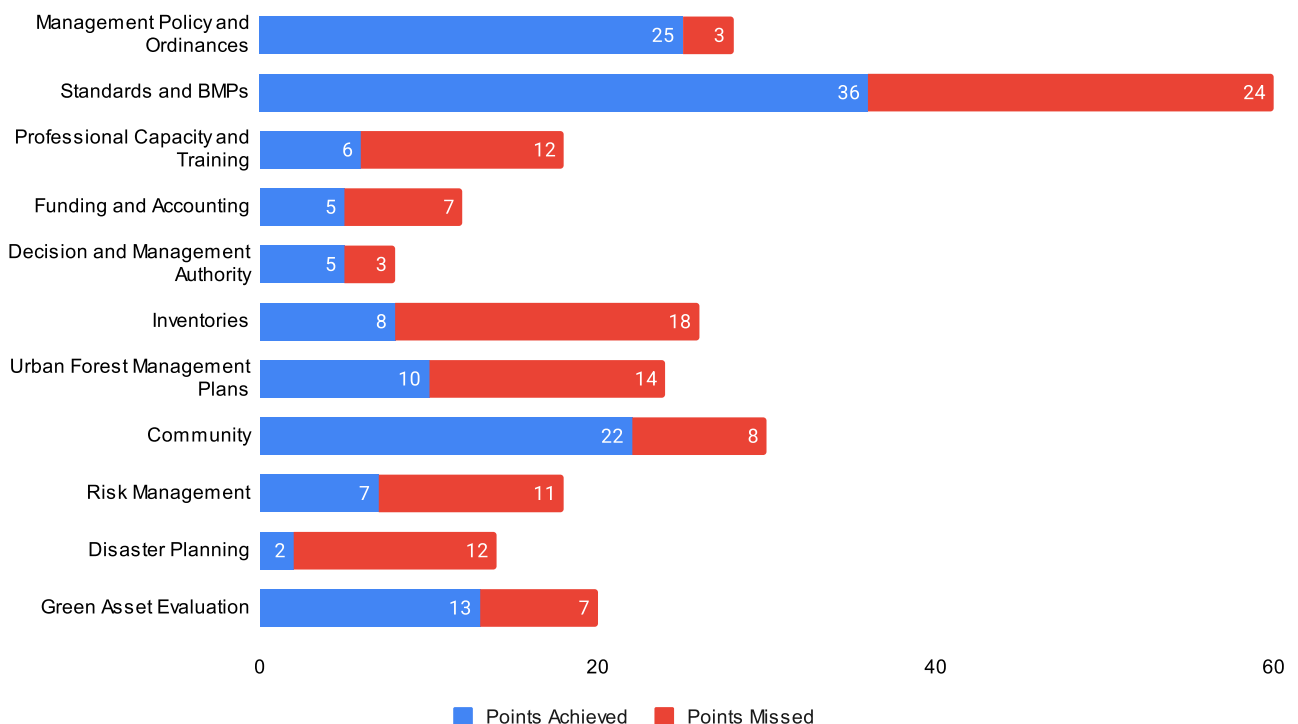


Figure 24. Mountlake Terrace's Urban Forest Audit results 2024.

STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK ON CURRENT CONDITIONS

Meaningful internal and external engagement was essential to the development and success of Mountlake Terrace's first Urban Forest Management Plan. From July 2024 to January 2025, the city conducted a comprehensive engagement process involving staff surveys, stakeholder interviews, public questionnaires, commission meetings, and targeted outreach. These efforts gathered valuable input from residents, businesses, and community partners, providing insight into urban forestry priorities, challenges, and opportunities.

The feedback helped shape a plan that reflects the needs and values of the community while building broad support for its implementation. Continued engagement not only fosters transparency and shared ownership, but also strengthens the city's ability to manage and grow a resilient, inclusive urban forest.

STAFF AND INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Staff Survey

In July 2024, the city launched an internal survey to understand staff perspectives on urban forestry management. The survey gathered responses from 14 staff members across departments including Parks/Recreation, Community and Economic Development, Engineering, and Public Works. This cross-departmental participation provided valuable insights into how trees and urban forest management intersect with other various aspects of city operations.

The survey revealed a notable gap between personal and organizational priorities regarding tree management. While staff members showed high personal prioritization of urban forestry (rating it 4.5 out of 5), they perceived lower organizational prioritization (3.3 out of 5). This disparity suggests an opportunity to better align institutional actions with staff values.

Climate change emerged as a central concern, with staff overwhelmingly ranking "reducing urban heat island effects" as their top priority for the UFMP. This was closely followed by goals to improve disease and pest management policies and enhance educational outreach efforts. These priorities indicate that staff hold a holistic view of urban forest management, combining practical action with community engagement.

Staff Interviews and Departmental Meetings

Following the survey, the project team conducted in-depth interviews and departmental group meetings in October 2024. These discussions provided insights into operational challenges and opportunities for improvement in Mountlake Terrace's urban forest management.

Climate Change and Resource Management: Staff across departments expressed concerns about managing trees in the face of climate change impacts. Key issues included the need for drought-resilient species selection, irrigation management challenges, and considerations for stream temperature and erosion control when planning tree replacements.

Infrastructure Challenges: Engineering staff identified 54 specific sidewalk panel repairs needed due to tree root conflicts, highlighting concerns about the Town Center standards and electrical outlets for decorative tree illumination. The Public Works team noted challenges with their current \$30,000 hazard tree removal budget, which staff described as insufficient for addressing both routine maintenance and emergency response needs. Additionally, state-mandated code updates permitting higher density present further challenges to preventing tree removal on private property and during new development.

Training and Capacity Building: Parks department staff emphasized the need for enhanced crew training in tree care. The department is currently working to build expertise through staff development, with plans to eventually hire an arborist. Long-term staff provided valuable context on how tree management practices have evolved over time and highlighted opportunities for improved coordination between departments.

Departmental Coordination: Staff interviews revealed several challenges in coordinating tree management across departments. These included:

- Clear delineation needed between in-house versus contracted tree work
- Lack of formal replacement planting plans for removed trees
- Need for established guidelines for tree species selection
- Desire for dedicated urban forestry staff and on-call tree service contracts

Specific Geographic Concerns: Staff identified various location-specific challenges throughout the city, including invasive species management in natural areas and the contrast between newer developments using modern tree planting technologies versus older areas with traditional tree wells.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Public Surveys

First Survey (August-September 2024)

The first public survey gathered 118 responses, providing initial insights into community perceptions and priorities and experiences related to trees in Mountlake Terrace. Respondents indicated a strong community interest in trees. Notable findings included:

- High daily engagement with urban trees, with 115 respondents regularly observing trees during walks/commutes, 101 using tree shade, and 104 actively caring for their own trees
- Clear recognition of diverse tree benefits, particularly city beautification (108 responses), shade/heat reduction (81 responses), and mental/physical health improvements (104 responses)
- Strong preference for strategic tree placement, with highest support for street trees (38.98%), followed by parks/public spaces (27.12%), and commercial/industrial areas (18.64%)
- Notable community support for tree preservation during development, with respondents favoring incentives for builders who retain existing trees
- Primary concerns centered on infrastructure conflicts (root interference with utilities) and safety issues, though many reported no challenges with trees
- Identified barriers to tree planting including knowledge gaps about tree selection/care, financial constraints, and physical limitations

However, respondent self-identification questions revealed significant demographic gaps in participation. The home ownership status, age, and racial/ethnic identities of survey participants was not reflective of the population of the City of Mountlake as a whole. Homeowners were heavily overrepresented (84.75% of respondents), while renters (11.86%), and younger residents were underrepresented. Additionally, racial and ethnic diversity was limited, with 74.58% of respondents identifying as white. Language responses were almost exclusively English speakers, excepting one survey response in Spanish.

Second Survey (November 2024-January 2025)

The second survey was designed to collect more specific insights into implementation preferences amongst Mountlake Terrace residents. Participation in the second survey achieved a total of 283 responses, showing strong community interest in urban forest management. Notable findings included:

- Majority support (56.18%) for tree removal permits outside of development and beyond critical areas. Support increased by 16% when exemptions for hazardous tree removals were included.
- High interest in educational programming, with 69.68% of respondents interested in learning proper tree pruning practices
- Strong preference for practical support mechanisms, particularly cost-sharing programs for arborist services
- Geographic variations in perspectives, with notable differences between neighborhoods regarding tree regulations and support programs

While the second survey gathered more Spanish and Vietnamese responses (five and one respectively), the overall demographic representation was still extremely limited. To encourage participation, a gift basket donated by a local business was raffled to a survey respondent through a social media promotion near the end of the collection period.

Commission Meetings

Recreation and Park Advisory Commission (RPAC)

The RPAC has played a vital role in shaping the engagement process through two key meetings. At the August 13, 2024 meeting, commissioners provided valuable input on youth engagement strategies, suggesting partnerships with the MLT High School Eco Club and parent-teacher groups. They also raised important concerns about tree preservation during development, particularly in light of state housing requirements.

The October 8, 2024 follow-up meeting focused on practical implementation considerations. Commissioners emphasized the importance of using renter-friendly terminology in engagement materials and expressed strong interest in understanding the ratio of native to non-native trees in the city's urban forest. The Commission also discussed ways to better publicize existing incentives for developers to preserve large trees and suggested using the December 1st edition of Craze (the MLT Parks and Rec online newsletter) to broaden community outreach.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission (DEIC)

The DEIC meeting on August 21, 2024 proved instrumental in strengthening the project's approach to inclusive engagement. The commission provided specific, actionable recommendations that have directly influenced the project's engagement strategies and helped identify new community partners for outreach efforts.

Community Events



The city's UFMP Project Team provided on-the-ground engagement support by flyering at homes, local businesses and public spaces, tabling at community events and sharing information about the UFMP engagement opportunities on social media. These events took place between July and December and included:

- Music in the Park - July 18th & 25th
- Tour d' Terrace - July 19th to 21st
- National Night Out - August 6th
- Holiday Tree Lighting - December 6th

Throughout these months, outreach was also carried out on Instagram, Facebook, Craze (Rec & Parks online newsletter), Twitter, City web page, City Happenings (quarterly newsletter), and MLT News.

INSIGHTS FROM COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ENGAGEMENT

While the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) had its own dedicated outreach efforts, additional insights were gathered through the concurrent engagement process for the City's Comprehensive Plan. These findings provide valuable context and reinforce themes that are directly relevant to the UFMP's goals, particularly around environmental priorities, equity in outreach, and future opportunities for engagement.

As part of the Comprehensive Plan process, The Vida Agency (TVA) was subcontracted to support engagement efforts specifically focused on BIPOC-owned and small businesses—two groups historically underrepresented in city planning. TVA adapted the Comprehensive Plan questionnaire and conducted intercept surveys with 27 locally owned and BIPOC businesses in Mountlake Terrace. Their engagement team distributed fact sheets, held informal conversations, and encouraged business owners to complete a digital survey. Of those contacted, 21 completed the questionnaire. While responses reflected a wide range of perspectives influenced by lived experience, race, culture, and prior engagement with city processes, several common themes emerged. Business owners most frequently emphasized the importance of protecting the city's tree canopy, expanding access to public open space, and implementing composting programs as part of a broader environmental strategy.

Youth engagement was also a key focus during the Comprehensive Plan outreach. City staff and TVA partnered with student leaders from Mountlake Terrace High School, including members of the Black Student Union, Latino Student Union, The Hawk News, and administrative staff, to determine the most effective way to involve students in the planning process. Through this collaboration, TVA recruited students to complete a digital questionnaire aligned with earlier engagement tools. Although only nine responses were received as of the UFMP drafting, the survey remains open. Initial results indicate that students prioritized tree canopy protection, composting, and the addition of electric vehicle charging stations as top environmental actions. Importantly, this effort revealed the value of involving student leaders early and building more lead time into future engagement processes to better accommodate student schedules and responsibilities.

Together, these insights reinforce many of the priorities identified through UFMP-specific outreach and underscore the importance of continued engagement across diverse community groups. As the City advances its urban forestry initiatives, these findings offer additional direction on aligning future programs with community values and expanding inclusive participation.





VISION FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

This section provides guidance and recommendations for the City of Mountlake Terrace to continue to provide high levels of service now and into the future over the next 10 years. The Urban Forest Management Plan's recommendations include those that may only take a few months and others that will require a coordinated effort that may need to continue beyond the 10-year timeframe.

PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Mountlake Terrace is a city where a flourishing urban forest and a thriving tree canopy enrich the health, environment, and beauty of our community, ensuring every resident enjoys their benefits.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OVERVIEW

Mountlake Terrace's UFMP was designed to guide the city in managing, protecting, and growing its urban forest. The goals, strategies, and priority actions were developed based on research and analysis of available data, extensive internal and external engagement, and an evaluation of urban forest sustainability criteria. The resulting goals and recommendations address the current conditions, existing and potential challenges, and shared priorities described in previous sections of the Plan. The Plan's long-term framework supports the shared vision for Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

GOALS, STRATEGIES, AND ACTIONS

A series of guiding principles supported by goals, strategies, and actions are provided to serve as a 10-year roadmap toward the urban forest vision.



GOAL AND STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Through the analysis of data, information collection, and input from both internal and external stakeholders, a set of overarching guiding principles emerged to shape the Plan's direction and strengthen its foundation. These principles reflect the community's priorities and are supported by feedback from internal stakeholder engagement sessions. Together with the Urban Forest Audit and the Indicators of Sustainable Urban Forestry—detailed in earlier sections—they form the core framework of the Plan.

Engage Goal

We want to Engage the Mountlake Terrace community in the retention, maintenance, and growth of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. The urban forest is part of our city's character, but the residents define it. For this Plan to succeed, the community needs to understand the Plan for the urban forest and participate in it.

Maintain Goal

Mature trees contribute to the character and identity of our city. A diverse urban forest, with trees of varying ages and life stages, provides greater ecological and community benefits. To sustain this, young trees should be planted to replace those that have died and to enhance suitable right-of-way areas. Caring for public trees prolongs their lifespan and maximizes ecosystem benefits. A balanced mix of mature and young trees strengthens the urban forest's resilience and longevity.

Grow Goal

As development increases impervious surfaces, temperatures rise, and pollution from traffic grows, expanding tree canopy by 4.5% will help offset these environmental impacts and enhance the benefits of the urban forest for all residents and visitors to Mountlake Terrace.

Retain Goal

The tree canopy assessment revealed that most of Mountlake Terrace's remaining canopy is on residential property. While efforts to plant and manage trees in the right-of-way, parks, and public spaces are important, meaningful progress requires engaging residents to reduce the loss of mature trees on private land. A phased approach beginning with outreach and incentives, and possibly leading to tree removal permits should prior efforts not prove effective in balancing density and urban forest preservation, can help support this goal.

Know Goal

To fully appreciate all the urban forest does for us, we must continue to understand our progress as we grow it. By tracking tree canopy, number of trees planted, number of volunteers participating, and other useful metrics, we can see a picture of our progress.

In support of the five goals, specific objectives, actions, and targets were developed to establish an actionable and achievable work plan for Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. The [How Do We Get There](#) section of this UFMP includes recommendations and guidance based on city objectives, feedback, and needs identified in the planning process. Needs identified include tree risk management, sustainability and resilience planning, among others.



ENGAGE

We want to Engage the Mountlake Terrace community in the retention, maintenance, and growth of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. The urban forest is part of our city's character, but the residents define it. For this Plan to succeed, the community needs to understand the Plan for the urban forest and participate in it.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement an urban forestry outreach strategy.
2. Empower residents through hands-on training and stewardship programs.
3. Strengthen community partnerships for urban forestry engagement.
4. Enhance public communications on tree policies and urban forestry initiatives.

ENGAGE ACTIONS	
E.01	Develop an urban forestry outreach strategy with a clear implementation schedule, including timelines, required resources, and assigned responsibilities for executing related actions.
E.02	Provide technical assistance to homeowners through educational resources and training on tree care, planting, and pest management, utilizing partnerships with local organizations.
E.03	Establish a Tree Ambassador citizen science group to engage volunteers in urban forestry efforts, including tree planting, care, and community outreach.
E.04	Create a Tree Steward program to recognize residents and businesses for preserving mature trees or caring for newly planted trees, fostering community engagement and urban forest appreciation.
E.05	Develop consistent talking points on tree-related topics, including regulations, planting, maintenance, invasives, pests, and permitting.
E.06	Ensure transparent communication with residents about tree-related code changes, including the rationale and process.
E.07	Improve communication on tree equity, emphasizing the benefits of increasing canopy in underserved areas and near major highways.
E.08	Partner with faith-based organizations, schools, and institutional landowners to identify planting sites, provide trees, and support long-term care.
E.09	Collaborate with community centers, schools, and libraries to distribute educational materials and host multilingual programs that promote tree benefits and care.
E.10	Collaborate with environmental organizations to offer workshops and presentations for broader community engagement.
E.11	Promote Heritage Tree Program to foster enthusiasm about the unique and mature trees in the city.
E.12	Continue Tree Board efforts within RPAC and regularly evaluate if new boards or committees are necessary and staff have capacity as forestry program evolves and grows.

Supports Urban Forest Audit Categories:

- Community Engagement – Encourages public participation in urban forestry efforts.
- Capacity Training and Authority – Builds expertise and resources for effective management.
- Green Asset Management – Enhances long-term planning and maintenance of the urban forest.
- Assessments and Plans – Enhances monitoring of tree health, pests, and urban forest conditions.

MAINTAIN

Mature trees contribute to the character and identity of our city. A diverse urban forest, with trees of varying ages and life stages, provides greater ecological and community benefits. To sustain this, young trees should be planted to replace those that have died and to enhance suitable right-of-way areas. Caring for public trees prolongs their lifespan and maximizes ecosystem benefits. A balanced mix of mature and young trees strengthens the urban forest's resilience and longevity.

Objectives:

- 1. Ensure proactive tree care by securing expert arborist services and establishing a long-term maintenance plan.
- 2. Improve hazard tree management through systematic identification, pruning, and removal.
- 3. Standardize tree-related policies, guidelines, and best practices to enhance urban forest resilience and management.
- 4. Strengthen staff capacity through training in pruning, planting, and tree maintenance best practices.

MAINTAIN ACTIONS	
M.01	Secure funding and resources by identifying budget sources to support tree maintenance and management efforts.
M.02	Establish an on-call arborist contract to provide professional guidance on tree health and maintenance.
M.03	Implement a hazard tree removal and pruning program based on inventory data to proactively manage tree risk.
M.04	Create a Tree Steward program to recognize residents and businesses for preserving mature trees or caring for newly planted trees, fostering community engagement and urban forest appreciation.
M.05	Integrate tree-related guidelines, best practices, and resilience planning into city planning documents to standardize urban forestry policies.

Supports Urban Forest Audit Category:

- Green Asset Management – Ensures sustainable care and preservation of urban trees.
- Assessments and Plans – Enhances data collection and strategic planning for urban forestry.
- Tree Management Policy – Strengthens guidelines for tree care, protection, and planting.
- Capacity Training and Authority – Builds expertise and resources for effective management.

GROW

As development increases impervious surfaces, temperatures rise, and pollution from traffic grows, expanding tree canopy by 4.5% will help offset these environmental impacts and enhance the benefits of the urban forest for all residents and visitors to Mountlake Terrace.

Objectives:

1. Increase tree planting efforts citywide, with a focus on expanding canopy through city projects and public education.
2. Prioritize equitable canopy growth in low-tree-cover, high-impact areas.
3. Enhance long-term urban forest resilience by updating policies, diversifying species, and adapting to climate change.

GROW ACTIONS

G.01	Establish and implement an annual tree planting plan, with a commitment to planting 137 trees per year in addition to tree removal mitigation planting over the next 25 years to increase in citywide canopy cover.
G.02	Update city codes to allow and encourage tree planting in public rights-of-way and remove barriers to planting while protecting critical infrastructure and walkway accessibility.
G.03	Increase tree planting and prioritize tree retention in capital improvement projects to maximize canopy expansion and preservation.
G.04	Prioritize planting in low-canopy areas and near major roadways to improve tree equity.
G.05	Revise the suitable tree list to reflect inventory data, climate projections, and site conditions, promoting species diversity and resilience.
G.06	Acquire land for open space to support tree planting and long-term canopy growth through land donations, partnerships, and grant funding opportunities.

Supports Urban Forest Audit Categories:

- Tree Management Policy – Guides tree planting initiatives to address environmental challenges caused by urbanization.
- Green Asset Management – Expands and maintains tree canopy to improve air quality, reduce heat, and enhance urban resilience.
- Assessments and Plans – Informs strategic planning for tree growth and placement in response to development and climate impacts.
- Community Engagement – Encourages public participation in tree planting efforts to strengthen environmental stewardship.

RETAIN

The tree canopy assessment revealed that most of Mountlake Terrace’s remaining canopy is on residential property. While efforts to plant and manage trees in the right-of-way, parks, and public spaces are important, meaningful progress requires engaging residents to reduce the loss of mature trees on private land. Tree removal permits, incentives, and outreach can help support this goal.

Objectives:

- 1. Promote private tree retention through education, incentives, and voluntary mapping of significant trees.
- 2. Improve tracking and policy by monitoring canopy trends and implementing notification programs to guide future regulations.
- 3. Strengthen implementation capacity by expanding staff expertise, resources, and enforcement capabilities for tree retention.

RETAIN ACTIONS	
R.01	Provide opportunities for private property owners to voluntarily map significant or heritage trees as part of the city’s tree inventory.
R.02	Develop an urban forestry advocacy calendar to promote tree retention during key seasonal periods and keep residents informed as high-impact development projects progress.
R.03	Strengthen internal capacity through staff training, interdepartmental collaboration, and potential hiring of staff or interns.
R.04	Establish a tree removal notification program for private properties to improve awareness and tracking.
R.05	Assess tree canopy trends and, if necessary, phase in a tree removal permit process for private properties.

Supports Urban Forest Audit Category:

- Tree Management Policy – Establishes guidelines to regulate tree removal and retention on private property.
- Community Engagement – Encourages resident involvement in tree preservation efforts through outreach and education.
- Capacity, Training, and Authority – Enhances the city’s ability to implement and monitor tree protection measures effectively.

KNOW

To fully appreciate all the urban forest does for us, we must continue to understand our progress as we grow it. By tracking tree canopy, number of trees planted, number of volunteers participating, and other useful metrics, we can see a picture of our progress.

Objectives:

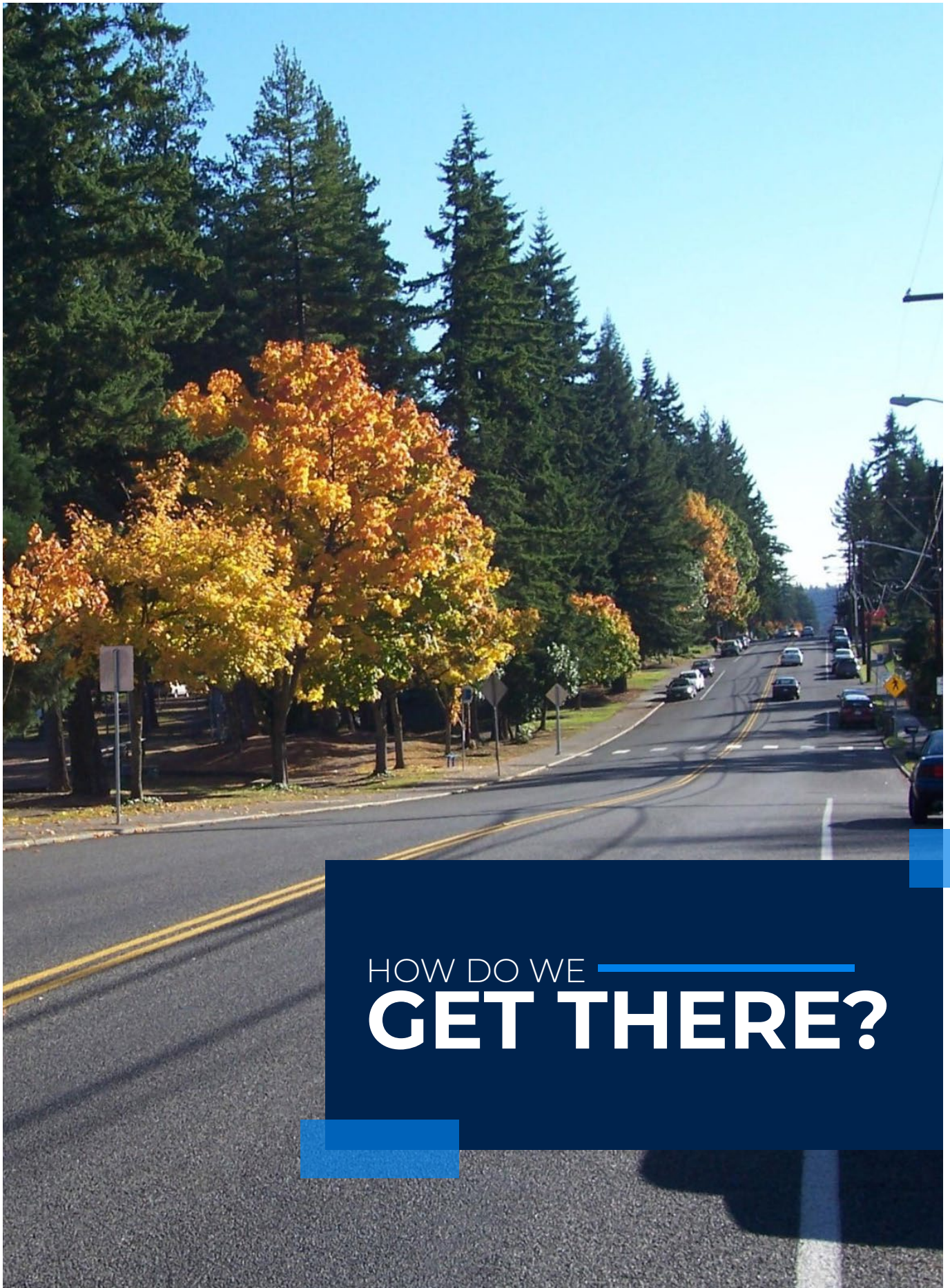
- Enhance data collection and monitoring to support long-term urban forest planning and management.
- Use data-driven insights to refine policies, improve tree care practices, and strengthen urban forest resilience.
- Foster community awareness and engagement by tracking and sharing urban forestry progress and benefits.

KNOW ACTIONS	
K.01	Update the Tree Canopy Assessment every two years using industry standards to track canopy changes and measure growth or loss based on the latest data.
K.02	Maintain and update the street tree inventory as maintenance and new plantings occur.
K.03	Track all city and partner-led tree plantings using tree inventory software or the city’s asset management system.
K.04	Annually report urban forestry activities to maintain the Arbor Day Tree City USA designation and work toward Growth Awards.
K.05	Conduct a community tree survey every two years to assess public perceptions of the urban forest and identify areas for improvement.

Supports Urban Forest Audit Categories:

- Capacity Training and Authority – Builds a case for increased staffing and resources by demonstrating the need for ongoing urban forest management and data tracking.
- Assessments and Plans – Tracks key urban forestry metrics to evaluate progress and guide future strategies.
- Community Engagement – Encourages public involvement through volunteer participation and awareness initiatives.





IMPLEMENTATION

The Urban Forest Management Plan is the first of its kind in Mountlake Terrace and lays the foundation for the long-term health, sustainable management, and resilience of the city's urban forest. To successfully implement this plan after its approval, a dedicated team—likely comprising members from both the city and the community—is essential. This team would be responsible for organizing, managing, monitoring, reporting, and adapting strategies and actions through an adaptive management approach. This approach involves a structured, iterative process of making informed decisions amid uncertainty and adjusting as programs and resources change. The primary goal is to reduce uncertainty over time through systematic monitoring, ensuring that the plan remains relevant and effective. As the plan advances, additional resources will become available to support long-term actions.

It is recommended that the city collaborate with the Recreation and Park Advisory Commission (RPAC), which serves as the Tree Board, to support implementation and monitoring of the Urban Forest Management Plan. Leveraging the expertise of the Forestry Team and RPAC will help coordinate actions with relevant partners and ensure ongoing alignment with urban forestry goals.

It is recommended that the city leverage the expertise of the Forestry Team by establishing a dedicated urban forestry working group or Tree Board. This group would oversee the plan's implementation and monitoring and coordinate action with relevant partners or collaborators.

For Mountlake Terrace's 2025 Urban Forest Management Plan, the goals outlined in the "What do we want?" section are based on data from the tree canopy and public tree inventory, stakeholder input, reviews of existing plans and policies, and alignment with industry standards and best practices highlighted in this "How Do We Get There?" section. With this framework, the roadmap to achieve these goals is provided by detailing the recommended or priority actions and the supporting guidance.

Based on the assessment of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest resource, the programs that manage it, and the community that shapes and benefits from it, the following implementation strategy is recommended. Implementing the Plan in this manner will effectively and efficiently address the city's shared challenges and priorities using available resources. As the Plan progresses, more resources will become available to implement the longer-term actions.

COLLABORATION

The urban forest in Mountlake Terrace is managed by multiple departments. The Recreation & Parks Department oversees trees in parks, along trails, and in open spaces. The Public Works Department's Streets Division manages trees in the public right-of-way along city streets. Engineering services manages right-of-way frontage design review and approvals for placement of street trees. The Community & Economic Development Department ensures compliance with tree-related regulations during development. Successful implementation of the UFMP requires collaboration across departments while respecting their individual roles, resources, and capacities. It is recommended that the Environmental Programs Manager lead UFMP implementation and interdepartmental coordination.



IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

ENGAGE STRATEGIES

Purpose Statements:

1. Engaging residents in urban forestry fosters a shared sense of responsibility and strengthens long-term tree stewardship.
2. Clear communication and education empower the community to make informed decisions about tree care, preservation, and planting.
3. Partnerships with local organizations and volunteers expand the city's capacity to enhance and sustain the urban forest.

Responsible Party:

- Lead: Environmental Programs Manager
- Support: Engineering Technician, Contract or On-Call Arborist, GIS
- Partners: Snohomish Conservation District, EarthCorps, RPAC/Tree Board, community groups, schools, and local businesses



E.01: Develop an urban forestry outreach strategy with a clear implementation schedule, including timelines, required resources, and assigned responsibilities for executing related actions.

- Action Target 1: Define outreach priorities, key messaging, and communication methods in collaboration with city departments and partners. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Develop and distribute educational materials across multiple platforms, including digital, print, and in-person engagement. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Launch seasonal campaigns, workshops, and events to increase public awareness and participation in urban forestry programs. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Monitor engagement metrics and community feedback to refine outreach efforts and improve effectiveness. (Ongoing)



E.02: Provide technical assistance to homeowners through educational resources and training on tree care, planting, and pest management, utilizing partnerships with local organizations.

- Action Target 1: Develop homeowner-friendly guides, flyers, and online resources covering tree care, pruning, planting, invasive species/disease identification, and young tree maintenance. Ensure materials are accessible on the city website and promoted through social media. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Establish training partnerships with organizations like Snohomish Conservation District, Plant Amnesty, or Earth Corps to deliver in-person workshops, webinars, and instructional videos on tree maintenance and planting. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Create a concise, engaging handout for city staff involved in tree management to distribute when interacting with residents in the field. (Midterm)
- Action Target 4: Implement a seasonal outreach campaign to promote available technical assistance and training opportunities, tracking participation and homeowner feedback for program refinement. (Ongoing)



E.03: Establish a Tree Ambassador citizen science group to engage volunteers in urban forestry efforts, including tree planting, care, and community outreach.

- Action Target 1: Develop a training program and resource toolkit for volunteers, covering tree planting, watering, young tree care, invasive species identification, and basic street tree pruning. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Recruit and train initial Tree Ambassador volunteers through partnerships with community organizations and local experts. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Provide ongoing support, resources, and recognition for volunteers, including an online platform, printed materials, and annual appreciation events. (Mid-Term)
- Action Target 4: Establish a neighborhood outreach framework for Tree Ambassadors to promote city tree programs, educate neighbors, and encourage community participation in urban forestry efforts. (Long-term)



E.04: Create a Tree Steward program to recognize residents and businesses for preserving mature trees or caring for newly planted trees, fostering community engagement and urban forest appreciation.

