



News Release

From the City of Tacoma, Washington

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Ramie Pierce, Urban Forestry, trees@cityoftacoma.org, (253) 591-2048

Alicia Lawver, Community Relations, alawver@cityoftacoma.org, (253) 591-5414

New UW tree canopy study shows Tacoma closer to 30 percent goal

The City of Tacoma's goal of 30 percent tree coverage is a little closer to reality, thanks to a University of Washington study released this month that shows Tacoma has a 19 percent tree canopy.

A previous study by the U.S. Forest Service using 2001 data had Tacoma's tree coverage at 12.9 percent. The new UW study used 2009 data.

While the news is good, Tacoma's urban forester Ramie Pierce adds that part of the increase is likely due to the University of Washington study being more detailed and localized. The UW study considered factors such as the Northwest's highly varied terrain and abundance of evergreen trees. The previous U.S. Forest Service study was part of a national inventory that looked at data on a broader level and often didn't take into account street trees or wetlands, Pierce said.

"We still have a lot of work ahead of us, but achieving the goal is worth it," Pierce said. "Trees are a valuable asset to our community. They give us cleaner air, higher property values, energy savings, flood prevention, healthier waterways and more enjoyable neighborhoods. It pays to save trees."

How to help Tacoma make it to 30 percent:

- **Maintain your trees:** Planting trees is great, but taking care of older trees makes a bigger impact on Tacoma's overall tree coverage. Plus, the more mature your tree, the more bang for your buck. According to the U.S. Forest Service, for every \$1 spent on tree maintenance, \$9 is recouped in property value alone.
- **Check before you cut:** Many trees that get cut down because a homeowner thinks they're too big, hazardous or messy are simply in need of basic tree maintenance such as pruning. Pierce recommends that residents hire a consulting arborist before cutting down trees. "A \$200 consultation could save thousands of dollars," says Pierce, when you take into account the cost to cut down a tree, the loss of property value and the energy savings lost.
- **Attend a free tree class:** Urban Forester Ramie Pierce will lead a series of workshops about picking, planting and pruning trees this October at Tacoma's EnviroHouse. For more information, go to www.cityoftacoma.org/envirohouse.

For more information about this study, Tacoma's Urban Forestry program or to learn about how plant and maintain trees in Tacoma, go to www.cityoftacoma.org/evergreentacoma.

About Tacoma's Urban Forestry Program

Tacoma's urban forestry program was created to plan, manage, protect and preserve the natural and planted vegetation in Tacoma for the health and well-being of residents and visitors. The City of Tacoma offers education, outreach and resources about tree planting and maintenance.

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