



01-24-2023

Urban Forest Strategy and Policy

Kendra Boot

City Forester



1. What general questions or feedback does Council have on how the Forestry Division is addressing the urban forest-related Council Priorities?
2. What general questions or feedback does Council have on the proposed areas of focus and proposed process for the Urban Forest Strategy?

Strategic Alignment

- City Strategic Plan
- City Plan
- Our Climate Future
- Council Priorities



NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY & SOCIAL HEALTH

- 1.9** Plan for, preserve, plant and maintain a safe, healthy and resilient urban forest.

Urban Forest Benefits

Environmental

- Reduce energy use
- Stormwater runoff reduction
- Air pollutant removal
- Reduce Urban Heat Island

Economic

- Appreciating asset
- Property values

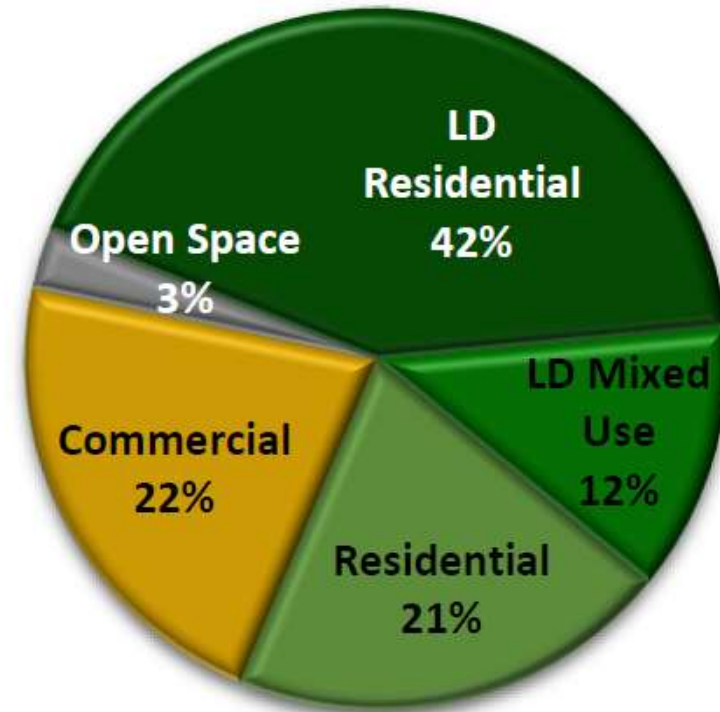
Social

- Quality of life, faster healing
- Sense of place
- Reduce crime
- Shade and aesthetics



Public and private trees within City Limits

- Estimated 443,300 trees*
- Structural value equates to \$781M*
- 14% canopy cover**



Percent of Trees by Land Use

*Community Tree Assessment, Davey Resource Group, 2016

**McHale, 2019

Structure and Public Infrastructure

- 17 full-time classified employees; plus 4 hourlies
- 57,000 public trees
- Current budget equates to \$53/tree investment
- Valued at \$113.7M
- Provide \$6.4M in Eco Benefits Annually
 - Greenhouse gas, water and energy saved, air quality, and property benefits



Urban Forest-related Council Priorities

- Indirect connection
 - Help bird species recover #9
 - Effective soil amendment policies and compliance (water usage) - #14
 - Improved Air Quality - #17
 - Xeriscape - #19
- Direct connection
 - Improve Tree Policies - #28
 - Tree Planting Subsidy - #29

