

A photograph of a field of purple flowers, likely camas, in a forest setting. The flowers are in the foreground and middle ground, with a dense forest of trees in the background. The scene is captured in a natural, outdoor setting.

# Camas Parks and Open Space Management Plan

City Council Presentation

May 6, 2024



A scenic background image of a forest stream with purple flowers in the foreground. The stream flows through a lush green forest, and the foreground is filled with vibrant purple flowers, likely irises, growing along the water's edge. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

# Agenda

- Project overview and goals
- A Systems Approach, Valuing Nature
- Tree Canopy Analysis
- Financial and Operations Assessment
- Resource Prioritization
- Open House Feedback
- Q&A



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# Setting the stage: Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

## Open space and stewardship

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Camas' open space, greenways and waterways are a **critical component of the City's green infrastructure** and play critical roles in supporting healthy, well-functioning ecosystems.

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### PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

City of Camas  
March 2022



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## PROS Plan action

New plans should reflect the **realities of limited program funding** and the challenges presented by **climate change** to include the following considerations:

- 1. Maintain the functional benefits** of open space vegetation.
2. Foster **resilient plant communities** that can recover from disturbances and adapt to climate change and its impacts, such as forest fires.
3. Implement work **based on the value** of these functional benefits, the community's priorities for the open space properties and the condition of the vegetation found there.
- 4. Maximize the return** on available funding through volunteers, matching grants, and donations.

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# Project Introduction: 2024 Parks and Open Space Management Plan

## **POSMP Goal:**

**Optimize the management of our resources** through data-driven decision making and operational efficiencies.

## **POSMP Objective:**

The City of Camas aims to create a framework to help prioritize efforts in a way that **aligns with community, city, and funding resource goals and shared values.** Efficiencies in our own operations will allow for a focus on BMPs in order to set an example, provide clear guidance, and collaborate more with the community.

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## Goals of this effort

We recognize the intrinsic value of our **parks and open spaces as essential assets** that contribute to the City's character and residents' quality of life. Through this Parks and Open Space Management Plan, we can increase the resilience of open spaces that will enrich the lives of current and future generations in Camas.

### Enhance external communication and collaboration

Raise public awareness

Encourage and support use of best management practices

Make a Call to Action

### Improve internal decision making

Develop a clear inventory of existing conditions and best management practices

Encourage and support use of best management practices

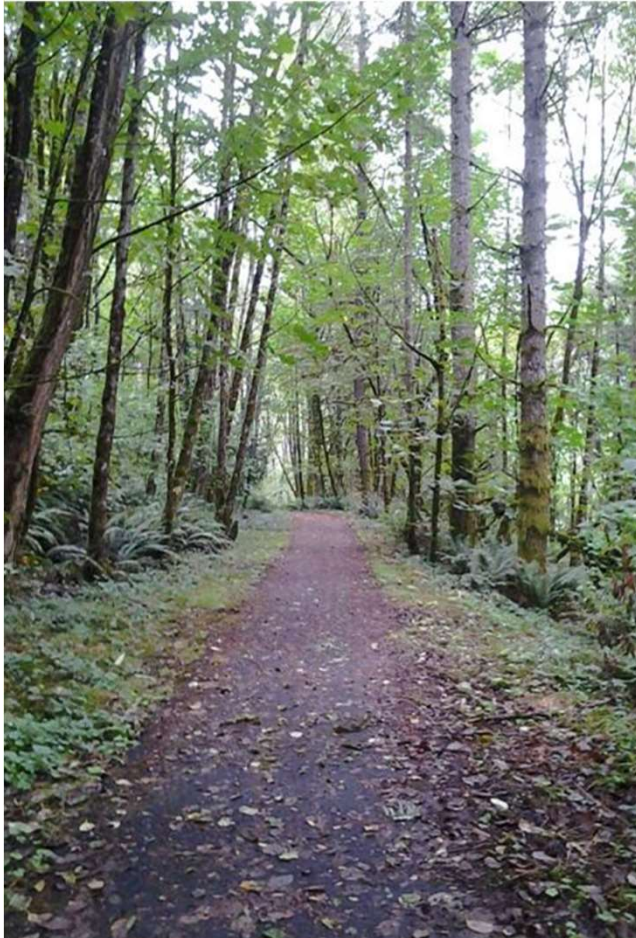
Prioritize resource use with a science/data-backed tool

Identify opportunities for more investment

**Collectively  
increase the  
resilience of parks,  
open spaces, and  
natural ecosystems**



# From challenges to opportunities



## What challenges are we facing?

- **Tree canopy and open space service gaps**
- **Climate change and extreme weather**
- **Lack of data**
- **Unclear guidance for private landowners**
- **Lack of resources**

## Moving towards our goals

-  **Equitable access**
-  **Asset protection and public safety**
-  **Preserve and enhance natural features**
-  **Outreach and education**
-  **Financial and resource allocation**

# Assessment: Valuing Nature

# A systems approach

A systems approach to management involves understanding and optimizing the benefits each component can contribute to the overall community, while understanding potential trade-offs and synergies.

