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FEBRUARY 20, 2024

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Bowie Holland
Development Advisory Committee (DAC)

D.J. Harrell
Development Services, City of Fort Worth

Stacey Pierce
Streams and Valleys

Christina Brooks
Diversity & Inclusion, City of Fort Worth

Brendan Lavy
Environmental & Sustainability Sciences, TCU

Joel McElhany
Park & Recreation, City of Fort Worth

Courtney Blevins
Texas Forest Service

Other Staff Contributions

Jaclyn Ingram
Urban Forestry Officer

Mary Wells
Manager – Downtown, Urban Forestry & Appeals

Craig Fox
City Forester

Fort Worth is geographically diverse, containing portions of the eastern and western Cross Timbers Forests, native prairies, and the Trinity River. These ecosystems contain endangered and endemic plant and animal species that form an integral part of Fort Worth's natural landscape.

The Tandy Hills Natural Area originally contained 160 acres of natural prairie overlooking the city skyline. In 2020 the City added Broadcast Hill, an adjacent 50-acre tract. This purchase was the City's first acquisition through the Open Space Conservation Program.

History

Development of the Plan

Community Engagement

Achieving the Vision

Why Trees, Why Now?

Cross Timbers Region

- Traverses from southeastern Kansas across central Oklahoma to Central Texas

- Named for the repeated crossings of timberland before the open prairies to both east and west

- Undisturbed land today in the East Cross Timbers is perhaps the most fragmented vegetative region in Texas
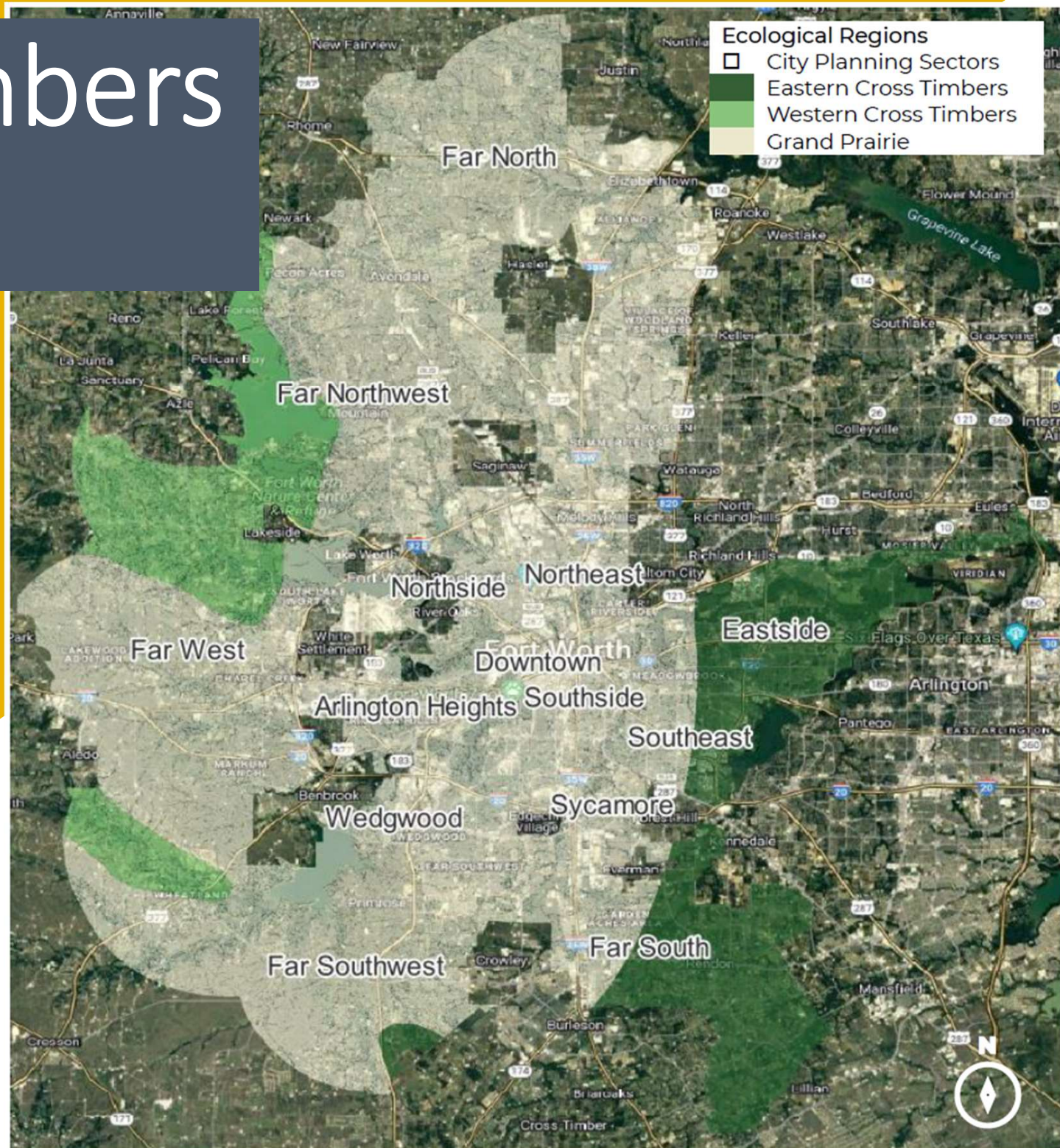
Figure 5. Estimated annual benefits of Fort Worth's urban tree canopy cover.

