

One Seattle Approach to Urban Forestry

Office of Sustainability & Environment

4/19/2024

Seattle Office of Sustainability &
Environment



City of Seattle

Today's Presentation

- Overview of Seattle's urban forest
- Citywide urban forestry vision and framework
- Management highlights on our public lands – SDOT, Parks
- Two exciting new canopy equity initiatives





Seattle's Urban Forest

05/18/2015

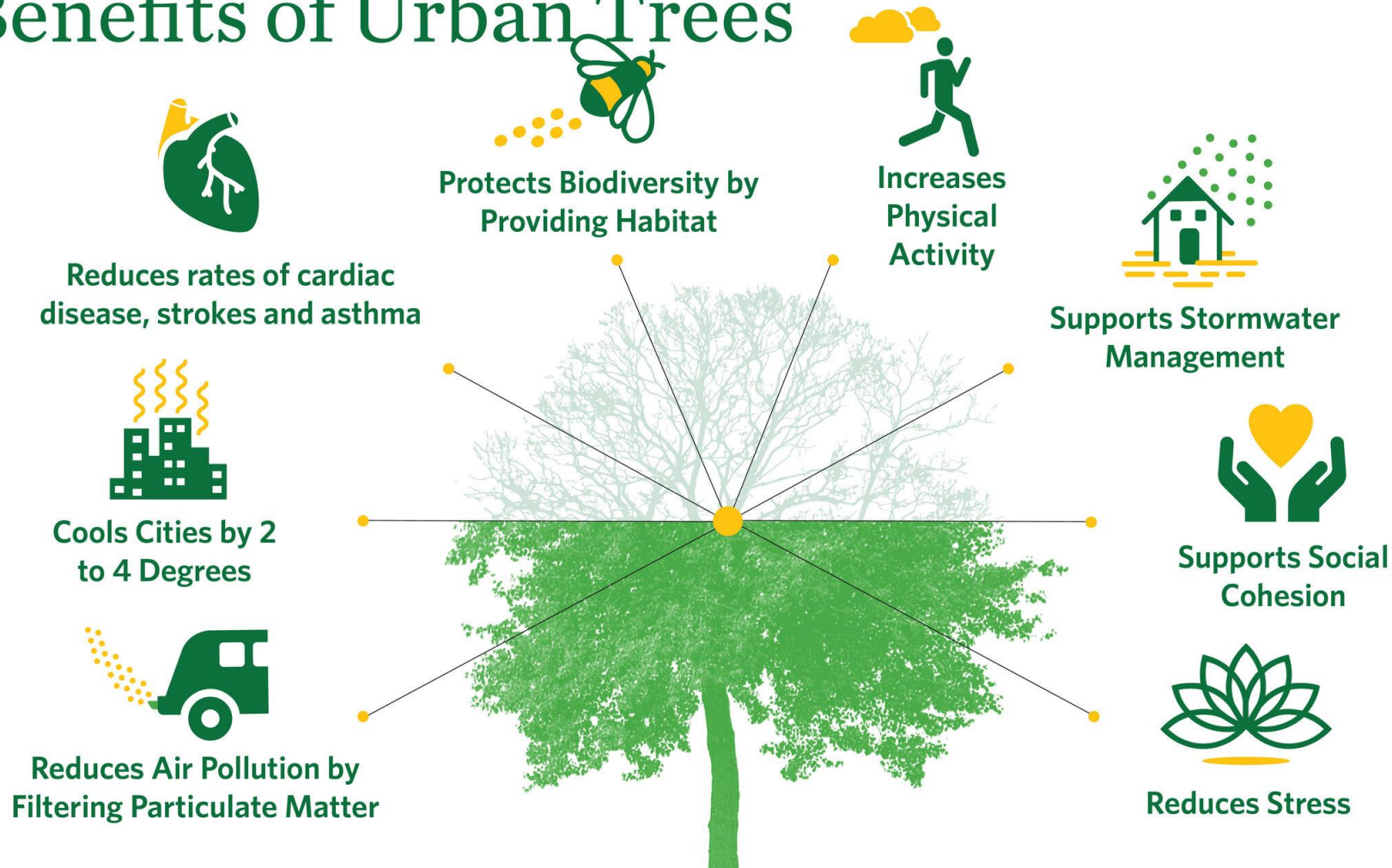
Seattle's Vision for the Urban Forest

Our vision is a Seattle where everyone—starting with those most harmed by inequities—has access to trees and the benefits they provide and where we keep our trees and forest healthy and thriving in the face of a changing climate.

