

State of the Urban Forest

UFC-UF IDT Joint Meeting 2023

October 2023

Office of Sustainability & Environment



City of Seattle

Vision

A Seattle where everyone—starting with those most harmed by inequities—has access to trees and the benefits they provide and where we keep our trees and forest healthy and thriving in the face of a changing climate. Part of this vision is achieving our goal of at least **30% canopy coverage that is equitably distributed across the city by 2037.**



Key 2023 Milestones

- Assessments
 - Canopy cover
 - City urban forestry investments SLI
- Policy updates
 - Tree ordinance
 - Executive Order
- Capacity
 - Grant funding
 - New positions



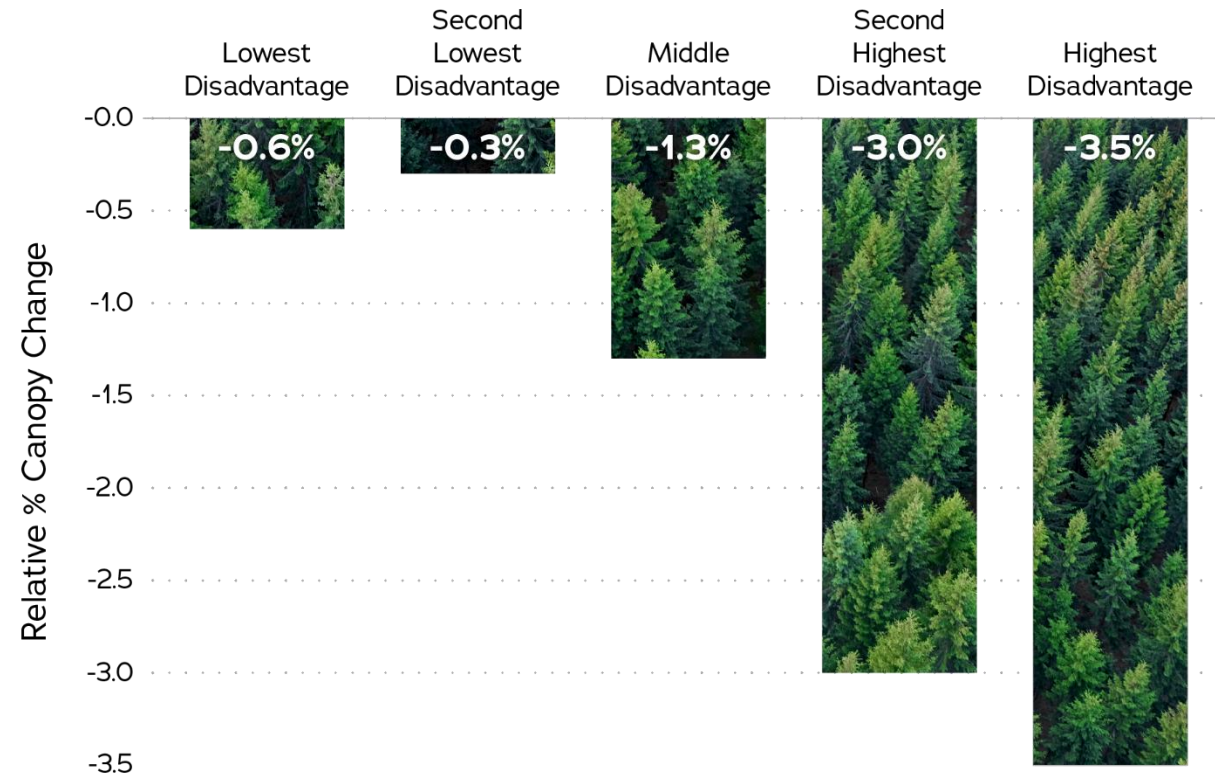
Assessments

Canopy Cover Assessment Key Findings

- **We are slowly losing ground.** We lost 255 acres of canopy (net) - this is as big as Green Lake and represents a relative decline of -1.7% over 2016 canopy.
- **Loss is happening inequitably.** Neighborhoods impacted by racial and economic injustice started with less canopy and lost more than the citywide average,
- **Trees are critical climate infrastructure, helping to mitigate extreme heat.** Trees help our communities adapt to a changing climate, protecting us from extreme heat. On hot days, temperatures are higher in areas with lower canopy cover.
- **Forested parks and residential areas saw the greatest net losses.** All management units lost canopy, led by Neighborhood Residential and Parks Natural Areas. Combined, losses in these areas comprise 78% of the total canopy loss.

