Current Programs, Projects, and Initiatives

Current programs, projects, and initiatives are categorized in the table below according to whether they apply to public and/or private land, and according to their impact on Edmonton's urban forest. Information on funding has been included where relevant.

- ➔ **Grow:** Programs, projects, and initiatives that contribute to the growth of the urban forest. This includes but is not limited to planting new trees.
- ➔ **Preserve:** Programs, projects, and initiatives that support the preservation of existing trees.
- ➔ **Maintain:** Programs, projects, and initiatives to maintain the health and vitality of the urban forest.
- ➔ **Monitor:** Programs, projects, and initiatives for monitoring and collecting data on the urban forest.

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
City-led Planting and Stewardship			
Greener As We Grow Initiative: (2023 - 2030) This Initiative will enable the planting of over two million trees and shrubs by 2030 on 300 hectares of land. This includes approximately 900 new boulevard and open space trees, 3,000 replacement park and boulevard trees, and 400,000 naturalization trees and shrubs (40 hectares) annually. **The Greener As We Grow Initiative includes:** ➔ **Capital Planting (2021 - 2023):** Supporting The City Plan goal of planting two million new trees and the Urban Forest Asset Management Plan's canopy coverage goal by: • developing a new mapping tool GIEM (Green Infrastructure Expansion Mapping) which enables the identification, selection, and prioritization of public lands for naturalization and tree planting using Geographic Information System (GIS) and spatial analysis of each of the proposed 15 City Plan Districts; and	**Grow, Preserve**	☑	✗

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
• creating a new Naturalization, Restoration and Reclamation Plan to enable the identification, selection, and prioritization of public lands for naturalization and tree planting. This plan will replace the 1994 Roadways and Parks Naturalization Master Plan. ➔ **Urban Tree Canopy Expansion Project (2021-2023):** Concluded in 2023, this project planted boulevard and open space trees, as well as trees in naturalization/restoration project areas to increase the number of trees on public land in alignment with The City Plan's two million trees target. **Funding:** Funded through CM-35-1000 Greener as We Grow Tree Planting Program which provides $66.8 million in funding, allocated as matching funding for the federal government's 2 Billion Trees grant of approximately $48 million. This funding also covers the Root for Trees program, doubling volunteer tree planting opportunities compared to what was funded from 2019-2022. Maintenance of new trees was not funded through the CM-35-1000 Greener as We Grow Tree Planting Program. Additional resources would be required to support ongoing maintenance of new trees planted through the Initiative. **Status:** Ongoing			
Increasing Trees Through Capital Projects Net gain of new trees through capital projects including the development of new infrastructure such as bridges, playgrounds, and park renewal in alignment with tree canopy targets established in the Urban Forest Asset Management Plan.	**Grow, Preserve**	✅	❌

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
This also includes increasing trees through EPCOR capital projects such as the installation of dry ponds on surplus lands. Tree preservation in addition to new trees are considered in the design process. **Status:** Ongoing			
Increasing City Owned Planting Sites Using Surplus Land Corporate land assets may be transferred to the Parks or Transportation inventory and retained as a City-owned planting site to preserve and enhance the existing canopy. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow**	☑	✗
Tree Replacement Program for Boulevard and Open Space Trees Approximately 6,000 boulevard and open space trees are replaced annually. Replacement plantings are informed by Annual Tree Health Assessments. Replacement trees are carefully selected to ensure the right tree is planted at the site. Funding: 3,000 of the replacement planting completed annually are funded through the Greener as We Grow Profile / 2BT Grant. 3,000 replacement plantings annually are funded through CM-35-0000 Open Space: Soft Landscaping: Renewal. **Status:** Ongoing	**Maintain**	☑	✗
Education and Stewardship Programs			
Education and Stewardship Programs Education and stewardship-focused planting programs enable residents, community groups and businesses to help with growing Edmonton's forest canopy, including on private property.	**Grow, Preserve**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Root for Trees engages volunteers in planting native species of trees and shrubs within publicly-owned naturalized areas across the city. The program is operational between May and October. - Root for Trees currently offers registered and drop-in tree planting programs, in addition to special events, such as National Tree Day. - Root for Trees collaborates with the City's Indigenous Relations Office and Indigenous stakeholders on hosting events such as Connecting with our Roots, Heartland Planting, and native tree and shrub giveaways on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. **The Grow Together Program** works to expand and diversify the urban forest through partnerships with communities interested in planting more trees within their neighbourhood. **The Commemorative Tree Program** offers Edmontonians an opportunity to commemorate an individual or event through the installation of a park tree. **The Request to Plant Program** works to preserve and expand the urban forest through partnerships with community groups, individual residents, and local businesses. Edmontonians can plant a tree on public property themselves or provide a monetary donation. **The Tree Donation Program** offers Edmontonians an opportunity to donate a privately owned tree to the City for planting on public property. **Front Yards in Bloom** showcases healthy plants, trees, and gardens on private property. Programs are advertised using various communication channels. Presentations, workshops, and reference materials are provided to community leagues, schools, university students, conservation groups, builders and developers through outreach efforts and requests for presentations. Presentations are tailored to meet the audience's objectives and learning goals.			