Urban Forest Council Priorities

#28 Improving Tree Policies

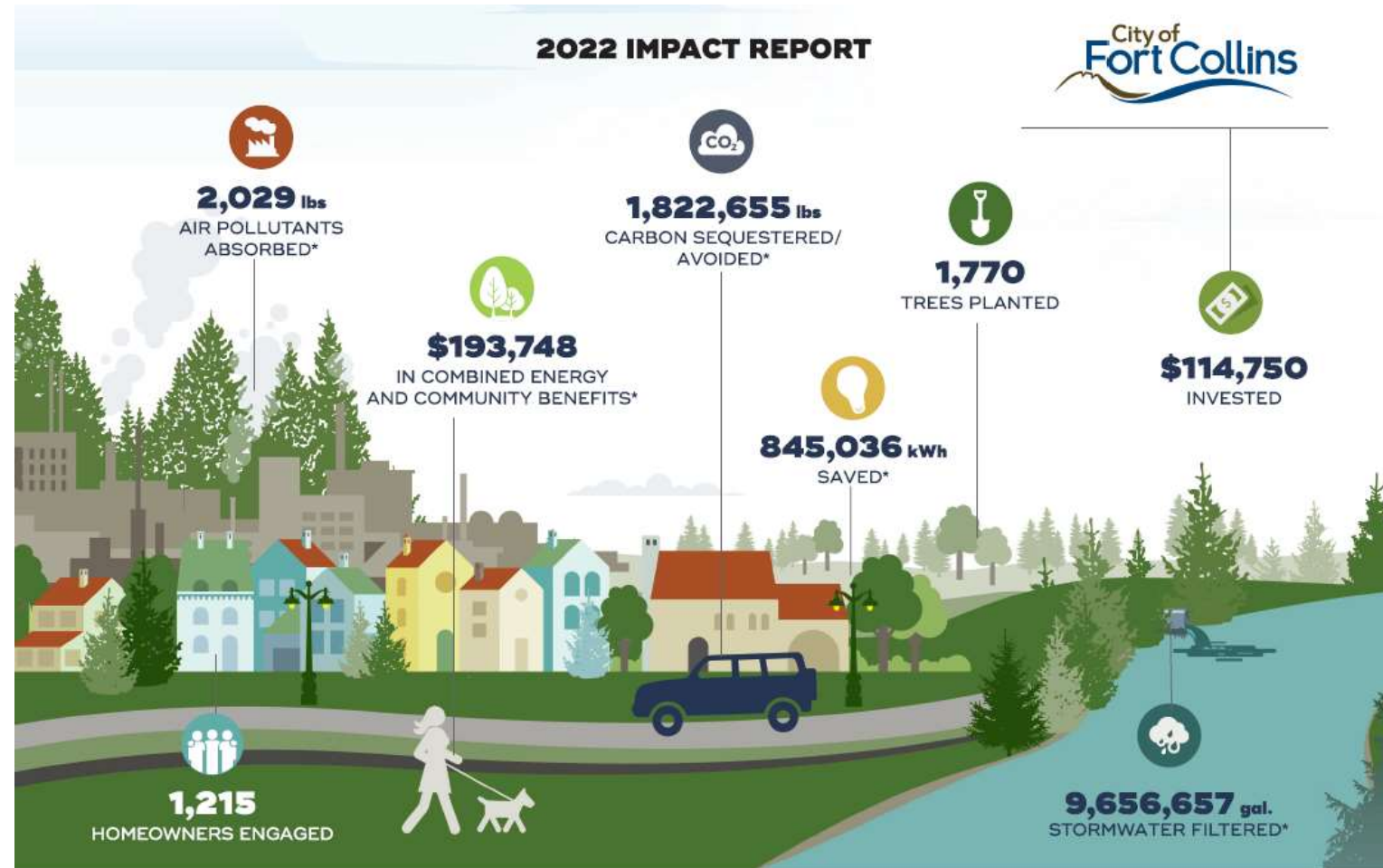
- Municipal Code Updates
 - Dedicating trees as infrastructure
 - Arborist Licensing improvements
 - Affixing items to ROW trees
 - Shifted maintenance responsibility of alley trees
 - Prohibiting planting/sale of ash trees
- Land Use Code audit
 - Clarion Associates
 - Ad hoc Committee

Urban Forest Council Priorities

#29 Tree Subsidy

Community Canopy Program

- 1000 trees in 2022



Established Spring 2019
*projected 20-year cumulative values

LP40177209

Additional Council Support

2023/2024 Funding

- Emerald Ash Borer Management
- Additional tree planting, water truck and hourly
- Contractual pruning funding
- Landscape Inspectors
- Urban Forest Strategic Plan



Operations

- Pruning and Removal
- Emergency Response
- Tree Infrastructure Replacement
- Wood utilization and recycling
- Living Tribute Tree Program
- Tree City USA and Arbor Day



Operations

- Pruning and Removal
- Emergency Response
- Tree Infrastructure Replacement
- Wood utilization and recycling
- Living Tribute Tree Program
- Tree City USA and Arbor Day