Highest disadvantaged areas started with less tree canopy and saw the highest losses

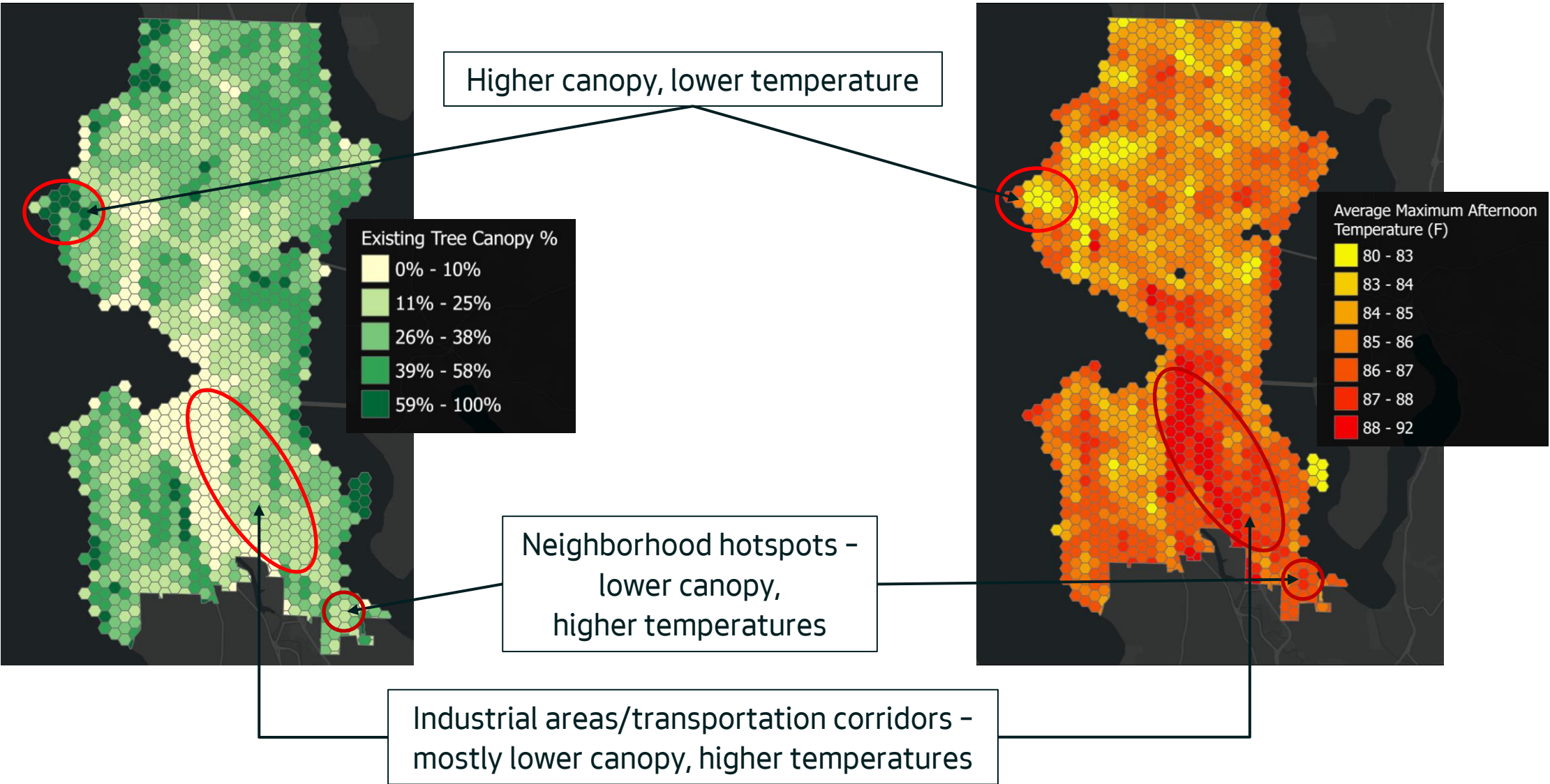
Relative percent canopy change from 2016-2021 by RSE Index category



- The highest losses were in the highest disadvantage categories.
- By 2021, canopy in these areas was 31% lower than the areas in the two lowest categories of disadvantage.