- **Fastest growing** city in America and currently half developed
- Fort Worth is losing about **2,500 acres** of natural open space to development every year
- Investing in the urban forest is one of the most cost-effective ways a city can improve **quality of life** and benefit economically
- Align with **Good Natured Green Space Initiative**
  - **Open Space Conservation Program**

January 2022

- Texas Trees Foundation (TTF) approached Development Services Department (DSD) regarding the development of an Urban Forest Master Plan

- Request for City to fund $50,000

- TTF to contribute a minimum $250,000

May 2022

- Allowed for Tree Funds to be used for professional services and planning initiatives

Development of the Plan

The development of the Fort Worth Urban Forest Master Plan was based on answering four key questions:

1

What Do We Have?

2

What Do We Want?

3

How Do We Get There?

4

How Are We Doing?

Staff Collaboration

City Manager's Office
Code Compliance
Development Services
Diversity and Inclusion
Economic Development

Environmental Services
Neighborhood Services
Park & Recreation
The FW Lab
Transportation and Public Works

Community Engagement

Citizen Forester and PARD staff member with volunteers from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at tree planting event

Tree giveaway at Mayfest 2022. Photo courtesy of the Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council.

Volunteer tree planting event. Source: Texas Trees Foundation

61 Participating Organizations

- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Texas, Fort Worth Branch
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Texas, DFW Section
- Botanical Research Institute of Texas(BRIT) / Fort Worth Botanic Garden
- Climate Reality Project, DFW Chapter
- Community Design Fort Worth
- Community Frontline
- Cross Timbers Urban Forestry Council (CTUFC)
- CTUFC Citizen Foresters
- Downtown Fort Worth Inc
- Fort Worth Audubon Society
- Fort Worth Bicycling Association
- Fort Worth Botanical Society
- Fort Worth Development Advisory Committee
- Fort Worth Garden Club, Inc
- Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Worth Independent School District
- Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Worth Neighborhood and Homeowners Associations
- Fort Worth Urban Forestry Advisory Committee

- Friends of Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge
- Friends of Tandy Hills Natural Area, Inc.
- Girl Scouts Texas Oklahoma Plains
- Greater Fort Worth Association of Realtors
- Greater Fort Worth Builders Association
- Greater Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club
- Hispanic Real Estate Brokers Association
- Keep Fort Worth Beautiful
- Kids Environmental Education Network
- League of Women Voters, Tarrant County
- National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP)
- Near Southside Inc.
- North Central Texas Council of Governments
- North Tarrant Express Mobility Partners
- North Texas Tollway Authority
- Real Estate Council of Fort Worth
- Riverside Alliance
- RxPlore / Fort Worth Climate Safe Neighborhood Coalition
- Scenic Texas / Scenic Fort Worth
- Streams and Valleys
- Tarleton University, Fort Worth Campus

