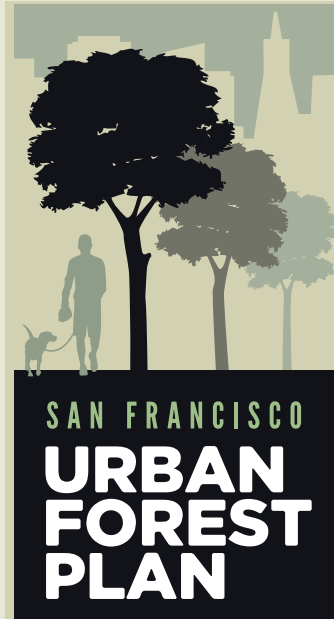


# SAN FRANCISCO URBAN FOREST PLAN

## Planning for the Urban Forest

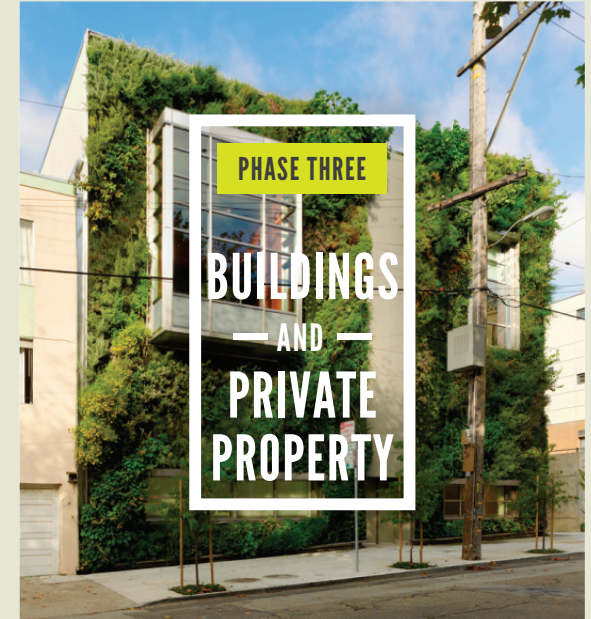
The Urban Forest Plan provides a phased approach to planning for trees and vegetation in the city's landscape. These three phases will together form a comprehensive plan for San Francisco's urban forest and a truly *green city*.



2014



To Come

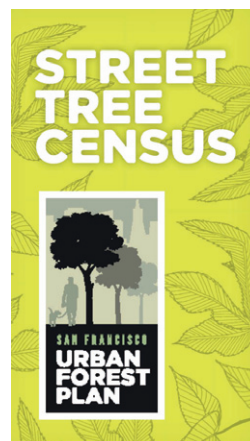


To Come



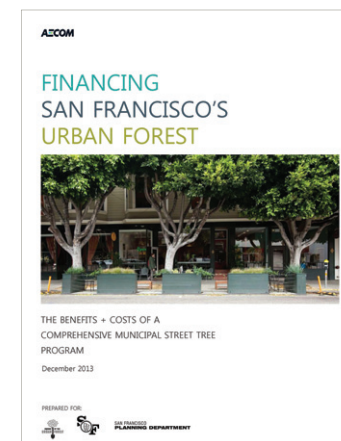
### The Urban Forest Plan (Phase 1: Street Trees)

The Plan was developed by the Planning Department in collaboration with the Department of Public Works (DPW), Urban Forestry Council (UFC) and Friends of the Urban Forest (FUF). Content for the Plan was informed by a series of meetings, workshops, public forums and think tanks with urban forestry specialists from 2012-13. The Plan was made possible by a grant from the State of California Strategic Growth Council's Urban Greening Planning Program.



### Street Tree Census

As part of the Plan, a partial Street Tree Census was conducted. Data on age, location, species and condition was collected for 25,000 of the city's 105,000 street trees. The final Summary Report includes info on species and population composition, stocking levels and the value of environmental and economic benefits provided by inventoried trees. The completion of the Street Tree Census is expected to take place in 2014. Data from the Census will be used to improve management and care of the city's street trees.



### Street Tree Financing Study

In an effort to address the City's declining urban forestry budget, the Planning Department commissioned an economic consultant, AECOM, to conduct a Street Tree Financing Study. The Study evaluated the costs associated with street tree planting and maintenance. It also examined the costs and funding required for a municipal street tree program, whereby the City would take responsibility for maintaining 100% of San Francisco's street trees. The Study is a starting point for a continuing dialogue on how to boost funding for tree planting and maintenance in San Francisco.

URBAN  
FORESTRY  
COUNCIL





# SAN FRANCISCO URBAN FOREST PLAN

## A Plan for Trees? Why?

Street trees in San Francisco don't have it easy. The city's streets are a difficult place for trees to take root and flourish. Small growing spaces, compacted soil, drought and vandalism make it hard for trees to survive and reach maturity. In addition, larger structural problems related to street tree maintenance and funding threaten the long-term health of our urban forest.



