



CITY OF KIRKLAND URBAN FOREST WORK PLAN

March 2024

2021-2023 REPORT CARD



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Left (from top to bottom): City Council planting ceremonial trees during Arbor Day 2023 including: Mayor Kelli Curtis, Councilmembers Penny Sweet (former Mayor), Toby Nixon (former), and Amy Falcone; Trees given away through KCD grant at 2023 Arbor Day; Mitigation plantings at Totem Lake Park; Restoration at Juanita Bay Park.

Above (from top to bottom): Volunteers harvesting apples at McAuliffe Park with funds from the City Forestry Account; Parks staff teaching local students about restoration; Sustainable landscapes workshop for Kirkland residents taught by Jessi Bloom.

2021-2023 OVERVIEW

The Urban Forest Six-Year Work Plan (UF6YWP) was adopted in 2020 and includes a list of urban forestry actions that were determined to be a high priority to accomplish over a six-year time frame (2021-2026). The actions in the UF6YWP stem from the City's Urban Forestry Strategic Management Plan (UFSMP) which was developed in 2013.

The UF6YWP has 27 actions spread under the umbrella of five areas of focus. The goal of this annual report is to provide an update on the status of these actions and highlight the collaborative work the City puts into the management of Kirkland's urban forest.

COMPLETED ACTIONS

17 actions were completed or are ongoing as of 2023.

1.0 Inventory Trees

- **Action 1.1** - Right of Way
- **Action 1.2** - Other City-owned property
- **Action 1.3** - Parks open space
- **Action 1.4** - Quantify ecosystem benefits
- **Action 1.5** - Citywide tree canopy assessments every 5-6 years
- **Action 1.6** - Assess current inventory/GIS/work order system (Lucity)

2.0 Maintain Public Trees & Natural Areas

- **Action 2.2** - Maintain park trees proactively
- **Action 2.4** - Control ivy in parks/open spaces

3.0 Plant Trees

- **Action 3.1** - Identify/prioritize climate resilient tree species
- **Action 3.3** - Develop robust tree planting program in parks/open spaces
- **Action 3.5** - Develop tree planting programs for private property
- **Action 3.6** - City/CIP and private private property development projects: Develop public tree planting and establishment policies

4.0 Community Engagement

- **Action 4.1** - Dedicate resources for ongoing, robust and inclusive urban forestry-related public outreach

5.0 Program Framework

- **Action 5.1** - Establish formal urban forest program
- **Action 5.4** - Develop annual reports to City Council
- **Action 5.5** - Enforce tree codes proactively
- **Action 5.6** - Ensure equitable parks acquisition

HIGHLIGHTS



Over 40,000 public trees inventoried



639 trees planted on private property through the Tree Rebate Program



Over 600 trees given away to residents through KCD Tree Giveaway Grant




3,051 trees planted in Kirkland parks and natural areas

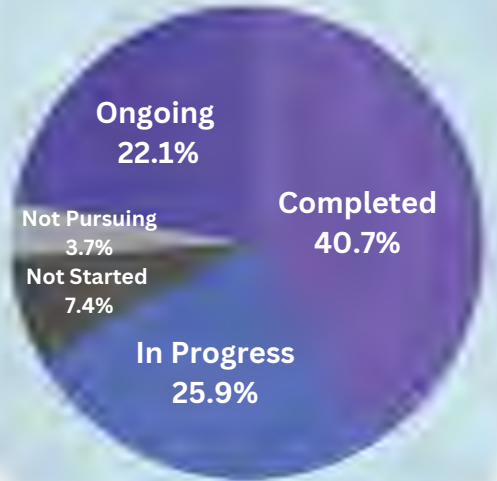
2021-2023 PROGRESS

The summary below provides a high-level status overview of the UF6YWP. In progress actions indicate one-time actions that staff have started to work on and which have a defined completion point. Ongoing actions indicate recurring and regularly occurring activities that have begun and are likely to remain ongoing for the entire work plan duration.

LEGEND

-  COMPLETED/ONGOING
-  NOT STARTED
-  IN PROGRESS
-  NO LONGER PURSUING

UF6YWP Progress



INVENTORY TREES (6 actions)



MAINTAIN PUBLIC TREES & NATURAL AREAS (5 actions)



PLANT TREES (7 actions)



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (3 actions)



PROGRAM FRAMEWORK (6 actions)





INVENTORY TREES

Understanding our Urban Forest

In 2023, the City contracted a consultant to conduct a **comprehensive inventory** of public trees. This included all trees in the public right-of-way (ROW), public facility sites, Public Works open spaces, the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC), and select high-usage parks.

Nearly **50,000 trees** were inventoried and information such as species, size, condition, and primary maintenance needs recorded. With this new data, the City will have a better understanding of the health and condition of our urban forest and can plan for management accordingly.

Additionally, **153 potential planting sites** were mapped, with priority given to sites in **lower income & low canopy areas** of the City.

The City will now also have data on the **ecosystem services** provided by our urban forest including stormwater abatement, carbon stores and air quality.

What's next?

