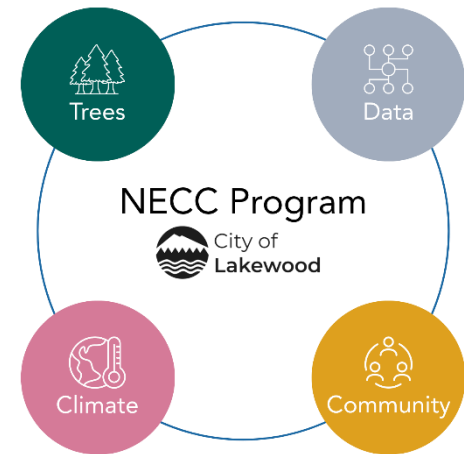


# Natural Environment and Climate Change (NECC) Program Overview

**4/1/26 Planning Commission**

Tiffany Speir, Planning Division Manager  
Planning & Public Works Department



In recent years, Lakewood has adopted policies, regulations, and implementation actions related to energy, climate change, tree retention, and urban forestry.

- **2022: 15-item Three-Year Energy & Climate Work Plan** (Ordinance 776.) This work plan was culled from a larger 89-item action list adopted as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

2022 ECCC 3-year Work Plan	Implementation Measure	Status
1	Establish (and regularly update) a new climate change chapter to the City's Comprehensive Plan	✓
2	Develop a five-year plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions	Ongoing
3	Update the City's Non-motorized Transportation Plan (also referred to as Active Transportation Plan).	✓
4	Clover Creek Floodplain Engineering Alternatives Analysis.	✓
5	Review, and as appropriate, update Lakewood Municipal Code (LMC) Title 14, Environmental Protections. Title 14 provides regulations for geologic hazard areas, flood hazard <u>areas, and</u> critical lands and natural resources. Climate change impacts may require that new regulations be inserted into this chapter.	✓
6	Work with Pierce County and Pierce County municipalities to develop a regional approach and best practices to address climate change. One strategy: adopt revised climate change Pierce Countywide Planning Policies	Ongoing
7	Develop a public engagement plan for climate change (and comprehensive plan periodic update.)	✓
8	Incorporate an environmental justice assessment into the Energy & Climate Change Chapter work plan.	✓
9	Lakewood, as a member of the South Sound Military Communities Partnership (SSMCP), advocate for improvements to the I-5 corridor along the Nisqually Delta at both the state and federal <u>levels</u> .	Ongoing
10	Revise the Lakewood's tree preservation code.	✓
11	Explore the feasibility of reducing the City hall footprint from three floors to two floors (potentially reducing energy consumption.)	✓
12	Every two years, or as otherwise dictated by Washington State, update LMC Title 15, Buildings and Construction Codes to address hazards resulting from climate change.	Ongoing
13	Support the implementation of the Tacoma-Pierce County Solid Waste Management Plan.	✓
14	Coordinate a regional electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy with neighboring cities, Pierce County and the State.	Not started
15	Develop/promote an urban forest management/master reforestation plan.	Ongoing

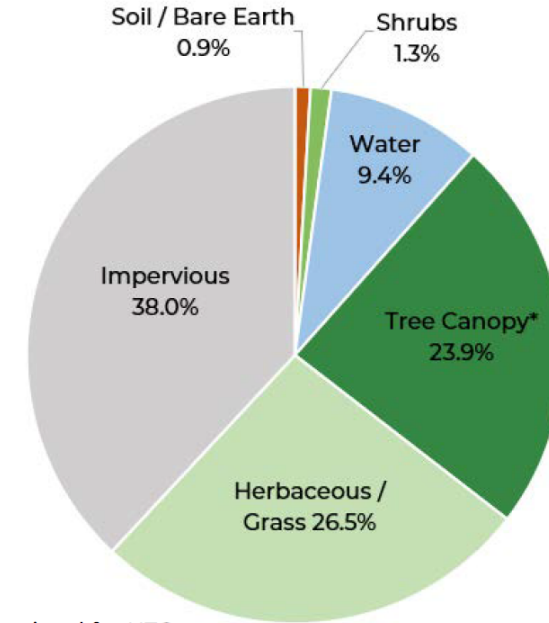
# Tree Canopy Assessment

Previous actions by Lakewood:

- 2022: Tree Assessment

## Lakewood's Land Cover Classification

Grass / Open Space	all surfaces with non-woody vegetation - lawns, cropland, grasses, etc.
Bare Soil	non-vegetated non-impervious cover - snow, sand, barren farmland, rock, etc.
Impervious	impermeable built-up surfaces - roads and transportation infrastructure, sidewalks, buildings, parking lots, etc.
Water	open water - lakes, rivers, streams, sea, ponds, etc.
Tree Canopy	trees
Shrubs	low woody vegetation - early stage or stunted trees



\*Tree Canopy in the Land Classification includes water. This is omitted for UTC.

