



DEPARTMENT OF
**PUBLIC
WORKS**

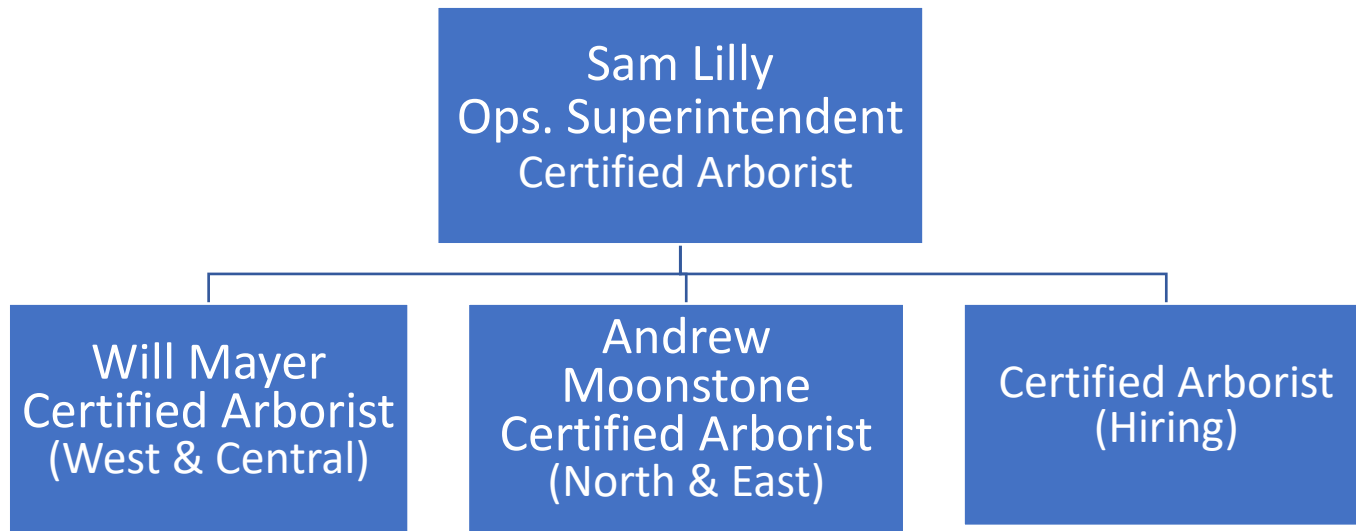
Urban Forestry Division



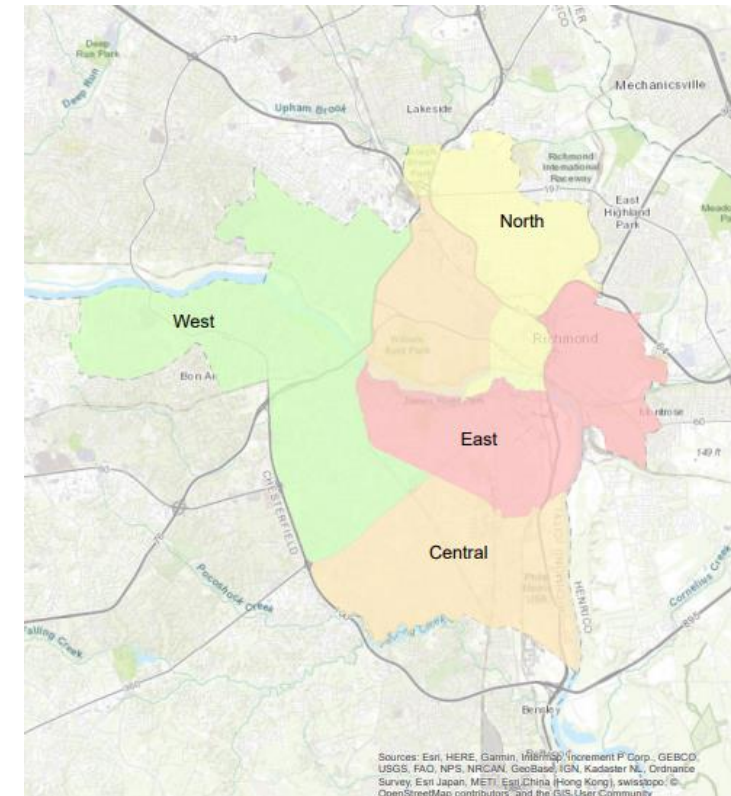
Presented by: Dr. Tarron Richardson

Urban Forestry Operations Org. Chart

The Urban Forestry Division (UFD) maintains a team of Certified Arborists to oversee the management of the City's tree canopy:



Arborist's Service Zones



Responsibilities

- Maintenance Requests (via RVA 311)
 - Assessment of street trees, trees on city property, and coordination of work to include – pruning, removals, and planting
- Citizen-Reported Tree Emergencies (24/7)
 - Urgent responses to citizen-reported fallen trees or limbs impacting the right-of-way (streets, schools, parks), or those that may damage public property
- Debris Management
 - Oversight and management of the Department's Debris Management Program
 - Snow Program Support
- Permit Issuance
 - Street Tree Planting Permit
 - Permit to Remove a City Tree
 - Permit to Perform Maintenance on a City Tree
- Additional City Services:
 - The Urban Forestry Division also assists with community education regarding tree care, including speaking to neighborhood groups, conducting tree identification walks, and working with the City's Tree Stewards program.



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Tree Removal Criteria

City trees are removed by in-house crews or external contractors based on the following criteria:

- The tree is dead
- The tree is dying or diseased to the point that the overall health and safety of the tree has been compromised
- The tree has structural defects that compromise its integrity and pose a public safety concern

Public safety is our number one priority and work is scheduled based on assessed risk and available resources.