Part of this vision is achieving our goal of at least **30% canopy coverage that is equitably distributed across the city by 2037.**

Urban Trees Provide Essential Benefits

Benefits of Urban Trees



Urban Trees Face Challenges

Stressful growing conditions

Climate change

Heat + drought

Pests + disease

Soil volume and condition

Competing mandates

Competition for space

Urban design challenges

Costs of tree establishment & maintenance



Damaged Ash Tree



Ash Borer Beetle



One Seattle Management Approach

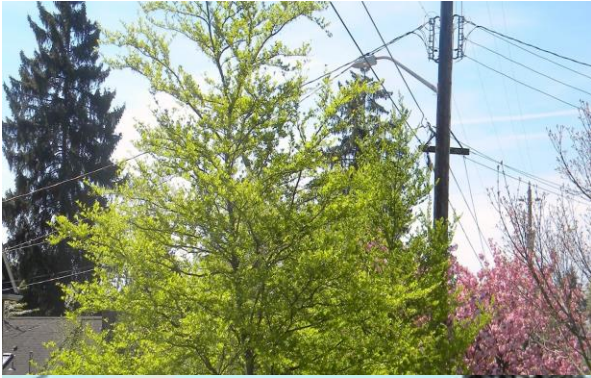
Seattle's urban forestry programs and policies are driven by data and research.

Focus on:

- Realizing public benefits of trees
- Creating climate-adapted urban forest
- Reaching tree equity
- Balancing competing priorities
- Identifying locations where we can plant and care for trees to grow our canopy – e.g. ROW & Parks



Integrated Management: Seattle's Urban Forest Touches Many City Services



Urban Forest Management Plan

Framework for setting urban forest vision and goals

Underscores the different ways we manage trees in different management units

Action Agenda drives near-term strategy and management actions

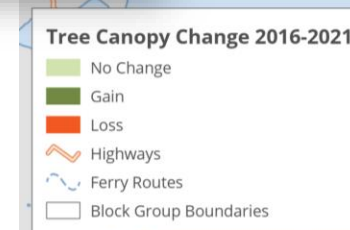
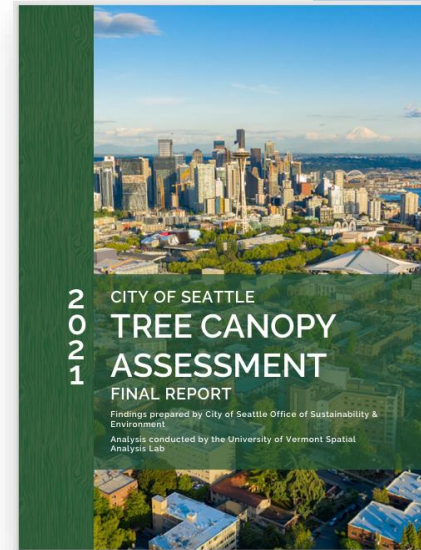




2021 Tree Canopy Assessment

Every five years

- Canopy cover
- Canopy location
- Change over time (2016-2021)