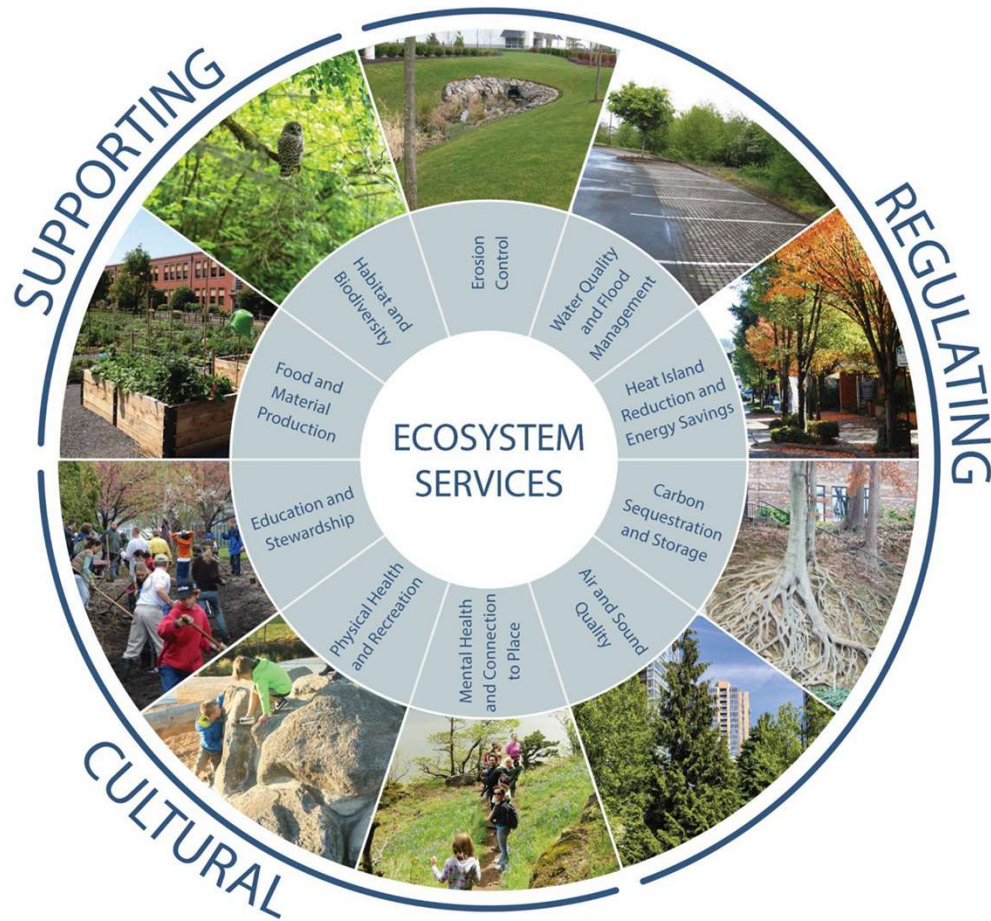
**We are organizing the Management Plan into these components in order to work towards giving each the attention they need to help the overall system thrive.**





# The Role of Natural Areas to Meet Our Needs

Parks and Open Space play a key role in contributing to human, ecological, and economic health and wellbeing.



## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

“The direct and indirect benefits that ecosystems provide humans.” (USDA)

Parks & Open Spaces contribute to human physical and mental health, economic wellbeing, climate mitigation, and asset protection.

“Green Infrastructure”

“Nature-based solutions”

**NATURE AS A VALUABLE ASSET**

# The Role of Natural Areas to Meet Our Needs

Parks and Open Space play a key role in contributing to human, ecological, and economic health and wellbeing.

National trends around ecosystem service valuations have been undertaken by FEMA, NOAA, EPA, USFS, and a variety of public and private research institutions.

2022 Proposed Values	
Land Cover Category	Value (2021 USD/acre/year)
Forest	12,589
Urban Green Open Space	15,541
Rural Green Open Space	10,632
Riparian	37,199
Coastal Wetland	8,955
Inland Wetland	8,171

Source: FEMA

“Park access was associated with **better mental health among children and parents**, and more parent physical activity and **parent-child co-participation in outdoor activity during the COVID-19 pandemic**. Access to nearby parks may be an important resource to promote health and well-being, for both individuals and families.”

Hazlehurst, M.F., Muqueeth, S., Wolf, K.L. et al. Park access and mental health among parents and children during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMC Public Health* 22, 800 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13148-2>



# CAMAS

## TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

The trees in Camas Washington annually provide **\$34,698,263** in ecosystem benefits.



### MENTAL HEALTH

People without views of nature from their desks claimed 23% more sick days than workers with views of nature.



### WILDLIFE HABITAT

Planting and protecting trees provides habitat for Clark County's 300+ bird species.



### CLEANER AIR

**\$1,181,200**  
Each year, the roadside trees in Camas remove 83 tons of pollution.



### ENERGY SAVINGS

Residents and businesses can save up to 50% on hot-day energy bills.



### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

**\$1,216,095**  
The City's trees intercepts 136 million gallons of runoff annually.



### CARBON SEQUESTRATION

**\$522,339**  
In one year, the mature trees in Camas absorb 11,229 tons of CO2.

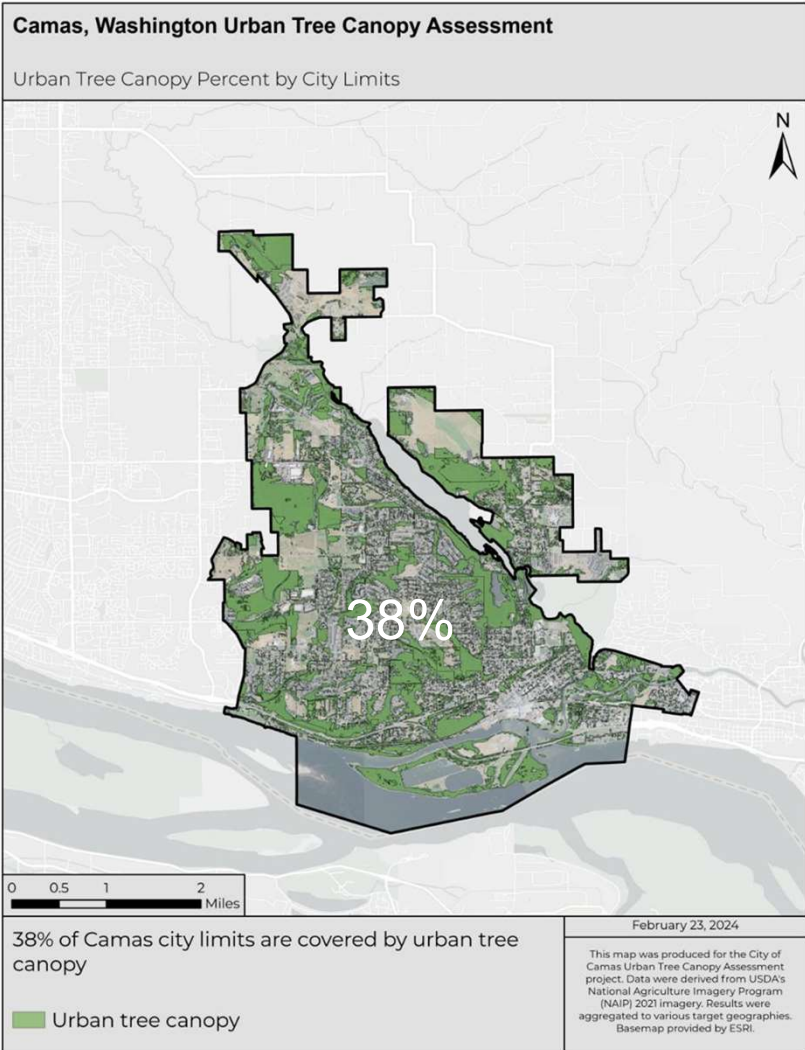


**In general, a single natural element (i.e. a tree) does more work in urban environments than in rural ones**

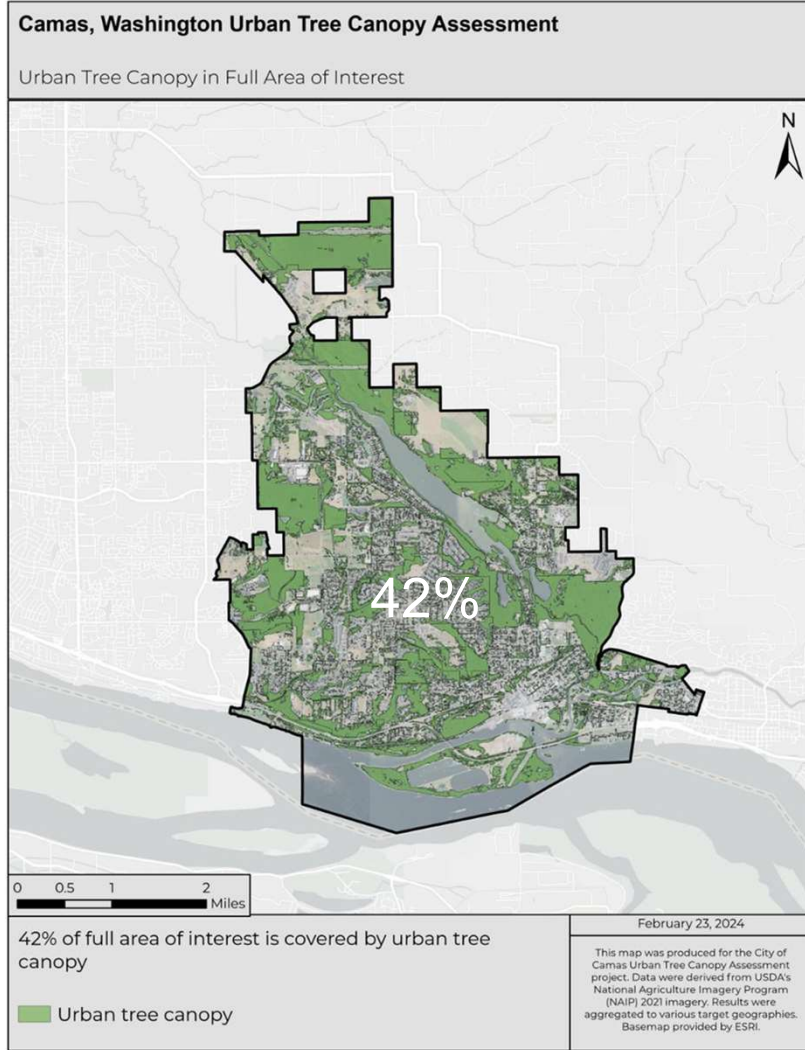
## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES: TREE CANOPY

