



## Urban Forestry Commission Meeting Agenda

February 18, 2026  
5:00 PM

### Marine Park Engineering

Marine Park Conference Room  
4500 Colulmbia Way  
Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA), the Urban Forestry Commission meeting will be open to in-person attendance. Options for viewing and/or participating in the meeting remotely will also be accommodated (see details below).

MEETING ACCESS INFORMATION [Click here to join the meeting](#). To access by phone (audio only), call: 1-347-941-5324  
Phone Conference ID: 989 890 263#

#### 1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair/Vice Chair

#### 2. Water Center Tour **\*\*in person only\*\***

Commission to walk to the Water Center for a short tour of the facility and meeting space.

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

a. January 21, 2026 Meeting Minutes

#### 4. Community Forum

3 minutes each

#### 5. Special Guest-Comprehensive Planning, Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan.

Draft Plan and Code, emphasis on landscaping / tree standards. Mark Person, Senior Planner, Community Development Department. Commission to discuss.

a. Presentation and Chapters

#### 6. Winter Planting Projects

Staff to provide overview of winter projects. Commission to discuss

## Urban Forestry Commission

### Members

Jesse Durfee  
Lucius Shields  
Jamie Beyer  
Ammaar Akhtar  
Clif Barnes  
Lauren Danner  
Vacant

### Public Works Department

4500 Columbia Way  
Vancouver, WA 98660  
TTY: 711  
[www.cityofvancouver.us](http://www.cityofvancouver.us)

## **7. Arbor Day 2026 Prep**

Commission to discuss.

## **8. Program Updates**

- a. Friends of Trees
- b. Annual Report 2025
- c. UFC Retreat Planning 2026
- d. Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison Role
- e. Mac Awards 2026
- f. Subcommittee Report

## **9. Urban Forestry Report**

Commission to discuss

- a. Program Update and Staff Report

## **10. Commission Communications**

Commission to report & discuss 3 minutes each

## **11. New Business. Agenda topics for future meetings**

Commission to discuss

## **Adjournment**

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### **Community Forum Instructions**

The public is invited to speak regarding any issue. Members of the public testifying are asked to limit testimony to three minutes. There are three ways to provide comments:

1. Writing: Public comments can be submitted in writing (name, address, contact information and comments) via email to [charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us) by noon on the day of the meeting.
2. Remotely: Remotely: Pre-register by phone at 360-487-8328 or email [charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us) by 5pm the day before the meeting
3. In Person: Pre-register by phone at 360-487-8328 or email [charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us) by 5pm the day before the meeting or fill out a Public Comment form in person prior to the start of the Community Communications portion of the meeting.

City Hall is served by C-TRAN. Route information and schedules are available online at [www.c-tran.com](http://www.c-tran.com). You also may reach C-TRAN at (360) 695-0123 for more information on times, fares, and routes.

Anyone needing language interpretation services or accommodations with a disability at a Vancouver City Council meeting may contact the City Manager's staff at (360) 487-8600 (RELAY: 711). Assistive listening devices and live Closed Captioning are available for the deaf, hard of hearing and general public use. Please notify a staff person if you wish to use one of the devices. Every attempt at reasonable accommodation will be made. To request this agenda in another format, please also contact the phone numbers listed above.



## Meeting Minutes

**Date** Wednesday, January 21, 2026

**Time** 6 p.m.

**Location** Marine Park Engineering  
Marine Park Engineering Conference Room  
4500 Columbia Way  
Vancouver, WA 98668-1995

**Commissioners/Board Members Present:**

Clif Barnes, Jess Durfee, Lucius Shields, Lauren Danner, Ammaar Akhtar, Jamie Beyer

**Staff Present:** Charles Ray, Jessica George

**Special Guest:** Sunrise O'Mahoney, Past Executive Director, Watershed Alliance

**ITEM 1: Call to Order and Roll Call – Chair/Vice Chair**

The January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 meeting of the Urban Forestry Commission was called to order at 6:04pm by Clif Barnes (Chair). This meeting was held both in-person and online.

**ITEM 2: Approval of Minutes – November 19, 2025**

**Motion** by Jess Durfee, seconded by Lauren Danner, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2025 Urban Forestry Commission meeting.

**ITEM 3: Community Communications – 3 minutes each**

None.

**ITEM 4: Special Guest – Sunrise O'Mahoney, Past Executive Director, Watershed Alliance**

Past Executive Director of Watershed Alliance, Sunrise O'Mahoney, participated in a Q&A with Commissioners regarding the organization's legacy, best practices learned, and the community's future needs.

**ITEM 5: UFC Retreat Planning 2026**

## Members

**Clif Barnes**  
*Chair*

**Jamie Beyer**  
*Vice Chair*

Ammaar Akhtar  
Lauren Danner  
Jess Durfee  
Lucius Shields  
Vacant

**Public Works Department**  
**Charles Ray**

415 W 6<sup>th</sup> St  
P.O. Box 1995  
Vancouver, WA 98668  
360-487-8328  
TTY: 711  
charles.ray@cityofvancouver.us

The 2026 UFC Retreat is scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup> with the location still to be determined. At the February UFC meeting, location will be finalized along with programming and final logistics.

**ITEM 6: Review UFC Calendar & Schedule**

The Commission reviewed the upcoming year’s schedule of meetings and programming, with nearest upcoming events being the UFC Retreat, Arbor Day celebration, and Pollinator Festival.

Discussion also centered around timing and preparations for the next Heritage Tree Program cycle, with current consensus being for 2027 to allow more time for outreach and education to ensure ample application collection.

**ITEM 7: UFC Bylaw Update**

**Motion** by Lauren Danner, seconded by Jess Durfee, and carried unanimously to adopt the revised version of the UFC bylaws.

**ITEM 8: Program Updates**

Emailed out.

In-meeting updates include:

UFC tour of the Water Center on February 18<sup>th</sup> will now take place from 5-7pm.

The Commission discussed potential nominees for the Mac Awards.

Corridor subcommittee shared of a tree planting in December.

**ITEM 9: Urban Forestry Report**

Emailed out.

**ITEM 10: Commission Communications**

Ammaar shared of tree planting and Behren Woods work party.

Jess shared of Pollinator and Outreach subcommittee meetings.

Lucius shared of upcoming Corridor subcommittee meeting.

Lauren shared of tree plantings, upcoming tree watering, Outreach subcommittee, continued tree education, and upcoming Old Apple Tree research at the Clark County Historical Museum.

Clif shared of holiday social gathering, Outreach subcommittee meeting, and tree planting.

**ITEM 11: New Business**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

7:23pm

Clif Barnes, Chair

Meetings of the Urban Forestry Commission are electronically recorded on audio. The audio tapes are kept on file in the office of the City Clerk for a period of six years.

# OUR VANCOUVER

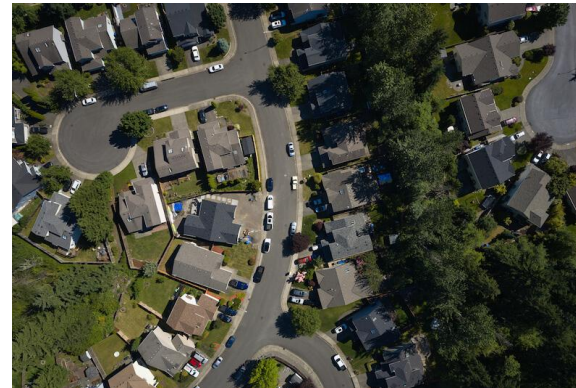
OUR FUTURE 2045

## Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Update

Mark Person (he/him), Senior Planner, Community Development  
Urban Forestry Commission | February 18, 2026

# Agenda

- Comprehensive Plan Background
- Draft Comp Plan
  - ➔ Where urban forestry fits in
- Draft Tree Code
  - ➔ Framework and Council-endorsed Preferred Alternative
  - ➔ Tree Code Applicability
  - ➔ Key Tree Standards
  - ➔ City Tree Account
- Coming Up + Discussion



# OUR VANCOUVER Comprehensive Plan

- A guide for the city’s growth and development over the next **20 years** (2025-2045).

	2024	Growth	2045 Targets
<b>Population</b>	~200,000	+ 81,000	~281,000
<b>Housing Units</b>	~86,000	+ 38,000	~124,000
<b>Jobs</b>	~100,000	+ 43,100	~143,100

Vancouver is an equitable and prosperous community, which ensures that all residents, businesses and organizations benefit from the growth and advancement we make together.

Vancouver will be recognized for our quality of life, as evidenced by affordable housing in vibrant, safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to jobs and economic opportunity for all, and leading-edge efforts to address climate change.

Learn about  
our community

Develop  
alternatives

Understand  
potential impacts

Refine map,  
policies, & code

Adopt plan  
and code



# Key Drivers and Priorities

- **A Changing Landscape** – Rising housing costs, climate change, evolving transportation needs, community safety and economic shifts require a new approach.
- **Economic & Employment Trends** – Capacity for 4,300 new jobs, continued remote work, desire for jobs closer to home, access to family wage jobs, shifts in commerce and support for small businesses.
- **Growing Community**– Transition from suburban to urban; continue transition from suburban expansion to compact, connected neighborhoods where daily needs can be met within a 15-minute walk.
- **Opportunity for All**– Address disparities in outcomes and provide equal access to housing, jobs, parks, schools, healthcare and essential services for all community members.
- **Climate Action** – Net-zero emissions by 2040; adapt to heat, wildfire smoke, and flooding through compact, connected growth and resilient infrastructure.
- **Legal & Policy Requirements** – Room for 38,000+ new units by 2045 in range of income bands, allow new housing types in all neighborhoods, integrate climate and equity into Comprehensive Planning.



# New State Laws

- At a minimum, allow up to 4 units per residential lot and up to 6 units per residential lot if near transit or if at least 2 units are affordable.
  - ➔ Standards for middle housing cannot be more restrictive than those for detached single-family homes
- Make room for set numbers of housing units in all income levels – over 30,000 total new units citywide
  - ➔ Including permanently supportive housing



- Account for racially disparate impacts
- At a minimum, allow 2 ADUs per residential lot
- No parking minimums for affordable housing and no more than 0.5 per unit for all other housing
- Only one stairwell required for residential buildings 6-stories or less
- Align impact fees to size of housing
- Allow for permanently supportive housing



# Draft Comprehensive Plan



## Chapters

- Community Experience
- Land Use and Development
- Housing
- Equity and Inclusion
- **Climate and Environment**
- Economic Opportunity
- **Parks and Recreation**
- Transportation and Mobility
- Public Facilities and Services
- Annexation



# Draft Plan

- In each chapter:
  - ➔ Historical context and current conditions
  - ➔ Chapter vision statement
  - ➔ Key challenges and trends
  - ➔ Community feedback
  - ➔ Equity lens
  - ➔ Goal pages
    - Description of goal
    - List of supporting policies
    - Key actions (TBD)
- Plus, an Introduction section with overall vision statement and definitions and an Implementation chapter

# Parks and Recreation

**PR-1** Increase Community Health Through Recreation

**PR-2** Parks, Trails and Natural Spaces

**PR-3** Community Health and Wellness

**PR-4** Thriving Cultural Landscape

# Climate and Environment

**CL-1** Resiliency and Climate Adaptation

**CL-2** Increase Biodiversity and Enhance Natural Systems

**CL-3** Decrease Emissions

**CL-4** Environmental Health



# Draft Zoning Code



# Code Framework

## Goals:

- Easy to understand
- Supports connected and accessible neighborhoods, more and diverse housing, and unique and authentic places
- Uses land efficiently
- Focuses on form
- Reduces non-conformities

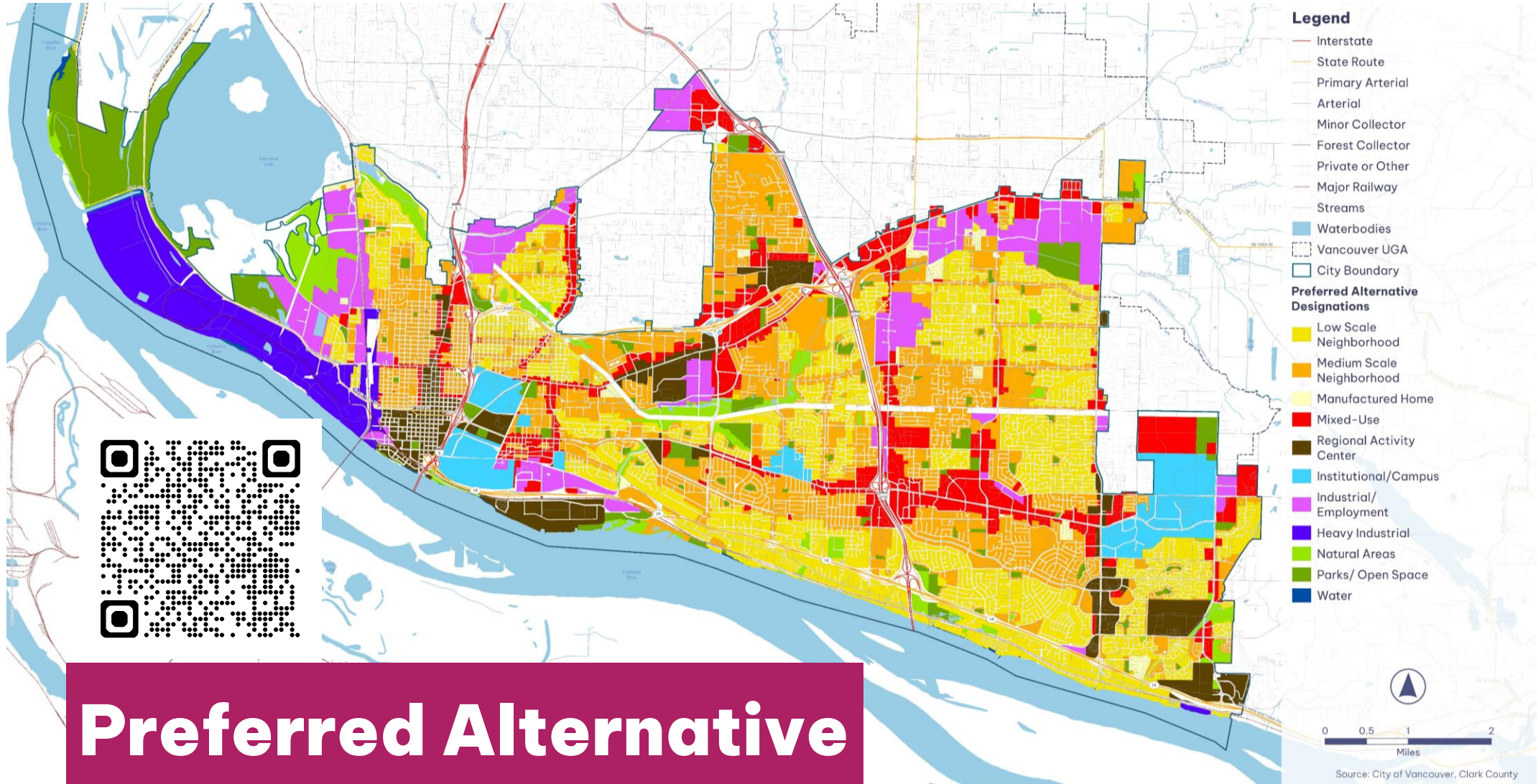
## Key Components:

- All areas will have a **Base District**
  - Allowed **building types**
  - Allowed **uses**
- Some areas will also have an **Overlay**



	Existing Code	New Code
Uses	Allowed or prohibited	Mixing uses allowed/required
Density	Focuses on density maximums	Focuses on density minimums
Building Height	Maximums	Maximums
Parking	Minimums	No minimums
Building placement	Lot coverage, setbacks	Relationship to the street, build-to lines, building types

*Note: Heavy Industrial zoning district will be fundamentally different from all other districts.*



# Preferred Alternative

[www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045](http://www.beheardvancouver.org/plan2045)



# Landscaping and Tree Conservation

## *Draft Section VMC 20.450.006*

- Recognizes the aesthetic, ecological and economic values of trees and landscaping
- For new construction, removal of existing trees, and areas of site disturbance:
  - ➔ Tree removal permit, Landscape Plan and Tree, Vegetation, and Soil Plan required
- Exemptions
  - ➔ Commercial tree farms or harvesting with permit
  - ➔ Emergencies
  - ➔ Residential parcels
  - ➔ Undeveloped property
  - ➔ Minor development



# Tree Preservation and Protection

- New Requirement – Retain a minimum of 33% of trees in good condition at least 12" diameter.
- Priority order
  - Heritage trees
  - Sensitive areas
  - Floodplains and wellhead protection
  - Other existing trees
- Critical Root Zone deducted from site area for residential density calculations



