



# ROOTED IN RENTON

## Community Survey #1 Analysis

August 25, 2021





## 1 Executive Summary

In total, 123 community members responded to the first survey. Respondents primarily live in Renton (59%) and own a home (82%) or live and work in the City (17%) and reside in the Highlands (22%), City Center (21%), or Benson (12%) neighborhoods. Respondents are primarily white/Caucasian (75%) in the 35-44 (27%) or 55-64 (23%) age class and trees are present in their normal routine such as daily commutes, park visits, and street trees.

The majority of respondents have planted, maintained, watered, and pruned trees and feel there should be drastically more canopy coverage (48%) or slightly more

(46%) because they feel the number of trees has decreased in the past 10 years (59%) as well as the overall health (38%). The primary concern for tree-related issues is the sidewalk and pavement cracking due to roots. New plantings should be focused in all areas of the City such as ROW, parks, private property, commercial, schools, and subdivisions. Respondents feel that the greatest benefit of trees is their ability to improve air and water quality and quality of life, along with the aesthetic value and benefits to wildlife.



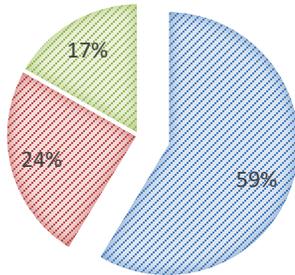


## 2 Results

### 2.1 Demographics

#### RELATION TO RENTON

■ I live in Renton ■ I work in Renton ■ I visit Renton

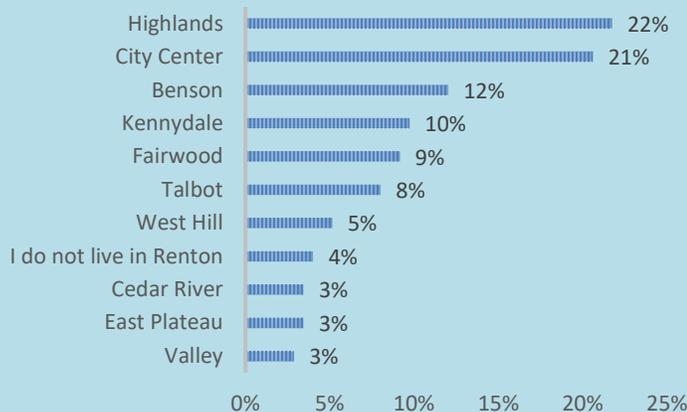


#### Live, work or play?

Around six in ten respondents lived in the City of Renton (59%) while around a quarter (24%) work in the City. Those who do not live or work in the City – but rather visit the City– totaled 17%.

Question 1: Do you live, work and/or visit Renton?

#### LOCATION OF PARTICIPANT



#### Neighborhoods of Renton

Renton is geographically represented by ten neighborhoods. The majority of respondents lived in Highlands (22%), followed by City Center (21%), while a third of respondents (31%) lived in Benson (12%), Kennydale (10%) and Fairwood (9%). The remaining 35% lived in Valley, West Hill, East Plateau, Cedar River, or outside Renton.

Question 2: Please indicate which neighborhood.

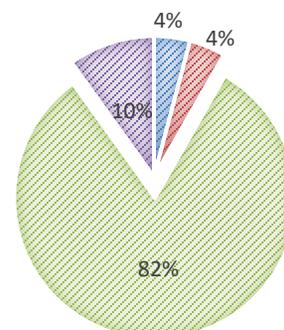
#### Housing

The vast majority of respondents owned homes in Renton (82%). Both renters and condominium owners accounted for 4% of respondents.

Question 13: Do you own or rent your primary residence?

#### HOUSING

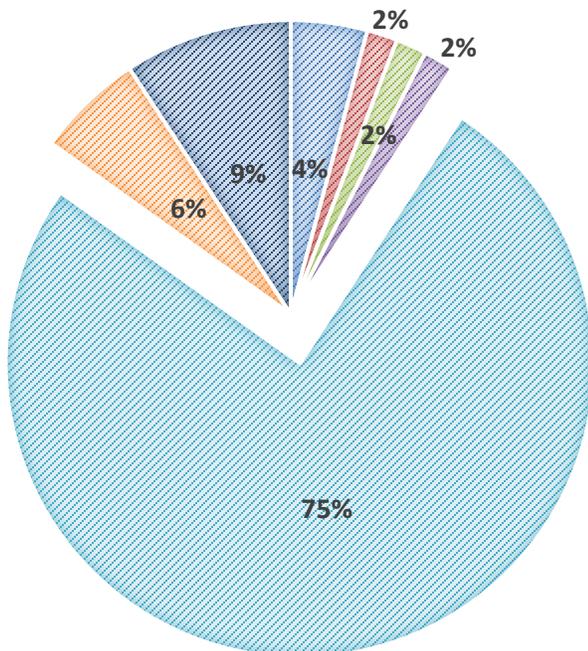
■ Other ■ Own condo ■ Own home ■ Rent





## ETHNICITY

- Asian or Asian American
- Black, African, or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- White / Caucasian
- Multiracial
- Prefer not to answer