# Gather Info: **Tree Canopy Analysis**





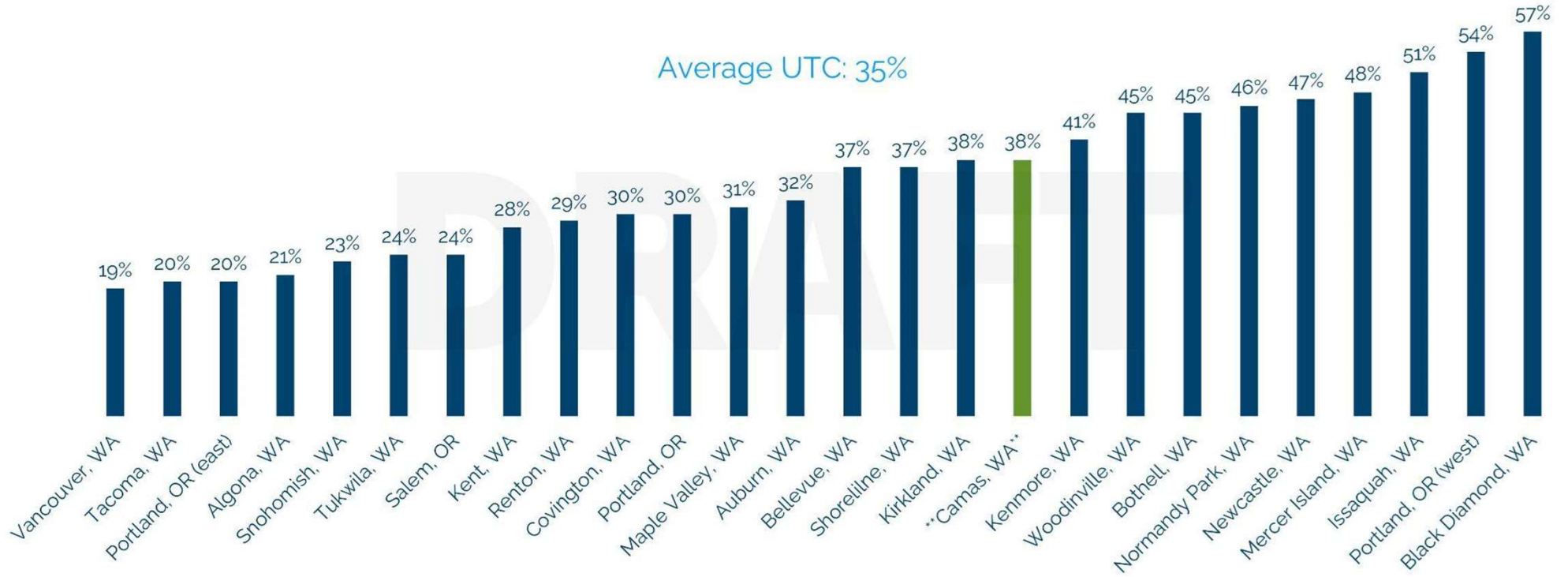
**CITY LIMITS**



**CITY LIMITS + COUNTY OPEN SPACE**

Land Type	Area
City Limits	3,399 acres
City Limits + County Open Space	4,205 acres