# Tree Density and Coverage

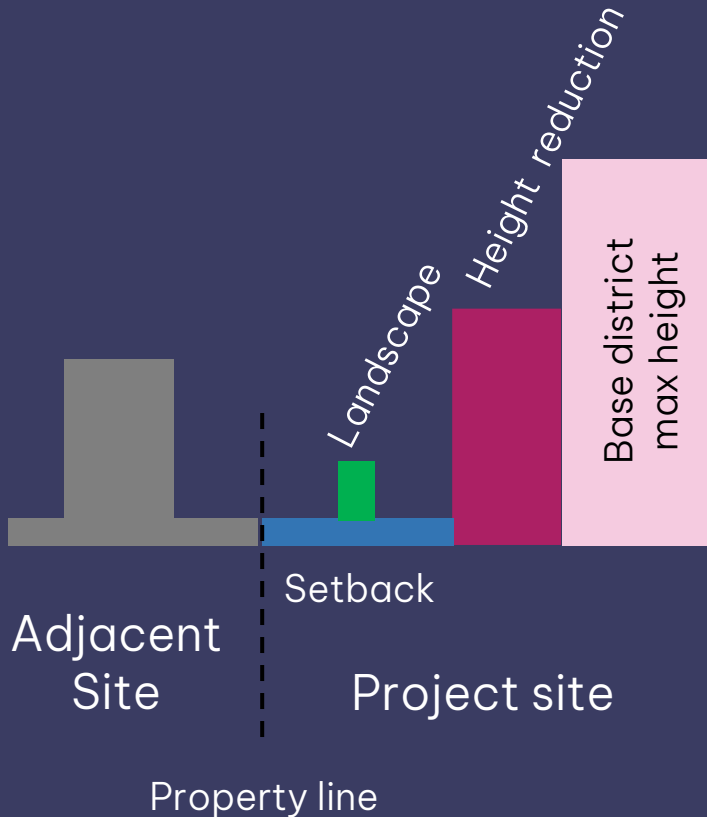
- Minimum tree density
  - ➔ 30 tree units per acre for new development
  - ➔ 200 tree units for conversion option harvest forest practices
  - ➔ Required street trees may count toward this
- Priority locations for tree planting
  - ➔ If on-site not feasible, off-site planting or city tree account.
- Some exemptions to minimum tree density and tree canopy coverage

Development	Minimum Canopy Coverage %
Active Retail Uses, Office Uses, Passive Retail Uses	15%
Industrial Uses	9%
Mixed-Use (Residential Uses and at least one other primary use)	24%
6 or fewer dwelling units	33%
7+ dwelling units	27%



# Landscaping

- Parking lots
  - Increased landscape parking islands and tree cover/shade for surface parking lots for >10 spaces
- Buffers proposed on higher-intensity zoned properties when they share a property line with a lower-intensity zoned property.
  - Increased Setback
  - Landscaping
  - Height reduction
- Minimum tree requirements included for L1 and L2 landscaping
  - 10' or less setback = 1 tree per 30 lineal feet
  - >10' setback = 1 tree per 800 square feet



*Graphic for illustrative purposes only. Not to scale.*



# Buffers Between Zoning Districts

Project Site	Manufactured Home	Low-Scale	Medium-Scale
<b>Manuf. Home</b>	None	None.	None.
<b>Low-Scale N.</b>	General landscaping (L1)	None.	None.
<b>Medium-Scale Neighborhood</b>	10' & 6' screen planting 10'-20': 35' max height	3' screen planting (L2)	None.
<b>Mixed-use Neighborhood</b>	10' & 6' wall planting 10'-20': 35' max height	15' & 6' screen planting 15'-20': 45' max height	10' & 3' screen planting 10'-15': 75' max height
<b>Regional Activity Center</b>	10' & 6' wall planting 10'-20': 35' max height	25' & 6' screen planting 25'-30': 55' max height	15' & 6' wall planting 15'-20': 75' max height
<b>Institutional / Campus</b>	10' & 6' wall planting 10'-20': 35' max height	25' & 6' wall planting 25'-30': 55' max height	15' & 6' wall planting 15'-20': 75' max height
<b>Industrial / Employment</b>	25' & 6' screen planting 25'-30': 35' max height	35' & 6' berm + planting 35'-40': 45' max height	15' & 6' wall planting 15'-20': 75' max height
<b>Heavy Industrial</b>	25' & 6' screen planting 25'-30': 35' max height	45' & 6' berm + planting 45'-50': 45' max height	45' & 6' berm + planting 45'-50': 45' max height

There are also buffers for Industrial/Employment and Heavy Industrial properties when adjacent to Mixed-use Neighborhood, Regional activity Center, or Institutional / Campus. See attachment.



# Open Space

- Open space regulated by building type
  - Single-family requires minimum 20%, the rest of middle housing requires minimum 10-15%
  - Multi-family and mid-rise building types require minimum 15% open space
  - Mixed use, commercial, and industrial building types require no open space
- Moving from lot coverage to max impervious
- Open space requirements for larger (10 acres or greater) master plans





# Additional Standards

- Street tree requirements
- Heritage tree standards
- Cool site surfaces requirements
- Automated irrigation system required
- Added definitions (e.g., tree drip line)





# City Tree Account

- Funded by:
  - Sale of trees or wood from city property where the proceeds from such sale have not been dedicated to another purpose
  - Donations and grants for purposes of the fund
  - Sale of seedlings by the City
  - Civil penalties imposed under Section 20.450.006.070 VMC or settlements in lieu of penalties
  - Other funds allocated by the city council
- To be used for
  - Acquiring, maintaining, and preserving wooded areas within the city
  - Planting and maintaining trees within the city
  - Identification and maintenance of heritage trees
  - Propagation of seedling trees
  - Urban forestry education
  - Other purposes relating to trees as determined by the City Council



# Coming Up

- **Draft of Plan & Code**
  - ➔ Mid-February: Release of drafts for public
    - Community presentations
  - ➔ Feb and March: Council and Commission Review
    - February 23: City Council – Code
    - March 10: Planning Commission – Code and Plan
    - March 16: City Council – Plan- Annexation, Community Experience and Implementation Chapters
    - March 23: City Council – Code
- **Initiate Adoption Process in April (PC) and May (Council)**
  - Supported by Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)



## Community Presentations

**Thur, Feb 19**

4p-6p  
Virtual

**Thur, Feb 26**

11a-1p  
Virtual

**Sat, Feb 28**

11a-1p  
City Hall

**Wed, Mar 4**

5:30-7:30p  
Cascade Park  
Community Library

# Thank you & Questions

[www.behardvancouver.org/plan2045](http://www.behardvancouver.org/plan2045)

[OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:OurVancouver2045@cityofvancouver.us)



# Climate and Environment



6

OUR VANCOUVER

# Introduction

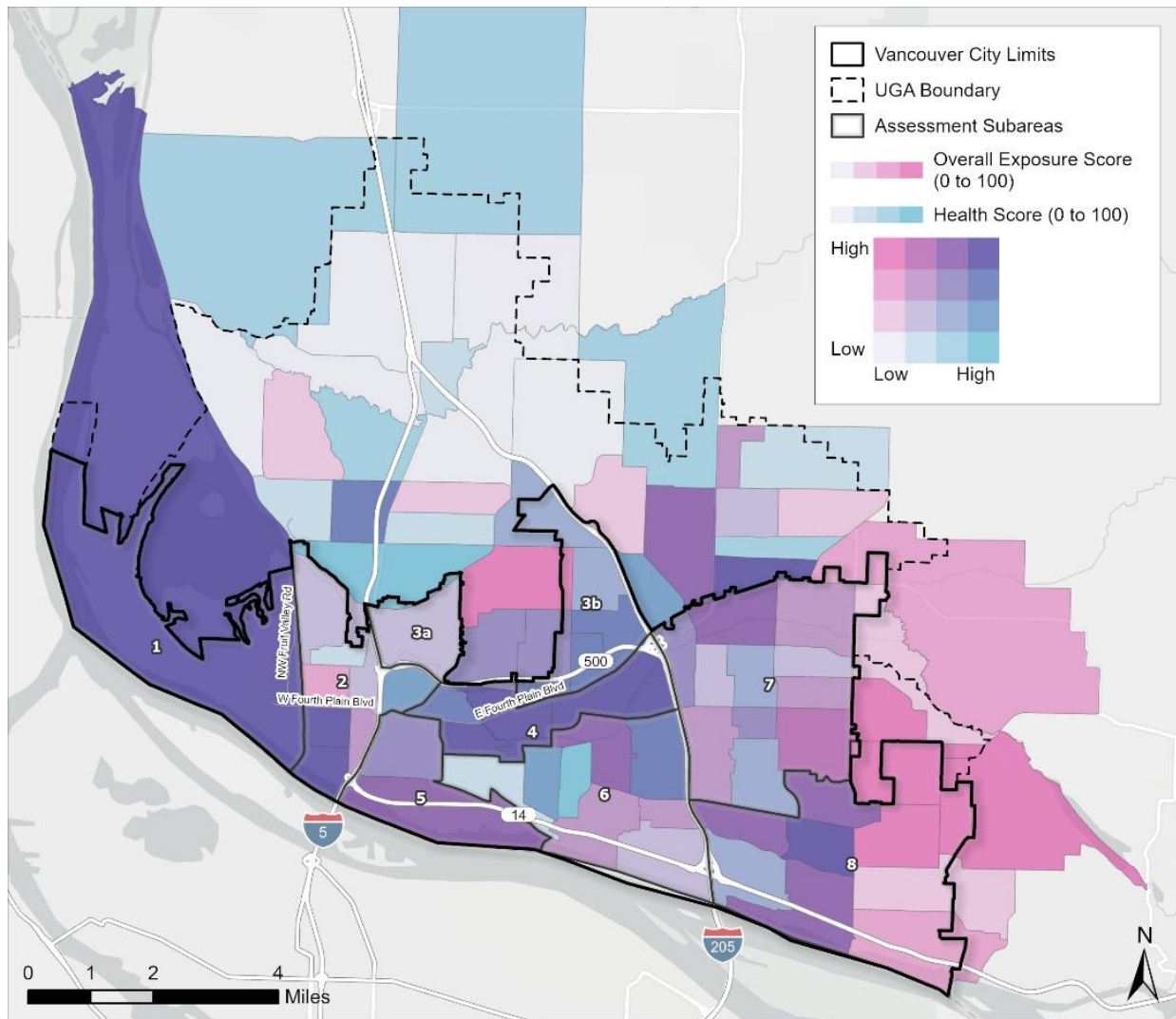
Climate change is no longer a distant threat in Vancouver. Rising temperatures, wildfire smoke, and more frequent flooding events are impacting the health of our residents, the resilience of our infrastructure, and the vitality of our natural systems. These impacts are expected to worsen over the next twenty years without significant interventions on a national or global scale to reduce carbon emissions. In the face of an environment that is rapidly changing due to these impacts – which includes increased wildfire risk, extreme heat, smoke and poor air quality exposure and increased flooding, the City can play a key role in mitigating some of these impacts and increasing overall community resilience.



**Downtown Vancouver, WA during the 2020 Wildfire Season.**

For decades, Vancouver’s land use patterns have shaped the greenhouse gas emissions profile the city faces today. Much of Vancouver’s post-war growth occurred through low-density residential development separated from jobs, services, and daily needs, resulting in an urban form where most households rely on driving for nearly every trip. This pattern has contributed to transportation becoming the city’s largest source of emissions, consistent with regional and statewide trends. At the same time, older housing stock and commercial buildings—many built long before modern energy codes—continue to generate substantial emissions through inefficient heating, cooling, and ventilation systems. Historic industrial activity, the concentration of commercial corridors along

auto-oriented arterials, and development patterns that expanded outward rather than upward have further locked in a built environment that consumes more energy and produces more air pollution than compact, mixed-use neighborhoods. These patterns have also produced uneven climate burdens: neighborhoods with lower tree canopy, more impervious surface, and older buildings—often the same communities facing socioeconomic and health disparities—experience both higher emissions exposure and greater climate vulnerability, reinforcing many of the inequities identified in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Health Impact Assessment.



**Exhibit 1: Climate Exposure Versus Health Impact Score**

Due to a variety of socioeconomic factors and structural inequities, not all population groups in our community experience the impacts of climate change equally, and are less able to adapt and respond to those impacts when faced with them. Areas with the highest combined climate exposure, health sensitivity, and equity disparities are concentrated along the Fourth Plain corridor (Maplewood, Meadow Homes, Bagley Downs), Fruit Valley, central Vancouver south of SR-500, and southeast Vancouver. These neighborhoods include higher proportions of people of color, low-income

households, renter households, adults without a four-year degree, households with limited English proficiency, and persons with disabilities, all of which are identified as indicators of reduced adaptive capacity in the City's Equity Index. Additionally, these populations tend to overlap with areas of the City where residents experience greater health risks such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary



## **Vision: Climate and Environment**

We envision a future where there is balance between the built and natural environment, with resilient and thriving communities that are well prepared to adapt to the impacts of climate change. We commit to expanding green spaces and the ecosystems they host, building sustainable infrastructure, combating heat islands and providing every community member with multimodal transportation options that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will invest in projects and initiatives that support those most impacted by climate change and engage all community members in finding solutions. We will prioritize the development of infrastructure and community spaces that are ready to function during times of disaster and create places where people continue to be able to live, work and play as climate changes.

disease, diabetes, heart disease, poor physical health, and poor mental health.

As Vancouver grows, there are also opportunities to place an intentional focus on developing a built environment that supports increased health outcomes. Policy efforts to encourage physical activity,

support food access, bolster community connections, mitigate health hazards, and support housing access and financial security that are outlined in this chapter can improve wellbeing for current and future residents, particularly those with the greatest health disparities. Vancouver must also grow in ways that make it easier for residents to walk, bike, roll, or take public transit to their daily destinations, instead of relying primarily on single-occupancy vehicles. Achieving this will require advancing many of the strategies outlined in this plan, including creating more compact land use patterns, expanding diverse housing options, improving walking and cycling infrastructure, and encouraging a thoughtful mix of land uses to lower community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. This chapter establishes a coordinated approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing per-capita vehicle miles traveled, and preparing for the local impacts of climate change. It is grounded in the findings of the Health Impact Assessment (Exhibit J) and Climate Vulnerability Assessment (Exhibit K), which together provide the technical basis for understanding current and future climate hazards, who is most affected, and which assets and systems face the greatest risks.

### Climate Hazards

Vancouver’s approach to climate resilience recognizes that climate change impacts are not experienced evenly across the city. The effects of extreme heat, heavy rainfall, drought, and wildfire smoke intersect with existing inequities in health, housing, and infrastructure. Climate modeling suggests that hazards will become more intense and more frequent by 2050.



**Warming and Extreme Heat:** The annual number of extremely hot days and warm nights in the Northwest has been above the

long-term average over the past decade, and the annual number of extremely cold nights over the same period has been below the long-term average. Future warming in the region is expected to exacerbate regional heatwave intensities. It is particularly magnified on impervious areas in urban areas like Vancouver.

- **6 °F hotter** average summer maximum temperature by 2050
- **+39 hot days** (over 90°F humidex / heat + humidity) by 2050

of strong atmospheric events and fewer moderate and weak events are projected to occur and are projected to reach farther inland. In Vancouver, major flooding along rivers and streams is less likely due to flood control structures and greenways but there is a risk along the Port and other areas that are low lying, and there is a risk of urban flooding elsewhere.

- **13% more total precipitation** in a 2-year storm by 2050.
- **14% more total precipitation** in a 25-year storm by 2050.



**Extreme Precipitation Events:** The frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation events are projected to

increase across the region. A greater number



**Flooding and Infrastructure:**

Riverine flooding as well as localized urban flooding is a growing concern in Vancouver due to aging stormwater infrastructure, particularly in older neighborhoods with combined sewer systems. These systems are increasingly overwhelmed

by intense rainfall events, leading to surface flooding and sewer overflows.

- **More frequent high streamflows** (every 9 years for Burnt Bridge Creek and every 21 years for Columbia River, instead of every 25 years) by 2050.



**Decreasing Summer Precipitation and Increasing Drought:**

Summer precipitation is projected to decline.

Observed lower stream flows in summer are expected to decrease. This could affect fish and other aquatic life in Vancouver's streams.

