

Tree Inventory complete

In 2022, the City of Snohomish received a grant from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Urban and Community Forestry Program to conduct a tree inventory of all trees located within the City right-of-way. This exciting project offered an opportunity to ground-truth our tree cover, determine the health of our trees, and provide a much-needed data point to begin future planning efforts for tree protection in the City.

The selected consultant, DUDEK, went to work in October, but had to postpone completion of the field work because the number of trees exceeded initial estimates. Just this month, the work was completed, and City staff has integrated the data into the online base maps to share with the public. [The interactive tree inventory map is now available to view](#). Click on a tree in the map to learn more information about it, including the species (both common and botanical name), diameter at 4-feet above grade, canopy width, and a basic health assessment.

The tree inventory is the first step of a longer planning process to protect and care for the tree canopy in Snohomish. Our urban forest represents a significant financial investment, and contributes to the health and quality of life of Snohomish residents. It is important that this resource is prioritized and properly managed. While the inventory work was underway, the City also assembled a cross-functional team of staff members from various departments representing Planning, Engineering, Parks, Streets, and Utilities to address urban forestry issues. The team's diverse perspectives ensures that the oftentimes conflicting interests – such as between utility infrastructure and tree roots – will be considered at the very beginning when policies are drafted, to avoid tradeoffs down the road. This team will use the inventory data to develop a planting prioritization plan based on the DNR's Urban Canopy Assessment information to identify gaps in tree coverage. This plan will be used in future planting efforts to identify areas of opportunity and ensure new trees are installed in the right places, addressing environmental justice and equitable access to nature for our residents.

The next step will be a maintenance and management plan to help the Public Works Department schedule regular maintenance activities, and development of planting standards. The planting standards will include recommended species lists, standards for planter area size, root barrier, and other best practices so that new trees thrive. In 2024, the project will expand to an analysis of the municipal code and a potential code update to ensure trees are properly protected, and to meet the eligibility criteria of the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA recognition program. Other items that may be included in the code update are a tree mitigation fund and framework for how funds will be used, regulating tree removal, and level-of-service standards for street trees.

The tree inventory is the baseline data needed to jump start the remainder of the Urban Forestry program. With this critical piece done, the City can move forward with the next steps in the planning efforts to preserve our urban forest, thus ensuring biodiversity, aesthetic interest, temperature regulation, ecosystem services, and climate resilience!