

Draft Portland Urban Forest Plan Vision and Goals

The preservation, care, and expansion of Portland’s urban forest is the shared responsibility of the City and Portlanders. The following vision and goals are being created through a robust engagement process and reflect City and community values. The vision and goals are intended to be implemented through coordinated efforts and collaborative partnerships. City staff must work together, across departments and with other government agencies, community organizations, businesses, and residents to achieve the vision and goals.

Vision

Portland’s urban forest is a healthy and resilient ecosystem which serves as a living testament to Portland’s commitment to community health and climate action. The urban forest includes the interconnected network of trees, vegetation, and soil in our city.

A healthy, biodiverse, and climate-resilient urban forest

We manage the urban forest to thrive amidst ongoing and unexpected climate challenges like heat, wildfire, storms, and pests. The City and community have the resources to keep trees healthy and well maintained throughout their life cycle. The urban forest is made up of a diversity of native and other species, reflecting the diversity of environments within Portland. This range of trees supports healthy and comfortable spaces for people and wildlife in all parts of the city. We preserve and plant native or climate-resilient trees. Our policies and practices emphasize the importance of preserving mature trees in achieving canopy, climate, and livability goals.

Racial and social equity guide decisions

Our tree canopy is preserved, protected, and expanded equitably across neighborhoods, to provide access to nature and improve health for all Portlanders. We take accountability for our history. We learn about the impacts of past and current policies and practices on different communities. We look at who benefits from the urban forest today. We prioritize addressing gaps and unequal burdens experienced by our centered communities, including Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+ people, people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and people earning low incomes.

An urban forest that supports healthy people and ecosystems

Trees are prioritized and managed to maximize benefits to people, wildlife, and the natural environment. They improve public health and well-being by cleaning our air, reducing stress, fostering a sense of place, and encouraging physical activity outdoors. Trees increase our community's resilience to climate change by providing shade and cooling, storing carbon, and slowing the flow of stormwater. Trees and vegetation provide a connected network of habitat for birds, insects, fish, and other wildlife. Portland's trees are protected and managed to benefit future generations.

Sustainable urban design

The City and community value trees as critical infrastructure. Proactive planning and coordination creates inviting public and private spaces with room for healthy trees. The urban forest is an integral part of Portland's identity and character. City staff and community members work together to design and build spaces that prioritize the preservation and integration of trees. We use trees strategically in our streets, parks, yards, and other spaces to provide shade, habitat, and manage stormwater. We think creatively and use innovative strategies to make space for a diversity of trees across all land uses.

Collaborative care and shared responsibility

Portlanders value the urban forest and actively work together to protect and care for it. Care of the urban forest is coordinated across city and regional governments, businesses, community organizations, and residents. We foster collective responsibility for urban forest management through two-way communication, knowledge sharing, and strong partnerships. Resources, education, training, and services for trees and tree care are accessible to all Portlanders.

Goals

Equitable Preservation, Care, and Expansion

1. Protect, preserve, restore, and expand Portland's urban forest to improve ecological and community health.
2. Equitably distribute tree canopy so all Portlanders can enjoy trees where they live, work, and play.
3. Prioritize the needs of centered communities¹ in urban forest planning, programming, and services.
4. Provide Portlanders with resources, services, and programs to preserve, plant, and care for trees.
5. Prioritize the preservation and planting of trees and creation of new spaces for trees in policies, plans, and projects to enhance the city's livability and resiliency.

Education, Outreach, and Partnership

1. Provide programs and education about trees and tree care that are responsive to community-identified needs, accessible to all Portlanders, and empower residents to be active stewards.
2. Coordinate and support efforts across government departments, community organizations, and residents to expand and care for the urban forest through frequent communication and collaborative partnerships.

Climate Action and Monitoring

1. Actively manage the urban forest and adapt practices to maintain forest health to respond to the changing climate and the challenges that go along with it.
2. Monitor and assess urban forest health and distribution to understand past trends, anticipate future management needs, and reduce service gaps.

¹ Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ2SIA+ people, people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and people earning low incomes.