Per the ordinance, a healthy tree cannot be removed without an approved variance from the Director of Public Works



311 Tree Inspections

- **Tree inspections completed to date (FY25) - 2,315**
- **Completed within 5 business days- 772**
- **Average # calendar days for completion- 28.3** based on request completed or closed, 17.5 business days
- **Breakdown of inspections**
 - **Inspected- 1253**
 - **Stump removals- 197**
 - **Tree pruning- 482**
 - **Storm related pruning- 13**
 - **Pruning in wires reported to Dominion- 3**
 - **Tree removal- 357**
 - **Tree removals related to storm damage- 9**
- **Average wait time for work completion**
 - **Pruning- 57 days**
 - **Removal- 140 days**



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Contractors & Community Partners

UFD works with multiple City of Richmond vendors and community partners to maintain the city's tree canopy, including:

- Davey Tree – General Tree Pruning & Removal
- Orleans Co. Tree Service – Tree Pruning & Removal
- Commonwealth Tree – Special Projects
- Tree Stewards – Tree Pruning (Sidewalk & Parking Ln. Clearance)
- James River Nurseries – Tree Planting & Supply
- Landscapes LLC – Tree Planting





Tree Canopy Snapshot

- 76,145 trees (120,837 tree sites) = **63%** stocking
- 42% Urban Tree Canopy (2010)
- Tree City USA – 33 years
- Top 5 species (Citywide Composition)
 - Crape Myrtle- **9.8%**
 - Sugar Maple- 7%
 - Willow Oak- 6.3%
 - Red Maple- 6.1%
 - Japanese Zelkova- 5%



Tree Planting

- The Urban Forest Master Plan will guide the tree planting approach in the city to address heat islands
- **Cost Per Tree**
 - 2019: \$340
 - 2025: \$523.45
 - Six year change: Increase of \$183.45 per tree (↑ 54%)