- Action Target 1: Develop program criteria, application process, and recognition materials (e.g., “MLT Tree Steward” yard signs) to acknowledge participants. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Launch the program with an outreach campaign, utilizing social media, city newsletters, and community events to encourage participation. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Establish an annual recognition event or online showcase to celebrate Tree Stewards and highlight their contributions to urban forest preservation. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Explore program expansion to businesses and community organizations, promoting corporate and institutional engagement in tree stewardship. (Mid-term+)



E.05: Develop consistent talking points on tree-related topics, including regulations, planting, maintenance, invasives, pests, and permitting.

- Action Target 1: Compile and standardize messaging on key topics, including tree codes, planting best practices, invasive species management, pest and disease identification, and tree maintenance responsibilities. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Develop user-friendly materials, such as fact sheets, FAQs, and web content, for public distribution via the city website, social media, and print resources. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Train city staff and community partners on the messaging to ensure consistent communication when engaging with residents. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Establish a process for regular updates to talking points based on changes in regulations, industry best practices, and community feedback. (Ongoing)



E.06: Ensure transparent communication with residents about tree-related code changes, including the rationale and process.

- Action Target 1: Develop a concise communication plan to inform residents about proposed tree code changes and the finalized Urban Forest Management Plan. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Create accessible informational materials explaining the need, benefits, and impacts of code changes, distributed through city channels, public meetings, and social media. (Mid-term)

- Action Target 3: Host public engagement opportunities, such as open houses, surveys, or workshops, to gather resident feedback before implementing changes. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Establish a process for ongoing updates and transparency, ensuring residents are informed of any future tree-related policy adjustments. (Ongoing)



E.07: Improve communication on tree equity, emphasizing the benefits of increasing canopy in underserved areas and near major highways.

- Action Target 1: Develop educational materials highlighting the environmental and social benefits of tree canopy in low-equity areas and near major highways. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Utilize GIS and tree equity mapping tools to visually communicate priority areas for tree planting and canopy expansion. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Partner with local organizations and community groups to share information and promote engagement in tree equity initiatives. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Incorporate tree equity messaging into public outreach efforts, ensuring transparency about planting priorities and funding allocations. (Ongoing)



E.08: Partner with faith-based organizations, schools, and institutional landowners to identify planting sites, provide trees, and support long-term care.

- Action Target 1: Identify and map potential planting sites on institutional properties, prioritizing areas with low canopy cover. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Establish partnerships with faith-based groups, schools, and landowners to coordinate tree planting efforts, ensuring alignment with city canopy goals. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Provide free trees and planting support through city programs or partner organizations, along with watering and maintenance guidance. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Develop a long-term care plan with community partners to ensure newly planted trees receive proper maintenance and watering support. (Ongoing)



E.09: Collaborate with community centers, schools, and libraries to distribute educational materials and host multilingual programs that promote tree benefits and care.

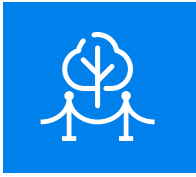
- Action Target 1: Develop and distribute multilingual educational materials on tree benefits, care, and urban forestry programs through community centers, schools, and libraries. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Partner with schools and libraries to integrate urban forestry topics into children's programs, including storytime and hands-on learning activities. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Host multilingual workshops and presentations on tree care and urban forestry topics to engage diverse community members. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Establish ongoing collaboration with community organizations to ensure continuous outreach and education on urban forestry initiatives. (Ongoing)



E.10: Collaborate with environmental organizations to offer workshops and presentations for broader community engagement.

- Action Target 1: Partner with environmental organizations, Master Gardeners, and local extension offices to develop educational workshops on tree care, planting, and pest management. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Schedule seasonal presentations and hands-on training sessions to engage residents in urban forestry initiatives. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Promote workshops through city communication channels and partner networks to maximize participation. (Long-term)

- Action Target 4: Establish an ongoing collaboration with key organizations to ensure consistent educational outreach on urban forestry topics. (Ongoing)



E.11: Promote Heritage Tree Program to foster enthusiasm about the unique and mature trees in the city.

- Action Target 1: Develop outreach materials highlighting the benefits and significance of heritage trees, including historical and ecological value. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Continue maintaining and enhancing the public recognition system, such as plaques or interactive maps, to showcase designated heritage trees. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 3: Collaborate with local historians, arborists, and community groups to identify and nominate heritage trees. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Promote the program through city events, schools, and social media to encourage community participation. (Ongoing)



E.12: Continue Tree Board efforts within RPAC and regularly evaluate if new boards or committees are necessary and staff have capacity as forestry program evolves and grows.

- Action Target 1: Assess the capacity of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission (RPAC) to serve as the primary tree advisory body, identifying potential gaps in expertise or bandwidth. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Determine whether a separate advisory group or a subcommittee within RPAC is needed to focus on urban forestry efforts. (Short-term)
- Action Target 3: Develop a framework for the advisory group's role, responsibilities, and collaboration with city departments and community partners. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Formalize the advisory group's structure and ensure integration into urban forestry planning and policy discussions. (Mid-term)

Recommendations and Considerations for Engage

STRENGTHENING AND ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Effectively managing an urban forest requires fostering strong partnerships across the community. Collaborative efforts with residents, businesses, nonprofits, environmental groups, and government agencies are essential for maintaining and expanding the urban forest. Engaging the community through volunteer programs, educational initiatives, and feedback opportunities fosters a sense of ownership and stewardship for Mountlake Terrace's green spaces.

Nonprofits, environmental organizations, and government agencies provide critical expertise, resources, funding, and volunteers to support these efforts. Partnerships with educational institutions such as Edmonds College, University of Washington, and Washington State University's Everett campus can enhance urban forestry through research and educational programs, creating a culture of learning and innovation. Expanding engagement to include private companies and community groups like master gardeners, state agents, extension offices, and private nurseries will strengthen Mountlake Terrace's forestry efforts.



Mountlake Terrace benefits from a highly engaged and enthusiastic community, as evidenced in recent community engagement efforts for this project. The city should capitalize on the momentum generated during the UFMP process by continuing to involve residents and community groups in implementing the Plan's goals. Empowering stakeholders to lead specific initiatives not only encourages broader participation but also helps reduce the workload on the Forestry Team.

Technology and social media serve as powerful tools for coordinating events, sharing information, and gathering community feedback. Regular meetings and workshops with stakeholders will foster ongoing communication, while recognizing volunteers and partners will help sustain long-term engagement. Hosting an annual appreciation event, such as a community cookout, will celebrate the contributions of Tree Stewards, Tree Ambassadors, and other partners—boosting morale, strengthening relationships, and highlighting UFMP achievements. By prioritizing collaboration and recognition, Mountlake Terrace can continue to cultivate a resilient, thriving urban forest that benefits all residents.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The City of Mountlake Terrace actively engages with the community through website content, social media messaging, press releases and news articles, and by extending outreach through community partners' networks. The following strategy is provided for the Forestry Team to review and adapt community engagement efforts to support the implementation of the UFMP.

There are multiple ways to engage the public to improve the care of and expanse of local tree canopy. First, topics or messages must be defined, prioritized, and limited in number. More effective communication occurs through choosing a few strong messages and repeating them over and over. After messages are chosen, avenues of targeted communication to deliver those messages can be determined and implemented. Important topics and messages that should be considered for Mountlake Terrace are as follows:

Messaging

- **Current Canopy Extent and Value of Mountlake Terrace's Trees.** The message should present the current canopy level and benefits the canopy (and public trees) provide. This is typically the first message to send out to the public, as all other messages should connect back to this one. This can also be a way to "roll out" the Urban Forest Management Plan to the public. Include information such as why Mountlake Terrace needs tree canopy, what the current canopy level is, and the plans to improve the management of the trees that comprise the canopy. Educating local business owners on the impact that a forested commercial district can have on sales and educating property owners about the impact that trees have on property values are other useful methods for boosting the desire for increased canopy along main thoroughfares and neighborhood streets while also engaging the public. The important value of mature trees could also be highlighted, as people often do not realize that the large tree they have is a value to their property, the community, wildlife, and the environment.
- **How You Can Get Involved.** What are the next steps you want people to take? The city should decide the answer and insert this "ask" in every outreach piece or effort. The city should consider offering tree giveaways (such as seedlings, saplings, or small nursery stock) at Arbor Day and related events for people to plant on private property. Another opportunity for getting the community involved is to increase awareness of the city's Heritage and Champion Trees. Lastly, residents can donate funds or volunteer at a tree planting event.



- **Tree Threats.** Public and private trees can die, decline, or become safety risks because of insect and disease infestation as well as inadequate maintenance. With education, the residents of Mountlake Terrace can become aware of the common threats to the tree canopy and what they can do to help. The city should provide education on existing tree pest and disease concerns and what the city is doing about these threats on public land, and options for management on their own land. Since the majority of the trees that comprise the city's urban tree canopy are on private property, it is vital for the city to educate the public on how to detect insect and disease threats, provide information about management and treatment options, and relay the importance of reforestation in the event trees are removed. Informing residents about tree removals and other significant tree work is essential for maintaining the city's relationship with the community. When an established public tree must be removed, the city should begin notifying abutting or adjacent property owners of necessary removals. Consistent and transparent messaging around the cause(s) and reason(s) for removing a public tree— and that the removal is part of a larger, long-term planting strategy in support of the city's canopy cover goal— will build trust and support while reducing staff time in addressing concerns.
- **General Tree Care Education for Property Owners.** There are several actions people take that are detrimental to trees at all stages of life, including improper mulching and pruning. Providing residents with information on tree care can significantly enhance maintenance practices, leading to better tree health and higher survival rates. Some examples include:
 - Demonstrate how to properly mulch a tree. Too often mulch is placed around tree trunks in a “mulch volcano”, which is extremely detrimental to the tree. A simple message of how to mulch properly can improve tree health and longevity.
 - Provide guidance on how and when to prune trees. Incorrect pruning can lead to poor tree structure or wounds that may never seal.
 - Explain proper tree planting and tree care techniques. This could be especially helpful for homeowners who are considering planting a tree in their yard but are unsure where to start.
 - Encourage recycling or composting leaves on-site.
 - Encourage water efficient landscaping practices.
- **Tailored Talking Points for Community Engagement.** To ensure the success of the UFMP, messaging must be customized for different groups in the community, emphasizing the importance of stewardship and long-term urban forest health. By aligning talking points with each group's values and priorities, Mountlake Terrace can foster stronger partnerships and community investment in urban forestry efforts.
 - Faith-Based Organizations
 - ▶ Stewardship of trees aligns with environmental and community care values.
 - ▶ Trees provide shade and comfort for gathering spaces and worship areas.
 - ▶ Tree planting and care can be integrated into community service projects.
 - ▶ Congregations can serve as role models for sustainable practices by planting and preserving trees on their properties.
 - Schools & Educational Institutions
 - ▶ Trees create healthier learning environments by improving air quality and reducing heat.
 - ▶ School-led tree planting projects provide hands-on environmental education.
 - ▶ Integrating urban forestry into STEM curricula can engage students in science and sustainability.
 - ▶ Trees on school grounds provide habitat for wildlife and enhance student well-being.
 - Businesses & Commercial Property Owners
 - ▶ Trees enhance curb appeal, attract customers, and increase property values.
 - ▶ Proper tree care can reduce energy costs by providing natural cooling and wind protection.
 - ▶ Businesses can demonstrate corporate social responsibility by supporting tree planting efforts.
 - ▶ Sponsoring a tree planting initiative or hosting tree care workshops can enhance community relations.

- Homeowners & Neighborhood Associations
 - ▶ Well-maintained trees increase property values and neighborhood appeal.
 - ▶ Proper tree care reduces storm damage risks and long-term maintenance costs.
 - ▶ Community-led tree planting events strengthen neighborhood connections.
 - ▶ Residents can contribute by preserving mature trees and planting new ones.
- Developers & Contractors
 - ▶ Integrating trees into developments improves aesthetics and environmental resilience.
 - ▶ Trees support stormwater management and reduce infrastructure costs.
 - ▶ Following Right Tree, Right Place principles ensure long-term sustainability.
 - ▶ Proactively engaging with the UFMP ensures smoother permitting and compliance processes.
- Community & Environmental Organizations
 - ▶ Collaboration with the UFMP aligns with shared goals of environmental stewardship.
 - ▶ Partnering on tree planting and care initiatives strengthens collective impact.
 - ▶ Volunteers play a vital role in monitoring and maintaining urban trees.
 - ▶ Advocacy efforts can help shape policies that protect and expand tree canopy.

USE MULTIPLE AVENUES OF COMMUNICATION

There are numerous avenues to convey urban forestry messages and accomplishments of the program to the residents, such as:

- **Social Media.** Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and BlueSky can create buzz and promote involvement in the current urban forestry activities occurring locally. To reach even more people, the city should consider coordinating with allied community gardens, non-profits, educational institutions, and businesses to get messages posted on their social media sites as well.
- **Website.** The City of Mountlake Terrace's Trees for Terrace webpage contains important information about the program, including details about the Heritage Tree program, changes to city code, the benefits of trees, and tree retention. The website should be maintained regularly to make sure information is up to date. It is recommended the city add information regarding pests and diseases, tree planting, and water efficient landscaping to the website.
- **Presentations to city leadership and local business and neighborhood groups.** Identify key audiences, partners, and potential champions for the urban forestry program. Making short presentations at regular or special meetings relieves individuals from having to go to yet another meeting in the evenings. Initial outreach could be based on letting the audience know about Mountlake Terrace's urban forest and the work called for in this Plan. Be sure to have an "ask" at the end of the presentation. What do you want them to do next? This work often unearths new partners and funding sources that can otherwise go untapped.
- **Do a survey.** Once every other year, create a short online survey to identify what urban forestry issues people in Mountlake Terrace are concerned about or care about. The survey can also be used to gauge people's reactions to new urban forest management procedures and regulations, and their willingness to participate in volunteer work or to donate funds or other resources. Questions about public trees, maintenance responsibility, and tree canopy can be part of the public survey.



- **Cultivate partnerships for communication.** Partnerships can be initiated with organizations that can help promote, enhance, and preserve Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. Organizations can include local businesses, local utilities, regional non-profits, homeowner associations, neighborhood associations, and schools and other educational institutions. Other audiences to engage can include youth groups, landscape architect firms, faith-based groups, and nurseries and landscape contractors. Actions that can be taken by each partner should be defined before approaching them for support.
- **Create and publish the Annual Urban Forestry Report and Work Plan.** This annual report or state of the urban forest should provide highlights from the previous year and the Work Plan should provide goals and actions for the upcoming year. These actions should reflect the goals and strategies in the UFMP and the "How Are We Doing?" section can be utilized to support the reporting and work plans. The reports should include updated tree inventory data, tree planting statistics, key performance indicators and metrics, status of achieving canopy goals and actions in the Plan, and other program information. It should provide information on the number and condition of public trees, as well as maintenance, planting, and management accomplishments. It should also present a summary of the current year's annual work plan and identify emerging issues and budget or resource needs.
- **Add signage to the landscape.** Signs placed in high traffic areas can spark interest in trees and the urban forest. Something as simple as species name or a notable fact about a tree can encourage people to learn more and to get more involved. Adding signs identifying various tree species can help the city achieve Arboretum status resulting in greater recognition, funding, and support.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is one of the true keys to reaching the goals of an urban forestry program. Only by educating the public, city officials, developers, and contractors working within city limits will the city be able to achieve urban forest protection and planting goals. Ordinances and guidelines alone will not guarantee success since builders, contractors, and others often have their own priorities and agendas, and trees and ordinances are sometimes viewed as a nuisance with no incentives for tree planting, protection, and preservation.

Cooperation from all concerned parties can be improved by requesting various community stakeholders, such as City Council members and neighborhood groups, to attend educational sessions to learn about the current state of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, plans for urban forest management and planting, and the importance to the future of the community.

To gain support for Mountlake Terrace's urban forest, various public outreach campaigns aimed at educating the residents of Mountlake Terrace should be established. Where there is understanding and acceptance of the forestry program, there will be increased support for the Grow and Retain portion of the program. Based on examples of public relations efforts by urban foresters in other communities, the following types of activities are suggested for the city to undertake, adopt, or adapt current efforts:

- Hold a seminar or public meeting to discuss the tree inventory project, its results, and its importance for the city.
- Develop quarterly evening or weekend seminars related to tree care and landscaping; bring in guest experts from various disciplines in the green industry.
- Write a quarterly "Tree Talk" article for local newspapers or social media.
- Develop a Tree Care door hanger brochure to go to each residence where new trees are planted; educating residents about proper tree care could help eliminate trunk damage and improper mulching and pruning of new trees.
- The city should consider offering free tree seedlings or small nursery stock to community members, modeled after successful programs like the one in Grand Junction, CO. This initiative could be timed around Arbor Day and include educational materials, such as the Tree Care door hanger brochure, attached to each tree, helping to raise awareness about proper tree care and the importance of the urban forest.

- Co-host tree planting programs with the local clubs, non-profits, or groups.
- Embrace storytelling within the urban treescape. Connect the trees to the history of the area through complementary art, placards, or signage. Consider establishing tree walks that highlight some of Mountlake Terrace's greatest tree specimens and provide tree identification training.
- Encourage citizen science activities that involve the urban forest. For example, the Nature Conservancy's "Healthy Trees Healthy Cities" app can be used to monitor tree health and check trees for pests. Local professors and non-profit groups that work with citizen science may be able to help plan projects and recruit citizen scientists.
- Expand the annual Arbor Day celebration to help it become an even greater community tradition. Expanding programs about planting and pruning trees and including children's programs about trees can help increase public interest in the city's tree programs. Additionally, the city could invite contractors to conduct demonstrations on tree planting, trimming, landscaping, and species selection. Organizers could also set up booths with tree information. Refer to the National Arbor Day Foundation (ArborDay.org) for publications that provide great Arbor Day ideas to assist in planning of this event.

ESTABLISH A TREE BOARD

Currently, the Mountlake Terrace Recreation and Park Advisory Commission (RPAC) serves as the city's Tree Board. However, given the scope of the UFMP and its extensive recommendations, RPAC may not have the capacity to fully support its implementation alongside their existing duties. Establishing a dedicated Tree Board, Tree Stakeholder Group, or similar community-focused entity may be necessary to provide critical governance and support for UFMP execution.

This dedicated group serves as a vital bridge between the Forestry Team and the broader community, ensuring that UFMP progress, strategies, and goals are effectively communicated and integrated into outreach efforts, educational initiatives, and work plans. This partnership enhances transparency, increases community ownership, and fosters proactive involvement in urban forestry management.

In addition to promoting the UFMP, the Tree Board could help integrate its strategies into local initiatives, provide feedback on ongoing efforts, and mobilize volunteers for forestry projects. An independent advisory body would allow for greater adaptability and responsiveness to community needs, strengthening urban forestry efforts and ensuring long-term success.

To maximize effectiveness, the Environmental Programs Manager could provide members with access to resources such as Tree Board University (treeboardu.org) and other training tools to build their expertise. Equipping this group with the necessary knowledge and leadership skills would empower them to make informed contributions to urban forestry efforts.

Establishing and supporting this group is essential to achieving UFMP objectives. By leveraging community passion and expertise, Mountlake Terrace can ensure the long-term sustainability of its urban forest while enhancing the quality of life for all residents.

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE TREE AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

The city should formally establish a Mountlake Terrace Tree Ambassador program to enhance community involvement in managing and growing the urban forest. This program would provide free education from local arboriculture experts on topics such as tree identification, tree biology, proper tree care, city tree regulations, tree planting, natural area restoration, nursery tree production, and the benefits of trees. Upon completing the training, Tree Ambassadors would be equipped to share accurate information about trees within their neighborhoods and assist with hands-on urban forestry projects. In exchange for their training and education, Tree Ambassadors could volunteer to conduct tree planting or tree-related education initiatives, with guidance and support from the Forestry

Team throughout the process.

A Tree Ambassadors program would also serve as a volunteer opportunity for residents to assist with essential new tree planting and care tasks, including watering, mulching, and structural pruning. Volunteers could be specially trained to care for young trees—generally those less than six inches in diameter—that require specialized care to establish strong, healthy growth. Such care would address issues like codominant leaders, crossing or interfering limbs, and other structural problems that, if uncorrected, can increase risk and liability as the tree grows. Volunteers could also help with critical Plant Health Care (PHC) tasks, such as fertilization, mulching, and pest management, ensuring young trees thrive and contribute to long-term canopy cover goals.

Citizen science can play an integral role in this program by actively engaging residents in the scientific aspects of urban forestry. Volunteers could participate in projects such as monitoring tree health, mapping tree canopy cover, and tracking invasive species using tools like i-Tree, Project Budburst, or other established programs. This not only supports data-driven decision-making for the Forestry Team but also empowers residents to take ownership of their urban forest. Partnering with local schools, universities, and organizations like EarthCorp could expand the reach of these initiatives, creating a robust network of engaged citizen scientists. Programs like Trees for Missoula provide an excellent example of how citizen science can strengthen urban forestry efforts.

The Tree Ambassadors could also assist with broader urban forestry efforts, such as organizing Arbor Day and Earth Day events, managing tree-related social media content, updating the tree inventory, and identifying new planting sites. Partnerships with community-based organizations, green industry professionals, youth programs, neighborhood associations, master gardeners, scout troops, church-affiliated groups, and school service programs would further enhance the program's success. Frequent training, mentoring, and coordination would ensure volunteers are well-prepared and effective in their roles, while providing the Forestry Team with much-needed capacity to meet its goals.

By incorporating hands-on activities, citizen science, and community outreach, the Mountlake Terrace Tree Ambassadors program would foster a sense of stewardship and pride among participants, ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. This collaborative effort between the city and its residents would not only enhance the urban forest's health and resilience but also create a shared vision for a greener and more vibrant community.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The equitable distribution of resources is central to achieving environmental justice, and this UFMP prioritizes ensuring that all residents benefit from a safe, healthy, and sustainable tree canopy. Managing the existing urban forest—particularly in public spaces—requires a focus on deferred maintenance as an environmental justice issue. Addressing deferred maintenance reduces safety risks, enhances the resilience of aging trees, and ensures equitable access to the benefits of a healthy canopy across all neighborhoods.

While Mountlake Terrace's tree canopy is relatively well-distributed, disparities remain, particularly in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods where tree canopies are often smaller and less robust. Expanding canopy coverage in these areas requires a thoughtful, community-centered approach that prioritizes ongoing maintenance and long-term sustainability. The city can partner with trusted local organizations, volunteer groups, and residents to help care for newly planted trees and ensure their success. By fostering collaboration and shared responsibility, Mountlake Terrace can bridge resource gaps and strengthen community ownership of the urban forest.

Effective, proactive communication is key to gaining support for the UFMP. Outreach should begin well before planting efforts, include input from trusted community leaders, and ensure materials are accessible, such as being translated into Spanish and Vietnamese where appropriate. Involving residents early—whether through feedback on tree species selection, education on tree care, or hands-on participation in planting—builds trust and lasting

partnerships. Maintaining this trust requires consistent follow-up to monitor tree health, address concerns, and demonstrate the city's commitment to a healthier, more resilient canopy.

The UFMP embeds environmental justice principles by ensuring the urban forest is managed equitably, prioritizing the health and safety of all trees, and addressing disparities in canopy quality. By focusing on proactive maintenance, removing unhealthy or undesirable tree species, and enhancing the quality of the existing canopy, the city ensures that all residents can enjoy the environmental, social, and economic benefits of a thriving urban forest.

By prioritizing maintenance first and building partnerships with communities, the city lays the foundation for equitable, sustainable growth of the canopy. This approach not only enhances the urban forest's long-term resilience but also ensures that Mountlake Terrace's urban forest continues to be a shared resource, offering benefits for generations to come.

ENGAGING PROPERTY OWNERS IN TREE CARE

In Mountlake Terrace, approximately 50% of properties are rentals, a figure that continues to rise citywide. This shift presents challenges for urban forest sustainability, as tree care responsibilities are often overlooked or misunderstood by both tenants and property owners. Without proactive maintenance, trees on rental properties are at risk of neglect, improper care, and premature removal.

A practical first step is partnering with realtors and real estate companies to provide homebuyers with clear information on tree care best practices, responsibilities, pruning guidelines, and retention strategies. Additionally, municipalities can leverage community social media platforms and local rental groups to share educational materials tailored for both property owners and tenants.



Some municipalities, such as small mountain ski towns in Colorado, have successfully used similar outreach strategies to promote responsible tree care in rental-heavy areas. Implementing these low-cost, high-impact solutions can help bridge the gap while longer-term policy and infrastructure solutions are developed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Effective community outreach and engagement are essential for the success of the UFMP. Clear, accessible messaging based on the Plan's key findings will help residents understand its purpose and impact. To ensure inclusivity and reach all communities in Mountlake Terrace, translating materials into Spanish and Vietnamese and partnering with local nonprofits that support urban forestry initiatives is recommended.

In addition to community partnerships, establishing a dedicated Tree Board can expand capacity and create more advocates to support the Forestry Team. Furthermore, a growing network of Tree Stewards and Tree Ambassadors—trained in tree planting and post-planting care—will enhance the city's ability to meet canopy cover goals, strengthen public participation, and build long-term support for urban forest sustainability.

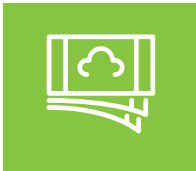
MAINTAIN STRATEGIES

Purpose Statements:

1. Proactive maintenance and expert care extend the lifespan of public trees, maximizing their ecological and community benefits.
2. Standardized policies and planning ensure consistent, long-term management of the urban forest.
3. Investing in staff training and resources strengthens the city's ability to sustain a healthy and resilient tree canopy.

Responsible Party:

- Lead: Environmental Programs Manager
- Support: Engineering Technician, Contract or On-Call Arborist, GIS
- Partners: Snohomish Conservation District, EarthCorps, RPAC/Tree Board, community groups, schools, and local businesses



M.01: Secure funding and resources by identifying budget sources to support tree maintenance and management efforts.

- Action Target 1: Evaluate existing city budgets, including stormwater and streets funds, to determine available resources for tree maintenance. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Identify and pursue grant opportunities, state funding, and public-private partnerships to supplement city funds. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Develop a long-term funding strategy that integrates tree maintenance into city infrastructure and environmental planning. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Establish a dedicated tree maintenance fund or budget line item to ensure sustainable funding for ongoing management needs. (Long-term)



M.02: Establish an on-call arborist contract to provide professional guidance on tree health and maintenance.

- Action Target 1: Develop a scope of work outlining arborist responsibilities, including hazard tree assessments, pruning guidance, and planting recommendations. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Secure a contract with a qualified arborist to provide on-call expertise for tree health evaluations, maintenance planning, and staff training. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Implement annual staff training sessions led by the arborist, focusing on pruning, planting best practices, and long-term urban forest resilience. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Integrate arborist recommendations into long-term tree management plans, ensuring climate resilience and proper species selection. (Ongoing)



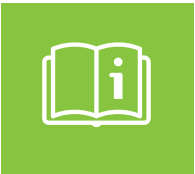
M.03: Implement a hazard tree removal and pruning program based on inventory data to proactively manage tree risk.

- Action Target 1: Develop a standing tree work contract to ensure timely removal of hazard trees and proactive pruning based on inventory data. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Prioritize and schedule tree removals and pruning based on risk assessments from the latest tree inventory. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Establish a funding mechanism for ongoing hazard tree management, potentially leveraging stormwater and streets budgets. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Conduct annual evaluations to assess program effectiveness, refine removal and pruning schedules, and ensure risk reduction. (Ongoing)



M.04: Implement a routine pruning program for all city trees to encourage healthy structure, minimize hazards, and reduce long-term maintenance needs.

- Action Target 1: Develop a pruning schedule using the Tree Maintenance Workbook and estimated budgets to guide routine maintenance. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Establish a systematic pruning cycle based on tree age, species, and location to optimize long-term tree health and safety. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Engage the Tree Ambassador citizen science group in on-ground pruning for young and small trees, reducing maintenance costs. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Secure sustainable funding and staffing resources to support ongoing pruning efforts through budget planning and strategic partnerships. (Long-term)



M.05: Integrate tree-related guidelines, best practices, and resilience planning into city planning documents to standardize urban forestry policies.

- Action Target 1: Develop and incorporate a tree module into the MLT Engineering Design Manual to consolidate urban forestry policies, guidelines, and best practices for planners, developers, homeowners, contractors, and private tree care companies. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Establish a process for regularly updating tree-related policies to align with evolving best practices and climate adaptation strategies. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Develop and implement resilience plans to address potential urban forest threats, including extreme weather events, climate change, and wildfires. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Increase interdepartmental collaboration to ensure tree-related policies remain a priority in city planning and development review processes. (Ongoing)

Recommendations and Considerations for Maintain TREE MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITIZATION WORKBOOK

A schedule and budget of recommended maintenance activities and their associated costs has been provided in this section. Using these recommendations as a guide, the city should have qualified staff evaluate the recommended removals and amend/correct issues, if possible, or remove the tree if not possible (based on priority, budget, potential targets, location, and other factors). The urban forestry program should also budget and prepare for natural tree mortality, hence the need for continued monitoring.

A routine pruning cycle delineated by a grid system or city planning boundary should be considered where all public trees are pruned within a timespan of five to seven years. Routine pruning consists of clearance pruning (from signs, sidewalks, roads, buildings), crown cleaning (removing of dead/dying/diseased/decayed branches), structural pruning (removal of weakly attached limbs with included bark and removal of co-dominant stems), and pruning for aesthetics (shaped based on natural growth habits). View the following pages for the summary of tree maintenance recommendations and the recommended tree management schedule and estimated budget.



The CalFire standards used to assess management needs for the inventoried tree population in Mountlake Terrace distinguish between large tree routine pruning, small tree routine pruning, and young tree training. However, these classifications can be challenging for non-specialists to apply accurately when conducting inventories or determining management needs.

To simplify the process, the recommended Public Tree Management Program and Maintenance Workbook categorize trees based on Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) rather than species or age. This approach ensures that young trees, typically smaller than 6 inches in diameter, receive the necessary training pruning. While most small trees do not exceed 12 inches in diameter, factors such as growth habits, resource availability, and growing conditions can occasionally allow them to grow larger.

These adjusted classifications ensure that all trees receive appropriate maintenance, regardless of the tree's specific characteristics or the expertise of the person conducting the inventory. This method also facilitates the implementation of recommendations outlined later in this section, creating a consistent and efficient framework for managing the urban forest.

After assessing the inventory by maintenance priorities and maintenance types, the following maintenance recommendations were identified:

Table 3. Recommended tree maintenance summary chart based on management priority.

MAINTAIN EXISTING TREES			
PRIORITY 1 HIGH RISK REMOVAL	5	Total High Risk Tree Removals	Years 1-3
	~2	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 1 HIGH RISK PRUNE	5	Total High Risk Tree Pruning	Years 1-3
	~2	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 2 CRITICAL REMOVAL	38	Total Critical Tree Removals	Years 1-3
	~13	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 2 CRITICAL PRUNE	71	Total Critical Tree Pruning	Years 1-3
	~24	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 3 ROUTINE REMOVAL	91	Total Trees	7-year Cycle @ Year 3
	13	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 3 LARGE TREE ROUTINE PRUNING (DSH > 6 INCHES)	3,736	Total Trees	7-year Cycle @ Year 3
	534	Trees Per Year	
PRIORITY 4 SMALL TREE ROUTINE PRUNING (DSH ≤ 6 INCHES)	2,884	Total Young Trees	3-year Cycle @ Year 1
	961	Trees Per Year	

Table 3 provides a high-level summary of recommended tree maintenance activities designed to foster a healthy and sustainable urban forest. The Tree Maintenance Workbook, utilized by the urban forestry consulting team, outlines an approach that distributes tree work evenly across industry-recommended cycles: three years for Priority 1, Priority 2, and small tree routine maintenance, and seven years for large tree routine maintenance. This balanced strategy supports efficient budgeting, resource allocation, and tree replacement planning.

To ensure public safety and reduce risk, it is strongly recommended that the city address Priority 1 and Priority 2 removals and pruning as soon as resources and budgets allow. If necessary, mitigation plantings associated with these removals can remain on the recommended three-year cycle, provided they are prioritized over routine plantings. Priority tree removals and pruning follow a three-year cycle to address high-risk trees and urgent needs,

with annual updates to adapt to changing conditions or major events. Mitigation plantings tied to these activities are also managed on a three-year cycle, distinct from routine plantings, as they respond specifically to removals and are adjusted annually to align with current forest conditions. This flexible, targeted approach ensures the program remains responsive to the forest's evolving needs. It should be noted that Table 2 represents an idealized recommendation based on the full set of trees assessed during the inventory. In practice, many cities manage limited resources by reducing maintenance efforts on trees located outside of high-risk areas where people, property, or overall canopy health are not at immediate risk.

