



STRENGTHEN CITY POLICIES TO PROTECT TREES.

In 2024, Fort Collins’ municipal code focuses on the stewardship of public trees; however, only 12% of the City’s tree canopy is publicly owned. Opportunities to protect trees on both public and private land—whether through policy or incentives—can help curb canopy losses, mitigate heat, and protect community tree benefits.

Outcome Areas:

- Neighborhood & Community Vitality
- Environmental Health

FOUNDATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Engage the community in adopting a citywide land use code to improve tree preservation and protection while balancing other priorities and needs of the community.
- Draft a heritage tree program that allows for the elective enrollment and protection of trees that have cultural, historic, or ecological value.
- Create policy summaries or tip sheets that clarify the responsibility for tree maintenance in spaces including alleyways, property boundaries, and ditches.
- Plan for education and outreach that will guide tree protection for development scenarios on private land.
- Reference existing good practices—best management practices and manuals, ISA Certified Arborist requirements, wood utilization program—in city code.
- Develop an adaptable response strategy for current and future threats from insect and disease.

TRANSFORMATIONAL INITIATIVES

- Clarify the legal responsibility for trees within vacant and boundary areas (land without ownership) to encourage the protection and growth of tree canopy.
- Plan for tree preservation and tree canopy expansion within areas in the Growth Management Area that are to remain as future green space as identified by the Parks & Recreation Master Plan and the Natural Areas Strategic Framework.
- Demonstrate the role for trees in outdoor water efficiency by creating water-smart landscapes that incorporate trees on City property.
- Explore and expand tree protection and preservation policies within the Land Use Code to apply to non-development scenarios.
- Create educational support, incentives, and potential policy improvements to help homeowners and private property owners achieve long-term success in tree planting and preservation.
- Require landfill diversion for wood waste that originates from private land.

