



ELLENSBURG'S URBAN FOREST: TREES, COMMUNITY, AND PLANNING

September 24, 2025



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Defining Ellensburg's Urban Forest



Street Trees: 5,775



City Parks and Facility Trees: 1,550

- **What is an Urban Forest?**

- The urban forest includes all trees within Ellensburg's city limits, such as:
 - Street trees in the right-of-way
 - Park trees in public spaces
 - Trees on CWU's campus
 - Residential yard trees
 - Commercial landscaped trees
 - Trees along creeks, rivers, and natural corridors

Why the Trees in Ellensburg Matter

- **Benefits of Trees**

- Cleaner Air
- Shade
- Energy Saving
- Wildlife Habitat
- Beauty
- Rainwater Capture



THE VALUE OF ELLENSBURG'S URBAN FOREST



MENTAL HEALTH

People without views of nature from their desks claimed 23% more sick days than workers with views of nature.

TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFITS

Ellensburg's trees annually provide **\$285,409** in ecosystem benefits.



CLEANER AIR

\$114,157

Each year, Ellensburg's roadside trees remove 18.53 tons of particulate matter.



CARBON STORAGE

\$3,723,226

Ellensburg's urban forest stores 21,832 tons of carbon.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

\$61,862

Ellensburg's trees intercepts about 6.8 million gallons of runoff annually.



CARBON SEQUESTRATION

\$109,390

In one year, Ellensburg's mature trees absorb 642 tons of CO₂ from the atmosphere.



What is a Street Tree?

Answer

False. The ROW often extends several feet past the curb, including the strip between the curb and sidewalk (and sometimes even a bit into what looks like someone's yard).



- Right-of-Way
 - Land set aside for streets, sidewalks, utilities
 - Usually extends a few feet beyond the curb or pavement edge into what looks like a “yard.”
- Street Tree
 - All trees growing within the public right-of-way
 - Typically located between the curb and sidewalk, or along the street where no sidewalk exists.
 - The city regulates all planting, trimming, and removal of trees in the right-of-way.
 - Ellensburg Code of Ordinances: Chapter 4.36 – Street Trees

Who Takes Care of Our Trees?

- **Street Trees**
 - City maintenance includes:
 - Trees planted as part of city projects
 - Most trees in the Central Business District
 - Trees adjacent to city-owned facilities
 - Property owners are generally responsible for street trees next to their property, with City oversight.



Choosing and Planting Trees Wisely



- **Right Tree, Right Place**
 - Match species to site conditions (soil, sun, water, space)
 - Consider mature tree size and root spread
- **Tree Diversity Goals**
 - No more than 10% of any single species
 - No more than 20% of any single genus
 - Encourages resilience against pests and disease
- **Approved Street Tree List**
 - Compatible with Ellensburg's climate and growing conditions
 - Examples: Honeylocust, Serviceberry, Eastern White Oak, Ginkgo
- **Do Not Plant List**
 - Weak-wooded or invasive trees
 - Species prone to disease or sidewalk damage
 - Examples: Siberian Elm, Willows, Tree-of-Heaven, Russian Olive



Arbor Day Tree Giveaway Program

- **A Community Tradition Since 1982**
 - Over 750 street trees planted through the program
 - Since 2024: 68 residential trees added to private yards
 - More than 40 years of growing Ellensburg's canopy
 - First Tree City USA in Washington State
- **Why It Matters**
 - Expands Ellensburg's urban forest every year
 - Creates shade, improves air quality, and reduces stormwater runoff
 - Engages the community in caring for and growing our urban forest





The poster for the 2025 Arbor Day Tree Giveaway features a background image of a person planting a tree. The title 'Arbor Day Tree Giveaway' is in large green letters, with '2025' in a yellow box. The text is organized into sections with green and yellow backgrounds.

Arbor Day Tree Giveaway 2025

The City of Ellensburg invites you to participate in the Arbor Day Free Tree Program. Right-of-way and private residential trees are available. The City covers the cost—you just pick up, plant, and care for your tree!