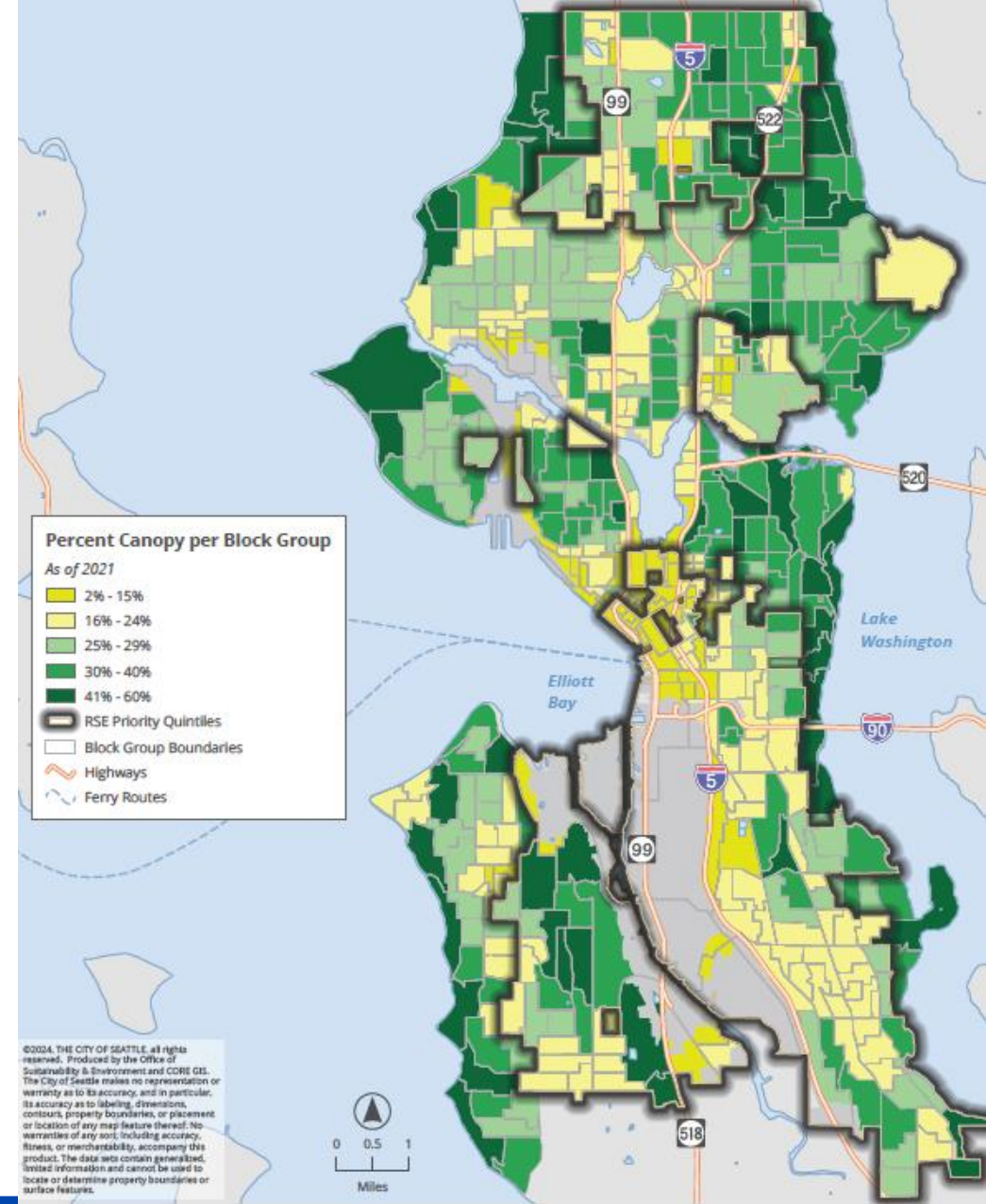


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Key Findings: Tree Canopy Assessment

- **Slowly losing ground:** We are still not meeting our 30% canopy cover goal.
- **Public sector is essential:** Majority of canopy is in right of way, parks, neighborhood residential
- **Canopy is inequitably distributed:** Neighborhoods impacted by racial and economic injustice started with less canopy cover *and* lost more.



Data Driven: Urban Forestry Highlights



Seattle Parks & Natural Areas

- Critical space for physical activity, ecosystem services, and wildlife habitat
- Major canopy contributor (19%)
- Largest canopy losses in parks natural areas
 - Climate impacts
 - Aging urban forest
 - Forest management with a long time-horizon



Developed
Parks



Natural Areas



Restoring Parks Natural Areas: Green Seattle Partnership

Groundbreaking program replicated across the state and nationally

Long-term management vision to steward our forested park lands

Community engagement approach through community events and stewardship

2023 Accomplishments

- Expanded contracts with 14 community-based partner organizations
- Over 9,000 trees planted
- 30 new acres added for restoration





More Planting and Tree Care in Developed Parks

Recent investment in trees in developed parks

- **Expanded program for tree planting and care:** Will plant 300 new trees/year and better meet maintenance needs
- **Responding to climate needs:** Extended 5-year establishment for young trees
- **Expanded tree inventory:** To monitor tree health and survivorship



Seattle Right-of-Way

The ROW is a key asset for canopy

- Opportunities for shade, health, enjoyment where people live and work
- Runs throughout the city
- 27% of city's land area
- 23% of the city's canopy

Important work ahead to prioritize trees in the ROW



Right of Way

Street Tree Management

Final year of nine-year operations and maintenance plan

- **Equitable tree planting and maintenance**
- **Grounded in tree inventory data**



Street Tree Management 2023-24 Accomplishments

Over 500 trees planted:

- 69% in two highest RSE areas
- 50% of new trees planted in areas with below 25% canopy cover

Thousands of trees pruned each year to support tree health and safe and vibrant streets

Community engagement supports SDOT street tree planting and care:

- Flyers and websites translated into nine languages
- Reduced tree care burden and increased tree health




Request a Free Street Tree

We are planting City-owned street trees in your neighborhood. Street trees clean our air and water, cool sidewalks and homes, and make your neighborhood healthier.