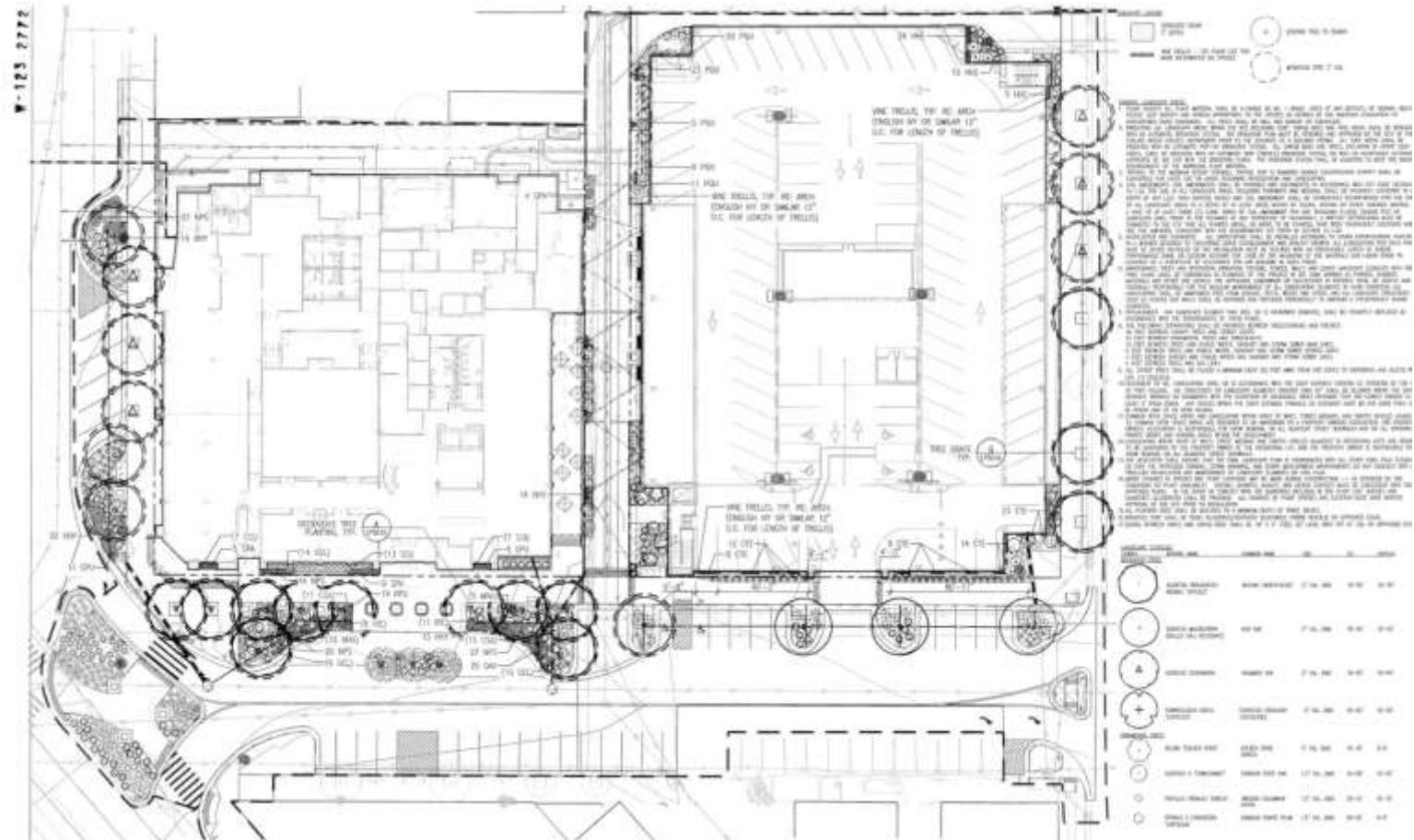
Operations

- Arborist Licensing
- Private Property Enforcement
- Insect & Disease Management
- Development Review
- Education & Outreach



Operations

- Arborist Licensing
- Private Property Enforcement
- Insect & Disease Management
- Development Review
- Education & Outreach



Operations

- Arborist Licensing
- Private Property Enforcement
- Insect & Disease Management
- Development Review
- Education & Outreach