Event Dates
Applications Open: APRIL 7th—25th & Last Day to Pick Up Trees is **May 4th**

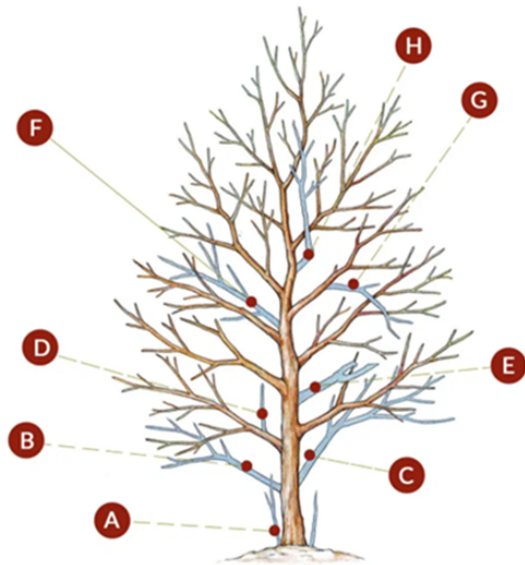
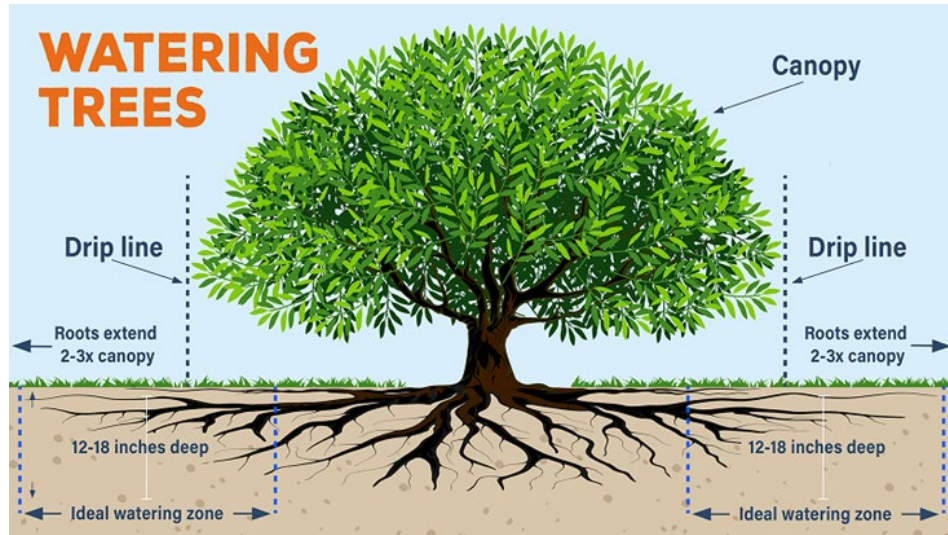
Applications Available
CITY HALL
PUBLIC WORKS
501 N Anderson St

Contact
PUBLIC WORKS
(509) 962-7230

811
Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

City of **Ellensburg**
WASHINGTON

Growth Award
TREE CITY USA
By the American Forest Society



what to prune from a tree

- A** Suckers that grow from the roots of base of the trunk
- B** Limbs that sag or grow close to the ground
- C** Branches that form an acute angle with the trunk
- D** Watersprouts that shoot up from main "scaffold" branches
- E** Limbs that are dead, diseased, or broken
- F** Branches that grow parallel to and too close to another
- G** Branches that cross or rub against other branches
- H** Limbs that compete with the tree's central leader

Question?

When is the best time of year to plant a tree in Washington State?

Updating the City's Tree Plan



Park Tree Inventory

Ellensburg's first park tree inventory
Estimated 6,000 trees in developed park areas



Urban Forestry Management Plan

A long-range plan for street and park trees
Removal and replacement plan for the Historic District



Tree Ordinance Update

Update and replace the existing ordinance



Street Tree Section in Public Works & Utilities Development Standards

Minimum standards and details for tree care and protection
Easily inserted into civil plans



Public Outreach & Education Materials

Brochures for tree planting, pruning, and removal
Field guide for Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park