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Status: Ongoing			
Neighbourhood Design and Development			
New Neighbourhood Development New trees are brought into the City's inventory as new neighbourhoods are developed. New neighbourhoods are the largest contributor of new boulevard and open space trees annually. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow**	☑	✘
Review of the City's Design and Construction Standards A review of the City's Design and Construction Standards is underway in collaboration with the development industry and utility companies, including: ➔ **Volume 5: Landscaping -** Evaluating standards for tree types, numbers, and placement in public spaces to support ecological diversity and urban aesthetics, aligning with updated naturalization guidelines. ➔ **Volume 2: Complete Streets** - Reviewing integration of street trees to boost urban greenery and environmental quality. ➔ **Volume 3-02: Stormwater Management and Design Manual** - Provides design direction for low impact development (LID) including the design of soil cells to enhance tree health in urban streetscapes. **This review includes exploring strategies to expand Edmonton's urban canopy such as:** ● Partnering with EPCOR for low-impact development in new neighborhoods ● Exploring options to enable treed boulevards on local roads ● Increasing tree species diversity, soil volume, and naturalization, including climate-resilient tree species to ensure survival in future climate	**Grow**	☑	✘

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
• Adjusting offset requirements to balance trees, utilities, and infrastructure **A preliminary set of climate resilience recommendations was developed to guide updates to the standards.** The recommendations aim to enhance climate resilience in open spaces, targeting benefits such as improved stormwater management, soil stabilization, and reduction of urban heat islands. <u>Status:</u> Ongoing			
Neighbourhood Renewal Program The Neighbourhood Renewal Program provides a strategic approach to renew and rebuild roads, sidewalks and street lights, as well as identify planting areas in mature neighbourhoods and along local and collector roadways. **The Program provides an opportunity to, conserve, maintain, and grow Edmonton's urban canopy by:** • Increasing tree planting spaces and naturalization on public land • Considering the retention of trees during the design and construction process • Planting new trees in alignment with the City's canopy targets • Increasing soil volumes for new trees through incorporating low-impact design techniques in partnership with EPCOR Efforts are made to work with private property owners to retain trees on private property that may be located close to the property line and are within proximity to neighbourhood renewal work. The program includes pre-construction watering and post-construction care for trees that are planted or impacted by renewal. <u>Status:</u> Ongoing	**Grow, Preserve**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Infrastructure Renewal Projects Trees, shrubs and naturalization are protected, maintained, and replaced as part of open space, facility, roadway, and other infrastructure renewal projects. In alignment with the City's Infrastructure Asset Management Policy and associated Asset Management Plans, the renewal of all asset types allows the City to renew and rebuild infrastructure while helping ensure protection of the City's existing urban canopy. Where possible, renewal projects associated with open space, facilities, roadways and other infrastructure make efforts to conserve, maintain, protect, or replace by: ● Considering the retention of trees during the design process ● Increasing soil volumes for new trees through incorporating low-impact design techniques in partnership with EPCOR **Status:** Ongoing	**Preserve**	☑	✗
Land Acquisition Natural areas and tree stands are brought into the City's tree inventory through the land development application process as new neighbourhoods are developed. Privately owned land in the river valley is also acquired for naturalization. Efforts are made to identify and acquire large, high-quality natural stands as new neighbourhoods are developed. Stands are acquired through Municipal Reserve, and tree retention is balanced against other parkland priorities such as schools and playgrounds. Additional trees may be retained through Environmental Reserve when sites meet the criteria outlined in Section 664(1) of the *Municipal Government Act* such as slope instability and flood risk. Dedicated funds may be used to acquire stands through direct purchase using one of the City's reserve funding sources including: ● Funds in Lieu of Reserve Account - supports the acquisition of parkland in residential areas	**Preserve**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
• Parkland Purchase Reserve Account - supports the acquisition of river valley land for park purposes • Natural Area Reserve Fund - supports the acquisition of priority natural areas that might not be acquired through dedication **Status:** Ongoing			