The recommended Public Tree Management Program is based on inventory data from December 2024 and may not reflect changes to the public tree population occurring afterward. Over time, as Priority 1 and Priority 2 maintenance needs are addressed and a routine pruning cycle is implemented, high-risk and critical tree removals and pruning should decrease significantly, occurring primarily after major storm events or pest and disease outbreaks. Addressing high-risk and critical trees will always take precedence to ensure risks are promptly mitigated.

Variability is expected within the small tree routine pruning category, as young trees grow into the large tree routine maintenance cycle and new trees are planted annually. Proper training of young trees and adequate watering are essential for long-term tree health and help significantly reduce future maintenance needs. Regular monitoring of the tree population is critical to identifying and addressing new or emergency high-priority situations as they arise.

Table 4. Summary of the estimated costs by management activity, year, and totals. Estimated costs were derived from standing tree work contracts for neighboring municipalities in Washington.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY COSTS	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	ACTIVITY TOTALS
Priority 1: High Risk Removal	\$13,620	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$13,620
Priority 1: High Risk Pruning	\$4,536	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$4,536
Priority 2: Critical Removal	\$18,875	\$18,500	\$13,110	-	-	-	-	\$50,485
Priority 2: Critical Pruning	\$21,192	\$20,136	\$15,456	-	-	-	-	\$56,784
Priority 3: Routine Tree Removal	\$4,770	\$3,018	\$2,968	\$2,968	\$2,968	\$5,400	\$4,740	\$26,830
Priority 3: Routine Large Tree Pruning	\$266,924	\$265,454	\$266,924	\$265,821	\$266,924	\$266,311	\$266,924	\$1,865,282
Priority 4: Routine Small Tree Pruning	\$168,175	\$168,175	\$168,350	-	-	-	-	\$504,700
Existing Tree Maintenance and Removal Subtotal	\$496,412	\$481,643	\$467,648	\$268,789	\$269,892	\$269,191	\$268,664	\$2,522,237

Table 5. Summary of tree counts by management activity, year, and totals.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY COUNTS	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	ACTIVITY TOTALS
Priority 1: High Risk Removal	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Priority 1: High Risk Pruning	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Priority 2: Critical Removal	16	13	9	-	-	-	-	38
Priority 2: Critical Pruning	28	24	19	-	-	-	-	71
Priority 3: Routine Tree Removal	13	14	13	13	13	13	12	91
Priority 3: Routine Large Tree Pruning	534	534	534	533	534	533	5534	3,736
Priority 4: Routine Small Tree Pruning	961	961	962	-	-	-	-	2,884
Existing Tree Maintenance and Removal Subtotal	1,562	1,546	1,537	546	547	546	546	6,830

Tables 4 and 5 present the recommended tree management activity counts and estimated costs by year based on the inventoried tree population. These tables prioritize addressing all high-risk removals and pruning activities in the first year, rather than distributing them evenly over the three-year industry-recommended cycle. Critical removals and pruning are scheduled for completion within the first two years of the recommended cycle. This adjustment emphasizes risk reduction for the city and provides a clear estimate of the overall program costs.

The cost estimates assume that all tree work is outsourced to professional tree care companies. However, the City of Mountlake Terrace's Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments handle tree removals and maintenance for trees below a certain size in-house. As a result, these estimates, while useful for budget planning and requests, are likely higher than the actual costs for work performed internally. Outsourcing all tree work is not recommended due to the prohibitive costs often associated with such an approach. Instead, these estimates serve as a guideline to inform decisions and help increase capacity and resources for urban forestry efforts.

Given the elevated risks associated with Priority 1 and Priority 2 tree work, it is recommended that these tasks be contracted out to professional tree care companies to ensure safety and expertise.

Routine (Proactive) Pruning of Established Public Trees

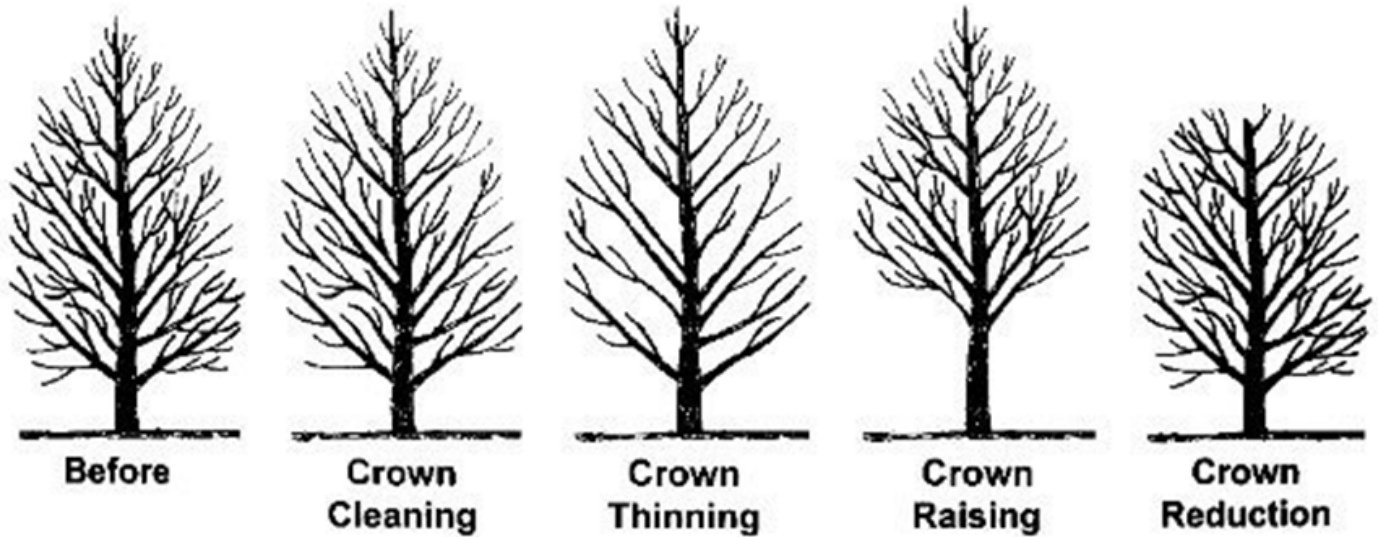
Designed to create structurally sound trunk and branch architecture, maximize the lifespan of a healthy tree, and manage potential tree risks, this "routine pruning" or "proactive / programmed pruning" will sustain a tree's benefits to the longest extent possible until the tree ideally reaches a natural point of senescence—a process of deterioration that occurs as trees age. Proactive or programmed pruning is typically implemented citywide or in prioritized maintenance corridors on a rotation of five to seven years depending on the tree species, density of trees, frequency of pedestrians and vehicles, available budget, and other factors. This means that each tree in the proactive pruning cycle is pruned for clearance, risk, health, and/or structure at least once within the programmed cycle (e.g., five to seven years). The goal with mature trees is to develop and maintain a sound structure to minimize risks such as branch failure. This task is easier provided a good structure was established earlier in the tree's life. When properly executed, a variety of benefits are derived from pruning. Benefits include reduced risk of branch and stem breakage, better clearance for vehicles and pedestrians, improved health and appearance, enhanced view, and increased storm resilience.

Proactive pruning should be a prominently positioned component of Mountlake Terrace's Public Tree Management Program for the city maintained public trees. Proactive pruning plans as well as tree risk mitigation should complement the city's overall tree management program goals, align with the Urban Forest Management Plan, and should be fully integrated with the tree planting, plant health care, and emergency response programs to grow an equitable and resilient urban forest.

The level of care or maintenance performed on a planted tree is linked to tree establishment, survival, growth, condition, and longevity. Survival, growth, and condition are closely connected to one another and to the structure of a tree (size, leaf area) and of the urban forest (canopy cover, diversity, age distribution). As a result, tree structure impacts the functions provided by the urban forest and ultimately the level of benefits generated by the tree. Thus, less than optimal maintenance may lead to decreased benefits produced by the urban forest. The benefits lost are the "costs" of not maintaining trees.

According to the city's Tree City USA application, approximately 205 public trees were pruned in 2022. This figure likely reflects maintenance performed by the Recreation and Parks Department in parks, open spaces, and along trails—areas not included in the street tree inventory conducted for this project. With 6,830 trees recorded in the public tree inventory, the city must increase annual pruning by 534 trees to achieve a seven-year pruning cycle. Currently, 3,736 public trees (55%) are identified as suitable for a routine pruning program.

To ensure sustainable urban forest management, the city should evaluate pruning needs annually, track public tree care demands, and adjust staffing and resource allocations accordingly. Maintaining a five- to seven-year pruning cycle will require strategic investment in personnel, contracts, and equipment to meet long-term urban forestry goals.



Examples of the types of tree pruning.

Source: Arbor Day Foundation.

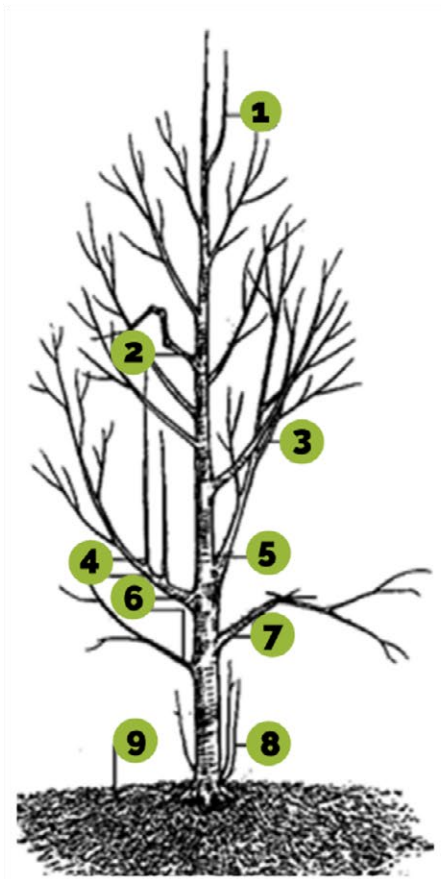
Young Tree (Structural) Pruning

Young tree pruning is performed to improve tree form or structure; the recommended length of young tree pruning cycles is three years since young trees tend to grow at faster rates (on average) than more mature trees. The young tree cycle differs from a routine pruning cycle in that these trees generally can be pruned from the ground with a pole pruner or pruning shear.

The objective is to increase structural integrity by pruning for one dominant leader in most cases for most tree species. Young tree pruning is species-specific, since many trees may naturally have more than one leader. For such trees, young tree pruning is performed to develop a strong structural architecture of branches so that future growth will lead to a healthy, structurally sound tree. In addition to training pruning, young trees may also require additional maintenance such as added or amended mulch, watering, added or removed stakes and ties, and/or clearance of debris and litter. These needs can potentially be addressed during young tree pruning.

Trees included in the young tree pruning cycle are generally less than six inches DSH. These younger trees sometimes have branch structures that can lead to potential problems as the tree ages. Potential structural problems include codominant leaders, multiple limbs attaching at the same point on the trunk, crossing/interfering limbs, or dead/diseased/damaged limbs. If these problems are not corrected, they may worsen as the tree grows, increasing risk and creating potential liability.

Within Mountlake Terrace's public tree inventory, there are 2,884 trees (45%) that require young tree pruning under the Public Tree Management Program. These trees are under six inches in diameter, not dead, and are not recommended for removal. View Table 5 for the recommended pruning cycle and associated costs for young tree pruning.



- 1 PRUNE COMPETING LEADER**
- 2 PRUNE MALFORMED BRANCHES**
- 3 REMOVE CROSSING BRANCHES**
- 4 REMOVE WATER SPROUTS**
- 5 REMOVE BRANCHES WITH POOR ANGLES**
- 6 PRUNE BROKEN OR DAMAGED BRANCHES**
- 7 PRUNE TEMPORARY BRANCHES OVER TIME**
- 8 REMOVE SUCKERS**
- 9 APPLY 2-3" OF MULCH**

Example of branches to be pruned for newly planted trees to promote good structure. Source: Penn State Extension.

STANDING TREE WORK CONTRACTS

A standing tree care contract is a proactive agreement that ensures essential urban forestry services—such as tree removal, pruning, and hazard mitigation—are secured before an urgent need arises. These contracts streamline service procurement, eliminating delays associated with emergency bid procedures, which can slow response times, increase public safety risks, and raise costs for local businesses and residents.

Establishing pre-approved contracts with tree service providers, debris removal contractors, equipment rental vendors, mulch grinding services, and landscape contractors enhances a city's ability to maintain its urban forest efficiently. By securing these agreements in advance, municipalities reduce costs, improve response capacity, and ensure continuity in urban tree care and hazard mitigation efforts.

Key Benefits of Standing Tree Care Contracts:

- **Faster Response Times:** Eliminates delays associated with bidding and procurement during emergencies or routine tree maintenance.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Reduces long-term expenses by securing competitive rates before demand surges.
- **Public Safety and Liability Reduction:** Proactively removes hazardous trees and mitigates risks before they escalate.
- **Improved Urban Forest Resilience:** Ensures consistent tree care, enhancing long-term tree health and stability.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensures contracts meet FEMA, city, and environmental guidelines.

To maintain a resilient, safe, and well-managed urban forest, municipalities should have the following standing contracts in place:

- **Routine Tree Maintenance** – Regular pruning and health assessments to prevent hazards.
- **Hazard Tree Removal** – Removal of dead, diseased, or structurally unsound trees.
- **Debris Management and Disposal** – Efficient removal and recycling of tree waste.
- **Emergency Response Services** – Rapid mobilization of tree crews after storms, wind events, or other natural disasters.

However, for ground-level pruning, the city may benefit from alternative staffing models rather than relying solely on standing contracts. Instead of outsourcing all routine pruning tasks, a seasonal laborer or intern position could be created to handle lower-risk, ground-level pruning efforts. This approach lowers costs, provides workforce development opportunities, and ensures a dedicated in-house resource for maintaining young trees and performing non-specialized maintenance.

Additionally, there is growing interest from city leadership in resource-sharing agreements with neighboring municipalities. This could involve a shared arborist position, where a professional works part-time for two cities (e.g., 20 hours per week in each jurisdiction). This model could help municipalities access skilled personnel without the full financial burden of a dedicated full-time position, while ensuring consistent oversight of urban forestry programs. While such collaborative staffing models may be beneficial for certain maintenance tasks, more specialized services—such as hazard tree removal and emergency response—should remain under dedicated tree care contracts with experienced service providers.

Municipalities should avoid "piggybacking" on existing contracts from neighboring jurisdictions, as this can create regulatory and compliance challenges. While shared staffing arrangements, such as partnering with another city to employ an arborist, may be beneficial for oversight and planning, tree care services—including removal and emergency response—should be secured through dedicated, city-specific contracts to ensure compliance and service reliability. Instead, cities should develop a customized Request for Proposal (RFP) and competitively bid for services that align with local needs. A well-structured standing contract should clearly define:

- **Scope of Work** – Services covered, including pruning, removal, and emergency response.
- **Cost Structure** – Transparent pricing for different services.
- **Performance Standards** – Compliance with ANSI A300 tree care standards and other regulations.

By investing in standing tree care contracts, cities proactively safeguard public spaces, reduce liabilities, and ensure a healthy, well-maintained urban forest for future generations.

PLANNING FOR URBAN FOREST RESILIENCE

While immediate action may not be necessary, the city should begin integrating urban forest resilience planning into broader municipal policies and emergency preparedness efforts. While some aspects of resilience may not require stand-alone plans, trees and the urban forest should be incorporated into all future planning initiatives. Strengthening resilience through proactive strategies will ensure that the urban forest remains a vital, sustainable asset for the community.

Urban Forest Storm Resilience Planning

Severe weather events pose a significant threat to trees and the broader urban forest. Developing an Urban Forest Storm Resilience Plan will provide critical guidance on preparedness, response, and recovery strategies to manage and mitigate storm impacts. Such a plan will:

- Equip the city with protocols to assess and address storm-related tree damage.
- Offer educational resources for residents, helping to address concerns about tree safety following major weather events.
- Support long-term tree retention by promoting proper storm-resistant planting and pruning techniques.
- Align with the city's broader emergency response plans, improving coordination with county and state agencies.
- Strengthen eligibility for emergency funding from FEMA and other disaster relief programs.

Tree Pest and Disease Management

Proactive planning is essential for preventing and managing tree pests and diseases, which can cause significant ecological and economic losses. A Tree Pest and Disease Management Plan will:

- Identify emerging and existing threats to the urban forest.
- Establish monitoring protocols and early detection strategies to prevent outbreaks.
- Provide guidance on pest-resistant species selection and best management practices.
- Educate the community on identification and mitigation techniques to reduce risks.
- Protect the city's investment in tree planting, maintenance, and long-term urban forest sustainability.

Addressing Invasive Species

While invasive species may not require a stand-alone management plan, the city should implement a targeted strategy to track and control their spread. Key actions include:

- Monitoring and updating the prohibited species list to prevent further introduction of high-risk species.
- Providing public education and online resources on proper removal and replacement of invasive trees.
- Expanding tree inventory efforts beyond street trees to better understand the extent of invasive species in parks, natural areas, and private properties.

Urban Forestry's Role in Wildfire Mitigation

The role of urban forestry in wildfire mitigation is an evolving field that warrants further exploration. While wildfire risk management is traditionally overseen by Open Space and Planning divisions, urban foresters, tree ambassadors, and master gardeners are often regarded as key vegetation management experts. In Mountlake Terrace, wildfire risk is generally low, with mitigation efforts being most relevant for residents near greenbelts or the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Although wildfire prevention is not a primary concern for most residents, city staff regularly receive inquiries on this topic and should remain informed on best practices and evolving risks to provide accurate guidance when needed.

Integrating Urban Forestry into Climate Resilience Planning

Urban forestry plays a critical role in climate resilience and sustainability. The city should ensure that trees are included in all climate adaptation and sustainability initiatives, recognizing their ability to:

- Reduce urban heat island effects.
- Improve air quality and carbon sequestration.
- Enhance stormwater management and soil stabilization.
- Support biodiversity and ecological health.

By proactively incorporating urban forest resilience planning into city policies, Mountlake Terrace can safeguard its tree canopy, enhance community preparedness, and maximize the long-term benefits of its urban forest.

GRANTS

Cities should explore grants offered by federal programs, such as those through the U.S. Forest Service and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as state forestry agencies like the Urban and Community Forestry Program by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA DNR). Additional funding sources include private foundations and nonprofit organizations, such as the Arbor Day Foundation and American Forests. Online grant databases and local government resources can also help identify relevant funding opportunities.

Grants provide critical resources that can help address funding gaps, support new projects, and improve the long-term sustainability of the Urban Forest Program. These funds can be used for activities such as tree planting, urban forestry education, canopy studies, and implementing best practices in forest management. In addition, applying for grants often requires cities to develop clear objectives and measurable outcomes, which can lead to better project planning and accountability.

Building partnerships with community groups, nonprofits, and local businesses can further strengthen grant applications. Collaborative efforts demonstrate widespread community support and shared commitment, making applications more competitive. These partnerships can also provide in-kind contributions, such as volunteer time, outreach efforts, or additional funding, to help meet grant requirements. By leveraging grant opportunities and community collaboration, the Forestry Team can advance its goals, expand its impact, and ensure the urban forest remains a valuable asset to residents.

As part of the UFMP process, specific grant opportunities were identified to support staffing and project implementation. Notably, the Snohomish County PUD's TREE Power program offers funding for urban tree planting on publicly accessible land such as parks, school grounds, and community gardens. This pilot program promotes energy efficiency by reducing urban heat through increased canopy cover. By helping lower air conditioning demand and mitigating infrastructure strain, TREE Power aligns both urban forestry and energy conservation goals. In its 2024 pilot year, TREE Power will fund three to five projects with grants of up to \$10,000 each, available to public agencies and nonprofit organizations within the PUD service territory.

In addition, Forterra's Land for Good – Community Restoration Grants offer funding to community-led restoration projects in urban and suburban areas across Washington State. Supported by the One Square Fund, this program emphasizes environmental equity, native plant restoration, and youth engagement—particularly in communities with larger BIPOC populations and greater health disparities. While local governments cannot apply directly, they are encouraged to serve as partners to eligible nonprofits, schools, tribal governments, and community organizations. These grants present a strong opportunity to advance restoration goals through collaborative, community-driven initiatives.



GROW STRATEGIES

Purpose Statements:

1. Expanding tree canopy mitigates environmental impacts of urbanization, improving air quality, cooling temperatures, and enhancing resilience.
2. Prioritizing equitable tree planting ensures all communities benefit from increased canopy, particularly in underserved and high-impact areas.
3. Strategic planning and policy updates support long-term urban forest sustainability, promoting species diversity and climate adaptation.

Responsible Party:

- Lead: Environmental Programs Manager
- Support: Public Works Department, Contract or On-Call Arborist, Recreation & Parks Department, Community and Economic Development Department
- Partners: Community groups, Tree Stewards, Tree Ambassadors, RPAC/Tree Board, schools, faith-based organizations, and local businesses



G.01: Plan and implement annual tree planting efforts to replace lost trees and expand canopy.

- Action Target 1: Ensure annual planting of at least 137 trees to meet canopy goals, accounting for tree removals and natural mortality. (Short-term, ongoing)
- Action Target 2: Maintain mitigation planting requirements to prevent net canopy loss and offset tree removals. (Short-term, ongoing)
- Action Target 3: Track planting efforts and survival rates to refine strategies for species selection, maintenance, and future planting priorities. (Short-term, ongoing)
- Action Target 4: Incorporate tree planting into community initiatives to maximize impact and long-term canopy expansion. (Mid-term, ongoing)



G.02: Update city codes to allow and encourage tree planting in public rights-of-way and remove barriers to planting while protecting critical infrastructure and walkway accessibility.

- Action Target 1: Amend city codes to explicitly allow tree planting in public rights-of-way while ensuring alignment with safety and infrastructure regulations. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Identify and revise restrictive codes or policies that may unintentionally limit tree planting efforts. (Short-term)
- Action Target 3: Develop guidelines for proper tree selection, planting, and maintenance in ROWs to prevent conflicts with utilities, sidewalks, and roadways. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Work with city departments and community partners to implement best practices and ensure long-term success of ROW tree planting. (Long-term, ongoing)



G.03: Increase tree planting and prioritize tree retention in capital improvement projects to maximize canopy expansion and preservation.

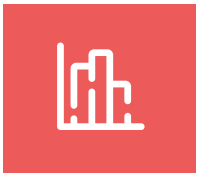
- Action Target 1: Establish clear guidelines that prioritize tree retention in project designs, ensuring existing trees are preserved whenever feasible. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Integrate strengthened tree planting requirements into capital improvement planning to increase canopy coverage in public projects. (Long-term)

- Action Target 3: Develop evaluation criteria for project designs to assess and promote tree-friendly infrastructure solutions. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Coordinate with city planners, engineers, and contractors to implement urban forestry best practices within infrastructure projects. (Ongoing)



G.04: Prioritize planting in low-canopy areas and near major roadways to improve tree equity.

- Action Target 1: Use tree equity maps and available data to identify priority planting areas, focusing on neighborhoods with lower canopy coverage and communities most impacted by heat and pollution. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Incorporate research on the benefits of roadside tree planting for pollution reduction and public health into site selection and project planning. (Long-term)
- Action Target 3: Ensure community engagement in planting efforts, considering long-term tree maintenance capacity and potential financial burdens for residents. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 4: Establish partnerships with local organizations and agencies to secure funding and resources for tree planting and maintenance in these priority areas. (Ongoing)



G.05: Revise the suitable tree list to reflect inventory data, climate projections, and site conditions, promoting species diversity and resilience.

- Action Target 1: Update the suitable tree list using the latest tree inventory data, climate projections, and site suitability factors, ensuring alignment with Right Tree, Right Place principles. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Prioritize species diversity by selecting climate-resilient trees that enhance age structure and reduce overreliance on commonly planted species such as maples and cedars. (Long-term)
- Action Target 3: Incorporate ecosystem service benefits such as drought tolerance, stormwater management, and air quality improvement into tree selection criteria. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 4: Regularly review and update the list based on emerging research, urban forest assessments, and long-term canopy goals. (Long-term)



G.06: Acquire land for open space to support tree planting and long-term canopy growth through land donations, partnerships, and grant funding opportunities.

- Action Target 1: Establish criteria for identifying and prioritizing parcels for acquisition based on tree canopy gaps, climate resilience, and community need. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Develop and maintain partnerships with land trusts, conservation organizations, and developers to facilitate land donations and conservation easements for tree planting. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 3: Actively seek and apply for grant funding and other financial resources to support land acquisition efforts for urban forestry. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 4: Monitor available properties, surplus city land, and tax-delinquent parcels to respond to acquisition opportunities as they arise. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 5: Ensure potential for tree preservation or planting for long-term urban forestry use is incorporated into decision-making during land acquisition, with site-specific tree planting and management plans developed as needed. (Ongoing)

Recommendations and Considerations for Grow MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S TREE CANOPY COVER GOAL

Generally, the U.S. Forest Service recommends citywide canopy cover of 25-40 percent in western communities and in 1997, the American Forests organization established a benchmark of 40 percent after analyzing the tree canopy in dozens of cities from 1992 to 1997 and working closely with the research community. While incredibly valuable and groundbreaking at the time, technology and research have significantly evolved over the past 25 years, leading to a consensus that more nuanced approaches to canopy goal setting are necessary. Supporting this statement, U.S. Forest Service Research Forester Greg McPherson of the Pacific Southwest Research Station adds, "Tree canopy cover targets are difficult to specify broadly because the opportunities to create canopy are highly variable among cities, even within a climatic region or land use class."

Therefore, tree canopy targets are best developed for specific cities and should consider constraints to creating canopy such as:

- Development densities (i.e., dense development patterns with more impervious surfaces have less opportunity for cover);
- Land use patterns (i.e., residential areas may have more opportunity for canopy than commercial areas, but canopy cover tends to be less in residential areas of disadvantaged communities versus wealthy ones);
- Ordinances (i.e., parking lot shade ordinances promote cover over some impervious areas); and
- Climate (i.e., canopy cover in high desert cities, such as those in eastern Washington, is often lower than in temperate rainforest cities located west of the Cascade Mountains).

The City of Mountlake Terrace intends to use canopy goals and targets to influence tree protection, preservation, and planting initiatives. Mountlake Terrace's 2019 Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) data revealed that 32% of the city is covered with tree canopy already, and that 30% of the city's area could potentially support future tree plantings. The UTC and the possible planting area (PPA) are the baseline datasets used in calculating canopy cover targets for Mountlake Terrace.

The canopy cover targets established in this project reflect citywide numbers in addition to each land use type according to the 2024 updated Land Use Map. City staff provided input on the city's future development plans, conservation initiatives, and parallel goals set throughout Mountlake Terrace. These contributions of local knowledge were incorporated into the review process, along with findings from the benchmarking exercise. This approach realizes the unique opportunities, limitations, extent, resources, and characteristics found among land use types. Canopy goals and planting targets must not be standardized across the city, they should be specific to each land use type as outlined in this section.

To ensure realistic and achievable goals, the analysis did not assume that 100% of all possible planting area would be modeled as canopy. Each land use has unique development goals and initiatives which impact the feasibility of planting and growing trees. Therefore, varying levels of canopy growth were modeled across the city, ranging from 0% to 25% of possible planting area. These land use-specific results were then compiled into a citywide canopy goal with planting targets.

Table 6. Tree canopy goal modeling by land use.

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE LAND USE TYPES	2023 UTC	2023 PPA	% OF PPA TO ADD BY 2050	MODELED CANOPY % IN 2050	MODELED CANOPY GROWTH 2023-2050
Public Facilities and Services	32.80%	26%	25%	39.23%	6.40%
Recreation and Park District	45.50%	43%	25%	56.38%	10.87%
Public ROW	20.20%	23%	25%	26.05%	5.85%
Light Industry/Office Park District	35.10%	10%	0%	35.12%	0.00%
Commercial	32.90%	20%	10%	34.85%	1.98%
Residential	34.60%	34%	10%	37.97%	3.38%
Other	17.60%	41%	0%	17.62%	0.00%
	32.40%	30.20%	15%	36.90%	4.50%

Table 6 uses 2050 as the projected year for modeled canopy to compare with the goal of 37% by 2050. The modeled canopy growth of all land use types resulted in a combined projected canopy of 37% citywide in 2050. To achieve this integrated approach, the city must preserve the existing canopy and increase its coverage by 4.5%, up from 32.4%, and plant approximately 137 trees annually for a total of 3,425 trees. With additional resources and investment in the urban forest, this goal is realistic and achievable.

Achieving the citywide planting goal requires efforts across both public and private properties. The city should aim to plant at least 50% of the required trees on public property, leveraging partnerships with local nurseries to secure a steady supply. Additionally, incentivizing private tree planting through targeted community engagement campaigns can further support this goal. Establishing long-term contracts with nurseries for tree procurement will ensure a reliable, cost-effective source of trees, strengthening the sustainability of planting initiatives.

MITIGATION PLANTINGS

On top of plantings required to reach Mountlake Terrace's canopy goal, mitigation plantings remain essential to offset tree removals, maintenance activities, and anticipated annual tree mortality. Initial mitigation planting needs were calculated based on the priority removals identified in the Tree Maintenance Workbook. Approximately 43 trees are expected to be removed annually during the first three years, with an additional 91 trees slated for removal over the seven-year routine cycle. These removals will require corresponding replacement plantings.

Table 7. Summary of tree planting counts for the recommended seven-year Public Tree Management Program.

PLANTING NEW TREES			
TREE PLANTING (REPLACEMENT OF PLANNED REMOVALS)	134	Total Trees	7-year Cycle @ Year 1
	19	Trees Per Year	
RECOMMENDED TREE PLANTING	459	Total Trees	7-year Cycle @ Year 1
	66	Trees Per Year	

Further mitigation requirements account for the expected annual mortality of all live inventoried trees and the newly planted mitigation trees. Predicted mortality rates assume a one percent loss annually for both the existing tree population and new mitigation plantings. These calculations are based on the inventoried tree population and the recommended maintenance activities outlined in the workbook.

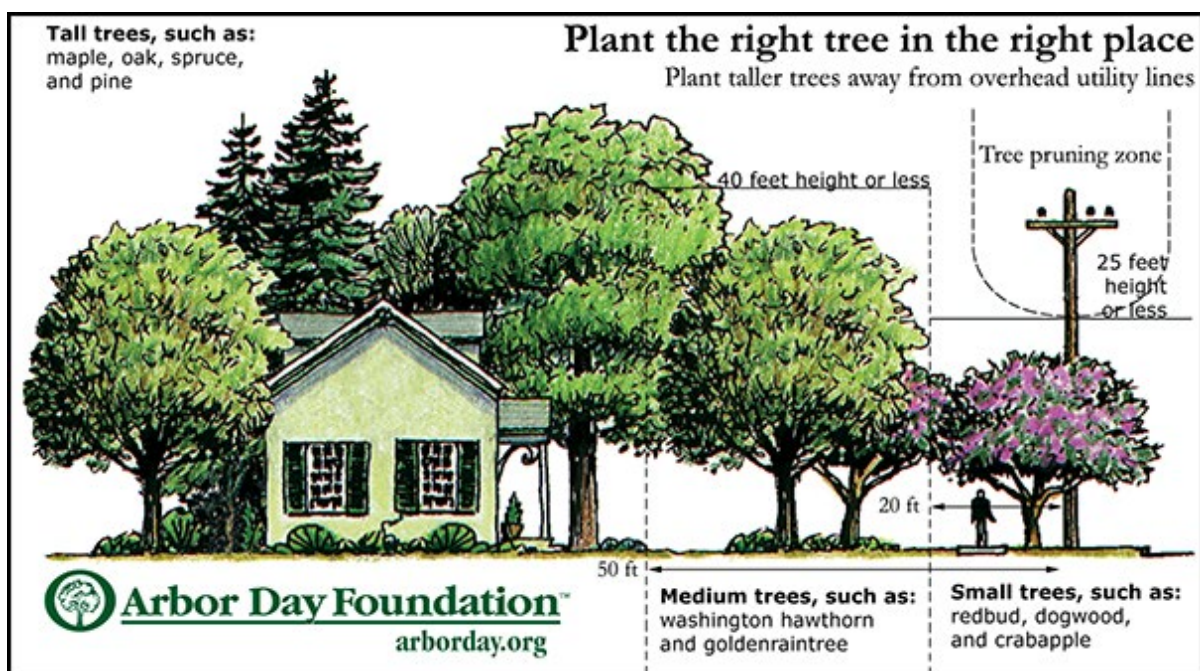
It is important to note that these estimates do not account for potential changes to the broader urban forest. The Forestry Team must regularly update these figures to reflect changes in the urban forest and ensure mitigation planting efforts remain aligned with current needs and goals.

