

# Urban Forest Strategy



## URBAN FOREST STRATEGY 2025 Update

Monday, May 12, 2025

Park Board Committee Meeting





The Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations have been the stewards of these lands since time immemorial.

We are honoured to be stewards of the City of Vancouver's urban forest and work in collaboration with the local First Nations.

1. Extent of Vancouver's Urban Forest
2. Why have an Urban Forest Strategy?
3. Trends and Achievements
4. Urban Forest Strategy (2018 vs 2025)
5. High Priority Actions
6. Recommendations







# 1. Extent of Vancouver's Urban Forest

# Extent of the Urban Forest



Rooftop and on-slab plantings



Public parks and green-spaces



Natural forests and wooded areas



Foreshore and Riparian Areas



City streets and rights-of-way



Residential Private Lots

# Extent of the Urban Forest



150,000

street trees



35,000

stand-alone park trees



>1,000,000

forest area trees



~325,000

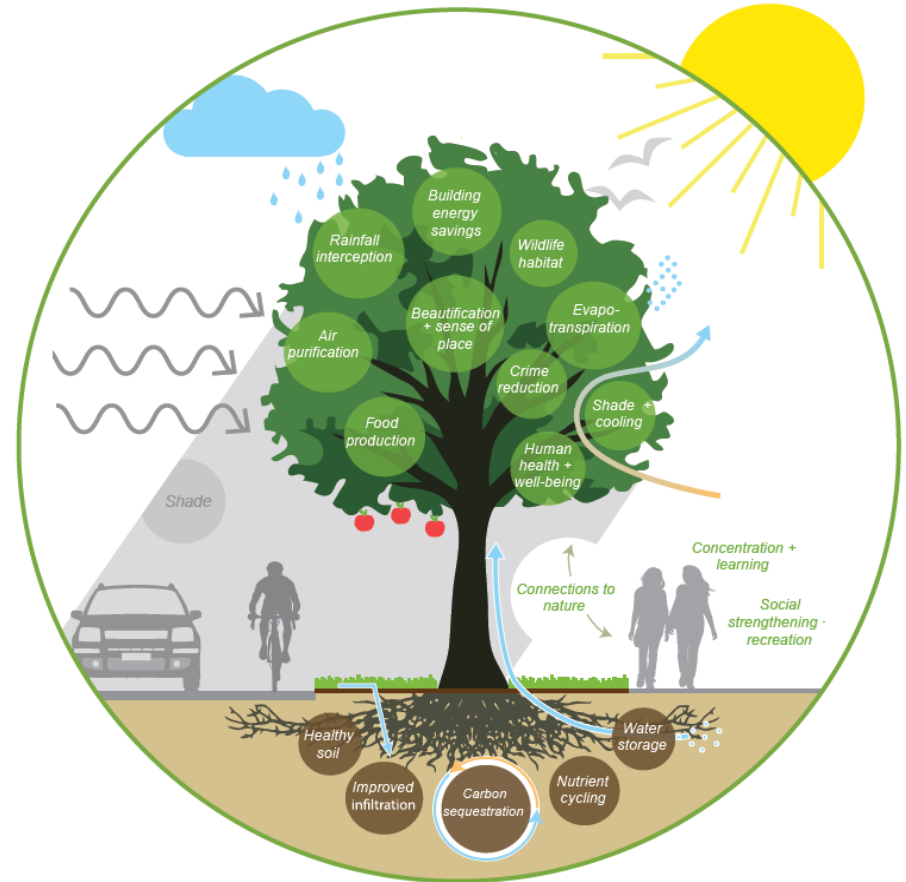
private land trees



### 3. Why have an Urban Forest Strategy?

# Why have an Urban Forest Strategy?

- Vancouver's forest is a pillar of the city's brand, identity and reputation
- The Urban Forest Strategy guides stewardship of the urban forest
- It will support staff in optimizing:
  - Social benefits
  - Ecological benefits
  - Economic benefits