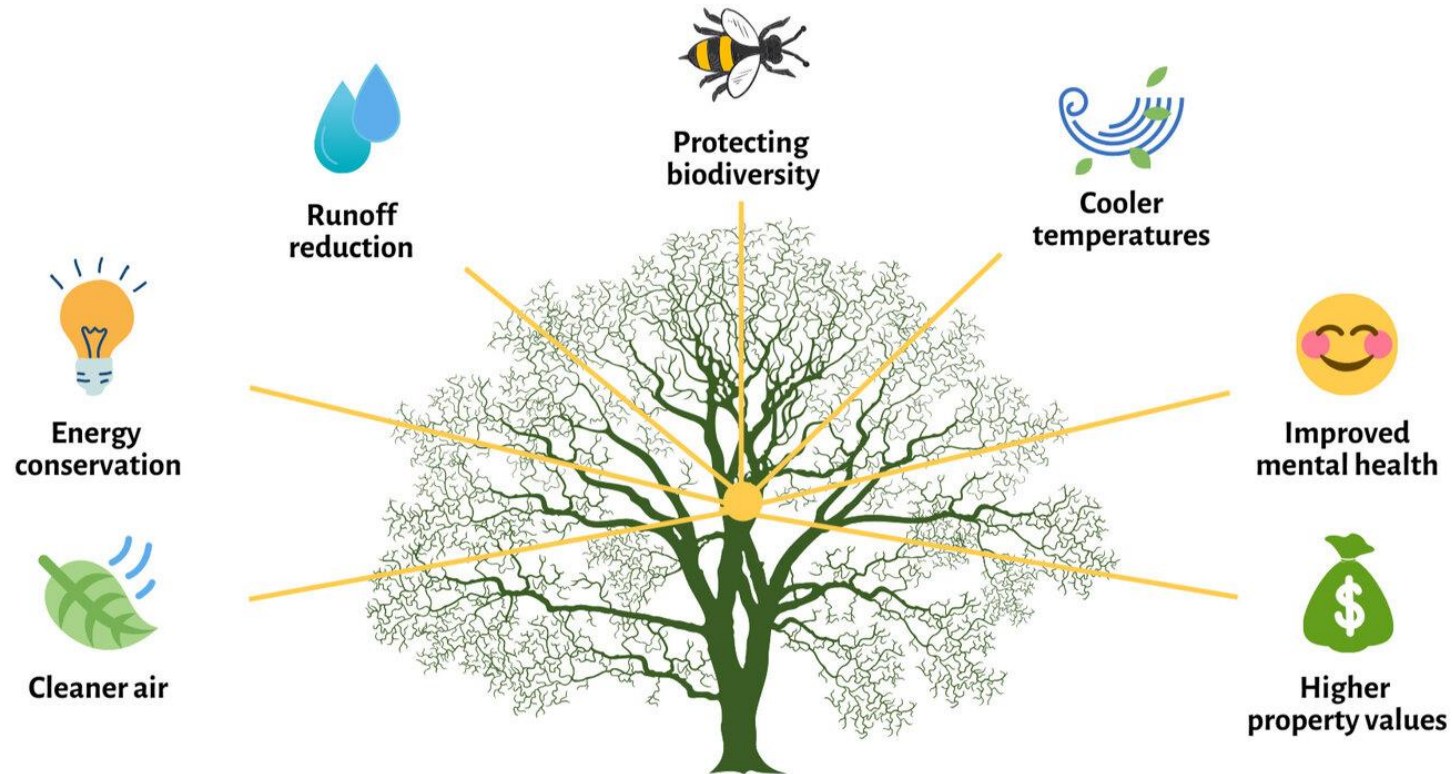


Urban Forestry Planning Division

- **Staffing**
 - Urban Forestry Technician – new role
 - Beautification Superintendent- new role
- **Urban Forest Planning**
 - Starting the development of the Urban Forest Master Plan in early summer 2025
 - Development plan review- Special Use Permits (SUP) and Plan of Development (POD)
 - Support to non-profit urban forest goals
 - Community education