Site-Specific Natural Area Management Plans A Site-Specific Natural Area Management Plan (SSNAMP) complements the city-wide Natural Area Management Plan, by providing site-specific guidance to support the ongoing management and stewardship of retained tree stands. This helps preserve tree health and associated ecosystem services. A SSNAMP is typically prepared as part of the development process when new natural areas are zoned in advance of transferring them to City ownership. However, where irregular land acquisitions may not have gone through this process, SSNAMPs are prepared on a case-by-case basis. **Status:** Ongoing	**Preserve**	☑	✗
Climate Adaptation and Resilience			
Climate Resilience Planning and Development Action Plan Developing a list of critical actions to integrate climate resilience within the City's planning and development spectrum through updates to regulations, policies, and processes and the development of new planning tools and resources. **Options being explored to expand Edmonton's urban canopy as a part of the Action Plan include:**	**Grow**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
• Opportunities to increase compliance with the Zoning Bylaw's landscaping requirements for new developments • Public education, partnerships, capacity building, and other initiatives to increase resilient landscaping on private properties • Reviewing Zoning Bylaw regulations in consideration of climate resilience **Funding:** A service package was approved via the 2023-2026 Operating Budget to advance the Action Plan. **Status:** In progress at the time of writing this report. An update on the Action Plan to the Urban Planning Committee was scheduled for October 29, 2024.			
Climate Risk Index Spatial assessment of local climate resilience indicators. This includes mapping city trees and infrastructure that influences localized resilience. The results of this assessment can inform policy and planning decisions and help identify where additional efforts can be directed to support planning and adaptation measures, such as preserving tree stands or planting new trees. This project develops a scientifically robust, evidence-based measurement system—a Climate Risk Index (CRI)—to help the City of Edmonton periodically: • Assess and track exposure, vulnerability, risk, and resilience to climate change and variability across time at city and sub-city scales. • Compare units of analysis (e.g., neighbourhoods across the city and assets and services within a neighbourhood) across space in particular geographic areas. • Guide policy decisions, set priorities, target resources, and manage progress toward climate change resilience and adaptation goals.	**Monitor**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Status: The Index is in the final stages of development at the time of writing this report, with an estimated completion in Q3 2024.			
Corporate and Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory The City completes an annual greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory to quantify GHG emissions from corporate operations and from all sources and sinks within the City boundary. The GHGs sequestered are considered when determining the corporate and community net GHG emissions footprint and target achievement. The corporate inventory includes the estimated annual GHG sequestration from boulevard and open space trees. The community inventory includes the estimated annual GHG sequestration from undeveloped natural lands within the City boundary. **Status:** Ongoing	**Monitor**	☑	☑
Wildfire Risk Assessments Wildfire risk assessments are conducted in natural stands. Specific areas may receive vegetation management to mitigate risk while preserving the ecological integrity of the natural stands and are then monitored. A Wildland Urban Interface Wildfire Risk Strategy is currently in development to ensure there is a strategic approach for mitigating wildfire risk. **Status:** Ongoing	**Monitor, Preserve**	☑	✗
Zoning Bylaw Requirements and Incentives			
Zoning Bylaw Landscaping Regulations and Incentives Zoning Bylaw 20001 includes minimum tree planting requirements for new residential, commercial, and industrial development and incentives to preserve mature trees by substituting a ratio of new trees required for the development with existing trees on site.	**Grow, Preserve**	☑	☑

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
As part of Zoning Bylaw Renewal, landscaping requirements and incentives to retain existing trees were enhanced by: • Increasing the number of trees and shrubs required within setbacks for new large-scale residential developments • Increasing the number of trees and shrubs required in parking areas along walkways and increasing space for trees in landscaped parking islands • Introducing a new requirement for a minimum amount of soft landscaping area for small-scale residential sites • Increasing the ratio of existing trees that can be substituted for new trees beyond what was available under the previous zoning bylaw **Status:** Ongoing			
Review of Zoning Bylaw Landscaping Regulations To further implement the Climate Change Planning and Development Action Plan, landscaping requirements in Zoning Bylaw 20001 will be reviewed in consideration of greater climate resilience. **Options for amendments to landscaping regulations will be presented as a part of the Zoning Bylaw 20001 One-year Review and may include examining options for:** • Incorporating drought-resistant plant species and native species • Increased tree count and canopy coverage • Increased naturalization and soft-scaping **Status:** In progress. A report will be provided to Urban Planning Committee in June 2025.	**Grow**	☑	☑
Inspections and Compliance			