- **34% chance of lower than normal precipitation** (at or below 75% of normal) by 2050
- **Lower summer streamflows** (-5% for Burnt Bridge Creek and -21% on Columbia River) by 2050

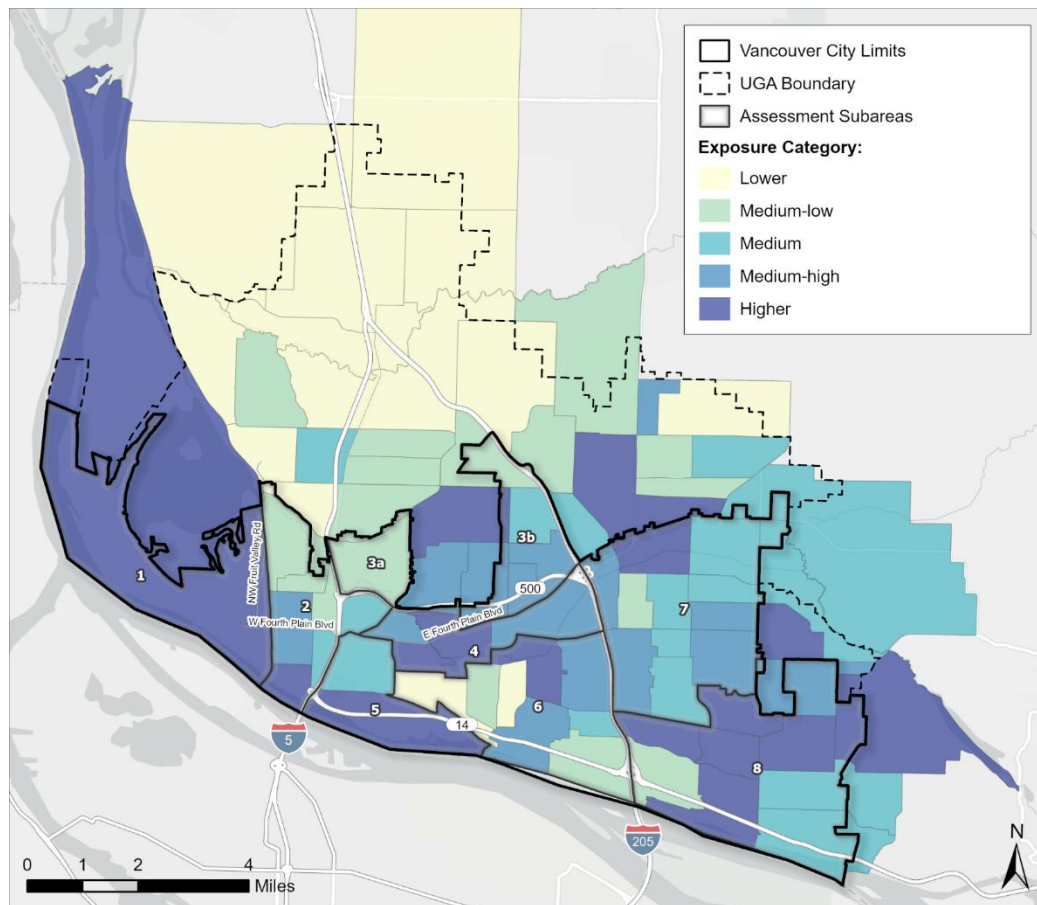


**Increasing Wildfire Likelihood and Smoke:**

An increase in wildfires in the Pacific Northwest could expose people in Vancouver and the broader region to more wildfire smoke.

Increased wildfire smoke events are straining indoor air quality in public facilities. Many community centers and senior centers lack adequate HVAC systems or filtration, limiting their ability to serve as clean air shelters during smoke events.

- **37% greater** chance of climate and fuel conditions being conducive to wildfire =
- **9 more** high fire danger days in Vancouver annually by 205

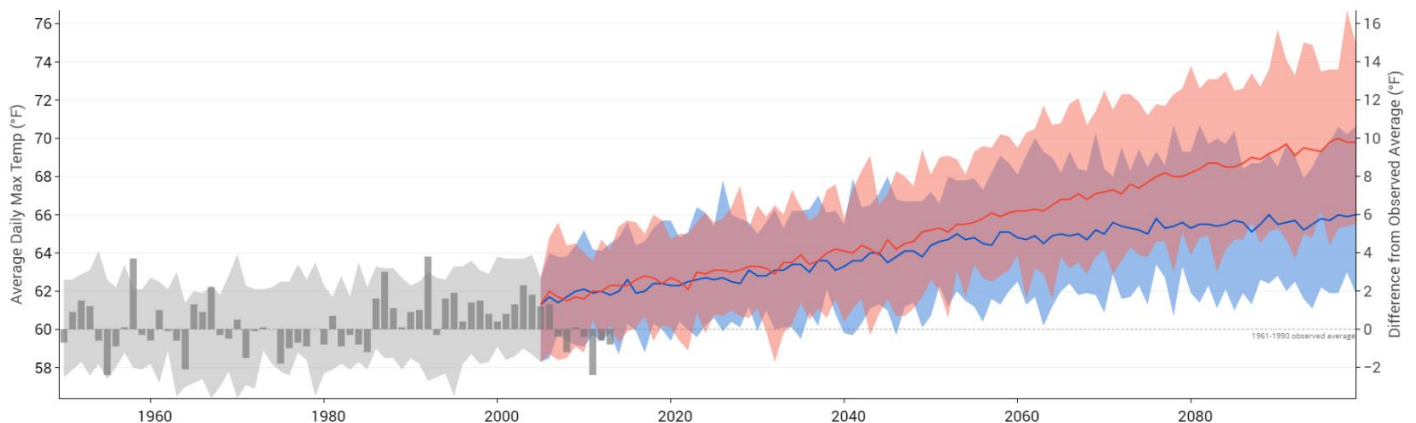


**Exhibit 2: Climate Exposure Index**  
Source: BERK, 2025

These hazards and their associated impacts vary substantially across Vancouver's neighborhoods. Some populations are at higher risk of climate impacts than others, based on location, health sensitivities, and access to resources. Areas at higher risk include those with more pavement and fewer trees, parts of the City prone to flooding and the 100 year floodplain, and areas adjacent to industrial land uses and transportation emissions, and higher exposure to air quality impacts.

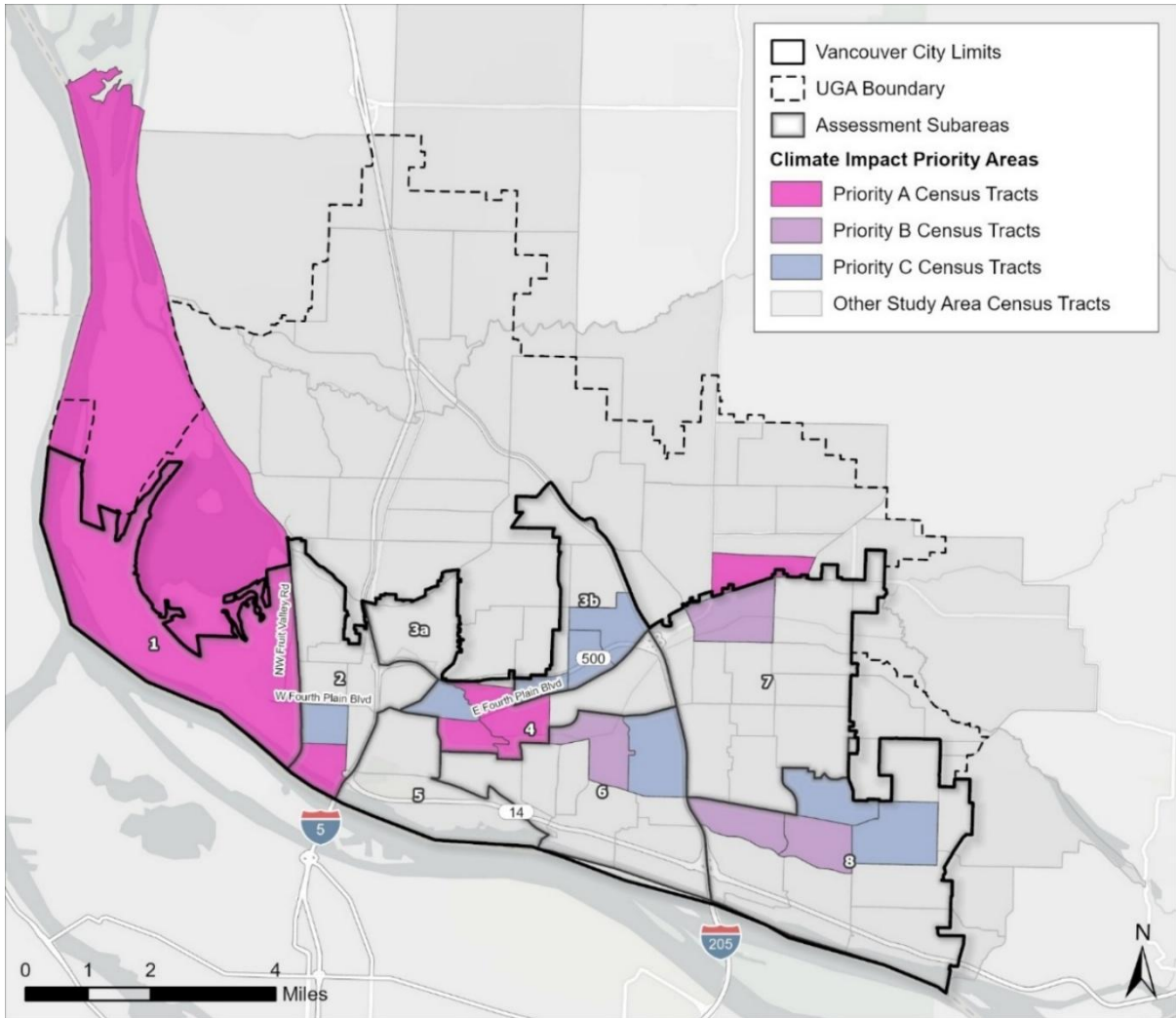
Conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD), diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, poor physical health, poor mental health, and lack of health insurance are linked to higher sensitivity.

- Bagley Downs, Maplewood, and Meadow Homes—along with the Fruit Valley and Mountain View neighborhoods—face the highest combined exposure to climate hazards and the lowest equity scores, reflecting greater social and economic vulnerability and fewer resources to adapt.
- East Vancouver, including areas near the Vancouver Mall and along SE Mill Plain Boulevard, experiences the city’s greatest heat exposure, driven by low tree canopy (below 20 percent) and high impervious surface coverage.
- West Vancouver, especially around Vancouver Lake and the Port, faces the highest flood and precipitation exposure due to low-lying topography and aging stormwater infrastructure. Central corridors around Burnt Bridge Creek also experience repeated surface flooding during intense rainfall events.
- Air quality and smoke exposure are more pronounced east of NW Fruit Valley Road, along SR 14, and in southeast Vancouver, where prevailing winds concentrate wildfire smoke during regional fire events



**Exhibit 3: Average Daily Max. Temp. (°F) – Historic and Projected Trends – Clark County, WA**

Vancouver’s climate risk is the product of both natural systems and long-standing development patterns that have concentrated people, infrastructure, and industry in areas more exposed to hazards. Historically, industrial land uses and transportation corridors were sited along Vancouver’s western shoreline, adjacent to the Columbia River and Vancouver Lake. This legacy has left these neighborhoods with higher exposure to flooding, stormwater overflow, and poor air quality, while also limiting green space and tree canopy. The *Climate Vulnerability Assessment* identifies these same areas as having some of the city’s lowest adaptive capacity, due to older housing, lower incomes, and aging infrastructure.



**Exhibit 4: Census Tracts with Higher Vulnerabilities to Climate Impacts**

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

As climate impacts become more intense and frequent, it is increasingly urgent that Vancouver takes action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which are the driving force of climate change. Emissions in Vancouver mostly come from how we get around and how we heat, cool, and power buildings. Air travel, vehicles and equipment (like cars, delivery trucks, boats, and lawn mowers), electricity use, and natural gas use are major sources. Over time, residents on average have used less natural gas, driven fewer miles, and sent less waste to the landfill, even as our local economy has progressed.

The City’s Climate Action Framework sets forth a goal that the City be carbon neutral by 2040. The Framework anticipates that with current technologies and existing policies, Vancouver could reach approximately 80% of its goal towards carbon neutrality. With policy changes and technological innovations Vancouver will strive to close the remaining gap. This Element reflects the City’s policy changes and actions to reach its goal through reducing emissions from City owned buildings,

operations, infrastructure, and municipal fleet; supporting transportation options; regulating land use; advancing technology and infrastructure; and partnering on regional economic development.

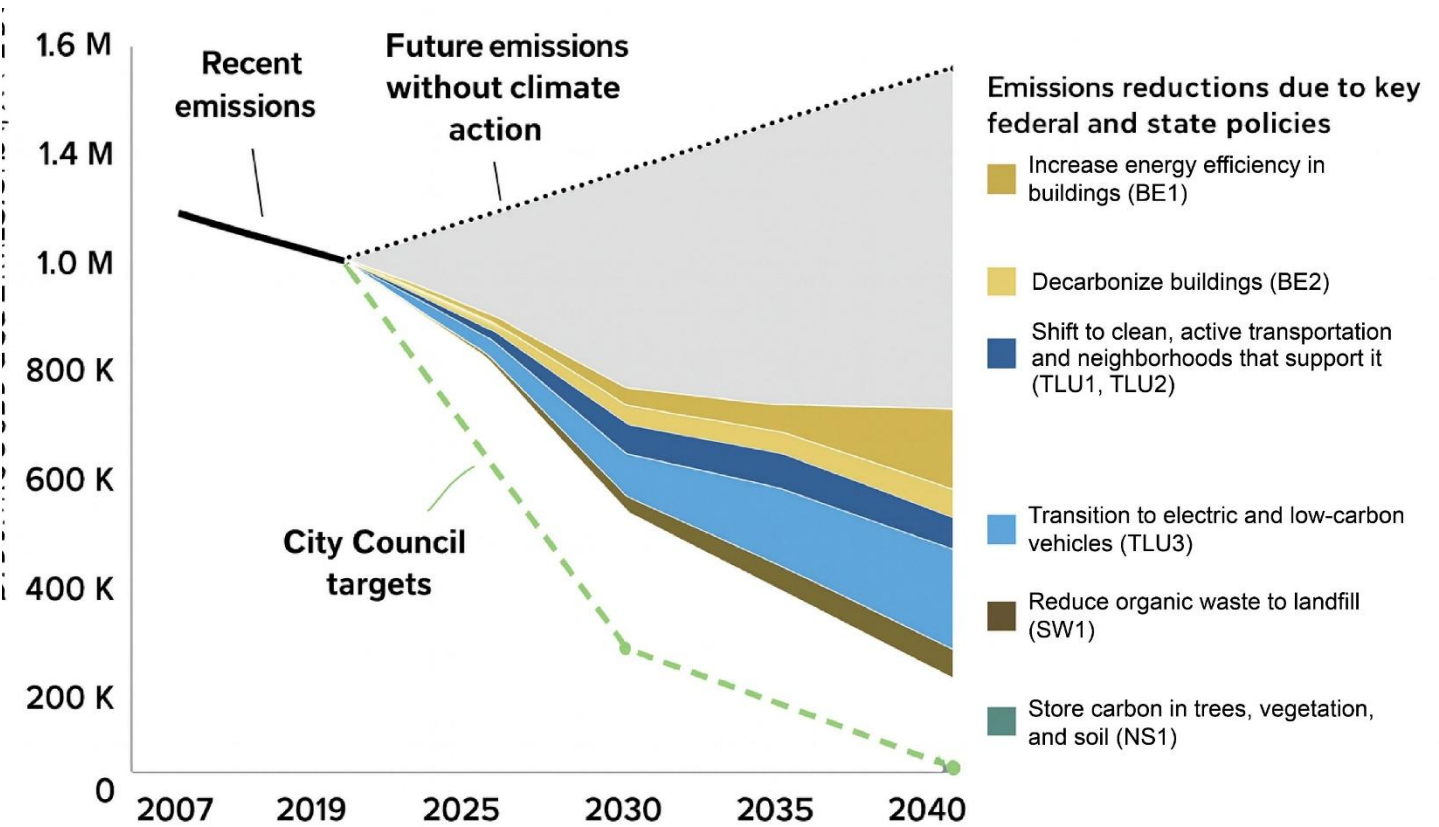


Exhibit 5: Wedge Analysis – Climate Action Framework

**Health and the Built Environment**

Land use and urban design shape the health of our communities. Safe and accessible walking and biking routes, access to parks, proximity to grocery stores and other services, housing access, and financial security all affect people’s wellbeing on a day-to-day basis. Exposure to poor air and water quality, noise, heat, and climate impacts can have negative effects. City policies that emphasize health benefits and minimize hazards can lead to better health outcomes for Vancouver residents. The City can support physical activity through parks and active transportation. Access to parks varies citywide: Fruit Valley, Rose Village,

**Health Facts**

- 5.5%** Workers who get some physical activity on their commute (walk, bike, or take transit)
- 16%** of households receive SNAP benefits
- 48%** Students who receive free and reduced school lunch
- 30** Estimated deaths per year from poor air quality exposure (PM2.5)
- 1 in 8** Households living below the federal poverty level

Fourth Plain Village, and some areas on the east side of Vancouver have less than 20% of the park acreage needed to meet the City's established level of service<sup>38</sup>. As of 2024, only 2% of Vancouver workers walk to work, 0.5% bike to work, and 3% take public transit (and are likely to walk some amount in their commute), while the overwhelming majority (75%) drive alone to their jobs<sup>39</sup>. Many existing car trips are under 5 miles long. Improved pedestrian and bicycle safety and connectivity could make active transportation an option for more people. Land use planning that encourages mixed uses and more services near homes can also make it easier to walk and bike on a regular basis.

Much of the Vancouver population has food access challenges. 16% receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) support and 48% of public school students receive free and reduced school lunch<sup>40</sup>. Access to supermarkets varies citywide: some areas don't have any within a mile. Other food resources include food banks, community gardens, and local farmers markets. City efforts can help support access to food by facilitating the density and commercial space needed to support new stores, and by promoting community gardens and other food-related uses.