TREE PLANTING AND UTILITY CONFLICTS

Expanding tree planting in the public right-of-way (ROW) is a key strategy for increasing canopy cover and enhancing the urban forest. It also allows the city to have greater oversight and long-term stewardship of publicly managed trees. However, the ROW is also where other essential infrastructure—such as electric, water, gas, sewer, and communication lines—is typically located, which can lead to conflicts between trees and utilities, both overhead and underground.

To address these challenges, the City of Mountlake Terrace has developed a GIS-based mapping system to identify ROW areas where trees can be safely planted without interfering with existing utilities. This proactive approach helps avoid costly maintenance, safety hazards, and premature tree removal due to infrastructure conflict.

Following the “Right Tree, Right Place” principle is essential (Arbor Day Foundation, n.d.). The city can reduce overhead utility conflicts by developing an approved tree list of small-stature trees for planting directly beneath power lines. These species are selected based on their mature height and growth habit to ensure they do not require aggressive utility pruning or pose safety risks (ANSI, 2012). For sites further from overhead lines, medium or large trees can be planted to maximize canopy benefits while maintaining appropriate clearance.



Right Tree, Right Place. Source: Arbor Day Foundation.

Underground utility conflicts can be minimized through thoughtful design and modern technologies. Utility vaults and duct systems can be designed or retrofitted to prevent root intrusion while remaining accessible for maintenance. Solutions like Silva Cells or structural soils allow for healthy root development beneath sidewalks while protecting utility corridors, reducing the risk of root-related damage to pipes or pavement.

By integrating site-specific planning, appropriate species selection, and coordinated infrastructure design, Mountlake Terrace can continue to expand its urban forest in a way that complements, rather than competes with, its critical utility infrastructure (U.S. Forest Service, 2004). This approach reduces long-term maintenance costs, improves public safety, and supports a resilient, sustainable canopy for generations to come.

RETAIN STRATEGIES

Purpose Statements:

1. Establishing voluntary programs and educational outreach fosters community support for tree retention before pursuing regulatory approaches.
2. Tracking canopy trends and implementing notification programs provide data-driven insights to guide future policies and evaluate the need for permitting.
3. Strengthening staff capacity ensures the city can effectively manage tree retention efforts and, if needed, support a phased implementation of a permit system.

Responsible Party:

- Lead: Environmental Programs Manager
- Support: Contract or On-Call Arborist, Engineering Department, Economic and Community Development Department



R.01: Provide opportunities for private property owners to voluntarily map significant or heritage trees as part of the city's tree inventory.

- Action Target 1: Develop an easy-to-use online platform or mobile tool where residents can voluntarily map trees on their property, providing species, size, and condition details. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Launch an outreach campaign to promote voluntary tree mapping, highlighting benefits such as ecosystem services, tree value, and pest awareness. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Integrate mapped private trees into the city's urban forestry database to enhance canopy assessment, planning, and pest monitoring. (Long-term)



R.02: Develop an urban forestry advocacy calendar to promote tree retention during key seasonal periods and keep residents informed as high-impact development projects progress.

- Action Target 1: Create an annual advocacy calendar highlighting tree protection during peak removal periods, such as development review cycles, construction seasons, and following storms or wind events. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Align messaging with city infrastructure priorities to position tree retention as a critical component of sustainability, climate resilience, and urban planning. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Equip community advocates and decision-makers with outreach materials, case studies, and talking points on the economic and environmental benefits of tree preservation. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Integrate tree advocacy messaging into broader city initiatives, including tourism, economic development, and quality of life campaigns, to maximize impact. (Mid-term+)



R.03: Strengthen internal capacity through staff training, interdepartmental collaboration, and potential hiring of staff or interns.

- Action Target 1: Expand tree care training and arborist certification opportunities for existing staff to enhance internal expertise and reduce reliance on external contractors. (Short-term)



- Action Target 2: Establish an internship program with local universities and colleges, focusing on landscape architecture, environmental sciences, and forestry to support urban forestry initiatives. (Short-term)
- Action Target 3: Utilize data from tree inventory, canopy assessments, and permit-related actions to identify trends and build a case for future staffing needs. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Phase in seasonal or part-time urban forestry positions to support increased workload and demonstrate the need for dedicated full-time staff in future budget cycles. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 5: Develop long-term budget proposals for full-time urban forestry staff, ensuring requests align with the biennial budgeting process and are supported by performance data. (Mid-term, Long-term)

R.04: Establish a tree removal notification program for private properties to improve awareness and tracking.

- Action Target 1: Launch a voluntary tree removal notification system, encouraging property owners to self-report removals through an accessible online form or hotline. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Conduct outreach campaigns to educate residents on the benefits of voluntary reporting, linking it to tree canopy goals and community engagement. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 3: Analyze voluntary reporting data to assess participation rates and trends in tree removals, identifying areas of significant canopy loss. (Mid-term)
- Action Target 4: Based on data, evaluate the feasibility of transitioning to a mandatory Neighbor or Public Notice system if voluntary engagement proves insufficient in mitigating canopy loss. (Mid-term)



R.05: Assess tree canopy trends and, if necessary, phase in a tree removal permit process for private properties.

- Action Target 1: Monitor tree canopy trends by analyzing inventory data, voluntary tree retention participation, and reported tree removals to assess the impact of engagement efforts. (Short- to Mid-term)
- Action Target 2: Benchmark neighboring communities with private tree removal permits to evaluate best practices, enforcement challenges, and applicability for Mountlake Terrace. Use findings to identify an approach tailored to the city's needs. (Short-term)
- Action Target 3: If engagement efforts prove insufficient to slow canopy loss, begin developing a phased tree removal permit system, considering enforcement mechanisms, exemptions, and necessary staffing. (Long-term)
- Action Target 4: Establish the required administrative and enforcement capacity, incorporating lessons from R.04 and neighboring cities, before implementing a phased permit system. (Ongoing)

Recommendations and Considerations for Retain

CITY CODE AND ORDINANCES

Preserving urban forests begins with establishing strong policy frameworks. However, when policies are implemented, they are often spread across various sections of municipal codes, creating confusion or frustration during enforcement. Most cities have public tree ordinances that provide protections for public trees and outline penalties for damages, but these ordinances must be regularly reviewed and updated to remain effective.

As cities evolve, so do environmental challenges, development patterns, and climate conditions. Outdated regulations may fail to address modern needs, such as mitigating climate change impacts, managing invasive species, and

accommodating urbanization. Regularly reviewing and updating city codes ensures they align with best practices in urban forestry, supporting proactive strategies for tree management, protection, and growth.

Updating ordinances also reinforces the goals of the UFMP, promoting proper tree care, safeguarding trees during development, and prioritizing planting in areas where trees provide the most significant benefits. These efforts help preserve essential urban forest functions, such as stormwater management, air quality improvement, and urban cooling, while enhancing resilience to environmental challenges. By adapting policies to meet current needs, cities ensure their urban forests remain sustainable and valuable for future generations.

Mountlake Terrace has an established process for reviewing and updating municipal codes and ordinances. To further align existing codes with UFMP goals, the city should consider conducting a benchmarking review of tree-related ordinances in other municipalities. This process can help identify best practices and innovative approaches. Benchmarking criteria can be developed internally or with the support of consulting firms experienced in urban forestry policy. Based on these findings, the city should draft and implement updates to its ordinances, ensuring they reflect desired outcomes for tree health, protection, and growth.

By prioritizing regular updates and leveraging benchmarking insights, the city can build a more robust policy framework that supports a thriving, resilient urban forest.

STAFFING AND RESOURCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE URBAN FOREST

Adequate staffing and resources for public tree management are essential to sustaining the quality of service provided by the Forestry Team. Proactive management requires a trained, qualified, and dedicated team capable of balancing regular pruning cycles, planned removals, new plantings, emergency response, and customer service needs. As the urban forest expands and external pressures such as climate change, development, and pest and disease threats increase, existing resources will be further strained. To ensure the long-term health and sustainability of Mountlake Terrace's trees, proactive planning and strategic investment in urban forestry capacity will be necessary.

Meeting the goals of the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) will require additional planting, watering, maintenance, engagement, and administrative resources, particularly for public trees. Currently, the city does not have a dedicated Forestry Program, and key tasks such as community engagement, tree inventory management, and public outreach may require full-time roles in the future. Based on industry benchmarks, UFMP goals, and insights from urban forestry consultants, the city should consider contracting a City Arborist. This would be a certified tree care professional hired on a part-time, contract basis—working at least 20 hours per week—to provide expert oversight and lead crews. Contracting arborists has been a successful strategy for smaller communities with limited resources, hiring constraints, or operational efficiency needs. The city could also explore sharing a contracted City Arborist with a neighboring municipality by splitting hours or costs to maximize regional capacity and cost-effectiveness.

To further build capacity, the city should hire two part time or seasonal staff members or interns to assist with peak workloads. Retaining these three additional positions for at least five years will allow the city to meet industry standards, improve efficiency, and strengthen long-term capacity. For a city the size of Mountlake Terrace, urban forestry consultants recommend a Forestry Team of three to four members as optimal. Additional full-time staff will require approval from council.

Given limited resources, the city must also rely on technology, citizen science, volunteer groups, and private contractors to implement UFMP goals and manage increasing workloads. Simultaneously, the city should begin building a case for additional permanent staffing, ensuring that budget requests align with future needs. When planning for additional staff, the city should account for associated costs such as training, professional development, and maintaining industry certifications to uphold safety standards and best practices.

Looking ahead, the city should closely monitor changes in service demands and advocate for necessary budget and

staffing adjustments. This includes developing a clear plan to address future challenges posed by climate change and the expansion of the public tree population. A proactive, data-driven approach will allow Mountlake Terrace to manage increasing urban forestry demands effectively while maintaining the health and resilience of its urban forest.

TREE REMOVAL NOTIFICATIONS AND PERMITS

The Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) canopy assessment revealed that most of Mountlake Terrace's remaining tree cover is on residential property. While the city manages trees in rights-of-way, parks, and other public spaces, achieving meaningful tree preservation requires addressing removals on private land. Many communities regulate tree removal through permit systems, but these programs come with challenges, including enforcement complexities, staffing needs, administrative costs, and varying levels of public support. Based on public survey data and staff input, it is clear these systems are not immediately viable, but should remain in consideration as circumstances evolve.

As part of the UFMP engagement process, a community tree survey of 277 residents provided insight into local perspectives on tree removal regulations. The results showed strong interest in education and technical assistance, with 70% of respondents supporting these efforts. However, opinions on tree removal permits were mixed, with 56% of respondents in favor and 44% opposed. Support increased when exemptions for hazard trees were considered, 16% of those who initially opposed permits said they would support a system that included such exemptions. While tree removal permits can be an effective tool for reducing canopy loss, they require significant resources to administer and enforce. Additionally, recent state legislation expanding housing options in residential areas may further complicate tree preservation efforts, requiring a phased, data-driven approach to regulation. The best strategy follows a four-step process: Report → Notify → Build Capacity → Regulate.

The first phase should focus on voluntary tree removal reporting, allowing the city to track private tree removals, establish baseline data, and raise awareness about the benefits of tree retention. This system would help identify trends in tree loss while promoting responsible tree management. Public education should emphasize the role of trees in climate resilience, stormwater management, and property value enhancement.

If voluntary reporting indicates a continued or increasing rate of tree loss, the city should implement a mandatory public notification system. Property owners planning to remove a tree would be required to provide advance notice, creating a waiting period before removal. Public notices, such as on-site signage or mailed notifications, would improve transparency and encourage property owners to reconsider unnecessary removals.

To ensure long-term success, the city must build internal capacity before introducing regulatory measures. This includes studying neighboring cities with private tree removal permits, strengthening staff expertise through arborist training and certifications, and establishing interdepartmental coordination for enforcement. A critical component of this phase is the registration of tree care companies as official businesses within the city. Only registered tree service providers should be allowed to operate within city limits, ensuring compliance with best management practices and future regulations.

If tree loss continues at unsustainable levels despite notification and capacity-building efforts, the city should consider implementing a tree removal permit system. However, this should only occur if previous measures prove insufficient and the city has established the enforcement capacity necessary for successful implementation. Any permit system should include clear exemptions, streamlined processes, and appropriate penalties for noncompliance. Cities such as Seattle provide useful models, where penalties for unauthorized tree removals are strictly enforced, and only licensed and registered tree care companies are permitted to work within city limits.

By adopting a phased approach—Report → Notify → Build Capacity → Regulate—Mountlake Terrace can proactively protect its urban forest while balancing community needs and administrative feasibility. Registering tree companies ensures that only qualified professionals conduct removals, reducing improper tree cutting and increasing

accountability. Through education, data collection, strategic regulation, and industry oversight, the city can implement an effective and sustainable tree protection framework that preserves canopy cover for future generations.

KNOW STRATEGIES

Purpose Statements:

1. Data-driven tracking and assessments provide measurable insights into urban forest growth, health, and management needs.
2. Ongoing monitoring and reporting support adaptive policy improvements, resource allocation, and long-term urban forest resilience.
3. Transparent sharing of urban forestry data fosters public engagement, encourages stewardship, and strengthens community support for tree initiatives.

Responsible Party:

- Lead: Environmental Programs Manager
- Support: GIS Specialist, Recreation & Parks Department, Contract or On-Call Arborist



K.01: Update the Tree Canopy Assessment every two to three years using industry standards to track canopy changes and measure growth or loss based on the latest data.

- Action Target 1: Conduct a canopy assessment every 2-3 years using industry-standard methodologies to evaluate trends in tree coverage and identify areas of gain or loss. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 2: Analyze assessment results to determine the effectiveness of UFMP actions and adjust strategies as needed to improve tree retention and canopy expansion. (Every assessment cycle)
- Action Target 3: Use canopy data to inform policy changes, guide future planting efforts, and support funding opportunities for urban forest management. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 4: Share findings with stakeholders and the public to maintain transparency and reinforce the importance of urban forestry initiatives. (Every assessment cycle)



K.02: Maintain and update the street tree inventory as maintenance and new plantings occur.

- Action Target 1: Utilize GIS or tree inventory software to track real-time updates on tree maintenance, removals, and new plantings. (Ongoing)
- Action Target 2: Equip field staff with mobile data entry tools to update inventory records on-site as work is completed. (Short-term)
- Action Target 3: Conduct periodic audits to verify inventory accuracy and assess trends in tree health, species diversity, and maintenance needs. (Every 3-5 years)
- Action Target 4: Use inventory data to prioritize maintenance schedules, plan future plantings, and support urban forestry decision-making. (Ongoing)



K.03: Track all city and partner-led tree plantings using tree inventory software or the city's asset management system.

- Action Target 1: Establish a standardized process for recording tree plantings conducted by community partners, nonprofits, and private entities. (Short-term: 1-3 years)
- Action Target 2: Integrate partner-led tree planting data into the city's tree inventory software or asset management program for centralized tracking. (Ongoing)

- Action Target 3: Develop reporting mechanisms to ensure accurate and timely updates on non-city-led tree planting efforts. (Short-term: 1-3 years)
- Action Target 4: Use aggregated planting data to assess progress toward canopy goals and adjust urban forestry strategies as needed. (Ongoing)



K.04: Annually report urban forestry activities to maintain the Arbor Day Tree City USA designation and work toward Growth Awards.

- Action Target 1: Ensure annual reporting to maintain Tree City USA designation and strive for Arbor Day Foundation Growth Awards. (Short-term)
- Action Target 2: Monitor progress and continue achieving Tree City USA and Growth Awards annually. (Annually)
- Action Target 3: Strengthen coordination between the Public Works Street Division and Parks Division to improve accuracy in reporting tree removals, plantings, and maintenance activities. (Ongoing)



K.05: Conduct a community tree survey every two years to assess public perceptions of the urban forest and identify areas for improvement.

- Action Target 1: Develop and distribute a bilingual (or multilingual) community tree survey to ensure accessibility for diverse populations. (repeating 2-year cycle)
- Action Target 2: Utilize multiple outreach platforms, including online surveys, mail-in forms, and in-person engagement at community events, to maximize participation. (repeating 2-year cycle)
- Action Target 3: Analyze survey data to identify key concerns, priorities, and areas for improvement, using findings to refine urban forestry policies and programs. (Ongoing)

Recommendations and Considerations for Know IMPROVED COORDINATION

Implementing effective communication and workflow management in urban forest management requires a structured and collaborative approach. The process begins with establishing regular internal meetings. These meetings, set at a frequency that balances continuous communication with productivity, serve as a platform to review ongoing activities, address challenges, and strategize future actions. Within this framework, it is crucial to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each team member. This clarity not only streamlines communication but also ensures comprehensive coverage of all urban forest management aspects, avoiding overlaps and gaps in responsibilities.

A critical step in this process is the documentation of current workflows. These workflows encompass all processes related to tree planting, maintenance, data collection, stakeholder engagement, and emergency responses. Utilizing visual tools like flowcharts or process maps can greatly enhance the understanding and analysis of these processes. It is also beneficial to develop a centralized information system, possibly a digital platform like a cloud-based system, where all relevant information is stored. This system should be easily accessible to all team members and include essential data like tree inventories, maintenance schedules, and feedback from stakeholders.

Implementing a project management tool can significantly improve task tracking and coordination. Such a tool provides a clear view of tasks, deadlines, and progress, ensuring everyone is aligned and informed. Moreover, fostering



an environment of open communication is pivotal. Encouraging team members to freely share ideas, concerns, and feedback leads to early identification of potential issues and collaborative problem-solving.

Annually assessing these workflows is an integral part of the process. This assessment involves analyzing the effectiveness of current processes, considering advancements in urban forestry practices, technological developments, and team feedback. Based on this assessment, workflows should be updated and adapted to reflect best practices and incorporate new technologies or methodologies. It's important that all team members are adequately trained on any new processes or tools.

Additionally, maintaining a record of best practices and lessons learned from various projects can serve as an invaluable resource for training and refining processes. This documentation aids in capturing experiential knowledge and ensures that successful strategies are replicated, and pitfalls are avoided in future projects.

Finally, integrating stakeholder feedback into the internal review process is essential. Regularly considering input from external stakeholders ensures that the workflow remains relevant and effective, aligning with the needs and concerns of the community and other stakeholders. By following these steps, urban forest management can be conducted more efficiently, transparently, and adaptively, leading to a more sustainable and community-aligned approach.

TREE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Effective tree inventory and management software enhances efficiency, strategic planning, and long-term sustainability for urban forestry programs. These tools allow staff to maintain accurate, real-time data, track work history, and prioritize maintenance tasks, ultimately improving the health and resilience of the urban forest.

By integrating tree inventory software with existing GIS systems, the city can:

- **Streamline Data Collection and Updates** – Field staff can update tree records in real time using mobile devices, reducing the need for costly, full-scale inventories in the future.
- **Improve Maintenance Planning** – Interactive dashboards and work order tracking tools help prioritize tree care based on risk assessment, species diversity, and maintenance needs.
- **Enhance Decision-Making** – Advanced filtering and mapping functions allow staff to analyze tree distribution, track canopy coverage, and align urban forestry efforts with city infrastructure projects.
- **Increase Community Engagement** – Public-facing tree maps or QR-tagged trees can provide residents with access to information about tree species, benefits, and maintenance efforts, fostering stronger public support.

Many municipalities successfully use tree inventory software to track maintenance, schedule proactive care, and integrate urban forestry into larger planning efforts. The City of Mountlake Terrace can leverage its existing GIS capabilities to achieve similar benefits. To maximize the impact of inventory software, the city should:

- Ensure that all tree-related fieldwork includes real-time data updates.
- Utilize filtering tools to focus resources on high-priority pruning, removals, and plantings.
- Align tree management strategies with broader city planning initiatives using spatial analysis tools.
- Explore opportunities to share inventory data with key stakeholders to improve coordination and advocacy.

By fully utilizing tree inventory and mapping software, Mountlake Terrace can enhance operational efficiency, reduce resource constraints, and strategically manage its urban forest for long-term sustainability.

HOW DO WE GET THERE: ASSESSING PROGRESS

In this Urban Forest Management Plan, the traditional “How Are We Doing” section—focused on tracking progress and measuring outcomes—is fully integrated into the Know goal under the “How Do We Get There” framework. This reflects the plan’s adaptive management approach, where implementation and monitoring are not separate phases but part of a continuous, responsive cycle of action, learning, and adjustment.

The Plan equips the City of Mountlake Terrace with a structured framework to measure progress, adapt to environmental changes, and respond to shifting resources. Each goal is aligned with industry standards, stakeholder priorities, and best practices, while the associated objectives are designed to strengthen public tree management and ensure long-term sustainability of the city’s urban forest. As the City advances these goals, clearly defined metrics will be essential to evaluate success, guide decision-making, and refine strategies as needed.

To support effective implementation, it is recommended that the City leverage the expertise of its Forestry Team and consider forming a Tree Board or advisory group to help monitor progress. This group can work collaboratively with staff and community partners to track goal performance, ensure accountability, and maintain alignment with the Plan’s vision.

Although this UFMP outlines strategic goals and actions, the specific implementation strategies and timelines will be shaped by the City following adoption. This approach ensures both focus and flexibility—allowing Mountlake Terrace to act on immediate priorities while adjusting to new challenges, funding opportunities, or community needs over time. As progress is made and successes accumulate, the City will be better positioned to leverage additional resources and partnerships to expand impact and deepen its investment in a healthy, equitable urban forest.



PRIMARY URBAN FOREST BENCHMARK VALUES TO MEASURE PLAN PROGRESS

2019 Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Cover (Assessed in 2025)

Tree Equity Score (2024)	87 out of 100
UTC	32%

Public Tree Counts (Inventory as of 2024)

Total Public Trees (alive and dead)	Total: 6,830 Alive: 6,723 Dead: 107
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Tree Benefits (2024 Estimates)

Citywide (UTC Assessment)	2025: \$2,529,859 (total annual)
Ecosystem benefits of Public Trees (inventoried)	2025: \$923,800 (annual benefits and total carbon storage)
Asset Value of Public Trees (inventoried)	\$12 million (\$1,874 per tree average)

Tree and Budget Distribution (2022)

Public Trees per Capita (inventoried)	0.17
Budget per Capita	\$5.07
Budget per Public Tree (inventoried)	\$15.29
Urban Forestry Staff (FTE)	0 (2025)
Total Public Trees per Forestry Staff	N/A

Management Activities (2024)

Public Trees Pruned	To be recorded at the end of the year
Public Trees Removed	To be recorded at the end of the year
Public Trees Planted	To be recorded at the end of the year
Number of Volunteers and/or Hours	To be recorded at the end of the year

Urban Forest Audit System (Total Score of 2024): 54%

Management Policy and Ordinances	89%
Professional Capacity and Training	33%
Funding and Accounting	42%
Decision and Management Authority	63%
Tree-related Inventories	31%
Tree-related Plans	42%
Risk Management	39%
Disaster Planning	14%
Standards and Best Management Practices	60%
Community	73%
Green Asset Management	65%

Public Perception (2024)

Tree-related priorities	- Staff and community members emphasized the need for climate-adapted tree species and management strategies. - Respondents expressed strong interest in educational programs, especially on proper tree pruning techniques.
Preference for improving public tree health	- Staff and residents called for improved strategies to address tree conflicts with sidewalks and utilities. - Respondents showed strong support for strategic tree placement, especially along streets, followed by parks, public spaces, and commercial or industrial areas.

Staff can measure plan progress by regularly utilizing multiple tools and methods to track changes in key metrics outlined in the UFMP benchmark table. Checking the Tree Equity Score through American Forests provides a snapshot of equity improvements, while periodic updates to the canopy assessment help monitor citywide tree cover changes over time. Maintaining an up-to-date tree inventory is essential, as it allows seamless data export to i-Tree for detailed ecosystem benefits analysis and valuation.

The urban forest audit, provided to the city, serves as a critical tool for assessing changes and evaluating progress. This resource allows the team to compare current conditions with baseline data, identifying areas of improvement or emerging challenges. Engaging the community through surveys provides additional insights into public perception and satisfaction, offering valuable feedback for refining strategies and priorities. Surveys also help track changes in public awareness and involvement in the urban forest's care and maintenance.

Additionally, annual management activities, recorded as part of Tree City USA reporting, should be thoroughly analyzed for trends such as increased pruning, decreased removals, or enhanced planting efforts. This analysis not only demonstrates tangible progress but also identifies areas where adjustments may be needed. By continuously monitoring these metrics and comparing them against the established benchmark values, the Forestry Team can ensure alignment with UFMP goals and communicate measurable achievements to stakeholders. This iterative process fosters accountability, highlights successes, and supports adaptive management to sustain a healthy and resilient urban forest.



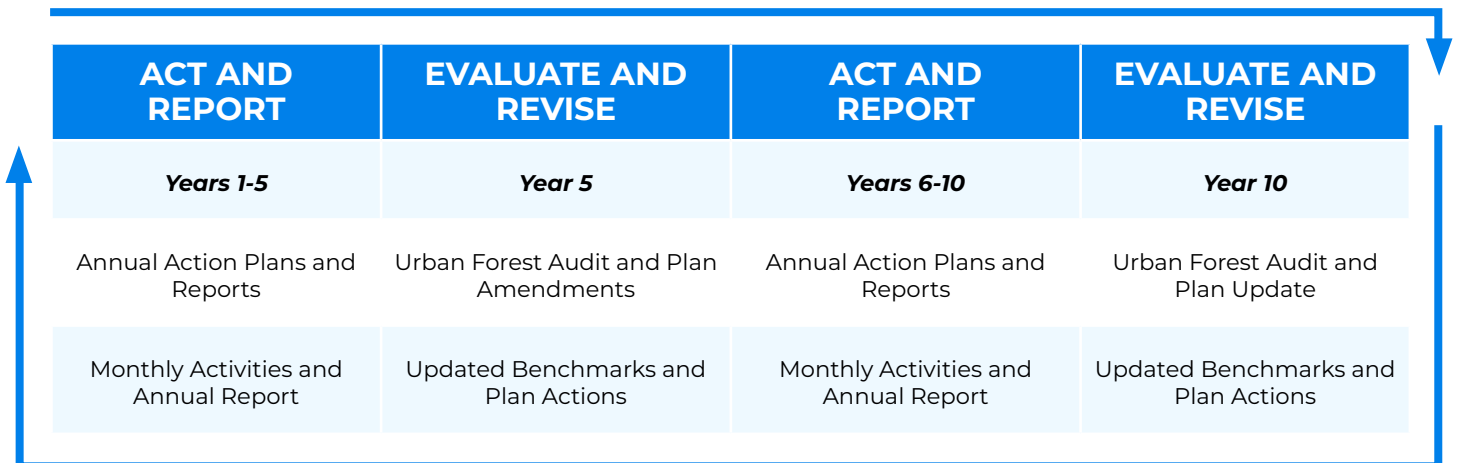
REPORT AND REVISE

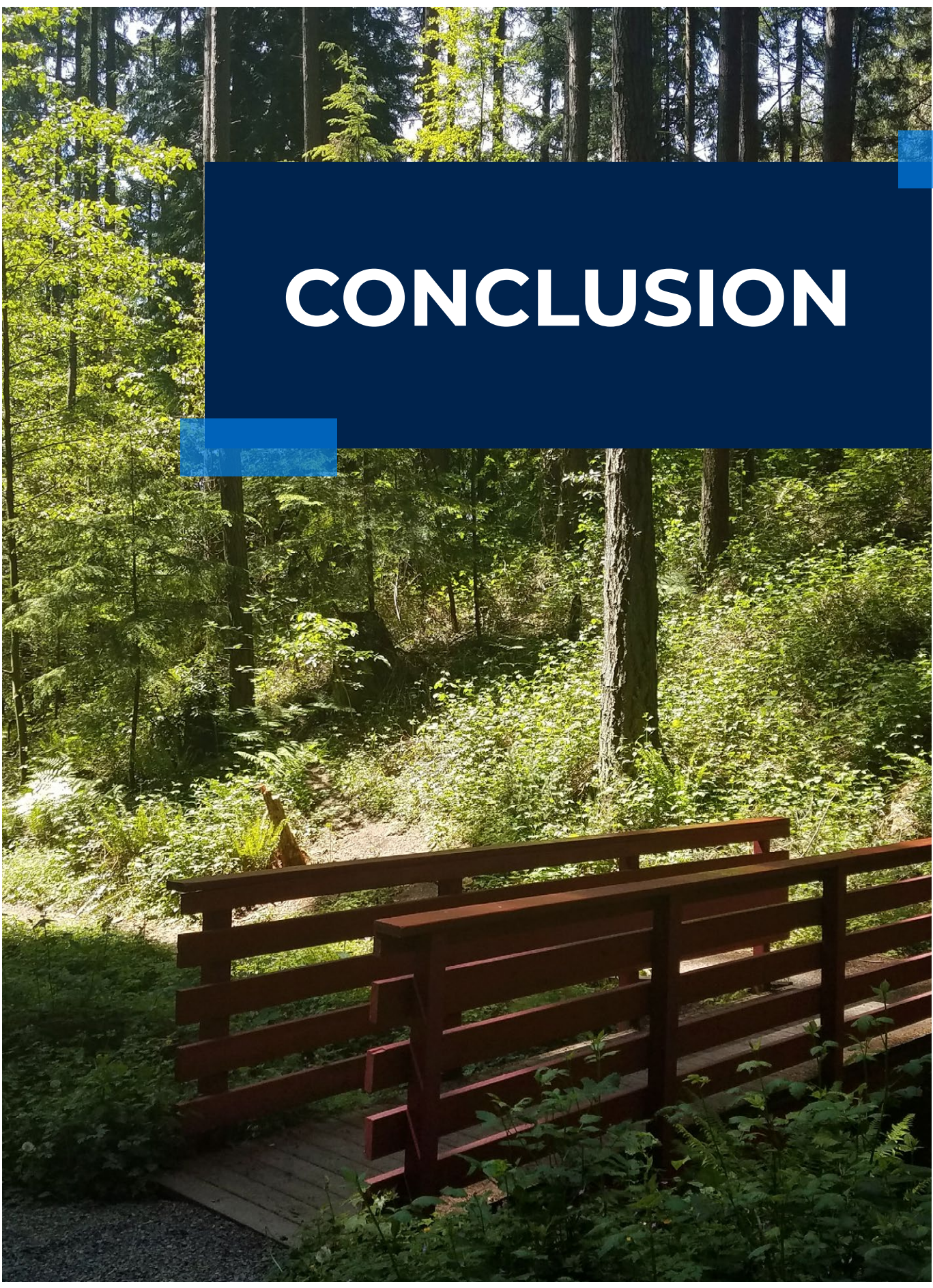
Completion of this Plan is a critical step towards meeting the vision for Mountlake Terrace's urban forest. Continual monitoring, analysis, and reporting will help to keep urban forest partners involved and focused on accomplishing the actions. Plans are typically revised every 10 to 15 years; hence, the Plan will need formal revision to respond and adapt to changes as they develop. Ideally, revisions to the Plan should align with updates to other key city planning efforts, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Sustainability Strategy, Landscape Regulations, and Strategic Plan. This alignment will help ensure cohesion among city initiatives, enabling shared priorities and goals to be integrated effectively. However, even if direct alignment is not feasible, these planning efforts should, at a minimum, reference the most up-to-date version of the UFMP to maintain consistency and ensure forestry goals are reflected across the city's broader planning framework. Revisions to the Plan should occur with major events, such as newly discovered pests or diseases, changes in program budget and resources, or significant changes to industry standards or legal codes.

The findings from monitoring and evaluating Plan progress as demonstrated in the previous section should be incorporated into an internal and external report(s).