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Landscape Securities and Inspections Landscape securities are collected to ensure that the minimum landscaping requirements outlined in the Zoning Bylaw are met on private property. Securities are collected for all non-residential development, mixed-use development, and residential development with more than 5 dwellings. Securities are collected at the time landscaping is installed and are held until Administration confirms via inspections that the required landscaping has been provided per the approved Development Permit and has been maintained in a healthy condition for a minimum of 24 months. If landscaping is not provided, then Administration draws on securities to procure the missing landscaping. A review of this process has found only 19 per cent of securities are collected promptly, and 63 per cent of sites sampled have deficiencies in the number of trees and shrubs installed upon first landscape inspection. **Work is underway to develop an updated, simplified, and transparent process for collecting and returning landscaping securities to increase rates of compliance.** A report will be provided to the Urban Planning Committee on October 29, 2024 that will recommend changes to the landscaping securities process. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow**	❌	☑
Public Tree Bylaw 18825 Edmonton's Public Tree Bylaw preserves and protects the urban forest by requiring physical protection measures around City trees and their root zones when construction and excavation activities are happening nearby. The bylaw came into effect on May 1, 2022, and only applies to trees located on City-owned land. Under the bylaw, a Public Tree Permit is required for any work done within five metres of the trunk of a Boulevard and Open Space Tree or within ten metres of a Natural Stand boundary.	**Preserve**	☑	❌

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Permit applications include the submission of a Tree Preservation or Tree Protection Plan which is approved by a City of Edmonton Urban Forester. **Status:** Ongoing			
Strategic Planning and Policy Direction			
Breathe Implementation Breathe will guide future planning to ensure all neighbourhoods are supported by high-quality, accessible, connected open spaces. Breathe will update and create new open space standards and guidelines, guiding City Administration, developers and external partners for open space planning, design and management. This involves creating provision measures to evaluate open space supply, distribution, quality, and diversity, and establishing provision standards that cater to various neighbourhood contexts (e.g. industrial, redeveloping, developing). **Status:** Ongoing	Grow	☑	✗
River Valley Planning Modernization The River Valley Planning Modernization Project proposes to renew strategic planning, processes, and regulatory tools for the River Valley and Ravine System. The project, if approved, will see the renewal of the Ribbon of Green Strategic Plan, originally adopted in the early 1990s, and the North Saskatchewan River Valley Area Redevelopment Plan, originally adopted in 1985. Both plans are being updated to reflect contemporary planning challenges, land use planning principles and practices, environmental conservation practices, and community engagement approaches in the River Valley. Both plans include policies that seek to limit the loss of vegetation and habitat in the River	Grow	☑	✗

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Valley by limiting development, mitigating impacts of development, and encouraging restoration and offsetting when disturbance can't be avoided. **Status:** Ongoing			
District Planning The District Planning project recently created an overarching District Policy and a plan for each of Edmonton's 15 districts, providing policy direction that guides Edmonton's redevelopment as the city grows to 1.25 million people. The District Policy provides direction which encourages built form and open space design that preserves and expands the urban tree canopy. It also provides policy direction to expand the urban tree canopy by increasing tree plantings in parks and along roadways, including local and collector roadways internal to neighbourhoods. The district plans also map out Urban Greenways (transportation routes with enhanced landscaping) and Habitat Greenways (vegetated corridors that support ecological connectivity). **Status:** City Council approved the new District Policy and 14 district plans. The plans are in effect as of October 2, 2024. Council will still consider the Rabbit Hill District Plan, at a future public hearing.	**Grow, Preserve**	☑	☑
Guidelines			
Tree Diversity Guidelines An urban forest that is high in species diversity will be more tolerant of insect and disease issues and promote a sustainable urban forest. The City of Edmonton Landscaping Design and Construction Standards ensure that species diversity must be considered during the planning and development of a neighbourhood or site. Tree Diversity guidelines will be reviewed as a	**Grow**	☑	✗