The funds used for the inventory will allow the City to:

- ✓ **Proactively manage public trees**
- ✓ **Understand species diversity & plan for future resiliency**
- ✓ **Strategically plant new trees in low income/low canopy areas**
- ✓ **Understand resource needs to manage trees**



MAINTAIN PUBLIC TREES & NATURAL AREAS

Growing the Team

In continued efforts to shift from reactive to proactive tree management, **Public Works Grounds** has:

- Allocated one Arborist and one Senior Maintenance worker **dedicated to maintaining the Urban Canopy**
- Supported **on-the-job training** by rotating Grounds division utility workers through the tree team, training on how to efficiently work within the work/fall zone and **learn technical aspects** of pruning, rigging and tree removal
- Developed **in-house chainsaw basics** training course

Planning for the Future

- Public Works is currently developing **pre-approved plans for tree planting** to improve specifications for soil volume & quality, planting depth, and root barrier installation to **promote healthy, long-term ROW trees**

Resources & Resiliency

In 2023, the Parks Department purchased an **Arbor Pro lift** to more **efficiently maintain** Parks trees. This equipment has been an **asset to the City** and is also regularly used by Public Works Grounds to manage ROW trees.

Parks continues to **source seeds** from southern Oregon, which will be more **drought resistant** as temperatures climb in the Region.

What's next?

- ✓ **Catalog and control invasive species in the public ROW**
- ✓ **Incorporate assisted migration into ROW tree planting strategies**
- ✓ **Control invasives in parks using 20-year phased approach based on existing degradation & priority areas**



Increasing the Canopy

The City continues planting trees to **prevent net loss** of tree canopy and to grow the canopy over time. New regulations related to illegal tree removals (KMC 1.12) and tree replanting (KZC 95) have contributed to increased availability of funding to the City’s Forestry Account. In 2022 & 2023, nearly \$300,000 in funding was authorized to support tree planting & restoration projects.

Continued Dedication

Parks & Green Kirkland Partnership continue to **actively restore** natural areas. Between 2021 to 2023, this included:

- 66.1 additional acres enrolled into restoration
- 3,051 trees planted including:
 - 1,557 planted by volunteers
 - 1,443 planted by contracted crews
 - 51 planted by parks staff



Volunteers at GKP event



Trees planted through rebate program

Community Commitment

The Tree Rebate Program provides private properties the opportunity to enhance their landscapes at lower costs. Since the program began in 2021, 168 participants applied for rebates, planting **639 trees which** contributed to:

- Over 1-acre of future mature tree canopy
- 455,036 annual gallons of rainwater intercepted

The City has also distributed \$3,687 in pre-paid tree certificates to **help residents** who may not be able to **afford out-of-pocket expenses** while waiting for rebate reimbursement.

Enhancing our Streets

Public Works continues to incorporate tree planting into their work plan which included planting **107 new trees** in the public ROW.

Maintaining newly planted trees with water and mulch is **vital to success**. Public Works is pursuing hiring seasonal staff in the summer dedicated to watering young trees in the ROW during dry months to increase the tree planting capacity.

What’s next?

- ✓ **Develop robust street tree planting program**
- ✓ **Develop management strategy for maintaining open spaces**
- ✓ **Revise pre-approved plans to ensure adequate soil volume for new tree plantings in the public ROW**
- ✓ **Improve accessibility of tree planting to Kirkland residents through the Tree Rebate, particularly in areas where canopy cover is low**



Prioritizing Education

Since the City adopted the amended tree code (KZC 95) in May 2022, staff has **created over 20 new educational and instructional documents** to help the public navigate tree regulations. Staff is also currently working on an **interactive tree permitting guide and educational video series** to help the community understand which regulations apply and guide them through online permit submittals.

Expanding our Reach

In 2023, the City hosted the **largest Arbor Day event to-date**, which included giving away **500 trees**, a food truck, educational workshop, tree trivia, and more!

Several hundred people engaged with the City through this event and had the opportunity to ask staff questions about tree regulations and what the City is doing to preserve our urban forest.



Arbor Day sustainable landscapes workshop

What's next?



Community engagement process for the upcoming updates to the Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan and Urban Forest 6-Year Work Plan



PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Collaboration is Key

The Tree Team continues to meet quarterly to review the UF6YWP and see where **resources can be pooled** to meet objectives. In 2023, some highlights included:

- Multi-department team formed to draft RFP and participate in selection panel for the 2023 Public Tree Inventory Project
- Applied for and was awarded a KCD Member Jurisdiction Grant to fund inventory of Public Works managed open spaces
- Adoption of the PROS Plan which includes specific tree-related goals, objectives and tasks including land acquisition to close parkland gaps
- Collaboration with King County to acquire the Kosalos property for preservation and future establishment of Green Loop Corridor Trail

- Hiring a third code enforcement officer to assist with tree violations
- Collaboration between Planning & Public Works to develop and refine public tree permitting procedures

What's next?



Apply for large-scale grant to tackle larger projects



Re-evaluate UF6YWP to determine new actions and priorities



Revise Urban Forest Strategic Management Plan



Continue acquiring new parkland to provide equitable access to greenspaces



Left (from top to bottom): Mitigation of hazard trees using the Park Department's new Arbor Pro Lift



Above (from top to bottom): Tree planted on private property through the City's Tree Rebate Program; City staff educating local students on the value of trees