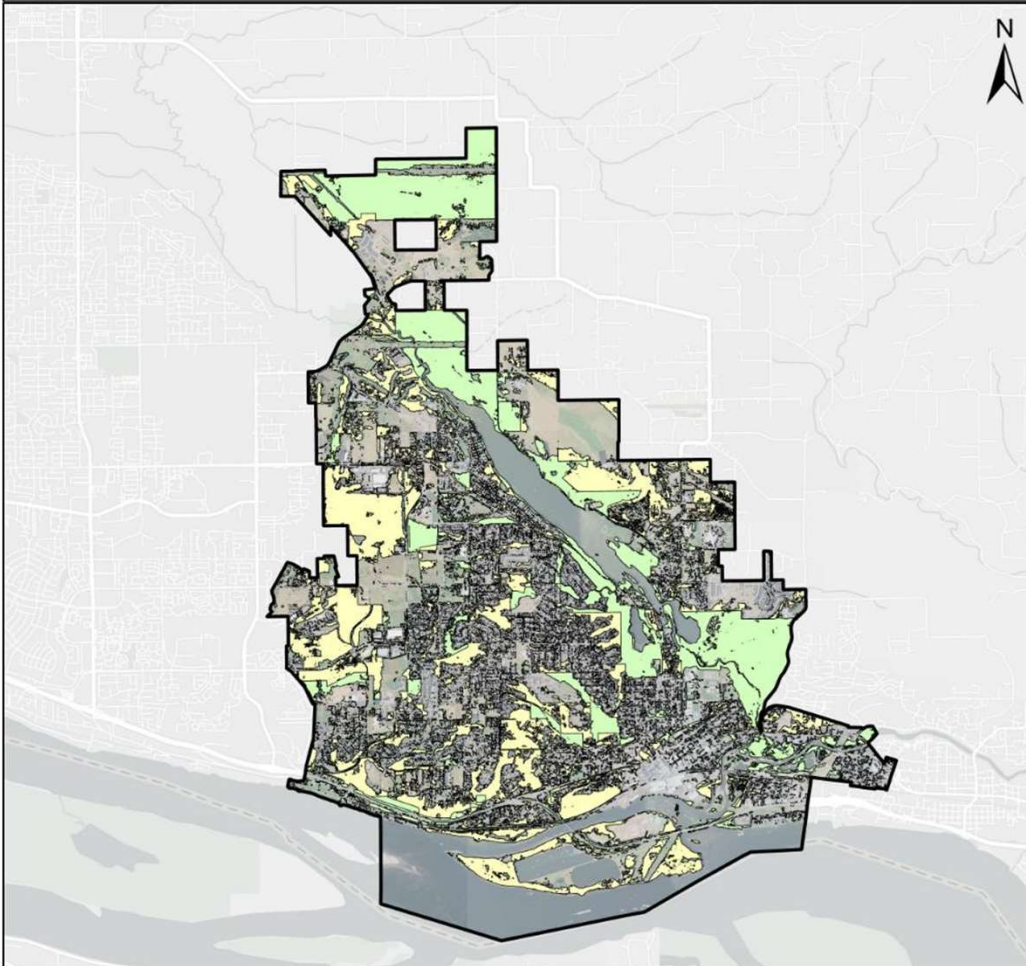
# Canopy Cover Comparisons





## Camas, Washington Urban Tree Canopy Assessment

Urban Tree Canopy on Public vs. Private Lands



Land Type	%	Area
Tree canopy on private lands	54.91%	2,293 acres
Tree canopy on public lands	45.09%	1,883 acres
All tree canopy (within POSMP area)	100%	4,176 acres

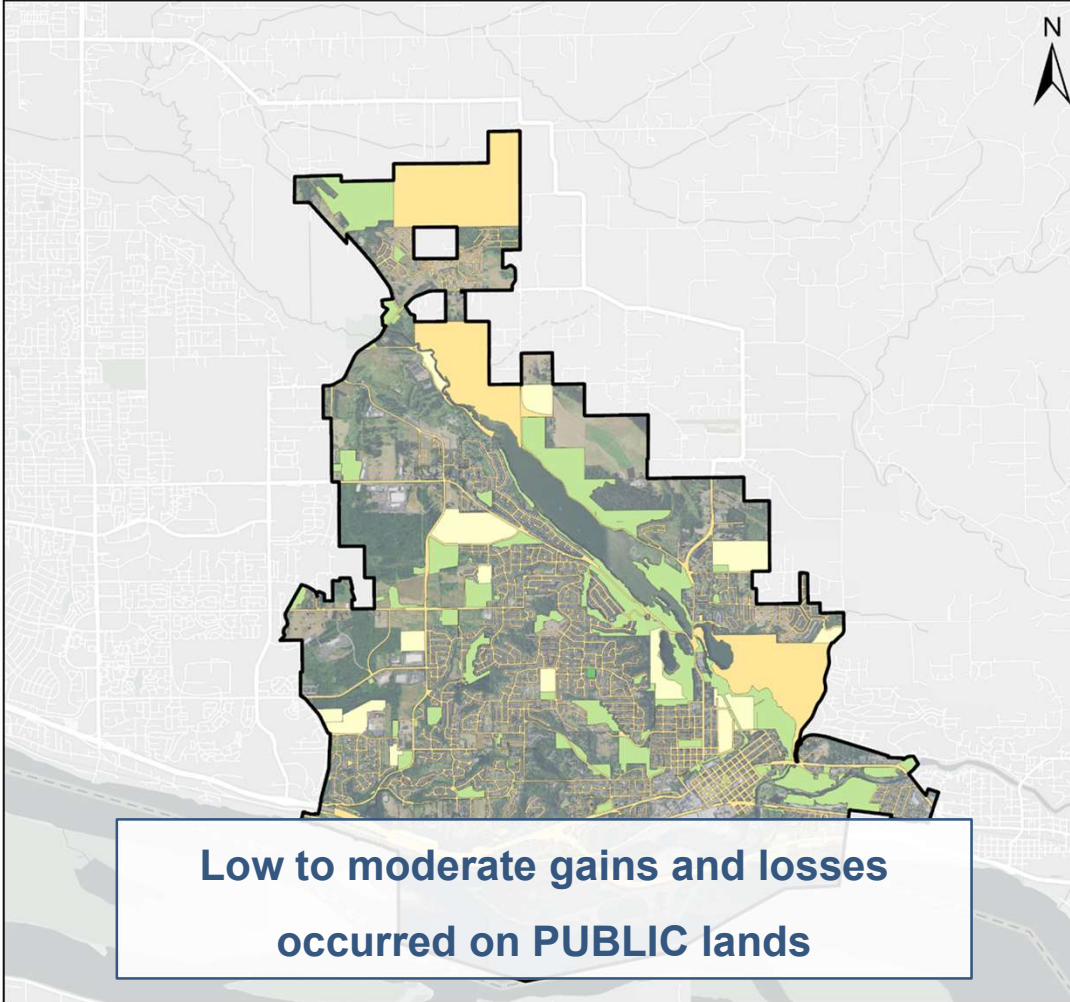
**About half of all urban tree canopy in Camas is on private property.**