Benefits of Trees

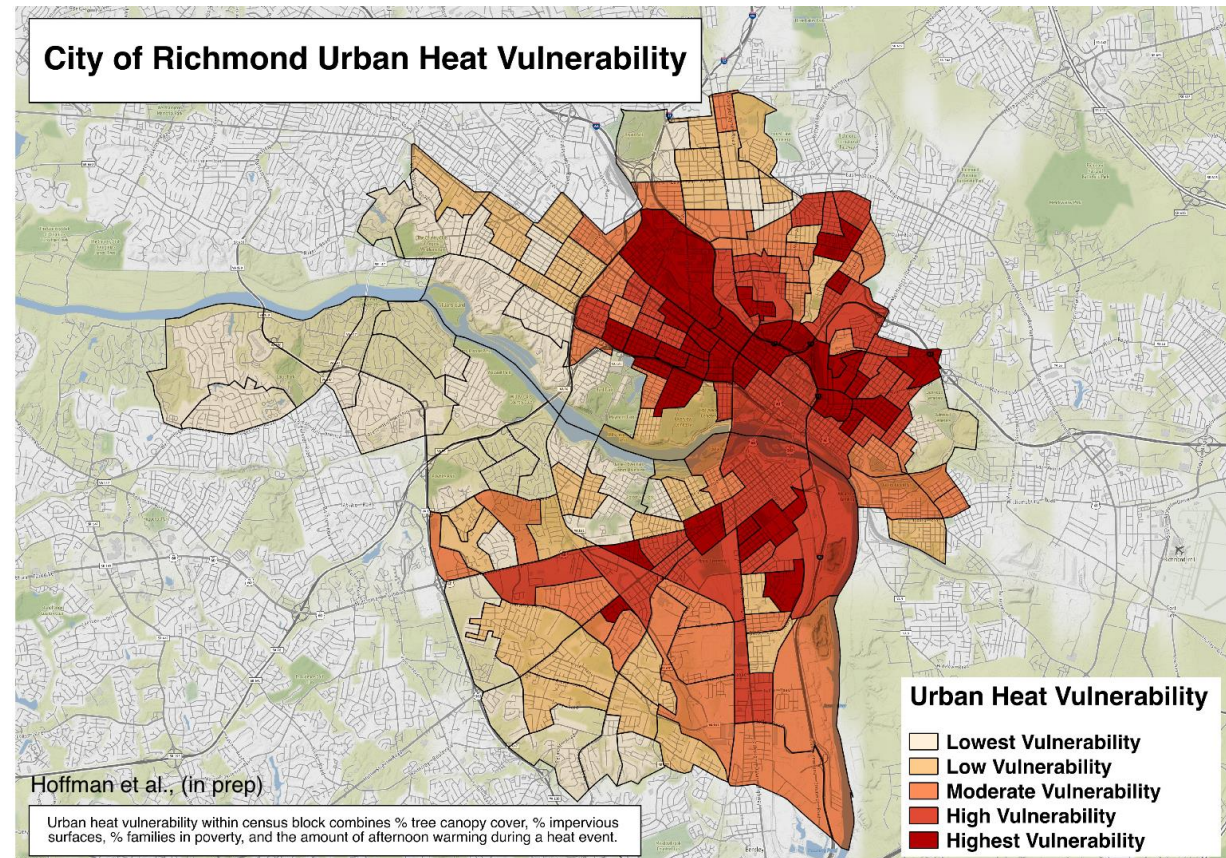
Our urban forest is important to the health and well-being of Richmond citizens and provides many benefits:





Urban Heat and Tree Canopy

- Low tree canopy coverage in high heat vulnerability areas
- Department support to community based urban forestry efforts
 - Non-profits
 - Civic groups



Richmond Tree Plan (Urban Forest Master Plan)