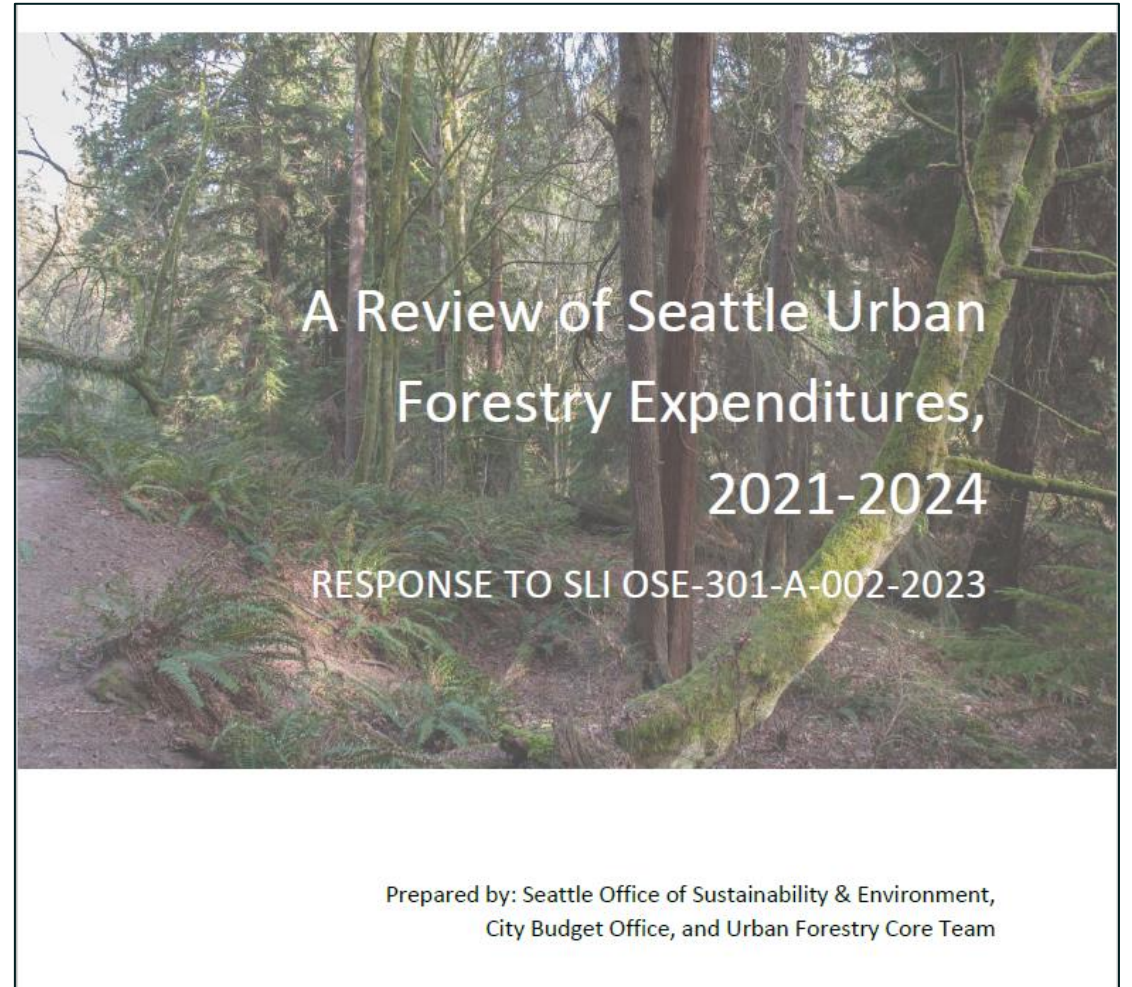
*The **race and social equity composite index**, produced by the Office of Planning and Community Development, includes data on race, language, origin, socioeconomic disadvantage, and health disadvantage. It is used as a tool for City planning, program, and investment priorities. More information can be found at: <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/NSF/Race%20and%20Social%20Equity%20Map.pdf>

Temperatures are higher in lower canopy areas



City UF Investments Statement of Legislative Intent

- Highlights
 - Annual funding ranged from almost \$21M to over \$25M
 - Increase of 23% 2021-2024
- Report will serve as baseline for continued reporting



Policy Changes

2023 Tree Ordinance

- Updates SMC Chapters 25 and 23 regarding trees on private property
- Additional elements
 - Reporting on use of payment-in-lieu
 - Strategies for reducing financial burden on homeowners
 - Set up One Seattle Tree Fund

One Seattle Tree Plan Executive Order

- Updates replacement requirements
- Introduces replacement requirement for dead/hazard trees
- Updates and increases reporting by city departments



City of Seattle

Mayor Bruce Harrell

Office of the Mayor

City of Seattle

Bruce A. Harrell, Mayor

Executive Order 2023-03: One Seattle Tree Plan: Growing and Fostering an Equitable Tree Canopy on Public Land

An Executive Order directing City departments to protect and grow our City's tree canopy by developing and enacting specific actions to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of climate change and invasive pests on trees found within City of Seattle property to address equity concerns and to protect our environment.

Funding/Capacity

Grant Funding

- Combined city project - \$12M
 - Community engagement
 - Natural area restoration
 - Job training/career pathways
- SDOT project - \$900k
 - Delridge Native Forest Garden project

Urban and Community Forestry Grants - 2023 Grant Awards



<p>City of Seattle*</p>	<p>Delridge Native Forest Garden: The Delridge Native Forest Garden will enhance approximately four acres of City-owned parcels and unimproved rights-of-way in the Longfellow Creek basin in West Seattle. The project will remove invasive species and plant native conifers and understory plants with cultural significance to regional Tribes. The project will include a footpath, and planting will be coordinated with local communities to provide educational and volunteer opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Planting & Maintenance • Restoration & Resilience • Planning & Community Engagement 	<p>\$900,000</p>
<p>City of Seattle - Office of Sustainability & Environment</p>	<p>Growing Seattle: Community-driven urban forestry and job training: This project will leverage longstanding partnerships to improve the health of Seattle's urban forest and people. This project will implement tree planting and stewardship across priority neighborhoods, train youth with green economy skills and connect them with employment, plant trees, and restore forested spaces in parks, near public housing, and public school lands.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Planting & Maintenance • Workforce Development • Planning & Community Engagement 	<p>\$12,000,000</p>

Urban Forestry Staff Capacity - New Positions

- OSE - Sr. Urban Forestry Strategic Advisor
- SDCI - 3 positions included in tree ordinance
- SDOT - 1 position included in tree ordinance