



Central Falls

RHODE ISLAND

Strategic Tree Canopy Plan

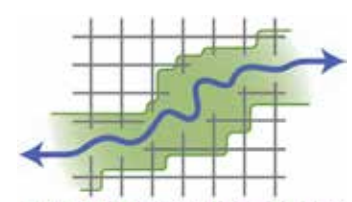


Plan by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. for the City of Central Falls, Rhode Island



City of Central Falls, Rhode Island
<https://www.centralfallsri.gov/>

APRIL 2026



Green Infrastructure Center
<https://gicinc.org>



City of
Central Falls
RHODE ISLAND

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Executive Summary

The urban forest is a critical asset for healthy, resilient, and sustainable cities. Trees provide benefits that directly support public health by cleaning the air and filtering and reducing stormwater runoff, reducing urban temperatures, and fostering greater economic development. However, these benefits are at risk because tree canopy cover is declining across many U.S. localities. This *Strategic Tree Canopy Plan* provides data and strategies for maintaining and increasing tree canopy in Central Falls.

This plan is the culmination of a ten-month planning process that included workshops and strategic planning sessions led by the Green Infrastructure Center Inc. (GIC) with city staff and community partners. The public was engaged in this process through outreach events, a community open house and community interviews. The extent of urban forest cover was determined by analyzing aerial imagery to map the City's land cover. Open space was evaluated to determine the *Potential Planting Area* where future trees might be planted, along with assessments of the environmental and social benefits the City's trees provide. Strategies for retaining, protecting, and restoring tree canopy coverage were created.

City Goal

The City of Central Falls currently has 18% tree canopy coverage city-wide. The city's goal is to increase canopy cover by 1% over the next 10 years. Tree planting will be needed to increase the canopy by 1%. To achieve this, approximately 978 trees should be planted on public and private property over the next 10 years (until the year 2036). These tree planting estimates include anticipated annual tree loss due to pests, storms, landowner removals, additional development, or old age.



Central Falls Canopy Goal: Increase tree canopy by 1% to a citywide average of 19% over the next 10 years.



Top Five Strategies to Achieve This Goal

1. Establish a community tree-planting campaign targeting streets with low canopy.
2. Update the zoning ordinance to require a maximum impervious surface limit or minimum pervious surface cover by zoning class.
3. Revive the Central Falls Tree Advisory Board to develop a Tree Standards Manual, update the tree ordinance and support urban forest activities.
4. Maintain a public tree inventory that supports long-term urban forest management.
5. Support a paid employee who will be an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist.

How Trees Benefit the City

Tree canopy provides benefits such as cleaner air, urban cooling, stormwater capture, wildlife habitat, and natural beauty. This plan quantifies and identifies strategies to increase these benefits.



Air Quality

Trees sequester carbon and clean the air of particulate matter and ground-level ozone. Each year Central Falls' trees remove:

- 619 metric tons of carbon
- 2,833 lbs. of ground-level ozone (O3)
- 617 lbs. of airborne particulate matter



Urban Cooling

Excessive pavement and lack of shade create urban heat islands. Central Falls' trees counter urban heating by shading hot areas. Tree canopy cover lowers surface temperatures and cools the city.



Stormwater Uptake

Trees capture rainfall and filter pollutants. During a ten-year/24-hour rainfall event (5.11 inches) the city's trees:

- soak up 900,000 gallons of water
- reduce runoff pollution loads for nitrogen by 6%, phosphorus by 9%, and sediment by 7%



Canopy Goals

Central Falls' goal is to increase tree canopy coverage by 1% over the next 10 years. This goal requires planting:

- 196 trees on city-owned land annually
- 782 additional trees on private property through education and tree giveaways

Tree Canopy and Potential Planting Area

The City of Central Falls now has baseline data to identify opportunities to plant new trees for shade, energy savings, increased stormwater uptake, and improved air and water quality.

- Tree Canopy
18% of Land Area
(142 Acres)
- Potential Planting Area
4% of Land Area
(31 Acres)



Based on 2023 NAIP Imagery. 0 1/2 mi.

Introduction

The first inhabitants of the area that is now known as the City of Central Falls were Paleo-Indians ~12,000 BP. Before the mid-1600s, the area was predominantly inhabited by the Nipmuc, Wampanoag, and Narragansett Native Americans, and the landscape was dense woodland with abundant pine trees. The Blackstone River was known as “the great tidal river,” and salmon and lamprey were plentiful.

The area evolved into a village, first in the Town of Smithfield and later in the Town of Lincoln. Colonists harnessed the power of the Blackstone River, leading to the rise of mill-based industries. Beginning in the 1780s, the first chocolate manufacturing industry in America was established along the Blackstone River. This led to the area being known as “Chocolateville” and “Chocolatemills”. In 1824, at a celebration at the Middle Falls to dedicate a mill and bridge, Stephen Jenks, a prominent businessperson, declared that the village should be named “Central Falls.” In 1895, industrialization and continued population growth strained the resources of the Town of Lincoln, as a result, Central Falls became an independent city after an unsuccessful proposal to merge the village with Pawtucket.

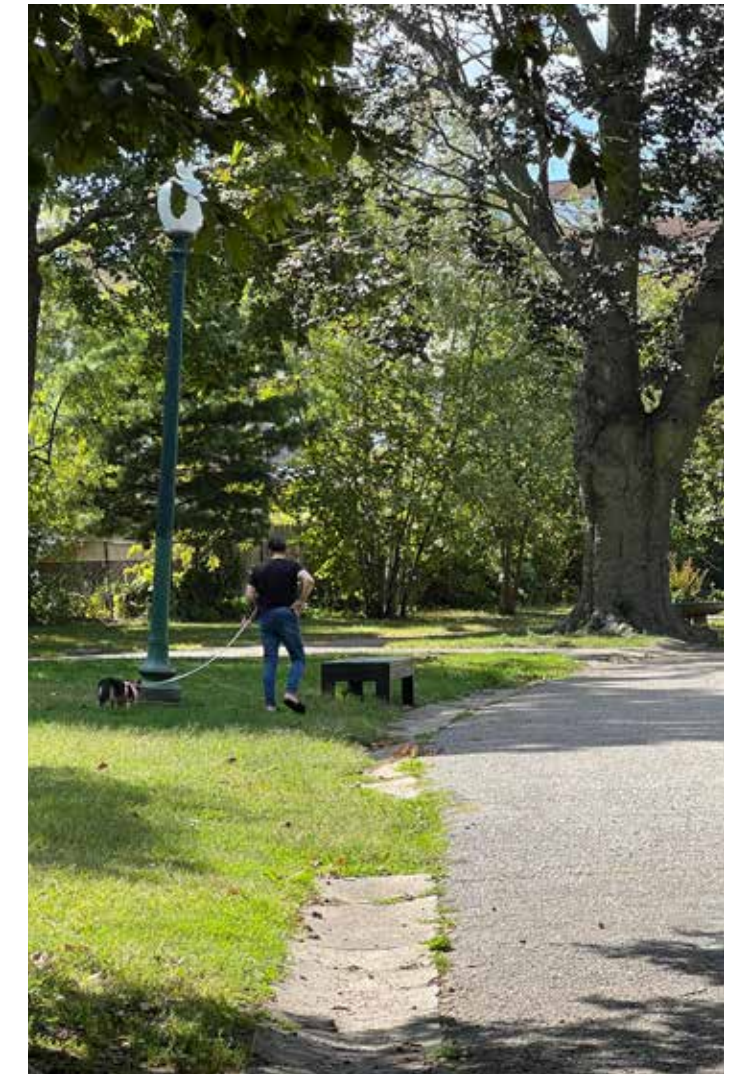


Central Falls used to be the site of one of the earliest water-powered chocolate mills in North America.

By the 20th century, Central Falls experienced rapid population growth, driven primarily by the expansion of the textile industry that drew immigrants from many countries to work in the numerous mills. At one point, Central Falls had the distinction of being the densest city in the nation, and it is still the most densely populated municipality in Rhode Island. Even as the textile industry declined, the population of the city continued to grow as new immigrants made Central Falls their home. The city’s rich immigrant history is captured in the City’s slogan, “Central Falls – Diversity That Inspires.”

This *Strategic Tree Canopy Plan* supports the City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan Update by encouraging tree planting and expansion of the tree canopy. This plan calls for the increase of trees to address urban heat islands (areas of high temperatures caused by an abundance of asphalt and minimal tree canopy) and stormwater runoff, and to reduce risk to property and infrastructure from natural disasters. This plan is instrumental to the City’s development of the natural resources chapter of the forthcoming Central Falls 2045 Comprehensive Plan, which will adopt many of the strategies.

Hazard Mitigation Plan, Action #7
 Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024
Action 7: Reduce the urban heat island effect.
 “Prepare an Urban Forest Master Plan to guide the City’s ongoing efforts to increase the tree canopy.”



Central Falls, RI

Fast Facts

<p>Total City Area: 1.3 sq. miles (approx 832 acres)</p> <p>Land Area: 1.2 sq. miles</p> <p>Lakes/ponds: 43 acres</p> <p>Wetlands & Marshes: 2 acres</p> <p>Streams: 11.6 miles</p> <p>Tree canopy: 142 acres</p> <p>Potential Planting Area: 31 acres</p> <p>Impervious surfaces: 456 acres</p>	<p>Population: 23,034 people a 2% increase since 2020*</p> <p>44.2% Foreign born</p> <p>69.1% Hispanic or Latino,</p> <p>20.9% Non-Hispanic Whites,</p> <p>11.1% Black/African Americans,</p> <p>0.5% American Indian or Alaskan Native,</p> <p>0.1% Asian,</p> <p>35.7% Two or more races</p> <p>Age: 26.1% under 18 years; 10.7% 65 years or older</p>	
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*(U.S. Census July 2024 estimate)

Tree Benefits

Trees benefit communities ecologically, economically, and socially. Some of the many benefits include:

- Cleaner air and water
- Enhanced natural beauty
- Bird and wildlife habitat
- Reduced city heat
- Reduced levels of crime
- Reduced traffic accidents
- Increased revenues from sales and property taxes
- Lower vacancy rates
- Improved mental health and focus
- Improved metabolic function
- Increased access to outdoor fitness opportunities



Large canopy trees provide greater benefits than smaller trees. The USDA Forest Service found that in 2025 dollars, a large tree is worth \$7,411 in annual benefits while a small tree is worth just \$450 (Center for Urban Forest Research and Southern Center for Urban Forestry Research & Information 2006).

Trees Are Green Infrastructure

Trees and other vegetation serve as the City's "green infrastructure." Just as localities manage grey infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, bridges, and pipes), they should also manage vegetation as infrastructure. Trees support a vibrant, safe, and healthy community while adding to its historic character. They enhance sustainability by filtering stormwater and reducing runoff, cooling streets, cleaning the air, capturing carbon emissions, and increasing property values.



Gray vs Green. The image on the left shows the City of Central Falls' gray infrastructure, including buildings and roads. Classified high-resolution satellite imagery (on the right) adds the City's green infrastructure (trees and other vegetation). This green infrastructure provides cleaner air and water, energy savings, and natural beauty.

Reducing Stormwater Runoff and Filtering Pollutants

Trees protect communities from problems associated with stormwater runoff. As forested land is converted to impervious surfaces, such as roads, buildings and parking lots, urban stormwater runoff increases. Excess stormwater runoff can cause temperature spikes in receiving waters, increased pollution of surface and ground waters, and greater potential for flooding.

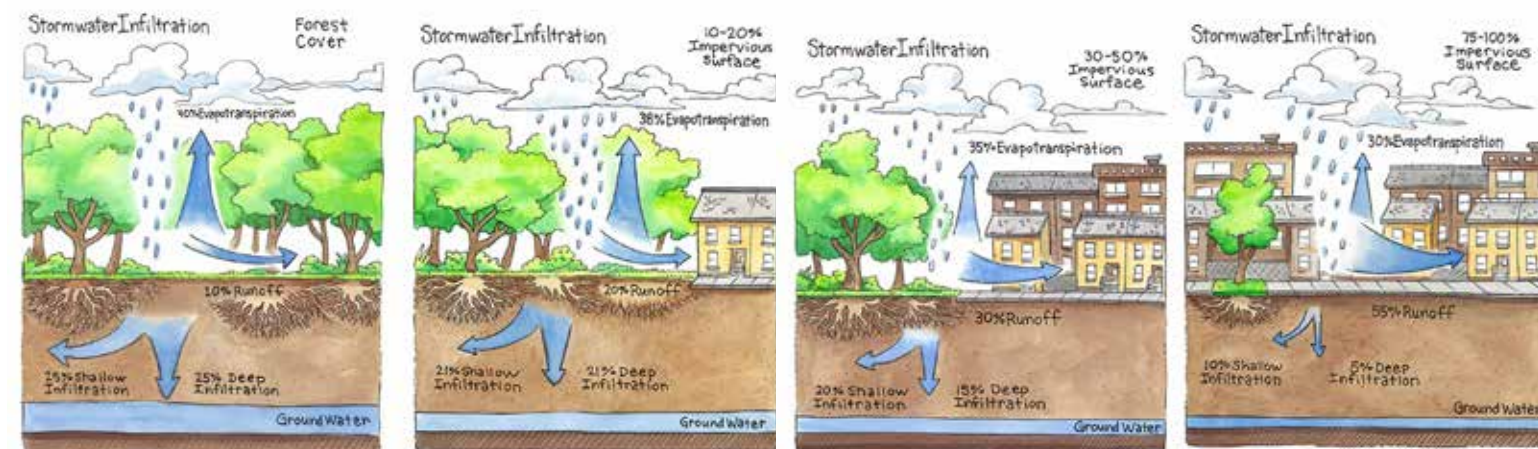
Trees reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment in stormwater by filtering runoff of these pollutants. Increased loads of nutrients in stormwater runoff reduce oxygen in surface water, causing harm to fish and other aquatic life. Nitrogen and phosphorus can cause harmful algal blooms, while sediment can clog fish gills, smother aquatic life, and necessitate additional dredging of canals and waterways. As tree cover is lost and impervious areas expand, excessive urban runoff of these harmful pollutants greatly increases. The presence of trees means fewer pollutants enter the City's many watersheds, including the Blackstone River, which empties into the Seekonk River and eventually the Narragansett Bay.



Trees filter and clean stormwater runoff before it enters surface waters, ensuring healthy rivers and creeks for recreation and habitat.