- Tarrant County Asian Chamber of Commerce
- Tarrant County College
- Tarrant County Master Gardeners Association
- Tarrant Regional Water District (TRWD)
- Tarrant Transit Alliance
- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service District 4
- Texas A&M Forest Service
- Texas Blossoms / Eastside Blossoms
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Department of Transportation(TxDOT) Fort Worth District
- Texas Master Naturalists, Cross Timbers Chapter
- Texas Nursery and Landscape Association (TNLA) Region V
- Texas Wesleyan University
- Trinity Metro
- Trinity River Vision Authority (TRVA)
- Trust for Public Land
- University of North Texas Health Science Center
- Urban Land Institute
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District
- Visit Fort Worth

Surveys & Events

Bi-Lingual Community Survey

Five Pop-Up Events

Two Virtual Community Workshops

Six Focus Groups

Distribution Methods

Promotional Videos

Social Media Postings

Email Blasts

Press Releases

Neighborhood Association Meetings

Interviews with the Fort Worth Report

Flyer Distribution

Project Website

Over **2,300** Community Participants in 5 Months

What the community wants?

Provide Shade — 86%

Add Where They Don't Exist — 83%

Increase Preservation — 82%

Development that Preserves Existing Trees — 75%

Increase Funding for Programs — 75%

Plant Where They Can Thrive — 77%

Access to Information — 42%

*Respondents were able to make more than 1 selection

Achieving the Vision

19% — 2025
20% — 2030
22% — 2035
25% — 2040
27% — 2045
30% — 2050

25 year timeframe
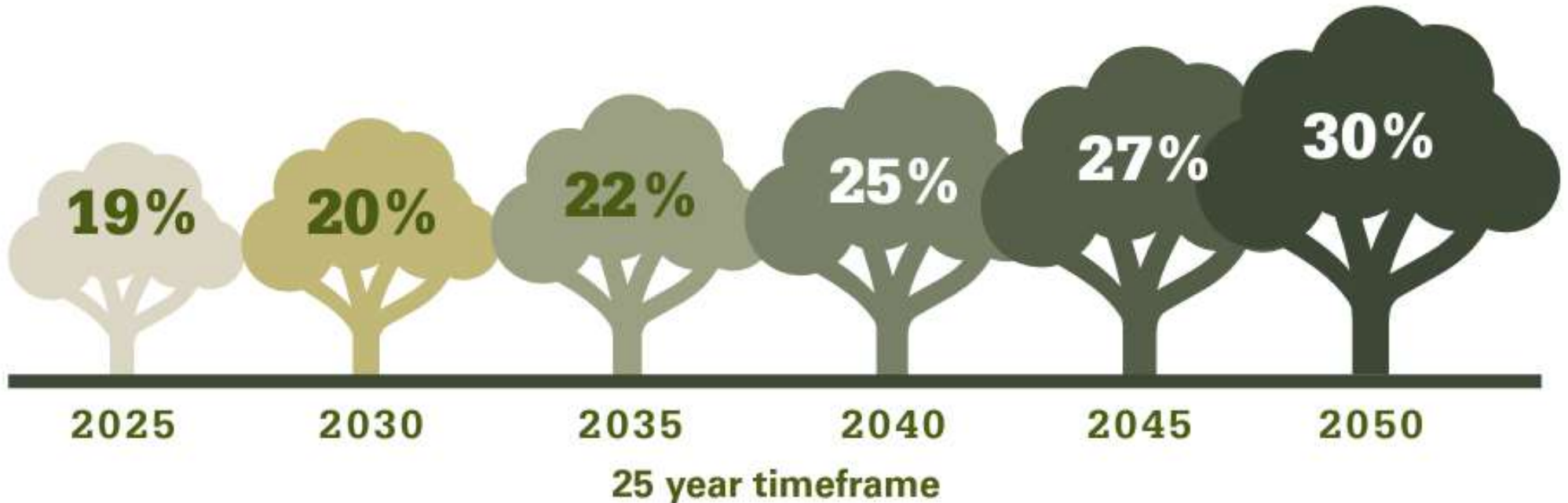
30% canopy goal based on input from the Texas Forest Service in 2006 based on aerials of city and knowledge of existing ecological regions

Tree Canopy – the leaves, branches, and stems covering the ground when viewed from above; typically expressed as a percentage of ground area.