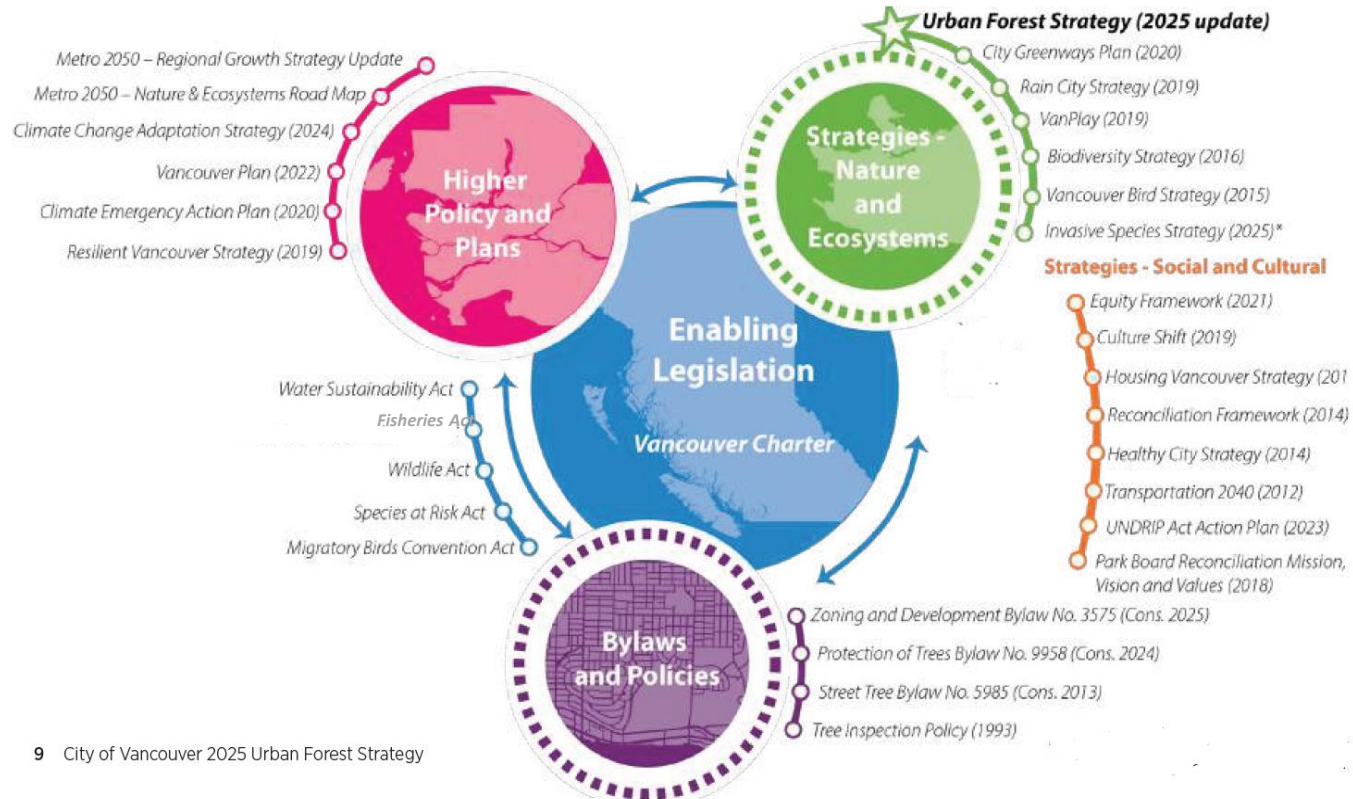


## Housing density impact on trees

As Vancouver densifies under new zoning changes, balancing growth with tree retention, replacement, and climate-resilient planting is crucial for maintaining urban canopy benefits.



Figure 12. Existing trees may be impacted by new construction above and below ground when building or parkade setbacks are insufficient.