Multiple opportunities

- **Improve codes, standards, and best management practices**
- Urban Forest Strategic Plan

Existing Code and Policy

- Tree Management Standards and Best Management Practices
- Emerald Ash Borer Management & Response Plan
- Urban Forest Storm Response Plan
- Municipal Code
- Land Use Code
- Larimer County Urban Area Streetscape Standards

Existing Code and Policy

Municipal Code

- City Forester position
- Arborist Licensing
- Enforcement
- Permitting
- Prohibiting certain tree species

LUC and LCUASS

- Landscape Standards
- Tree Protection and Preservation
- Mitigation
- Tree Diversity
- Tree-lined streets and neighborhoods

Multiple opportunities

- Improve codes, standards, and best management practices
- **Urban Forest Strategic Plan**

WHY a Strategic Plan?

- Establish a Vision and Strategy
- Identify gaps and opportunities
- Community wants and needs
- Alignment with local and regional plans



Strategic Plan Areas of Focus

- Increasing tree canopy and setting metrics
- Diversify tree species to create resilience
- Co-create a more equitable tree canopy
- Explore sustainable funding approaches



Proposed Strategic Plan Timeline



1. What general questions or feedback does Council have on how the Forestry Division is addressing Council Priorities?
2. What general questions or feedback does Council have on the proposed areas of focus and proposed process for the Urban Forest Strategy?



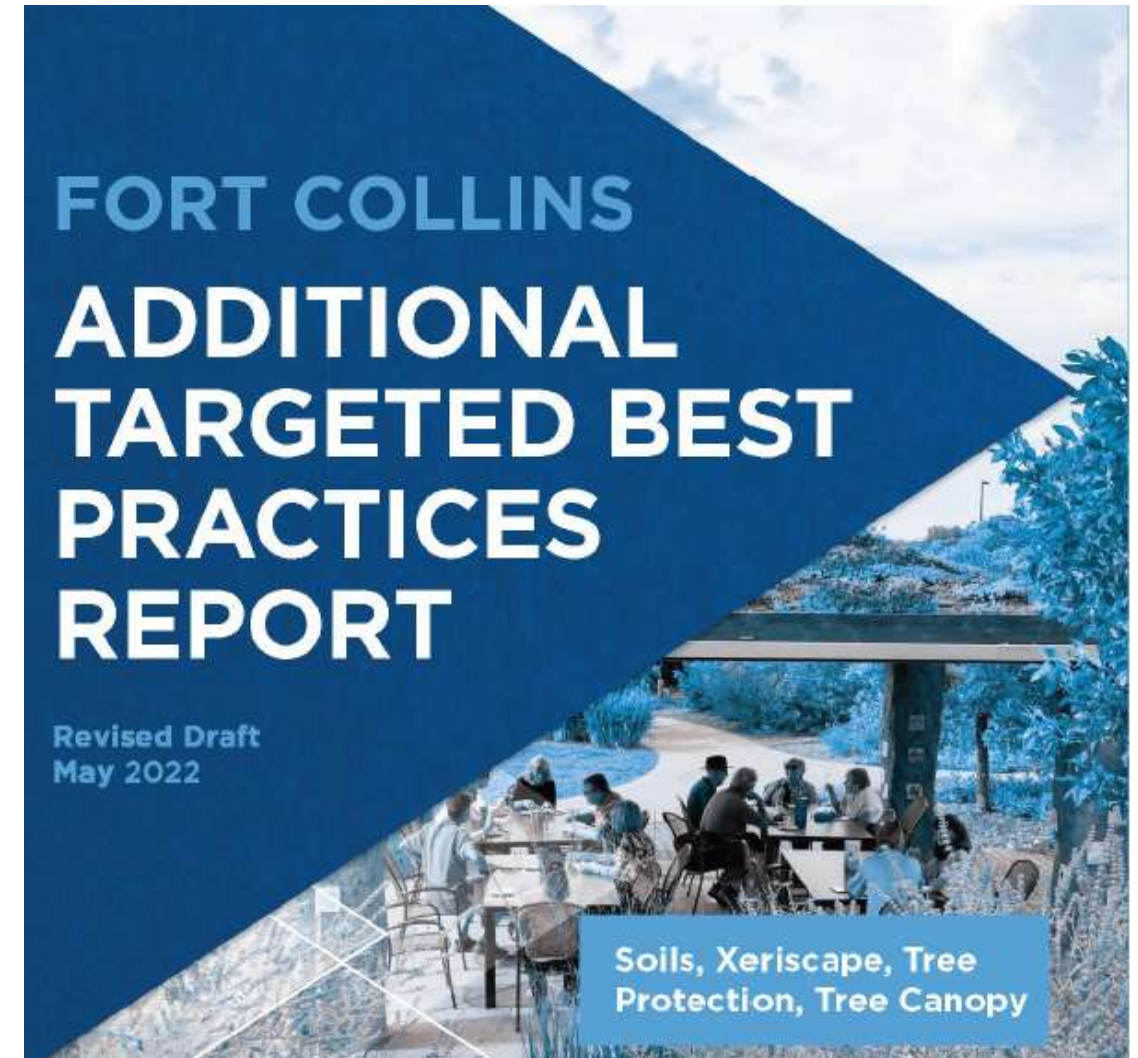
1. Does Council support these opportunities to improve tree-related land use code policies?
2. What general questions or feedback does Council have on the proposed direction?
What additional information is needed?