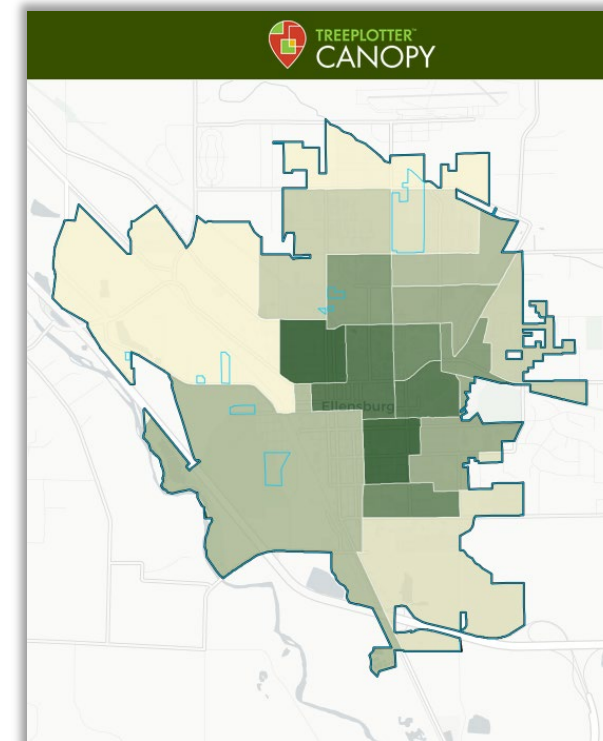
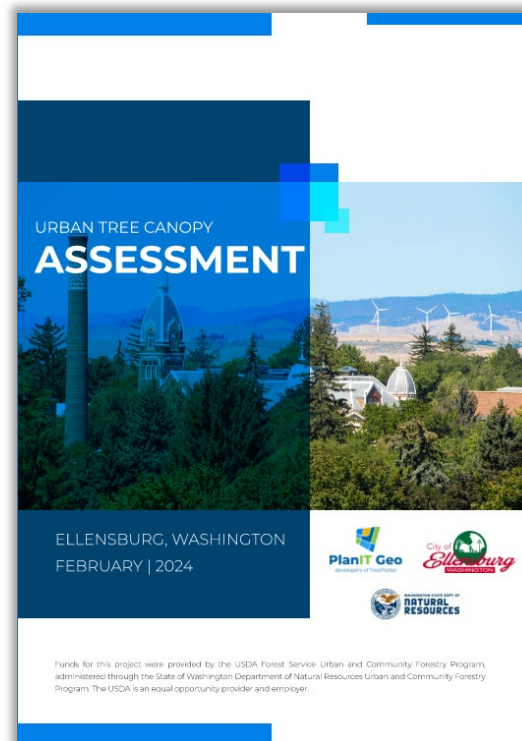
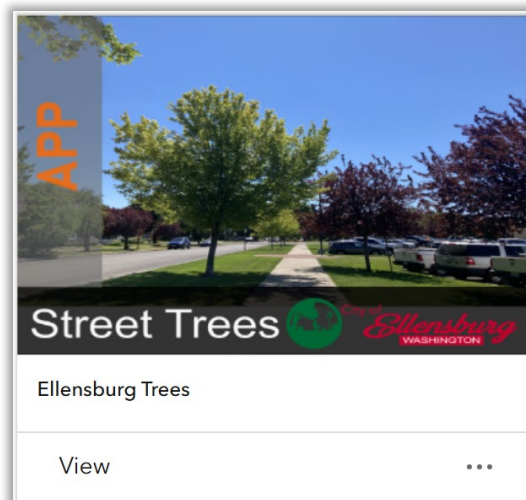
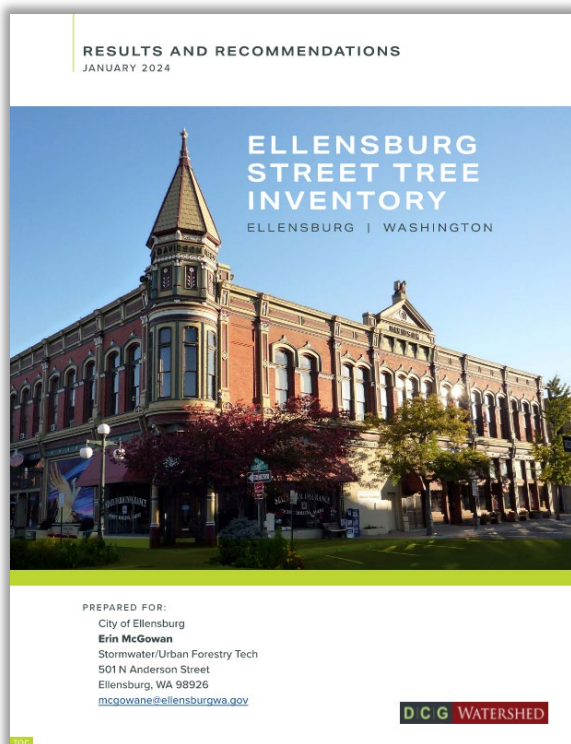
Public Outreach & Feedback