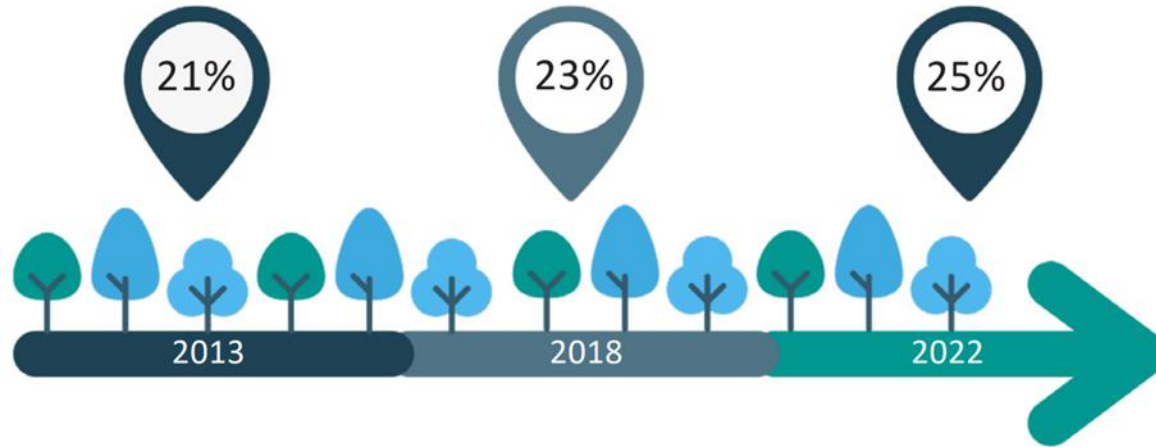




## 3. Trends and Achievements

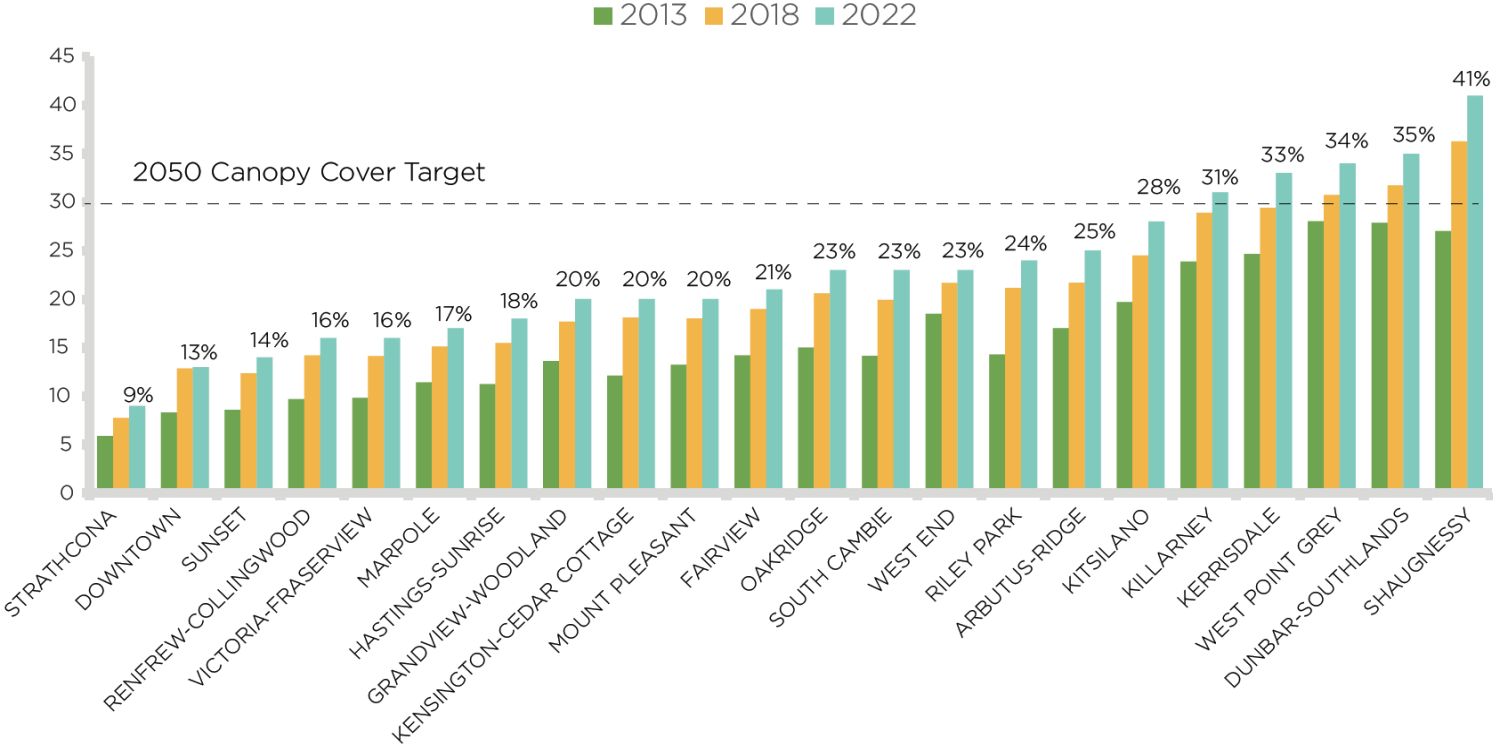


# Canopy Cover Trends

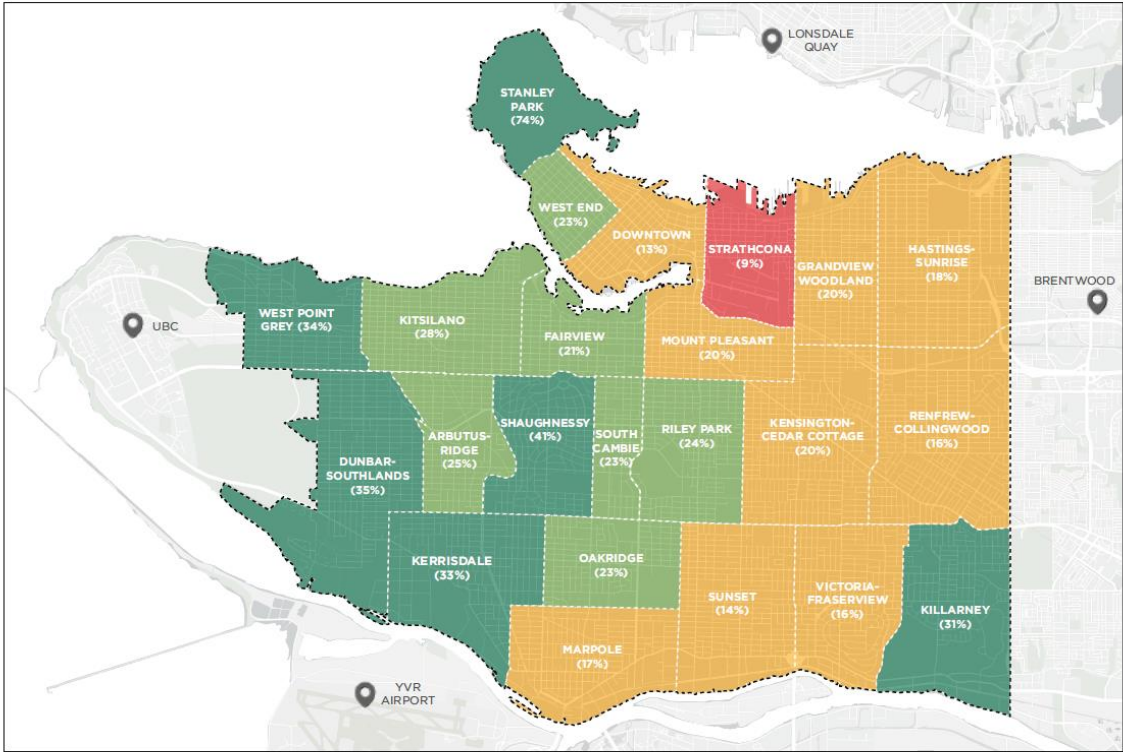


Greenest City decade has contributed to the growth of the current **25%** overall City-wide canopy cover

# 2025 Canopy Trends



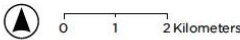