Clarion Associates (consultant)

- Tree Protection and Preservation
- Tree Canopy Enhancement

Ad hoc Committee

- Reviewed existing code
- Explored Clarion Associates report
- Identified potential updates



Current Opportunities for Improvement

- Challenges around tree establishment and responsibility of replacement
- Mitigation requirements do not strongly incentivize tree preservation
- No penalties for tree removal or tree damage on commercial development sites with approved landscape plans post development
- Parking lot standards and tree replacement to reduce heat island impacts
- Single family residential construction sites do not trigger any tree-related LUC requirements

Escrow for Tree Establishment

Existing Code

- Landscape escrow released once ROW trees are planted/permitted
- No timeline on when trees are specifically taken over by City
- City ends up replacing many trees with General Fund dollars

Opportunities for improvement

- New Landscape Inspectors funded!
- Create separate street tree escrow
- Set timeline for when City takes over street trees

Mitigation

Existing Code

- Mitigation value 1-6 trees
- All trees under 6-inches not mitigated
- Mitigation trees replaced on site or within half mile
- Removals accompanied by feasibility letter
- Does not incentivize saving existing trees

Opportunities for improvement

- Mitigating “in addition to” minimum stocking requirements
- Mitigating trees 2” DBH and above
- Appraised value or inch for inch for larger trees over specified diameter
 - Sliding scale to incentivize preservation
- Limit offsite mitigation to public ROW

Penalty for Healthy Tree Removals

Existing Code

- No long-term enforcement beyond approved landscape plan post development
- Developer/property owner must keep site in compliance

Opportunities for improvement

- New Landscape Inspectors funded!
- Mitigating trees 2" DBH and above
- Appraised value or inch for inch for trees over specified diameter

Heritage Tree Program

Existing Code

- Does not currently exist

Opportunities for improvement

- Municipal and Land Use Codes
- Trees need to be nominated
- Property owner would have to agree
- Approval process needed
- Trees mapped to show designation
- Would require permission to remove, prune, or treat
- Protected in perpetuity
 - Exception for dead, dying or dangerous
- Fund created for maintenance

Parking Lot Standards

Existing Code

- Mostly sufficient
- Losing existing planting spaces for additional parking in redevelopment

Opportunities for improvement

- New Landscape Inspectors funded!
- Increase enforcement/penalties for non-compliant landscapes
- Improve site requirements for adequate growing spaces

Tree protection & preservation on single family residential

Existing Code

- Does not currently exist

Opportunities for improvement

- Explore ways to educate and advise
- A resource for tree preservation
- Establish touch points during Building Permit Process
- Empower licensed tree companies as a resource

Prioritization of Opportunities

High Priority – Q3 2023

1. Escrow for tree establishment
2. Improve mitigation standards to incentivize preservation
3. Consider increasing penalties for tree removal

Lower Priority

4. Explore a Heritage Tree Program
5. Investigate parking lot standards/replacement enforcement
6. Review options to best advise / influence residential redevelopment on tree protection and preservation



1. Does Council support these opportunities to improve tree-related land use code policies?
2. What general questions or feedback does Council have on the proposed direction?
What additional information is needed?