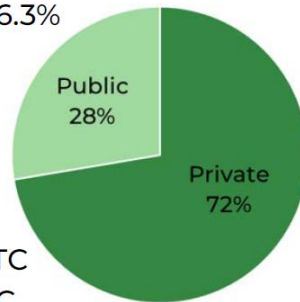
## Tree Canopy Assessment

### Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) Cover

Lakewood's citywide UTC = 26.3%

Of the citywide UTC:

- 72% is on private land
- 28% is on public land

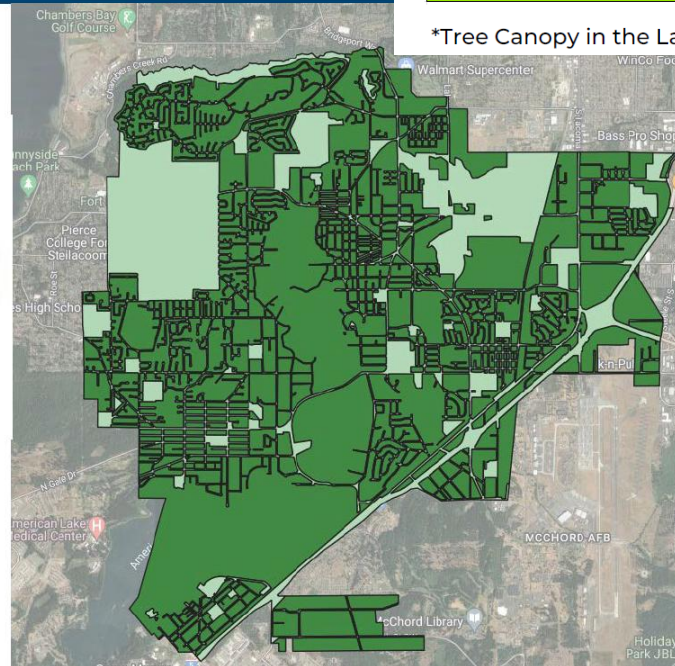


In total:

- 28% of private land has UTC
- 22% of public land has UTC

Lakewood's canopy has grown (2011-2019)!

- UTC gain = 53.5 acres or 0.5%

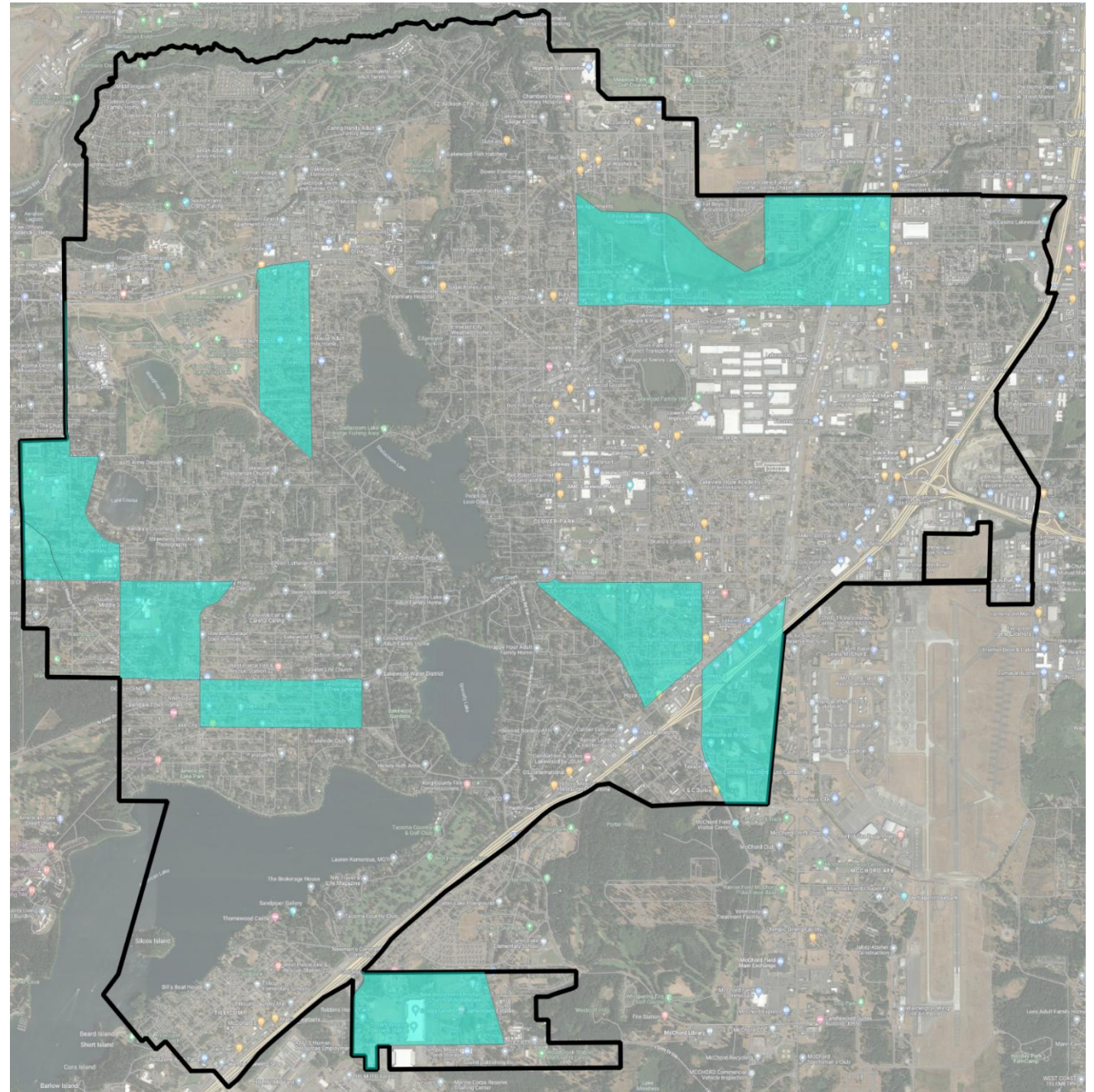


## Previous actions by Lakewood:

### - 2022: Tree Advisory Committee

#### Prioritized tree planting areas based on:

- Tree equity score
- Tree canopy cover <25%
- Surface Temperature
- People of Color
- Possible Planting Area >50%



