CONCLUSION TO THE PHASE 1 RESEARCH

The UF Team developed this Plan to address concerns around urban forest management in Tacoma. The main tenets of this Plan are to ensure public safety, increase operational efficiencies, facilitate short- and long-term sustainable urban forest planning, validate budgets and programs, ensure equitable distribution of resources and services, and standardize methodology for asset management of the urban forest. In order to achieve these goals, during Phase 1 of the planning project, extensive research and auditing processes were conducted to establish baseline conditions of Tacoma's urban forest. This deep dive examined six planning elements that resulted in the following recommendations:

RESEARCH SUMMARY AND POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS (TABLE 26)

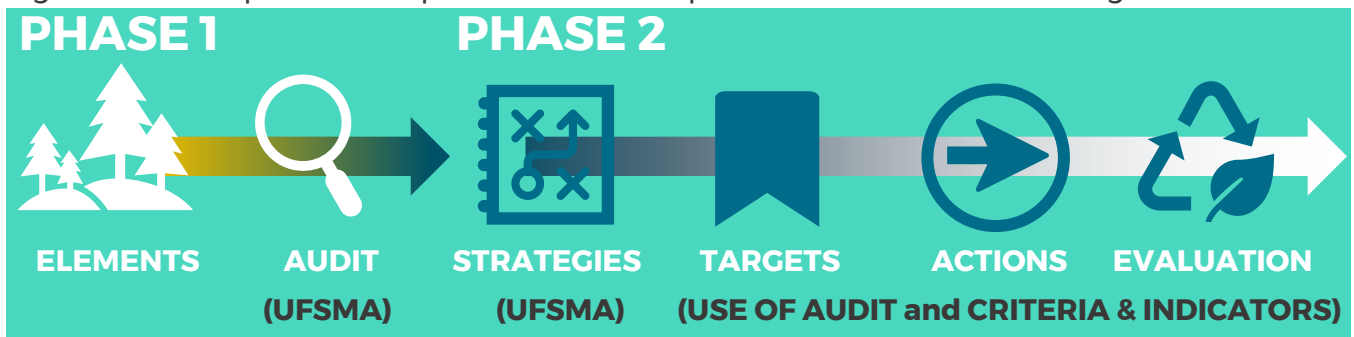| ELEMENT	CONCLUSION
1) Existing Policies and Plans	The City has a strong framework of policies and plans that allude to or reference urban forestry but a strategic plan (the UFMP) is needed to connect the elements in these documents to achieve improvements in urban forest management and sustainability while supporting Citywide initiatives.
2) City Staff Interviews	Improve operations and workflows through standard operating procedure (SOP) development, workflow refinement, internal technical support (City Arborist), and policy clarification.
3) Urban Forest Benchmarks	Based on the existing conditions and operations and cross-examined with programs and resources of comparable cities, Tacoma should evaluate strategies for adequate urban forestry funding and resources, street tree maintenance responsibility, updates to TMC, alignment of strategies with One Tacoma, landmark tree preservation, and ROW tree protection—all in an effort to achieve 30% canopy and a healthy urban forest.
4) High-Level and In-Depth Data Analysis	Achieving 30% canopy Citywide and addressing issues of equity should be strategically implemented by utilizing available data. The selection of tree species and timing should consider the analysis of inventory data. The planting strategy can be strengthened by conducting a comprehensive, Citywide inventory of all public trees that is well-maintained.
5) Community Interests and Input	The community considers trees as important to the overall quality of life and the environment in Tacoma but have seen a decline in tree numbers and tree health. The community would like to see increased tree planting while considering the site and the species. The community suggests investing in additional resources (staff and funding) to achieve this. Efforts for inclusion of all residents of Tacoma in the planning process were implemented and it is recommended that education and outreach continue across the City but also with an emphasis on underrepresented groups.
6) Urban Forest Audit System	Overall, the City scored 77% in terms of urban forest sustainability and management, largely due to the existing policies, standards, and community efforts. This Plan addresses all categories of the audit but should emphasize improvements in professional capacity, funding, and risk management.

