# Tree Canopy

## Goal:

Continually increase urban tree canopy capacity to provide air quality, water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Expand urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025.

In this Management Strategy, we use a broad definition of “urban” tree canopy that includes all sizes of communities. It is important to note that this goal is intended to reflect a *net gain* in acreage of tree canopy, after accounting for canopy losses due to various factors such as development, storms, pests/diseases, and natural mortality. Meeting the goal requires protecting as much of our existing tree canopy as possible and planting enough to both mitigate losses and expand the tree canopy cover by 2,400 acres.

## Factors Influencing Success

There are a variety of social and environmental factors that influence the ability to meet Urban Tree Canopy goals. The equation in Figure 1 illustrates the basic components of achieving an urban tree canopy goal, demonstrating that success is not just a matter of how many trees are planted, but how new and existing trees grow and survive over time as a function of the protection and maintenance that is provided, as well as the canopy losses that occur through removals and mortality. Each element of this equation is influenced by various social and environmental factors, summarized in Figure 1 and Table 1. The Forestry Workgroup and interested stakeholders assisted in ranking some of these key “influencing factors” to help prioritize those areas that we can influence through Strategy actions and collaboration. The Workgroup acknowledges that all influencing factors are a priority, but a rough ranking is included in Table 1 below.



***Figure 1. The Basic Components of Achieving an Urban Tree Canopy Goal***

**Table 1. Factors Influencing Ability to Meet Goal**



## Resulting Scoring Narrative

The complexity of factors require best professional judgement (BPJ) to discern the differences between some scores. For instance, multiple different combinations of practice effects could lead to judgments that a 4 is warranted instead of a 3 or 5.

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| **Score** | **Score Narrative for Tree Canopy** |
| 5 Substantial Improvement | Practice directly creates tree canopy |
| 4 Moderate to Substantial Improvement | Somewhere between 3 and 5 🡪 BPJ |
| 3 Moderate Improvement | Practice establishes policies, regulations, ordinances, or program priorities that should result in increased tree canopy. Practice involves limited tree planting, but not to the extent of a tree canopy. |
| 2 Slight to Moderate Improvement | Somewhere between 1 and 3 🡪 BPJ |
| 1 Slight Improvement | Practice improves survivability of existing trees (e.g. reduces the impact of development, pests/diseases, utility-related or homeowner/property owner removals, mortality due to poor maintenance or site conditions, natural mortality due to aging, or deer browse on canopy loss). |
| 0 No Effect | Practice has no impact on tree canopy |
| -1 Slight Worsening | Practice decreases survivability of existing trees. |
| - 2 Slight to Moderate Worsening | Somewhere between -1 and -3 🡪 BPJ |
| - 3 Moderate Worsening | Practice establishes policies, regulations, ordinances, or program priorities that should result in decreased tree canopy. Practice involves limited tree removal, but not to the extent of removing a tree canopy. |
| - 4 Moderate to Substantial Worsening | Somewhere between -3 and -5 🡪 BPJ |
| - 5 Substantial Worsening | Practice directly removes tree canopy. |