## Previous actions by Lakewood:

### - **2023: *Establishing the Roots of Urban Forestry in Lakewood, WA: An Implementation Guide***

Provides background research and recommendations on **how to responsibly craft an urban forestry program (UFP.)** It includes best practices, case studies, City resource and administrative capacity assessments, community engagement recommendations, and implementation recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: Develop a mission, vision and goals for an urban forestry program;
- Recommendation 2: Complete a comprehensive resource assessment and begin restoration practices in the City;
- Recommendation 3: Develop a comprehensive community engagement strategy; and
- Recommendation 4: Create administrative capacity within the existing City organizational structure. This recommendation includes several budget templates, monitoring and evaluation guidance, and program evaluation guidance.

## Previous actions by Lakewood:

- **2024:** Comprehensive Plan **Energy and Climate Change Element** excerpts:
  - EC-1 Provide Leadership in Managing Climate Change
    - EC-1.4 Achieve Regional **Greenhouse Gas Emissions** Goals
  - EC-2 Improve Clean and Efficient **Transportation** Options
  - EC-3 Increase **Sustainable** and **Energy-Efficient Systems**
  - EC-4 Encourage Sustainable Development
  - EC-5 Develop a Climate Resilient Community.
    - EC-5.5 Improve the **Urban Tree Canopy**

**Previous actions by Lakewood:**

- **2024:** Comprehensive Plan **Natural Environment Element** excerpts:

NE-6 Maintain an **urban forestry program** to preserve significant trees, promote tree health, and increase tree coverage citywide.

NE-6.1 **Maintain a comprehensive urban forestry program.**

NE-6.2 Encourage the planting and regular maintenance of street trees to enhance urban greenery.

NE-6.3 Provide for the retention of significant trees and tree stands and the restoration of tree stands within the city.

NE-6.6 **Maintain a city tree fund** to preserve wooded areas, restore and enhance native trees, and provide for education and research.

NE-6.7 Work towards a citywide goal of **40% tree canopy cover by the year 2050.**

NE-6.8 Consider opportunities to increase canopy and environmental equity when evaluating tree canopy distribution.

NE-9 Meet applicable **air quality standards** with coordinated, long-term strategies that address different types of air pollution.

NE-9.1 **Reduce air pollutant emissions** through strategies in land use and transportation management.

NE-9.2 **Maintain and increase urban greenery, including trees and other vegetation,** to improve air quality.

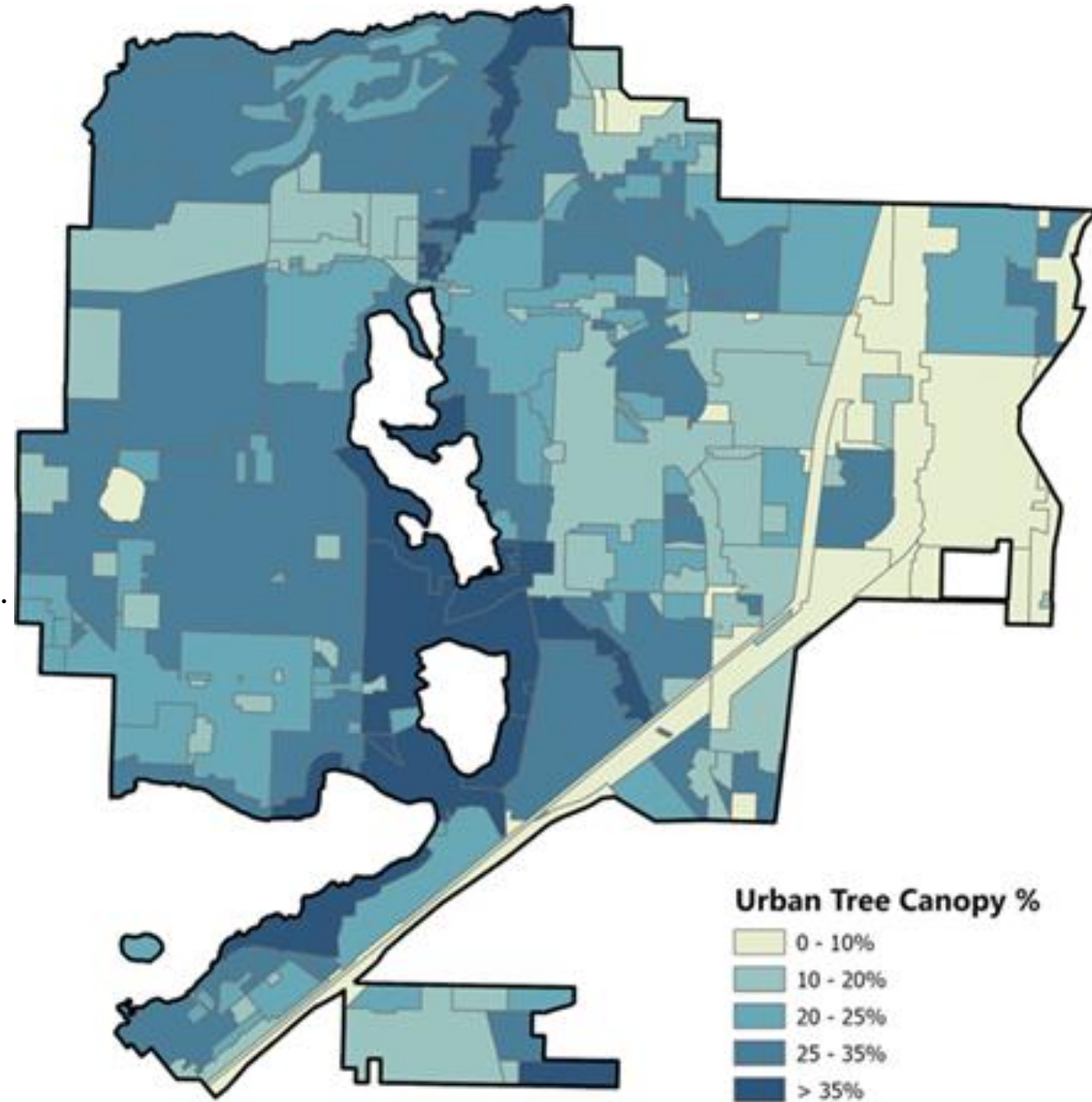
NE-9.3 Reduce air pollution from wood burning by restricting wood-burning fireplaces in new construction.

