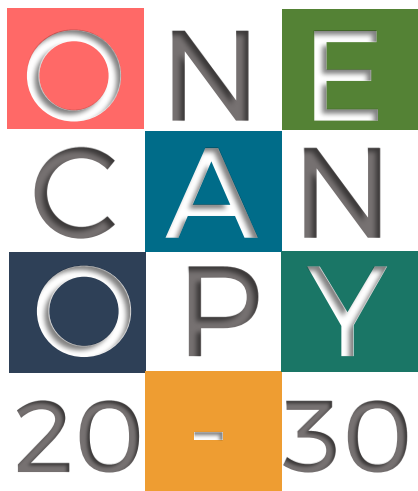


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



We are all under **One Canopy**. Trees across the City—along streets, in parks, open spaces, and backyards—constitute Tacoma’s **urban forest**, a valuable asset that, if planned well and cared for properly, will support the health and well-being of the community for generations to come. A healthy urban forest contributes to vibrant, vital and sustainable communities, while promoting public health and safety.

The residents of Tacoma care about the place where they live, work, and play. Among the many things that make Tacoma special is its physical environment—tree-lined streets, abundant parks, natural areas, trees in parking lots and framing buildings, flowering trees in spring and fall color, trees with swings in our backyards, and trees edging streams and ponds cooling the

waters for aquatic life. One of our most important responsibilities is to protect these resources and ensure that Tacoma will always be a beautiful and livable city, long into the future.

There are many challenges to this vision, however; across the Puget Sound region, urban tree canopy is declining at a rapid rate as development pressures soar. When compared with other Puget Sound cities, Tacoma has the lowest percent of tree canopy in the region. Recognizing the impacts of insufficient tree canopy, City Council has adopted many policies and plans specifically aimed at increasing resources for healthy tree canopy across Tacoma. These include the 2008 Climate Action Plan, 2010 Comprehensive Plan - Urban Forest Policy Element, and the 2016 Environmental Action Plan.

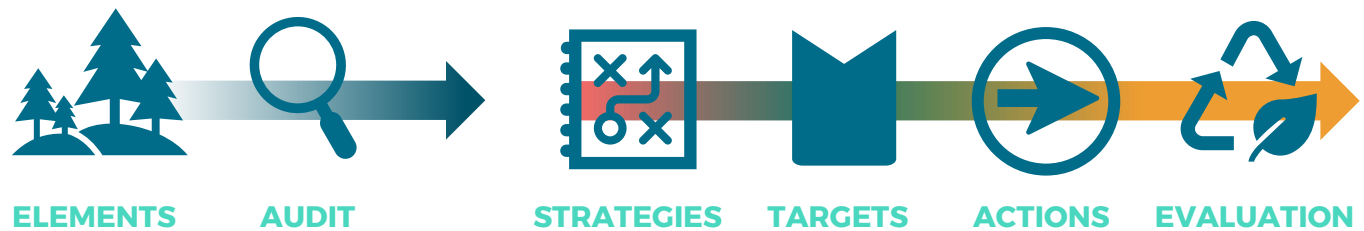
An Urban Forest Team (UF Team) was assembled to develop the City of Tacoma’s Urban Forest Action Plan (the Plan) to direct City resources towards the mission of growing a better Tacoma for all. Extensive research was conducted to establish baseline conditions of Tacoma’s urban forest as part of Phase 1 (October 2019). Phase 2 of the Plan (December 2019) describes recommended actions to improve the urban forestry program while meeting the needs and goals of the community. Following Phase 2, a third and final phase (2020) will provide supplemental studies that support implementation of the Plan.

The Plan serves as a road map for actions that move towards a goal of a healthy, thriving 30% overall tree canopy coverage by 2030 by creating greater efficiencies in City operations; standardizing levels of service; and responding to the challenges of climate change as well as other environmental factors. The Plan functions as a management tool for City staff that is transparent to the public regarding the actions taken on behalf of the broader community. Working together, the City and its people can achieve the vision they have for Tacoma, ensuring this city remains a great place to live, work, and play well into the future.