Help your neighborhood by requesting a street tree in front of your home

HERE'S HOW:

1. Request a tree: Complete the online application form at <https://forms.office.com/g/01rCS9EQLU>, email DOT_LA@seattle.gov or scan QR code:

2. We review your application and determine if tree planting is possible.
3. We plant street tree(s) in your planting strip next to the street. The tree is owned and cared for by the City.
4. We water and care for the tree(s).
5. Residents enjoy cleaner air, shade, and a healthier neighborhood!

Two Exciting New Tree Equity Initiatives

Citywide Seattle Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan

IRA Urban Forestry Grant Initiative

- 5-year, \$12M federal grant
- Historic federal urban forestry investment!

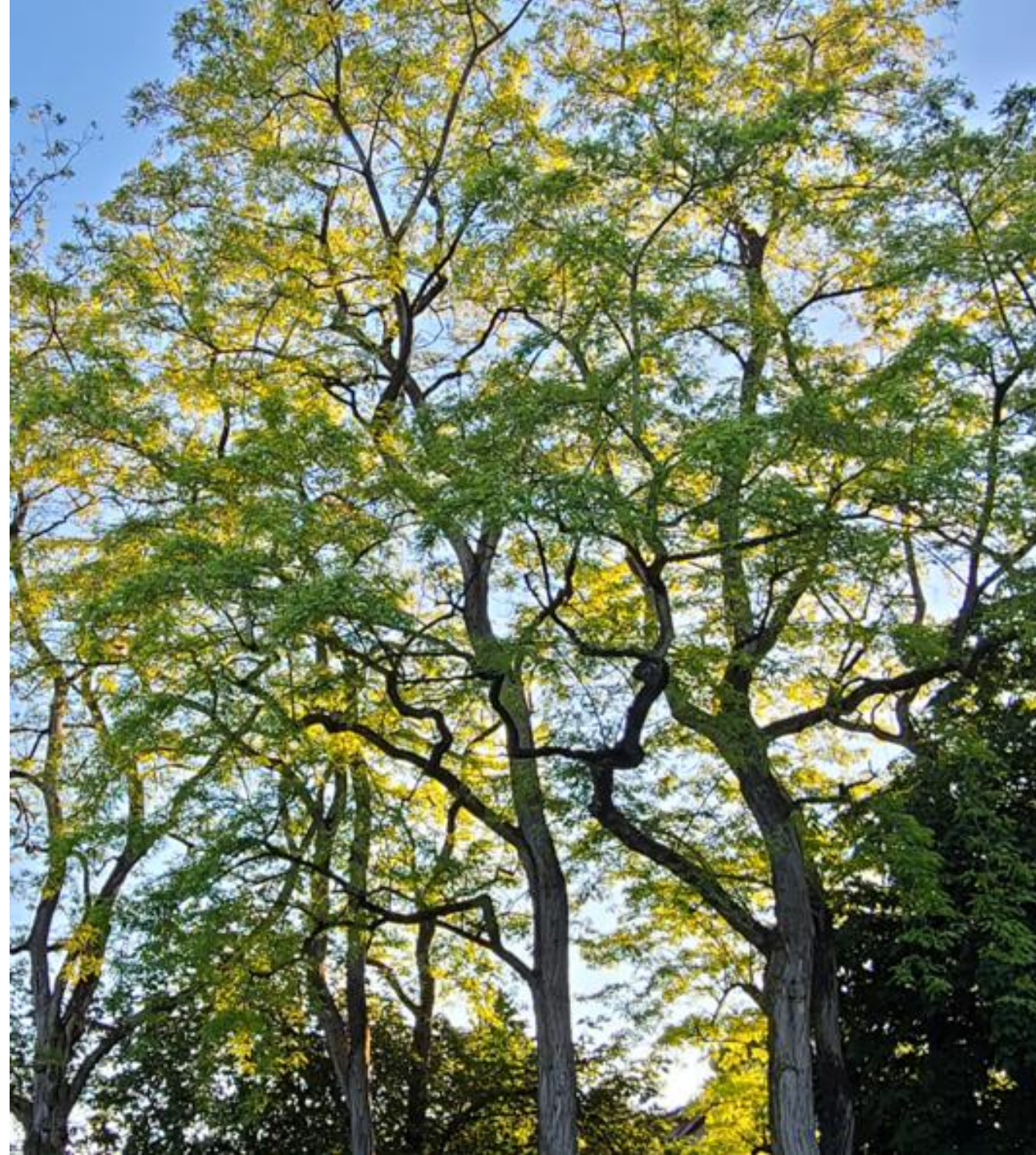
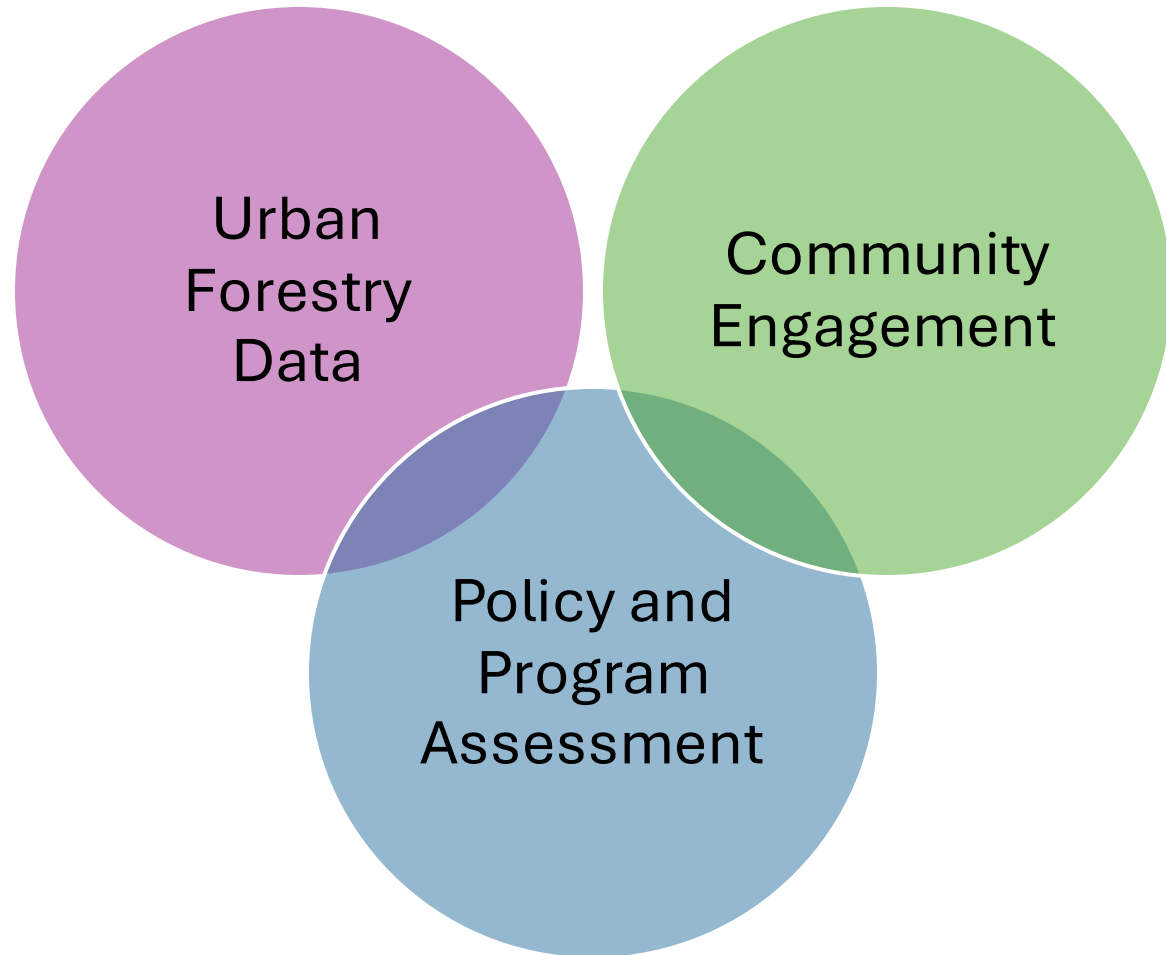
Seattle awarded \$12.9 Million to plant trees, create jobs, advance climate justice, and restore forested places near schools, parks and low-income housing