Many cities with an urban forest management plan are shifting towards online reporting, making the results of plan implementation and monitoring protocols accessible through interactive platforms on their websites. In addition, the team overseeing the Plan's implementation should prepare an annual report and work plan that is communicated to other city boards, committees, and City Council. Other departments should be made aware of the report and work plan and informed of how the work plan aligns with other city priorities and projects.

Monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on Plan progress will inform any necessary changes to the Plan's strategies or actions and should be addressed in a timely manner where appropriate. Completion of this 10-year Plan with a seven-year Public Tree Management Program is a critical step towards meeting the vision for Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.



A photograph of a forest scene. In the foreground, there is a wooden bridge with a dark brown railing, crossing a small stream or path. The bridge is surrounded by lush green vegetation and ferns. In the background, there are tall, slender trees, possibly evergreens, with sunlight filtering through the canopy. A large blue rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper right portion of the image, containing the word "CONCLUSION" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. There are also smaller blue rectangular accents on the left and right sides of the main overlay.

CONCLUSION

Trees are an integral part of the community and the ecological systems in which they exist. They provide significant economic, social, and ecological benefits, such as carbon sequestration, reducing heat islands, energy savings, stormwater runoff reduction, improving water quality, enhancing human health and wellness, and increasing property values.

The changing climate, combined with Washington's rising cost of living and increased development, adds complexity to preserving this green infrastructure. Acting now on the UFMP is essential to ensure that Mountlake Terrace continues to enjoy the many benefits of its trees, while adapting to the future challenges that will test the resilience of the urban forest.

The Urban Forest Management Plan serves as a strategic roadmap for managing Mountlake Terrace's public trees. This plan outlines the goals, strategies, and actions necessary to preserve the long-term vitality of the urban forest. Implementing this plan requires both stewardship and financial resources to begin its execution. Further, it must be institutionalized with a sense of urgency, as the health of the urban forest directly impacts the overall wellbeing of Mountlake Terrace.

Mountlake Terrace's leadership clearly understands that a healthy urban forest is essential—not a luxury—to guarantee the long-term health of its residents and future generations. The urban forest is the backbone of the urban ecosystem, just as critical as water, infrastructure, and energy in sustaining healthy communities.

To achieve these goals, the city should consider the following commitments:

- Recognize that the trees within the urban forest are essential infrastructure, providing far-reaching benefits beyond aesthetics.
- Manage the urban forest as a critical part of Mountlake Terrace's green infrastructure, following best management practices for tree selection, planting, watering, and pruning.
- Protect the urban forest from known and future threats, including climate change, pest infestations, and diseases, by promoting policies that enhance its resilience.
- Foster public appreciation of the urban forest through educational programs, and support local efforts to plant and maintain trees.
- Engage in long-range planning for the urban forest's growth, and ensure that decisions are made inclusively and transparently.

Successful implementation of this Plan will elevate Mountlake Terrace to a higher level of community service, creating a more equitable, sustainable, and thriving urban forest that benefits all residents and future generations.



APPENDICES

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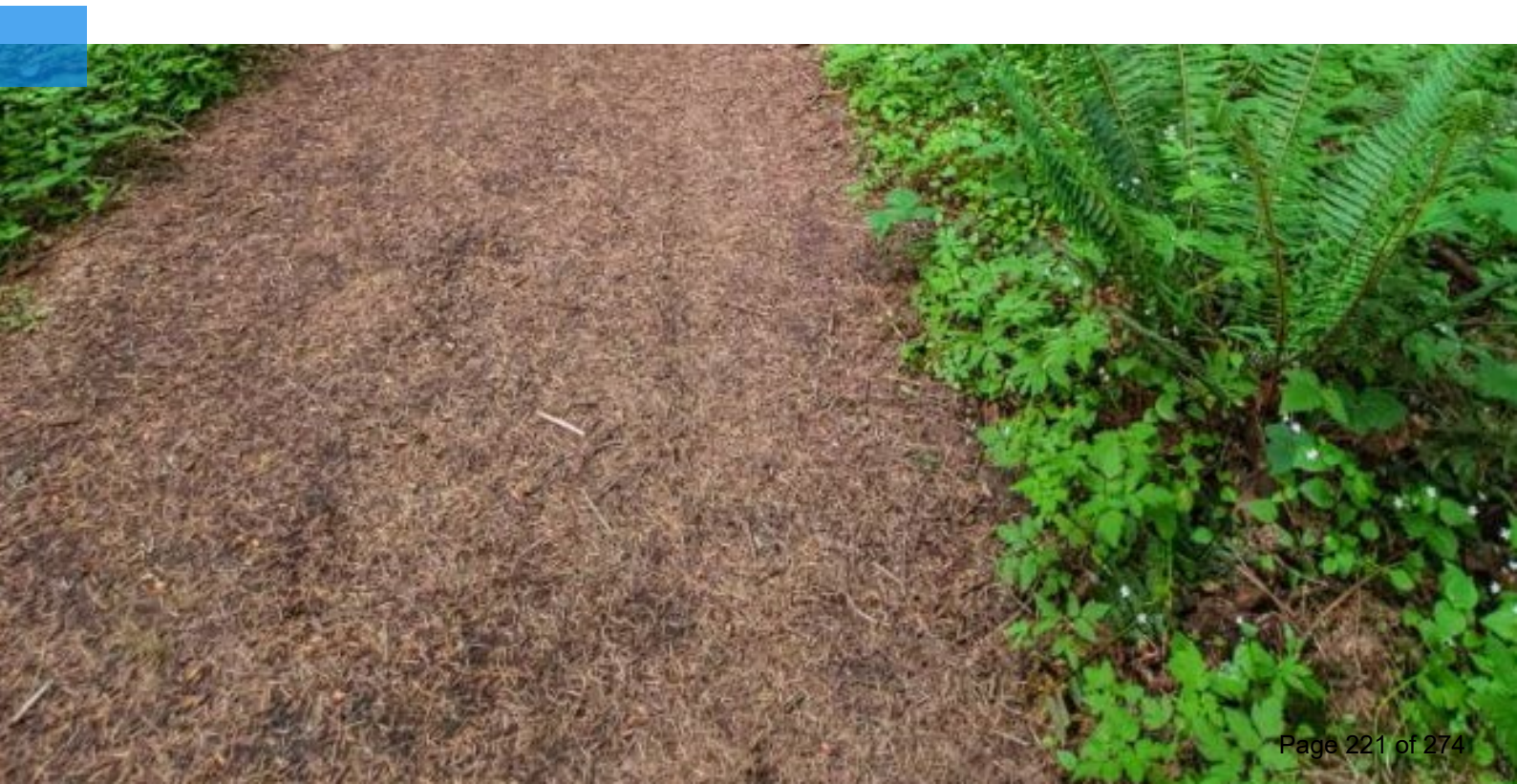


URBAN FOREST

MANAGEMENT PLAN

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON

MAY 2025



Option 1			
Ask	Cost	Pros	Cons
Add tree-related tasks to EPM, Engineering Tech, Comms Manager and GIS Specialist workload	\$0	Existing staff will be able to manage some, but not all elements of UFMP	No tree expertise added; existing staff may be stretched thin; will not be able to tackle majority of UFMP tasks
Community outreach non-profit or consultant contract	\$20,000	Would enable a much more comprehensive tree education and outreach program; supports work of EPM; should be relatively easy to get grant funding	\$20,000 will cover quite a bit of public outreach, but in-person work by the EPM and Eng Tech will also be required
Add minimal amount to tree removal on-call for 2025 only	\$10,000	Allows city to remove hazard trees ID-ed in street tree inventory	Does not build annual tree removal program or cover critical pruning. No replanting for dead street trees.
Total	\$30,000		

Option 2			
Purchase 69 trees per year	\$10,350	Allows for replacement of dead trees in ROW and Parks, plus some new street trees; grant opp?	Only 50% of the tree replacement recommended to grow tree canopy in MLT
Add \$ to tree removal/pruning on call each year	\$20,000	Allows city to remove hazard trees ID-ed in street tree inventory; increases capacity for critical pruning & ROW proactive work	
Hire seasonal intern or laborer for summer only	\$16,000	Critical watering for newly planted trees; ground-based pruning; public outreach assistance; grant opp?	No tree-specific expertise required, would not be able to determine hazard trees or other arborist tasks
On-call arborist, 10 hours/week	\$66,000	Technical expertise resource for city	May be less hours than needed
Subtotal	\$112,350		
Running total	\$132,350		

Option 3			
Purchase 137 trees per year	\$20,550	Meets recommended tree replacement rate for MLT	
On-call arborist, 20 hours/week	\$130,000	Determine hazard trees, public outreach material support, staff training, expertise resource, review development tree reports	May be light on hours depending on scope of work.
Subtotal	\$150,550		
Running total	\$206,550		
Option 4			
Tree removal permits on private property	\$190,800	Would city to accurately track tree removal; could require qualified arborists to remove trees (reduce risk); could require tree replacement; potentially could discourage large tree removal.	Unclear if it actually would retain large trees or just force replacement. Expensive for city & residents, potentially inequitable, unpopular with permit applicants, may entangle city in extensive enforcement. Requires city code change.
Subtotal	\$190,800		
Running total	\$267,350		



URBAN TREE CANOPY **ASSESSMENT**

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE,
WASHINGTON
MAY | 2025





MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, CA

TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT



**When one plants
a tree they plant
themselves.
Every root is an
anchor, over which
one rests with
grateful interests,
and becomes
sufficiently calm to
feel the joy of living.**

-JOHN MUIR



PREPARED BY

PlanIT Geo, Inc., Arvada, Colorado

PREPARED FOR

The City of Mountlake Terrace

COMPLETED

May 2025

**833****ACRES OF CANOPY****32%****OF MOUNTLAKE
TERRACE'S LAND AREA
WAS COVERED WITH
CANOPY IN 2023**

EXECUTIVE --- SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND METHODS

Urban tree canopies in Mountlake Terrace are dynamic and continuously evolving. While new plantings and natural growth contribute to increased canopy cover, factors such as development, storms, disease, and pests can reduce it. High-resolution aerial imagery enables precise measurement of these changes over time. This report evaluates shifts in tree canopy within Mountlake Terrace, in southern Snohomish County, situated just north of Seattle. The analysis summarizes canopy distribution by city limits, public properties, parks, census block groups, zoning, future land use, and parcels to provide a comprehensive understanding of how tree canopy is distributed across the community.

Using 2023 imagery from the USDA's National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP), this study presents a near-current snapshot of land cover. These findings support the City's efforts to update existing strategies and develop new approaches for protecting and expanding the urban forest. Machine learning techniques were applied to generate consistent land cover data, allowing for uniform comparisons in future assessments. The primary objectives of this tree canopy assessment are to:

- ▶ Quantify the amount and location of tree canopy and other land cover types
- ▶ Analyze the change in canopy cover from 2011 to 2023
- ▶ Identify areas where tree canopy can be expanded (Possible Planting Area analysis)
- ▶ Determine priority areas for tree planting initiatives based on socioeconomic, environmental, and climate-related factors

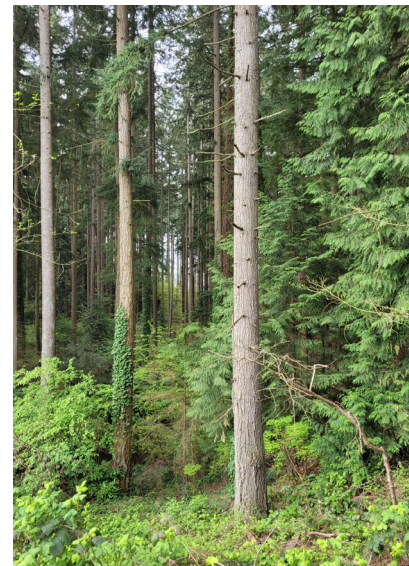
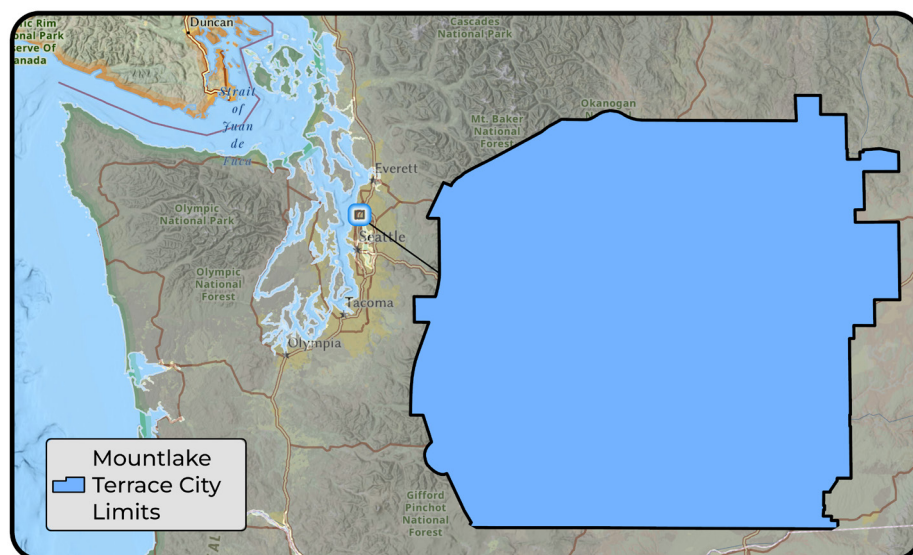


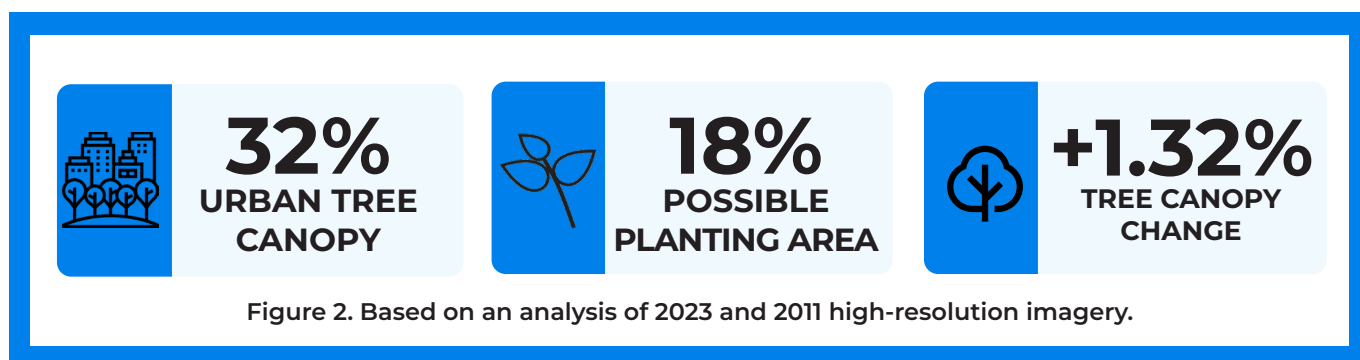
Figure 1. Mountlake Terrace is a city in southern Snohomish County, Washington, located about 14 miles north of downtown Seattle along the I-5 corridor. Covering approximately four square miles, the city is recognized for its convenient transportation connections, access to parks and trails, and sweeping views of the Olympic and Cascade mountains.

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE'S URBAN FOREST

Based on 2023 imagery, 32% of the city was covered with tree canopy when viewed from above. The remaining portion of the study area was split between areas deemed unsuitable (50%) and suitable for planting (18%).

In 2023, the greatest concentration and growth of tree canopy were observed in city-managed parcels, particularly those designated for open space or general recreation parks. The city's 23 designated parks and trails, although densely forested, cover only 17% of the city's total area and contribute to 20% of the total canopy. Despite their relatively small footprint, these areas exhibit upward trends in canopy cover over the study period and play a vital role in supporting a connected and resilient urban forest. However, the largest contributor to the city's canopy is the Single-Household Residential Districts (RS 7200), which account for 29% of the city's current canopy and nearly half (46%) of the city's plantable space.

When combining the three single-family residential zoning classes (RS 8400, RS 7200, and RS 4800) these zones collectively cover over 55% of the city's land area, account for 52% of the citywide tree canopy, and contain three-quarters of the total plantable space. This includes 294 acres of front yards, backyards, and sidewalks that are suitable for planting new trees. Despite their significance, these residential zones have lost 9 acres of canopy over the past 12 years. This loss underscores the crucial role that residents play in maintaining the health, biodiversity, and resilience of the urban forest in Mountlake Terrace. This data highlights the urgent need for community engagement and strategic planting efforts to reverse these losses and preserve the urban forest for future generations.



PROJECT

METHODOLOGY

Land cover, urban tree canopy, and possible planting areas were mapped using the sources and methods described below. These data sets provide the foundation for the metrics reported at the selected geographic assessment scales.

DATA SOURCES

This assessment utilized high-resolution (60-centimeter) multi-spectral imagery from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) collected in 2023 to derive the land cover data set. The NAIP imagery was used to classify all types of land cover. For canopy change analysis, 1-meter resolution data was collected in 2011 to classify the historical tree canopy.

MAPPING LAND COVER

The land cover data set is the most fundamental component of a tree canopy assessment. Tree canopy and land cover data from the EarthDefine US Tree Map (<https://www.earthdefine.com/treemap/>) provided a six-class land cover data set. The US Tree Map is produced using a modern machine-learning technique to extract tree canopy cover and other land cover types from the latest available 2023 and 2011 NAIP imagery. These six classes are shown in Figure 4.



Figure 3. This study identified six (6) unique land cover classes within the 2023 assessment imagery: tree canopy, shrubs, other vegetation, bare soil and dry vegetation, impervious surfaces, and water.

IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE PLANTING AREAS

In addition to quantifying Mountlake Terrace's existing tree canopy cover, areas suitable for planting trees (PPA-Possible Planting Area) to increase canopy cover were identified. To identify PPA, areas absent of tree canopy cover were classified as either PPA or unsuitable for planting. Unsuitable areas for tree planting, such as recreation fields, utility corridors, wetlands, etc., were manually delineated and overlaid with the existing land cover data set (Figure 5). The final classifications include PPA Vegetation, Unsuitable Impervious, Unsuitable Vegetation, Unsuitable Soil, and Water.

Planting in the hilly areas of Mountlake Terrace requires careful planning due to the presence of steep slopes. On-site assessment is essential to determine actual site conditions, as certain locations may not be suitable for planting. For this evaluation, in addition to the usual list of areas considered unsuitable for planting, both mapped wetlands and areas with erosive soils were also excluded from consideration.

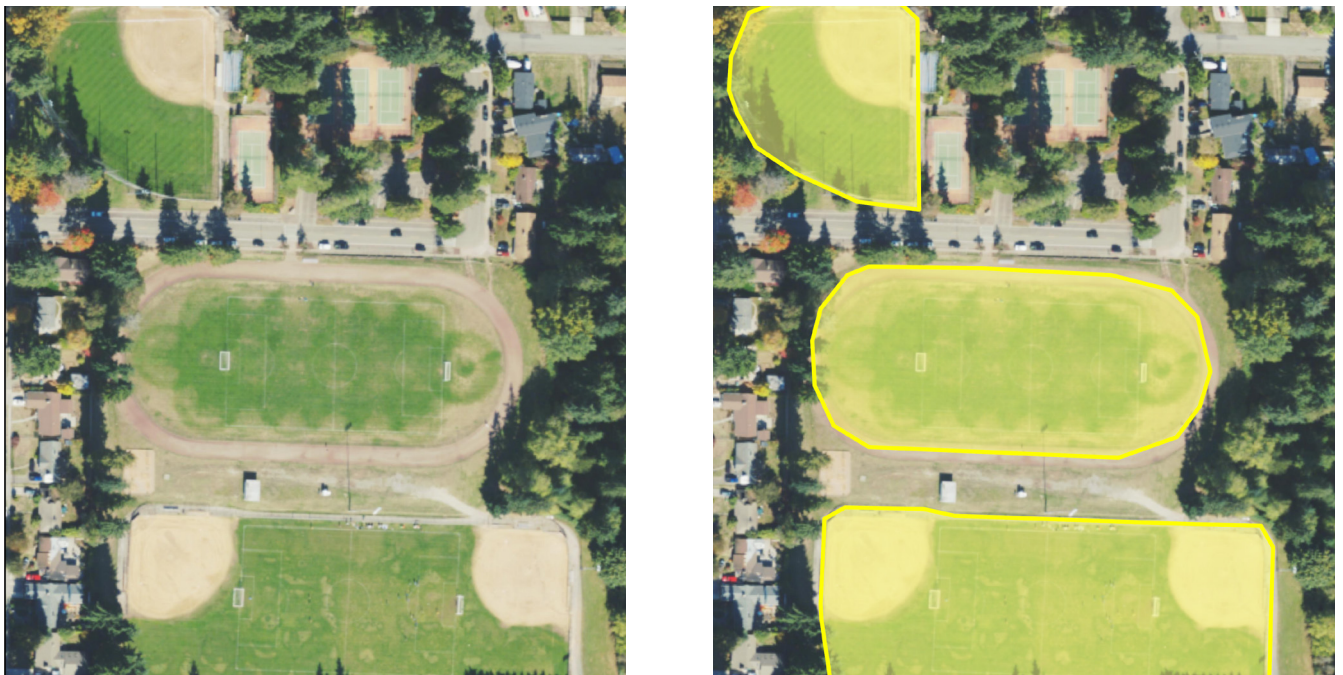


Figure 4. The study identified vegetated areas where it would be feasible for tree plantings but undesirable based on their current usage (left) in the data as “Unsuitable” (right).



STATE OF THE CANOPY AND

KEY FINDINGS

The results of this study can be used to design a strategic approach to identifying existing canopy and future planting areas. The land cover data presented below depict the current state of Mountlake Terrace's city limits.

The chart below reports on canopy coverage compared to the total land area, **including water bodies** that account for 3% of the total. The remaining 2,594 acres encompass the city's land area. The largest portion comprises buildings and paved surfaces like roads, covering 43% of the study area. Tree canopy covers just 32% of the area. Low-lying vegetation, including grass and small bushes, make up the third-largest category at 22%. The remaining land is divided between bare soil at 1% and shrub/scrub vegetation at 2%. Figure 5 shows the breakdown of land cover types within the City Boundary.

Table 1. Land cover classes in acres and percent in Mountlake Terrace.

Land Cover Class	Acres	% of Total
Impervious Surfaces	1,148	43%
Non-Canopy Vegetation	592	22%
Water	69	3%
Tree Canopy	833	31%
Soil/Dry Vegetation	18	1%
Shrubs	3	0.1%

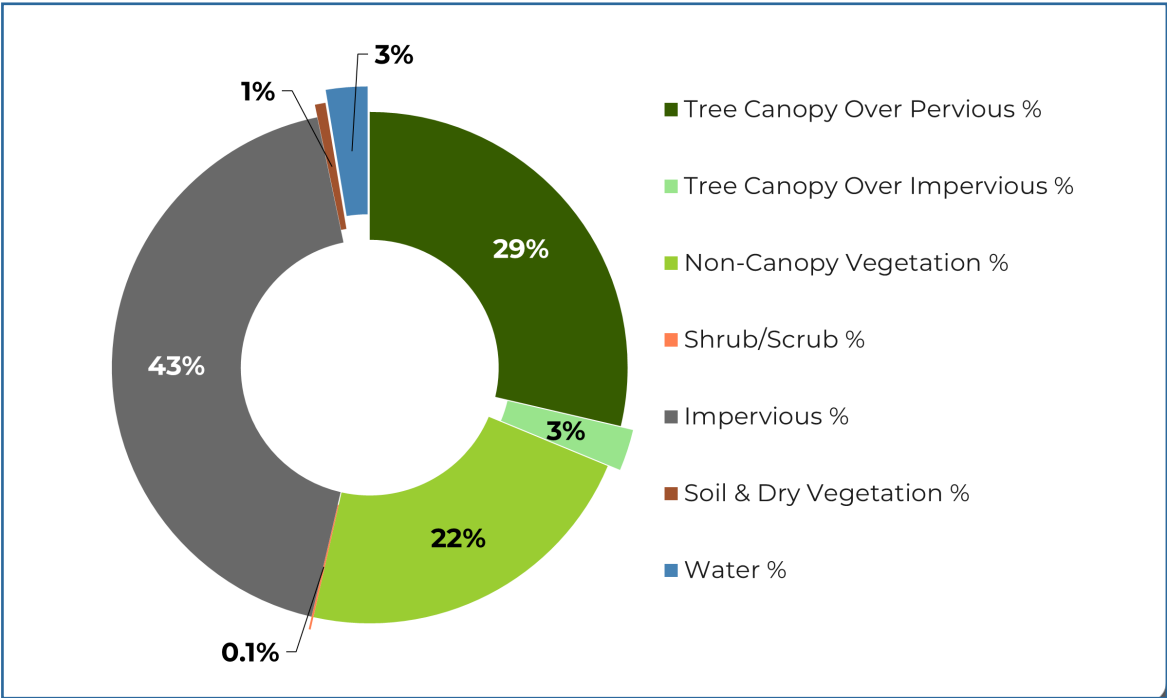
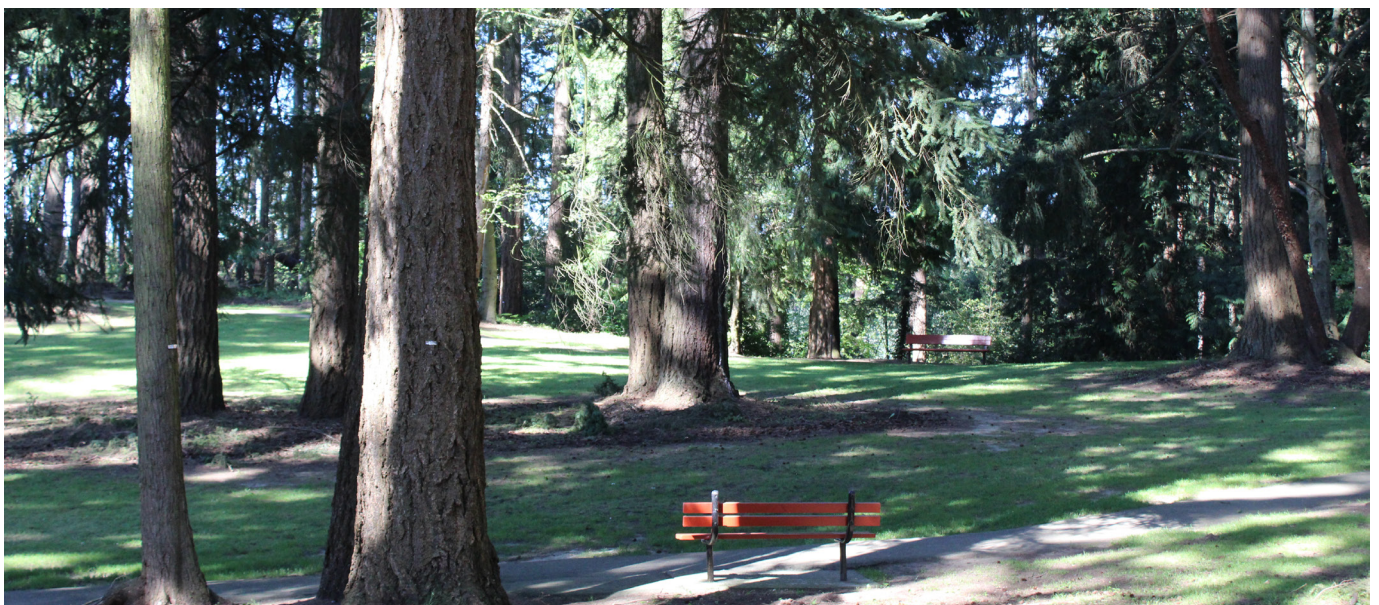


Figure 5. Land cover distribution in Mountlake Terrace city limits.



Figure 6. Land cover classification results (percentages based on the total area of Mountlake Terrace including water bodies).



CITY-WIDE TREE CANOPY COVER

After excluding the 69 acres of surface water, the Mountlake Terrace city boundary occupies 2,594 land acres. In 2023, 32% percent of Mountlake Terrace’s land area was covered by tree canopy. 18%, or 3,465 acres, were available to plant trees (PPA). However, planting trees in some land cover classes is not feasible, and the remaining 50% of land was considered unsuitable, primarily due to 5,586 acres of impervious surfaces.

In 2011, Mountlake Terrace had 835 acres of tree canopy. Over the following 12 years, the city experienced a net canopy loss of 2 acres, which represents a -0.1% absolute change or a 0.2% relative decrease in total canopy cover during the study period. This gradual decline highlights ongoing pressures on the urban forest, including aging trees, urban development, and storm impacts.

Table 2. Tree canopy potential in acres and percent in Mountlake Terrace.

UTC Potential Class	Acres	% of Total
Existing Canopy	833	32%
Possible Planting Area	464	18%
Unsuitable	1,297	50%



Mountlake Terrace’s tree canopy has remained largely unchanged between 2011 and 2023, reflecting a period of relative stability in overall canopy coverage

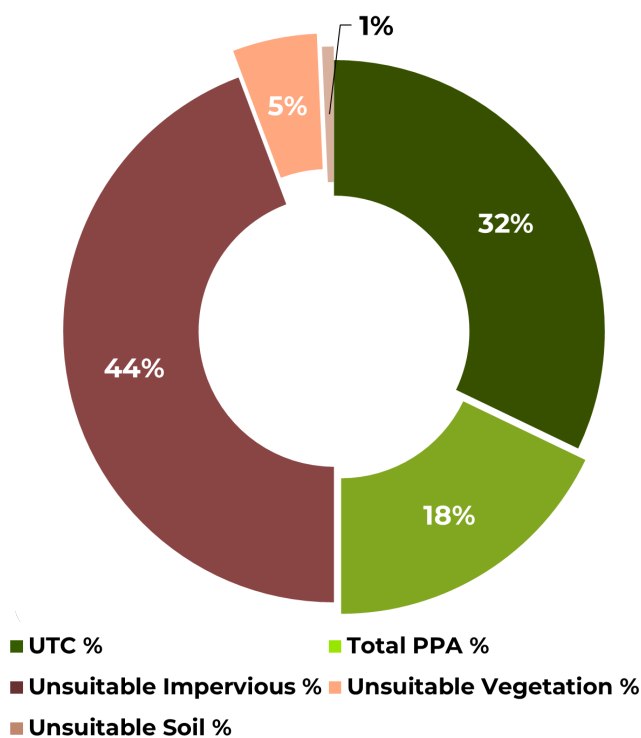


Figure 7. Urban tree canopy, potential planting area, and unsuitable planting area distribution within Mountlake Terrace city limits.





CANOPY AND IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

The city's 833 acres of tree canopy were further divided into subcategories based on whether the canopy was overhanging pervious or impervious surfaces. Tree canopy overhanging an impervious surface offers many advantages, such as localized cooling and increased storm-water absorption.

In Mountlake Terrace, 92% of the tree canopy covers pervious surfaces, while only 8% extends over impervious surfaces. This highlights the importance of planting and maintaining trees in areas adjacent to impervious surfaces, such as rights-of-way, streets, sidewalks, and public spaces, to continue mitigating the harmful effects of buildings and paved surfaces. Strengthening ordinances that support tree planting around parking lots in new developments can further contribute to this effort.