# OVERVIEW OF THE TWO PLANNING PHASES

## PHASE 1 RESEARCH SUMMARY

## PHASE 2 ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK



## OVERVIEW OF PHASE 1 RESEARCH SUMMARY

Phase 1 consisted of a systematic audit applied to the results of an evaluation of five Citywide planning elements using the Urban Forest Sustainability and Management Audit System (Urban Forest Audit System) developed in 2014 by the U.S. Forest Service.

### PHASE 1 PLANNING ELEMENTS



The Urban Forest Audit System evaluates categories on urban forest sustainability, management, and equity. Each category contains subcategories that support these urban forestry principles. **A total of 126 urban forest subcategories were evaluated for Tacoma.**















Subcategories were rated on a scale of 0 to 3. These values were then used as a multiplier to determine percent achievement for each.

- 0 → Not Practiced
- 1 → In Development
- 2 → Adopted Practice
- 3 → Exceeds Adopted Practice

This process informs the community, decision makers, and City staff on the strengths and vulnerabilities of Tacoma’s urban forest. See Urban Forest Management Plan - Phase 1 Research Summary for evaluation results and further details.

# PHASE 2 APPROACH

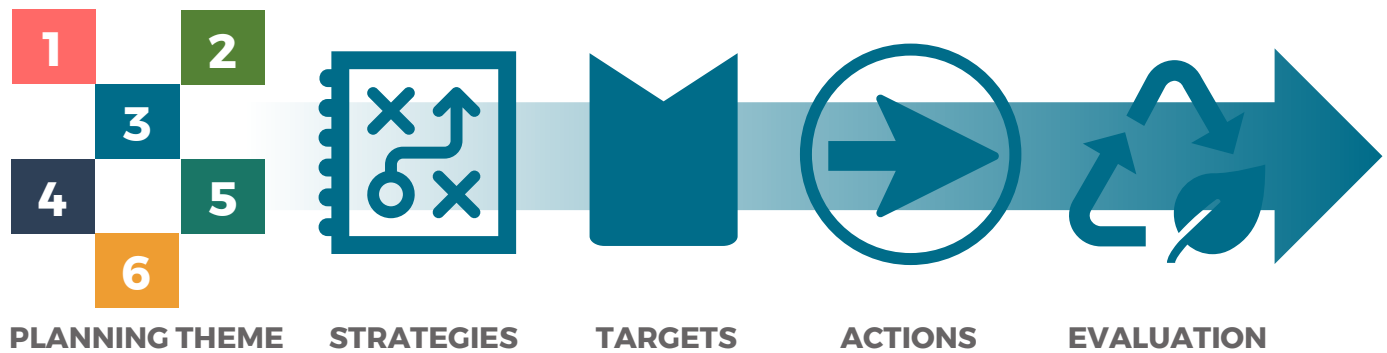
Results from the Urban Forest Audit System informed the Phase 2 short- and long-term strategies, benchmarks for measuring progress, implementation actions, and evaluation criteria to facilitate adaptive management approaches. The five planning elements of the Phase 1 Research Summary were integrated into six themes from the audit:

		Category Rating
1) Management Policy	  	85%
2) Capacity and Training	 	81%
3) Funding and Authority	  	67%
4) Inventories and Plans	  	81%, 79%
5) Risk and Disaster Planning	 	50%, 57%
6) Community Engagement		86%
<b>OVERALL RATING:</b>		<b>77%</b>

Recommended actions are based on the above themes. Each section in this Plan provides an overview of the results of the audit, the purpose and goal of the planning theme, strategies to achieve the goal, actions to achieve the strategies, and targets to measure progress and adapt for success.