Master Plan Goals

1. Continue to **manage the urban forest** as an asset using industry standards and best practices and adequate resources for sustainable management.

2. **Preserve and expand** the urban forest to address tree equity, resiliency, urban heat, air quality, human health, and other challenges facing Fort Worth.

3. Strengthen **urban forest programs** through coordination, integration, professionalism, and funding to meet the needs of a growing city and urban forest.

4. Invigorate **equitable engagement** for a community-wide commitment to care for and grow Fort Worth's urban forest.

RECOMMENDATION 1.
Conduct a comprehensive inventory of public trees in rights-of-way, parks, and other public property.

Short-Term Target 1: Complete the inventory in one City planning sector or other boundary (e.g., neighborhood). Prioritize underserved and disadvantaged neighborhoods within areas with low tree canopy.

Recommended Action Steps		Timeframe
First Step	Identify the department staff/positions that will manage the tree inventory project and determine the intended use and end users. Utilize the 2011 sample inventory and i-Tree Streets data to estimate the total number of public trees that will need to be inventoried.	
1.A	Create a work plan and budget to complete the inventory.	
1.B	Estimate costs and consider options to conduct the inventory in phases or all at once.	
1.C	Develop a plan for managing, updating, and integrating inventory data.	**Immediate (1-5 years)**
1.D	Secure funding to complete the inventory.	
1.E	Prepare and release bid specifications and select a consultant (if applicable).	
1.F	Refine and implement the data management and integration plan as needed.	

RECOMMENDATION 2.

Develop and implement changes to tree regulations, standards, and best practices to support Fort Worth's tree canopy and sustainability goals.

Short-Term Target 2: Draft the changes to Urban Forestry Ordinance that do not require stakeholder involvement (e.g., updated terminology, definitions, authority, and alignment with other ordinances). Evaluate additional recommended changes and draft proposed ordinance language. Seek input from local arborists, community leaders involved with urban forestry, and professionals familiar with Fort Worth's permitting process.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Recognizing that a balanced approach of both regulation and incentives will be required to successfully align real estate developers towards the goal of increasing overall canopy, the city should create a task force to examine creative incentive structures. Both monetary and non-monetary incentives should be considered to motivate the development community towards the goal of increased preservation and increased tree planting to support the overall goal of 30% city wide canopy coverage. Implementation and education will require additional staffing.	
2.A Draft proposed amendments to regulations and standards.	
2.B Conduct stakeholder engagement and public information sessions prior to presenting text amendments for adoption.	**Immediate (1-5 years)**
2.C Update the City website and communicate changes to City staff, external stakeholders, and the public.	
2.D Create a manual for residents, tree care professionals, developers, and property managers containing the City's tree regulations, standards, and best practices.	
2.E Work with other sections and departments to update additional regulations impacting trees.	
2.F Update City standards, specifications, and manuals related to hardscape/infrastructure conflicts with public trees.	

RECOMMENDATION 3.

Expand and strengthen cooperation among departments to ensure adequate staffing, training, and integration of urban forest considerations into City plans, policies, and programs.

Short-Term Target 3: Establish an internal urban forest working group to organize, monitor, and report on plan implementation.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Identify members, objectives, and roles of an internal urban forest working group to assess the staffing and resources needed to implement the UFMP. Providing adequate staffing for urban forest programs will help to ensure other departments and sections are able to maintain necessary coverage.	
3.A Create an Urban Forest Working Group to support UFMP implementation and future decisions on staffing and programs.	
3.B Identify and budget for training, certifications, equipment, and other resource needs of forestry and urban forestry staff.	
3.C Update or create protocols and procedures for inter-departmental operations and cross-training.	**Immediate/Ongoing (1-3 years)**
3.D Consider renaming the Urban Forestry Section and the Urban Forestry Ordinance to clarify the roles and responsibilities regarding public and private trees.	
3.E Identify areas to streamline processes.	
3.F Meet regularly as a working group to implement a continuous improvement framework.	
3.G Explore the benefits and feasibility of establishing a City Urban Forest Advisory Committee.	
3.H Provide an annual update to City Council regarding the state of the urban forest and progress made toward UFMP goals.	