The average annual precipitation in Central Falls is 49.34 inches (National Weather Service 2026). Much of this runoff flows into the combined sewer stormwater system transporting surface pollutants from the land to local waterways. Large, paved areas contribute significant volumes to this runoff. While stormwater ponds and other best management practices (BMPs) are designed to mimic natural land cover rainfall release by detaining and filtering runoff, they do not fully replicate pre-development hydrology. In addition, older parts of the city may lack updated stormwater management practices required for new developments, so not all runoff is captured or treated before it flows into open waterways.

Water Infiltration Rates with Development



Stormwater runoff increases as land is developed. Graphic adapted by GIC. Data Source: U.S. EPA Watershed Academy 2025.

Since trees filter stormwater and reduce overall flows, planting or conserving trees is a natural, cost-effective way to mitigate stormwater. Each tree plays an important role in stormwater management. Based on the GIC's review of canopy rainfall interception studies, a typical street tree's crown can intercept between 760 and 4,000 gallons of water per year, depending on the tree's species and age.



Excess impervious areas cause hotter temperatures and increased runoff.



This bump out with trees helps to shade the pavement, capture stormwater and calm traffic along Sylvian Street.



Riparian buffers prevent stream erosion and reduce the risk of flooding



Trees in residential yards provide stormwater management benefits for this home and the surrounding watershed.

Buffering Storm Damage with Green Infrastructure – Trees!

Another benefit of conserving trees and forests is buffering against storms and reducing losses from flooding. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), excessive stormwater causes increased flooding, property damage, and public safety hazards. The EPA recommends ways to use trees to manage stormwater in its book *Stormwater to Street Trees*. Link: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-11/documents/stormwater2streettrees.pdf>

Retaining trees and forests along streams prevents erosion and provides key habitat for fish, birds, animals, and people too. A community can categorize their trees as “green infrastructure” to help justify spending money on city trees because they function as natural infrastructure by reducing standing water, preventing erosion, serving as windbreaks, and shading areas to reduce excessive temperatures.

In some cases, FEMA has reimbursed communities for lost tree cover when those trees were part of identified infrastructure, such as when a stream restoration project was damaged by a hurricane and the community had already identified the planted trees as infrastructure. To qualify, trees must be inventoried, have records of maintenance, and be specifically utilized for stormwater management, buffers, or other “green infrastructure” functions. Trees should also be recognized as infrastructure in policy documents such as the Comprehensive Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and even the City’s tree ordinances

Improving Air Quality, Public Health, and Economic Values

Trees Clean the Air

Higher tree canopy cover is correlated with better air quality. Trees reduce ground-level ozone (O₃) while filtering out fine particulate matter, which can damage lungs and lead to respiratory distress and conditions such as asthma. In fact, well-treed neighborhoods have lower rates of respiratory illness (Rao et al. 2014). Trees capture such greenhouse gases as sulfur dioxide and carbon dioxide. These gases contribute to a warming planet and are associated with health problems from excessive heat. Trees also sequester carbon by storing it as wood, preventing its release into the atmosphere and mitigating the impact of climate change.

Trees Cool the City

Tree shade provides important refuge for children and the elderly during hot summers. Excessive heat can lead to heat stress, especially affecting infants and children up to four years of age, and people 65 years of age and older, or people with obesity or other health issues (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2024).

Tree canopy shades streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and homes, making urban locations cooler and more pleasant for outdoor activities, such as hiking, gardening and playing in city parks. Multiple studies have found significant cooling (2-7oF) and energy savings from shade trees in cities (McPherson et al. 1997, Akbari et al. 2001). Individual trees can transpire hundreds of liters of water per day, creating a cooling effect equivalent to the energy needed to power two average



The city’s trees provide shade and quality outdoor spaces for people to enjoy and relax.



The city’s trees reduce temperatures during hot summers through evapotranspiration and by casting shade.

household central air-conditioning units (Ellison et al. 2017). Proper tree placement can reduce summer air conditioning costs by up to 35% (Arbor Day Foundation 2025). Pavement shaded by trees has a longer lifespan than pavement in full sun, reducing maintenance costs associated with roadways and sidewalks (McPherson and Muchnick 2005).



Community members are always looking for comfortable spots in the shade.

Trees Improve Walkability

Trees result in people walking more and walking farther. The cooler temperatures, aesthetics, and traffic calming effect increase a community’s walkability, which is a priority of the City of Pawtucket. When trees are not present on a street, people perceive distances to be longer, hotter, and less pleasant, making pedestrians less inclined to walk than if streets are well-treed (Tilt, Unfried, and Roca 2007).



Well-treed sidewalks encourage people to walk and shop.

Exposure to green spaces for 20 minutes a day can improve cognitive function.

Trees Improve Cognitive Function

Exposure to green spaces such as parks or treed landscapes for just 20 minutes a day can significantly improve cognitive function, emphasizing the need for green spaces around schools to allow children to learn to their best ability. Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) benefit from exposure to greenspace. Children who regularly play in green spaces have milder symptoms of ADHD (Faber Taylor and Kuo 2011).

Trees Increase Property Values

Developments that include green space or natural areas in their plans sell homes faster and for higher profits than those that take the more traditional approach of building over an entire area without conserving natural space (Benedict and McMahon 2006). Individual trees and forested open spaces make lots more valuable. Trees on developed lots add about 18% to property assessments and real estate value. (Wolf 2007). See the *Nature Sells* graphic, below.



Trees shade playgrounds and provide green spaces where children play and learn.

Trees Pay Us Back

As the City considers the cost of planting and caring for more trees, it's important to note that "every dollar invested in planting a tree results in an average return on investment of \$2.25" (Endreny 2018). In fact, even a newly planted tree will immediately begin to provide benefits. So, while the City will need to expend more funds to increase and maintain its canopy coverage, those trees will more than pay their way. This includes increases in property values, and thus property tax revenue, the rejuvenation of business districts, tourism revenue, and makes the city more attractive to new businesses. For example, people were seen to shop longer and spend more in treed commercial shopping districts, which benefits the city through increased sales revenues (Wolf 2007).

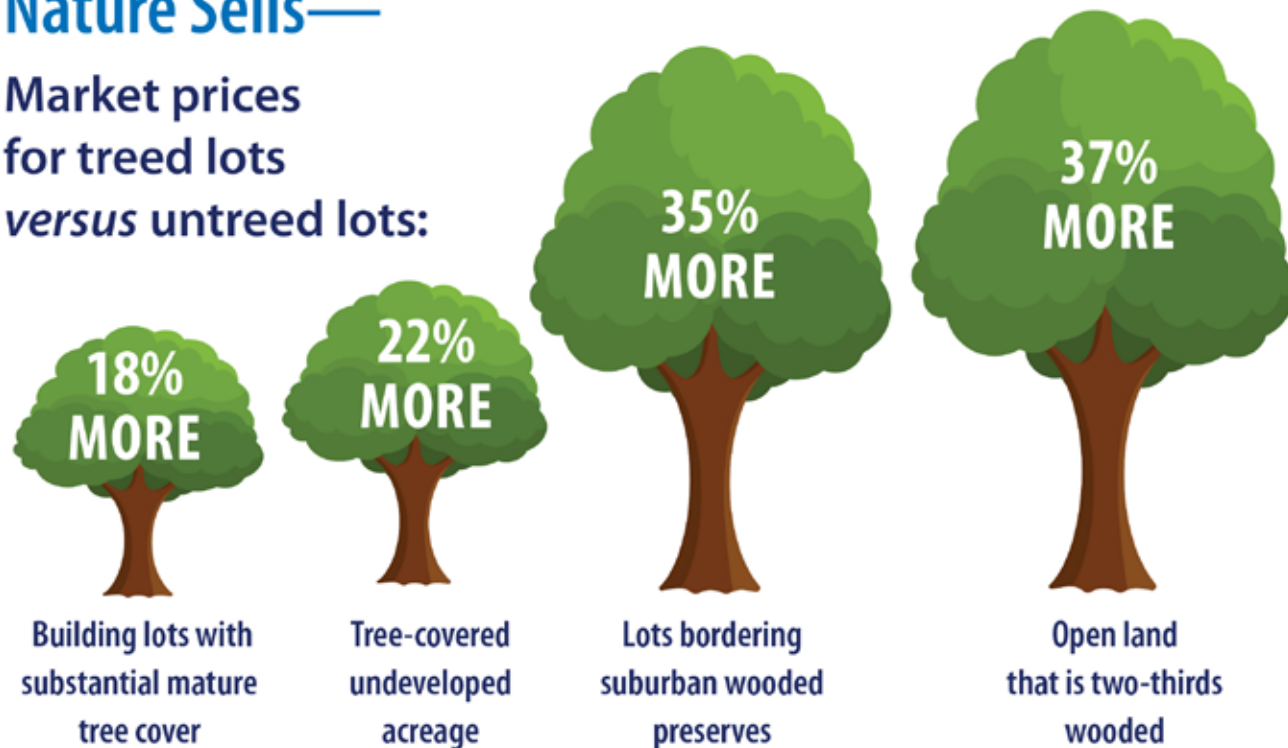
Planting trees should not be seen in isolation, but as part of a wider cycle of urban renewal and growth, in which trees spur development and raise incomes, business sales and that 'feel-good factor', which can, in turn, lead to a desire for more trees, parks and outdoor leisure facilities. Trees help turn a downward spiral into an upward spiral, as part of a city's renewed sense of pride and prosperity.



Natural areas, trees and green space are popular amenities when dining and shopping.

Nature Sells—

Market prices for treed lots versus untreed lots:

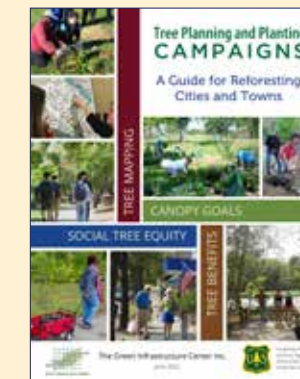


Source: Kathleen Wolf, 2007, *City Trees and Property Values*.

Preventing "Green Gentrification"

Gentrification is a reasonable concern when it comes to community planting projects in lower-income neighborhoods. The concern is that beautifying a neighborhood with numerous shade trees, adding street medians with more trees, planting trees in front yards, and having more parks and other open spaces nearby will raise property values and make houses unaffordable, spur landlords to raise rents and result in property tax increases. Central Falls should consider a comprehensive approach that minimizes the negative consequences of green gentrification through policies that encourage residents to stay in their homes while enjoying the many benefits of trees and green space, such as cleaner air, cooler summers, less flooding, lower energy costs and general social well-being. To learn more about how to prevent "green gentrification", see the GIC's *Tree Campaign Guide* <https://gicinc.org/books/tree-planning-and-planting-campaigns/>

Instead of holding back on greening projects, cities should address the sources of affordability problems. One example would be an agreement with landlords not to raise rents within five years of a planting project; another would be to engage the community housing and development staff in providing more affordable housing. The City of Greenville, South Carolina for example, spent a decade and millions of dollars purchasing land around a future park development, Unity Park, that was to be built on city-owned land in historically black neighborhoods that experienced discrimination and disinvestment. The City created a housing fund to build a thousand affordable housing units around the new park, allowing low-income residents to remain in the adjacent neighborhoods and reduce the risk of gentrification. The desire for more affordable housing in the area surrounding the park was an idea driven by local residents and community activists during the planning of the park.



Tree Canopy Analysis Methods

The tree canopy analysis was performed to map current tree canopy, quantify the ecosystem services these trees provide, map potential planting areas, and estimate potential future canopy based on plantable areas. These new tree canopy data can be used to analyze urban cooling, walkability, and street tree plantings; or to inform area plans, urban forestry planning, and the City's *Comprehensive Plan* updates.

Satellite imagery from the National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP) distributed by the USDA Farm Service Agency was classified to determine the types and extent of different land covers in Central Falls. The land cover map was created at 1-meter resolution using NAIP imagery from August 24, 2023. LiDAR (light detection and ranging) data from 2022 were used to determine height, to distinguish between large shrubs and trees. This allows the GIS analyst to separate bushes from trees and other vegetation. This distinction of tree/non-tree vegetation is very important when modeling tree benefits, since the modeled pollution-removal benefits are based on trees, and do not necessarily translate to smaller, non-woody vegetation. The tree canopy was mapped at 93% accuracy, with an overall land cover accuracy of 84%.

¹ LiDAR is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the top of the vegetation, compared to the underlying surface of the Earth. The farther the laser beam travels, the shorter the vegetation.



NAIP Aerial Image

Determining Plantable Acreage

Potential Planting Areas (PPA)

In urban areas, a realistic goal for expanding urban canopy depends on an accurate assessment of the total plantable open area. A *Potential Planting Area (PPA)* map estimates areas where it may be feasible to plant trees. The PPA is estimated by selecting land cover types that have space available for planting trees and accounts for the overlap of canopy (canopy that is intermingled or a large canopy tree that partially covers an understory tree).

Of the nine land cover types mapped, only pervious and bare earth were considered for the PPA. However, some paved areas could be removed or reduced, soils conditioned, and then used to plant new trees. For example, a parking lot could be redesigned to accommodate more tree canopy to absorb and clean stormwater runoff and provide shade for cars.

Eligible planting areas are also limited by their proximity to features that interfere with a tree's natural growth (such as buildings) or where a tree might affect the feature, such as power lines, street signs, or road junctions. The GIC buffers potential planting areas to exclude trees from these features. City staff and the GIC reviewed the draft PPA map and removed playing fields, cemeteries, and other land uses where trees would not be appropriate. The resulting PPA represents the maximum potential places trees can be planted and grow to full size.



Potential Planting Area (PPA)

Based on an analysis of existing pervious surfaces, 4% of the City's land area, or 31 acres, could be planted with additional trees. The GIC recommends that no more than half the available PPA, 2% or 15 acres, is realistic to plant, since many other uses, such as vegetable gardens or swimming pools, require full sun.

Potential Planting Spots (PPS)

Potential Planting Spots (PPS) are created from the PPA. A GIS modeling process is applied to select spots where a tree can be planted, depending on the desired mature size. For this analysis, expected canopy spreads of 20ft. and 40ft. diameter for individual mature trees were used, with priority given to 40 ft. diameter trees, since larger trees provide more benefits.

Potential Canopy Area (PCA)

The *Potential Canopy Area (PCA)* is created from the PPS. Once the PPS are selected, a buffer around each point is created to represent the mature canopy spread. For this analysis, that buffer radius is either 10ft. or 20ft., which represents a 20ft. or 40ft. diameter canopy. These individual tree canopies are then merged to form a Potential Canopy Area.