# 2025 Canopy Trends



Canopy cover  
by neighbourhood (%)



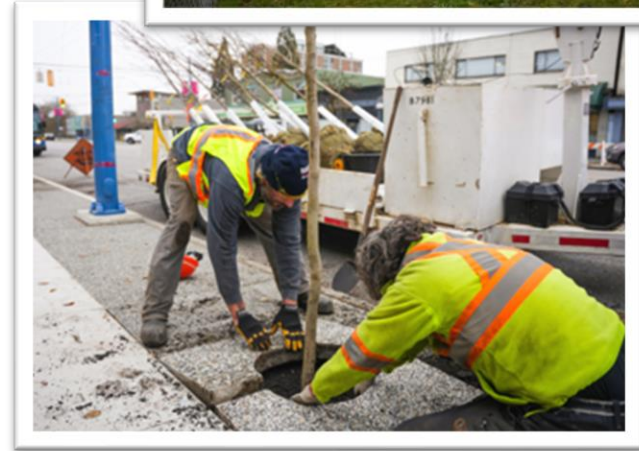
--- City boundary





# Achievements: Tree Inventory and Planting

- Completed park and golf course tree inventory
- Piloting climate-adapted tree species
- Delivered over 350 new trees in DTES
- Previous target of 150,000 trees planted in GCAP decade (2010-2020)