Access to other amenities also varies. There is generally lower access to services, in terms of quantity and variety, in Fruit Valley, Rose Village, and some areas west of I-205 and the east side of the city. Land use that supports a mix of uses and densities can encourage development that provides new services close to where people live. A range of health hazards also affect Vancouver residents. Vancouver is especially impacted by air pollution, with an estimated 30 deaths per year

## Equity Lens

Some communities experience greater climate hazard and health disparities than others:

- Persons that are elderly may have more limited mobility or preexisting health conditions, and children under 5 years old may have a harder time regulating temperature and may have underdeveloped immune systems.
- Low-income households may be more susceptible to illnesses and have limited resources to adapt or respond to climate change.
- Persons that speak English less than very well may have more difficulties during evacuation and difficulties accessing post-disaster funding.
- Households with lower incomes are more likely to lose more work hours due to weather.
- BIPOC populations are more likely to have new asthma diagnoses due to particulate air pollution.
- Areas with less tree canopy are exposed to more heat, and communities of color have less coverage in Vancouver.

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<sup>38</sup> 2022-2031 Vancouver Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan

<sup>39</sup> Design Workshop (2024)

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2022) and Design Workshop (2024)

associated with PM 2.5 concentration<sup>41</sup>. Other threats like climate hazards and noise vary by location. City policies can help mitigate these hazards by influencing things like tree canopy cover, placement of growth, stormwater management, and other factors.

Housing and economic issues are also tied to health and wellbeing. Affordability and displacement are pressing issues in Vancouver, and many older units may have exposure to hazards like lead and asbestos. About 1 in 8 households is living below the federal poverty level and average wages are especially insufficient for single parent households<sup>42</sup>. City policies to encourage housing affordability, safe and healthy housing, and a strong local economy can create opportunities for all Vancouver residents to thrive.

## Community Feedback

- Through Resilience Rising in May and June 2025, participants with Fourth Plain Forward, the Southwest Washington Equity Coalition, and Washington Conservation Action repeatedly raised issues of inequitable access to resources like air conditioning, clean air shelters, and public cooling infrastructure.
- Through engagement for the Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2023, physical elements that community members would like to see include water features such as splash pads, urban gardens and fruit trees, more tree coverage, and community centers or public spaces for neighbors to connect with one another.

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<sup>41</sup> Washington Department of Ecology (2023)

<sup>42</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2023), MIT (2025)

**Goal: CL-1****Resilience and  
Climate Adaptation**

**Vancouver is a resilient and sustainable city that is prepared to mitigate and adapt to the localized impacts of climate change including sea level rise, landslides, flooding, more intense winter storm conditions, drought, heat, smoke, and wildfire.**

Vancouver’s climate response depends on preparing for and adapting to the localized impacts of climate change that are already unfolding across the region. Rising temperatures, more frequent wildfire smoke events, intense rainfall, flooding, and prolonged drought conditions are affecting residents in every neighborhood—and disproportionately harming frontline communities with fewer resources to cope. Goal CL-1 establishes a coordinated, community-centered approach to safeguarding public health, strengthening infrastructure, and ensuring that all residents have equitable access to the protections they need as climate conditions intensify. This goal embraces the reality that resilience is built through both physical investments and strong social networks, and it positions Vancouver to adapt proactively rather than reactively.

At the core of this approach is robust disaster recovery and emergency response, which ensures that residents—particularly older adults, people with disabilities, unhoused residents, low-income households, and linguistically isolated communities—can access emergency information, cooling or clean-air shelters, medical care, and recovery assistance during climate-related events. Supportive policies include building trust with community-based organizations, cultural groups, and neighborhood networks, acknowledging that these relationships are essential for effective emergency communication and resource distribution.

Vancouver’s Climate Vulnerability Assessment shows that heat exposure is most severe in neighborhoods with limited tree canopy, high impervious surfaces, and existing social and health inequities. Policies under this goal commit the City to cooling these neighborhoods through strategic shade structures, expanded green space, and climate-appropriate tree canopy—especially in Equity Priority Neighborhoods. These nature-based solutions not only cool streets and homes but also improve air quality, reduce stormwater runoff, and create healthier public environments.

The approach also proposed integrating climate-resilient infrastructure and buildings into both public projects and private development, including green stormwater systems, drought-tolerant

landscaping, cool roofs, and building upgrades that increase energy efficiency, improve indoor air quality, and reduce emissions. Expanding solar access for low-income renters and homeowners supports both equity and long-term energy resilience. Policies that advance solid waste reduction, composting, and resource recovery further reduce emissions and environmental impacts.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Adapt Infrastructure to Climate Change</b>	Retrofit existing infrastructure, parks and natural spaces, and construct new facilities to adapt to the localized impacts that will occur in the community due to climate change.	8	CL-1, PFS-1, PFS-3
<b>Build a resilient economy</b>	Encourage business growth, retention, and expansion, with an emphasis on family-wage jobs and foster resilience within Vancouver's economy.	24	LU-2 CL-1, EO-3
<b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>	Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces.	29	CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3
<b>Conserve Water Resources</b>	Encourage water-efficient technologies and practices to reduce consumption and ensure sustainable water availability amid climate change and growing demand.	37	CL-1, CL-4, PFS-1
<b>Disaster Recovery and Emergency Response</b>	Develop plans and resources to ensure effective emergency response and equal access to emergency services and recovery resources, mitigating risks from natural disasters, climate-related hazards, and social disruptions.	43	CE-3, CL-1, PFS-3

**Energy Efficient and Climate Resilient Buildings**

Ensure that buildings contribute to the City’s greenhouse gas reduction goals and protect occupants from pollution, extreme weather and other climate hazards.

48

CL-1, CL-3

**Equity and Climate Data**

Incorporate the City’s Equity Index, Displacement Risk Assessment tool, and climate vulnerability assessment in public investment and infrastructure improvement decisions.

53

EI-1, PFS-1, CL-1

**Historic and Culturally Significant Resources**

Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures.

66

CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4

**Incorporate Climate Resilient Infrastructure into Development**

Integrate climate resilience best practices into development and infrastructure projects and investments in public spaces.

72

CL-1, CL-2, PFS-1

**Pilot Projects**

Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation, and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in.

102

CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1

**Reduce climate impact exposure to Vancouver’s neighborhoods.**

Establish development regulations that incorporate best practices for reducing the risk of wildfire, extreme heat, flooding, and other climate-exacerbated hazards.

110

CL-1

**Reduce Heat Island Effect**

Minimize impacts of the urban heat island effect, reduce geographic temperature disparities, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat..

114

CL-1, CL-2, CL-4

<p><b>Reduce Solid Waste</b></p>	<p>Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.</p>	<p><b>116</b></p>	<p>CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1</p>
<p><b>Redundancy in Infrastructure</b></p>	<p>Design, construct, and maintain capital infrastructure systems with resiliency and redundancy to minimize the risk of system failure during natural hazards, climate-related events, or other disruptions. Prioritize investments that diversify supply sources, strengthen backup systems, and enhance adaptive capacity so essential services can be maintained or restored quickly in the event of a failure.</p>	<p><b>118</b></p>	<p>PFS-3, CL-1</p>
<p><b>Solar Access</b></p>	<p>Expand residential, commercial and industrial access to solar power to meet energy needs.</p>	<p><b>134</b></p>	<p>CL-1, CL-3</p>
<p><b>Stormwater Management</b></p>	<p>Improve water quality, protect watersheds and reduce flood risks by promoting groundwater infiltration, reducing runoff, and advancing effective stormwater best management practices.</p>	<p><b>136</b></p>	<p>CL-1, PFS-1</p>

## Goal: CL-2

## Increase Biodiversity and Enhance Natural Systems

**Vancouver has thriving ecosystems, build green infrastructure and preserve natural spaces that enhance air quality, provide natural cooling, sequester carbon, and beautify neighborhoods, enriching residents' quality of life, and fostering rich and diverse plant and animal life.**

Vancouver's natural systems—its forests, waterways, wetlands, riparian corridors, and open spaces—are essential to the city's long-term resilience, ecological health, and quality of life. This goal strengthens these systems by proposing solutions to restore habitat, expand green infrastructure, improve tree canopy, and protect the ecological functions that cool neighborhoods, filter air and water, sequester carbon, and sustain a diversity of plant and animal life. As climate impacts intensify, these natural assets also serve as vital buffers against heat, flooding, drought, and poor air quality.

CL-2 emphasizes protecting and restoring the city's Critical Areas and Shorelines, ensuring no net loss of ecological function and advancing conservation design principles that support salmon-bearing streams, wetlands, and riparian habitats. The goal further commits to restoring degraded natural areas, improving habitat quality, and identifying climate refugia—places with naturally cooler conditions, stable hydrology, or intact vegetation that can sustain species under climate stress. These strategies help maintain biodiversity while preserving the ecological processes that safeguard water quality, reduce erosion, and support community wellbeing.

Expanding and equitably distributing tree canopy is a cornerstone of this goal. Increasing canopy to 28%—and prioritizing low-canopy, equity priority neighborhoods—provides natural cooling, reduces heat island effects, improves air quality, and enhances stormwater infiltration. Integrated climate-resilient infrastructure, such as green streets, bioswales, and permeable surfaces, complements this work by managing runoff, reducing localized flooding, and bringing greenery into urban areas where it is most needed.

CL-2 also strengthens habitat connectivity, linking parks, natural areas, and open spaces through linear greenways and active transportation corridors. These networks support wildlife movement, expand pollinator habitat, and create shaded, walkable routes for residents. Complementary policies promote native landscapes, food forests, and agroforestry, which enhance soil health, support food security, and foster cultural knowledge-sharing. Conservation of environmentally sensitive lands ensures long-term protection for ecologically significant areas.

Another key component of CL-2 is building meaningful partnerships with Tribal nations and Indigenous land stewards, whose knowledge and cultural priorities deepen ecological understanding and inform stewardship practices. The goal also aligns closely with efforts to protect historic, cultural, and archeological resources, recognizing the intertwined nature of cultural heritage and ecological resilience.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Conserve Land For Open Space and Environmental Preservation</b>	Acquire environmentally sensitive land with ecological benefits for the purpose of conservation.	35	PR-2, CL-2
<b>Engage with Tribal Community Members</b>	Foster meaningful partnerships with tribal communities and land stewards, integrating their knowledge, priorities, and cultural perspectives into local decision-making processes.	49	EI-4, CL-2
<b>Equitably Expand Tree Canopy</b>	Utilize canopy assessment data and the City’s Equity Index to prioritize areas for tree planting and greening investments.	58	CL-2
<b>Habitat and Species Under Stress from Climate Change</b>	Take inventory of and protect climate refugia, and fish and wildlife habitat needs for species under stress from climate change.	64	CL-2, CL-4

<p><b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b></p>	<p>Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures.</p>	<p>66</p>	<p>CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4</p>
<p><b>Incorporate Climate Resilient Infrastructure into Development</b></p>	<p>Integrate climate resilience best practices into development and infrastructure projects and investments in public spaces.</p>	<p>72</p>	<p>CL-1, CL-2, PFS-1</p>
<p><b>Native Landscapes</b></p>	<p>Incorporate native plantings, food forests, and agroforestry into parks and public spaces to support food security, ecological health, and cultural knowledge sharing</p>	<p>94</p>	<p>PR-3, CL-2, EO-3</p>
<p><b>Pollinator Habitats</b></p>	<p>Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide-free landscaping, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings.</p>	<p>103</p>	<p>CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4</p>
<p><b>Protect and Restore Critical Areas and Shorelines</b></p>	<p>Protect critical areas, shorelines and other ecologically significant areas, ensure no net loss of ecological function through avoidance and mitigation of impacts, and apply conservation design principles to restore and enhance degraded areas.</p>	<p>107</p>	<p>CL-2</p>

**Goal: CL-3****Decrease Emissions****Vancouver is a carbon neutral community that excels in reducing carbon emissions and criteria pollutants through implementing sustainable practices and green infrastructure.**

Achieving a carbon-neutral future requires transforming how Vancouver produces and uses energy, constructs buildings, manages waste, and moves people and goods throughout the community. This goal establishes a comprehensive approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and criteria pollutants by integrating clean energy, efficient buildings, sustainable transportation, and circular-economy practices into the city's long-term growth strategy. This goal supports both climate mitigation and public health by cutting pollution at its source and ensuring that the benefits of cleaner air, lower utility costs, and healthier environments reach all Vancouver residents.

A major focus of CL-3 is reducing emissions from buildings and infrastructure, which account for a significant share of community-wide emissions. Policies supporting this goal advance energy-efficient and climate-resilient building design, encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures, and promote the use of low-carbon and regionally sourced materials to reduce embodied carbon in new construction. Expanding solar access—especially for low-income renters and homeowners—along with supporting renewable energy storage and grid upgrades, ensures that the energy Vancouver uses becomes increasingly clean, reliable, and affordable. Complementary procurement and maintenance practices further lower emissions by prioritizing green materials, reducing plastics and harmful chemicals, and adopting sustainable alternatives across City operations.

Another major element of this approach is long term changes needed to shift Vancouver's transportation and land use patterns. The policies outlined in this plan promote low-carbon transportation alternatives—including electric vehicles, hybrid technologies, and emerging clean-fuel options—while investing in the infrastructure needed to support them. Equally important, this goal calls for land use patterns that lower per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by concentrating new housing and employment in key centers identified in the growth concept. By coordinating with regional partners such as Clark County, RTC, and C-TRAN, Vancouver aligns local decisions with regional mobility systems to expand multimodal options, reduce congestion, and improve air quality.

Waste reduction is a key component of this goal. Policies that increase waste diversion, enhance composting and resource recovery, and reduce food waste help cut emissions from landfills and support a more circular local economy. Ensuring surplus food is redirected to underserved communities also advances food security, equity, and community health.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Adaptive Reuse</b>	Support efforts to retrofit or repurpose underutilized buildings, structures and infrastructure for the development of new housing and commercial spaces.	9	LU-2, CL-3
<b>Embodied Carbon</b>	Prioritize local source materials, low carbon materials and material reuse in City-led infrastructure and redevelopment projects.	44	CL-3, EO-3
<b>Energy Efficient and Climate Resilient Buildings</b>	Ensure that buildings contribute to the City’s greenhouse gas reduction goals and protect occupants from pollution, extreme weather and other climate hazards.	48	CL-1, CL-3
<b>Environmentally Conscious Procurement and Maintenance</b>	Include criteria related to the use of environmentally sustainable materials and practices in procurement processes and maintenance contracts.	51	PFS-1, CL-3
<b>Low Carbon Fuels</b>	Work with transportation, industry and utility partners to support the transition to low-carbon fuels.	85	CL-3, CL-4
<b>Low Carbon Transportation Alternatives.</b>	Adopt new technologies and invest in supportive infrastructure to increase the adoption of electric, hybrid, and alternative fuel vehicles to reduce community emissions.	86	CL-3

<b>Reduce Built Environment Emissions</b>	Reduce emissions from buildings, structures, and, infrastructure in the community.	<b>109</b>	CL-3, PFS-1
<b>Reduce Food Waste</b>	Reduce food waste in the community, and ensure surplus food supply is directed to underserved communities without fresh food access.	<b>113</b>	CL-3, EO-3
<b>Reduce Solid Waste</b>	Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.	<b>116</b>	CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1
<b>Reduce VMT and GHG Per Capita</b>	Implement land use patterns that reduce vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, and associated greenhouse gas emissions per capita, while improving safety and air quality.	<b>117</b>	CL-3, CE-3, TM-2
<b>Regional Planning</b>	Coordinate closely with Clark County, other cities, and other government entities such as C-TRAN, the Regional Transportation Council (RTC), and school districts to sustainably manage urban growth areas, efficiently deliver urban services, expand regional transit and multimodal connectivity, and coordinate on shared goals and responsibilities, in accordance with adopted countywide planning policies.	<b>121</b>	LU-4, CL-3, TM-2, TM-1
<b>Solar Access</b>	Expand residential, commercial and industrial access to solar power to meet energy needs.	<b>134</b>	CL-1, CL-3
<b>Support the Use of Renewable Energy</b>	Encourage new renewable energy infrastructure and promote development of storage systems to ensure a stable, resilient, and sustainable energy grid.	<b>150</b>	CL-3, PFS-1

**Goal: CL-4****Environmental Health****Community members experience better environmental health conditions through the protection and enhancement of local ecosystems, improved air and water quality, reduced exposure to environmental hazards and increased access to natural spaces.**

Environmental health is essential to community wellbeing, and the policy approach proposed in this plan responds by focusing on improving the air, water, ecosystems, and neighborhood conditions that shape daily life for Vancouver residents. Climate change and historic land use patterns have created uneven exposures to pollution, extreme heat, flooding, noise, and environmental hazards—disproportionately affecting frontline communities identified in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Health Impact Assessment. The policies in this section aim to reduce these disparities by protecting ecosystems, improving environmental quality, and expanding access to healthy natural spaces and community resources.