- **How We Reached People:**
 - Urban Forestry Survey: July 12th – August 31st
 - 547 survey responses
 - Community Events:
 - Touch-A-Truck June 19th
 - Ellensburg Farmers Market July 12th
 - Youth Gladiator Dash August 2nd
 - National Night Out August 5th
 - Kittitas County Fair August 28th & 29th
 - Urban Forestry Project Working Group
 - September meeting; workshop a vision statement ideas for the Urban Forest Management Plan
 - November meeting; review and comment on proposed tree ordinance updates
- **What We Learned:**
 - 84% think trees are as important as other infrastructure
 - Most people want to see more trees planted along sidewalks & streets, parks, and new developments

Learn More & Explore Tree Data

- **Urban Tree Canopy Assessment**
 - State of the Canopy and Key Findings
 - Quantifying Ecosystem Benefits
- **TreePlotter CANOPY Software**
 - Parcel Level Tree Canopy Data
- **Street Tree Inventory Report**
 - Field Data Collection Results
 - Future Maintenance Recommendations
- **Street Tree Inventory Online Map**
 - Street Tree Identification



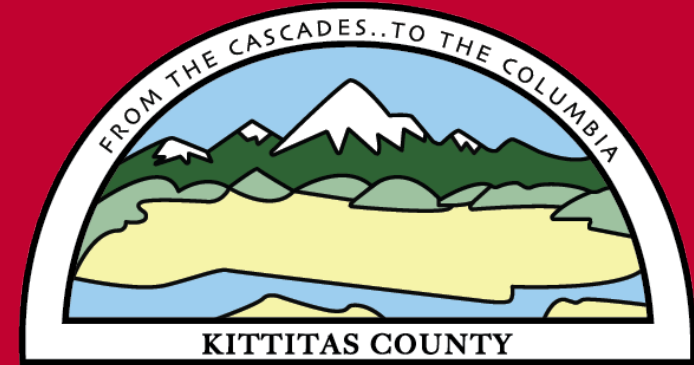
Looking Ahead...

- Update and adopt the new Urban Forest Management Plan & Tree Ordinance
- Expand the Arbor Day Program to increase participation
- Continue street tree planting with City road improvement projects
- Increase public education on tree permits, care, and benefits

Healthy Urban Forests = Healthy Communities



Noxious Weed Control in the City of Ellensburg



Marc Eylar, Assistant Coordinator
Kittitas County Noxious Weed Control
Cell 509-929-7308
Marc.eylar@co.kittitas.wa.us

What is a Noxious Weed?

- Non-native, invasive plant.
- Ability to invade natural areas and dominate plant communities.
- Pose a threat to Washington's environment and economy.
- Generally difficult to control.
- Listed by the State Noxious Weed Control Board.
- Landowner control is required.



Noxious Weeds vs Obnoxious

- **Noxious Weeds**

- Non-native, Invasive Plants
 - Destructive
 - Competitive
 - Difficult to control
 - Landowner control is required by RCW

- **Obnoxious Weeds**

- Plants that are a pain in the Neck!
 - Can be non-native or native
 - Sometimes difficult to control, but generally are managed relatively easily
 - Landowner control is not required by RCW but may be by city or county code.





Washington Weed Laws

- **RCW 17.10 and 17.04**
 - Limit the economic loss due to the presence and spread of noxious weeds
- **WAC 16.750**
 - Defines the state weed list, weed classifications, and schedule of monetary penalties
- **WAC 16.752**
 - Defines the prohibited/quarantined plant list



City of Ellensburg Code of Ordinances

5.40.080 - Specific public nuisances declared.

5.40.080

C. Overgrown or unkempt vegetation, which shall be maintained as follows:

1. No owner of property within the city shall allow the overgrowth of vegetation, or allow the accumulation of any such vegetation which has died, on any lot, parcel, or tract of real property within the city limits, including parking strips and/or nontraveled portions of the public right-of-way abutting upon private real property, and which may pose a fire hazard or endanger the public health, safety, or welfare.



WHO YOU GONNA CALL???



Kittitas County Noxious Weed Control - 509-962-7007

- All concerns regarding noxious weeds
- Plant ID or questions regarding any plants in general
- Questions regarding toxic plants
- Control recommendations
- Site visits

City of Ellensburg Code Enforcement - 509-962-7282

- All concerns regarding the overgrowth or accumulation of grass, weeds, shrubs, bushes, trees or any other vegetation.

Thank you!



**Slides will be posted on the City website
and link emailed to all registrants.**