**Previous actions by Lakewood:**

**- 2024 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment**

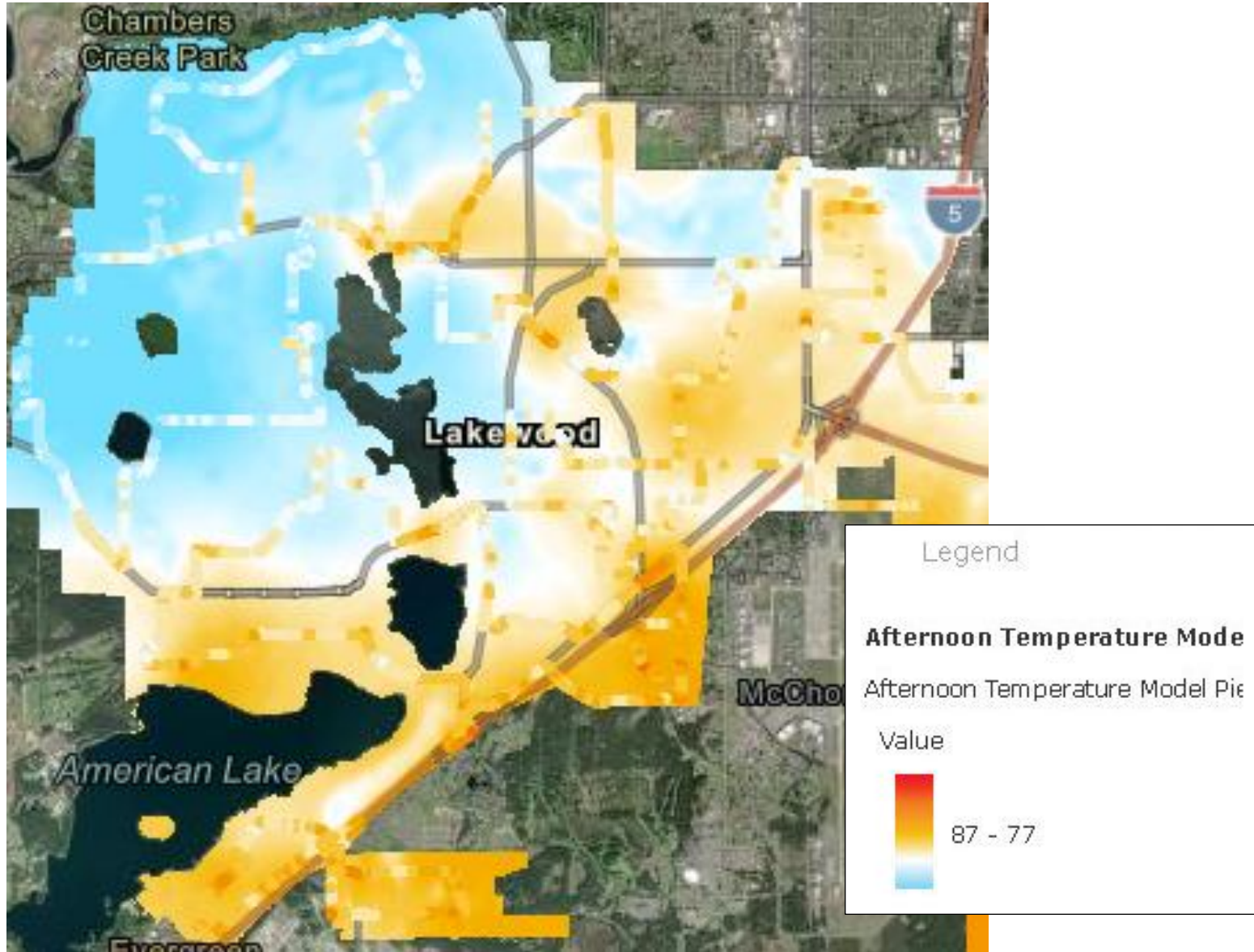
**24.4% citywide canopy cover**

- Residential zones (59% of the city's acreage): 23.3%-48.1%.
- Open space and recreation zones: 17%.
- Commercial and industrial zones: 5.4% - 11.3%.