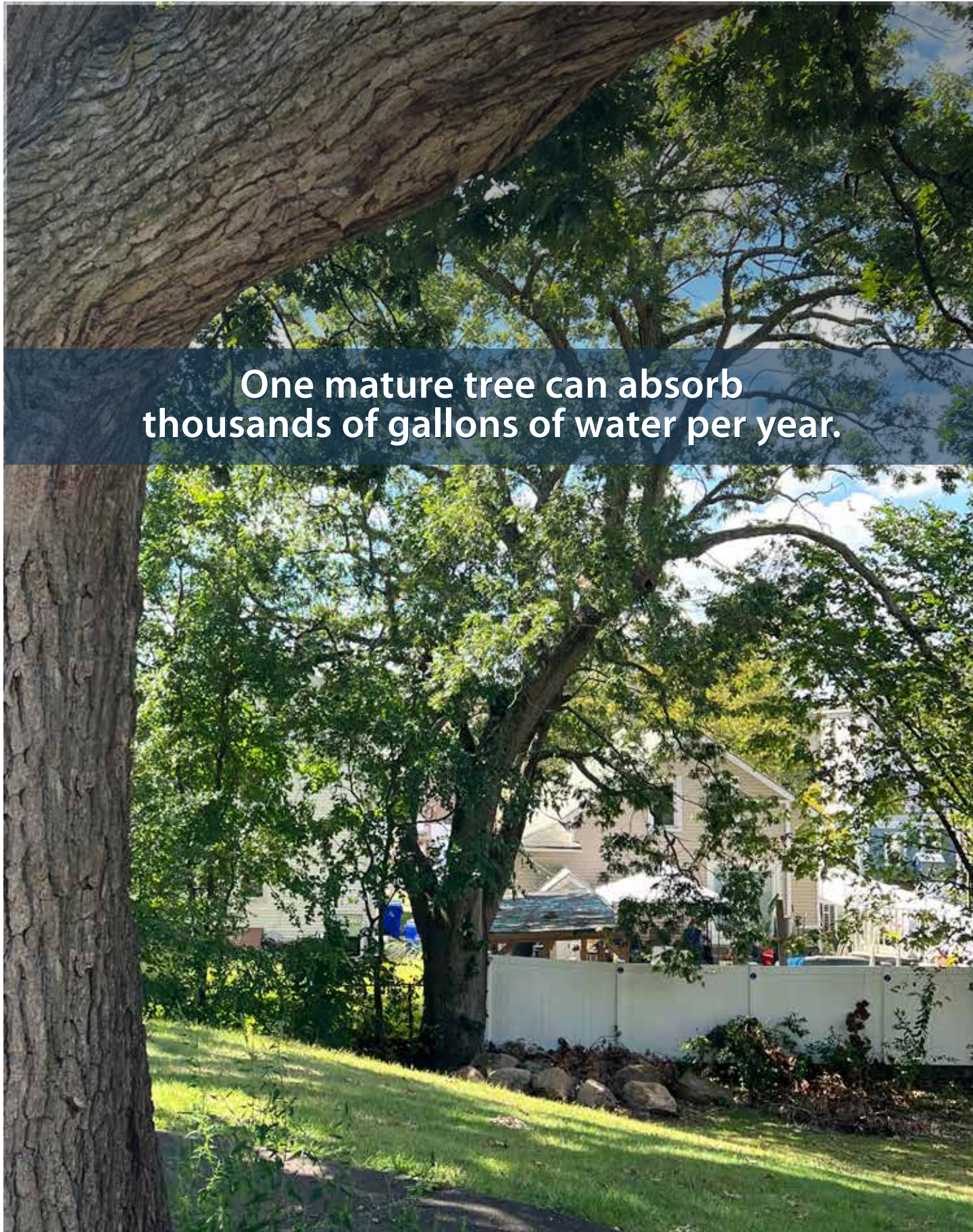
Potential Planting Spots (PPS)



There are many places where new trees can be planted in the city. Some of these places are located on private property, so it is important to get buy-in from residents.



Potential Canopy Area (PCA)



One mature tree can absorb thousands of gallons of water per year.

Tree Canopy Maps and Findings

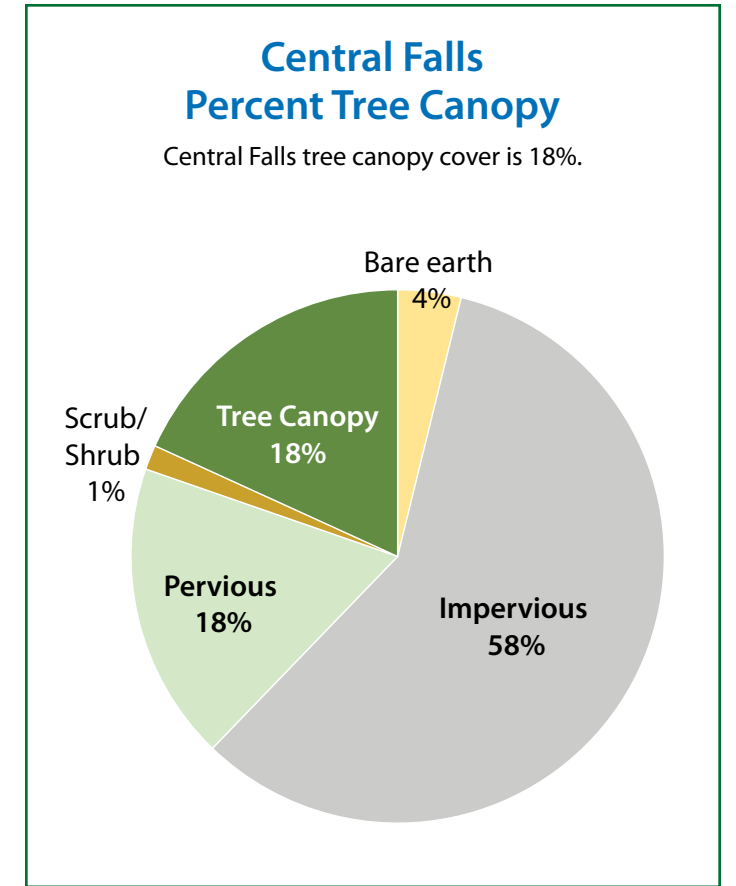
The *Tree Canopy Analysis* has been used to plan the City's target tree canopy goal and will act as a benchmark to gauge the future status of the City's tree canopy. An ArcGIS geodatabase with digital shape files produced during the study has been provided to the City.

In addition, the City received tree canopy statistics for the following areas:

- Streets
- Parks
- Parcels
- Zoning

The *Tree Canopy Analysis* can inform tree planting decisions to meet many goals, such as walkability, greenhouse gas emission reduction, energy savings, urban heat reduction, and economic revitalization.

The following six pages contain Central Falls' *Tree Canopy Analysis Maps*.



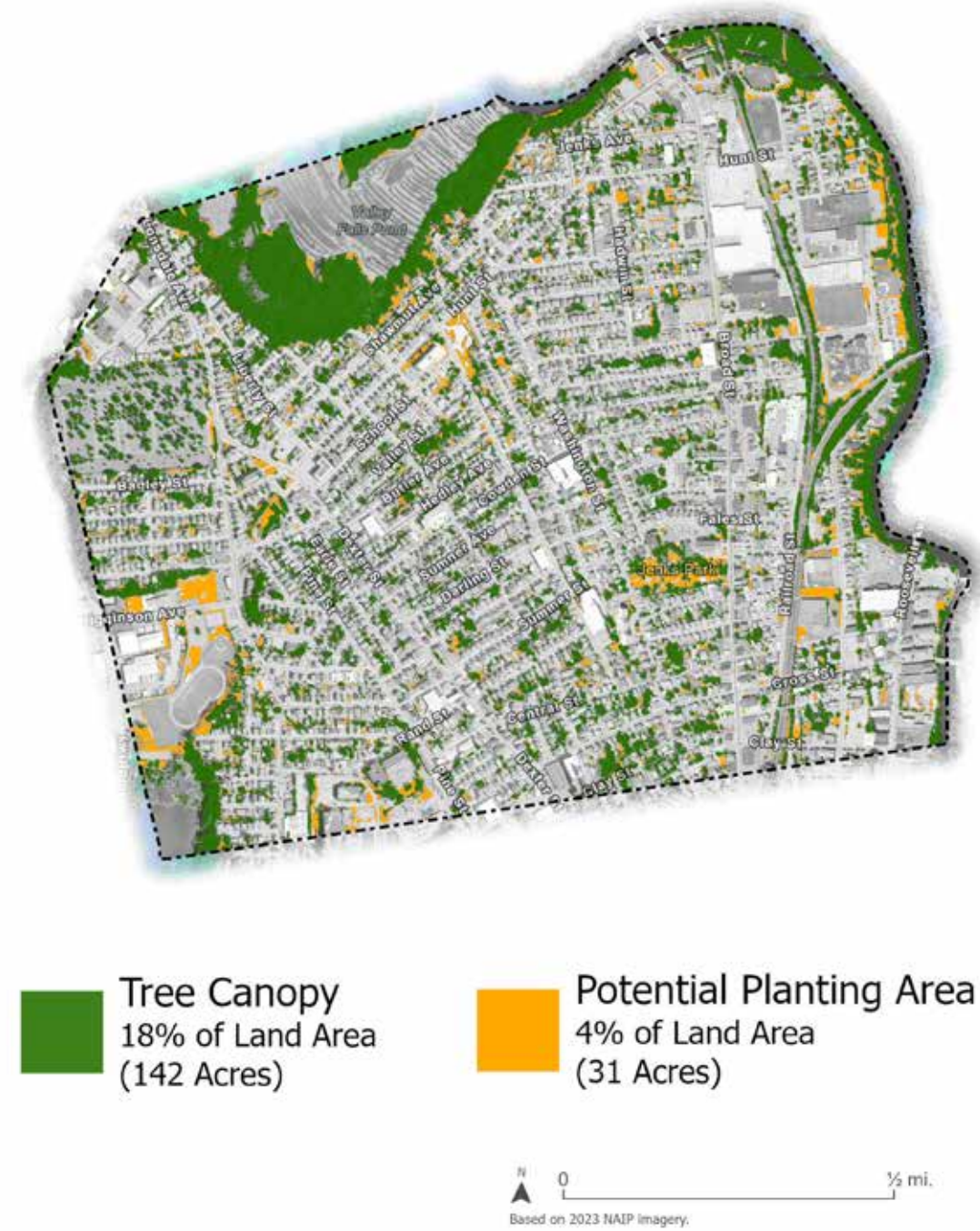
Map of City Land Cover

GIC classified 9 land cover types for the City of Central Falls from 2023 NAIP aerial imagery.



Map of Tree Canopy and Potential Planting Areas

Existing tree canopy (green) and potential planting area (orange) were determined based on land cover data and input from the City. Potential planting areas (PPA) depict areas where it may be possible to plant trees. All sites would need to be confirmed in the field prior to planting. The map shows PPA on both private and public lands.

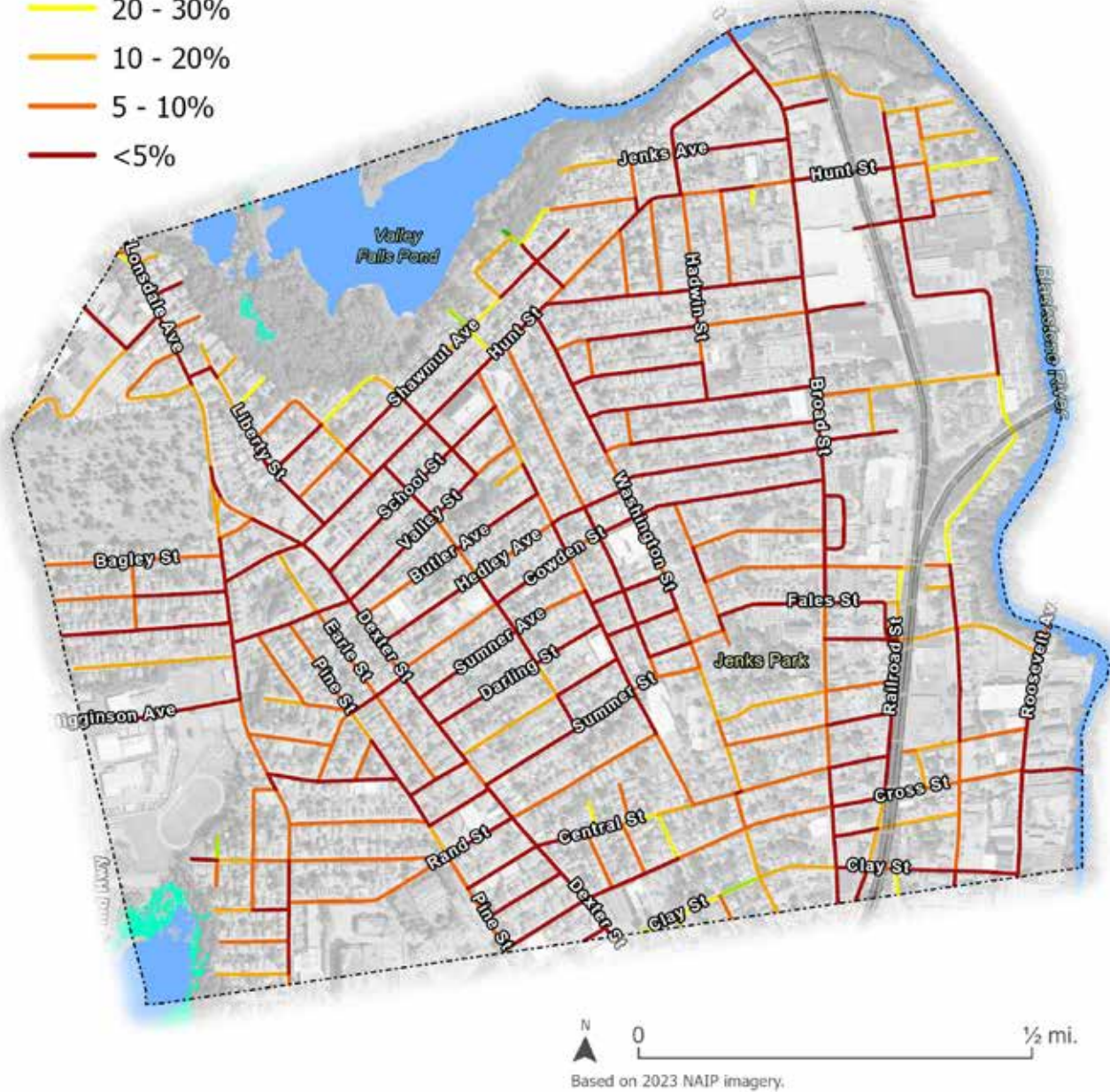


Map of Existing Tree Canopy Coverage Along Streets

Streets that have the most canopy (dark green) and those that have the least canopy (red). Streets that lack good tree coverage can be targeted as appropriate for planting to facilitate specific City goals, such as safe routes to school or beautifying a shopping district.

