



# Executive Summary

## Portland Urban Forest Plan

Draft - February 2025



# Purpose

The Portland Urban Forest Plan (the Plan) is the City's guide for protecting, preserving, restoring, and expanding the urban forest equitably and sustainably. It is an update to the 2004 Urban Forest Management Plan. The Plan reflects community priorities and supports Portland's efforts to respond to the climate crisis and improve access to trees and nature. The Plan includes a Community Vision, goals, and recommendations, each with specific actions and timelines, to help build a more equitable and resilient urban forest.



**Portland's urban forest includes all the trees and vegetation growing in the city. It covers a diverse range of environments and ecosystems.**



# Engagement Summary

The City used a variety of strategies to engage both community members and technical experts. This helped the City hear a broad range of perspectives. Throughout the project, staff met with a technical advisory committee, community advisory committee, and the Urban Forestry Commission. Additional community outreach included:

- Project website
- Focus groups
- Community events and discussions
- Citywide online survey
- Open house events
- A public review period for the draft plan



**Centered communities in the engagement process included Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+ people, people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and people earning low incomes.**



Photos: Bob Kerns



## Plan Goals

The process to create the goals included a broad range of stakeholders and accountability loops to ensure the goals were reflective of Portlanders' values and priorities. City staff will collaborate across work groups and with community organizations, local businesses, and residents to achieve the goals of the Plan.

### Equitable Preservation, Care, and Expansion

- 1** Equitably protect, preserve, restore, and expand Portland's urban forest to support biodiversity and improve community health and safety.
- 2** Prioritize the needs of underserved communities in urban forest planning, programming, and services.
- 3** Implement a comprehensive, citywide, and City-managed street tree maintenance program.
- 4** Prioritize the preservation and planting of trees and creation of new spaces for trees and smaller vegetation in policies, plans, and projects to enhance the city's habitat connectivity, livability, and ecological resiliency.

### Education, Outreach, and Partnership

- 5** Provide programs and education about trees and tree care that are responsive to community-identified needs, accessible to all Portlanders, and empower residents to be active stewards.
- 6** Improve coordination between local government, community organizations, and residents to expand and care for the urban forest.

### Climate Action and Monitoring

- 7** Actively manage and evaluate the urban forest and adapt practices to maintain forest health, preserve habitat, and respond to the impacts of climate change.

## Canopy Goals

Canopy goals define the amount of tree cover we want in Portland. To set these goals, the City measured the current distribution of tree canopy and identified where and how we can expand tree canopy. Staff assessed land use and development patterns and recent canopy trends to set the goals. The City also reviewed best practices from peer cities and industry leaders to understand how other cities set tree canopy goals. Throughout the project, the City heard from community members about the types of locations where they want trees and how ambitious they want the City to be with its goals.

### What is Tree Canopy?

**Tree canopy is made up of the leaves and branches covering the ground. It provides many important services, like shade, managing rainwater, producing oxygen, and adding beauty to our surroundings.**

32% of Portland's land area is covered by tree canopy.

