



News from: **City of Oakland**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Oakland City Council Unanimously Adopts the City's First Urban Forest Plan**

**The Plan outlines strategies based on community input, data, and industry best practices to support the long-term health and improvement of Oakland's trees.**



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Oakland, CA – Today, the Oakland City Council unanimously adopted the City's first Urban Forest Plan. The Plan lays out an equitable vision for the care, maintenance, and growth of Oakland's urban forest over the next 50 years, including the roughly 68,000 public trees that are on streets and in parks throughout Oakland. It is a roadmap to a healthier Oakland, by making its trees less susceptible to wind and drought, and providing benefits like cleaner air and cooler neighborhoods. The Plan was developed with significant community input, and its adoption fulfills goals identified in Oakland's Equitable Climate Action Plan (ECAP) and the Oakland General Plan.

Though Oakland has more tree canopy (the leaves, branches, and woody plants that cover the ground when viewed from above) than most other cities in the region, a recent analysis shows that it is inequitably distributed and decreasing in size.

The Urban Forest Plan makes recommendations to address these and other issues of concern, including:

- Maintain Oakland's 20.6% tree canopy cover by maintaining our current trees and planting additional trees.

- Prioritize planting new trees in Oakland communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution, as identified in the [California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool](#) (CalEnviroScreen).
- Establish an implementation team to actualize the Plan and identify funding sources.
- Develop a schedule for updating Oakland’s tree-related ordinances.
- Foster public/private partnerships to meet the Plan’s goals.
- Create green-collar jobs and provide educational opportunities.

“The adoption of the Urban Forest Plan is a critical step forward for environmental justice in Oakland,” said Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao. “Equity is the cornerstone of the Plan, which prioritizes delivering the environmental, economic and public health benefits of trees to our frontline communities where they are needed most.”

A \$1 million grant from the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) funded the development of the Plan, which commenced in 2019 with a Tree Canopy and Landcover Assessment, Street and Park Tree Inventory, and equitable community engagement process. The grant also funded planting 700 new trees in Oakland’s frontline communities.

Analysis of Oakland’s existing urban forest combined with industry best practices provided a baseline for making informed, data-driven decisions within an equity framework shaped by community input. Nearly 2,500 people participated in a 2022 survey assessing community priorities and more than 1,400 comments were submitted during public review of the Draft Plan published in 2023.

“The Urban Forest Plan provides a roadmap for reviving Oakland’s tree maintenance program, which was cut back to emergency response-only following the recession of 2008,” said OakDOT Director and Interim Director of Oakland Public Works, Josh Rowan. “Most of our park and street trees haven’t been pruned in 15 years. My goal is to see this plan fully funded and implemented so that our tree crews can resume a proactive care and planting program, which is both urgently needed and ultimately more cost effective.”

With the adoption of the Urban Forest Plan, the City is better positioned to pursue a variety of external funding opportunities. Oakland Public Works has already secured \$8 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding from the USDA Forest Service to implement elements of the Plan over the next four years, including planting and street tree pruning in Oakland’s highest-priority communities. An internal Implementation Team will be established to identify additional funding sources and continue implementing the Plan.

For more information, please visit the City’s project website: [www.oaklandca.gov/trees](http://www.oaklandca.gov/trees)

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