Percent Tree Canopy Coverage within 50 ft. of Street Centerline

- >50%
- 30 - 50%
- 20 - 30%
- 10 - 20%
- 5 - 10%
- <5%

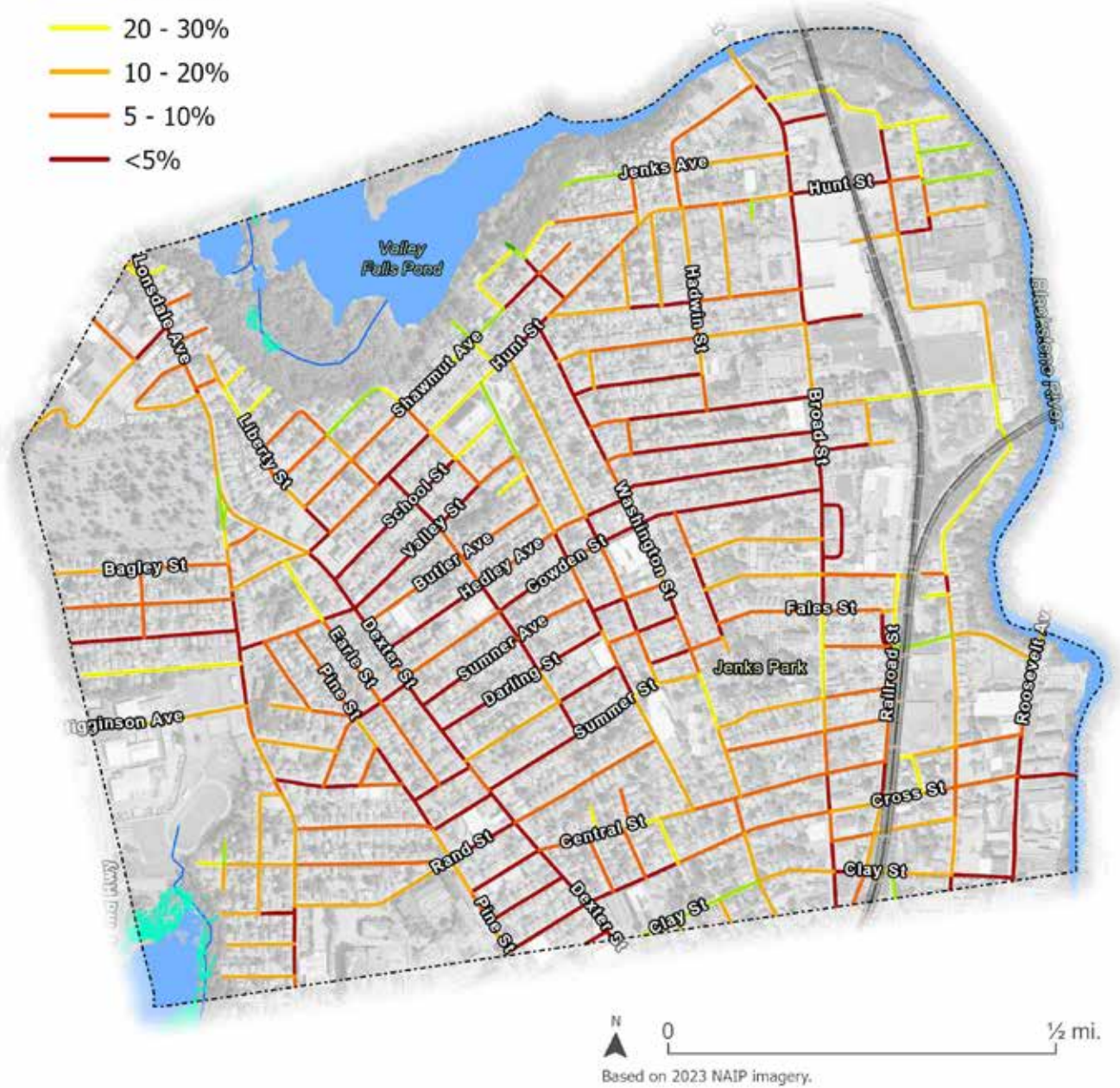


Map of Potential Tree Canopy Coverage Along Streets

If all potential planting areas within 50ft. of every road's center line were planted, this is what the canopy coverage along streets would look like.

Potential Tree Canopy Coverage within 50 ft. of Street Centerline

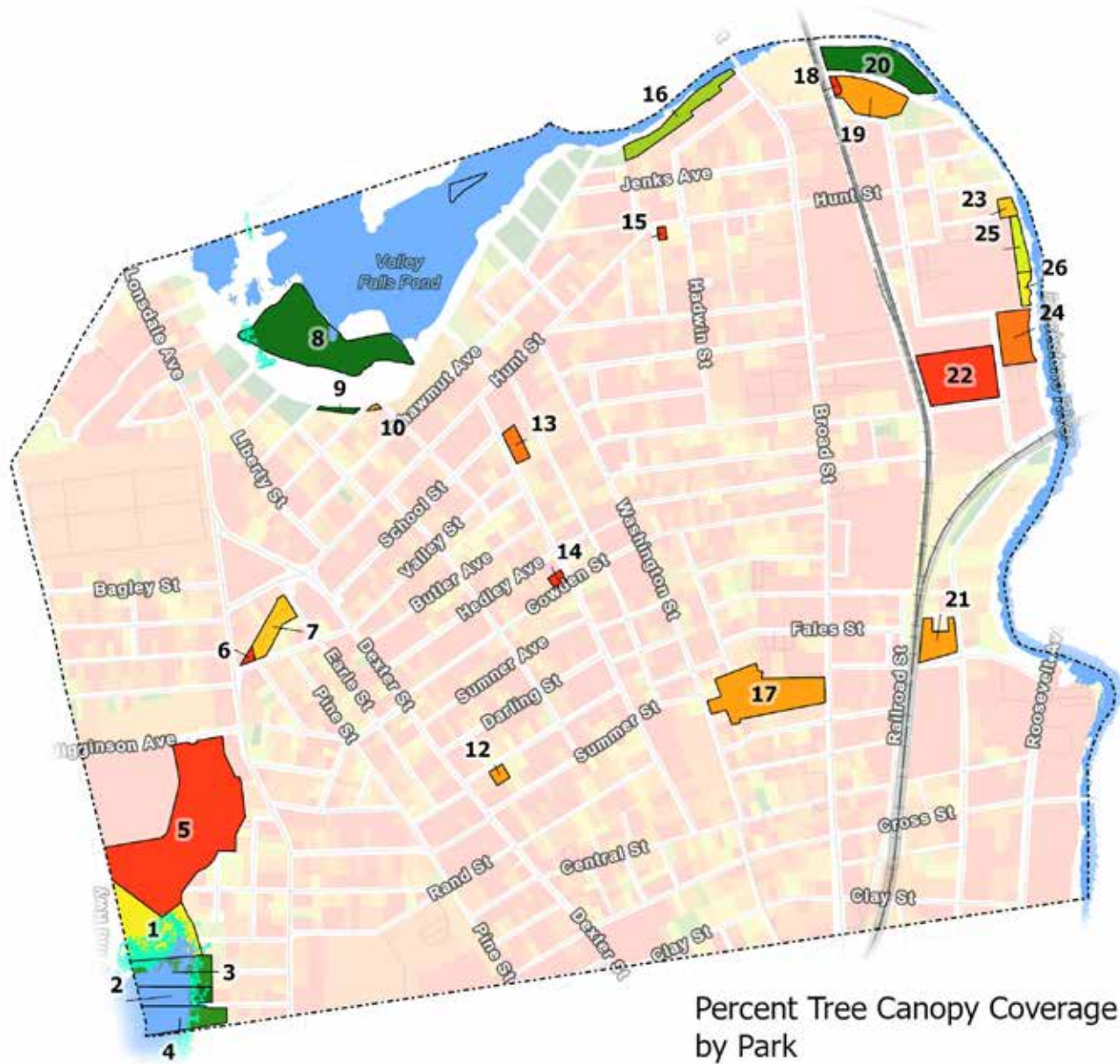
- >50%
- 30 - 50%
- 20 - 30%
- 10 - 20%
- 5 - 10%
- <5%



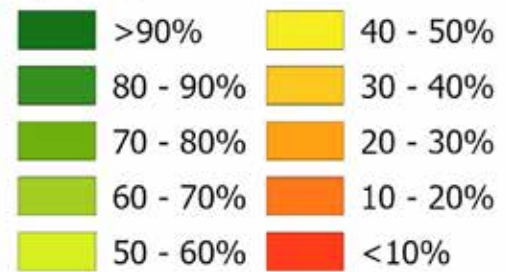
Disclaimer: This map is based on Potential Planting Areas (PPA) within 50 ft of the Right-of-Way. As such, it identifies unconstrained planting sites based on the best available GIS data, meaning that existing underground tree wells or narrow landscape strips (under 6 ft) are not included in this analysis. As with the overall PPA map, it does not account for utilities, and all locations must be field verified. There may be more or less available street tree planting opportunities than are depicted on the map.

Map of Potential Planting Spots by Park

Tree canopy for each City park. Parks with trees promote physical and mental health and provide shaded areas for children to play.



Percent Tree Canopy Coverage by Park

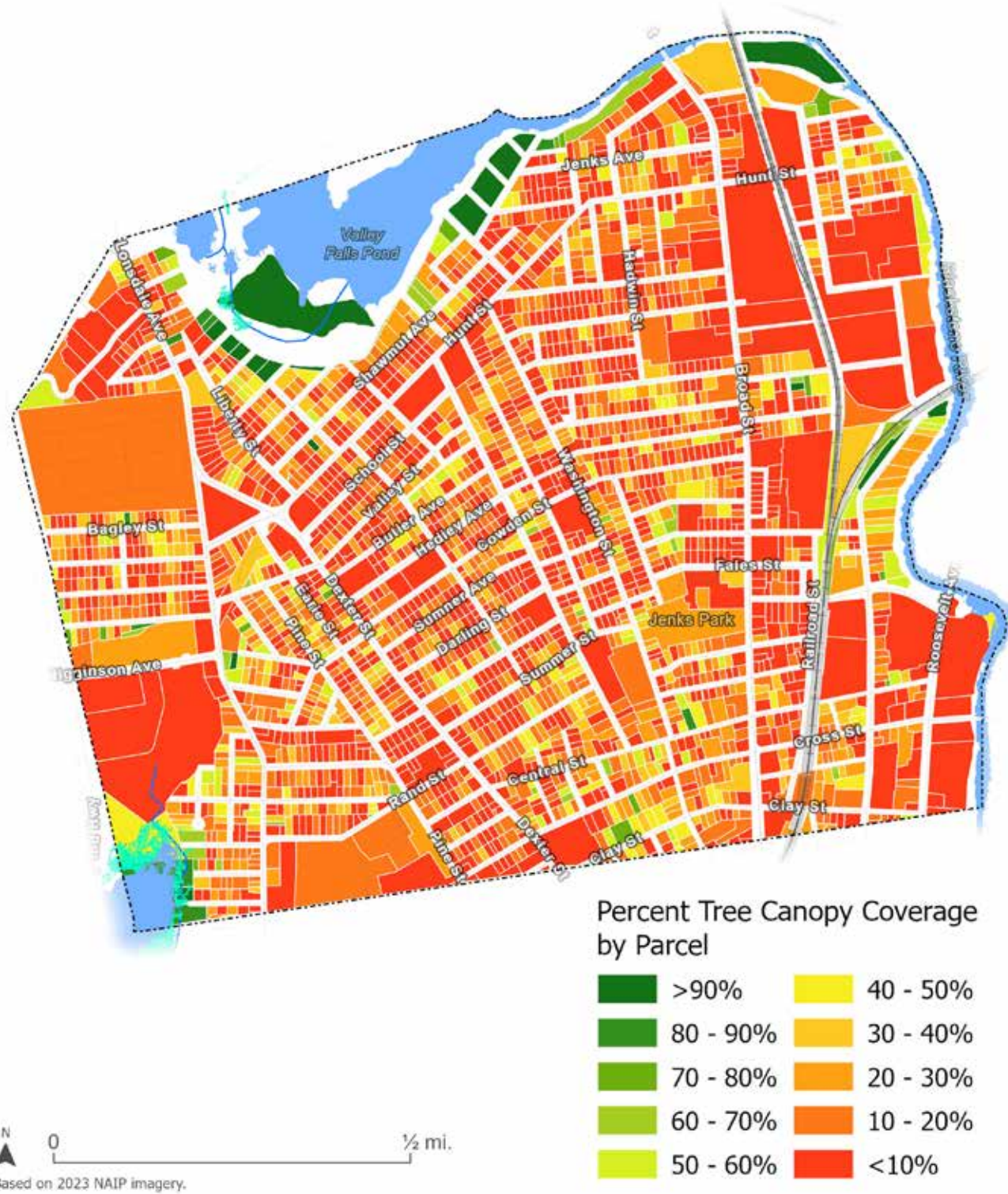


Based on 2023 NAIP Imagery.

Map Code	Park Name	Current canopy percent	Potential canopy percent	Small trees to plant	Large trees to plant	Total trees to be planted
1	Unknown Name	42%	70%	32	28	60
2	Unknown Name	91%	91%	0	0	0
3	Unknown Name	80%	80%	0	0	0
4	Unknown Name	82%	90%	3	2	5
5	Francis L Corrigan Sports Complex	5%	25%	111	90	201
6	Lincoln Almond Park	4%	14%	2	0	2
7	Lincoln Almond Park	31%	80%	26	22	48
8	Unknown Name	96%	98%	7	8	15
9	Unknown Name	99%	99%	0	0	0
10	Unknown Name	26%	25%	0	0	0
11	Unknown Name	0%	0%	0	0	0
12	Unknown Name	28%	75%	7	4	11
13	Veteran's Memorial Park	14%	84%	16	16	32
14	Unknown Name	0%	0%	0	0	0
15	Coutu Memorial Park	10%	87%	7	3	10
16	Unknown Name	69%	82%	13	6	19
17	Jenks Park	27%	82%	86	104	190
18	River Island Park	4%	13%	1	0	1
19	River Island Park	23%	40%	27	9	36
20	Island	90%	93%	12	4	16
21	Central Falls Dog Park	27%	54%	24	9	33
22	Macomber Stadium	4%	17%	26	19	45
23	Blackstone River Walk	30%	90%	7	8	15
24	Blackstone River Walk	16%	34%	28	7	35
25	Blackstone River Walk	55%	73%	17	1	18
26	High Street Ballfield	44%	85%	7	6	13

Map of Tree Canopy Coverage by Parcels

Tree canopy broken out by every parcel within the city. Promoting tree planting efforts to private property owners will be important to achieve the City's goal of increasing tree canopy citywide.