# Achievements: Reconciliation, Stewardship and Funding

- Continued MST collaboration on Stanley Park forest management and support to various stewardship groups
- Planted over 50k replacement seedlings in Stanley Park since 2024 and secured a 3-year private partnership for seedlings in Stanley Park
- Applied for two Growing Canada's Community Canopies grants as directed by Council
- Launched 'Adopt-A-Tree' program



	Jurisdiction	Approx. trees	Highlights
Application 1	Streets	3,050 caliper trees	3000 boulevard trees and another 50 in urban tree pits. Target is low canopy neighbourhoods.
Application 2	Parks	~16,000 seedlings and small trees	Invasive removals required to improve forest health and expand canopy in Jericho and Vanier Parks.



- Program launched on August 19, 2024
- Support tree planting success by encouraging and supporting residents to water newly planted trees
- 2024 Project Stats:
  - Over 5000 trees available from inventory (planted in the last 3 years)
  - 113 registered participants
  - 135 trees adopted
  - 3 in person pop up events
- Residents can register on the Adopt-A-City platform and pick up a free watering bag.



ADOPT A  
TREE



## 4. Urban Forest Strategy (2018 vs 2025)

# Evolution of the Urban Forest Strategy

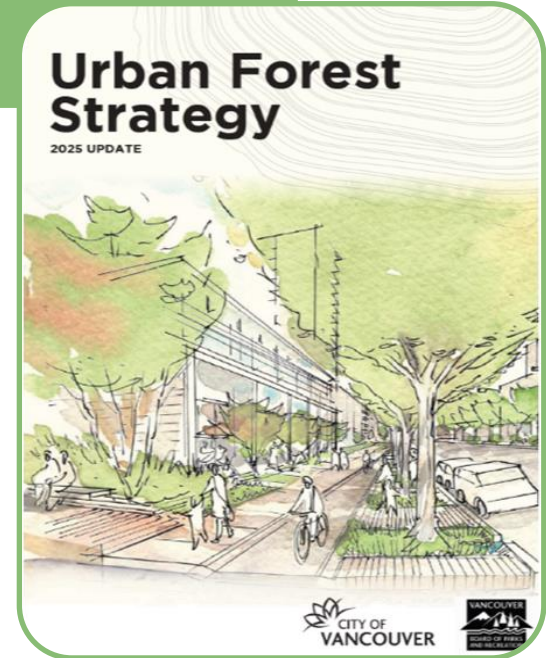
2013



2018



2025





- A revised canopy cover target
- More focus on equity
- Actions to advance Reconciliation
- Enhanced integration of climate adaptation principles
- Integration of the Ecological Vision and Network
- Strategy Framework and Action Plan





## 2050 Vision

*“The Urban Forest Strategy will guide the management, protection and expansion of a diverse, resilient, and beautiful urban forest in the City of Vancouver.”*



Goal	# of Actions
Goal 1: Manage Trees for Health and Safety	13
Goal 2: Protect the Urban Forest	6
Goal 3: Engage Residents in the Urban Forest	7
Goal 4: Monitor the Urban Forest	6
Goal 5: Expand the Urban Forest	12