## FRAMEWORK OF THE URBAN FOREST ACTION PLAN



### GOALS:

Urban forest sustainability, management, and equity goals are provided for each planning theme and are based on strengths and opportunities identified during Phase 1 research.

Each planning theme is supported by strategies, actions, and targets the City and partners will use to attain the goal.

### STRATEGIES:

Strategies specify or justify the actions necessary to achieve the stated goal. To achieve goals of urban forest sustainability, management, and equity, strategies are provided for each planning theme at three different implementation intervals—short, mid, and long-term. These strategies are based on the desired outcomes and goals identified during the Phase 1 Research and provide the means for improvement based on the Urban Forest Audit System. The City will be able to use this audit to develop annual progress reports.

### TARGETS:

Targets are performance standards and measurable values of specific indicators that enable monitoring of the actions to determine attainment of the strategies and goals.

### ACTIONS:

Actions are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound to be implemented to acquire the goals of each planning theme. These actions include recommended timeframes or “target year(s)” based on a starting date of January 2020 and the lead department or partner for implementation. Each action is rated based on the priority, level of effort and/or resources required, and the efficacy of the action.

To support City- and partner-led efforts, each planning theme highlights actions that the community can take to contribute to progress in a particular area through direct stewardship action or by becoming a better informed advocate for urban trees and forests.

### EVALUATION:

Using the Urban Forest Audit System and the targets, the success of Plan implementation can be evaluated and annually reported. The evaluation provides the information necessary for adaptive management.

## CO-BENEFITS OF PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Each goal is accompanied by a graphic depiction of co-benefits, illustrating added value that comes with achieving that goal. For example, a neighborhood with dense tree canopied streets and landscape may have cooler summer temperatures that lead to fewer heat illnesses reported. Each action impacts four different co-benefits at various levels; the relative level is indicated by the number of triangles (▲). The following is an overview of the co-benefits and their qualitative graphic:



COMMUNITY – actions that engage the public.



EQUITY – opportunities to satisfy essential needs and achieve full potential.



HUMAN HEALTH – provides physical benefits to local residents.



ENVIRONMENT – benefits of air quality, water quality, and habitat.

## IN CONCLUSION



Implementation of the strategic actions in this Plan will achieve the urban forestry goals and associated co-benefits desired by the City and its residents. To be successful, plan implementation is heavily depended on engagement between the City and its residents.