A central strategy outlined in this goal is reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality, particularly in areas with limited tree canopy or residents who face greater health risks. Investments in shade, vegetation, and climate-resilient building design help safeguard people during extreme heat and wildfire smoke events, while targeted efforts to improve indoor air quality reduce exposure to particulates, nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, and other harmful pollutants common in older or poorly ventilated homes.

Reducing environmental burdens also requires rethinking how waste, fuels, and materials flow through the city. Expanded waste diversion, composting, and resource recovery cut pollution associated with landfills, while support for low-carbon fuels and cleaner transportation technologies reduces emissions of pollutants that disproportionately impact neighborhoods along high-traffic corridors. Addressing noise pollution from freight, aviation, industrial operations, and major roadways further improves quality of life, especially in residential areas and places where vulnerable populations live.

Healthy ecosystems play a critical role in environmental health. Policies promote identifying and protecting species and habitats under climate stress, conserving climate refugia, and expanding

pollinator-friendly, pesticide-free landscapes that enhance biodiversity. Conservation and restoration efforts also support cleaner waterways, healthier soils, and stronger ecological connections across the city. Water-efficient technologies and conservation practices help maintain long-term water availability and protect the integrity of local watersheds.

Equitable access to natural spaces and community facilities is another essential focus. Expanding parks and green spaces in underserved neighborhoods, improving connections to existing natural areas, and ensuring housing is located near parks supports both physical and mental wellbeing. New and expanded community centers offer cultural, recreational, and educational programming, strengthening social networks and providing safe indoor spaces during climate-driven events. Land use strategies—including brownfield remediation, infill development on underutilized lots, and careful siting of new housing away from major stationary pollution sources—further reduce residents’ exposure to environmental hazards.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b>	Increase access to existing parks, and site new accessible and attainable housing close to existing and future parks, ensuring equitable access to existing facilities, and investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods.	23	CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2
<b>Conserve Water Resources</b>	Encourage water-efficient technologies and practices to reduce consumption and ensure sustainable water availability amid climate change and growing demand.	37	CL-1, CL-4, PFS-1
<b>Habitat and Species Under Stress from Climate Change</b>	Take inventory of and protect climate refugia, and fish and wildlife habitat needs for species under stress from climate change.	64	CL-2, CL-4
<b>Indoor Air Quality</b>	Improve indoor air quality for residents most susceptible to negative impacts from exposure to particulates, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and lead.	79	CL-4
<b>Low Carbon Fuels</b>	Work with transportation, industry and utility partners to support the transition to low-carbon fuels.	85	CL-3, CL-4

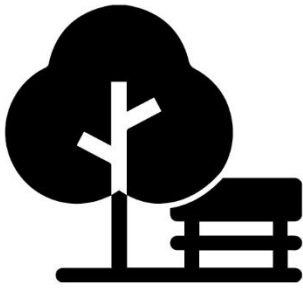
<p><b>Mitigate Noise Pollution</b></p>	<p>Reduce and mitigate noise pollution from major stationary and mobile sources, including air travel, vehicles, freight, railroads and high intensity industrial uses.</p>	<p>89</p>	<p>EI-1, CL-4</p>
<p><b>Pollinator Habitats</b></p>	<p>Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide-free landscaping, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings.</p>	<p>103</p>	<p>CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4</p>
<p><b>Reduce Environmental Health Disparities</b></p>	<p>Focus on areas with high environmental health disparities when mitigating the impacts of air, water, heat noise, and light pollution.</p>	<p>112</p>	<p>EI-1, CL-4</p>
<p><b>Reduce Heat Island Effect</b></p>	<p>Minimize impacts of the urban heat island effect, reduce geographic temperature disparities, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the adverse effects of extreme heat..</p>	<p>114</p>	<p>CL-1, CL-2, CL-4</p>
<p><b>Reduce Impacts of Point Source Pollution on Housing</b></p>	<p>Avoid siting new housing near known stationary sources of air, water, heat and light pollution, and facilitate site and building design that mitigates impacts from stationary pollution sources for both new and existing housing.</p>	<p>115</p>	<p>CL-4, LU-2</p>
<p><b>Reduce Solid Waste</b></p>	<p>Increase waste diversion rates through a system that minimizes landfill reliance, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, prioritizes composting and encourages resource recovery.</p>	<p>116</p>	<p>CL-1, CL-3, CL-4, EO-3, PFS-1</p>
<p><b>Underdeveloped Lots and Brownfields</b></p>	<p>Prioritize, facilitate, and incentivize development on infill and underutilized lots, and clean up of brownfield sites.</p>	<p>156</p>	<p>LU- 3, LU-4, LU-1, PFS-1, CL-4</p>

## **Chapter 6 - Key Implementing Actions**

- ✓ Update the Climate Action Framework to align with the Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Development of the City's Electric Vehicle Strategy
- ✓ Implementation of the Green Building Program for new construction
- ✓ Expansion of urban tree canopy cover and restoration of green spaces
- ✓ Work with partners to advance home energy efficiency

**Climate and  
Environment**

# Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services



7



OUR VANCOUVER

# Introduction

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services chapter of the *Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan* captures the vision, mission, goals, and policy recommendations from the recently adopted *Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan (VPRCS Comprehensive Plan)* and brings forward key land use recommendations based on existing conditions within Vancouver, and recent studies conducted through the *Our Vancouver* comprehensive planning process.

The VPRCS Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2022, provided an in-depth analysis of existing parks, recreation and cultural services conditions within Vancouver and identified 10-year goals which are currently being implemented. This chapter seeks to carry through pertinent information from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* through a land use planning lens – looking to provide an overview of existing programs and system structures that affect future land use decisions – and provide guidance on how the City can balance growth with the provision of parks and recreation. Building on



## Vision: Parks and Recreation

We strive for a future where all people enjoy increased access to cultural events, public art, natural areas, parks, community and green spaces, and an expansive network of trails and greenways. We recognize that art, culture and open spaces are critical elements of community health, wellness and quality of life. We commit to building inclusive and safe public spaces that reflect the diversity of our community without cost barriers, while conserving and preserving natural areas and adapting to climate change. Embracing native plants and species, we aim to create biodiverse havens that enhance ecological resilience. With a focus on health and well-being, our parks will offer diverse recreational opportunities and engaging programming, ensuring a thriving and interconnected community for generations to come.

the robust engagement process from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, the *Our Vancouver* planning process focused on engaging with Vancouver residents through the Community Survey, Community Partner discussions, and community working groups, in-person engagement events and online resources, asking respondents to provide feedback on a variety of topics related to parks and recreation in Vancouver. This feedback served as the baseline for developing the vision and goals for this chapter.

### **VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Overview**

The parks system in Vancouver is owned, maintained and managed by the City of Vancouver Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department. The Department is also tasked with creating and updating a parks plan to guide the future acquisition and development of parks within the city. The State of Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) requires that parks plans are updated in coordination with updates to land use plans and development regulations every eight years in order to ensure that city and county policies reflect state statutes.

In this case, the *VPRCS' Comprehensive Plan* was adopted prior to the *Our Vancouver* planning process and the most current Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), both of which will inform future discussions and updates to the next Vancouver parks plan. The work undertaken for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, in similar fashion to this planning process, included a heavy focus on community

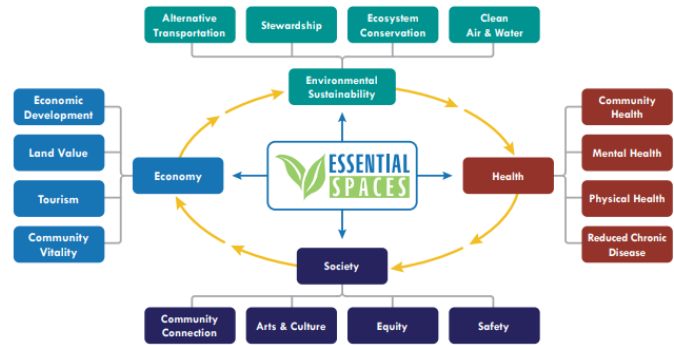
## **Community Feedback**

- Increase equitable access to parks and open spaces for all Vancouver community members –both for non-white and low-income residents, and in areas that are currently underserved such as East Vancouver.
- Maintain, improve and expand on existing parks and amenities – including expanded tree canopy, and the introduction of shelters, shade structures or areas, and integration of upgraded facilities for playgrounds, restrooms and parking.
- Accommodate cultural spaces, programming and community centers addressing specific needs and low-cost and free activities, particularly for Vancouver's youth.
- Encourage community connection through city parks, community centers, libraries, farmers markets and gathering places like the waterfront.
- Diversify recreation offerings for both outdoor and indoor recreation spaces including community pools, playgrounds, skateparks and pumptracks, museums, community events, gardens, art and performance spaces, trails and dog parks.”
- Implement climate resilience design principles through use of native plants, protections of natural ecosystems, and maintaining and expanding the city's tree canopy and naturalized landscapes.

outreach and engagement ensuring that the vision, mission, community goals and policies were reflective of the voices and needs of the Vancouver community. The following sections provide an overview of critical content from the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

**Vision and Essential Spaces Framework**

The concept of Essential Spaces was selected as the primary theme for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, centering on the idea that the role of parks, recreation, trails, natural areas, and cultural services contribute heavily to the physical, mental, and economic health of the Vancouver community. What the City has defined as “Essential Spaces” provide enormous benefits to residents, workers, and visitors through the direct impact they have on society, the local economy, sustainability efforts, and community health. These impacts are further illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 5 Essential Spaces Graphic, VPRCS Comprehensive Plan 2022**

A planning framework was created for the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* that captures community values, the City’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), and additional objectives identified by Vancouver’s City Council including climate action and safety. All together, these guiding principles emphasize the importance of the stewardship of public resources, inclusive access, and the creation of inclusive spaces.

**VPRCS Vision and Community Goals**

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* includes a vision, a mission statement, and eight community goals defined through the planning and outreach process. These goals provide the foundation for the plan focusing on how the city can enhance its parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and cultural services. The table below illustrates how the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* community goals relate to the Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan goals.

**Table 1 VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Community Goals vs. Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan Goals**

VPRCS Community Goals	Complementary Comprehensive Plan Goal
Provide safe and equitable access to parks, natural areas and public arts and cultural spaces for all residents.	PR-2 Parks, Trails, and Natural Spaces: Vancouver’s residents have access to a well-connected and expanded network of developed parks, trails, and natural areas that support outdoor recreation, biodiversity, and climate resilience, that serve as vital hubs for community gatherings, cultural events and a shared sense of place.
Provide an interconnected system of park properties and public spaces that support alternative modes of transportation, public health, recreational opportunity and environmental stewardship.	

<p>Preserve Vancouver’s historic and cultural heritage.</p>	<p>PR-4 Thriving Cultural Landscape: Vancouver supports a thriving cultural landscape for residents and visitors by investing in public art, cultural centers and facilities, historic preservation, and supporting community centered initiatives and opportunities for creative expression that reflect the city’s diverse identities and historic roots.</p>
<p>Expand Level of Service and Equity Gap Analysis to inform and guide project and funding opportunities and priorities.</p>	<p>PR-1 Increase Community Health Through Recreation Vancouver has safe and equitable access to a quality and diverse system of parks, natural areas, amenities, recreational facilities and programs that promote physical and mental well-being, cater to the varied interests and needs of community members and contribute to a vibrant and active community.</p>
<p>Update Improvement Level definitions to include innovative approaches that meet the needs of a growing and diversifying community.</p>	<p>CF-2 Inclusive and Affirming Environments: Vancouver’s public spaces and neighborhoods are inclusive and affirming across race, class, age, sex, gender identity, ability, religion, national origin and citizenship status, creating a sense of belonging and safety.</p>
<p>Maintain and enhance parks, trails, natural areas, culture and heritage spaces, recreation facilities and community assets to meet identified standards.</p>	<p>PFS-1 Public Facilities and Services: Vancouver has high-quality public facilities, services, and utilities that are affordable, efficient, well maintained, and meet the needs of a growing population.</p>
<p>Establish and meet goals outlined in the departmental program areas.</p>	<p>PR-3: Community Health and Wellness: Vancouver community members have access to high-quality public spaces that support physical and mental wellbeing, active lifestyles, connection to nature, and sense of community belonging.</p>
<p>Reflect the community we serve through creative public engagement, collaborative planning and culturally responsive communication.</p>	<p>EI-1: Equitable Community: All community members have equitable and inclusive access to opportunities and resources, including communities most impacted by past and present exclusionary practices.</p>

**Vancouver’s Park and Recreation System**

As of 2022, publicly accessible lands in Vancouver were estimated at approximately 3,800 acres or roughly 12 percent of the City’s total land area, where approximately 1,700 acres are identified as City owned park lands, comprised of 113 sites. The city also operates the Firstenburg and Marshall/Luepke Community Centers, which feature swimming pools, gyms, fitness amenities, a climbing wall, senior centers, and community rooms.

**Table 2 Park System Inventory**

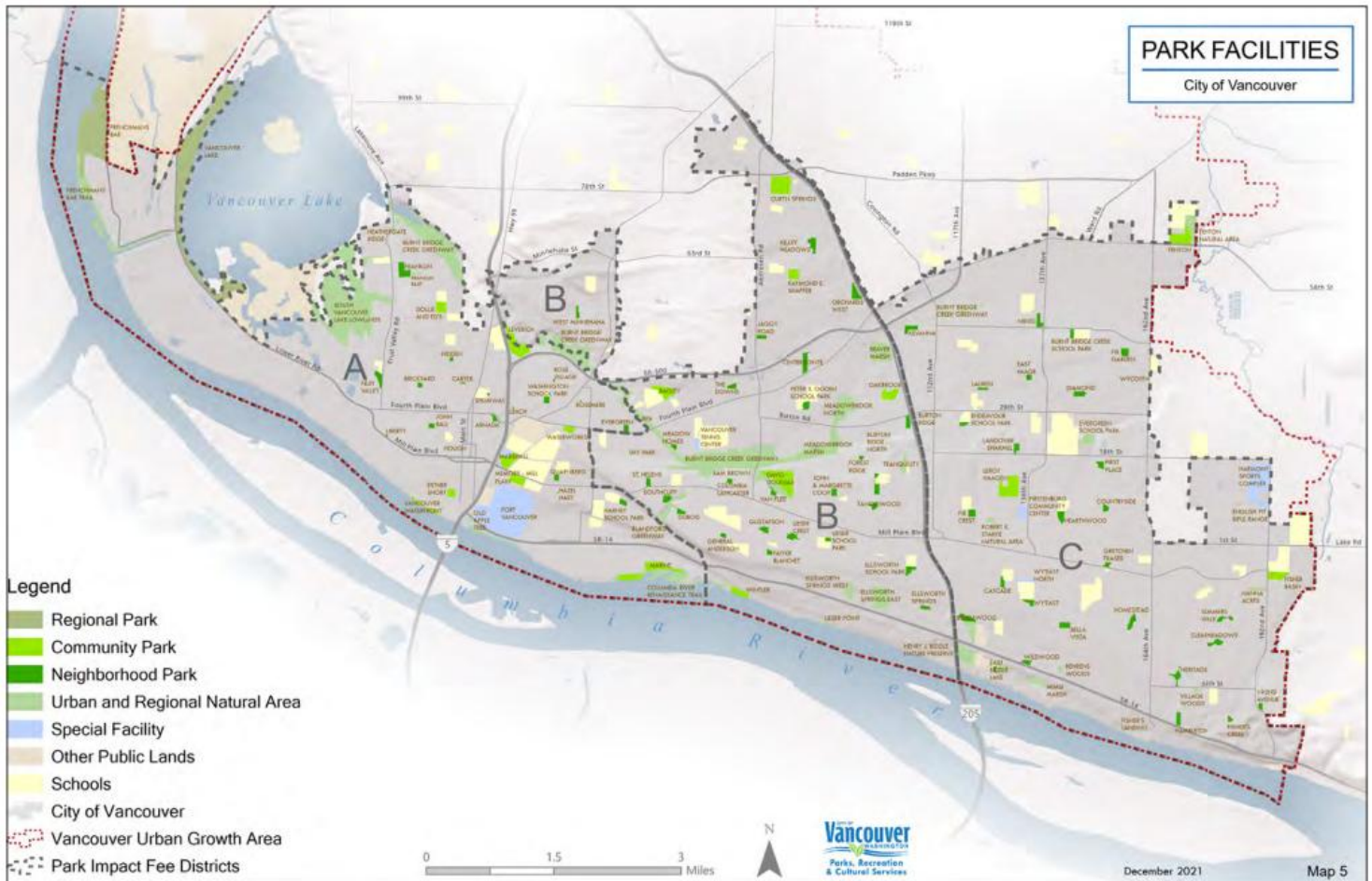
Park Type	Number of Sites	Area
Neighborhood Park	91 Sites (Includes 11 undeveloped sites, 55 developed sites, and 25 school sites)	314.84 acres
Community Parks	17 Sites (Includes 4 undeveloped sites and 13 developed sites)	287.69 acres
Regional Parks	2 Sites	489.40 acres
Urban Natural Areas	22 Sites	280.11 acres
Special Facility	9 Sites (Includes 3 developed City of Vancouver sites, 2 developed Clark County sites, 1 developed school site, and 3 developed sites managed by other providers)	332.91 acres
Regional Natural Areas	7 Sites (Includes 6 undeveloped City of Vancouver sites and 1 undeveloped Clark County site)	1,044.58 acres
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>		<b>2,749.53 acres</b>
NOTE: This table reflects updates to the number of sites and acreage since the VPRCS Comprehensive Plan as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Our Vancouver project.		