Previous actions by Lakewood:

- 2024: "Heat Watch Pierce County" Report



## **HB 1181: “Improving the state's response to climate change by updating the state's planning framework”**

In 2023, the State Legislature adopted [E2SHB 1181](#) that amended the GMA and added a significant new body of work for local governments to complete by mid-2029:

- **Lakewood’s Comprehensive Plan, development regulations, and regional plans must:**
  - **support state greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction goals and per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT); and**
  - **foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards, among other requirements.**

Lakewood has been awarded \$700,000 in state grant funds to comply with E2SHB 1181.

### **“Ongoing” or “not started” items from the 2022 Energy & Climate Change Three-Year Work Plan interrelate with required E2SHB 1181 requirements and adopted City goals:**

- Develop a five-year plan for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Coordinate a regional electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy with neighboring cities, Pierce County, and the State.
- Develop/promote an urban forest management/master reforestation plan (UFP.)
- Maintain building and development codes to address climate change hazards.

## HB 1181 5-Year Implementation Schedule for Lakewood

Done

### Completed actions in 2025 Comprehensive Plan Amendment Cycle:

- Update the **Parks & Recreation Element** to include a tree canopy evaluation.
- Update the **Utilities Element\*** to include the general location and proposed location of all existing and proposed utilities, including electrical, telecommunications, and natural gas systems.
- Update the **Capital Facilities Element\*** inventory of existing capital facilities owned by public entities, to include green infrastructure.

\* Capacity analysis of the utilities and capital facilities will be conducted in the 2027-2029 biennium

# HB 1181 5-Year Implementation Schedule for Lakewood

Now

## 2025-2027

- Update the **Energy and Climate Change Element** to include a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) sub-element and climate resiliency sub-element consistent with E2SHB 1181:
  - develop a local greenhouse gas (GHG) emission inventory, conduct a Vehicle Miles Traveled Per Capita (VMT) study, and project GHG emission reductions; and
  - explore expected local climate impacts; audit existing plans and policies for climate resilience opportunities, gaps, and barriers; assess local assets' climate vulnerability and risk; and develop and prioritize science-based climate resilience.
- Update the **Land Use Element** to:
  - include green spaces, urban and community forests. Give special consideration to achieving environmental justice in the element's goals and policies; and
  - reduce and mitigate the risk to lives and property posed by wildfires by using land use planning tools.
- Develop an **Urban Heat Resilience Strategy**.
- Develop **Native & Climate-resilient Planting Plans for Municipal Projects**.
- Finalize the City's **Urban Forest Management/Master Reforestation Plan**.

# HB 1181 5-Year Implementation Schedule for Lakewood

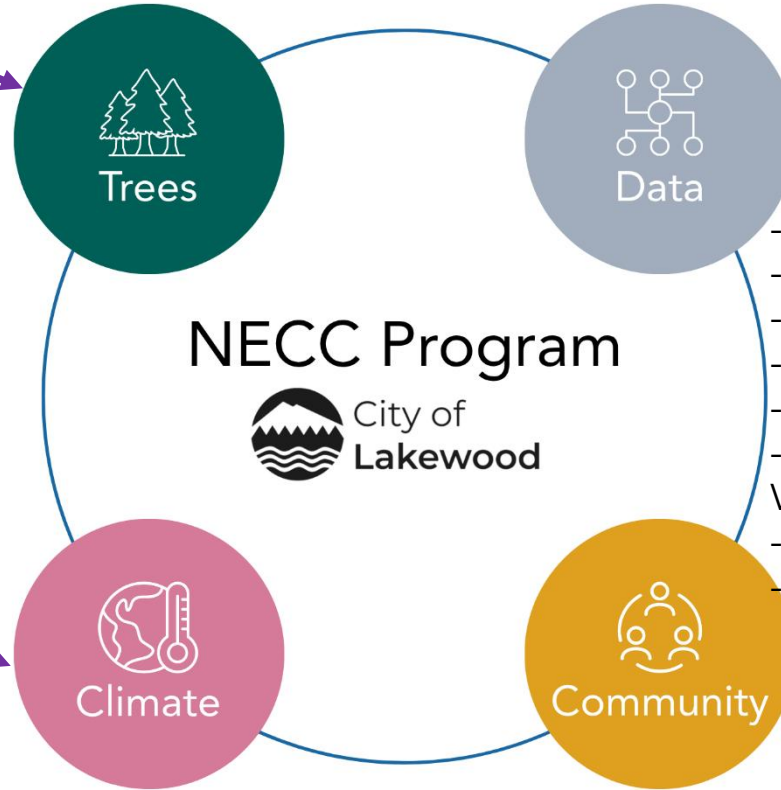
Next

**2027-2029** *(pending state action to award final 2 years of grant funds)*

- Update the **Transportation Element traffic demand forecast** to:
  - address multimodal transportation demand forecasts and needs; and
  - address forecasts of traffic demands and needs outside of the City to inform an element that balances transportation system safety and convenience to accommodate all users of the transportation system to safely, reliably, and efficiently provide access and mobility to people and goods.
- Also update the **Transportation Element** to:
  - include estimated multimodal level of service impacts, giving priority to inclusion of transportation facilities and services providing the greatest multimodal safety benefit to each category of roadway users for the context and speed of the facility;
  - include an inventory of active transportation facilities and multimodal level of service standards for all locally owned arterials, locally and regionally operated transit routes that serve urban growth areas, state-owned or operated transit routes that serve urban areas, and active transportation facilities; and
  - include an Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan.
- Develop an **Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan**.
- Conduct **capacity analyses** for **Utilities** and **Capital Facilities** in Lakewood.