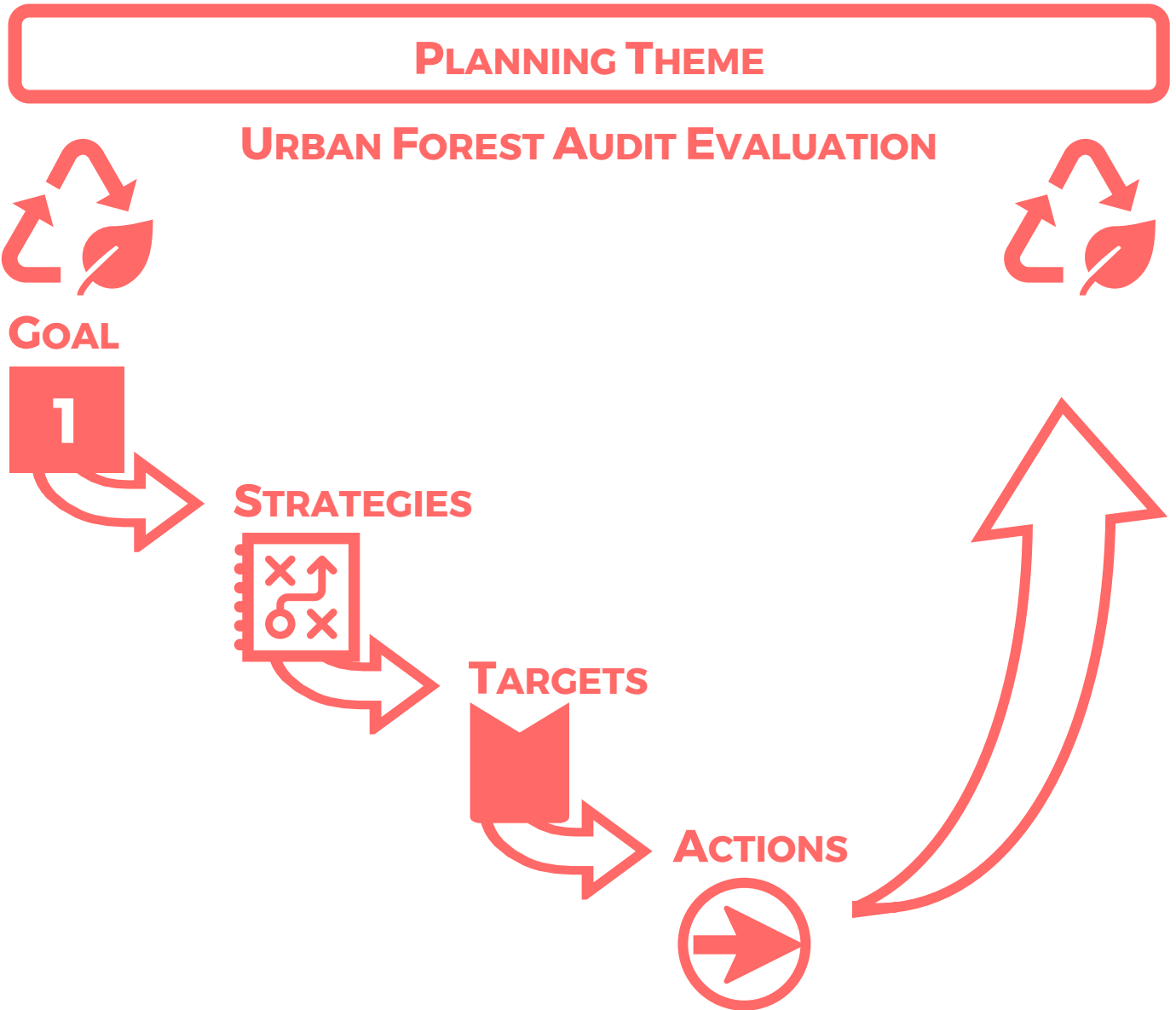
Although Tacoma received high ratings in several of the Urban Forest Audit System categories, there is always room for improvement. Each category contains goals, strategies, and actions to improve urban forest sustainability, management, and equity, which also support goals and actions in other categories.

The framework of this strategic plan allows the City to take actions that build on previous work, effectively monitor progress, and efficiently adapt in an everchanging environment. Successful implementation of the Plan will bring Tacoma’s trees and forests to a higher level of service that is equitably distributed across the City, and benefits present and future generations.

## TACOMA URBAN FOREST ACTION GOALS

- 1 MANAGEMENT POLICY GOAL:** Tacoma's urban forest policies are the foundation for preserving the environmental benefits, management, and the character of Tacoma's urban forest.
- 2 CAPACITY AND TRAINING GOAL:** The City has the capacity and expertise to provide optimal levels of service for equitable urban forest management.
- 3 FUNDING AND AUTHORITY GOAL:** City resources and authority enable equitable urban forest management for the preservation and enhancement of tree benefits.
- 4 INVENTORY AND PLANNING GOAL:** A comprehensive understanding of the urban forest ensures data-driven decisions, sustainable and equitable planning, and amplifies the benefits received from trees.
- 5 RISK AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT GOAL:** Proactively manage tree-related risk throughout the urban forest and equip urban forest leaders with resources to address risks and disasters.
- 6 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOAL:** Sustainable urban forest management and equity is achieved through a partnership with the City and its residents resulting in improved well-being, human health outcomes, and stronger local economies.

# Tacoma Urban Forest Action Plan Approach



*(This page intentionally blank)*