## EXISTING - URBAN TREE CANOPY

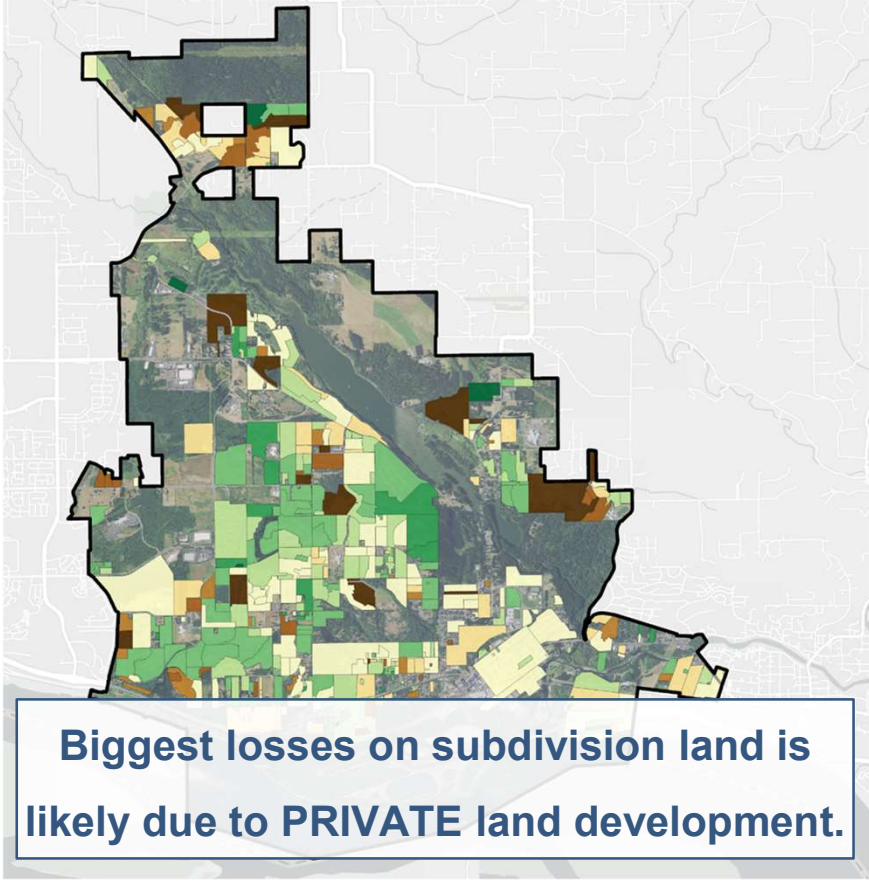
# Camas, Washington Urban Tree Canopy Assessment