APPLYING PHASE 1 TO THE PHASE 2 PLAN FRAMEWORK

The results and conclusions were thoroughly reviewed for all five planning elements (Element #1: Existing Policies and Plans; Element #2: City Staff Interviews; Element #3: Urban Forest Benchmarks; Element #4: High-Level and In-Depth Data Analysis; Element #5: Community Interests and Input) to complete the Urban Forest Sustainability and Management Audit.

The results of the audit were used to establish this Plan's strategies, targets, actions, and monitoring/evaluation methods that are aligned with goals of the City, its partners, and the community. Each category of the UFSMA is a theme of the Phase 2 UFMP Framework.

For example, a series of short- and long-term strategies were developed in Phase 2 for the Management Policy and Ordinances category of the UFSMA. Actions responsible for advancing Tacoma in this category based on the audit results were then established. The targets were assembled based on the criteria required to achieve or maintain "Adopted Practice" levels of urban forest sustainability and management. To further define these targets, the Criteria and Indicators for Urban Forest Planning and Management[5]— a modification to A Model of Urban Forest Sustainability[6]—was utilized. This method uses over 30 unique urban forest criteria that pertain to the urban forest resource (the trees), the resource management (the staff), the community framework (the people), and the institutional framework (the agencies) and align with the UFSMA categories used for this Plan.

Figure 32. Description of the process of next steps for the Urban Forest Management Plan

PHASE 1   PHASE 2

ELEMENTS   AUDIT   STRATEGIES   TARGETS   ACTIONS   EVALUATION
            (UFSMA)   (UFSMA)   (USE OF AUDIT and CRITERIA & INDICATORS)

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Adaptive management is a scientific approach to an urban forest management decision process. It promotes flexible decision-making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood. Careful monitoring of these outcomes helps adjust policies and operations as part of an iterative learning process. Adaptive management is a means to more effective decisions and enhanced benefits—environmental, social, and economic. Using an adaptive management approach will require the consistent monitoring of all the City's criteria and established targets for this Plan. The City will be able to judge if its new approaches to urban forest management are being effective and identify significant trends. This will allow the City to adjust management actions over time as changes occur both in the physical / biological environment and in the expectations of the City's residents.

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[5] Kenney, A. et al., *Criteria and Indicators for Urban Forest Planning and Management*. Arboriculture & Urban Forestry 2011. 37(3): 108-117

[6] Clark, J. et al., *A Model of Urban Forest Sustainability: Applications to Cities in the United States*. Journal of Arboriculture 24: 112-120. 1998

One Tacoma, One Canopy

The results of the research summary were applied to the strategies in this Plan to support goals for a thriving and resilient urban forest that provides benefits to a supporting community. This Plan will serve as a road map outlining meaningful, high-priority actions that the City will take to strive towards the vision of a healthy, thriving urban forest—30% tree canopy by 2030. This means creating greater efficiency in City operations, standardizing the level of service to meet the needs of the community, and responding to the challenges of climate change and other environmental factors. This Plan functions both as a management tool for City staff and provides transparency to the public regarding the actions the City will take to support environmental health on behalf of the broader community.

Understanding the existing conditions, the City workflows and operations, and the community's viewpoints of the urban forest provides the information and context for developing a shared vision and road map for the care and enhancement of trees throughout Tacoma.

> *Urban trees and forests are considered integral to the sustainability of cities as a whole. Yet, sustainable urban forests are not born, they are made. They do not arise at random, but result from a community-wide commitment to their creation and management.*
>
> -Clark et al.: Urban Forest Sustainability

Top to bottom left to right: Aerial View – University of Washington, Snake Loop Trail – Tacoma Nature Center, Ruston Way Waterfront – Travel Tacoma, University of Puget Sound, Residential Trees – Breakaway Vacation Rentals, Wapato Park – Wildlife Recreation, Port of Tacoma, Pacific Avenue to Downtown – South Sound Talk, Tree Planting – Pierce County Conservation District