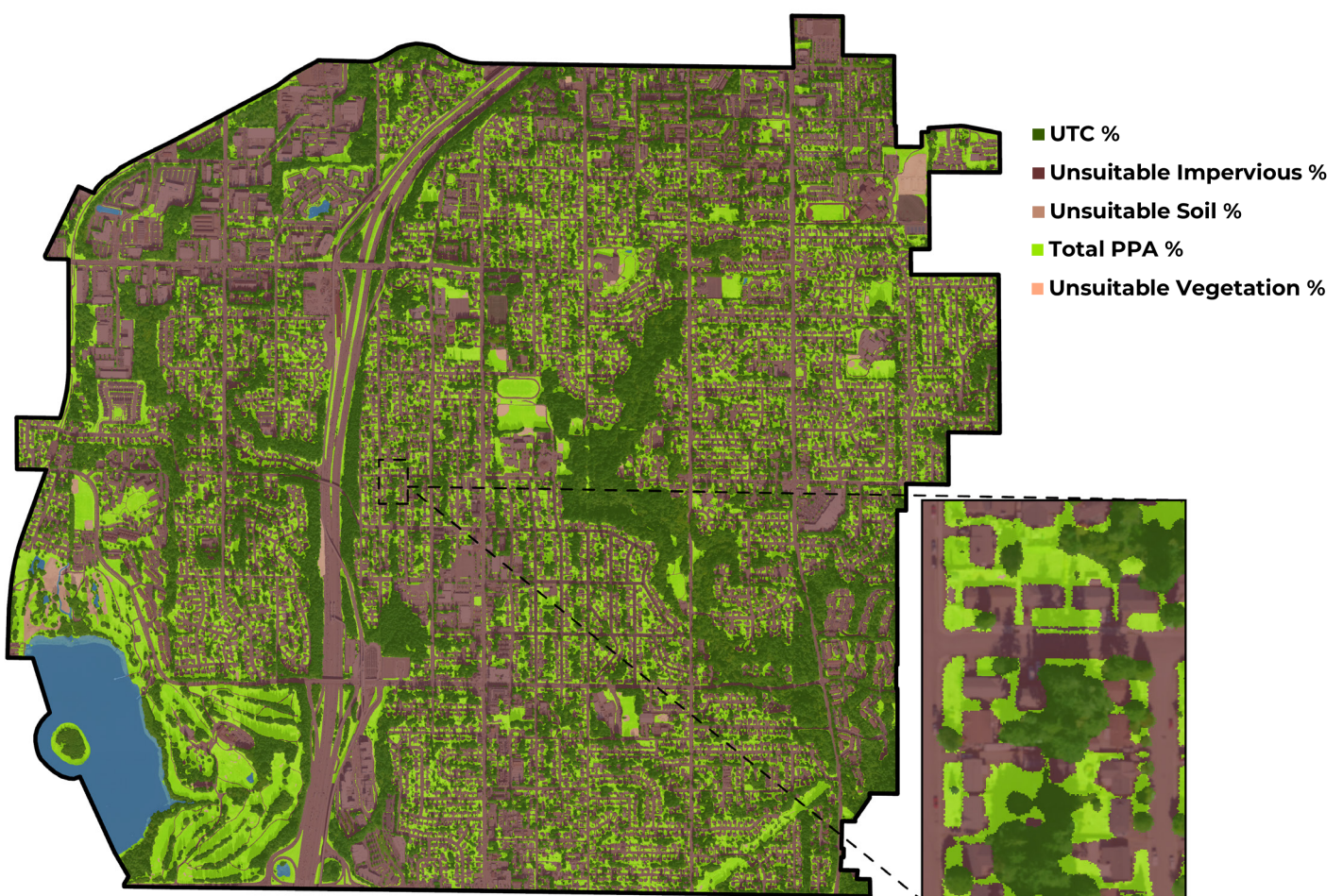


Figure 8. Distribution of UTC, possible planting area, and areas unsuitable for UTC within the City of Mountlake Terrace.

CITYWIDE CANOPY LOSS

At the time of data collection, Mountlake Terrace experienced a net decrease in canopy cover, with losses slightly outpacing gains. The primary causes of canopy loss can be grouped into the following major categories of loss:

► **Aging Neighborhoods:** Many of the city's mature trees were planted during the 1950s housing boom, as Mountlake Terrace rapidly developed to meet post-war demand. These trees, now 60–70 years old, are reaching the end of their natural lifespan. As they age and die, they are removed for safety or health reasons, and the loss is not always offset by new plantings

► **Urban and Transportation Development:** Rapid population growth and urbanization have transformed large residential lots and open spaces into denser multi-family housing and infrastructure projects. Notably, the construction of the Sound Transit light rail along the I-5 corridor has required the removal of many mature trees. As neighborhoods redevelop, the existing tree canopy is often reduced, leaving residents with less buffer from noise and pollution

► **Storm Damage and Environmental Stress:** Mountlake Terrace's parks and open spaces have lost trees due to storm events, including wind, snow, and flooding. These weather events can break limbs, uproot trees, and accelerate the decline of already aging or vulnerable species like alder and cottonwood. Storm-related tree loss is compounded by the challenges of climate change, which brings more extreme weather and stresses trees further.

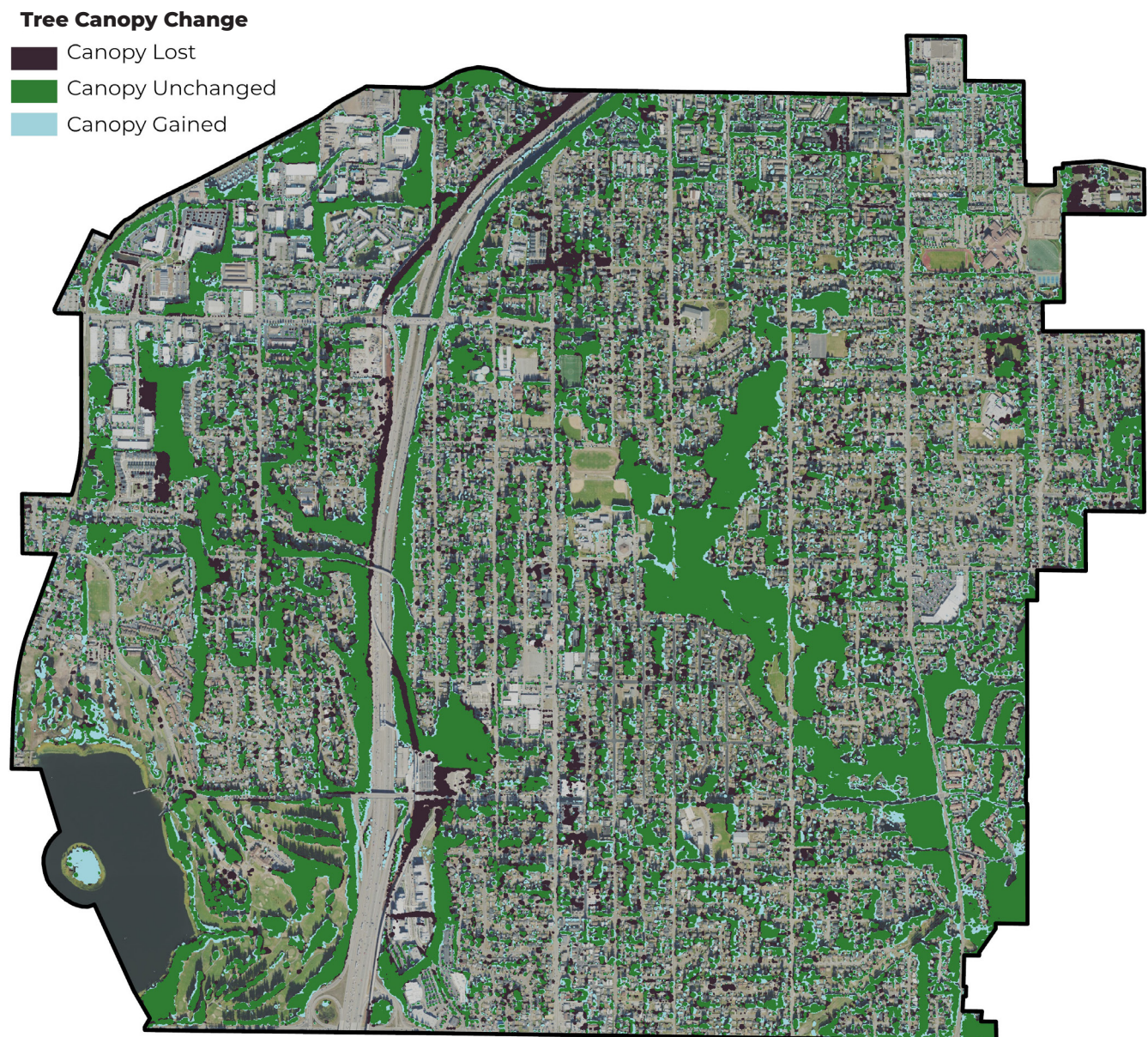


Figure 9. Granular canopy change throughout Mountlake Terrace.

TREE CANOPY COVER BY CITY-OWNED PROPERTIES

City-managed properties are essential to Mountlake Terrace's urban forestry efforts, as they are directly overseen by the municipality. These areas cover approximately 268 acres-about 10% of the city's total land area-and support 122 acres of dense tree canopy, resulting in an average canopy cover of 46%, which is 13% higher than the citywide average. Notably, these 122 acres represent 15% of Mountlake Terrace's total tree canopy. Due to the already substantial canopy coverage, only about 10% of the space on these properties remains available for new plantings.

Most of this canopy is concentrated in two types of parcels: general recreation parks and undeveloped (vacant) lots. The latter, which are minimally managed, account for 55 acres of land and 44 acres of canopy. However, these vacant parcels may be subject to future development, which could reduce their tree cover. Over the 12-year study period, canopy in these unmanaged lots increased by 2%-about an acre-due to natural regeneration and the maturation of existing vegetation.

Recreation parks demonstrated the most significant increase, with canopy cover rising by 8% since 2011. Most other city-managed properties maintained stable canopy levels, with gains generally offsetting losses. Two exceptions were observed in Water Utilities & Irrigation and Executive, Legislative & Judicial Functions properties, both of which saw a 2% decline in canopy cover. These trends highlight the need for targeted management and conservation strategies to sustain and enhance tree canopy on city-owned lands.

Tree Canopy Change

- > 15.0% Dec (0 Features)
- 14.9% to 5.0% Dec (1 Features)
- 4.9% to 0.0% Dec (3 Features)
- 0.1% to 5.0% Inc (5 Features)
- 5.1% to 15.0% Inc (2 Features)
- > 15.1% Inc (3 Features)

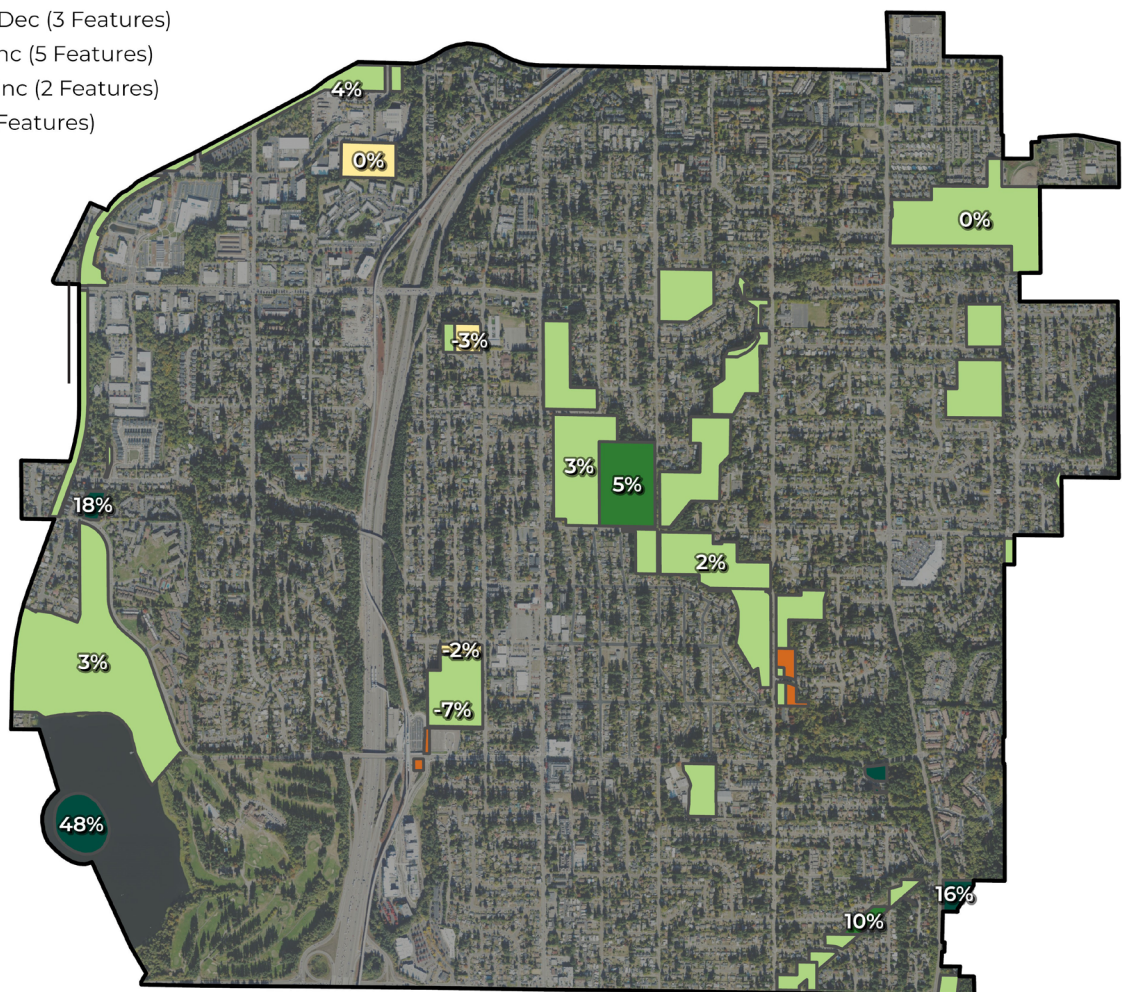


Figure 10. Canopy change by property ownership.

TREE CANOPY COVER BY DISADVANTAGED AREAS

Zoning classifications are fundamental in shaping land use and development in Mountlake Terrace, directly influencing the structure and sustainability of the urban environment. Residential zones, in particular, are crucial for maintaining the city's urban tree canopy, as they contain the majority of both existing canopy cover and available planting space. Alongside recreation and park districts, these zones are key contributors to the city's overall canopy health.

The Single-Household Residential District (RS 7200) stands out as the largest contributor to Mountlake Terrace's tree canopy, currently accounting for 205.1 acres—approximately 32% of the city's total canopy area. Recreation and Park Districts (REC) are also significant, covering 101.9 acres of land, with 50.1% of that area under tree canopy. In contrast, the General Commercial District (CG) has the lowest tree cover at 20.3% and the highest proportion of impervious surfaces at 69.1%. Similarly, the Freeway/Tourist District (F/T) and Light Industry/Office Park District (LI/OP) have high impervious surface percentages, at 64.2% and 59.6% respectively, limiting opportunities for planting and contributing to urban heat.

The RS 7200 district holds the greatest potential for canopy expansion, with 181.1 acres of plantable space—representing a substantial opportunity for urban reforestation. Recreation and Park Districts (REC) offer an additional 36.1 acres of plantable space, presenting further opportunities to enhance their already robust canopy coverage.

Recent trends show that REC zones have experienced positive change, gaining 4.3 acres of canopy—a 10% increase—over the study period. Conversely, the RS 7200 district has seen a net loss of 7 acres, equating to a 3% decrease in canopy cover since 2011. This decline may be indicative of increased urbanization, though further analysis is needed to determine if this is a persistent trend.

Other residential districts have shown mixed results. The RS 4800 district lost 3.4 acres of canopy (a 5% decrease), with current canopy coverage at 32.1%. Town Center zones (TC-1, TC-2, TC-3, TC-R) collectively lost approximately 6.6 acres, with relative losses ranging from 11% to 22%, underscoring the challenges posed by higher urban density.



Table 3. Tree canopy potential in acres and percent in Mountlake Terrace.

Zoning Class	Canopy %	Plantable Space %	Impervious %	Net Canopy Change %	Relative Canopy Change (%)
Community Business District	24	7	69	5.4	29.4
General Commercial District	20	10	69	-2.0	-9.0
Freeway/Tourist District	26	1	64	-2.0	-6.9
Light Industry/Office Park District	34	5	60	0.2	0.6
Mobile Home Park	18	15	66	5.3	43.4
Public Facilities and Services	28	7	62	-12.1	-30.1
Recreation and Park District	50	12	10	2.9	6.3
Multiple-Household Residential Low Density	37	15	42	3.2	9.3
Multiple-Household Residential Medium Density Dis*	33	15	50	3.0	10.0
Single-Household Residential Districts (RS-T)	26	28	45	-6.6	-20.0
Single-Household Residential Districts(RS 4800)	32	31	36	-1.7	-5.1
Single-Household Residential Districts(RS 7200)	33	29	36	-1.1	-3.3
Single-Household Residential Districts(RS 8400)	38	19	33	0.5	1.2
Special Development District Commercial/Residenti*	18	5	77	4.2	30.8
Special Development District/ Residential	61	2	30	5.6	10.1
Town Center (TC-1)	35	23	41	-10.0	-22.4
Town Center TC-2)	27	14	59	-1.2	-4.2
Town Center TC-3)	29	13	57	-5.9	-16.8
Town Center (TC-R)	19	14	67	-2.4	-11.0



The Single-Household Residential District (RS 7200) offers the greatest opportunity for canopy expansion, with 181 acres of plantable space despite a recent 3% decline in canopy cover.

TREE CANOPY COVER BY PARCELS

To effectively visualize tree canopy cover and changes over time in Mountlake Terrace, two maps depicting parcel boundaries offer a comprehensive view of canopy distribution. The parcel layer highlights specific land ownership classifications, enabling stakeholders in Mountlake Terrace to assess canopy metrics at the property level. This detailed scale allows for a quick review of spatial patterns of gains and losses over time, with darker green areas indicating growth and brown parcels representing canopy loss. By examining individual parcels and the overall spatial patterns throughout the city, stakeholders can identify priority planting areas.

The map reveals that canopy increases (dark green) are widespread in many residential neighborhoods, especially in single-household residential zones, indicating successful planting or canopy retention in these areas. In contrast, significant canopy decreases (dark brown) are concentrated in Town Center zones, commercial corridors, and along major roadways, reflecting redevelopment and urban densification. Recreation and Park Districts also show notable gains in canopy, while industrial and commercial districts remain challenged, with persistent low canopy cover and limited greening. This parcel-level visualization makes it clear where tree gains are occurring, where losses are concentrated, and where the greatest opportunities for urban forestry investment exist across Mountlake Terrace.

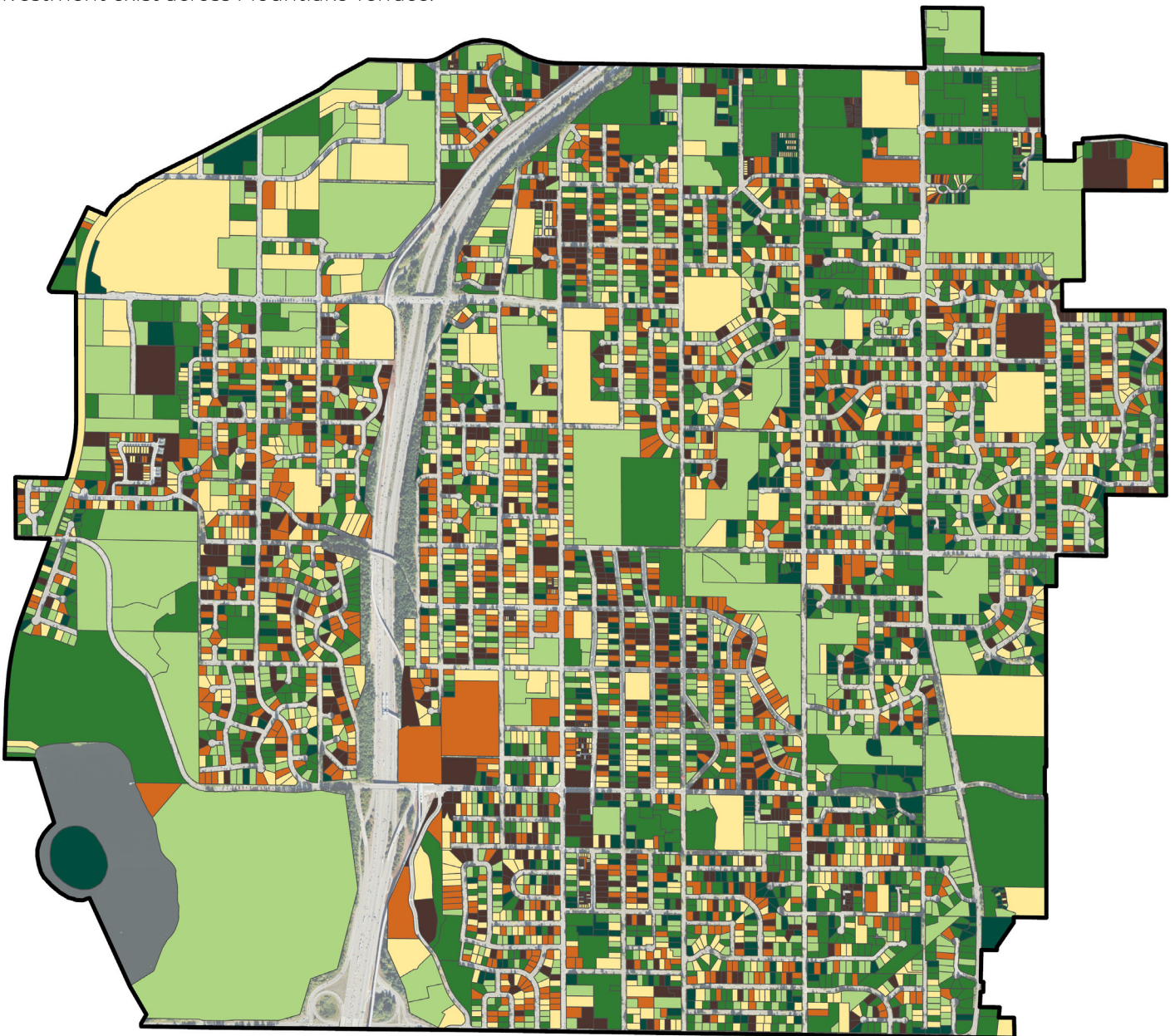


Figure 11. Canopy change within Mountlake Terrace's parcels.

TREE PLANTING

PRIORITIZATION

Mountlake Terrace comprises 17 census block groups (CBGs), which are clusters of census block boundaries designed to create even population divisions. These areas are essential for analyzing the equitable distribution of tree canopy across the region and can be linked to demographic and socio-economic data from the American Community Survey (ACS).

Increasing tree canopy cover can provide numerous benefits for local communities and visitors. Various socio-economic, demographic, and accessibility data sources were analyzed at the CBG level, and each was ranked based on the specific needs of the area. The rankings range from high priority (dark blue) to low priority (light yellow) and were calculated for each criterion, as well as overall, to highlight where multiple needs overlap.

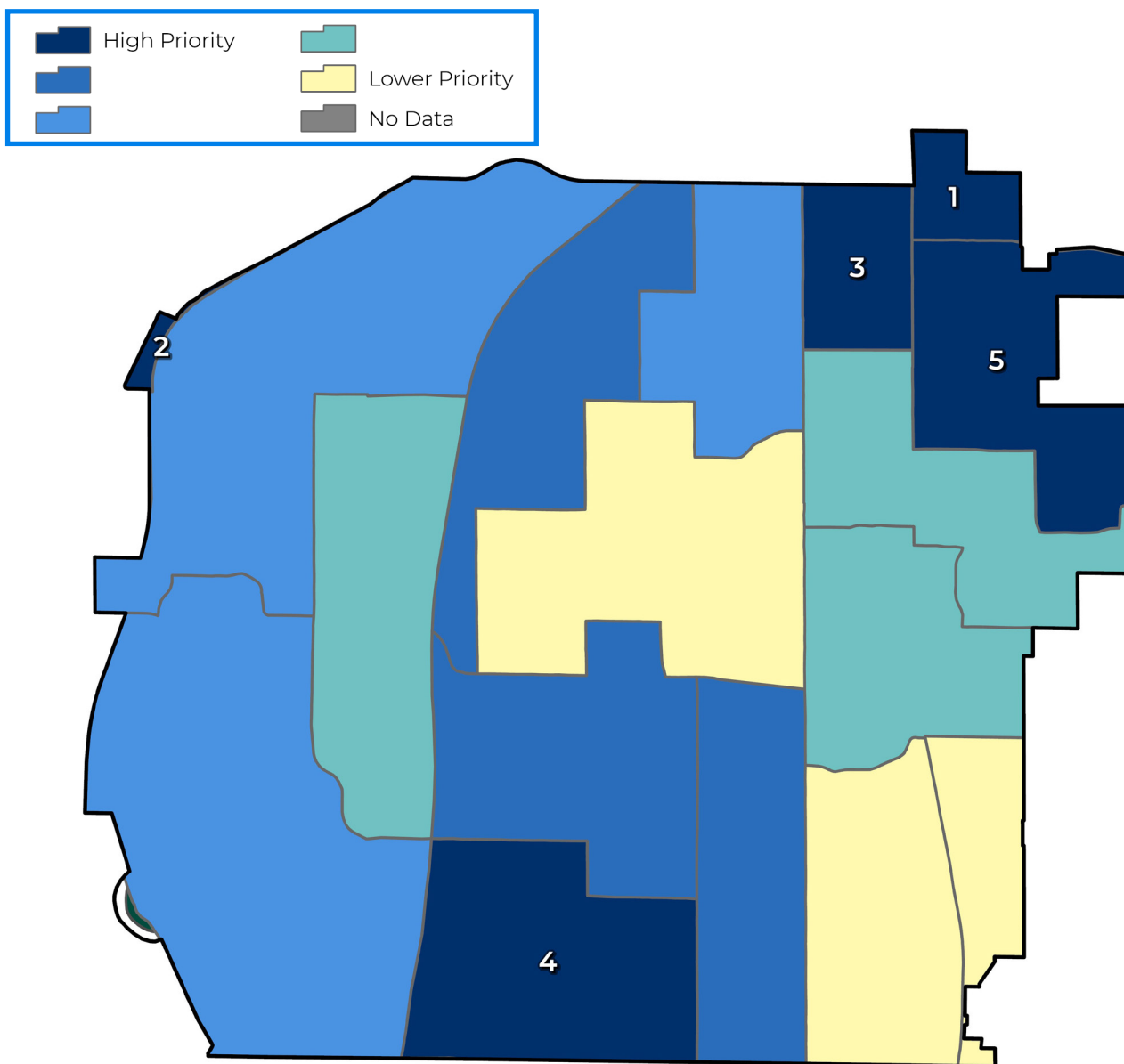


Figure 12. Overall prioritization rankings for Mountlake Terrace's census block groups. Lower rankings indicate higher priority for tree plantings.



Areas with Low Existing Tree Canopy: Census block groups with lower tree canopy cover percentages and higher non-canopy land are prioritized for planting.



Unemployment Rate: Census block groups with higher unemployment rates are prioritized for planting opportunities.



Possible Tree Canopy: Census block groups with greater plantable areas are prioritized for expanding urban tree canopy.



Vulnerable Population: Census block groups with larger ratios of residents under 18 or over 65 are prioritized for planting to support vulnerable populations.



Urban Heat Island Effect: Census block groups with higher surface temperatures are prioritized for planting to mitigate heat effects.



Median Household Income: Census block groups with lower median household incomes are prioritized for planting to address environmental inequality.



Poverty Rate: Census block groups with higher percentages of residents below the poverty level are prioritized for planting to enhance benefits designated poverty level.



Educational Attainment: Census block groups with lower percentages of residents with a high school diploma or GED are prioritized for planting to improve outcomes.

Table 4. Highest priority census block groups in Mountlake Terrace.

Census Block GEOID	Percent of Population in Poverty	% of Working Class Unemployed	Median Income	Avg. Surface Temp.	Educational Attainment	Canopy %	Possible Planting Area %
53-061051-929-2	16	39	55,000	118	14	31	10
53-061051-401-1	4	25	53,716	122	13	19	23
53-061051-301-3	14	28	54,518	117	2	27	17
53-061051-100-3	19	44	62,875	120	3	25	17
53-061051-301-1	7	45	111,875	121	2	21	26
53-061051-929-2	16	39	55,000	122	14	31	10

REPORT

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY/KEY TERMS

Land Acres: Total land area, in acres, of the assessment boundary (excludes water).

Non-Canopy Vegetation: Areas of grass and open space where tree canopy does not exist.

Possible Planting Area - Vegetation: Areas of grass and open space where tree canopy does not exist, and it is biophysically possible to plant trees.

Shrub: Areas of shrub or other leafy and woody vegetation (smaller than 6ft tall) that are not classified as tree canopy.

Soil/Dry Vegetation: Areas of bare soil and/or dried, dead vegetation.

Total Acres: Total area, in acres, of the assessment boundary (includes water).

Unsuitable Impervious: Areas of impervious surfaces that are not suitable for tree planting. These include buildings and roads and all other types of impervious surfaces.

Unsuitable Planting Area: Areas where it is not feasible to plant trees. Airports, ball fields, golf courses, etc. were manually defined as unsuitable planting areas.

Unsuitable Soil: Areas of soil/dry vegetation considered unsuitable for tree planting. Irrigation and other modifiers may be required to keep a tree alive in these areas.

Unsuitable Vegetation: Areas of non-canopy vegetation that are not suitable for tree planting due to their land use.

Urban Tree Canopy (UTC): The "layer of leaves, branches and stems that cover the ground" (Raciti et al., 2006) when viewed from above; the metric used to quantify the extent, function, and value of the urban forest. Tree canopy was generally taller than 10-15 feet tall.

Water: Areas of open, surface water not including swimming pools.

MAY | 2025

URBAN TREE CANOPY
ASSESSMENT
MOUNTLAKE TERRACE,
WASHINGTON





Tree Inventory Analysis Summary

February 2025

A summary of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest inventory

City of Mountlake Terrace, WA Urban Forest Management Plan



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Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Canopy Cover	The layer of tree leaves, branches, and stems that cover the ground when viewed from above.
Codominant Stems	Two or more main stems of a tree that are of equal or nearly equal size and originate from the same point on the trunk, which can lead to structural weakness and increased risk of failure.
Condition Rating	A classification of tree health based on foliage, structure, and wood condition
Crown Dieback	A condition where the branches at the top of a tree lose vitality, often due to stress or disease.
Cultivar	A plant variety that has been selectively bred for specific traits, such as disease resistance or aesthetics.
DSH (Diameter at Standard Height)	A standard measurement of a tree's trunk diameter, taken at 4.5 feet (1.37 meters) above the ground. Formerly DBH.
Ecosystem Services	Benefits trees provide to the environment, such as stormwater management, carbon sequestration, and air quality improvement.
Family	A taxonomic rank in the biological classification system that groups related genera (plural of genus).
Genus (Plural: Genera)	A rank in the biological classification system that groups species sharing common characteristics.
Hardscape Damage	Damage caused by tree roots or growth to sidewalks, roads, or other infrastructure.
Invasive Species	Non-native species that spread aggressively, outcompeting native species and causing ecological disruption.
Native Species	Species naturally occurring in a specific region, contributing to local ecosystem balance.
Species	The most specific level of classification, referring to a group of organisms capable of interbreeding.
Species Diversity	A measure of the variety of tree species in an area.
Structural Defects	Physical flaws in a tree, such as cavities, decay, or codominant stems, that may compromise its stability or health.
Taxonomic	Related to taxonomy, the scientific system of classifying and naming organisms based on shared characteristics. This system organizes life into hierarchical ranks such as kingdom, phylum, class, order, family, genus, and species.

Executive Summary



6,830

CITY STREET TREES INVENTORIED & ANALYZED

A healthy, diverse urban forest offers many benefits to residents and the ecosystem. Beyond their visual appeal, trees provide a range of valuable ecosystem services for the City. For example, they filter air pollutants, slow the release of stormwater runoff into the watershed, improve water quality, provide oxygen, reduce energy costs, offer shade, and create habitat and food for wildlife.

In urban environments, trees not only contribute to ecological health but also provide residents with invaluable green space and health benefits. Research shows that proximity to green spaces is linked to better mental health (Barton, et al. Environmental Science & Technology, 2010), improved social connections (Holtan, et al. Environment and Behavior, 2014), and enhanced physical well-being (Takano, Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 2002).