Calculating Environmental Benefits

Stormwater Uptake

Trees and forests are the best land cover for taking up urban stormwater and are recognized as such by forestry scientists and civil engineers (Kuehler 2017, 2016). Tree canopy stormwater interception varies from 100% at the beginning of a rainfall event to about 3% at maximum rain intensity (Xiao et al. 2000).

Trees help capture and filter stormwater runoff. The Trees and Stormwater (TSW) Tool developed by the GIC estimates the stormwater interception, infiltration, and runoff of different land cover types. This methodology uses a modified version of the "curve number" approach, originally developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which factors in impacts of hydrologic soil groups, land cover types, hydrologic condition, and design/management practices that impact runoff. The modified TR55 curve numbers (CN) provided by GIC include a factor for canopy interception. This approach allows for more detailed assessments of stormwater uptake based on the landscape conditions of the City's forests. It distinguishes whether the trees are within a forest, a lawn setting, a forested wetland, or over pavement, such as streets or sidewalks. This is because the conditions and the soils in which the tree is living affect the amount of water the tree can intercept. For more about this methodology, please visit: <https://gicinc.org/projects/resiliency/trees-and-stormwater>.

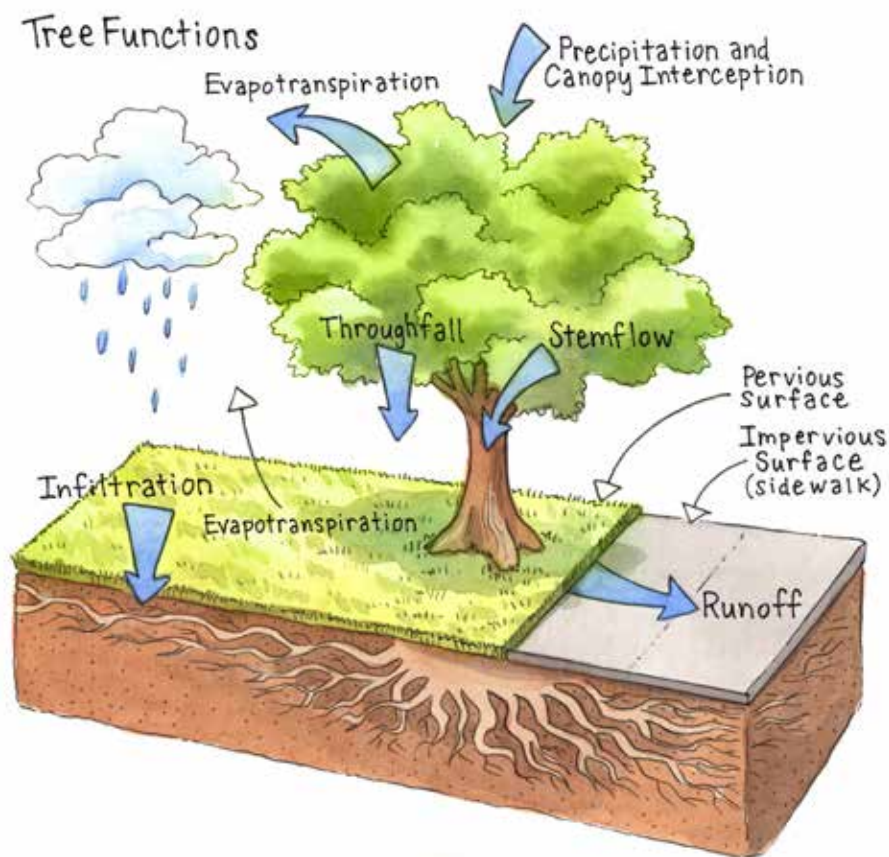
The GIC used its TSW Tool to model stormwater and pollution reductions by City tree canopy. The model shows that, during a 10-year/24-hour rainfall event (5.11 inches), trees take up 900,000 gallons of runoff, or about one and a half Olympic swimming pools of water. The trees in Central Falls capture:

- 542 nitrogen lbs. annually
- 43 phosphorus lbs. annually
- 65 sediment tons annually



Lawn trees in a park soak up more stormwater than trees over pavement.

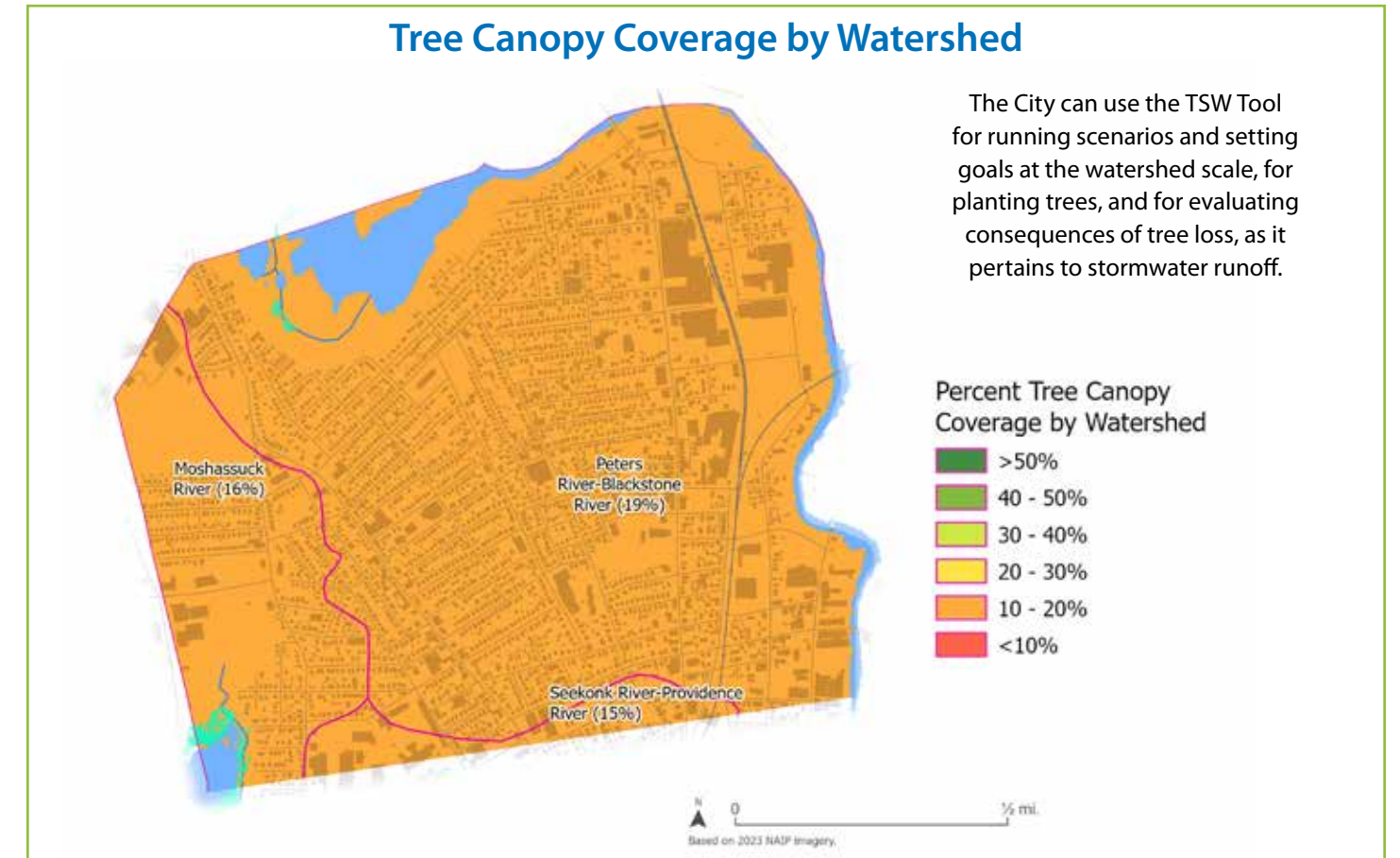
The TSW Tool considers the interaction of land cover and hydrologic soil conditions within each watershed. The TSW Tool can also be used to run 'what-if' scenarios, specifically losses of tree canopy from development or storm damage or increases in tree canopy from additional tree planting.



Tree Canopy Coverage by Watershed

The conditions under and around a tree, such as the size of its planting box, the amount and type of open space, surface soils, drainage and root spread affect the infiltration of water. The TSW Tool uses plantable open spaces to determine how many more trees could be planted and how much additional nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollutants new trees and their surrounding soils could absorb.

Removal of mature trees results in an increase in stormwater runoff. As more land is redeveloped, the City should maximize tree preservation and encourage new tree plantings to maintain surface water quality and groundwater recharge. The following maps use soil types and tree cover to show the areas where it is most important to retain trees for stormwater uptake and areas where tree planting will have the most benefits for stormwater uptake.



Central Falls, Rhode Island Urban Tree Canopy Stormwater Model version 10/16/2023

The Green Infrastructure Urban Tree Canopy Stormwater Model estimates stormwater runoff yields for current and potential land cover. The methodology is based upon the NRCS TR-55 method for small urban watersheds. It is used to provide better estimates using GIC's high-resolution land cover and modeling of potential canopy area.

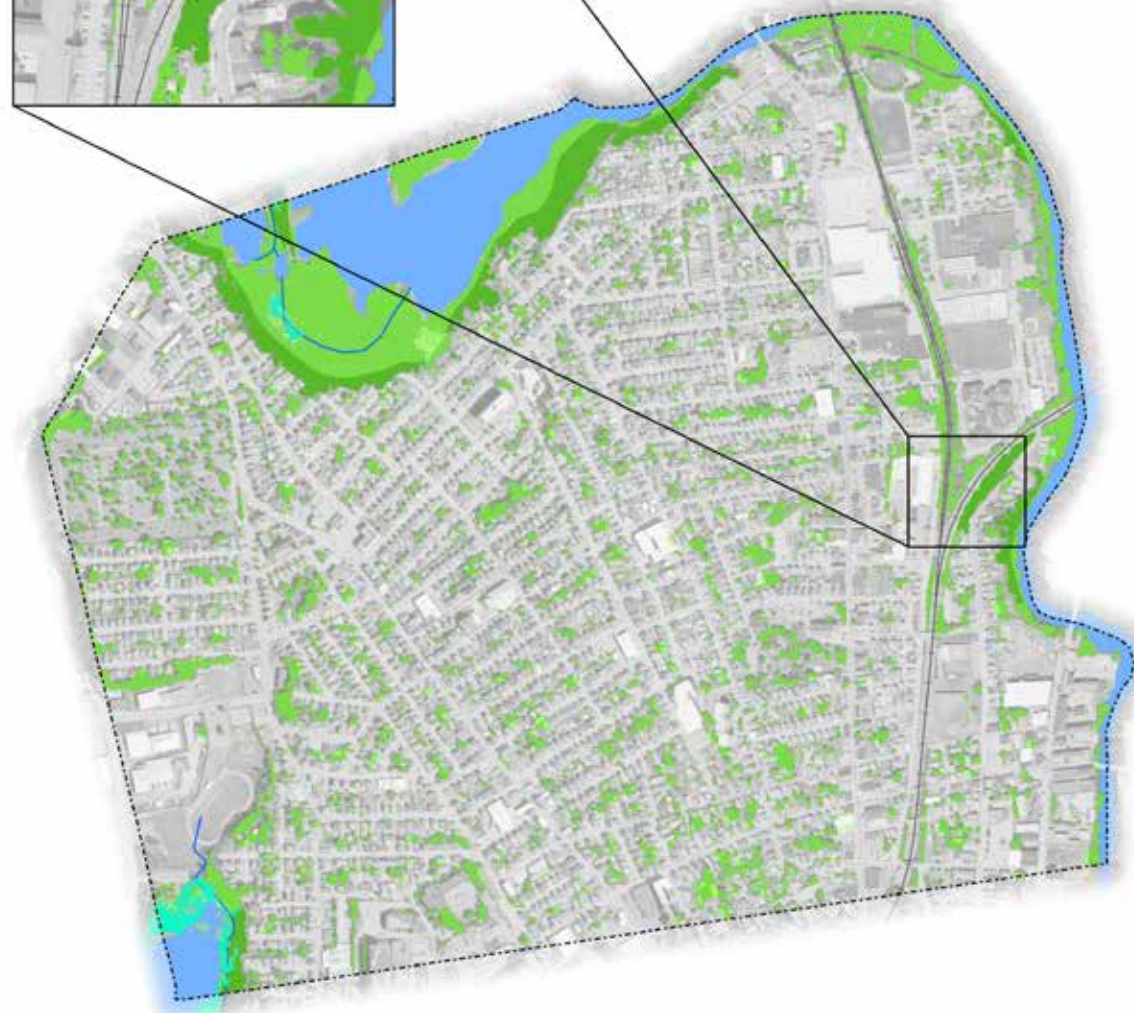
TOTALS		18.2%	55.2%	0.3	-	-	18.2%	Variable			Variable			
Area	Current Tree Canopy	Current Impervious Cover	Tree H2O Capture	Increased H2O w/cx% tree loss	Added H2O Capture w/cx% PCA	Adjusted Tree Cover from loss and gain scenarios	Pick an Event	Pick a loss scenario	Converted Land	Canopy Added	Enter % canopy to add			
	%	%	million gallons	million gallons	million gallons	%	Event	% UTC loss	% FOS Loss	% Imperv	Max TC Possible	Potential Added Canopy Area	% Canopy Added	% of PCA achieved
1 Moshassuck River	18.1%	47.2%	0.01	-	-	18.1%	1 yr / 24 hour	0%	0%	0%	24.4%	8.5%	0.0%	0%
2 Seekonk River-Providence River	15.8%	62.2%	0.004	-	-	15.8%	1 yr / 24 hour	0%	0%	0%	24.6%	9.8%	0.0%	0%
3 Peters River-Blackstone River	18.8%	50.6%	0.3	-	-	18.8%	1 yr / 24 hour	0%	0%	0%	23.2%	6.4%	0.0%	0%

The TSW Tool allows the City to model water uptake by the existing canopy and impacts from changes, whether positive (adding trees) or negative (removing trees).

Best Tree Canopy to Save for Stormwater Infiltration



The TSW Tool was applied to map the locations where tree conservation will result in the greatest amount of stormwater capture and infiltration (dark green).