RECOMMENDATION 4.

Strengthen existing relationships and support new partnerships with neighborhoods and community organizations throughout the City.

Short-Term Target 4: Review the City's list of neighborhood and community-based organizations and draft a list of potential partners for urban forest efforts.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Share the final UFMP with existing partners and provide a summary of how their input influenced the plan.	
4.A Create a list of potential local partners, including public, private, institutional, and non-profit organizations.	
4.B Host virtual discussions with stakeholders to update them on the UFMP and encourage continued participation.	
4.C Lead or partner with one or more organizations to host an event highlighting Fort Worth's urban forest and the UFMP.	**Immediate (1-3 years)**
4.D Develop or support a program that documents voluntary tree planting and recognizes exemplary urban forest stewards.	
4.E Regularly evaluate partnerships to ensure they are supporting UFMP goals and achieving greater representation of historically underserved and disinvested communities.	

RECOMMENDATION 5.
Support and expand plans for maintenance, risk management, and resiliency of public trees.

Short-Term Target 5: Develop the first annual work plan for the following fiscal year.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Review the strategies and recommendations provided in the Recommendations Section of the UFMP's Technical Report to develop an annual urban forest work plan. The plan should coordinate roles and responsibilities of various City departments involved in tree work, planting, permitting, inspections, and other tree-related activities on public property. Fulfillment of additional duties will require additional staffing	
5.A Identify the departmental staff/positions to lead the development of an urban forest management plan.	**Short-Mid Term (1-10 years)**
5.B Secure funding and utilize the data from the public tree inventory to develop the urban forest management plan.	
5.C Develop a tree pest and disease management plan for public trees and include a public education component.	
5.D Utilize current research and innovation to adopt new or improved management strategies supporting urban forest sustainability and resiliency.	

RECOMMENDATION 6.

Coordinate, create, and implement a public communications, education, and engagement plan focused on Fort Worth's urban forest.

Short-Term Target 6: Develop a public communications, education, and engagement plan where strategies are coordinated as a Citywide initiative rather than a departmental effort. This may necessitate additional staff to adequately engage the community.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Maintain Arbor Day Tree City USA designation and post the UFMP on the City's website.	
6.A Continue to implement the Neighborhood Tree Planting Program, Tree Grant Program, Citizen Forester Program, and volunteer efforts in support of the UFMP and citywide canopy goals.	
6.B Create a public dashboard or other mechanism to increase transparency and keep the community updated on progress and opportunities for participation.	Ongoing
6.C Regularly evaluate public education and engagement efforts.	
6.D Explore opportunities to engage with and support vulnerable and underserved populations in the planting of public street trees.	

RECOMMENDATION 7.

Develop and implement a strategy to maintain sustainable funding and resources to achieve desired levels of service for urban forest programs and management.

Short-Term Target 7: Develop an action plan and funding strategy for one (1) underfunded program or initiative.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Develop an actionable, long-term plan to fully fund tree planting, maintenance, and preservation at levels needed to meet the City's 30% canopy goal.	
7.A Use data from the inventory, canopy assessment, and the UFMP Technical Report to determine the level of funding needed to achieve and sustain the goals of the UFMP.	
7.B Review and implement a funding mechanism provided in Appendix C of the UFMP's Technical Report.	Immediate - Long-Term
7.C Evaluate and measure performance indicators to adjust funding as needed to achieve the goals of the UFMP.	
7.D Establish dedicated, sustained funding sources beyond the current budget for forestry and urban forestry operations to increase the level of service provided.	

RECOMMENDATION 8.
Create plans for tree planting, preservation, and maintenance to grow a resilient and equitable urban forest with 30% canopy cover.