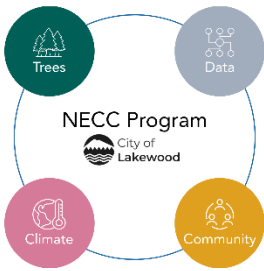
- Comprehensive Plan Goals re Urban Forestry Program
- Comprehensive Plan Goals re Tree Canopy
- E2SHB 1181 requirements

- Comprehensive Plan Goals re Energy & Climate Change
- E2SHB 1181 requirements

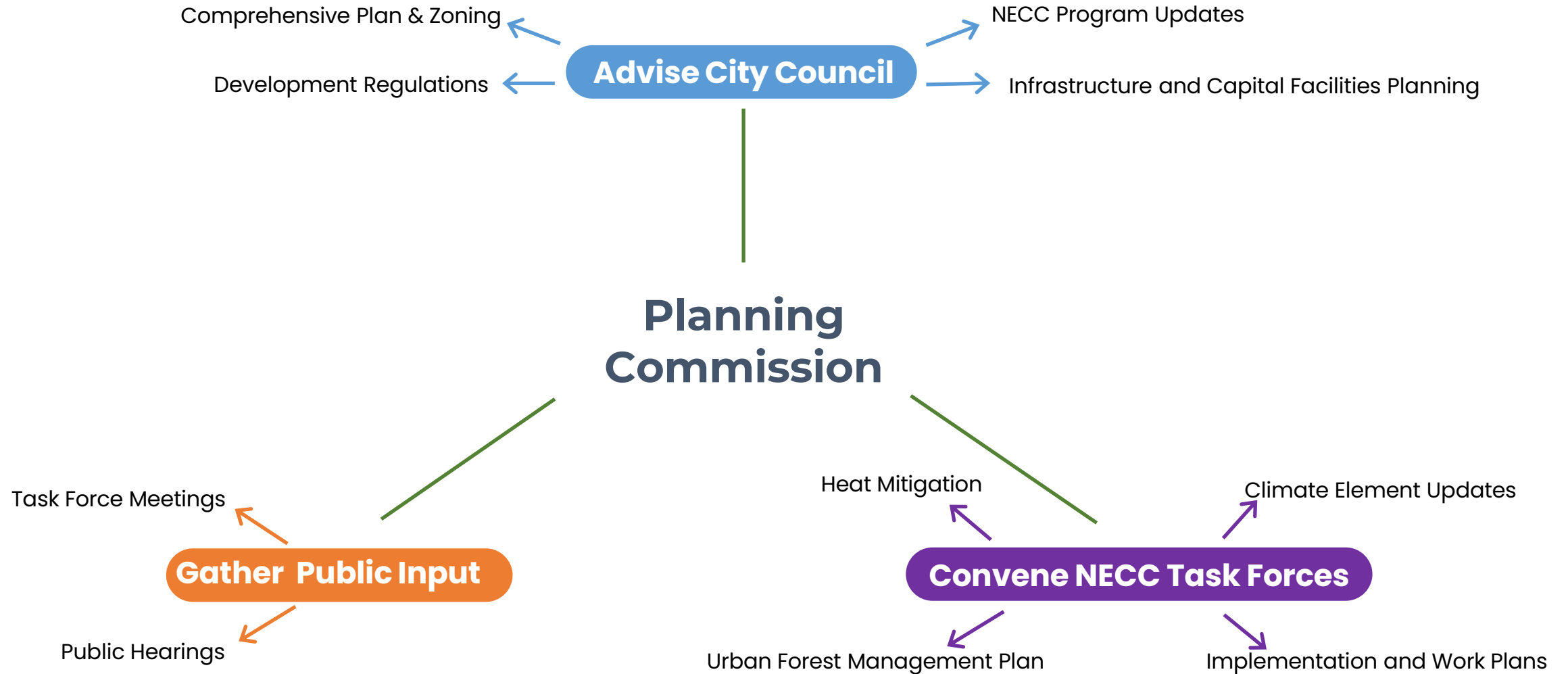


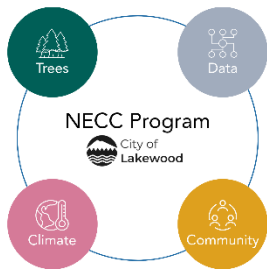
- '21 Energy & Climate Change 89 Actions Items
- '22 Tree Advisory Committee
- '22 Three Year Energy & Climate Work Plan
- '23 Urban Forestry Implementation Guide
- '22 & '24 Urban Tree Assessment Reports
- '24 Pierce County Canopy Analysis and Heat Watch Report
- '26 Lakewood Community Needs Map
- WA State HEAL Map

- '23 Urban Forestry Implementation Guide
- Comprehensive Plan Goals re Public Involvement and Environmental Justice
- E2SHB 1181 Requirements
- '26 City Council Direction



# Planning Commission Role in NECC Program





## Planning Commission Role in NECC Program

### What is the same?

Most of what the Planning Commission will be doing will be the same as it would do for other issues it considers:

- General Planning Issues (e.g., land uses, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and classification of lands as agriculture, forest, mineral lands, critical areas, wetlands and geologically hazardous areas);
- Redevelopment; and
- Transportation