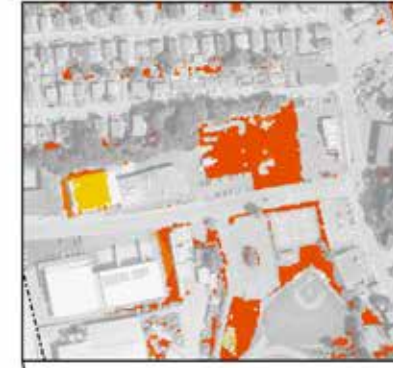
Based on 2023 NAIP imagery.

Tree Canopy Locations Retaining Greatest Stormwater Volumes

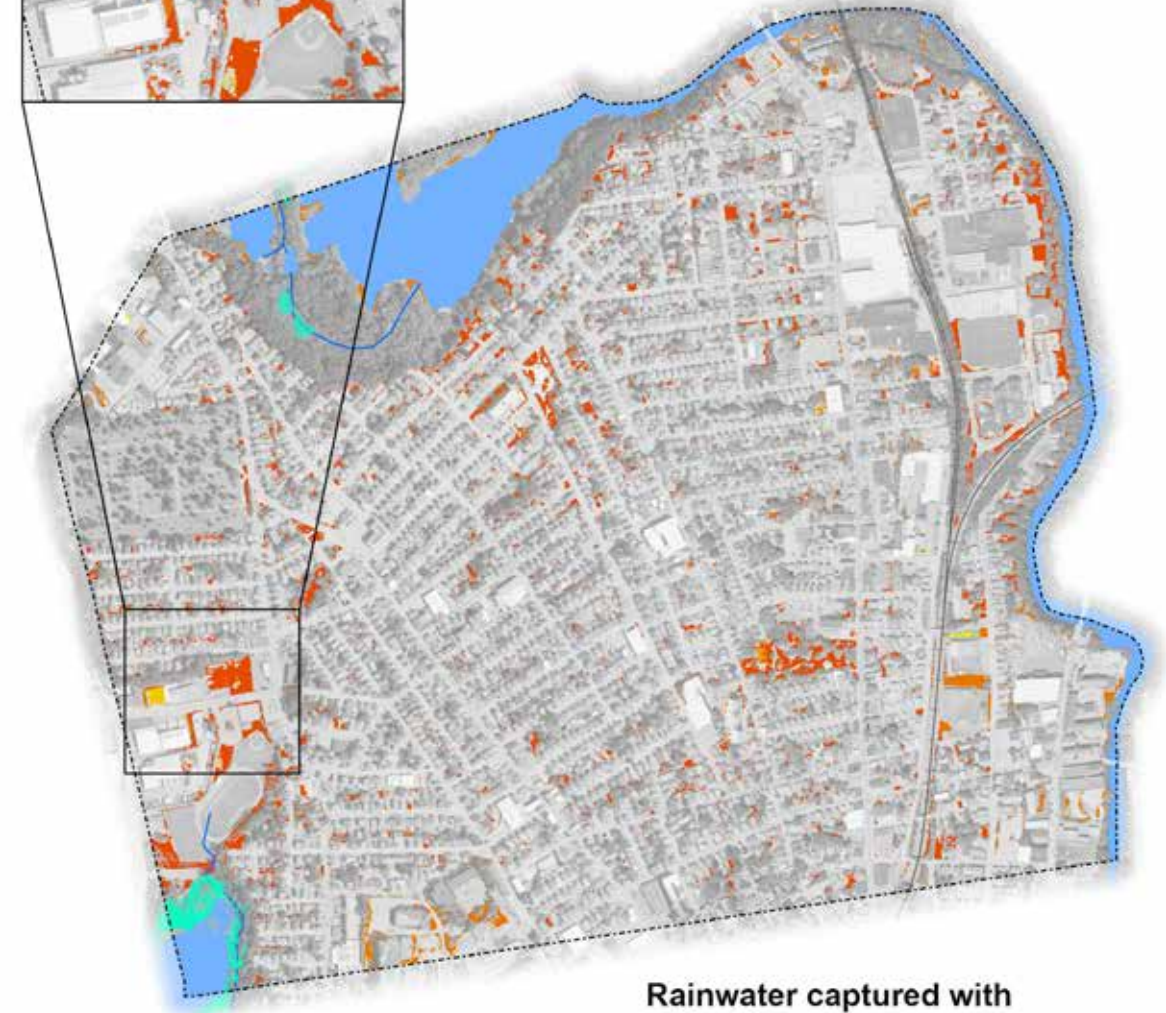
Based on a 2 inch storm event



Map of Best Tree Planting Locations for Stormwater Infiltration



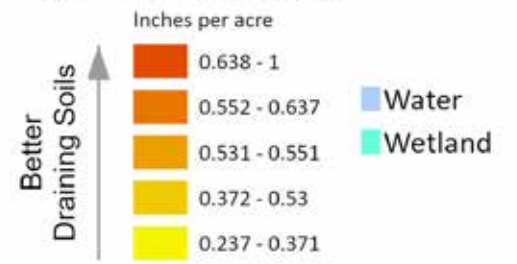
The TSW Tool was applied to map locations where planting trees will result in the greatest amount of stormwater capture and infiltration (red).



Based on 2023 NAIP imagery.

Rainwater captured with added tree canopy

Based on a 2 inch storm event





Trees help remove harmful air pollutants creating healthier spaces for outdoor exercise.



Well-treed neighborhoods have cleaner air and lower rates of asthma.

Air Quality

Air pollution removal values were calculated by applying the pollution removal values for each acre of tree cover from the i-Tree model. i-Tree is a peer-reviewed software suite from the USDA Forest Service that provides urban and rural forestry assessment tools.

Trees mitigate climate change by storing carbon in their tissue and sequestering atmospheric carbon from carbon dioxide (CO₂) in new tree growth. Current trees in the city are storing

Investments in canopy at the neighborhood level can improve the respiratory health of residents.

7,296 metric tons of carbon that will be released back into the atmosphere when these trees die. Trees also capture particulate matter, ground-level ozone (O₃), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) from the air, resulting in better air quality and healthier neighborhoods.

Air pollution and greenhouse gases removed annually by trees in Central Falls

CO (carbon monoxide)	NO ₂ (nitrogen dioxide)	O ₃ (ozone)	PM ₁₀ (particulate matter 10 microns)	PM _{2.5} (particulate matter 2.5 microns)	SO ₂ (sulphur dioxide)	C Seq (carbon sequestered)
27 lbs	283 lbs	2,833 lbs	492 lbs	125 lbs	82 lbs	619 metric tons

Urban Heat and Equity

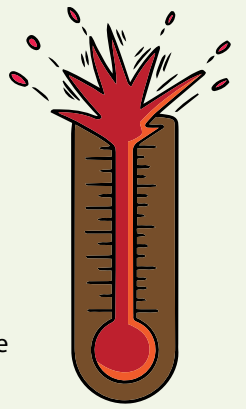
Urban heat is a growing concern as extreme heat continues to increase in Rhode Island with the changing climate. In Central Falls, the number of days above 100°F is projected to rise from the historic average of 0 per year to 29 per year by the year 2070. To reduce temperatures, the City can plant trees to cool the landscape. Inequities in the distribution of tree canopy and opportunities to correct them can be identified through tree canopy data, surface temperature data, and U.S. Census data that provides race and income statistics.

What is Tree Equity?

Tree equity ensures all communities have access to the benefits that trees provide. Areas that have been under-resourced, having fewer trees and more heat than the rest of the city, are the focus of tree-planting efforts.



How much hotter is your hometown now than when you were born?



This interactive online tool allows a user to put in their hometown and birthdate to see how their hometown has changed since then and how much hotter it may get. The tool provides the average number of days over 90°F.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/08/30/climate/how-much-hotter-is-your-hometown.html>



Extreme Heat

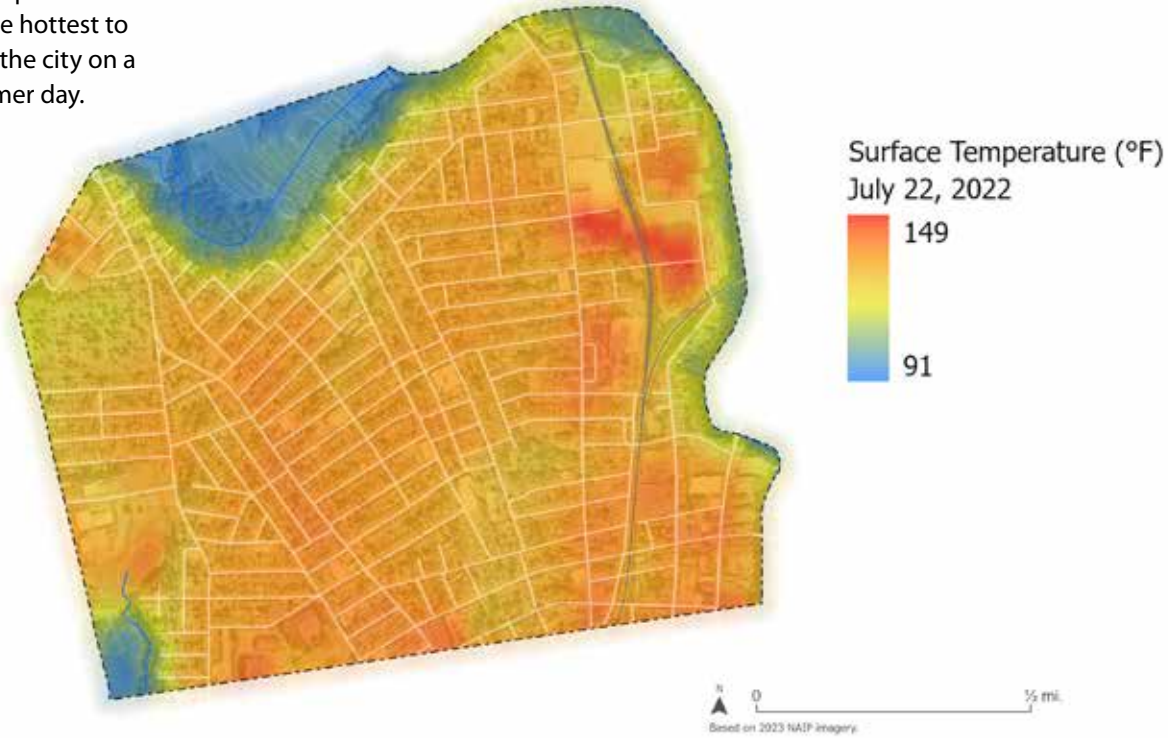
Average days per year temperatures over 100°F

Where we are now	Where we are currently headed		If bold action is taken
Historically 1971-2000	Midcentury 2036-2065	Late Century 2070-2099	Extreme heat limited to
0 days	12 days	29 days	6 days

In this table "bold action" refers to reductions in greenhouse gases through energy conservation. It does not consider the effects of planting more trees. Source: Union of Concerned Scientists. 2019, Killer Heat Interactive Tool.

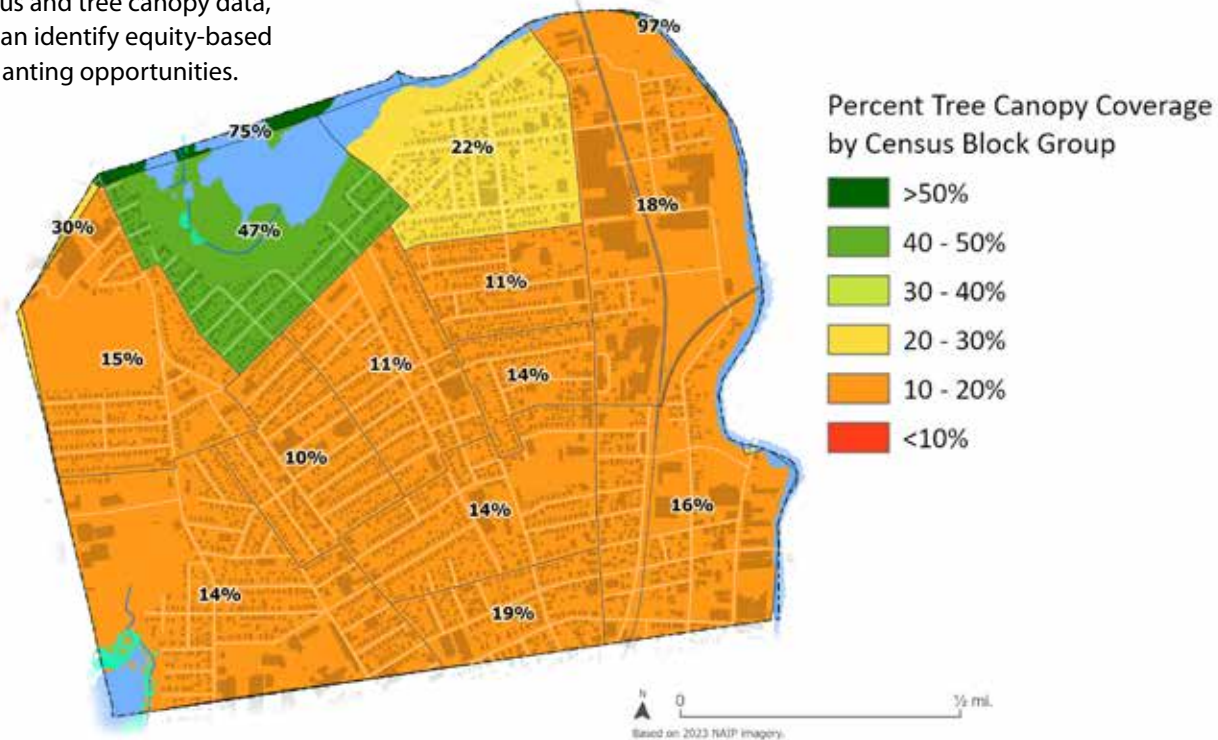
Map of Surface Temperature

The surface temperature map captures the hottest to coolest places in the city on a typical summer day.