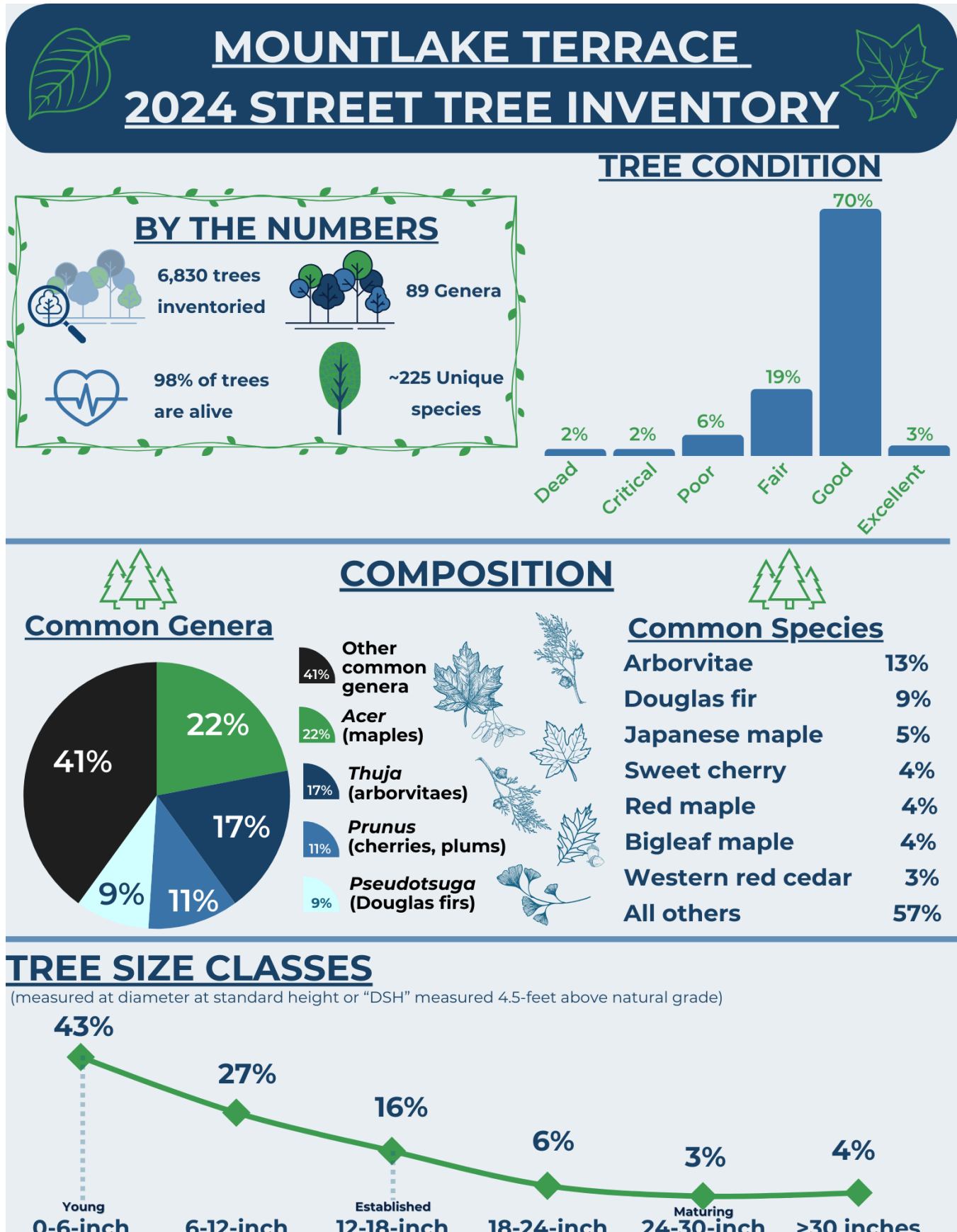
To assess the state, characteristics, and trends of the City's urban forest, inventory data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and the TreePlotter app (<https://pg-cloud.com/MountlakeTerraceWA/>). In 2024, 6,830 trees were inventoried by Certified Arborists accredited by the International Society of Arboriculture. These trees were evaluated for site quality, health observations, structural defects, and other key data points.

To maintain a sustainable and healthy community forest, it is essential to focus on species and age diversity, proper tree maintenance, risk management, and community involvement. An effective community forest management plan supports these efforts, helping to ensure the health and longevity of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

Species diversity plays a crucial role in building a resilient tree canopy. A more diverse forest is better protected from pests and diseases that could harm large portions of the tree population. The 10-20-30 rule, a widely accepted guideline for fostering diversity, recommends that no more than 10% of a single species, 20% of a genus, or 30% of a family should make up the urban tree population. Over-reliance on certain species can reduce diversity and increase the forest's vulnerability to threats.

Equally critical is ensuring that the right tree is selected for the right location. Factors such as available space, watering needs, and soil quality must be carefully considered to support the long-term health of newly planted trees. As cities like Mountlake Terrace work to create more resilient and sustainable community forests, understanding the specific environmental needs of the area will lead to more informed and successful management practices.

Inventory Results At-A-Glance



Benefits of the Urban Forest

The urban forest provides both measurable and experiential benefits, contributing significantly to human health, well-being, and climate change mitigation. The 2024 tree inventory revealed that the 6,830 inventoried street trees offer \$121,800 in annual ecosystem services. These trees intercept 1,277,000 gallons of stormwater, remove 3,584 pounds of pollutants, and sequester 86,080 pounds of carbon each year. With an estimated structural value of \$12 million, the city's growing legacy of trees remains a key asset in fostering a sustainable and vibrant community.

Annual Benefits and Services of the Inventoried Trees (2024)*

			
Overall	Air Quality	Carbon Services	Stormwater
\$121,800	\$69,100	\$18,600	\$34,100
Annually	3,584 lbs	86,080 lbs C. seq	1,227,000 gallons

Annual Benefits and Services of the Most Common Public Trees (2024)*

Common Name	Overall \$	Air Quality (\$)	Air Quality (lbs.)	Carbon Services (\$)	Carbon Services (C seq.)	Stormwater (\$)	Stormwater (gal)
Arborvitae	\$6,690	\$2,807	140	\$1,076	4,980	\$2,807	49,837
Douglas fir	\$19,427	\$11,724	600	\$1,920	8,880	\$5,783	208,123
Japanese maple	\$2,930	\$1,663	80	\$446	2,060	\$821	29,530
Sweet cherry	\$2,586	\$1,334	60	\$594	2,740	\$658	23,685
Red maple	\$5,433	\$2,770	140	\$1,296	5,980	\$1,367	49,176
Bigleaf maple	\$9,610	\$5,599	300	\$1,249	5,780	\$2,762	99,387
Western red cedar	\$10,072	\$6,546	340	\$296	1,360	\$3,230	116,214
Freeman maple	\$5,629	\$3,093	160	\$1,010	4,660	\$1,526	54,915
Thundercloud cherry plum	\$4,239	\$2,239	120	\$895	4,140	\$1,105	39,752
Common plum	\$1,127	\$552	20	\$303	1,400	\$272	9,801
Subtotal	\$67,743	\$38,327	1,960	\$9,085	41,980	\$20,331	680,420
Other Species	\$54,057	\$30,773	1,624	\$9,515	44,100	\$13,769	546,580
TOTAL	\$121,800	\$69,100	3,584	\$18,600	86,080	\$34,100	1,227,000

Table 1. Summary of ecosystem benefits and services for the most common street trees.

Tree Inventory: Structure

Urban forest structure describes the tree population in the city in terms of its species composition, number of trees, age classes, and tree distribution. These summaries assist city tree managers in proper tree management and planting to ensure long-lasting canopy and benefits are distributed equally throughout the City.

Tree Diversity and Composition

Species composition data are essential since the types of trees present throughout the city dictate the amount and type of benefits produced, tree maintenance activities required, and budget considerations.

The 6,830 trees inventoried consist of ~225 different species and cultivar classifications. The highest percentage consists of arborvitae with 13% (897 trees) of the total tree population, followed by Douglas fir at 9% (602 trees) and Japanese maple with 5% (340 trees). Figure 1 below shows the remaining top species, and their percentages compared to the other 201 species that were inventoried.

Composition of Street Trees by Common Name

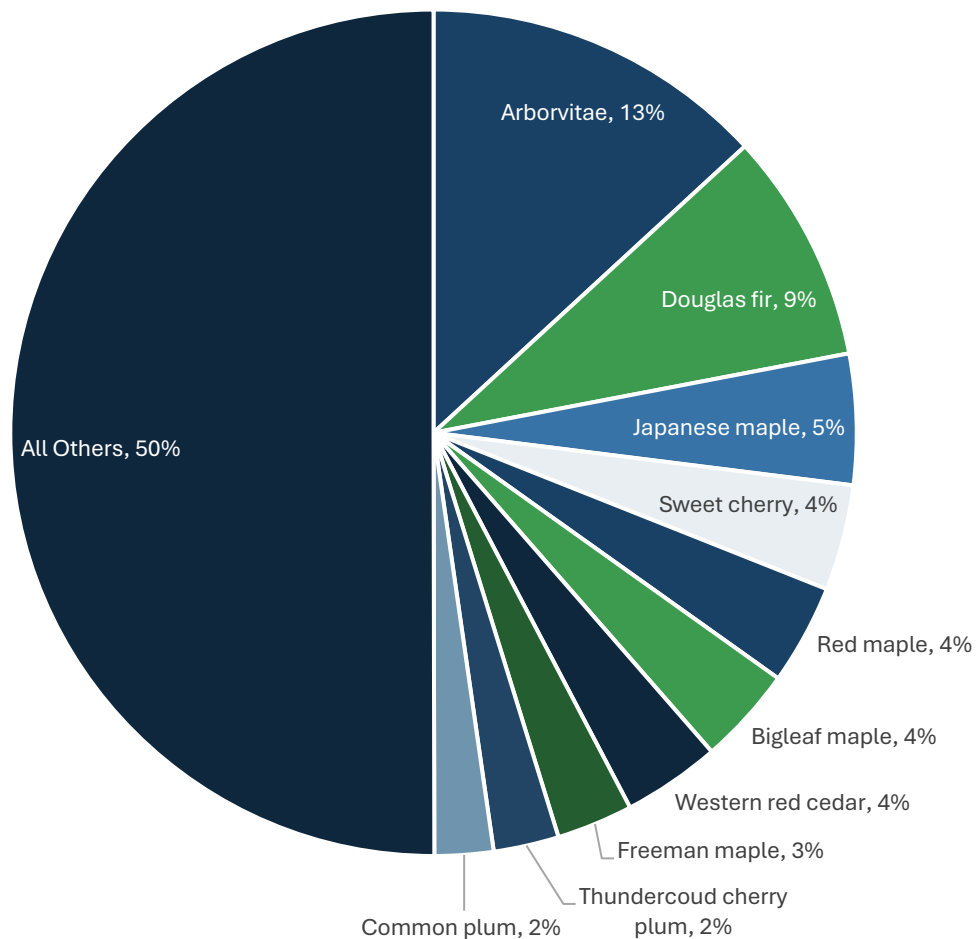


Figure 1. Summary of tree species composition for inventoried street trees by common name.

The 10-20-30 rule is a commonly recommended target for species composition within an urban forest. It suggests that no more than 10% of the tree population should be the same species, no more than 20% should be from the same genus, and no more than 30% should belong to the same family. In the street tree inventory of Mountlake Terrace, arborvitae represent 13% of all species, exceeding the ideal target.

Figures 2 and 3 show the composition of Mountlake Terrace's Street trees by genus and family classifications. Analysis reveals that *Acer* (maples), and *Thuja* (arborvitae & cedars) are the most common genera, representing 22% (1,502 trees) and 17% (1,154 trees) of the total population. In terms of family composition, *Cupressaceae* (arborvitae & cedars) and *Sapindaceae* (maples) have the highest representation at 22% each (1,532 trees and 1,513 trees respectively).

While the family composition remains within the recommended limits, the species and genus compositions reveal some potential concerns. Arborvitae exceed the 10% species limit, and *Acer* surpasses the 20% genus threshold. However, since cedars and arborvitae are native to the Pacific Northwest, their high representation does not pose an immediate threat but should be monitored for potential pest or disease outbreaks. The over-representation of maples, though no individual species exceeds the 10% guideline, underscores the need for greater diversity within the tree population to mitigate future risks from pests and diseases. Diversifying beyond the maple genus (*Acer*) would strengthen the resilience of Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

Within Mountlake Terrace's inventoried tree population, several species are classified as invasive or pose risks due to susceptibility to invasive pests. Portugal laurel (10 trees), European cherry laurel (17 trees), and European mountain ash (58 trees) are listed as invasive by the state of Washington. While these species have minimal representation in the current inventory, their presence may be more significant across the broader urban forest.

Additionally, green ash (20 trees) is highly vulnerable to the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). To mitigate this risk, future plantings of green ash should be avoided, and existing trees should be properly managed to prevent infestation.

A more detailed discussion on invasive species and pest management will be included in the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Composition of Street Trees by Genera

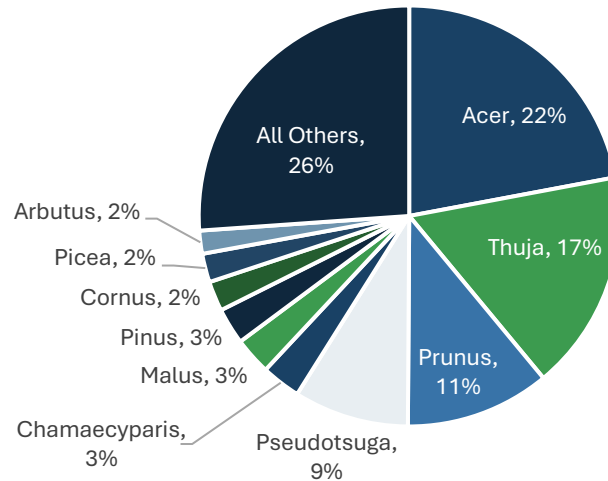


Figure 2. Summary of genera distribution for inventoried street trees.

Composition of Street Trees by Family

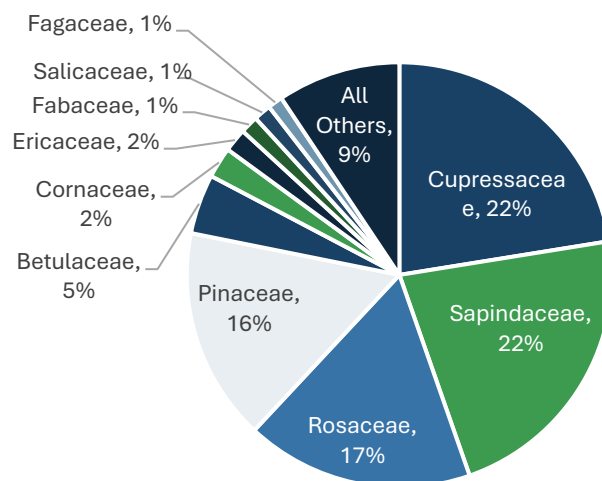


Figure 3. Summary of family distribution for inventoried street trees.

Size and Age Distribution

The distribution of tree ages influences the structure of the urban forest as well as the present and future costs. An unevenly aged urban forest offers continued flow of ecological benefits and a more uniform workflow allowing managers to more accurately allocate annual maintenance schedules and budgets.

To optimize the value and benefits of Mountlake Terrace's trees, the urban forest should have a high percentage of large canopy trees which provide greater ecosystem benefits. On the other hand, there must be a suitable number of younger, smaller trees in the urban forest to account for and eventually replace large and mature trees in decline. Having a healthy percentage of young trees in the urban forest will ensure a sustainable tree population as well as age distribution in future years. To compare Mountlake Terrace's urban forest structure to industry-recommended standards, the "ideal distribution" is used (McPherson et. al, 2011).

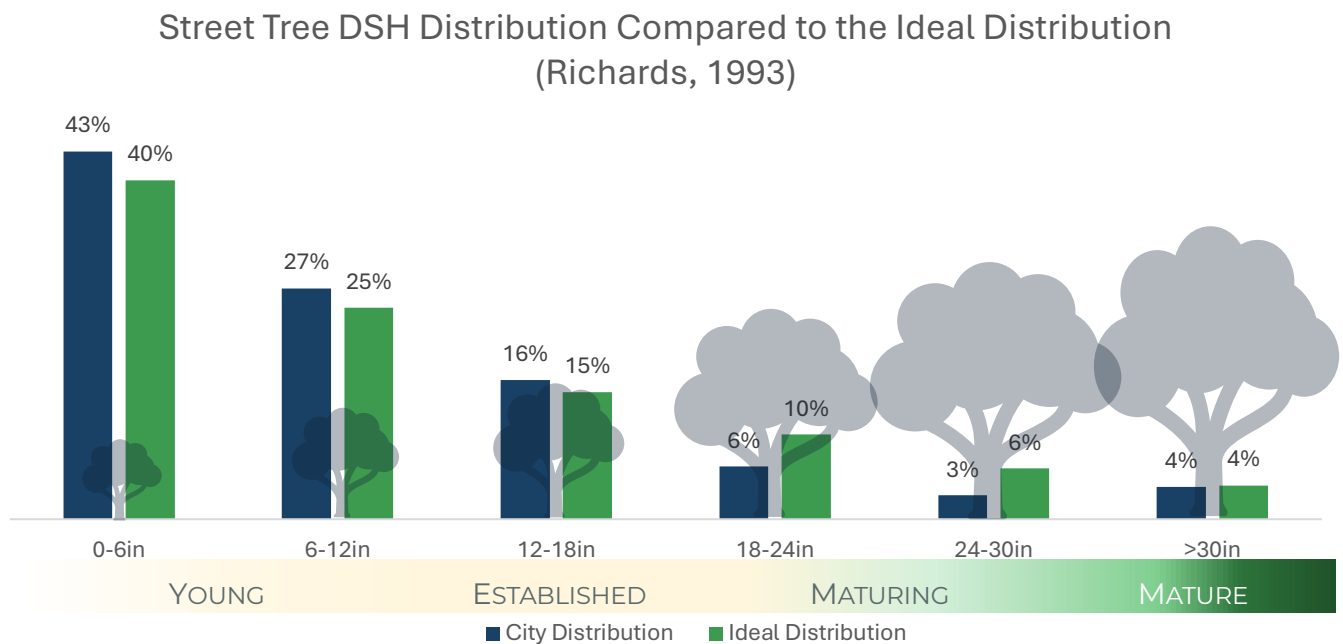


Figure 4. Comparison of Mountlake Terrace's street tree size distribution to an ideal distribution.

Overall, the age distribution of Mountlake Terrace's inventoried tree population (blue bars) is similar to the ideal age distribution (green bars). However, it is important to consider that the inventoried population is only a portion of the entire urban forest. As Figure 4 above shows, 70% of the urban forest (4,828 trees) is composed of trees with a DSH (or "diameter at standard height," measured at 4.5 feet above grade) ranging from 0 to 12 inches. This indicates that the majority of trees are young or small-statured, which is crucial for a healthy urban forest. However, trees with a DSH of 24 inches or greater make up just 7% (453 trees) of Mountlake Terrace's trees. City trees in this DSH range can offer larger ecological benefits if the trees are properly maintained and remain healthy, but trees of this size should be monitored frequently to determine maintenance needs, potential risks, and signs of decline. The DSH range of 18 to 30 inches, which makes up 9% of the tree population (or 617 trees) is 7% below the ideal distribution and extra care should be taken to ensure the health of these trees to maintain an ideal distribution in the future.

The average DSH for the entire population is nine inches, and the largest recorded DSH is 68 inches. An ideal age distribution in the tree population allows managers to allocate and project annual maintenance costs uniformly. This ensures continuity in overall tree canopy coverage and associated benefits which are often dependent on the growing space of individual trees (e.g. open grown versus restricted growing areas). It is recommended to monitor and strategically manage large trees throughout the city and weigh the risks and benefits that are associated with large, mature trees.

Tree Inventory: Management

Tree characteristics and environmental factors affect the management needs for urban trees. An analysis of the condition and maintenance requirements assists managers in planning Mountlake Terrace's urban forest.

Tree condition indicates how well trees are managed and how well they perform, given site-specific conditions. Evaluations are based on key attributes, including wood structure, foliage quality, and overall health indicators. Condition Classes:

- **Excellent:** Trees in ideal health with strong structure, vibrant foliage, and no visible defects. These trees perform exceptionally well in their environment.
- **Good:** Trees with minor issues that do not significantly affect their health or structure. These trees demonstrate good vitality.
- **Fair:** Trees exhibiting moderate health concerns, such as minor structural defects or signs of stress. These may require monitoring and targeted maintenance.
- **Poor:** Trees with significant structural or health issues that could impact their performance. Intervention may be required to prevent further decline.
- **Critical:** Trees at high risk of failure or severe decline. These trees demand immediate attention for safety or recovery purposes.
- **Dead:** Trees that are nonviable and require removal to ensure public safety and free up resources for healthier trees.

Tree maintenance needs are assigned for public safety reasons and for the health and longevity of the trees themselves. Understanding the maintenance needs assists tree managers in establishing daily work plans and maintaining public safety.

Urban Forest Condition

The inventory data were analyzed to identify potential trends in tree condition and management needs. Information on the condition of trees plays an important role in planning, budgeting, and use of resources. Each inventoried tree's health was evaluated by ISA Certified Arborists based on the condition of the wood and the foliage as well as the structure.

Figure 5 summarizes the 6,830 trees that were assigned a condition rating and shows the detailed information for each condition class.

The data show that a majority of the trees inventoried are classified as being in "Good" condition, comprising 70% or 4,753 trees, followed by those in "Fair" condition comprising 19% (1,291 trees).

Only 388 trees are noted as being in "Poor" condition, 104 trees are classified as being 'Critical' condition, and 107 trees are classified as dead / removal required. The dead trees or trees noted for removal should be addressed and planned for immediately. Trees classified as "Poor" may have a chance at recovery depending on the factor(s) affecting the rating. These trees should be examined to determine the mitigation necessary, if any.

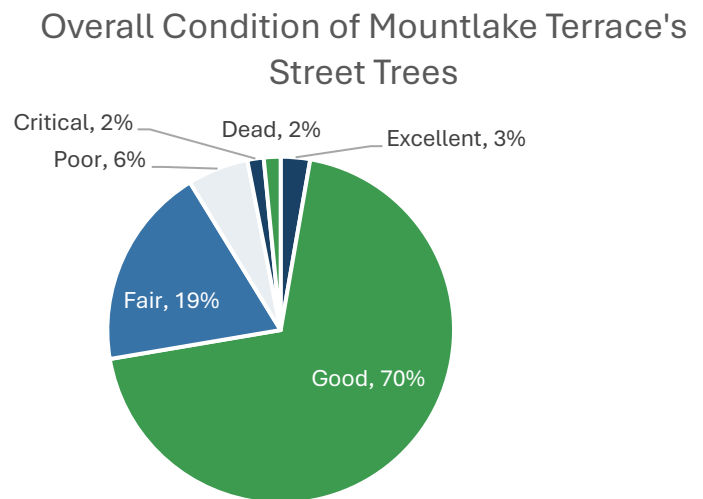


Figure 5. Summary of street tree condition classes.

Relative Performance Index

In addition to understanding the overall condition of the public tree population to inform management strategies, an analysis of performance was also conducted for the ten most prevalent tree species using the Relative Performance Index approach.

Relative Performance Index (RPI) is a comparison of a species' condition rating of "Good" and the tree population's "Good" rating. Using the percent of Good trees for a given species divided by the tree population percentage of Good trees gives a value of equal to 1, less than 1, or greater than 1. A value equal to 1 means the particular species is as healthy as the overall tree population. A value less than 1 means the species is not as healthy as the overall tree population. A value greater than 1 means the species is healthier than the overall tree population. RPI answers the question of how well a species is performing in terms of health compared to the entire inventoried population.

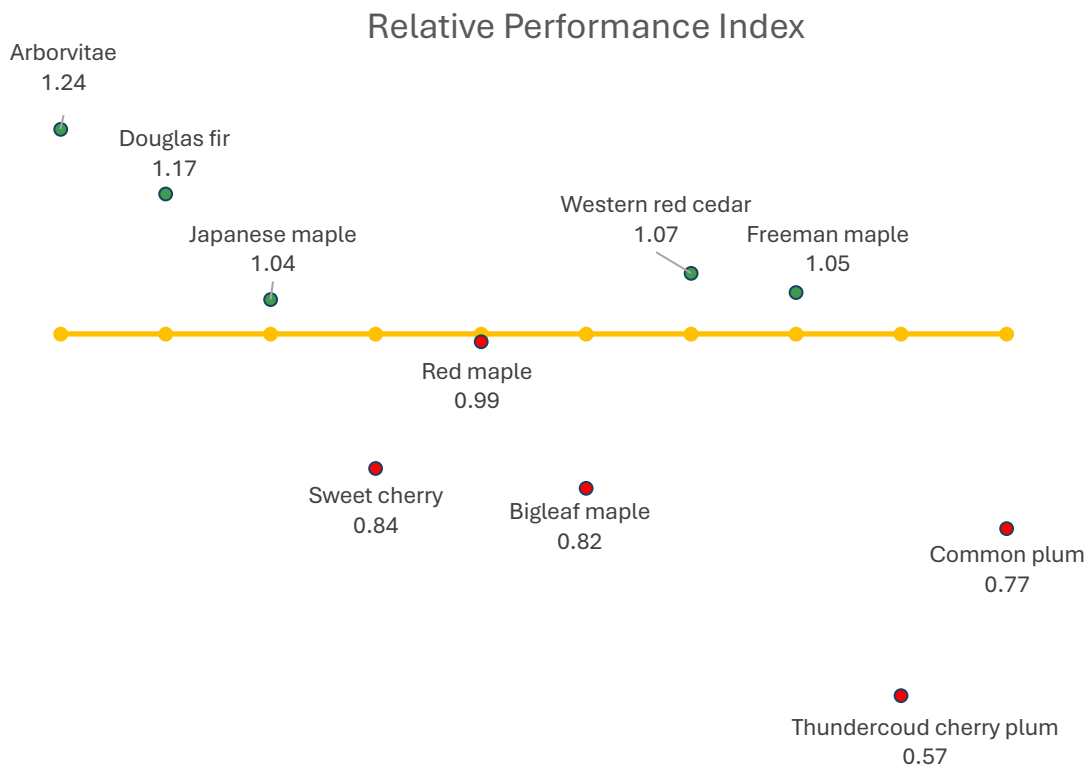


Figure 6. Summary of the Relative Performance Index (RPI) for Mountlake Terrace's top ten species.

For street tree population, arborvitae, Douglas fir, Japanese maple, western red cedar, and Freeman maple are performing better than the overall tree populations. Bigleaf maple, sweet cherry, red maple, thundercloud cherry plum, and common plum are underperforming and are in the poorest condition of the top ten most prevalent tree species.

Some species may have a low RPI due to a variety of factors, including susceptibility to local pests, disease, or environmental stressors such as poor soil conditions, drought, or competition with other vegetation. Species with low RPI may also struggle in urban environments if they are not well-suited to the specific conditions in the area, such as compacted soil or pollution. These metrics are useful in identifying concentrations of maintenance demand and determining the appropriate tree species to plant in the future.

Tree Observations

Tree observations were recorded during the 2024 inventory to further describe a tree's health, structure, or location when more detail was needed. A total of 21 unique observations were included in the inventory.

Table 2 to the right provides a summary of the observations for Mountlake Terrace's street trees. A total of 3,506 trees were recorded as having one or more defects (51% of all inventoried trees), with a total of 6,141 unique observations being recorded during the tree inventory. Poor structure was the most frequent observation recorded (14% or 970 trees) during the 2024 tree inventory. Deadwood (12% or 845 trees), codominant stems (11% or 743 trees), and improperly pruned (10% or 705 trees) were the next most frequent observations.

Of the total observations made, 63 percent are preventable or mendable meaning the defects or concerns observed are primarily human-caused. For example, poor structure can be prevented or limited with proper young tree pruning. Implementing best practices and standards would prevent or reduce the number of improperly pruned trees, and poor root systems can be prevented by choosing quality tree nursery stock, proper planting, and amending soils. Trees with hardscape damage observations could have been prevented by choosing the appropriate species for the site and ensuring adequate root space. Lastly, adequate mulch rings, increased growing space, better managed grates, and awareness would reduce the count of mechanical damage observations. The data also shows the impacts of deferred maintenance. About 60 percent of the observations recorded could be addressed or prevented with proactive pruning (codominant stems, crown dieback, poor structure, improperly pruned, girdling roots, and included bark).

Street Tree Observations

Observation	Count	% of Trees
Poor Structure	970	14%
Deadwood	845	12%
Codominant Stems	743	11%
Improperly Pruned	705	10%
Crown Dieback	682	10%
Cavity Decay	628	9%
Signs of Stress	337	5%
Hardscape Damage	271	4%
Disease	257	4%
Mechanical Damage	143	2%
Included Bark	116	2%
All Other Observations	444	7%
TOTAL	6,141	

Table 2. Observations and defects recorded for Mountlake Terrace's street trees.

Management Priorities

The tree inventory conducted in Mountlake Terrace assessed the management needs of each tree following CAL FIRE standards. Certified arborists evaluated the condition of every tree and determined its management priority based on overall health and the severity of any defects observed. Each tree was assigned to a specific category, including removal, priority pruning (with classifications such as high, medium, or low), and routine pruning. These categories help prioritize the timing and level of care required to maintain tree health and ensure public safety. By adhering to this standardized approach, the city can address tree management needs systematically and in accordance with best practices. The overall goal is to promote the health and longevity of the urban forest while addressing any safety risks efficiently.

As shown in Table 3, the inventory classified each of the 6,830 trees with a corresponding maintenance recommendation. The majority of trees (66%, or 4,540 trees) were identified as small trees in need of routine maintenance, while 30% (2,070 trees) were large trees also requiring routine maintenance. This means that most trees need regular pruning to correct structural issues or manage growth that could obstruct traffic, cause safety hazards, or interfere with infrastructure. A small percentage (less than 1%, or ten trees) were identified for a Training Prune, aimed at shaping young trees to promote strong central leaders and ensure healthy long-term growth.

Several trees in Mountlake Terrace's urban forest were also classified as requiring immediate or near-term action. Priority 1 Removal was assigned to 5 trees (<1%) that present immediate risks due to severe structural defects, disease, or other hazardous conditions, necessitating prompt removal to prevent damage or injury. Priority 2 Removal affects 38 trees (1%), which are not immediately dangerous but show signs of significant decline, requiring removal in the near future. Priority 3 Removal applies to 91 trees (1%) that, while not urgent, may need removal over time due to ongoing decline or conflicts with infrastructure.

Regarding pruning, Priority 1 Prune was recommended for 5 trees (<1%) that pose immediate risks due to broken or hazardous limbs, requiring urgent pruning to prevent accidents. Priority 2 Prune applies to 71 trees (1%) that need pruning to mitigate moderate risks, such as structural weakness or interference with buildings or streets and should be addressed soon to maintain overall tree health and safety.

By prioritizing tree maintenance, the city can address the most urgent tree health and safety concerns efficiently, ensuring a sustainable and safe urban forest for Mountlake Terrace. The MLT Public Works crew has received information on the location and condition of critical or dead trees for evaluation, with removal planned where necessary.

Management Need	Count	%
Priority 1 Removal	5	<1%
Priority 2 Removal	38	1%
Priority 3 Removal	91	1%
Priority 1 Prune	5	<1%
Priority 2 Prune	71	1%
Large Tree Routine Prune	2,070	30%
Small Tree Routine	4,540	66%
Training Prune	10	<1%
Total	6,830	100%

Table 3. Street tree management priorities.