Short-Term Target 8: Develop and implement a multi-year tree planting and maintenance plan for a priority area.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Utilize the 2020 canopy assessment and UFMP priority maps to identify the target area for the first planting plan.	
8.A Continue to support and diversify funding sources for the City's Rolling Hills Tree Farm in growing, distributing, and planting quality native and adapted trees.	
8.B Track plantings led by the City, its partners, and private development projects.	
8.C Practice a no-net-loss for public trees principle by budgeting for and planting replacement trees for those removed on an annual basis.	
8.D Develop a multi-year public tree planting and maintenance plan that prioritizes areas of greatest need.	**Mid-Term (3-10 years)**
8.E Maintain a recommended tree planting list that supports urban forest resilience and maximizes tree benefits.	
8.F Explore opportunities and implement measures to expand the Heritage Tree Program.	
8.G Conduct an i-Tree Eco survey of the citywide urban forest or utilize the U.S. Forest Service Urban Forest Inventory and analysis program data (when available).	
8.H Reassess the citywide tree canopy cover using the latest recommended technology and adapt planting targets and priorities.	

RECOMMENDATION 9.

Develop protocols for monitoring the urban forest to identify and address pests and other threats throughout the City.

Short-Term Target 9: Develop and implement a public tree monitoring program for pests and diseases of concern, such as emerald ash borer.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Gather and review the latest research on tree pests and diseases of concern and share information with community groups. Include information on the City's website.	
9.A Expand the public tree monitoring program to conduct field assessments and monitor threats to a growing tree population.	
9.B Expand opportunities for cross-training staff in other sections and departments that may encounter trees in their operations.	**Long-Term (5-10 years)**
9.C Continue and strengthen City inspections of development projects to ensure they remain in compliance with the Urban Forestry Ordinance.	
9.D Keep up with current research and emerging tree pests and diseases.	
9.E Provide information to property owners, especially large land-holders, regarding current and emerging tree pests and diseases of concern.	

RECOMMENDATION 10.

Strengthen, expand, and increase awareness of programs and strategies that utilize or repurpose urban wood waste generated from public tree operations.

Short-Term Target 10: Quantify the current amount of wood volume repurposed annually on average and the potential amount of wood volume that would be generated by expanding the program.

Recommended Action Steps	Timeframe
First Step Determine how much wood waste is generated from City Forestry operations, where the wood waste is generated, and if and how it is currently distributed	
10.A Document the procedures and protocols for utilizing alternatives to mulching and landfilling woody debris resulting from public tree maintenance.	**Long-Term (5-10 years)**
10.B Quantify the potential carbon and waste diversion impacts of reusing wood waste.	
10.C Increase awareness and provide opportunities for private tree care companies to support sustainable practices such as urban wood utilization.	

Approval Process Timeline

Date	Activity	Action
December 13, 2023	Park Board Presentation – Information Item	
December 20, 2023	City Manager's Office Presentation	
January 18, 2024	Urban Design Commission Presentation	
January 18, 2024	DAC Update	
January 24, 2024	City Plan Commission Presentation	Endorsed for Adoption
January 24, 2024	Park Board – Action Item	Endorsed for Adoption
February 15, 2024	DAC Presentation	
February 20, 2024	Council Work Session	
February 27, 2024	Council Meeting	

Comments from Board & Commissions

Park and Recreation Board

What is current canopy count?

How will the inventory be completed?

How will this effect current policies?

Urban Design Commission

Happy that plan has been completed and excited to see what happens next with engagement for potential ordinance changes

Comments from Board & Commissions

City Plan Commission

Discussion of Urban Forestry Ordinance and how that process will proceed – additional engagement will be needed before any policy changes

Asked about wildlife displacement, cross timbers preservation, and benchmark cities to look at for ordinance changes

Development Advisory Committee

Collaborate on development or ordinances and policies

Recognition of the development community's role to positively impact the preservation and planting of trees throughout the community.

Questions & Comments

Jaclyn Ingram

(817)392-8324

UrbanForestry@fortworthtexas.gov

www.fortworthtexas.gov

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