Urban Tree Canopy Change Percent by Public Land



# Urban Tree Canopy Change %



**CHANGE ('11 - '21): PUBLIC vs PRIVATE LAND**

2024 Parks and Open Space Management Plan



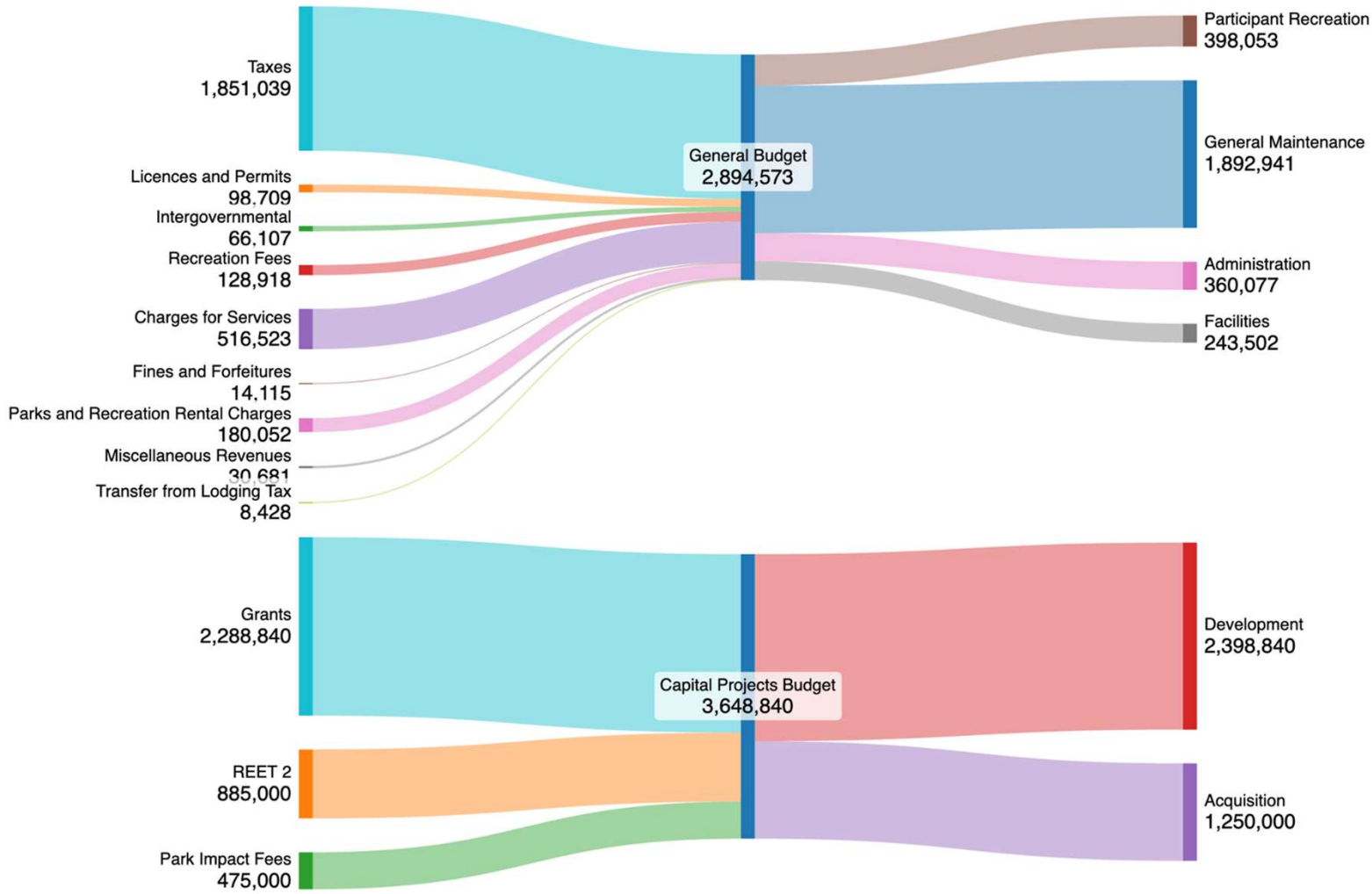


# Gather Info: Value & Resource Use

## MONEY SOURCES

## TOTAL BUDGET

## COST ALLOCATIONS



# BUDGET ALLOCATIONS: 2023

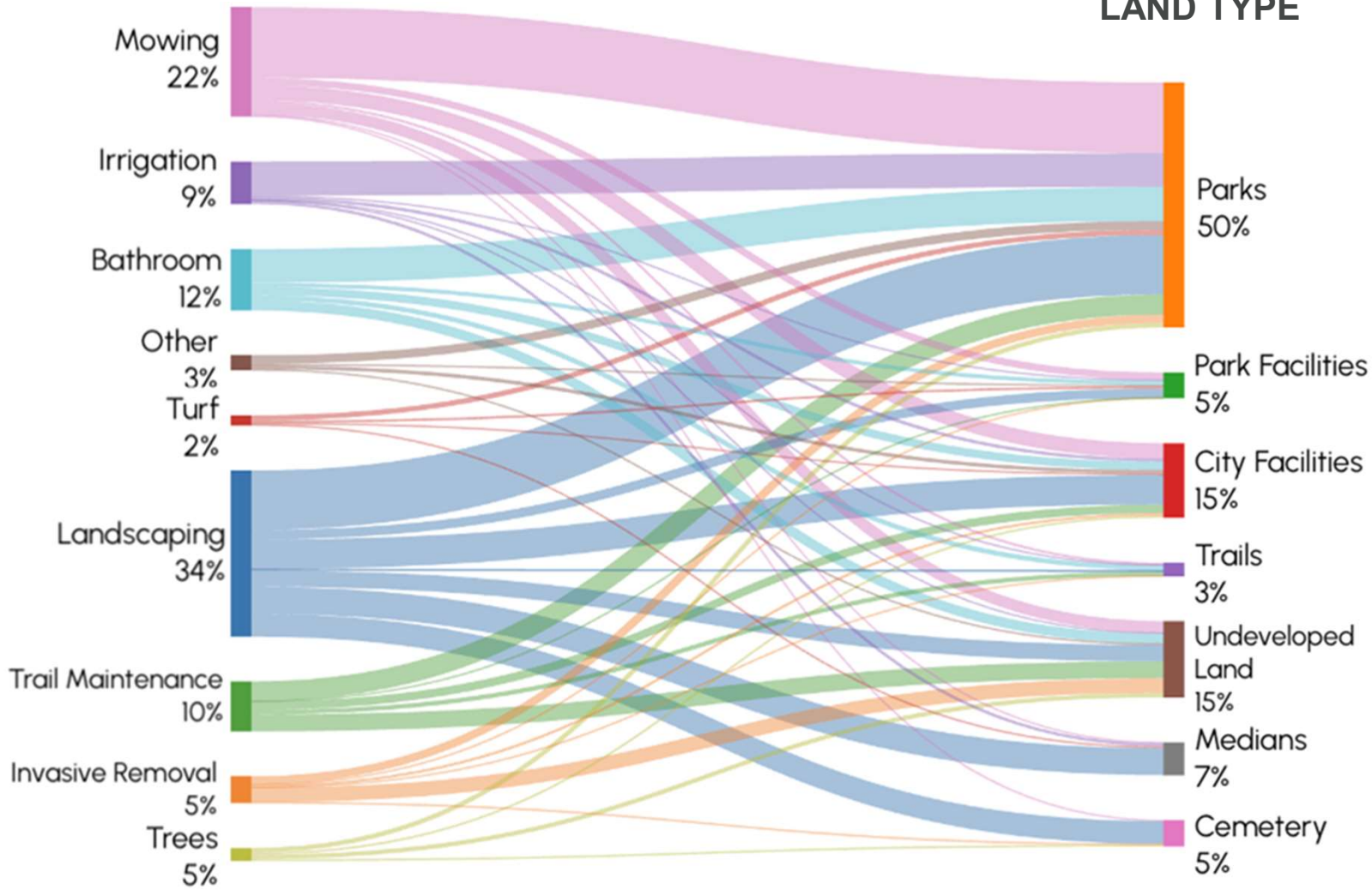
2024 Parks and Open Space Management Plan