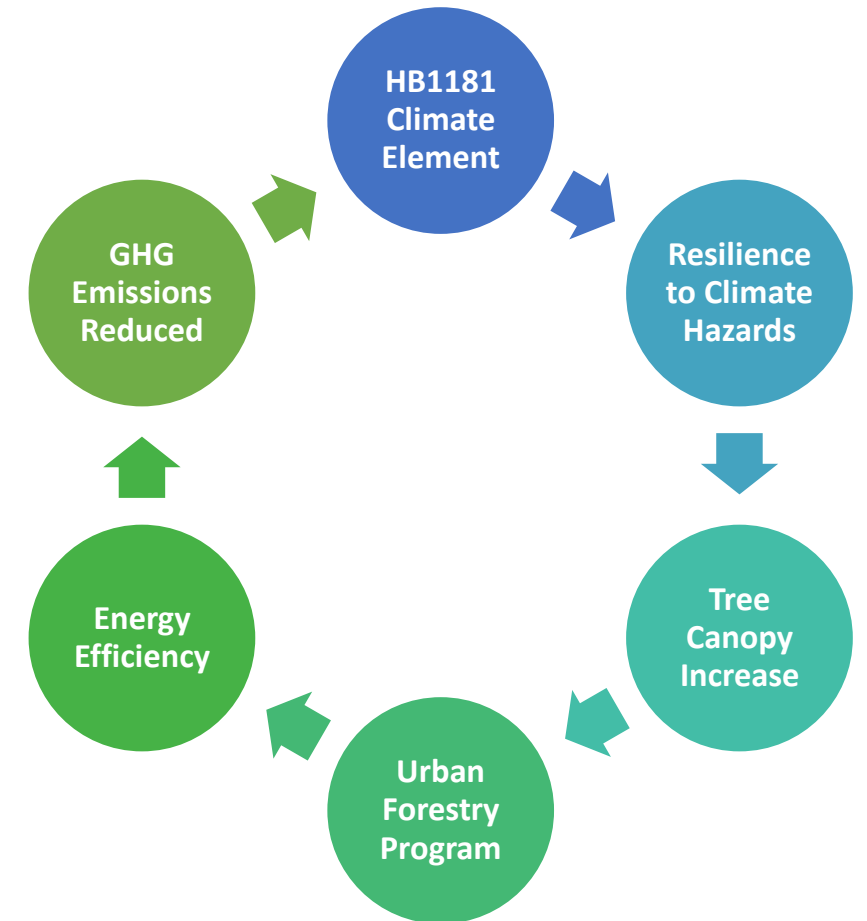
### What is new?

Task force meetings and development of recommendations for the full Planning Commission to review.

## Task Force 1: May-June '26 NECC Program Implementation and Work Plans

Compiled policy direction from existing City initiatives and priorities, informed by new requirements and information:

- 10+ Year Implementation Plan
  - Long-term framework to carry out required and voluntary climate actions
  - Establishes a basis for documenting, measuring, and coordinating climate mitigation and adaptation efforts
- 3-5 Year Work Plan
  - Near-term operational priorities with immediate foundational activities for the 2025–2027 period to kickstart long-term goals
  - Builds on 2022 Three-Year Energy & Climate Work Plan



## 10+ Year Implementation Plan

- Compile & outline strategies
- Establish long-term timelines & benchmarks
- Identify long-term funding strategies for implementation
- Develop monitoring & evaluation framework within the Implementation Plan
- Provide support for initiating foundational activities

## 3-5 Year Work Plan

- Compile and consolidate priorities from sources
- Organize the compiled items within NECC Program goals

### Building from previous priorities

2021 Comprehensive Plan Energy & Climate Change Element (ECCE)

2021 Ordinance 756 (89 Action Items to Implement ECCE)

2022 Planning Commission recommendation of 32 prioritized Action Items

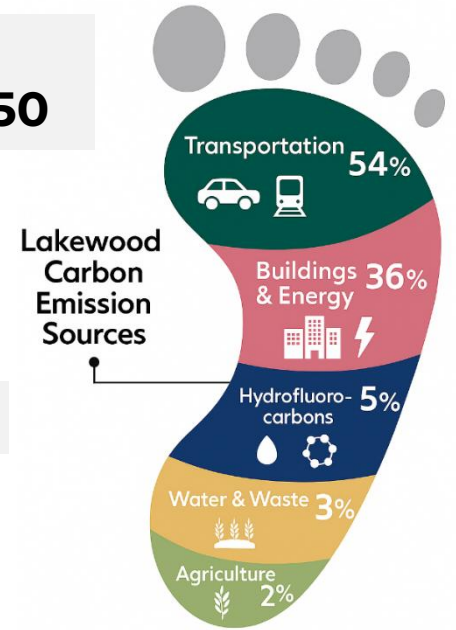
2022 Ordinance 776 (15 items for Three Year Work Plan)

# Task Force 2: June-July '26, October-November '26, April-May '27 Energy & Climate Change Element Updates

- **Jurisdictions must adopt a Climate Element consisting of two sub-elements:**
  - **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Sub-element** to lower emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
  - **Climate Resilience Sub-element** to address hazards like extreme heat and wildfire smoke
- Policies must prioritize and benefit overburdened communities to avoid worsening environmental health disparities