September 18, 2023 by David Benedict



Seattle
Office of Sustainability
& Environment

Citywide Canopy Equity and Resilience Plan

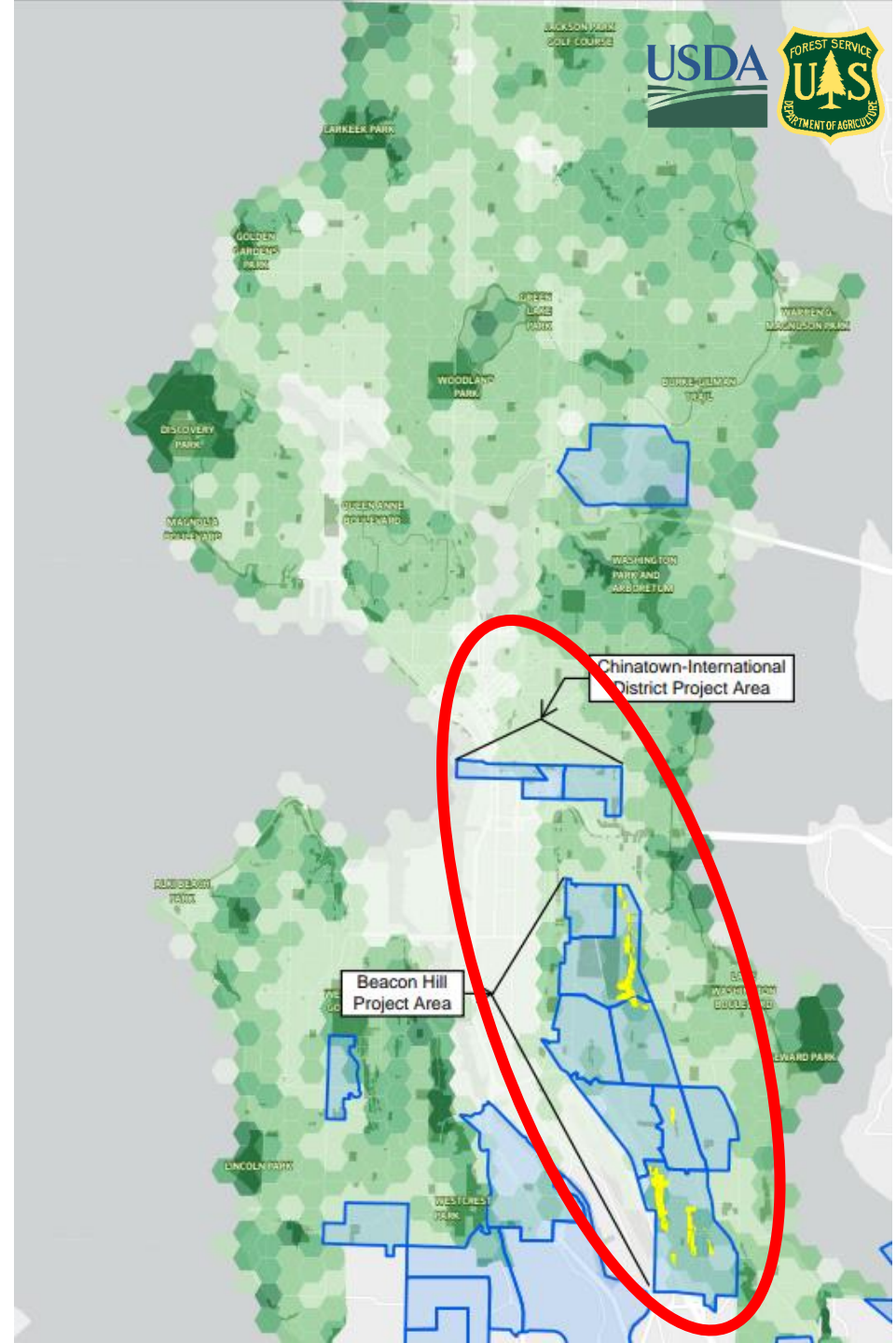


Sharing the Shade Initiative

\$12M, 5-Year federal grant

- **Climate and Economic Justice Neighborhoods**
Beacon Hill, Chinatown International-District
- **Youth green career pathways**
- **Community led urban forestry planning & actions**
- **Parks adjacent natural areas stewardship**
- **New Partnerships:**

OSE	Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
SPR Green Seattle Partnership	ECOSS Rising Star Elementary School
SPR Youth Green Corps	Communities
Seattle Housing Authority	And many more!





Thank you!