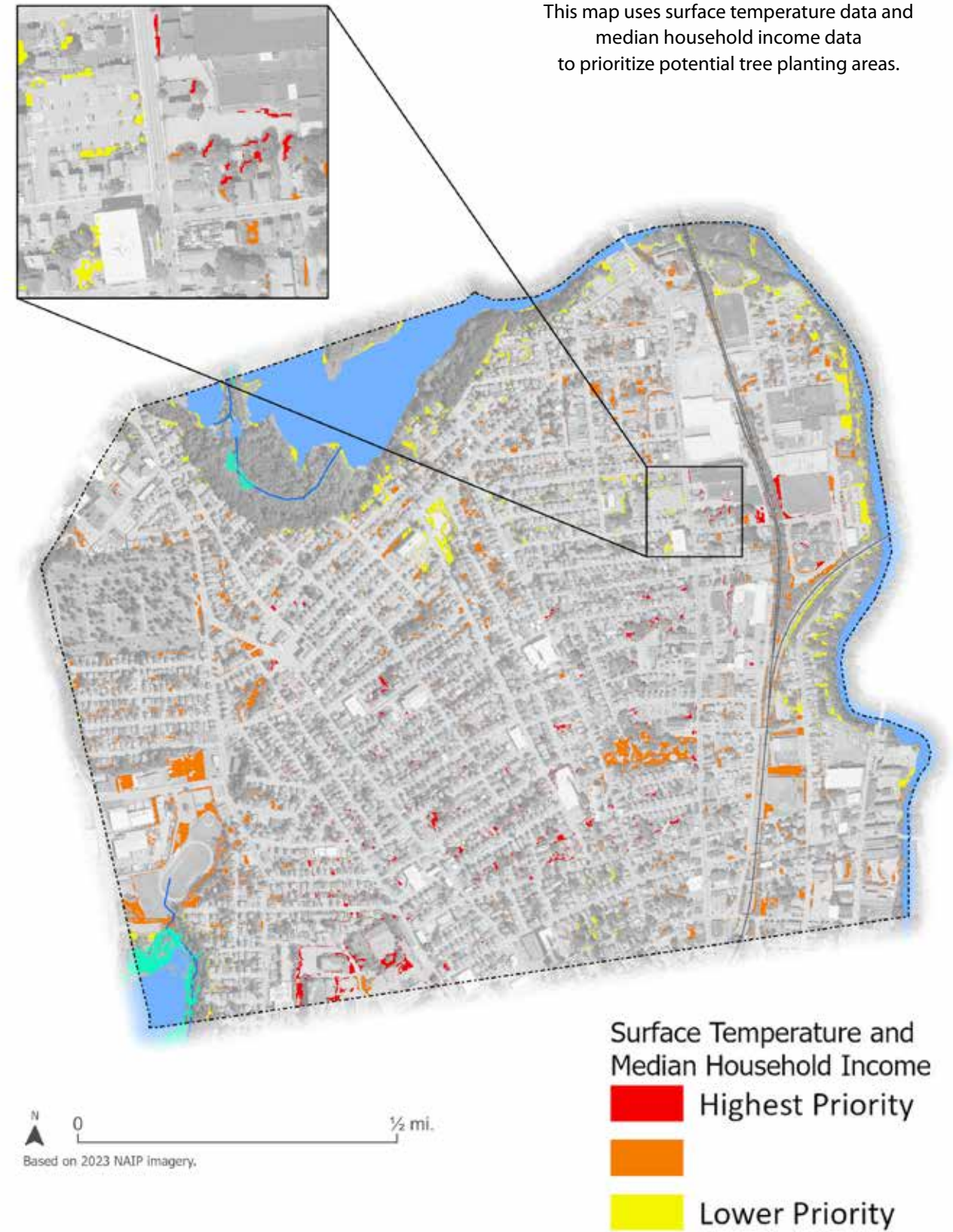
Map of Tree Canopy Coverage by Census Block Group

Tree canopy cover percentages by Census Block Group. By combining U.S. Census and tree canopy data, the City can identify equity-based tree planting opportunities.



Map of Heat and Income Priority Tree Planting Locations

This map uses surface temperature data and median household income data to prioritize potential tree planting areas.



Planning and Engagement Process

The City of Central Falls and the GIC partnered in a ten-month effort to create this Strategic Tree Canopy Plan. Advisory committees composed of city staff and local community partners met to discuss priorities. They engaged in a series of nine workshops from the spring of 2024 to the winter of 2025 to evaluate tree canopy cover, determine plantable areas, set a canopy goal and evaluate policies and practices that support tree canopy cover. In the summer and fall of 2024, the GIC attended community events and held an open house. GIC continues to engage with city staff to coordinate next steps.

Maps, beginning on page 20, show the results of the *Tree Canopy Analysis*. An assessment of the ecosystem services provided by city trees included:

- A stormwater analysis
- A surface temperature map
- An air quality analysis

Results of these analyses are found on pages 28-35. They were then used to identify opportunities to maximize benefits from future tree planting and retention. In addition, GIC staff conducted a codes and ordinances audit to evaluate the impact of City policies and ordinances on trees, tree care and tree protection. The audit, developed by GIC and used across the U.S., shows which policies promote healthy tree cover and which lead to excessive imperviousness and less green space. The audit results were used to inform the final tree canopy cover strategies.

Advisory Committee

During the planning process, a Technical Advisory Committee known as “The Central Falls Tree Canopy Advisory Committee or TCAC”, was created that consisted of city staff across multiple departments and local partners. This committee consisted of representatives from the City’s Planning Department, the Office of Constituent Services and Health, and the City’s Tree Warden. Local partners on the committee included representatives from Groundwork RI and Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC) (the backbone agency of the Pawtucket & Central Falls Health Equity Zone). Committee members attended workshops and check-ins throughout the planning process and assisted with event organization, information gathering, and a public open house. The TCAC reviewed the maps, data, and community input to develop the *Strategic Tree Canopy Plan* goals and strategies for a healthier Central Falls.



Members of the Tree Canopy Advisory Committee review draft maps and discuss Central Falls' tree canopy.

Community Partners

Throughout the planning process, the City and the GIC met with key community partners to discuss current initiatives and opportunities to collaborate on a healthier, greener city. Community partners provided support with stewardship, plantings, funding, and outreach. Community partner organizations included:

- Rhode Island Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment
- Groundwork RI
- Local Initiatives Support Coalition (LISC)/Pawtucket and Central Fall Health Equity Zone
- Largess Forestry

Public Engagement

Community input and feedback are foundational to the *Strategic Tree Canopy Plan*. In addition to the advisory committee’s planning work, this process included opportunities for public learning, engagement, and feedback.

In the summer of 2024, GIC participated in the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council’s River Days, the Rhode Island Health Equity Zone Community Learning Event, and spoke to the Youth 4 Urban Sustainability program, sharing Central Falls mapping and other green infrastructure resources. As well as gathering interest in upcoming GIC programs in Central Falls.

In October of 2024, GIC hosted an open house for the Central Falls Tree Canopy Advisory Committee (TCAC) to share a summary of Central Falls urban tree cover with residents and stakeholders, and to collect public input on the strategies that had emerged from the TCAC’s work. Rhode Island College Workforce Development Hub hosted the event on



The public open house included a mix of information sharing, discussion, and opportunities for feedback.

Dexter Street in Central Falls. LISC funded Spanish translation services for attendees and presenters. The Catholic Diocese of Rhode Island provided resources for food and beverages. GroundWork RI had the opportunity to present its programs and resources to attendees.

In addition to the open house, GIC visited the Blackstone Academy Charter School junior class, where we taught about green infrastructure, shared work from the TCAC, and then asked for their input on strategies. Finally, we partnered with GroundWork RI, Largess Forestry, and the City of Central Falls on tree plantings and education at River Island Park, Ella Risk Elementary School, and on Madeira Avenue.

Summary of Community Findings

During the planning process, the City and GIC staff participated in the following public outreach events: Open House held at the RI College Workforce Development Hub, Blackstone Academy Charter School science class, and Health Equity Zone Community Learning Events. An online survey was promoted through the City of Central Falls and the Pawtucket and Central Falls Health Equity zone and was up for 6 weeks in the fall of 2024. We recorded 35 responses from community members.

Top Favorite Strategies and Community Participation Interest

The strategies listed below reflect the combined responses from all survey respondents (online, open house, and outreach events).

Question 1: Vote for your 5 favorite strategies.

1. Establish a community-wide canopy goal and tree-planting campaign that prioritizes tree planting efforts on public right-of-way where the canopy is less than 10%. Incorporate these into the 2025 Comprehensive Plan (32 votes)
2. Update the zoning code to require a maximum impervious surface limit or minimum pervious surface cover by zoning class and landscaping and tree canopy cover minimums for all parking lots (25 votes)
3. Reactivate the Central Falls Tree Advisory Board to oversee the development and implementation of a Tree Standard Manual that can easily be updated to include best practices for tree planting, care, and maintenance (19 votes)
4. Maintain a public tree inventory that documents tree species, size, health (pests/disease), and empty tree pits or potential de-paving sites (17 votes)
5. Hire a certified arborist to have on retainer or as full-time staff to review development plans, enforce tree protection and planting regulations, and manage contractors (16 votes)
6. Establish a city-sponsored tree giveaway program that targets parcels with the opportunity to plant one or more trees with the greatest ability to soak up stormwater (16 votes)
7. Seek funds to add more plantable spots on narrow streets (there are different methods to do this, and they should be explored) (11 votes)
8. Develop a webpage on the city website dedicated to the City’s urban forestry program that provides the public with basic information (8 votes)
9. Use data to develop a Parks & Open Space Master Plan (8 votes)

Question 2: Are you interested in participating in future tree events in Central Falls?

Survey respondents are likely to participate in future tree-related events: 54% are interested in getting involved in the neighborhood tree committee, the tree stewards course, and/or community tree-planting events.

Canopy Goal and Implementation Strategies

Recent national data show urban and suburban tree canopy cover is trending downwards at a rate of **175,000 acres lost per year** – approximately 36 million trees lost annually (Nowack and Greenfield 2012). Trees are lost due to development, disease, storms, and old age. Central Falls is no exception. Fortunately, this loss can be offset by planting new trees, increasing the canopy by 1% to a citywide average of 19%, and this plan outlines strategies to do so.

Canopy Goal

The City of Central Falls’ goal is to increase tree canopy coverage by 1% to a citywide average of 19% over the next 10 years. Achieving this goal requires a coordinated effort by both the City and private property owners. Since City-owned land (including streets and sidewalks in the public right-of-way) accounts for about 20% of the total land area, the City is committed to planting 20% of the trees needed to increase the canopy by 1%. The remaining 80% will need to be planted on private property by residents, businesses, and developers. At an annual estimated tree loss of 25 trees, the City will need to plant 20 trees per year on City-owned land to account for both losses and gains. The City must also engage private landowners and businesses through outreach, education, and tree giveaways to encourage planting another 78 trees per year on private property.



Community partners like Groundwork RI are helping meet the goal of increasing canopy in the City by planting trees along city rights-of-way. Photo credit: Groundwork RI

Central Falls Goal— Increase tree canopy coverage by 1% to a citywide average of 19% over the next 10 years

Top Objectives to Achieve This Goal

1. Estimating annual tree loss at 25 trees, the City will plant 20 trees per year on city-owned land.
2. The City will engage private landowners and businesses through outreach, education, and tree giveaways to encourage planting 78 trees per year on private property.
3. A tree planting campaign will be developed in partnership with the community to achieve the goal.



As this is a new program, the first few years of planting may be less and then a gradual increase in effort will be needed. As the City’s capacity and the urban forestry program expand, the number of trees planted each year is expected to increase. A tree planting campaign will be developed in partnership with the community to achieve the goal.

The tree canopy goal and objectives for Central Falls’ urban forest are on the following pages. These, and other practices, will provide long-term care, protection, and best planting practices for the urban forest, and will ensure that investments in city trees pay dividends by reducing stormwater runoff, cleaning the air and water, lowering energy bills, raising property values, and providing natural beauty long into the future.



It is important to get the wider Central Falls community involved in efforts to plant and care for trees. This will ensure greater survival of trees and the success of increasing canopy throughout the city. Photo Credit: LISC

Objectives and Strategies

Goal: Increase tree canopy cover by 1% to 19% over the next 10 years.

1

Objective 1: Establish a community-wide canopy goal and tree-planting campaign targeting streets with low canopy.

Over 80% of the city's roadways have 10% tree cover or less. A community-wide goal targeting street trees helps the City stay accountable to its residents. Incorporating this goal into the Comprehensive Plan codifies it and holds the City accountable for monitoring and reporting progress to the State.

Action: Prioritize tree-planting efforts on public rights-of-way (ROW) where the canopy is less than 10%.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, and the Office of Constituent Services and Health.

Action: Incorporate the canopy goal into Central Falls 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development

Action: Create a tree species list suitable for planting along streets.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Tree Warden



Increasing tree canopy along streets is important to create a more walkable community. This data can help the city strategically identify priority streets for new planting efforts.

2

Objective 2: Update the zoning ordinance and make corresponding changes to the land development regulations to require a maximum impervious surface limit or minimum pervious surface cover by zoning district.

Over half of the city's land area is impervious. An impervious surface limit or minimum pervious surface would require more landscaping and pervious surface incorporation into parking lots, which can reduce urban heat and local flooding.

Action: Establish landscaping and tree canopy cover minimums for all parking lots.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Planning Board, and City Council

Action: Use recent land cover data to assess appropriate impervious surface maximums based on zoning district.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Planning Board, and City Council

Action: Update land development regulations to ensure that plan review procedures include calculations of impervious surface that correspond to the updated zoning ordinance.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Planning Board



Limiting the amount of concrete and asphalt in the city creates more space for trees and vegetation that help soak up stormwater and cool the city. This can discourage residents from over-paving their property.

3

Objective 3: Revive the Central Falls Tree Advisory Board to develop a Tree Standards Manual and support urban forest activities.

The City's current tree ordinance requires an active Tree Advisory Board to advise and educate on issues pertaining to trees in Central Falls. The advisory board is no longer active. This strategy would encourage the reactivation of the board to comply with the tree ordinance and charge the board with the responsibility to develop the Tree Standard Manual, which is currently listed as a duty of the advisory board (Sec. 32-12. Tree Ordinance). The Manual could be referenced in the City's tree ordinance and easily be updated to include guidelines for tree planting and care.

Action: Advertise and recruit new residents to the Tree Advisory Board.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Mayor's Office

Action: Oversee the development of a Tree Standard Manual that includes best practices for tree planting, care, and maintenance.

Responsible parties: Central Falls Tree Advisory Board, and Tree Warden

Action: Periodically review and update the Tree Standard Manual over time.

Responsible parties: Central Falls Tree Advisory Board, and Tree Warden



A Tree Standard Manual could include best practices for tree pruning to improve tree health.

4

Objective 4: Maintain a public tree inventory that supports long-term urban forest management.

In the summer of 2024, the Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment completed a tree inventory of all public trees in Central Falls. An up-to-date tree inventory can help the City plan for pests and diseases and develop a management plan for its urban forest.

Action: Designate a responsible party to maintain public tree inventory data.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Central Falls Tree Advisory Board, and Parks & Recreation

Action: Update inventory with new tree plantings, pruning history, health (pests/disease), and empty tree pits or potential de-paving sites.