*Cornus capitata*

### WORLD'S 'GREENEST' CITY?

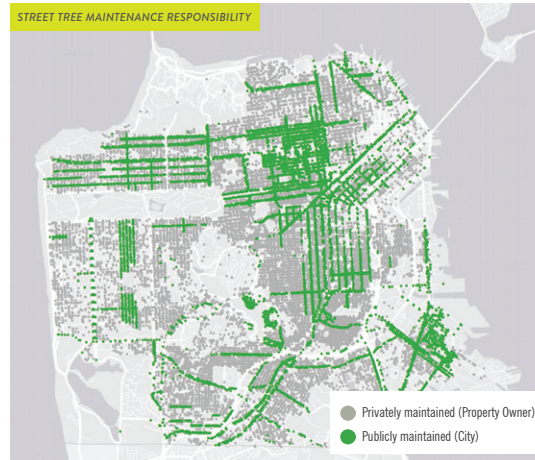


#### 1 INSUFFICIENT & SHRINKING TREE CANOPY

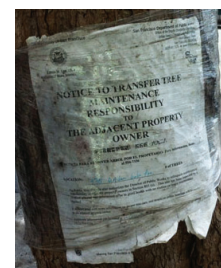
Tree canopy is measured by the amount of a city covered by trees when viewed from above. San Francisco has one of the smallest tree canopies of any major U.S. city. Our tree canopy (13.7%) is smaller than Chicago (17%), Los Angeles (21%), and New York City (24%). This translates to very few trees. Even worse, the city's tree canopy is shrinking. New plantings are not keeping pace with tree deaths and removals. As many as 100,000 street tree planting spaces remain empty with thousands more in parks and on private property. While trees may not be appropriate everywhere (i.e. sensitive habitats and natural areas), opportunities exist to expand trees and landscaping more throughout the city.

San Francisco has one of the smallest tree canopies of any major U.S. city.

### STREET TREE MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY



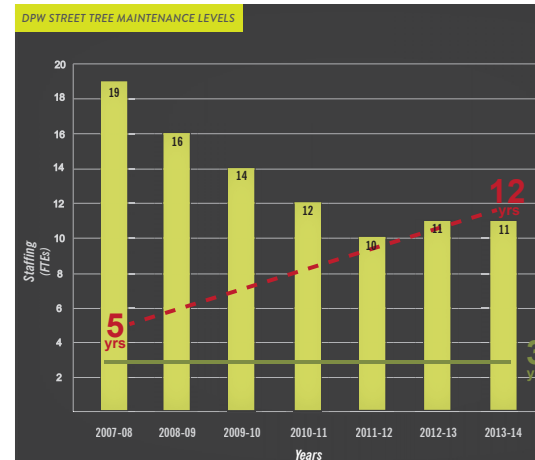
#### 2 FRAGMENTED MAINTENANCE STRUCTURE



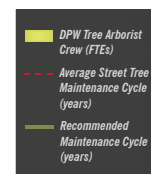
Although DPW has ultimate authority over all trees within the public right-of-way (streets and sidewalks), the agency is responsible for maintaining only about 40 percent of these trees. Responsibility for the remaining 60 percent falls to a confusing mix of private property owners and other public agencies. As a result, achieving a coordinated and standard level of care for street trees is difficult to achieve.

A discontinuous maintenance patchwork creates an inefficient and costly maintenance program. DPW must “hopscotch” across the city only able to maintain small numbers of trees.

### DPW STREET TREE MAINTENANCE LEVELS



#### 3 INADEQUATE FUNDING



Since 2007, the DPW's urban forestry budget has decreased dramatically reducing its ability to sustain adequate staffing and maintenance levels. Lack of maintenance compromises street tree health and safety while also diminishing the benefits they provide. In response to repeated budget cuts, DPW announced its seven-year Tree Maintenance Transfer Plan (2011). Under that plan, DPW is transferring responsibility for 22,000 street trees under its care to adjacent private property owners. This controversial program has raised concerns among residents. Research conducted for the Urban Forest Plan indicates that publicly managed street trees are maintained more frequently and in better health than those maintained by property owners. Identifying stable funding sources is essential to restoring the health of our urban forest.

Due to ongoing budget cuts, the average pruning cycle for City-maintained trees has increased from 5 years to 12 years per tree.

### URBAN FOREST PLAN (2014)



#### 4 LACK OF COHESIVE VISION

No comprehensive vision currently exists for the long-term care and management of San Francisco's street trees. Without this vision, issues such as maintenance, the uneven distribution of trees and forest expansion won't be proactively addressed. Past efforts, including the previous Urban Forest Plan (2006) and Street Tree Action Plan (2004) have lacked the adequate support and visibility they needed to succeed. The Urban Forest Plan (Phase 1: Street Trees) identifies policies and strategies to proactively manage, grow and protect the city's street trees. The Plan presents a bold vision for how to create an expanded, healthy and thriving urban forest now and for the future. Its recommendations are designed for timely implementation by policymakers and involved City departments.

No comprehensive vision exists for the long-term care and management of the city's street trees.

# SAN FRANCISCO URBAN FOREST PLAN

## Vision, Goals, Strategies and Actions

### PLAN VISION

“Our urban forest will be a healthy, **well-maintained** and **sustainably financed** collection of trees and greenery that improves the city’s ecological function and brings **enormous benefits** to the people of San Francisco.”

### PLAN GOALS

The Plan is based on Five Goals. Each goal is accompanied by a series of strategies and actions required to achieve the Plan’s goals for the urban forest.

## ENGAGE

RESIDENTS, PUBLIC AGENCIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN CARING FOR THE URBAN FOREST AND DEEPENING OUR CONNECTION TO NATURE.



## FUND

THE URBAN FOREST BY ESTABLISHING A DEDICATED FUNDING STREAM FOR THE CITY’S TREES.



## GROW

THE URBAN FOREST THROUGH NEW PLANTING TO MAXIMIZE THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF TREES AND URBAN GREENING.



## PROTECT

THE URBAN FOREST FROM THREATS AND LOSS BY PRESERVING THE CITY’S EXISTING TREES.



## MANAGE

THE URBAN FOREST THROUGH COORDINATED PLANNING, DESIGN AND MAINTENANCE TO ENSURE ITS LONG-TERM HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY.