3 Short Term  
Priority Actions

# Vancouver's Canopy Target

**Vancouver:**  
30% Canopy  
Cover by 2050

**Metro Vancouver:**  
Region-wide Goal: 40%

Toronto: 40% by 2050

Seattle: 30% by 2037

Portland: 33.3% by 2035

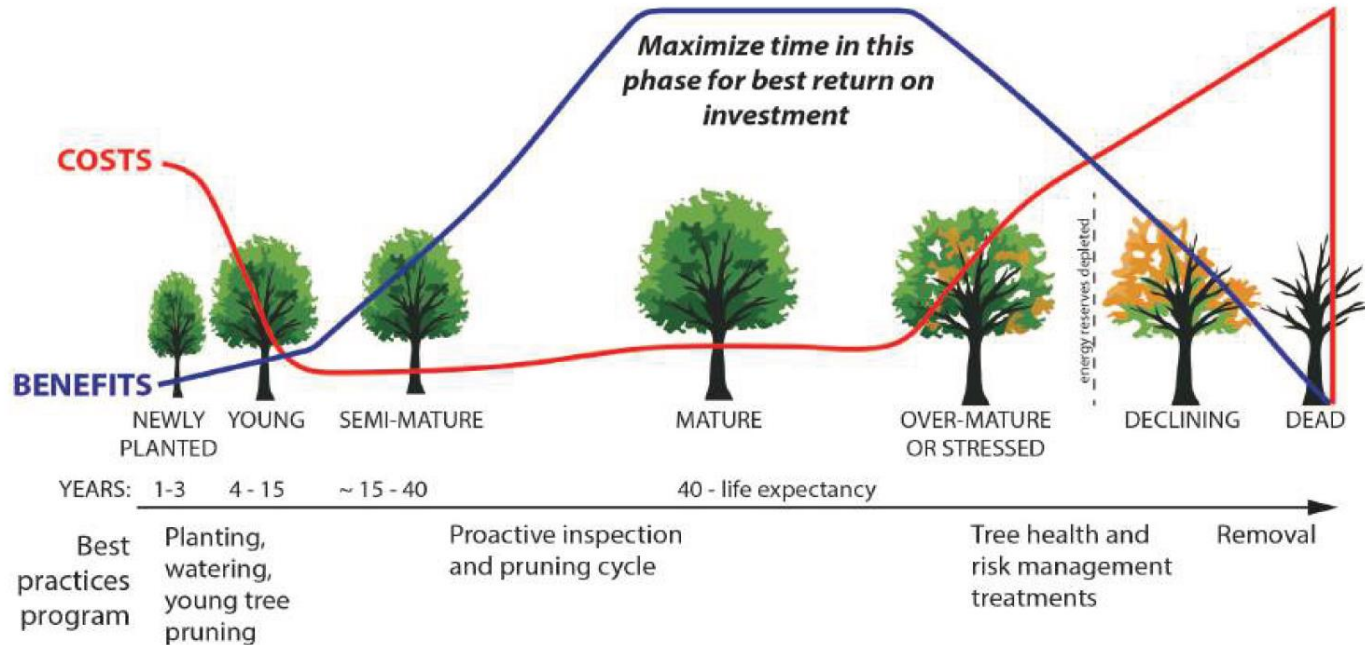


# Establishing the Target: 3-30-300 Rule



Image credit: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – Sustainable Urban and Peri-urban Forestry: An Integrative and Inclusive Nature-Based Solution for Green Recovery and Sustainable, Healthy and Resilient Cities. Policy Brief. <https://treesincities.unecce.org/policy-brief#sthash.0nI9UOZc.dpbs>