- Contractor has been selected with a panel through the RFP process
- Year 1-2 => What do we have? **Assessment of resources**
 - Urban Tree Canopy Assessment
- Year 2 => What do we want? **Community engagement**
 - Community engagement and education
 - Surveys
- Year 3-4 => How do we get there? **Long term planning**
 - Methodology for achieving goals
 - Ordinance update
 - Alignment with city initiatives e.g. Richmond 300, and RVAgreen 2050

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Use of Funds



- USDA Grant- City of Richmond awarded ~ \$6 million- funding the Urban Forest Master Plan effort
- ARPA funds have planted 950 trees throughout City through Spring 25'
- ARPA funds will fund plantings of an additional 1,000 trees throughout 2025
- ARPA funds were utilized to beautify the city and create gateways



Canopy Transition - Long Term Goals

- Strategic tree planting for urban heat mitigation
 - Urban Forest Master Plan
- Tree maintenance - Proactive vs. Reactive
- “Right Tree – Right Place”
- Improve young tree care program
 - Reduce tree mortality
 - Structural pruning
- Improve protection of tree canopy during development
 - HB2630- Tree canopy bank and replacement of trees during development process

QUESTIONS?



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Urban Forestry Division

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rva.gov/public-works/urban-forestry



DPW Open Audit Recommendations

Audit #	Audit Report Name	Report Issuance Date	Rec #	Original Due Date	Updated Due Date (Current Due Date)	DCAO Portfolio	Status	Department	Closed Date	Recommendation
2023-03	Graffiti Removal	8/23/2022	6	7/1/2023		DCAO Operations	In progress	Public Works	Open	We recommend the Department of Public Works Deputy Director formally document and implement performance measures to assist in the: a. Timeliness of graffiti abatement; b. Tracking and documenting of the process and expectations c. Evaluation of employee performance.
2025-06	Streetlight Division Maintenance (Phase 1 Contract Expenditures)	12/3/2024	1	12/31/2024		DCAO Operations	In progress	Public Works	Open	We recommend that DPW and DPU Directors work with the City Attorney's Office to recoup funds for the unallowable charges, overbilling, and questionable billing identified in this audit. In addition, review all outstanding invoices in detail and work with the City Attorney's Office on how to proceed.
2025-06	Streetlight Division Maintenance (Phase 1 Contract Expenditures)	12/3/2024	2	11/22/2024		DCAO Operations	Submitted	Public Works	Open	We recommend that DPW and DPU Directors work with the Department of Procurement Services to determine how to proceed with the existing contract, including assessing contract termination
2025-06	Streetlight Division Maintenance (Phase 1 Contract Expenditures)	12/3/2024	4	3/3/2025		DCAO Operations	In progress	Chief Administrative Officer (Multiple Depts)	Open	We recommend that DPW and DPU Directors define a process to ensure that bid line items are adequately defined in all contract documents and that employees and contractors both explicitly understand what is to be billed.
2025-06	Streetlight Division Maintenance (Phase 1 Contract Expenditures)	12/3/2024	6	7/1/2025		DCAO Operations	In progress	Chief Administrative Officer (Multiple Depts)	Open	We recommend that DPW and DPU Directors develop and implement a process to ensure that goods and services are billed in accordance with contract terms and conditions, invoices are reviewed for accuracy, and proper support is provided prior to payment. This process should explicitly ensure that employees receive and review contracts they are assigned to manage and that they determine how to verify an invoice for accuracy once invoice review duties have been assigned.
2025-06	Streetlight Division Maintenance (Phase 1 Contract Expenditures)	12/3/2024	7	3/1/2025		DCAO Operations	In progress	Public Works	Open	We recommend that DPW and DPU Directors ensure that staff responsible for managing contracts and reviewing invoices are properly trained, including invoice verification procedures. Employees designated to review invoices by Contract Administrators should be explicitly trained on what those duties entail, and the Contract Administrator should be responsible for oversight.