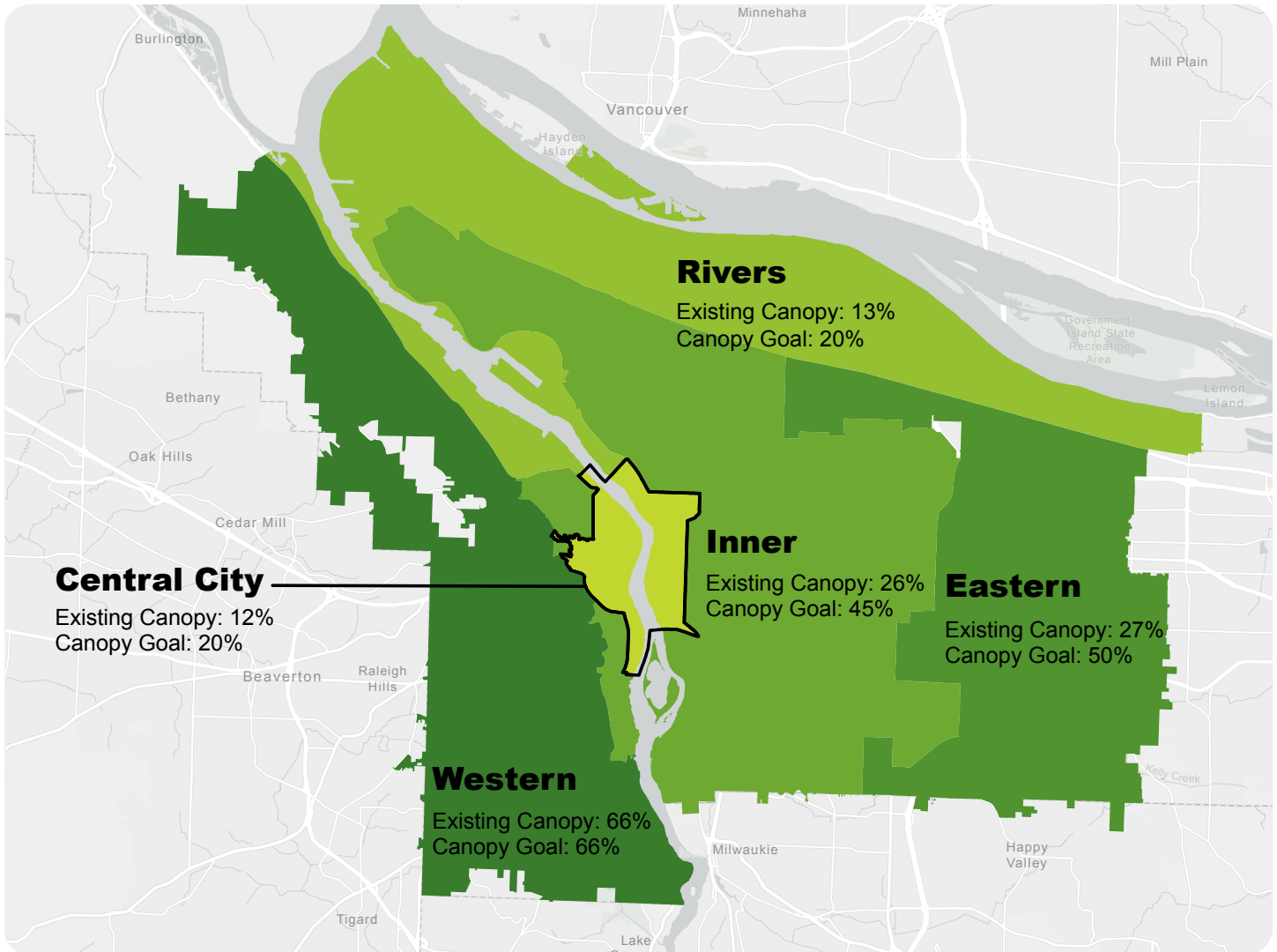
**Tree canopy cover =**  
(Acres of tree canopy / land area) X 100

Goal	Where we are today
Percentage of neighborhoods with at least 25% tree canopy <b>100%</b>	Percentage of neighborhoods with at least 25% tree canopy <b>46%</b>
Percentage of street tree area covered by tree canopy <b>35%</b>	Percentage of street tree area covered by tree canopy <b>24%</b>
Percentage of Portland covered by tree canopy <b>45%</b>	Percentage of Portland covered by tree canopy <b>32%</b>

Percentages are based on land cover.

There are three **Tree Canopy Goals**:

1. Every neighborhood will have at least 25% tree canopy cover.
2. Increase tree canopy cover over our streets to at least 35% in 20 years.
3. Increase tree canopy cover citywide to 45% in 40 years.



Achieving the canopy goals will require the collective efforts of all Portlanders, as these goals extend far beyond public land and involve private properties, neighborhoods, and community spaces. Reaching these goals depends on widespread participation, from residents to local businesses, to city planners, and community organizations.

The community and advisory committees for the project advised the project team to set ambitious, forward-thinking goals. Their guidance has been clear: aim high, be bold, and take proactive steps to ensure Portland is better equipped to respond to the growing challenges of climate change. They stressed that achieving canopy goals must prioritize equity, ensuring all neighborhoods—especially underserved ones—benefit from increased tree coverage.

### Recommendations and Implementation Strategy

The Recommendations and Implementation Strategy present a framework to achieve the vision and goals of the Plan. They support broader City priorities like community and environmental health, public safety, livability, equity, and anti-racism. They build on current City services, plans, and policies, which the City will continue to implement.

### Tracking Progress and Accountability

The City will use performance measures to track progress towards achieving Plan goals and urban forest management outcomes. A performance measure is a way to measure the effectiveness of a goal, project, or program. The City will track and share progress on performance measures every year and share a comprehensive update with a status report on each action every three years. These reports will demonstrate the City's accountability to plan goals, community priorities, and inform future updates to the Plan.

1

Prioritize the preservation and care of the urban forest

2

Reduce the cost of tree care for Portlanders

3

Design and create new space for trees and other vegetation

4

Expand the urban forest through planting, stewardship, and collaboration

5

Provide inclusive communication, training, and education about the urban forest and tree care

6

Use data, tools, and monitoring to support climate adaptation, meet canopy goals, and equitably distribute canopy

7

Improve City codes, standards, and guidelines to support community resilience and urban forest health