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
part of the updates to Volume 5: Landscaping Design and Construction Standards. **Status:** Ongoing			
Urban Design Guidelines for Residential Landscaping Work has begun to develop urban design guidelines for small-scale and low-rise residential development projects such as row housing and multi-unit housing to supplement new regulations in Zoning Bylaw 20001. This work may include developing best practices for landscaping to guide applicants during the site planning stage and support Administration in reviewing applications. **Status:** In progress	**Grow**	☑	☑
Partnerships			
Research The City has partnered with the University of Alberta to conduct research that will support an informed, long-term vision to ensure that the City's canopy goals are achievable. Research has been initiated to evaluate strategies for private tree planting. Additional research projects with the University of Alberta or other research institutes that explore the contributions of private actions to urban forest growth and preservation in Edmonton will be considered. **Status:** In progress	**Grow, Preserve**	✕	☑
Ongoing Maintenance and Monitoring			
Boulevard and Open Space Tree Pruning Most boulevard and open spaces trees are pruned on a five-year cycle, except coniferous trees and disease-prone trees. During pruning, trees are assessed for health and structural defects that may not be visible from the ground.	**Maintain**	☑	✕

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Status: Ongoing			
Pest Management The City of Edmonton utilizes Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to prevent and, where necessary, control pests. This includes pests that may impact the health and condition of the urban forest. Inspections are conducted to assess and address any potential insect or disease issues that could impact the urban forest on an ongoing basis. Integrated Pest Management Action Plans are currently being developed, including plans for Dutch Elm Disease and Emerald Ash Borer. **Status:** Ongoing	**Maintain, Monitor**	☑	✗
Recurring Canopy Assessments Recurring canopy assessments using aerial imagery and LiDAR data to determine the percentage of Edmonton's canopy coverage. The last assessment was conducted in 2019 and is scheduled to occur on a four-year cycle in alignment with requirements outlined in the Urban Forest Asset Management Plan. Recurring canopy assessments are used to monitor the amount of canopy lost or gained to monitor against the 20 per cent canopy coverage target outlined in the Urban Forest Asset Management Plan. **Funding:** Funding has been provided for the 2025 assessment through the Tree Reserve. Ongoing funding will be required to continue assessments on a four-year cycle. **Status:** Ongoing, next assessment planned for 2025	**Monitor**	☑	☑
Annual Tree Health Assessments Annual assessments to provide updated condition ratings for viable trees and identify trees	**Monitor**	☑	✗

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
for removal that will eventually be replaced through the Backlog Replacement Planting or Tree Replacement Program. Assessments are conducted geographically. The east side of Edmonton is assessed during even years, for example, 2024, and the west side in odd-numbered years. Using the tree health assessment data, ongoing evaluation and tracking of mortality by age, planting year, and species is possible. Tracking data is used to determine trends to improve tree establishment and survival rates. **Status:** Ongoing			
Natural Areas Ecological Monitoring and Inspections Plant health, wildlife, soil and disturbance metrics are assessed to monitor the health and condition of existing natural areas and tree stands over time. Plots are established and assessed every 5 years. Inspections occur yearly throughout the natural areas. **Funding:** Unfunded, may generate impacts for capital investment to restore natural areas identified as poor condition. **Status:** Ongoing	**Monitor**	☑	✖
Naturalization Plant Health and Soil Monitoring Naturalization plant health monitoring and soil testing are conducted to monitor the vitality and sustainability of the newly installed seedling trees and shrubs, through a rigorous assessment of health indicators, species diversity, growth patterns, and soil quality. All Naturalization projects planted after 2023 will be monitored annually under this program. **Status:** Ongoing	**Monitor**	☑	✖
Collaboration with EPCOR			

Program, Project, or Initiative	Impact	Public	Private
Stormwater Utility Credit Program Industrial, commercial and institutional properties are able to apply for a monthly credit on their stormwater bill if their properties have on-lot stormwater management systems. This includes elements such as parking lot storages, underground tanks, rooftop storages or low impact developments (LID), or if their property has a significant amount of soft-scaped area that absorbs runoff. While the program does not specifically target tree installation, it does provide incentives for soft-scaping and LID, which can indirectly promote tree installation on private properties. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow, Preserve**	❌	☑️
Low Impact Development (LID) on Private Property Through the Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan, EPCOR is collaborating with industrial, commercial, institutional and large multi-family residential properties to install LID on private property. While the program's primary goal is to improve stormwater management and reduce flood risk, these types of installations often have tree installations as a secondary benefit. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow**	❌	☑️
Low Impact Development (LID) on Public Property As part of the Stormwater Integrated Resource Plan, EPCOR and the City have been collaborating on installing LID on City-owned land, including within the road right-of-way. LIDs are installed in cooperation with Building Great Neighbourhoods and as part of other major City capital projects, such as LRT and at City facilities such as recreation centres and fire halls. While the program aims to improve stormwater management and reduce flood risk as its primary goal, these types of installations often have tree installations as a secondary benefit. **Status:** Ongoing	**Grow, Preserve**	☑️	❌