## Magnitude of costs and benefits over the tree life cycle



adapted from Franklin et al., 1987; Hilbert et al., 2019; Hauer et al. 2015

## Right Tree

Climate-Adapted

Biodiverse

Appropriate Size

## Right Place

Equity

Ecology Network

Easy Care

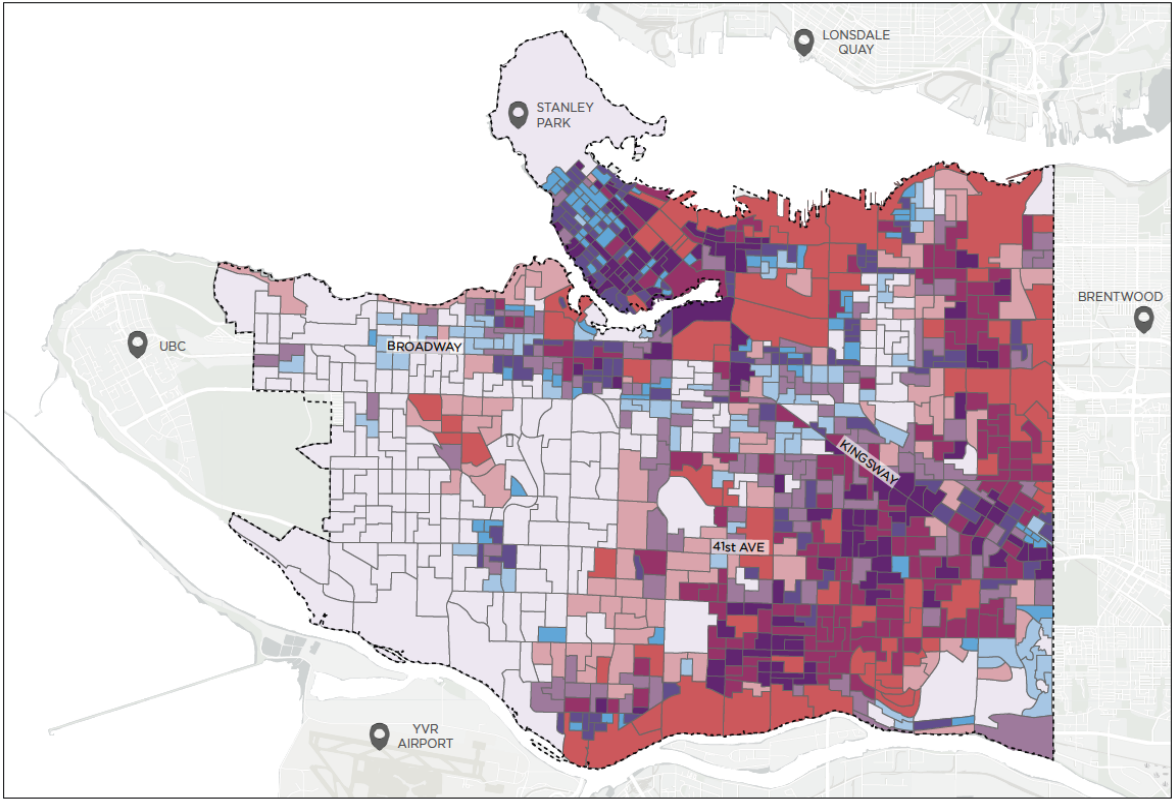
## Right Pace

Community Need

Resource Availability

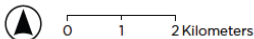
Maintenance Capacity

# Tree Equity Across the City



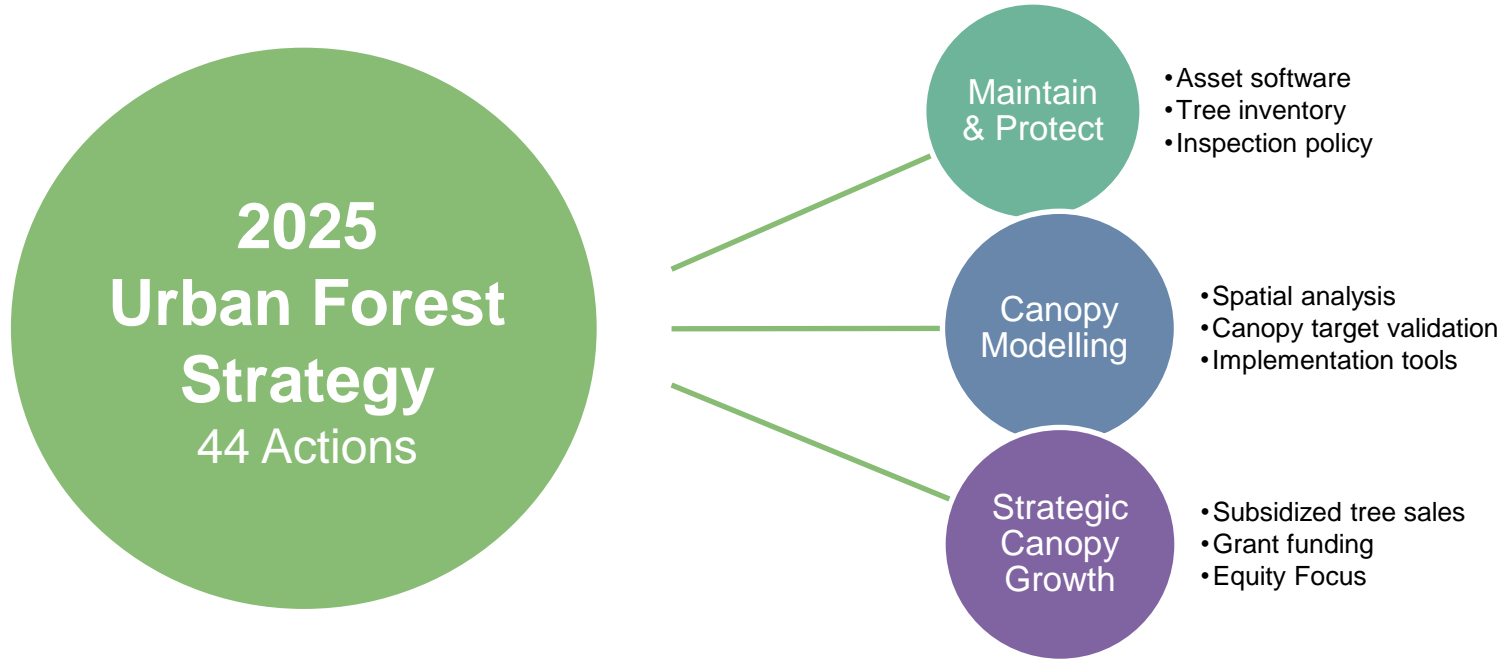
**Tree equity score  
by dissemination area**