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

The city continuously invests in its park system primarily through park acquisitions, park development, or rebuilding or renovating existing parks, diversifying the types of parks and spaces available to the Vancouver community. In order to accomplish this, the VPRCS Department relies on an organizational framework for its parks that includes park classification types, maintaining a parks inventory, setting and recording parks Level-Of-Service (LOS) standards, utilizing diverse funding mechanisms, and planning for parks acquisitions and capital improvements.

Figure 2 below, Vancouver Park Facilities Map, illustrates the city’s boundaries, delineates the Park Impact Fee Districts, and includes Regional Parks, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Urban and Regional Natural Areas, Special Facilities, Other Public Lands, and Schools.

**Figure 2 Vancouver Park Facilities Map**



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

### **Parks System Classifications**

The City of Vancouver is transitioning from a traditional core-and-suburb model to a denser, mixed-use urban environment. This evolution demands adaptive planning to address changing zoning, densities, mobility, and park needs. The city’s park system is organized into eight classification types based on landscape characteristics, access, development potential, local park needs and use patterns. These classifications guide the optimal use of parkland, ensuring diverse recreational opportunities through strategic funding and a balance between natural resource protection and park development.

Together, Vancouver’s parks provide spaces for play, connection, and environmental stewardship, forming a resilient network that supports recreation, wellness, and habitat conservation. The current parks classifications are outlined in Table 3, below, and include both pre-existing park types in Vancouver and two new additional classifications, Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, that were introduced in the 2022 *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

**Table 3 VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Parks Classifications**

Type	Description
Neighborhood Parks	Typically, 3–5 acres, offering amenities like playgrounds, sport courts, turf areas, gardens, native plant resource areas, pathways and trails, and picnic areas. These parks are designed for non-organized recreational opportunities that support healthy lifestyles, neighborhood identity, social interaction, and the preservation of natural resources.
Community Parks	Ranging from 20–100 acres, these parks serve as hubs for organized recreation and events for a broad segment of the population. In addition to typical of a Neighborhood Park, Community Parks feature sports fields, skate parks, picnic shelters, community gardens, trails, event spaces, public art, cultural features. These parks typically include more support facilities such as parking and restrooms, and may also integrate natural areas, passive recreation spaces, and community facilities like community centers or senior facilities.
Linear Parks	Developed landscaped areas or other lands that follow linear natural or man-made corridors like rivers, abandoned railroad rights-of-ways, canals, and utility corridors. Linear Parks typically feature trails, signage, seating, landscaping, small play areas, and viewpoints and are intended to expand the network and connectivity of trails and pedestrian corridors.
Civic Plazas	Found in urban centers or town squares, civic plazas are public gathering spaces with landscaping, seating, performance and vendor areas, public art, and fountains. They encourage community connection and may be managed in partnership with other entities.
Regional Parks	Usually over 50 acres, Regional Parks provide facilities for a wide range of activities, including sports fields, extensive trail systems, and large picnic areas or shelters. These parks also typically include passive recreation space and unique natural features in addition to support facilities such as parking and restrooms.
Natural Areas	Ranging from a single-acre to hundreds, natural areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation and education, such as bird-watching, walking, biking, hiking, biking, serving both local and regional needs.
Special Facilities	Special Facilities, or special use areas, are stand-alone facilities that do not have a minimum size. They include community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes or skate parks.
Trails	Trails are not considered a Park Classification but rather an improvement / amenity.

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

## Parks and Recreation System Evaluation

Vancouver’s park system strives for equitable access through careful geographic distribution and service area standards. In simpler terms, the city aims to provide residents with access to a park within a certain distance of their homes – a ½-mile service area, or 10-minute walk along public rights-of-way is recognized as a reasonable expectation for residents. This is aligned with national best practice as predicated by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) which establishes national guidelines for service area standards.

Parks in Vancouver have different indicated service areas depending on classification. For example, Vancouver’s Neighborhood Parks are designed to serve residents within a ½-mile radius, which equates to approximately a 10-minute walk. Community Parks, on the other hand, serve larger areas ranging from ½ mile to 3 miles, offering both walkable access and broader community coverage. Figure 3, below, illustrates how these walksheds (illustrated in green as park service areas) are determined by following public rights-of-way and easements from all access points to park sites, ensuring an accurate representation of accessible routes for residents.

The city relies heavily on service area mapping to determine which locations are served by parks, and to identify gaps where new parks or services may be needed.

In the update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, staff identified the need to expand on typical park metrics to reflect existing conditions and better assess the equitable distribution of parks across Vancouver. The VPRCS Comprehensive Plan developed a two-part methodology that involves combining demographic analyses and park scoring to guide reinvestment priorities. This methodology, though complex, reflects national best practice through layering equity considerations into the criteria:

- ➔ A detailed GIS analysis is performed at the Census Block level to identify areas with the greatest need for park access, focusing on populations such as residents under 18 and over 65, people of color, communities below the poverty level, households with low median income, individuals with disabilities, areas with high obesity rates, and regions of high population density per acre.
- ➔ Evaluation of park property using a comprehensive scoring matrix that measures factors related to quantity, quality, safety, sustainability, and accessibility.

**Figure 3 Park Service Area Diagram**



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

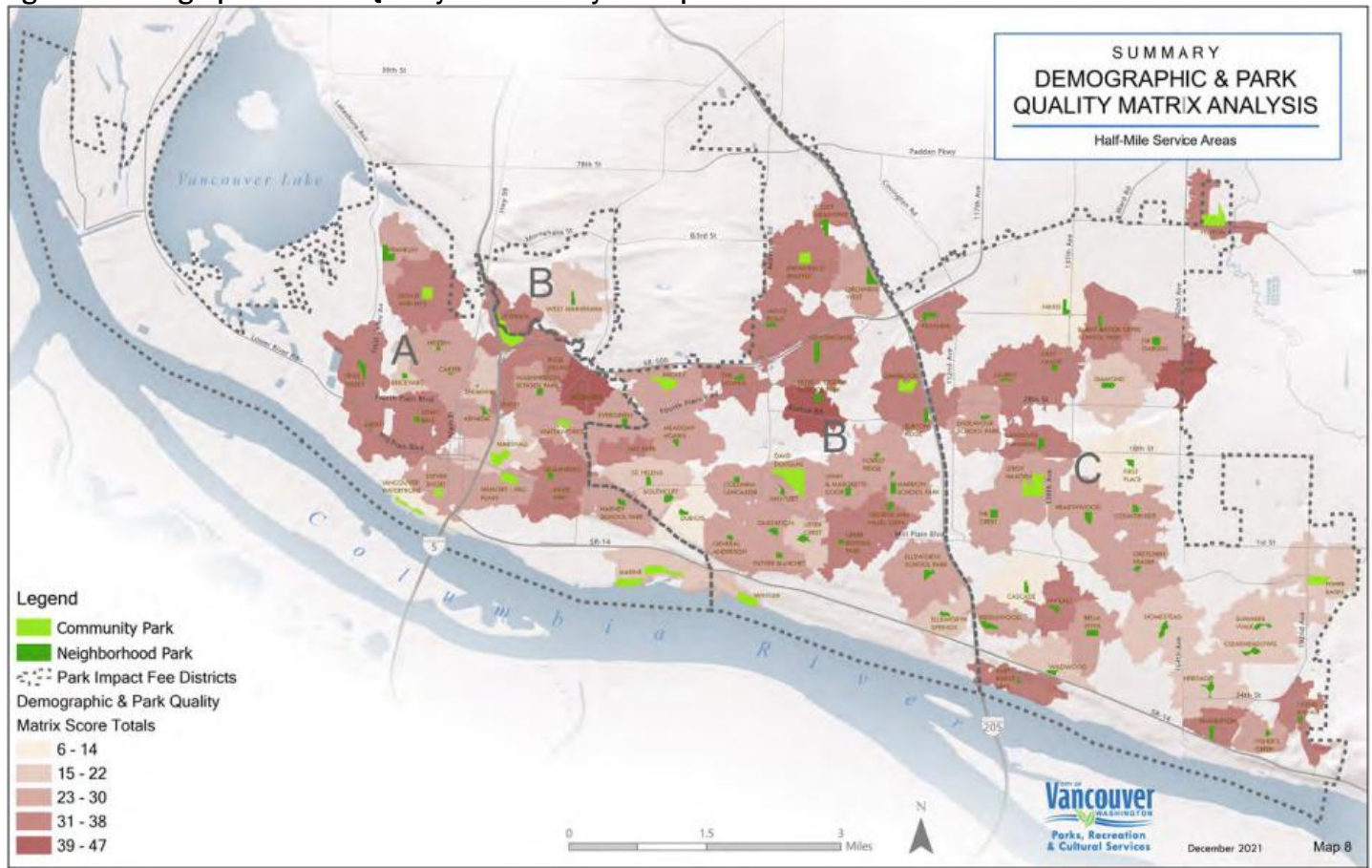
- ➔ Incorporating additional criteria including the (1) baseline ½-mile service area, (2) gaps between existing LOS and adopted standards, (3) current development status, (4) time since acquisition, (5) potential for improved accessibility, (6) safety, (7) resource protection, (8) diversity of recreation opportunities, (9) condition and lifespan of assets, (10) need for safety enhancements, (11) sustainability of infrastructure and natural resources, and (12) accessibility for people with physical limitations.

The outcome of this analysis was a matrix that prioritizes projects for reinvestment, ensuring that resources are allocated where they will have the greatest community impact and maximize the overall value of the park system for Vancouver residents.

It is anticipated that Vancouver will experience an increased demand for youth activities, after-school programs, and programming for active older citizens as it continues to grow, with an expanding need for intergenerational recreation opportunities and the implementation of inclusive design practices to welcome a more diverse community of residents. By establishing a baseline methodology, the city has created a tool that can be regularly utilized to evaluate residents' access to Vancouver's park and recreation system. This tool can be further refined and tailored to the city's needs as future policy work is undertaken as part of the next parks plan update.

Figure 4, on the next page, illustrates how demographic information is layered with park quality data to create composite scores which can help decision-makers prioritize available funding for future parks planning purposes.

Figure 4 Demographic & Park Quality Matrix Analysis Map



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

### Park Demand, Park Need & Total Level-of-Service (LOS)

The City of Vancouver utilizes three calculations to guide the monitoring of its parks system: (1) Level-of-Service (LOS) (2) Park Demand and (3) Park Need where:

- ➔ Level-Of-Service (LOS) is measured as the number of park acres per 1,000 residents.
- ➔ Park Demand is the acres of parkland needed to serve a population at a set standard.
- ➔ Park Need identifies the acreage required to bring the LOS into alignment with the standard

The city updated these calculations in the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, reviewing its inventory of parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and trails owned and operated by VPRCS. The city uses this inventory to identify acreage by park classification and measure existing conditions against set LOS standards looking at how many acres are needed to be acquired and/or developed. VPRCS utilized the following standards for Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas classifications in the 2022 plan update.

- ➔ *Park Acquisition*: 6 acres per 1,000 residents
- ➔ *Park Development*: 4.25 acres per 1,000 residents

Table 4 outlines the city adopted acquisition and development standards for Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas.

**Table 4 VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Acquisition and Development Standards**

City of Vancouver Standard	Neighborhood Park		Community Park		Urban NA	Total Park Acres	
	Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Acquire	Develop
Acres /1,000	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.25	1.00	6.00	4.25

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

Tables 5 and 6 detail the calculated Park Demand and Park Need established in 2022, differentiated by Park Impact Fee (PIF) Districts (A, B, or C). Park Demand calculations indicate a need for approximately 1,200 additional acres of parkland, of which over 800 acres need to be developed to adequately serve Vancouver’s 2022 population. Park Need indicates that the city needed to acquire approximately 440 acres of parkland to bring its existing acreage into alignment with its LOS.

**Table 5 VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Demand 2022**

Park District	Population	Neighborhood Park (Acres)		Community Park (Acres)		Urban NA (Acres)	Total Park Acres	
		Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Acquire	Develop
A	38,770	77.5	77.5	116.3	87.2	38.8	232.6	164.8
B	61,324	122.6	122.6	183.9	138.0	61.3	367.9	260.6
C	94,592	189.2	189.2	283.8	212.8	94.6	567.6	402.0
Total	194,686	389.35	389.35	584.02	438.02	194.67	1168.05	827.37

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

**Table 6 VPRCS Comprehensive Plan Park Need 2022**

Park District	Population	Neighborhood Park (Acres)		Community Park (Acres)		Urban NA (Acres)	Total Park Acres	
		Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Develop	Acquire	Acquire	Develop
A	38,770	23.1	23.8	16.0	0.3	0.1	39.2	24.1
B	61,324	0.6	15.1	76.4	40.1	28.4	105.4	55.2
C	94,592	51.5	68.7	218.3	170.6	20.3	290.2	239.3
Total	194,686	75.2	107.6	310.7	211.0	48.8	434.8	318.6

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

Table 7 highlights the city’s total Level-of-Service (LOS), combining Neighborhood and Community Park categories. Across measurable park classifications, the City of Vancouver provides 4.46 acres of parklands per 1,000 residents citywide – which falls short of the City’s standard of 6 acres acquired Neighborhood and Community Parks per 1,000 residents, and national guidelines provided

by the National Recreation and Parks Association which indicates 10.2 acres/1,000 residents as best practice.

**Table 7 Total Level-of-Service (LOS)**

City-Wide Level of Service (Acres/1,000 Population)	
Neighborhood & Community Parks	3.02
Urban Natural Areas	1.44
Total	4.46

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

While the city focuses LOS calculations on Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Urban Natural Areas, other park classifications are also assigned acquisition standards. The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* set acquisition standards for Regional Parks (10 acres / 1,000 residents) and also introduced two new park classifications – Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, to provide outdoor park spaces in compact urban areas where traditional park parcels are limited – but did not assign a standard of service. Regional Natural Areas and Special Facilities are also included as park classifications without assigned acquisition standards. As indicated in Table 3, trails are not currently considered a park classification, but rather an improvement or amenity. A detailed overview of acquisition and development standards, and 2022 LOS by park classification is provided in Table 8 below.

**Table 8 2022 Park Classification Acquisition and Development Standards vs LOS**

Park Classification	Acquisition / Development Standards	2022 Acquisition LOS (All PIF Districts)
Neighborhood Park	2 acres/2 acres per 1,000 residents	1.62 acres/1,000 residents
Community Park	3 acres/2.25 acres per 1,000 residents	1.40 acres/1,000 residents
Regional Park	10 acres/1,000 residents	6.80 acres/1,000 residents
Urban Natural Area	1 acre/1,000 residents	1.44 acres/1,000 residents
Regional Natural Area	No Adopted Standard	No Adopted Standard
Linear Park	No Adopted Standard	No Adopted Standard
Civic Plaza	No Adopted Standard	No Adopted Standard
Special Facilities	No Adopted Standard	No Adopted Standard

Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

## Recreation and Cultural Services

Recreation in Vancouver is designed to support a wide range of activities for residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. It includes structured programs such as aquatics, sports, and fitness, as well as informal opportunities for play, leisure, and social connection. The city’s recreation facilities include community centers, pools, and sports fields.

Public input played a key role in shaping recreation priorities established in the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*. Through surveys, outreach events, and stakeholder meetings, residents expressed strong interest in more trails, youth programs, water play features, and outdoor fitness equipment. These preferences are reflected in recommendations identifying a need for upgrades to existing facilities and the development of new amenities that support active lifestyles and social interaction. Engagement also identified barriers to recreation such as cost, transportation, and physical accessibility.

Recommendations for addressing community feedback include increasing parks and open space in East Vancouver, investing in safe multimodal infrastructure that connects people to parks and open space, improving ADA compliance, and offering culturally responsive programming.

Cultural Services are recognized as an essential component of the city’s identity, greatly impacting its sense of vitality and quality-of-life. The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* prioritizes equitable access to cultural services, acknowledging that historically marginalized communities often face barriers to participation.

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* highlights the need to expand culturally relevant programming and support for underrepresented groups, including Indigenous peoples, communities of color, LGBTQ+ residents, and people with disabilities. Strategies include increasing funding for community-led cultural initiatives, improving accessibility in cultural venues, and fostering partnerships with local artists and cultural organizations. The Cultural Services chapter of the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* identifies gaps in cultural infrastructure, including limited performance spaces, inadequate support for public art, and a need for flexible venues that can host a variety of cultural activities. Recommendations include investing in new cultural facilities, upgrading existing spaces, and integrating arts and culture into park and public space design. In late 2024, the City adopted a Cultural Access Program that will support improved and expanded cultural resources in the future, as it will generate approximately \$7 million annually to improve access to arts, culture, heritage, and science across the community. Vancouver also seeks to make better use of schools, libraries, and other civic buildings as cultural hubs.

