

URBAN FORESTRY MASTER PLAN 2021 PROGRESS REPORT



About the Urban Forestry Master Plan

The Columbus Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) is the first Citywide, strategic plan to invest long-term in Columbus' trees. Approved by Columbus City Council in April 2021, the UFMP will guide the entire Columbus community to prioritize, preserve and grow our tree canopy. We have three tree canopy goals: **1.)** Reach Citywide Tree Canopy Cover of 40% by 2050, **2.)** Stop the Net Canopy Losses by 2030 and **3.)** Invest in Equitable Canopy Across All Neighborhoods by 2030. We will accomplish these goals through four strategies: **community coordination and collaboration, best practices, dedicated resources** and **stronger policies**. This report details the progress made to date on these four strategy areas.

Community Coordination and Collaboration

Building a Coalition Team for Implementation

The City convened UFMP Advisory Group members in November to discuss UFMP implementation. Rosalie Hendon, environmental planner and project manager for the UFMP, gave updates on the City's UFMP progress. Guest speakers from coalitions in Boston and Cleveland shared their experiences with their community's coalition efforts. Advisory group members then discussed the possible creation of a Columbus Tree Coalition and arranged a follow-up meeting for those interested. The presentation and meeting recording can be found [here](#).

See UFMP Action Item 1.1; Goals 1, 2 and 3

Coordinating Between City Departments

Staff from Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's Forestry section and Columbus Department of Public Utilities now meet bimonthly. During 2021, Forestry met with the Department of Development, Sustainable Columbus and the Department of Public Service to discuss UFMP implementation in 2021. The UFMP goals are also now captured in the City's Climate Action Plan.

See UFMP Action Item 3.4; Goal 2

Improving and Increasing Communications with the Community

The City is working to communicate with the community better and more often. In 2021, Columbus Recreation and Parks Department staff presented the UFMP to 16 organizations, including capstone classes at The Ohio State University, Chadwick Arboretum's Tree University, the Audubon Center, various area commissions, Nationwide Insurance's Green Team, and the Ohio and Kentucky International Society of Arboriculture conference. The City also wrote this annual report on the progress of the plan implementation.

See UFMP Action 3, Action Item 10.1; Goal 2

New Online Content and Resources

To increase awareness and provide tree-related resources for residents, the City updated its [Forestry website](#). Additionally, two videos were created on [how to plant a tree](#) and [how to prune a tree](#) in Columbus.

See UFMP Action 3, Action Item 2.4; Goals 1, 2 and 3

Best Practices

Street Tree Inventory Update

Columbus has two key tree data sets: a street tree inventory and an urban tree canopy assessment. In 2020–2021, the City of Columbus began the process of updating the public tree inventory. Columbus' street tree inventory had not been updated citywide since 1998. The City has spent over \$275,000 so far, using both city capital budgets and federal grants to fund the project. Approximately 20 percent of the city has been updated, including seven neighborhoods with high social equity scores and low canopy: Far South, Franklinton, Milo-Grogan, North Central, South Linden, South Side and Southwest communities. A total of 15,652 street trees were inventoried, along with 19,410 planting spaces. A summary report of each neighborhood street tree inventory can be found [here](#). While the tree canopy assessment has not been completed, it has been made available for public exploration via [this online viewing tool](#).

See UFMP Action Items 4.1, 4.2, 8.2, 13.3, 13.4; Goals 1, 2 and 3

Increased Forestry Staffing for Proactive Tree Care

Two new full-time positions were filled within the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department's Forestry section: a forestry plan reviewer and a fourth regional arborist.

See UFMP Action Item 8.1

Dedication of Resources

Dedicated Funding for UFMP Implementation

The Mayor's Office awarded \$1.5 million to implement the UFMP in the 2020 capital budget, and City Council appropriated the funds in September 2021. Another \$1.5 million was proposed in the 2021 capital budget. These funds are planned to be used for Forestry staff, equipment and contracts. Columbus Recreation and Parks Department has also received \$420,500 of federal Community Development Block Grants to update the street tree inventory and plant public trees.

See UFMP Action Item 8.4, 11; Goals 1, 2 and 3

City Urban Forestry Leadership

The Columbus' City forester role was reimagined to implement the UFMP and approved by the Civil Service Commission. Applications are currently under review for Columbus' next City forester.

See UFMP Action Item 12.1; Goals 1, 2 and 3

Stronger Policies

Revising Public Tree Protections

A process began to revise the City's [public tree protection code](#) (Chapter 912: Trees and Shrubs; Columbus Tree Subcommittee). The community will have multiple opportunities to provide input throughout the process and review a draft.

See UFMP Action Item 15.1; Goals 2 and 3

2021 City Forestry Numbers



3,148 trees planted



2,619 trees pruned



1,120 hazardous trees removed



961 tree emergencies handled



6,056 requests for tree planting or care received

Awards for the UFMP



American Planning Association

Ohio Chapter Award for Best Practice in Planning



Ohio Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects

Excellence Award



The Ohio State University Chadwick Arboretum

Lorax Award presented to Rosalie Hendon, UFMP project manager

Visit **ColumbusUFMP.org**