- Disproportionately Impacted Population (DIP)
- Canopy Gap Compared to 30% Canopy Cover
- City boundary





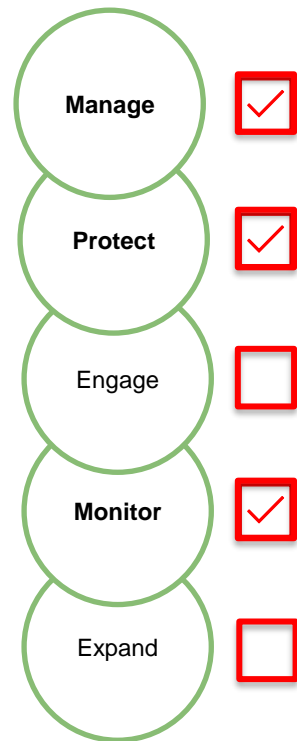
## 5. High Priority Actions



## **Maintain and protect existing canopy to deliver one City-wide approach to the management of trees as vital assets.**

Components:

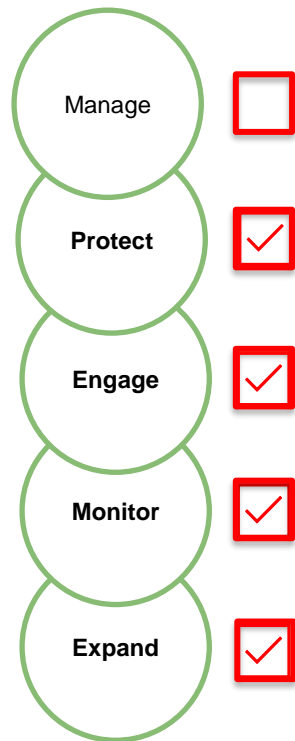
- Complete asset management software update (VanTree)
- Inventory of all un-inventoried trees on City property (REFM, ENG, Other City Lands)
- Updates to the Tree Inspection Policy with Legal and Risk



## Undertake area-based canopy targets modelling project.

### Components:

- Understand available planting space by neighbourhood and land use type
- Establish and validate canopy targets by land type
- Identify tools to determine private and public land contribution for equitable and strategic long-term planning

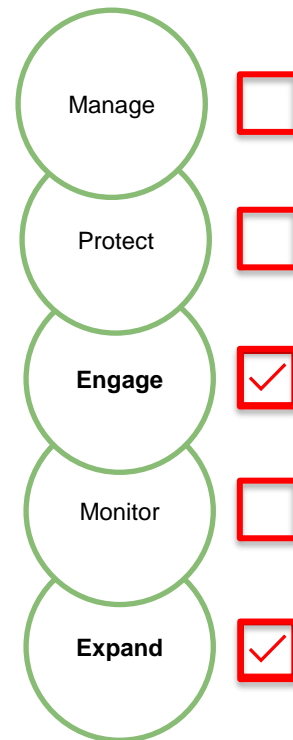




## Strategic canopy growth in with an equity focus via private and public land.

### Components:

- Pursue grant funding (GCCC)
- Tree pit / planting site upgrades
- Subsidized tree sales (2025)
- Adopt-A-Tree program



## 6. Recommendations

THAT the Vancouver Park Board adopt the Urban Forest Strategy 2025 Update as outlined in this report and shown in Appendix A and direct staff to advance the three short-term high priority actions to: maintain and protect, plan and expand canopy and work cross-departmentally to establish an associated budget allocation.

THAT staff report back in mid-2026 with long-term canopy cover targets by land-use and neighbourhood with a supplementary 4-year action plan.