**Figure 5 Firstenburg Pool**



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

**Figure 6 Día de Muertos Celebration**



Source: City of Vancouver

## Preferred Alternative and Future Parks Planning

Gaps in Level-Of-Service (LOS) provide the basis for the city’s land acquisition planning along with park impact fee allocation, measuring LOS and long-term planning for equitable access to recreation and green space throughout the city. Acquisition standards contribute to the city’s goals for climate adaptation, tree canopy preservation, improved air quality, environmental justice, and prioritizing natural areas in historically underserved neighborhoods. These standards also assist the city in meeting the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), which states that comprehensive plans must keep pace with projected population and development trends.

Priorities for parkland acquisition consider the four key criteria:

- ➔ **Geographic Equitable Access** to ensure all residents have equitable access to a park within a 10-minute walk (½ mile) (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Population Growth and Development Trends** highlight new parks in rapidly growing neighborhoods, particularly east of I-205, where future residential density and family households are projected to increase (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Network Connectivity and Access** prioritize sites that strengthen the citywide network of parks, trails, and greenways (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*).
- ➔ **Environmental Factors** protect lands that provide ecological value, such as tree canopy, wildlife habitat, flood mitigation, and climate resilience (EIS Report).

In an updated analysis conducted as part of the *Our Vancouver* planning process, Vancouver has identified a need to acquire 372.47 acres of parkland and develop 382.71 acres of parkland to meet its current metrics for LOS in 2025.

**Table 9 Existing (2025) City Parks and Natural Areas Demand, Inventory, and Need by District (in acres)**

Park Impact Fee By District	Acquisition Demand	Acquisition Inventory	Acquisition Need	Development Demand	Development Inventory	Development Need
A	246.43	217.12	29.31	174.56	124.50	50.05
B	388.10	327.73	60.37	274.91	207.82	67.08
C	600.13	317.33	282.80	425.09	159.52	265.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,234.66</b>	<b>862.19</b>	<b>372.47</b>	<b>874.55</b>	<b>491.84</b>	<b>382.71</b>

Source: City of Vancouver 2025

Note: Park Impact Fee District boundaries are shown in Figure 28. Demand calculated based on estimated 2025 population of 41,072 in PIF A, 64,684 in PIF B, and 100,021 in PIF C. Assumes LOS standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents of acquisition need and 4.25 acres per 1,000 records for park development need. Need is calculated by subtracting the inventory (as of 2025) from the future projected demand.

As Vancouver continues to grow, the city will need to regularly evaluate the acquisition standards to reflect changes in population, community priorities, and new development. Population projections through 2045 indicate a need to acquire 823.81 acres of additional parkland and develop 702.41 acres to adequately serve the community.

**Table 10 Future (2045) City Parks and Natural Areas Demand, Inventory, and Need by District (in acres)**

Park Impact Fee By District	Acquisition Demand	Acquisition Inventory	Acquisition Need	Development Demand	Development Inventory	Development Need
A	333.54	217.12	119.42	238.38	124.50	113.88
B	529.97	327.73	202.23	375.39	207.82	167.57
C	819.49	317.33	502.16	580.47	159.52	420.96
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,686.00</b>	<b>862.19</b>	<b>823.81</b>	<b>1,194.25</b>	<b>491.84</b>	<b>702.41</b>

Notes: a) Park Impact Fee District boundaries are shown in Figure 28. b) Demand calculated based on estimated 2045 population of 56,090 in PIF A, 88,328 in PIF B, and 136,582 in PIF C, for a total population of 281,000 citywide. Assumes LOS standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents of acquisition need and 4.25 acres per 1,000 records for park development need. Need is calculated by subtracting the inventory (as of 2025) from the future projected demand. Note: These citywide projections assume that the 2045 population distribution would be similar to the 2025 population distribution. The projections do not account for differences between the alternatives in housing capacity distribution by PIF district.

Competing land use interests will present challenges for the city in meeting these goals, but the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* outlines a plan for acquisitions, capital assets, and planned investments to begin implementation of measures to improve Level-Of-Service (LOS).

To address LOS deficiencies, the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* identified several measures to be addressed in future parks plan updates. These include (1) identifying opportunities to acquire new community park sites or enhance larger neighborhood parks with community-level amenities; and (2) improving parks with low Level-of-Service (LOS) by adding amenities, increasing user capacity, and enhancing both natural and built environments to promote sustainability and recreational diversity.

The *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* also identifies the need to explore alternative metrics for measuring LOS and setting classification standards. The addition of two new park classifications, Civic Plazas and Linear Parks, will provide additional options for recreation as the city experiences growth through the 2045 horizon of the *Our Vancouver Comprehensive Plan*, and the city will need to focus efforts on updating acquisition standards and PIFs through an updated nexus study prior to the adoption of the next update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*.

## Best Practices in Park System Planning

Many factors influence how cities establish guidelines for their park systems. In recent years, many cities have revisited how they designate parks, set Levels-of-Service (LOS), and manage facility and asset investments in response to demographic shifts, climate considerations, equity priorities, and fiscal pressures. The following section summarizes current national best practices relevant to Vancouver's future park system planning.

### Park Designation, System Definitions, and Classifications

Setting city-wide criteria helps prioritize park designations, land acquisitions, capital investments, and maintenance while aligning service expectations. Vancouver currently uses a classification system for its parks, open spaces, and trails. As the city continues to grow, it may consider adding new park classifications and expanding its LOS standards to anticipate future land acquisitions or expansions and diversify opportunities for capturing additional parklands. The introduction of Civic Plazas and Linear Parks as new classifications paves the way for the city to reconsider how it is providing parks and recreation spaces in an urbanizing environment.

Most cities reexamine their park designation criteria and system definitions during updates to their Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plans (typically every 8 to 10 years), with refinements to LOS standards or equity priorities every 3 to 5 years. These updates generally align with planning cycles and shifts in growth patterns, policy direction, or asset management frameworks rather than a fixed schedule. This aligns with NRPA's suggestion that comprehensive park system plans be updated roughly every 10 years with mid-cycle check-ins.

### System Definition and Access

Traditionally, Level-of-Service (LOS) has been measured using acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. While still relevant, many cities now use a broader LOS framework that incorporates access, equity, investment, and quality. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) uses a benchmarking metric of 10.2 acres per 1,000 residents (NRPA 2025 Agency Review) which is higher than Vancouver's current 6.0 acres per 1,000 residents.

Beyond acreage, cities are increasingly evaluating whether all residents have meaningful access to parks using metrics such as:

- 10-minute walk proximity, measured using walkshed analysis
- Quality of amenities, such as playgrounds, restrooms, or trails
- Equitable distribution across neighborhoods

**Figure 7 NRPA Park Metrics**



Source: [NRPA Park Metrics | Research | National Recreation and Park Association | NRPA](#)

The ParkScore report supports this by highlighting how investment, access, and distribution trends evolve over time, noting that residents of larger cities increasingly rely on parks for connection, well-being, and community togetherness.

### **Holistic Assessment of Publicly Accessible Parklands**

When assessing park distribution, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) takes a more holistic approach by evaluating all publicly accessible parks, trails, and open spaces regardless of ownership. Today, cities recognize that people often do not distinguish between city parks, state parks, or school play areas. Instead, people perceive all of these as part of the public realm. The publicly accessible parks may account for:

- City-managed parks
- County Parks or open spaces
- State or Federal Lands
- School district playfields
- Nonprofit-managed open spaces
- Other publicly accessible green spaces

These methods are useful for examining a more complete understanding of distribution, proximity, and service gaps.

Another emerging Level-of-Service (LOS) approach evaluates the condition and functionality of park and facilities assets such as playgrounds, restrooms, and trails. The NRPA’s dataset, accessed through Park Metrics, allows agencies to compare operational metrics such as staffing and maintenance burden. The Trust for Public Land (TPL’s) ParkScore index reflects these trends by assigning points based on acreage, investment, amenities, access, and equity. Its investment and amenity metrics also consider per-resident spending and available facilities.

### **Equity-Focused Level-of-Service (LOS) Trends**

Current best practices emphasize that LOS should account for underserved populations, spatial equity, and equitable access to both parks and park quality.

**Figure 8 Trust for Public Land ParkScore**



Source: [ParkScore® 2025 Scoring Metrics - Trust for Public Land](#)

## Considerations for Vancouver

Vancouver's park classifications adequately reflect existing conditions and provide distinction for park types currently seen across the city, however, as Vancouver continues to grow and strive for a higher Level-of-Service (LOS), additional consideration should be given to park types and intended purpose, park hierarchy, acquisition and development standards, and PIF program updates.

Based on peer communities in Washington and across the United States, Vancouver should explore:

- Explore enhanced focus on ecological value of property in planning efforts.
- Park hierarchy will need to be addressed as new park classifications are added. Vancouver should consider adding more detail to the Linear Parks classification that reflects how these spaces should function in contribution to the park system.
- Based on the *Our Vancouver* park system need cost analysis, consider adoption of proposed minimum standard of 1 acre / 30,000 residents for Civic Plazas. Additional standards for Community Centers, Regional Trails and Sports Complexes should also be considered. An updated nexus study should be conducted to affirm proposed standards are compliant with state regulations.
- Current Park Impact Fees (2025 rates) are estimated to support only 30% of the actual cost of acquisition and development. This deficit is anticipated to grow due to inflation and the use of partial impact fee waivers. Consideration should be given to increasing PIF rates to generate a proportionate share of the resources necessary to adequately serve residential development – in addition to review of incentives for private park development, impact of fee waivers on Level-of-Service to low-income areas, and application of program to non-residential development.

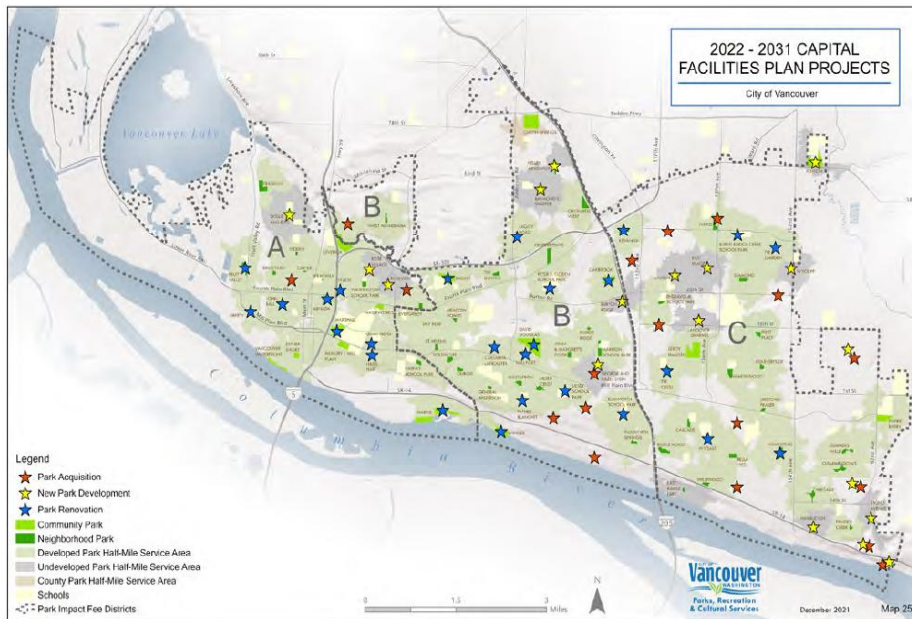
## Proposed Capital Assets and Acquisition Planning

Vancouver’s capital projects utilize investment and allocated funds to meet the needs of Vancouver’s parks and recreation system, based on Level-of-Service (LOS) standards, growth projections, and equity indicators. The planning process for new park land is data-driven and community-informed, incorporating structured evaluation from feasibility analysis through community input and City Council approval (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, EIS Report).

### Capital Facilities Plan

Vancouver’s Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) provides a six- to ten-year roadmap for capital projects, including major park and recreation investments, as well as the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP identifies near-term project priorities based on system needs, available funding, and coordination with other infrastructure investments. Capital improvements include physical changes to the park system, such as park, trail, or facility upgrades, as well as new park land acquisition.

Figure 9 Capital Facilities Plan Projects Map



Source: VPRCS Comprehensive Plan

### Planned Investments

As part of the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, approximately \$166 million in planned capital projects are identified between 2022 and 2031. These investments include new park acquisitions, major park renovations, trail expansions, and system-wide accessibility improvements, as Vancouver continues to keep pace with population growth, new development, and environmental changes (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*). A minor update to the *VPRCS Comprehensive Plan* is anticipated to occur following the adoption of the Our Vancouver plan to reflect policy changes and updates to investment strategies.

East and Central Vancouver, along with the Evergreen, Burton, and Fourth Plain Boulevard corridors, have been identified as areas suitable for future investments. These locations are expected to experience increased population growth and higher-density residential development, resulting in a gap in park acreage per capita, as well as a focus on equitable access (*Community Atlas Existing Conditions*, EIS Report).

## Implementation and Funding Sources

Implementation for Vancouver’s parks and recreation system is guided by adopted plans, policies, and funding tools that align with city-wide growth and planning objectives. Funding for implementation comes from a combination of federal and state grants, and partnerships with private and nonprofit organizations. These sources provide a guide for the city to maintain existing facilities, acquire new park land, and expand recreation facilities.

The City of Vancouver has a variety of funding sources available supporting both capital improvements and ongoing operations Which are further outlined below:

- ➔ **Dedicated Funding Streams.** Cities and counties may allocate dedicated sources, such as property taxes, sales taxes, business license surcharges and impact fees (residential and non-residential), specifically for parks and recreation. These revenues can support both ongoing operations and capital improvements in a stable, ongoing way. The City currently utilizes impact fees, a business license surcharge, and a local Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) to provide dedicated, ongoing Parks funding.
- ➔ **Bonds and Levies.** Bonds and levies may be used independently or in combination. When used together, bonds and levies can finance both the initial cost of improvements and the ongoing resources needed to support them. This combined approach offers a broader range of funding options than using either tool separately, and in most cases requires voter approval.
  - **Bonds.** Bonds are a debt-financing tool that allows jurisdictions to raise money upfront for large capital projects such as park development or major renovations. Repayment is typically made over time through property taxes or other dedicated revenue streams. In Washington, general obligation bonds usually require voter approval and are repaid through property taxes, while revenue bonds are repaid from specific program revenues (e.g., user fees) and typically do not require a public vote. This type of funding is focused for specific projects and is not necessarily a stable ongoing source of funding for a variety of parks related capital improvement projects.
  - **Levies.** Levies are property tax measures that raise revenue directly, either on a temporary or permanent basis. They are commonly used to fund park operations, maintenance, or smaller-scale capital improvements. Most levies require voter approval, often through a simple majority or, in some cases, a supermajority with minimum turnout thresholds.
- ➔ **Park and Recreation Districts.** Washington law authorizes the creation of park and recreation districts, service areas, and metropolitan park districts. These permanent entities may levy property taxes, issue bonds, and generate other revenues dedicated to parks. A guiding principle is that there should be a clear connection between the population served and the taxes or levies imposed.

- ➔ Grants: State and federal grant programs can provide funding for park acquisition, development, restoration, and programming. Grants are often tied to specific policy goals, such as conservation or community health, and supplement local revenue sources rather than providing ongoing funding.
  
- ➔ Tax Increment Financing: TIF districts capture increases in property tax revenue generated by new development within a designated area. The incremental revenue can be directed to fund a variety of infrastructure investments, including park facilities, often as part of broader subarea plan implementation and associated redevelopment efforts. The City of Vancouver currently does not have a TIF district but is actively studying their applicability to priority redevelopment areas in the city.
  
- ➔ Other Revenue Strategies:
  - User Fees and Charges: Fees for activities such as sports leagues, equipment rentals, or special events can generate revenue to help offset operational costs. These fees are typically structured to recover a portion of costs while maintaining access for a broad range of users. They do not typically generate revenue for parks system improvement or expansion.
  - Fundraising, Advertising and Naming Rights: Donations from individuals, foundations, or businesses, as well as organized fundraising efforts such as capital campaigns or crowdfunding, can provide additional support for parks projects. These sources are generally project-specific, vary in scale and do not provide ongoing funding.

## Goal: PR-1

# Increase Community Health Through Recreation

**Vancouver has safe and equitable access to a quality and diverse system of parks, natural areas, amenities, recreational facilities and programs that promote physical and mental well-being, cater to the varied interests and needs of community members and contribute to a vibrant and active community.**

Vancouver's parks and recreation system will support the health of the community by creating opportunities for play, connection, engagement, and creative expression. Currently, Vancouver's parks, trails, and facilities are inclusive places to engage in physical fitness, mental well-being, and social belonging. Through intentional design and equitable distribution, Vancouver's diverse system will enhance quality of life throughout the City, connecting neighbors and nature.