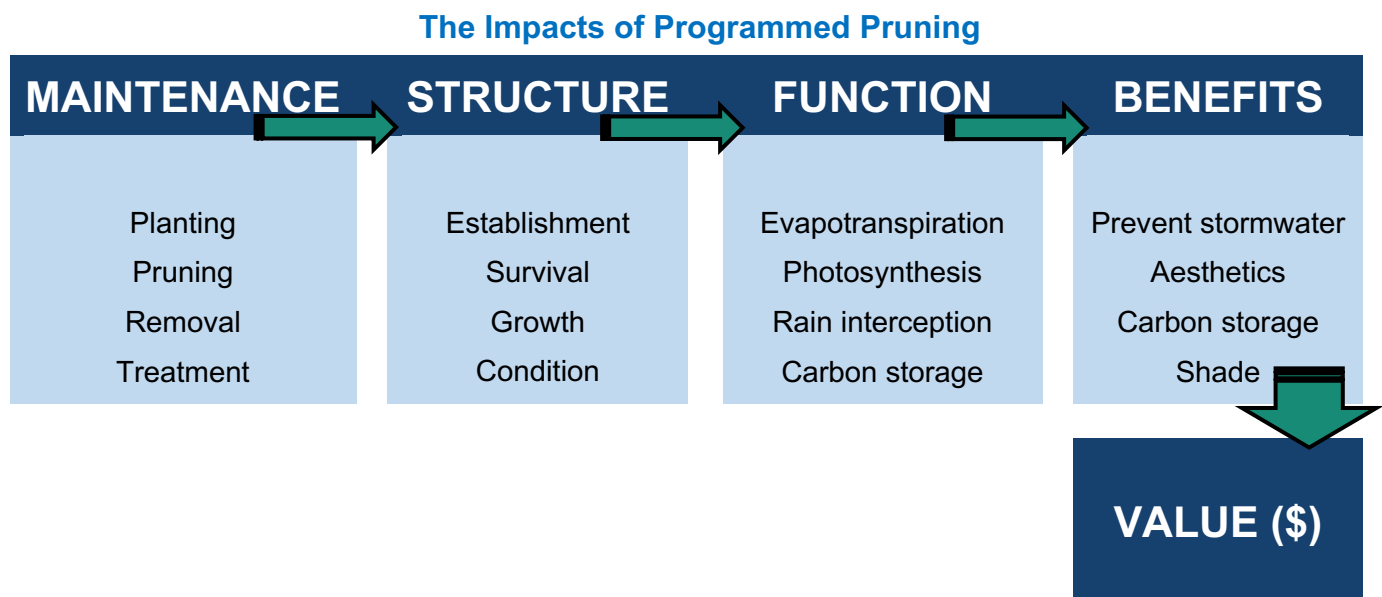


Figure 7. Diagram showing the impacts maintenance has on tree structure, function, and benefits.



Recommendations

The trees of Mountlake Terrace are a vital and valued feature, contributing significantly to the city's appeal as a place to live, work, and enjoy recreational activities. This resource, which has benefitted from a legacy of care and management, requires ongoing attention, including immediate removal or maintenance of certain trees.

To preserve and enhance the beauty and benefits trees provide, the city should implement a routine monitoring and maintenance schedule. Planting new trees, particularly following removals, will help sustain the city's green infrastructure. Although addressing these maintenance needs will require effort and additional resources, it will ensure that Mountlake Terrace's trees continue to be an asset cherished by residents and visitors alike.

The following sections outline high-level recommendations that will be further explored and refined during the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Tree Maintenance Recommendations

The first steps in proactively managing Mountlake Terrace's public trees are to:

- 1) Evaluate, mitigate, and routinely assess risk trees
- 2) Continually and frequently monitor all public trees
- 3) Properly track information in a tree inventory software or database of the City's choosing

A schedule and budget of recommended maintenance activities and their associated costs has been provided in this section. Using these recommendations as a guide, the City should have qualified staff evaluate the recommended removals and amend/correct issues, if possible, or remove the tree if not possible (based on priority, budget, potential targets, location, and other factors). The urban forestry program should also budget and prepare for natural tree mortality, hence the need for continued monitoring.

Once risk trees are mitigated, the City should consider:

- A. Expand and improve public education and engagement programs to ensure they are continuous, effective, and equitable.
- B. Create a cost-sharing program for tree maintenance and removal with adjacent property owners.
- C. Strengthen contract maintenance requirements and refine associated specifications.
- D. Implement a proactive street tree pruning program on a five- to seven-year cycle, assessing feasibility as needed.

A routine pruning cycle delineated by a grid system or City planning boundary should be considered where all public trees are pruned within a timespan of five to seven years. Routine pruning consists of clearance pruning (from signs, sidewalks, roads, buildings), crown cleaning (removing of dead/dying/diseased/decayed branches), structural pruning (removal of weakly attached limbs with included bark and removal of co-dominant stems), and pruning for aesthetics (shaped based on natural growth habits). View the following pages for the summary of tree maintenance recommendations and the recommended tree management and schedule and estimated budget.

The CalFire standards used to assess management needs for the inventoried tree population in Mountlake Terrace distinguish between large tree routine pruning, small tree routine pruning, and young tree training. However, these classifications can be challenging for non-specialists to apply accurately when conducting inventories or determining management needs.

To simplify the process, the recommended Public Tree Management Program and Maintenance Workbook categorize trees based on Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) rather than species or age. This approach ensures that young trees, typically smaller than 6 inches in diameter, receive the necessary training pruning. While most small trees do not exceed 12 inches in diameter, factors such as growth habits, resource availability, and growing conditions can occasionally allow them to grow larger.

These adjusted classifications ensure that all trees receive appropriate maintenance, regardless of the tree's specific characteristics or the expertise of the person conducting the inventory. This method also facilitates the implementation of recommendations outlined later in this section, creating a consistent and efficient framework for managing the urban forest.

After assessing the inventory by maintenance priorities and maintenance types, the following maintenance recommendations were identified:

MAINTAIN EXISTING TREES			
PRIORITY 1 HIGH RISK REMOVAL	5	Total High Risk Tree Removals	Years 1-3
	~2	Trees per year	
PRIORITY 1 HIGH RISK PRUNE	5	Total High Risk Tree Pruning	Years 1-3
	~2	Trees per year	
PRIORITY 2 CRITICAL REMOVAL	38	Total Critical Tree Removals	Years 1-3
	~13	Trees per year	
PRIORITY 2 CRITICAL PRUNE	71	Total Critical Tree Pruning	Years 1-3
	~24	Trees per year	
PRIORITY 3 ROUTINE REMOVAL	91	Total Trees	7-year
	13	Trees Per Year	@ Year 3
PRIORITY 3 LARGE TREE ROUTINE PRUNING (DSH ≥ 6 INCHES)	3,736	Total Trees	7-year
	534	Trees Per Year	@ Year 3
PRIORITY 4 SMALL TREE ROUTINE PRUNING (DSH ≤ 6 INCHES)	2,884	Total Young Trees	3-year
	961	Trees Per Year	@ Year 1
PLANTING NEW TREES			
TREE PLANTING (REPLACEMENT OF PLANNED REMOVALS)	134	Total Trees	7-year
	19	Trees Per Year	@ Year 1
RECOMMENDED TREE PLANTING	459	Total Trees	7-year
	66	Trees Per Year	@ Year 1

Table 4. Recommended tree maintenance summary chart based on management priority.

Table 4 provides a high-level summary of recommended tree maintenance activities designed to foster a healthy and sustainable urban forest. The Tree Maintenance Workbook, utilized by the urban forestry consulting team, outlines an approach that distributes tree work evenly across industry-recommended cycles: three years for Priority 1, Priority 2, and small tree routine maintenance, and seven years for large tree routine maintenance. This balanced strategy supports efficient budgeting, resource allocation, and tree replacement planning.

To ensure public safety and reduce risk, it is strongly recommended that the City address Priority 1 and Priority 2 removals and pruning as soon as resources and budgets allow. If necessary, mitigation plantings associated with these removals can remain on the recommended three-year cycle, provided

they are prioritized over routine plantings. Priority tree removals and pruning follow a three-year cycle to address high-risk trees and urgent needs, with annual updates to adapt to changing conditions or major events. Mitigation plantings tied to these activities are also managed on a three-year cycle, distinct from routine plantings, as they respond specifically to removals and are adjusted annually to align with current forest conditions. This flexible, targeted approach ensures the program remains responsive to the forest's evolving needs.

The recommended Public Tree Management Program is based on inventory data from September 2024 and may not reflect changes to the public tree population occurring afterward. Over time, as Priority 1 and Priority 2 maintenance needs are addressed and a routine pruning cycle is implemented, high-risk and critical tree removals and pruning should decrease significantly, occurring primarily after major storm events or pest and disease outbreaks. Addressing high-risk and critical trees will always take precedence to ensure risks are promptly mitigated.

Variability is expected within the small tree routine pruning category, as young trees grow into the large tree routine maintenance cycle and new trees are planted annually. Proper training of young trees and adequate watering are essential for long-term tree health and help significantly reduce future maintenance needs. Regular monitoring of the tree population is critical to identifying and addressing new or emergency high-priority situations as they arise.

Management Activity Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Activity Totals
Priority 1: High Risk Removal	\$13,620	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$13,620
Priority 1: High Risk Pruning	\$4,536	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$4,536
Priority 2: Critical Removal	\$18,875	\$18,500	\$13,110	-	-	-	-	\$50,485
Priority 2: Critical Pruning	\$21,192	\$20,136	\$15,456	-	-	-	-	\$56,784
Priority 3: Routine Tree Removal	\$4,770	\$3,018	\$2,968	\$2,968	\$2,968	\$5,400	\$4,740	\$26,830
Priority 3: Routine Large Tree Pruning	\$266,924	\$265,454	\$266,924	\$265,821	\$266,924	\$266,311	\$266,924	\$1,865,282
Priority 4: Routine Small Tree Pruning	\$168,175	\$168,175	\$168,350	-	-	-	-	\$504,700
Existing Tree Maintenance and Removal Subtotal	\$496,412	\$481,643	\$467,648	\$268,789	\$269,892	\$269,191	\$268,664	\$2,522,237

Table 5. Summary of the estimated costs by management activity, year, and totals. Estimated costs were derived from standing tree work contracts for neighboring municipalities in Washington.

Management Activity Counts	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Activity Totals
Priority 1: High Risk Removal	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Priority 1: High Risk Pruning	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Priority 2: Critical Removal	16	13	9	-	-	-	-	38
Priority 2: Critical Pruning	28	24	19	-	-	-	-	71
Priority 3: Routine Tree Removal	13	14	13	13	13	13	12	91
Priority 3: Routine Large Tree Pruning	534	534	534	533	534	533	5534	3,736
Priority 4: Routine Small Tree Pruning	961	961	962	-	-	-	-	2,884
Existing Tree Maintenance and Removal Subtotal	1,562	1,546	1,537	546	547	546	546	6,830

Table 6. Summary of tree counts by management activity, year, and totals.

Tables 5 and 6 present the recommended tree management activity counts and estimated costs by year based on the inventoried tree population. These tables prioritize addressing all high-risk removals and pruning activities in the first year, rather than distributing them evenly over the three-year industry-recommended cycle. Critical removals and pruning are scheduled for completion within the first two years of the recommended cycle. This adjustment emphasizes risk reduction for the City and provides a clear estimate of the overall program costs.

The cost estimates assume that all tree work is outsourced to professional tree care companies. However, the City of Mountlake Terrace's Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments handle tree removals and maintenance for trees below a certain size in-house. As a result, these estimates, while useful for budget planning and requests, are likely higher than the actual costs for work performed internally. Outsourcing all tree work is not recommended due to the prohibitive costs often associated with such an approach. Instead, these estimates serve as a guideline to inform decisions and help increase capacity and resources for urban forestry efforts.

Given the elevated risks associated with Priority 1 and Priority 2 tree work, it is recommended that these tasks be contracted out to professional tree care companies to ensure safety and expertise.

Tree Planting Recommendations

PLANTING NEW TREES			
TREE PLANTING (REPLACEMENT OF PLANNED REMOVALS)	134	Total Trees	7-year
	19	Trees Per Year	@ Year 1
RECOMMENDED TREE PLANTING	459	Total Trees	7-year
	66	Trees Per Year	@ Year 1

Table 7. Summary of mitigation plantings as determined by tree maintenance activities.

Table 7 outlines the initial mitigation planting needs, calculated based on priority removals identified in the Tree Maintenance Workbook. Approximately 43 trees are expected to be removed annually during

the first three years, with an additional 91 trees slated for removal over the seven-year routine cycle. These removals will require corresponding replacement plantings.

Mitigation planning also accounts for the predicted annual mortality of both the existing tree population and newly planted mitigation trees. Mortality rates are estimated at 1% annually for both groups, based on the current tree inventory and the maintenance activities recommended in the workbook.

It is important to note that these estimates do not account for potential changes to the broader urban forest or any canopy goals the City may adopt through the Urban Forest Management Plan. Regular updates to these figures are essential to reflect changes in the urban forest and ensure mitigation efforts remain aligned with current needs and goals.

The first steps in growing Mountlake Terrace's public tree population are to:

- 1) Commit to a Tree Canopy Goal.
 - a. The City should establish a canopy goal supported by a canopy assessment and the Urban Forest Management Plan.
 - b. At minimum, plant more trees than are removed and preserve existing canopy through ordinances, policies, education, and enforcement.
- 2) Plan for new plantings thoughtfully.
 - a. Select tree species, locations, and planting times based on inventory data to enhance species diversity and age structure.
 - b. Prioritize underserved neighborhoods for new plantings.
 - c. Diversify beyond maples and cedars wherever possible.
- 3) Provide Proper Care for New Trees.
 - a. Ensure newly planted trees are mulched, watered, trained, pruned, and monitored regularly.
- 4) Increase Ecosystem Benefits.
 - a. Plant more trees than are removed to maximize ecosystem benefits.
 - b. Use the information in this report to plan and budget for future maintenance needs.
- 5) Reduce Future Costs with Proactive Maintenance.
 - a. Conduct young tree training to establish the lowest permanent branch, proper scaffolding, healthy limbs, and a central stem without co-dominant or poorly attached stems.
- 6) Timely Mitigation Plantings.
 - a. Complete mitigation plantings within two years of tree removal and as close to the removal site as possible to maintain canopy coverage and ecosystem benefits.

Program Recommendations

Urban forestry programs across the country face similar challenges, including staffing shortages and budget limitations. As Mountlake Terrace works to grow and develop its urban forestry program, the following steps are recommended to build a strong and sustainable foundation:

- 1) Leverage Tree Inventory Software.
 - a. Use the existing tree inventory software application to track maintenance activities and plantings.

- b. Equip staff working on trees with tablets or iPads to allow on-site updates to the inventory as work is completed.
 - c. Renew the subscription to the existing tree inventory software as needed to ensure continued access to essential features and data, supporting efficient urban forest management.
- 2) Enhance Staff Training and Expertise.
 - a. Provide training and workshops for City staff to improve their knowledge of urban forestry practices.
 - b. Ensure that ISA Certified Arborists are on staff or contracted for all tree care operations to maintain professional standards.
- 3) Adhere to Industry Standards.
 - a. Follow ANSI A300 pruning standards and ISA Best Management Practices for all tree care activities.
 - b. Require all partners and contractors to comply with these standards to ensure consistency and quality.
- 4) Protect Trees During Construction.
 - a. Implement measures to safeguard trees during construction or infrastructure projects, including installation or replacement activities.
- 5) Establish Routine Maintenance Cycles.
 - a. Develop a cyclical schedule for routine pruning, inspections, and risk assessments. Track these activities in annual reports to monitor progress and outcomes.
- 6) Monitor Tree Health.
 - a. Routinely monitor trees in less-than-good condition or with notable issues, reevaluating their status regularly.
 - b. Conduct pest and disease monitoring for all trees, regardless of condition, to prevent widespread infestations or outbreaks.
- 7) Expand Arborist Expertise.
 - a. Ensure at least one staff member from each department working with trees becomes an ISA Certified Arborist until a dedicated urban forestry team or full-time arborist is hired.
 - b. Explore the possibility of hiring a contracted City Arborist to work a minimum of 20 hours per week, focusing on tree maintenance, urban forest health, and community education and outreach.
- 8) Engage the Community.
 - a. Partner with community groups to establish a Citizen Science program, encouraging residents to assist with small tree pruning and planting efforts. This initiative can help build public awareness and increase capacity for routine maintenance.



Summary

Mountlake Terrace's public trees are a valuable asset that, if properly planned and cared for, will continue to add to the health and well-being of the visitors, workers, students, and residents for years to come. Everyone benefits from the proper care and enhancement of the City's trees. This Report serves as a road map outlining meaningful actions that the City should take to strive towards the vision of a healthy, thriving and equitable urban forest. This means addressing maintenance needs, continually monitoring the urban forest, planting more trees than removed, and engaging the community. This Report functions as a management tool for City tree managers and provides transparency to the public regarding the actions the City may take to support environmental health, public safety, and tree equity on behalf of all who enjoy Mountlake Terrace. The City should begin to implement recommendations in this Report as soon as possible as the findings are integrated into a comprehensive Urban Forest Management Plan to ensure an equitable, healthy, thriving, and sustainable urban forest.





Executive Summary Report

August 2025

A summary of Mountlake Terrace's Urban Forest Management Plan

City of Mountlake Terrace, WA



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Overview

Mountlake Terrace's first Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP) provides a comprehensive strategy to preserve, maintain, and expand the City's trees over the next 25 years. Trees are essential public infrastructure—they reduce flooding, clean the air, lower heat, improve mental and physical health, and build stronger communities.

The Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan ("UFMP" or "Plan") is the City's first comprehensive, long-term strategy for protecting, maintaining, and expanding its urban forest. Developed in partnership with the Washington Department of Natural Resources and shaped by data, industry best practices, and community input, the Plan outlines a clear path toward a greener, healthier, and more resilient future for the trees of Mountlake Terrace.

The city's urban forest spans all landscapes—including trees along streets, parks, open spaces, trails, waterways, residential yards, and commercial properties. While the Plan primarily focuses on publicly managed trees, it recognizes that all trees, regardless of ownership, contribute to the health, sustainability, and benefits of the urban forest. Together, these trees form vital green infrastructure that supports the community's well-being and environmental resilience.

This Plan is a roadmap to:

- Protect and grow tree canopy
- Improve quality of life
- Enhance equity
- Adapt to climate change
- Leverage funding and partnerships

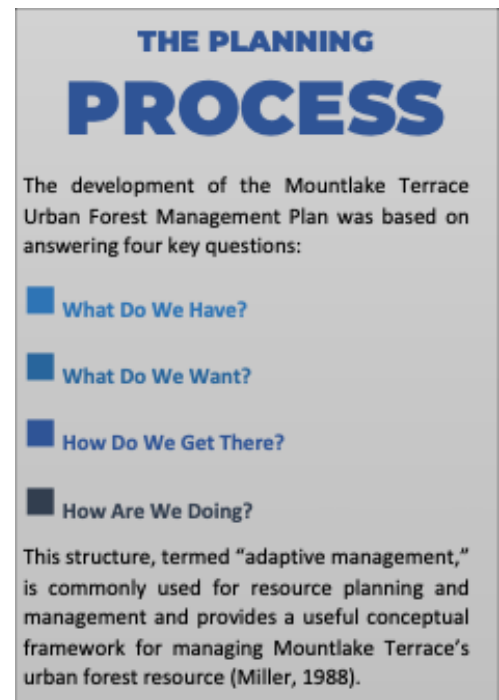
The Plan reflects significant community input, robust data analysis, and best practices in urban forestry. Adoption ensures that the City has a clear and actionable strategy that aligns with other City goals and lays the groundwork for long-term success.

Purpose and Vision

Mountlake Terrace envisions a city where a thriving urban forest enhances health, beauty, and environmental quality for all residents. The UFMP serves as a foundational tool to guide tree-related decision-making across city departments and support sustainable growth, climate adaptation, and community livability.

Urban Forest Snapshot

- **Tree Canopy:** Mountlake Terrace has 32% canopy cover, with the potential to expand by another 4.5% through targeted planting.
- **Tree Inventory:** A 2024 inventory documented 6,830 publicly managed trees.
 - 73% of trees are in good or excellent condition
 - 70% of trees have a Diameter at Standard Height (DSH) of 12 inches or less, with an average DSH of 9 inches.
- **Tree Management:** 63% of inventoried trees had tree issues that are preventable or correctable and are primarily human-caused.



- **Tree Diversity:** Maple (22%) and cedar (17%) dominate the street tree population, indicating a need to increase species diversity for long-term resilience.
- **Environmental Benefits:** The city's canopy provides an estimated \$2.5 million in annual ecosystem services, including stormwater management, air quality improvements, and carbon sequestration.
- **Tree Equity:** The city's Tree Equity Score is 87 (out of 100), signaling strong but uneven access to canopy benefits. Canopy expansion efforts will focus on underserved neighborhoods with higher temperatures and health burdens.

Community Engagement

Community support is one of Mountlake Terrace's greatest strengths. Urban forest volunteer contributions totaled nearly 2,800 hours in 2022, which is double the state average and 8 times the national average. Community members, advisory commissions, city staff, and volunteers provided key insights throughout the planning process and helped shaped this Plan.

- 400+ survey responses and community events
- Strong public support for tree protection, planting, equity, and education
- Equity lens applied: Canopy cover generally decreases with higher poverty and BIPOC populations, though local variation exists

Key Goals and Strategies

The Plan is structured around five overarching goals, each supported by actionable strategies, timelines, and measurable targets.

1. Engage

- Build stewardship and awareness to increase participation and capacity.
- Expand outreach, education, and volunteerism
- Launch Tree Ambassador and citizen science programs
- Celebrate and communicate progress
- Support diverse community engagement, including multilingual resources

2. Maintain

- Ensure proactive, cost-effective care for existing trees.
- Implement a 3- and 7-year pruning cycle based on tree size
- Reduce risk and improve health through structured maintenance
- Increase staff training and explore external contracting
- Use the tree inventory to prioritize work and improve budgeting

3. Grow

- Plant strategically to increase tree cover by 4.5% by 2050.
- Prioritize hotter, vulnerable neighborhoods and low-canopy areas
- Target 137 new public trees planted annually



- Use equity tools (like Tree Equity Score) to guide planting
- Promote appropriate species, site preparation, and post-planting care

4. Retain

- Preserve large, healthy trees and mitigate canopy loss.
- Promote voluntary tree mapping and education
- Explore a phased approach to tree removal permitting
- Increase support and incentives for tree protection during development
- Update policies and codes to prioritize tree retention

5. Know

- Track progress and use data to guide decisions.
- Regularly update the tree inventory and canopy analysis
- Establish clear benchmarks and performance metrics
- Use monitoring to inform annual work planning and grant applications
- Coordinate data collection across departments

Challenges & Considerations

Climate Change & Pests

- Increasing heat, drought, and severe storms threaten tree health
- Pests such as bronze birch borer and fir engraver beetle are active
- Emerald ash borer (EAB) is approaching the region
- Invasive plants like English ivy and holly hinder forest regeneration

Development & Urban Pressures

- Loss of canopy in areas near highways and the light rail
- Limited planting space in urban areas
- Plan recommends structural soils, root barriers, and planting innovation

Funding Gaps

- Mountlake Terrace invests \$108,731/year in urban forestry—\$5.07 per capita, significantly below:
 - Regional average: \$11.57
 - Washington average: \$11.05
 - National average: \$12.26
- The UFMP positions the City to compete for grants and justify additional investment

Implementation Approach

Achieving the goals of the Urban Forest Management Plan will require coordinated action, long-term commitment, and integration across City departments and planning efforts. The Plan provides a clear roadmap with actionable strategies to guide implementation, including:

- Cross-Departmental Coordination
 - Implementation will involve close collaboration among Public Works, Parks, Stormwater, Planning, and Community Services to ensure tree-related policies and practices are integrated throughout City operations.
- Staffing and Capacity Building
 - As the urban forest expands, additional staffing and technical capacity will be needed to maintain tree health, oversee planting, and deliver on long-term goals. The Plan outlines staffing recommendations to support this growth.
- Plan Integration

- Urban forestry goals are aligned with the City's broader vision. The Plan will be integrated into related efforts, such as the Comprehensive Plan, Parks and Recreation Plan, and Sustainability Strategy, to ensure consistency and maximize impact.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Data Updates
 - The City will maintain and regularly update its urban tree inventory and canopy assessment every two years. These updates will inform planning decisions and allow for adaptive management over time.
- Community Engagement and Transparency
 - Progress will be tracked through regular reporting and ongoing public engagement. Residents will have opportunities to participate in volunteer programs, provide input, and stay informed on implementation progress.
- Lead Department
 - The Environmental Programs Manager will oversee and coordinate implementation across departments, ensuring accountability and alignment with City goals.
- Tree Board Role (RPAC): The Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission, serving as the City's Tree Board, will play a central role by:
 - Guiding public engagement efforts
 - Recommending priorities for action and investment
 - Monitoring implementation progress and outcomes

Together, this structure ensures the Plan is not only actionable but also transparent, community-supported, and positioned for long-term success.

Conclusion

The Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan serves as both a strategic blueprint and a call to action. With thoughtful implementation and ongoing collaboration, the City can ensure that its trees continue to thrive as an essential and equitable part of the urban landscape for generations to come.

Mountlake Terrace's urban forest is a vital community asset. This Plan provides a clear vision and actionable framework to grow a healthier, more equitable, and climate-resilient city. With Council adoption and sustained investment, future generations will enjoy the full environmental, social, and economic benefits that the City's trees provide.



CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE

ORDINANCE NO. XXX

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON,
ADOPTING THE URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN; PROVIDING FOR
SEVERABILITY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE**

WHEREAS, trees are integral to Mountlake Terrace’s community character, and Mountlake Terrace is a “Tree City USA”; and

WHEREAS, healthy trees and vegetation contribute to the quality of life for Mountlake Terrace residents by reducing soil erosion; improving air quality; minimizing the “urban heat island” effect; promoting a sense of well-being; providing wildlife habitat; enhancing property values; intercepting/absorbing stormwater runoff; and by contributing to Mountlake Terrace’s natural beauty; and

WHEREAS, it is the City’s intention to retain street trees during development wherever possible; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to act upon the City Comprehensive Plan-Environment Element-Policy EN-2.1: Adoption of an Urban Forest Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, a State Environmental Policy Act (“SEPA”) review was performed on the proposed plan and a Determination of Non-significance (“DNS”) was issued on July 15, 2025, which has not been appealed; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments on September 8, 2025 and has forwarded a recommendation to the City Council to approve the proposed amendments; and

WHEREAS, the City Council held a work session on September 11, 2025 and a public hearing on the proposed plan on September 18, 2025 and considered the proposed amendments and the entire record, including recommendations from the Planning Commission; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that the proposed amendments are consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and other goals and objectives of the City; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this Ordinance will promote the public health, safety, and general welfare within the City of Mountlake Terrace; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that the adoption of the Urban forest Management Plan is in the best interest of the City;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MOUNTLAKE TERRACE, WASHINGTON DO ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan, Adopted. The Mountlake Terrace Urban Forest Management Plan dated September 2025, which is comprised in its entirety and attached hereto, is hereby adopted as is fully set forth herein. Consistent with RCW 35A.21.010, the Urban Forest Management Plan may be modified by the City Manager in the form of minor and non-substantive grammatical and punctuation edits prior to the filing of this Ordinance with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

Section 2. Corrections. The City Clerk and codifiers of the ordinance are authorized to make necessary corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

Section 3. Severability. If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason, such invalidity shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

Section 4. Summary, Publication, and Effective Date. This Ordinance or a summary thereof consisting of the title shall be published in the official newspaper of the City and shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after its adoption and publication as required by law.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON SEPTEMBER 18, 2025.

Kyoko Matsumoto Wright, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Hillary J. Evans, City Attorney



STAFF REPORT

To: Mountlake Terrace City Council
From: Jeff Niten, City Manager
Meeting Date: September 18, 2025
Subject: Presentation on Public Safety Costs

Required Reviews:

Jennifer Joki	Created/Initiated - 09/10/2025
Jeff Niten	Final Approval - 09/10/2025

Council Goal(s):

Responsible Governance to Ensure Desired Level of Service

Legislative History:

Adoption of contracts for the Police Guild, Prosecution and Public Defender. Adoption of budget documents related to indirect costs, Insurance for example.

Subject Summary:

The City Council requested a formal discussion surrounding public safety costs to identify any potential ways to save scarce resources during this period of rapidly escalating costs. For context the General Fund budget for 2025, exclusive of Capital or Utility Funds, and also removing funds such as the Street Operating Funds or Recreation Fund, is \$21,175,144 for 2024.

Salaries and Benefits are by far the largest cost related to public safety. In 2024 this cost is \$6,050,446 for both sworn officers and non-sworn personnel such as the public records coordinator, animal control officer and administrative personnel.

The City and the Police Guild reached agreement on a new three-year contract which raised compensation levels to match competitors for police officers. Additionally, some administrative personnel in the Police Department are represented by the Teamsters bargaining partner. The Teamsters contract was also updated to reflect competitive compensation levels for our region.

Police see a significant number of public records requests, the majority of which come from the public and from insurance companies as part of their claims process. Further, the introduction of body worn cameras has significantly increased the time it takes to fulfill public records requests because each frame of the film must be reviewed for redactions prior to release.

Animal control services along with vehicle maintenance logistics and other support functions are

performed by a Police Support Specialist. At this point, animal control calls for service occupy approximately 50% of the job function, leaving considerable time for the other assigned tasks. The employee in this position receives formalized animal control training through the Criminal Justice Training Commission.

Another significant component of public safety costs are what we refer to as indirect costs. Indirect costs include:

- Fleet Repairs and Maintenance: \$436,170
 - 1. Also includes contribution from Police to save for new police vehicles according to the replacement schedule.
- Insurance: \$369,456
- SNOCOM fees: \$322,543
- Property Maintenance: \$180,914
- Other Services: \$161,428
 - 1. Emergency Management, Phone, Animal Sheltering, Travel and Training.
- Supplies and Small Equip: \$95,263
- Computer Programs and Maintenance: \$82,029
- Training: \$36,354
- Translator Fees: \$29,094

The total indirect costs for the Police Department are \$1,713,251.

Another element falling under the Public Safety umbrella is Prosecution costs. The city contracts Zachor, Stock and Krepps for prosecution services for a flat monthly fee totaling \$150,000 annually. Our current contract with the firm ends on December 31, 2025, and we expect to open negotiations with the firm for 2026 and beyond. It is expected that Prosecution costs will experience an increase due to the compensation increases across the region, specifically for the Snohomish County Prosecutors who, in 2024 increased the salary for its entry level prosecutors (zero experience) from approximately \$72,000 per year (not including benefits, etc.) to \$88,851 for the year 2024, with an increase to approximately \$92,227 beginning January 1, 2025. This puts Snohomish County in the middle of the pay range for County Prosecutors across the state. In order to attract and retain qualified personnel contract service firms such as ours will increase compensation packages.

An additional element of prosecution costs include fees paid to South District Court which vary based on number of cases. In 2024 those costs were \$113,498. One element where we are exploring efficiencies is collections for infractions. Following the issuance of an infraction individuals have 15 days to pay the fine directly to our Police Department either in person or via a collection box outside the front door. Following that time period the infractions are sent to the Court, and we must pay a fee for the Court to process the infraction, \$47.39 for non-criminal infractions, and \$137.33 for criminal infractions. Of the 631 infractions issued from January through June 2025 411, or 65%, were sent to the Court. Increasing collections before being sent to the Court can save significant resources. Software is available to allow on-line payment, which we think will significantly increase payment before the infraction is sent to the Court.

Parking tickets can be handled similarly.

Public Defense, currently a contract service provided by Feldman and Lee, including conflict attorney costs, were \$311,098 in 2024. The city is required to compensate attorneys to provide defense services for indigent defendants. We typically screen individuals to determine their ability to pay for their own defense, however the vast majority of all criminal defendants across the state, on the order of 70%, are deemed indigent. Public Defense costs are expected to rise dramatically in the next several years. A recent Washington State Supreme Court decision requires cities to reduce public defender caseloads significantly. In 2024 the city paid \$18,000 per month and in 2025 the cost is \$26,500 per month, exclusive of conflict attorney services, for public defense. With the compensation environment, and the requirement to reduce caseloads, it is expected that public defense costs in 2026 to be at least \$35,000 per month, potentially more. The current Public Defense contract also ends December 31, 2025. A Request for Proposal for Public Defense services will be released in September for a competitive process.

The last component of public safety costs are jail and inmate fees paid to both the county facility in Everett and the new Lynnwood facility. In 2024 actual costs were \$699,909 for things like booking fees, video hearing fees, daily costs for housing arrested individuals and medical costs for persons arrested or serving a sentence. We have received notice from the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office that fees are increasing in 2026. In 2025 the booking fee is \$147.19 which will increase by \$4.42 in 2026. The flat rate for housing, not including the costs for individuals with special needs, is \$204.84 and will increase by \$6.15 to \$210.99 in 2026. The current video Court fee is \$243.81 and will increase by \$7.31 to \$251.12 next year. Further fees include medical costs for people housed in the facility which vary based on services provided.

Total public safety costs in 2024 total \$9,038,201.

Financial/Budget Impacts:

Budget Amendment Required? No

Budget and Sources:	N/A
Expenditure:	N/A
New Appropriation Required + Sources:	N/A

Community Notifications:

City Council Agenda

If "Other," please specify:

Board/Commission Recommendation:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Attachments:

None