

# City of Poulsbo

*Parks and Recreation Department*

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## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**Date:** October 14, 2024

### **Poulsbo Begins Project to Assess Urban Forests with \$46,000 DNR Grant**

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources selected the City of Poulsbo as one of forty-five recipients of their Urban and Community Forestry Grants. The City's Parks & Recreation Department, in collaboration with Western Washington University and the Poulsbo Tree Board, will use the \$46,000 grant to assess, analyze, and recommend enhanced protections for urban trees, determine conservation guidelines of existing forest canopy, and propose solutions to increase canopy cover equitably throughout the City of Poulsbo, Washington.

"This funding will allow us to better understand the current status of overall tree health in our community and continue the important work of protecting our urban forests," said Mayor Becky Erickson. "We are also proud to collaborate with Western Washington University, especially with their workforce development program. Partnerships like this are what make Poulsbo a strong community, committed to a healthy environment."

Earlier this fall, a team from Western Washington University began deploying temperature sensors to gather data showing the difference between ambient temperatures near tree cover and in open areas. The data will be utilized to better understand how current urban canopy cover effect heat mitigation. By the end of the project, a report will be generated that will leverage GIS data to compare existing tree cover to historical conditions, data visualizations taking census track data into account, as well as recommendations for future urban forestry planning.

"Staff have worked closely with the Poulsbo Tree Board and partners at Western Washington University to secure this important grant funding for our community. The data generated will help not only provide a snapshot in time of the health of our urban forest, but provide recommendations for heat mitigation and prepare for increasing climate challenges," said Parks & Recreation Director Jeff Ozimek.

Poulsbo joined the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA program in 1997. Since that time, the citizen led Poulsbo Tree Board has collaborated with the City in advocating for urban forests. According to the Arbor Day Foundation:

- Trees help absorb the sounds of traffic in urban areas by 40%.
- Neighborhoods with trees are seven to nine degrees cooler than those without.
- Trees reduce energy costs up to 25% by shading buildings and protecting them from winter winds.
- Homes with trees have higher property values.
- Green space plays a major role in improving mental and physical health.
- Planting and maintaining trees absorbs carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, mitigating the effects of climate change.

“We are thrilled to partner with the City of Poulsbo and the Poulsbo Tree Board on this important environmental initiative,” said Senior Director of Western Washington University Holly Hill. “This is a fantastic opportunity for our students to apply their knowledge, gain valuable real-world experience, and serve their community.”

The project funded by the Urban and Community Forestry Grant is expected to be completed by May 2025.