**State & Regional goal:  
Net-zero emissions by 2050**

**Preliminary GHG estimates**



**11 sectors**



## Task Force 3: July-October '26 (including August meetings) Urban Forest Management Plan



- Leverage existing Urban Forestry data and reports
- Secure tools and technology for tracking tree canopy cover increases over time.
- Integrate urban forestry goals with other NECC priorities
- Incorporate invasive species risks into the UFP and guide replanting with native, climate-resilient species
- Identify purposes for the City's tree fund
- Urban forestry public education
- Outline strategies for promoting voluntary tree planting on private property and partnering with external agencies/organizations

Urban Forest Sustainability:  
Keys to Improve Resources

Efficiency in Municipal  
Operations

Improve City practices by developing efficiency and aligning efforts

Community Collaboration

Build strong engagement and public participation in urban forest stewardship

Current Canopy Coverage: **24.4%**

Goal: **40%** canopy by **2050**

## Task Force 4: June '26, September – October '26 Heat Mitigation

### Urban Heat Resilience Strategy

- To guide Urban Forestry and Tree Canopy Expansion

### Land Use and Urban Design

- Modifying standards to include features that reduce heat absorption in buildings and streetscapes.

### Waste Heat Reduction

- Identifying actions to reduce the thermal energy released by human activities.

### Climate-Resilient Planting

- Developing native and climate-resilient planting plans specifically for municipal projects to ensure long-term viability during hotter, drier summers.

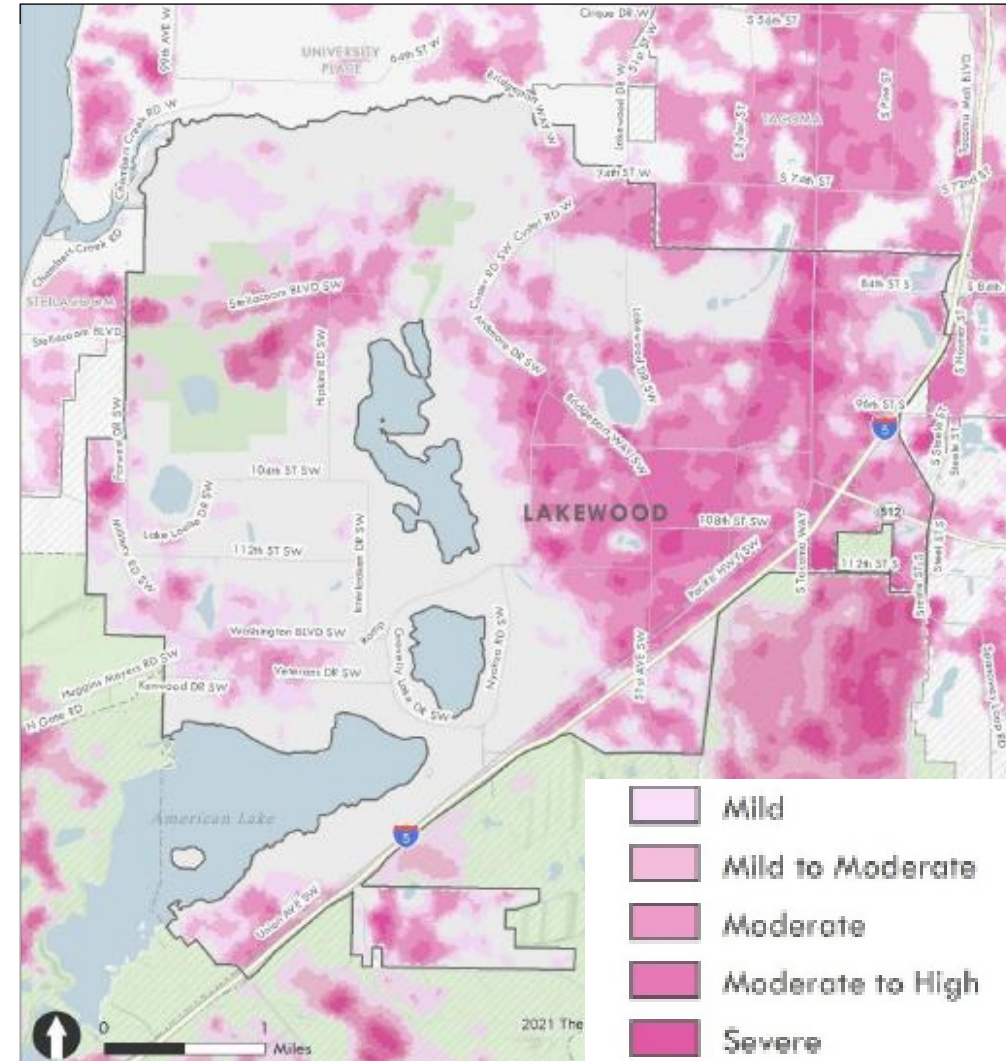
### Infrastructure and Built Environment Actions

- Cool Roofing, Green Infrastructure, Passive Cooling

### Emergency Preparedness and Vulnerable Populations

- Cooling Centers: w/in 10-minute walk for the most vulnerable residents by 2025.
- Health Protection: maintain low levels of heat-related illness and death through targeted outreach and real-time alerts via a mass notification system.

### Data and Monitoring



## **Next Steps**

- Amend Planning Commission Rules of Procedure to allow 5+ Member Task Forces**
- Identify Planning Commission liaisons for each NECC Program Task Force**
- Identify and invite NECC Program Task Force Members**

# Discussion