## TIME SPENT PER ACTIVITY

## TIME SPENT PER LAND TYPE



# ANNUAL MAINTENANCE STAFF HOURS: 2023

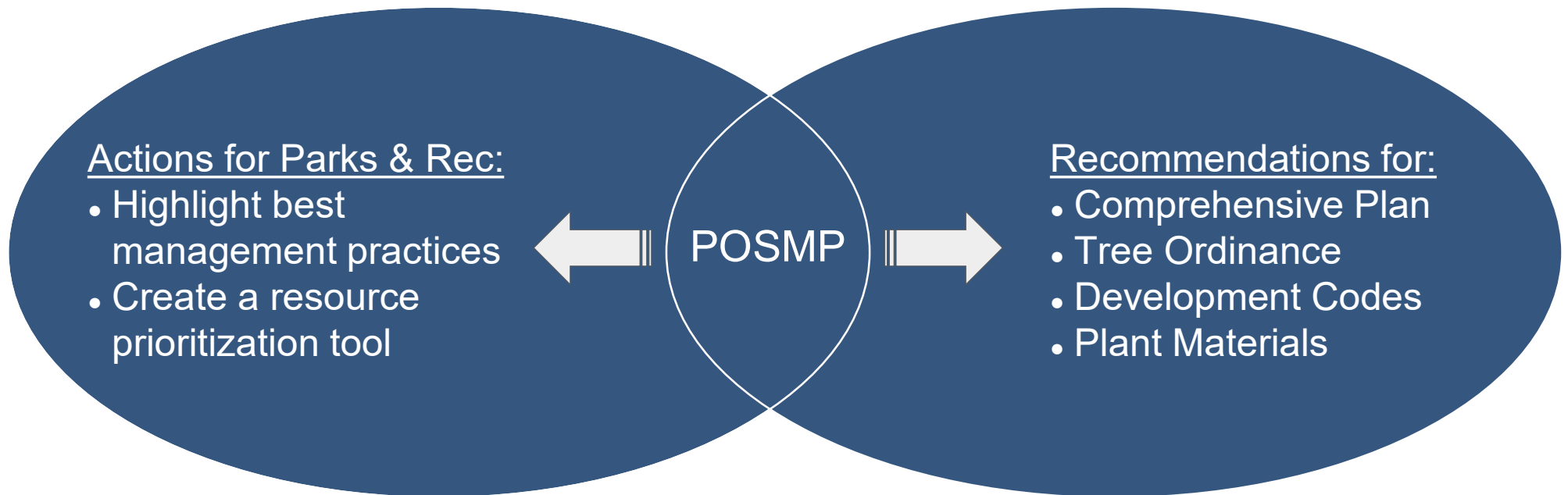
2024 Parks and Open Space Management Plan



# Assessment: Resource Prioritization

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## Performance Goals & Recommendations





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## Building a prioritization tool

Funding or project opportunity

Apply prioritization tool

Increase resilience of  
parks and open spaces

We can use a set of criteria to make good management decisions and prioritize opportunities.

# Building a prioritization tool

## Financial and Resource Allocation

Optimize resource use in order to best balance the long-term performance goals with immediate needs for parks and public open space.

## Outreach and Education

Provide opportunities for learning to gain efficiencies, institute best practices, and engage the community.

## Natural Character

Maintain the existing natural character of Camas in ways that bolster community identity.

## Equitable Access

Ensure that all community members have access to Camas' parks and natural resources and the benefits they provide.

## Asset Protection + Public Safety

Protect ecosystems, human health, safety, and public and private assets using green infrastructure to limit the effects of extreme weather and climate change.



Establishes system-wide resilience



Considers connectivity to other sites or organizations



Makes site or process improvements

## Status Quo

Current practices

## Roadblocks

Obstacles to implementation

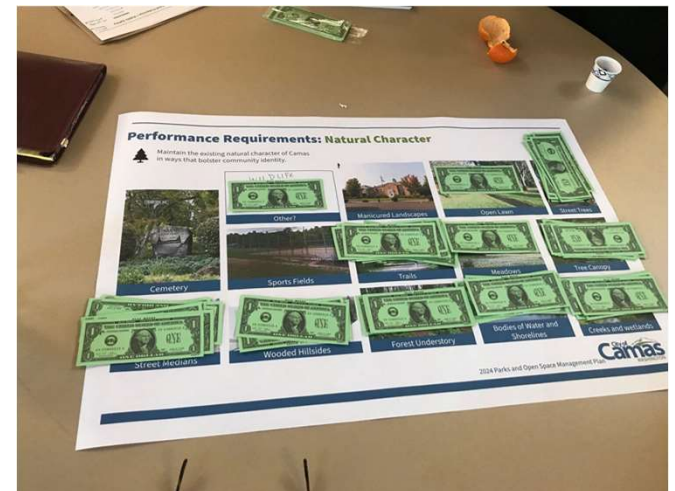
**Where most cities are required to focus and start from**

**Additional values Camas wants to incorporate into decision making and resource allocation**

# Open House Feedback Summary

## Key Takeaways:

- This will be a large change initiative for the city and community.
- Camas' natural resources, parks, and open space are a **valuable asset** and serve as **key infrastructure** to the city.
- Clear incentives, restrictions, and guidelines should be put in place for basic maintenance tasks, tree preservation, and appropriate planting practices.
- Program, amenities, and assets should be looked at from a system-wide perspective and located based on diversity of uses, population density, and adjacencies to other land uses and natural resources.
- There's a lot of potential in the volunteer organizations and HOA residents if organized and educated properly
- There was a long-term desire to progress from reactive maintenance to systemic stewardship.





# *our* Camas 2045

- In addition to an updated **Natural Environment** element, the *Our Camas 2045* Comprehensive Plan will include new **Community Character** and **Climate** elements that will include goals and policies for our trees and open spaces.
- Together with the POSMP, *Our Camas 2045* will include recommendations for updates to the City's tree ordinance, development codes, and plant materials lists, etc.

Contribute to the *Our Camas 2045* vision today by visiting  
[www.engagecamas.com/OurCamas2045](http://www.engagecamas.com/OurCamas2045)



# Next Steps

- Finalize list of recommendations
- Issue draft report for review