Responsible parties: Tree Warden, Central Falls Tree Advisory Board, Planning and Economic Development, and Parks & Recreation



A public tree inventory provides important data on tree species, health and maintenance needs.

5 Objective 5: A paid employee will be an International Society of Arboriculture certified arborist.

A tree professional, as a dedicated paid staff member, will be responsible for ensuring that plans and policies that affect trees are implemented and enforced.

Action: As opportunities arise to rewrite a job description for either Planning, Parks & Recreation, or a Public Works position, include International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist as a prerequisite qualification or provide the opportunity for training.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Parks & Recreation

Action: Review development plans, enforce tree protection and planting regulations, and manage contractors.

Responsible parties: Certified arborist/Tree Warden

6 Objective 6: Establish a city-sponsored tree giveaway program that targets parcels with the greatest ability to soak up stormwater.

This objective aims to increase tree cover on private property and reduce local flooding. The tree giveaway program would prioritize outreach and education to property owners with room for one or more trees where conditions are best for reducing local flooding.

Action: Identify parcels that have room to plant one or more trees and soils that infiltrate stormwater runoff.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development

Action: Allocate funds in the City's annual budget or apply for a grant for a City-sponsored tree giveaway.

Responsible parties: Mayor's Office, City's Director of Development and Strategic Partnerships, Planning and Economic Development, and City Council

Action: Outreach to owners and advertise the tree giveaway event. Create a webpage for residents to register for the trees.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development and Tree Warden

Action: Hold the tree giveaway event in a central location and give away smaller-sized tree stock (5 gallons or smaller) to make the event more accessible and easier for residents to take trees back home.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Central Falls Tree Advisory Board, and Tree Warden

7 Objective 7: Establish a policy that limits tree removals on private property.

Establishing a significant tree policy would require the City to review and issue permits to remove large, healthy trees on private property and to ensure that the removal is for reasonable cause. This minimizes tree canopy loss by retaining as many large healthy trees as possible.

Action: Update the city's tree ordinance to require permits for all tree removals on private property and strict standards for removals of large-sized, significant trees.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, Law Department, and City Council

Action: Update the online permitting process to notify Planning and Economic Development when a property owner applies for a permit to remove a large-sized, significant tree.

Responsible parties: Code Enforcement, and Planning and Economic Development

Action: Establish tree mitigation requirements for large-sized significant trees that must be removed.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development and Code Enforcement.

Action: Update the land development regulations to reflect tree mitigation requirements for the removal of trees of any size.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development



8 Objective 8: Seek funds to increase soil volume and plantable space for public trees.

A curb bump out is one example of a sidewalk modification that reduces pedestrian crossing distances while adding opportunities for plantable space. It can also reduce vehicular speeds and create better site lines that enhance visibility and safety between drivers and pedestrians.

Action: Identify potential sites for increasing soil volume and plantable space for public trees.

Responsible parties: Public Works, and Planning and Economic Development

Action: Apply for assistance from the Rhode Island Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment to install Permavoid structural cells at identified sites.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development

Action: Install pilot Permavoid structural cells and monitor long-term tree health and growth compared to other sites.

Responsible parties: Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment, and Groundwork RI



Large trees need ample room to grow both above ground and below. Trees given adequate soil volume for their roots will live longer and avoid damaging sidewalks and other infrastructure.

9 Objective 9: Create an urban forestry webpage for the City that provides tree-related information and links to educational sources.

A designated page on the City's website could include important information about Central Falls' urban forestry program, contact information, and more.

Action: Compile urban forest educational material and links to share tree-related information with the public.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Tree Advisory Board

Action: Develop an urban forestry webpage on the City's website.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Mayor's Office

Action: Periodically update the webpage with urban forestry related news and events. Connect the webpage to the City's social media.

Responsible parties: Planning and Economic Development, and Tree Advisory Council (content)



Conclusion

Central Falls has new data and strategies in this plan to guide the management of its urban forest. Implementing these tree strategies will ensure that current and future residents enjoy the continued benefits of trees and a healthy, sustainable, and beautiful city for all.

This plan is a living document intended to be integrated into ongoing staff work plans, annual budgets, grant proposals, and partnerships with external agencies. It is recommended that an implementation committee or Tree Board meet at least quarterly to document the plan's progress and adapt its strategies as needed.



Appendixes

Appendix A: Funding Opportunities

For tree campaigns to be successful, there must be dedicated funds. These funds can come from a variety of sources, including federal, state, local, and private resources. Examples of these opportunities are listed below.

Rhode Island Division of Forest Environment

<https://dem.ri.gov/natural-resources-bureau/agriculture-and-forest-environment/forest-environment/urban-and-community>

- Tree Equity RI Grant Program
- Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program
- Community Design Assistance

Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank

<https://www.riib.org/solutions/programs/climate-resilience>

- Municipal Resilience Program
- Stormwater Project Accelerator

Rhode Island Foundation

<https://rifoundation.org>

- Donations to a public entity must be held in a trust or endowment

Rhode Island Commerce

<https://commerceri.com/main-street-ri-streetscape-improvement-fund>

- Main Street Rhode Island Streetscape Improvement Fund

Arbor Day Foundation

<https://www.arborday.org>

- Distributes various tree planting grants aimed to increase tree canopy in communities or aid communities recovering from natural disasters in restoring their urban forest.

New England Environmental Finance Center

<https://neefc.org/environmental-funding-navigator/>

- A dynamic list of grants, loans, tax credits, and other financing options that support environmental work across New England.



Appendix B: References

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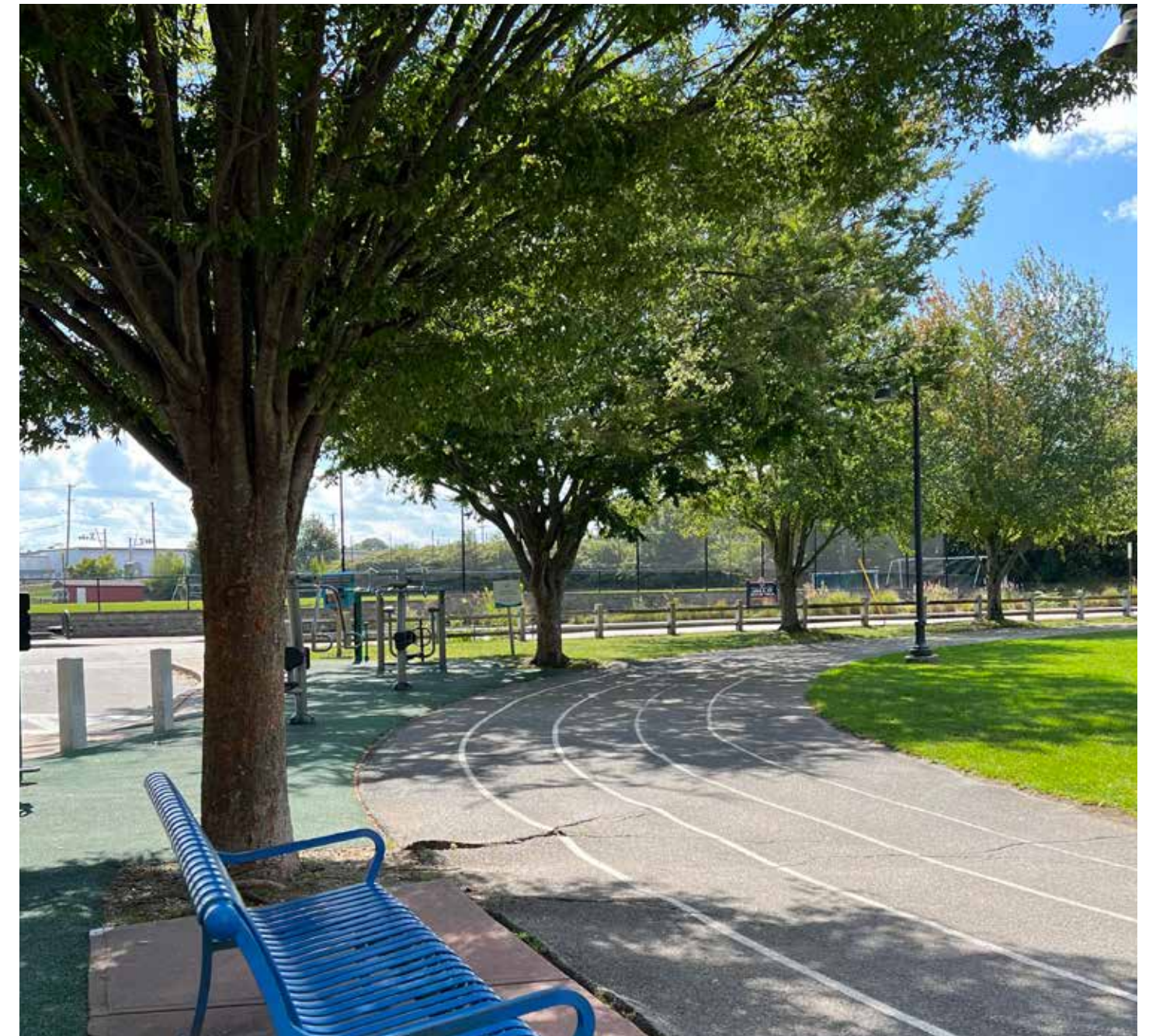
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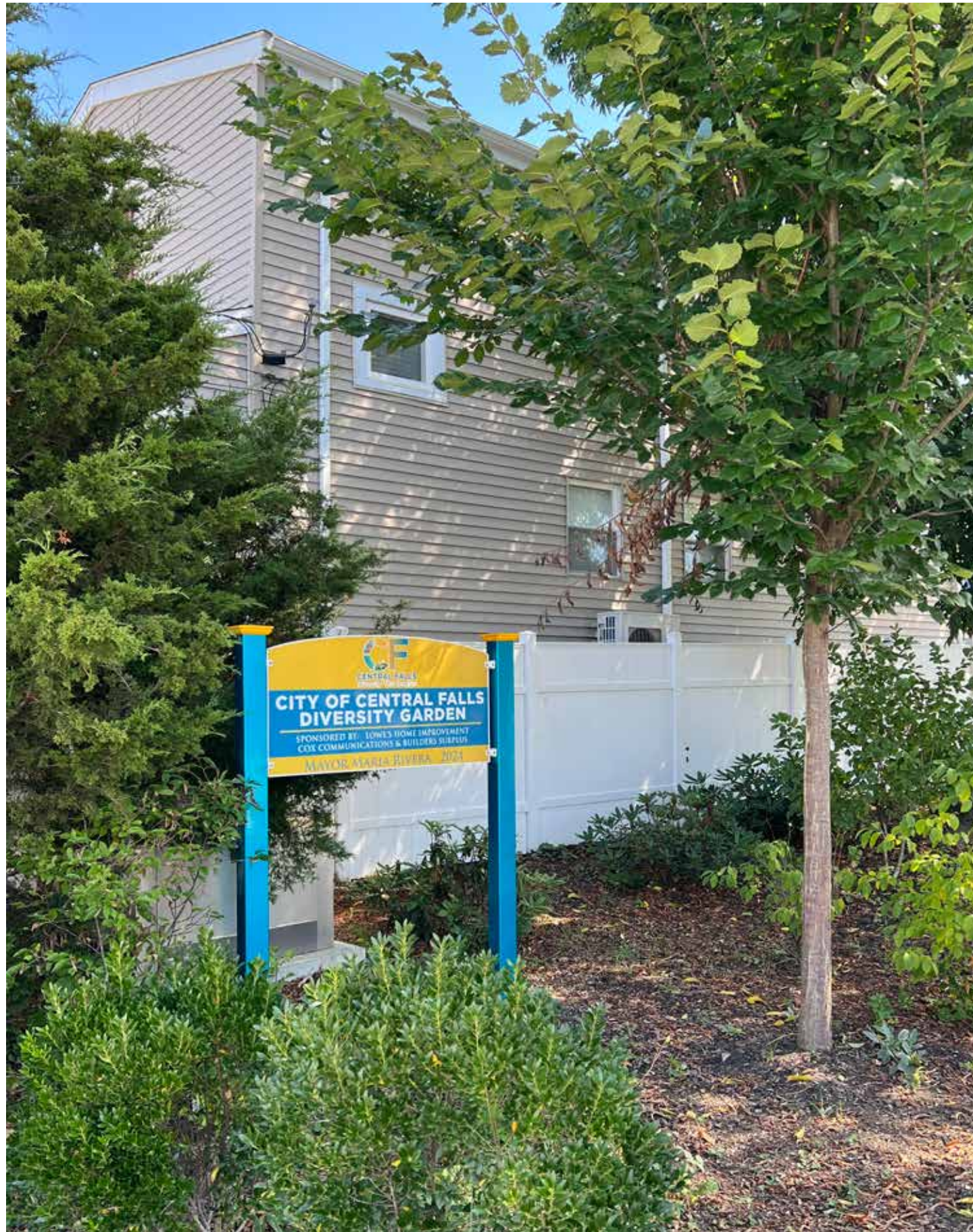
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Appendix C: Community Feedback

The following questions were posed to the community at 3 different events in 2024:

- Central Falls Tree Canopy Open House
- Blackstone Academy classroom
- Health Equity Zone Community Learning events & collaborative meetings

Here is a compilation of all questions and public input from the survey.

Q2. Are you interested in volunteering for future tree planting events in Central Falls?

Response	Votes
Yes	19
No	16

Q1. Pick your 5 favorite strategies for Central Falls' Tree Canopy.

Strategies	Votes
Establish a community-wide canopy goal and tree-planting campaign that prioritizes tree planting efforts on public right-of-way where the canopy is less than 10%. Incorporate these into the 2025 Comprehensive Plan	32
Update the zoning code to require a maximum impervious surface limit or minimum pervious surface cover by zoning class, and landscaping and tree canopy cover minimums for all parking lots	25
Reactivate the Central Falls Tree Advisory Board to oversee the development and implementation of a Tree Standard Manual that can easily be updated to include best practices for tree planting, care, and maintenance	19
Maintain a public tree inventory that documents tree species, size, health (pests/disease), and empty tree pits or potential de-paving sites	17
Hire a certified arborist to have on retainer or as full-time staff to review development plans, enforce tree protection and planting regulations, and manage contractors	16
Establish a city-sponsored tree giveaway program that targets parcels with the opportunity to plant one or more trees with the greatest ability to soak up stormwater	16
Seek funds to add more plantable spots on narrow streets (there are different methods to do this, and they should be explored)	11
Develop a webpage on the city website dedicated to the City's urban forestry program that provides the public with basic information	8
Use data to develop a Parks & Open Space Master Plan	8