Recreation is a core public service that enriches the City's livability and resiliency. Vancouver's recreational programs offer lifelong health by encouraging outdoor activity, building intergenerational relationships, and supporting inclusive events that celebrate Vancouver's diversity. Vancouver's facilities are designed and operated to be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Community health and well-being for all ages and abilities are an important part of Vancouver's outdoor plan and recreation. According to the *Community Atlas (2023)*, one in five residents is under 18, and nearly 15 percent are over 65, emphasizing a need for more intergenerational recreation opportunities. Youth programs provide safe and structured spaces for play, learning, and teamwork, while senior and adaptive recreation programs promote mobility, connection, and mental wellness.

Looking at both local and national trends, access to recreation and green spaces reduces the risk of chronic diseases and improves mental health, strengthening the City's dedication to inclusive and equitable recreation access (*VPRCS Comprehensive Plan*, EIS Report).

The supporting policies with this goal will support investment in recreation programs, facilities, and public spaces that promote physical activity, mental well-being, and social connection for people of all ages and abilities. The policies emphasize equitable access through universal design, inclusive programming, and programs and infrastructure that support youth, aging populations, and underserved communities. While there is an emphasis on equity and a sense of place, the policies also prioritize the coordination of capital investments to align with health and equity objectives.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Asset Management</b>	Manage City assets to balance full life cycle costs, performance, risk, and service levels, using best management practices and data. Public infrastructure and facility investments will leverage existing investments to support efficient and equitable growth.	21	PFS-2, TM-1, PR-1
<b>Climate Resilient Spaces</b>	Incorporate elements of climate resiliency into new public spaces.	29	CL-1, CE-1, PR-1, PFS-3, LU-3
<b>Incorporate Universal Design Principles</b>	Incentivize universal design principles in private development. Support accessibility retrofits for existing homes and prioritize affordable housing options tailored to multi-generational living, aging in place, and a wide range of abilities.	74	EI-2, PR-1, H-2

## Goal: PR-2

# Parks, Trails, and Natural Spaces

**Vancouver’s residents have access to a well-connected and expanded network of developed parks, trails, and natural areas that support outdoor recreation, mental and physical health, biodiversity, and climate resilience, reflect the cultural and economic value of the community, and serve as vital hubs for community gathering.**

Vancouver’s parks, open spaces, and trail network connect people to the outdoors, strengthening the City’s environmental health, recreation opportunities, and social vitality. Land acquisition and preservation efforts ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are protected, and new parks and open spaces expand in line with the City’s population growth.

As Vancouver continues to grow, capital investments will focus on linking parks and communities, improving connectivity and access for walking, biking, and active transportation. Expanding trail networks and greenway corridors will help address service gaps and promote equitable access to outdoor spaces, particularly in East and Central Vancouver, where access to parks and trails remains limited. Natural areas also play a critical role in the City’s climate adaptation strategy. Vancouver’s park lands and natural areas offer community health benefits and provide relief against heat island effects, flooding impacts, and the increasing urban tree canopy. According to the *Community Atlas (2023)*, neighborhoods with higher canopy coverage and access to natural spaces have higher public health outcomes and greater resilience to climate impacts. The policies associated with this goal support the expansion and maintenance of Vancouver’s connected network of parks, trails, and open spaces that provide environmental, recreational, and social benefits. There is a strong emphasis on climate resilience, preservation of sensitive lands, and creation of community streets and green corridors that bring nature into the urban environment.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Acquire Land for Public Parks</b>	Acquire and reserve land for the development of parks for public use and recreation in areas experiencing growth, prioritizing underserved neighborhoods and areas currently not meeting parks service standards.	7	LU-3, PR-2
<b>Community Safe Routes</b>	Create safe walking connections through programs that identify and invest in Safe Routes to Schools and Community Safe Routes that link people to transit and other important community destinations.	33	TM-1, TM-2, PFS-3, PR-2
<b>Community Streets</b>	Develop guidance and encouragement for community use of the right-of-way, including plazas, parklets, “streateries,” open streets events, public art, and demonstration projects.	34	TM-1, TM-4, PR-2
<b>Conserve Land For Open Space and Environmental Preservation</b>	Acquire environmentally sensitive land with ecological benefits for the purpose of conservation.	35	PR-2, CL-2
<b>Improve Connectivity Between Parks and Open Spaces</b>	Create an expansive network of linear parks that encourage active transportation, improve community health and wellbeing, enhance tree canopy and stormwater management, and link parks and open space with housing.	68	PR-2, PFS-1,
<b>Pilot Projects</b>	Encourage the use of short-term pilot projects for park, transportation, and general infrastructure improvements before making long-term investments to foster innovation, test feasibility, and increase community buy-in.	102	CE-4, PR-2, TM-2, CL-1

<b>Pollinator Habitats</b>	<p>Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide-free landscaping, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings.</p>	103	CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4
<b>Program Underutilized Spaces</b>	<p>Encourage the thoughtful reuse and activation of underutilized lands –such as space beneath freeway viaducts, oddly shaped parcels, utility corridors, temporarily vacant lots - and other non-developable remnants typically under 1 acre—by establishing public private partnerships to program them to serve community, cultural, and environmental needs</p>	105	CE-1, CE-4, LU-4, PR-2
<b>Regional Trail and Open Space Networks</b>	<p>Work with nonprofit and private partners, Clark County and adjacent cities to build out the regional trail network for recreation and active transportation purposes.</p>	122	TM-1, PR-2
<b>Sustainable Parks Funding</b>	<p>Identify and implement new funding strategies to support robust parks and natural area investments, ongoing maintenance and operation costs, and provide equitable access and level of service to all community members.</p>	151	PR-2
<b>Community Streets</b>	<p>Develop guidance and encouragement for community use of the right-of-way, including plazas, parklets, “streateries,” open streets events, public art, and demonstration projects.</p>	34	TM-1, TM-4, PR-2

## Goal: PR-3

# Community Health and Wellness

**Vancouver community members have access to high-quality public spaces that support physical and mental wellbeing, active lifestyles, connection to nature, and sense of community belonging.**

Vancouver's parks and recreation system connect residents to spaces and programs that encourage active living, stress reduction, and social connection. Parks, community centers, and recreation facilities function as part of the City's broader wellness network, providing inclusive environments that support physical and mental wellbeing and complement other community health services.

This goal helps address these benefits and recognizes neighborhoods within the City with higher rates of food insecurity and chronic disease, particularly in areas with limited access to fresh produce and outdoor recreation opportunities. Addressing these disparities requires a coordinated approach that integrates park amenities, community gardens, and wellness programming into everyday public spaces (*Community Atlas (2023)*).

In collaboration with the *Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Comprehensive Plan (2022-2031)*, there is a need for continued investment in programs that promote lifelong wellness, including fitness classes, adaptive recreation, nature-based therapy, and nutrition education. Partnerships with local health providers, school districts, and nonprofit organizations can help extend these opportunities.

Exposure to green spaces has also been proven to lower stress, improve concentration, and encourage a sense of social belonging, benefiting youth, older adults, and residents who experience higher health risks. Policies supporting this goal emphasize collaboration among parks, health, and social service partners to increase community wellness and provide equitable high-quality public spaces.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Broaden Equitable Access to Natural Spaces and Parks</b>	Increase access to existing parks, and site new accessible and attainable housing close to existing and future parks, ensuring equitable access to existing facilities, and investing in new and improved facilities in underserved neighborhoods.	23	CL-4, PR-3, H-1, EI-2
<b>Community Centers</b>	Establish multipurpose community centers offering social, recreational, educational, and cultural programming, especially in underserved areas.	30	PR-3, PFS-1
<b>Community Food Enterprises</b>	Explore opportunities for community-owned and cooperative grocery store models to strengthen neighborhood food access where the private market fails to meet demand.	31	PR-3, LU-1
<b>Community Gardens</b>	Expand access to community gardens and incentivize urban agriculture to improve food security and increase healthy food options .	32	PR-3
<b>Health Access</b>	Broaden access to essential healthcare and services in underserved populations and address built environment causes of health disparities.	65	EI-1, PR-3
<b>Increase Food Access</b>	Incentivize and remove regulatory barriers to locating grocery stores and neighborhood markets near housing and in underserved neighborhoods.	78	PR-3, LU-1

<b>Native Landscapes</b>	<p>Incorporate native plantings, food forests, and agroforestry into parks and public spaces to support food security, ecological health, and cultural knowledge sharing</p>	94	PR-3, CL-2, EO-3
<b>Pollinator Habitats</b>	<p>Support a healthy urban ecosystem by embedding pollinator habitat into public and private development, prioritizing pesticide-free landscaping, enhancing biodiversity, and connecting natural spaces across the city through pollinator-friendly plantings.</p>	103	CL-2, PR-2, PR-3, CL-4
<b>Support Mental Health Access</b>	<p>Explore partnerships to expand access to culturally inclusive mental health, behavioral health, and physical health resources.</p>	147	PR-3, EI-1

## Goal: PR-4

# Thriving Cultural Landscape

**Vancouver supports a thriving cultural landscape for residents and visitors by investing in public art, cultural centers and facilities, historic preservation, and supporting community centered initiatives and opportunities for creative expression that reflect the city’s diverse identities and historic roots.**

Cultural spaces, parks, and public facilities are essential to Vancouver’s uniqueness and sense of place. The park system provides community gathering spaces for creative expression and cultural learning that strengthen social connections. The City’s cultural programs honor Indigenous heritage, highlight local artists, and promote diverse community voices through events, exhibits, and performances that reflect Vancouver’s evolving character.

As Vancouver continues to grow, its population becomes increasingly diverse, with cultural heritage and multilingual communities shaping the City’s neighborhoods and public life (*Community Atlas (2023)*). Expanding access to cultural programming and facilities helps create shared experiences across generations and cultural groups, particularly in areas where residents have fewer opportunities for arts engagement.

Partnerships with schools, cultural organizations, and local artists extend opportunities for education, performance, and creative expression beyond traditional venues. Preserving and interpreting historic sites also plays an important role in maintaining the City’s identity.

Policies supporting this goal prioritize collaboration among cultural organizations, Indigenous partners, and community groups to advance arts education, heritage preservation, and equitable access to cultural experiences.

Supporting Policy	Description	No	Related Goals
<b>Access to Arts and Cultural Programs</b>	Improve access to arts, cultural, and heritage programs by reducing barriers to participation, prioritizing underserved and historically underserved communities, and investing in related programs.	1	EI-1, PR-4
<b>Center Impacted Voices in the Development of Community Spaces</b>	Engage community organizations and individuals representing diverse lived and cultural experiences in the planning, design and programming of community spaces.	26	CE-1, CE-5 EI-1, EI-4, PR-4
<b>Culturally Responsive Design</b>	Develop standards for public spaces and buildings that incorporate culturally-specific design principles and art installations and reflect the diverse history and heritage of Vancouver communities.	41	CE-5, CE-2, PR-4
<b>Event Programming</b>	Continue to support and expand local gatherings, festivals and special events that uplift community, reflect diverse histories and lived experiences, and create a sense of civic pride.	56	CE-1, CE-5, PR-4
<b>Expand Representation in Public Art</b>	Ensure publicly funded art projects and installations reflect and incorporate the experiences of historically excluded and underrepresented voices in the physical and cultural landscape of the City.	57	CE-5, CE-2, PR-4
<b>Fort Vancouver and the Historic Reserve</b>	Protect and promote Fort Vancouver and the Historic Reserve as nationally significant cultural and historic assets. Support public investment, inclusive programming, and heritage-based economic development. Oppose efforts to reduce funding or public accessibility.	61	PR-4

<p><b>Historic and Culturally Significant Resources</b></p>	<p>Protect and preserve significant cultural, historic, archeologic, and ecologic community resources. Promote preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and architecturally significant structures.</p>	<p>66</p>	<p>CE-5, CL-1, CL-2, PR-4</p>
<p><b>Increase Access to Space for Artists and Creatives</b></p>	<p>Establish partnerships that increase access to shared, affordable spaces serving artists and arts and cultural organizations.</p>	<p>76</p>	<p>CE-1, PR-4, CE-5</p>
<p><b>Increase Cultural Capacity</b></p>	<p>Strengthen Vancouver's cultural sector by investing in capacity building across arts, culture and heritage organizations as an economic and cultural driver of the community.</p>	<p>77</p>	<p>PR-4</p>

## Chapter 7 - Key Implementing Actions

- ✓ Develop a comprehensive parks funding strategy
- ✓ Revisit Parks level of service standards to ensure they are best aligned with the Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Review Park District Boundaries
- ✓ Reevaluate and update Park Impact Fee Program, including adding commercial PIF, and updating relevant technical documents
- ✓ Identify minor updates to Parks Comprehensive Plan to align with the Citywide Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Continue strategic parks capital investments guided by the Parks, Recreation and Services Comprehensive Plan
- ✓ Refine community recreation offerings to support community health and connectedness within the city's cost recovery policy.
- ✓ Develop a citywide strategy for managing natural systems in support of climate action framework.
- ✓ Advance the Arts Hub project
- ✓ Expand implementation of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Plan with approved cultural access funding.

## **February UFC Program and Staff Reports**

### **8. Program Updates**

#### **Friends of Trees (FOT):**

Here are the 2026 Season dates so far:

<b>Event Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Staff Lead</b>
1/24/2026	Vancouver Planting (SE)	AM
2/28/2026	Vancouver Planting 4 (Westside)	AM
3/28/2026	Vancouver Planting 5 (Northeast neighborhoods)	JM
3/28/2026	Community Tree Care Pruning 2 – Neighborhood in NE	LV

#### **Annual Report 2025:**

Staff has begun work on the annual report. Please send us any partners you have worked with, projects you have worked on, and other activities to be included in our 2025 Annual Report. See last year's Annual Report for reference, [UF\\_AR2024.pdf](#).

#### **UFC Retreat Planning 2026**

Staff are working with Community Mediation Services for a facilitator. After the tour of the Water Center, Commission should decide on the location for the retreat, either the Water Center or City Hall Birch room.

#### **Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission Liaison Role:**

At the January Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) meeting there was a discussion about wanting more collaboration with the Urban Forestry Commission. PRAC suggested to assign a specific liaison from the PRAC that would attend Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) meetings and report back to PRAC on items of interest. The same offer for an UFC member to attend PRAC meetings. This would be to support collaboration between the two commissions but the liaison role would be an observer/member of the public that attends meetings. Commissioners should review their schedule and see if they would be interested in attending future PRAC meetings. PRAC meets every third Wednesday of the month from 4:30pm to 6pm at City Hall.

#### **Mac Awards 2026:**

The Commission will be awarding the annual Mac Awards as part of Arbor Day. The Commission will vote on this year's nominates at the March meeting. Individuals, organizations, and businesses that have made a significant positive impact on Vancouver's urban forest are eligible for the Mac Award. Activities worthy of recognition

include organizing a tree planting project, educating others about the benefits of trees or proper tree care, preserving trees during land development, donating time and/or funds to advance the mission of the Urban Forestry program, developing creative partnerships in community forestry, or any other activity that inspires community stewardship of the urban forest. Please nominate candidates.

**Subcommittee Reports:**

**Outreach:**

No report

**Policy:**

No report

**Pollinator:**

No report

**Corridor:**

No report

**9. Urban Forestry Staff Report**

Since the January Commission meeting, staff have been focused on winter planting projects, scaled back version of our Green Work Force program or Environmental Youth Corps, our Tree Inventory grant; Emerald Ash Borer next steps, next steps with our Urban Forest Management Plan and our workload to ensure all aspects of our program are moving forward. Our winter planting projects are being implemented and we anticipate planting more than 1,000 trees this winter.

Parks Proactive Pruning Cycle

Staff worked with Parks and Operations to finalize our 2026 Park Proactive Pruning sites which are as followed:

Pruning Cycle Year 5 (2026)

Starke Park, Hazel Hart Park, John & Margrette Coop Park, Gretchen Fraiser and Police Station, Leroy Haagen, Endeavor Park, Oakbrook Park, and Sam Brown Park.

Parks not completed in 2026 will be moved to the 2027 list.

Proactive Street Tree Program

The proactive street tree program continues to move forward in coordination with Transportation's Pavement Management program. UF Staff has begun outreach and services to 2026 streets which will be completed before June. It is anticipated this

program will reduce storm damage in the right of way, address social/environmental justice, and improve climate resilience.

#### Tree City USA and Growth Award Application

Vancouver was recognized as a Tree City USA for 37<sup>th</sup> year and received the Growth Award for the 26<sup>th</sup> year. The Growth Award is a prestigious award designed to recognize cities that have made notable improvements in their Urban Forestry Programs over the last year. Vancouver would qualify for the Growth Award due to Andrew Land attending the Municipal Forestry Institute, updated the city's approved tree lists with climate adaptive species, and onboarding of new Urban Forestry Commissioners.

#### Tree Inventory Grant 2025-26

Urban Forestry was awarded \$350,000 to complete a tree inventory from Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as part of an Inflation Reduction Act grant. Phase 1 was completed in 2025 and Phase 2 will be completed before May 2026.

Urban Forestry's site visit inspection backlog is approx. 7 days (goal is 10 day response time) and hovering around 25 requests. Development and inspection requests are steady.