### Represented ethnicity in Renton

Three quarters of survey respondents were white/Caucasian (75%) – while Renton is only made up of 40% white/Caucasian. The second largest group preferred not to answer (9%), followed by people who identified as multiracial (6%).

Question 14: Please specify your race/ethnicity. Select all that apply.

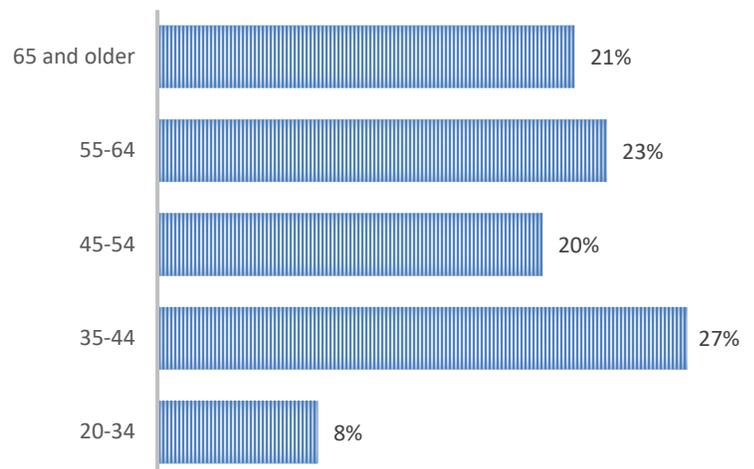
Renton’s 2020 racial makeup is 40% white/Caucasian – while white/Caucasian survey respondents made up 75% of the total participants.

### Age groups

While only 8% of the survey respondents were ages 20-34, at least 20% of the survey respondents fell into every other age category.

Question 12: What is your age?

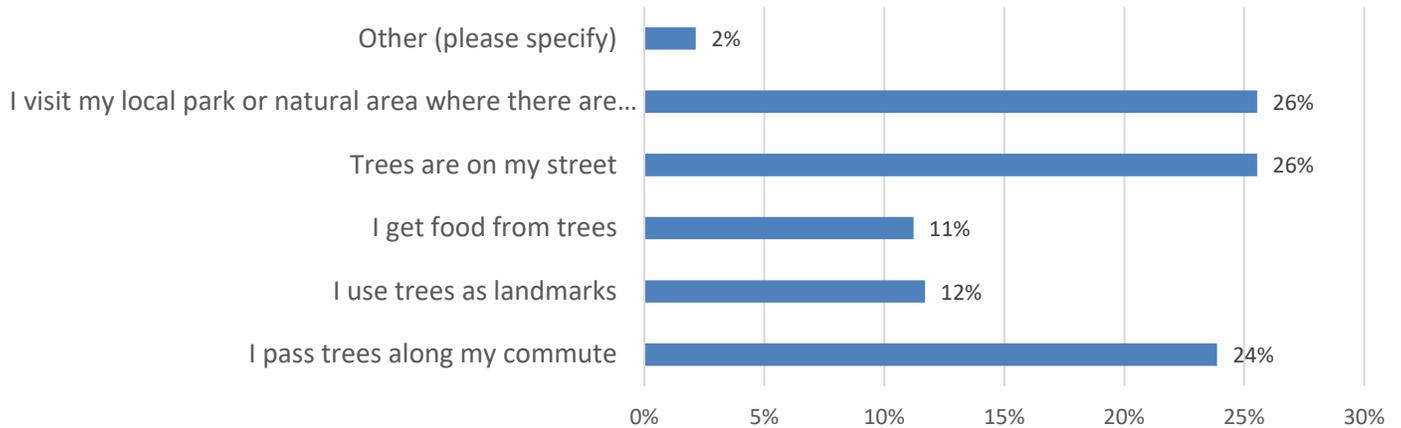
## AGE





2.2 Urban Forest Responses

Question 3: Are trees present in your life or normal routine? Select all that apply.



**Presence of community trees**

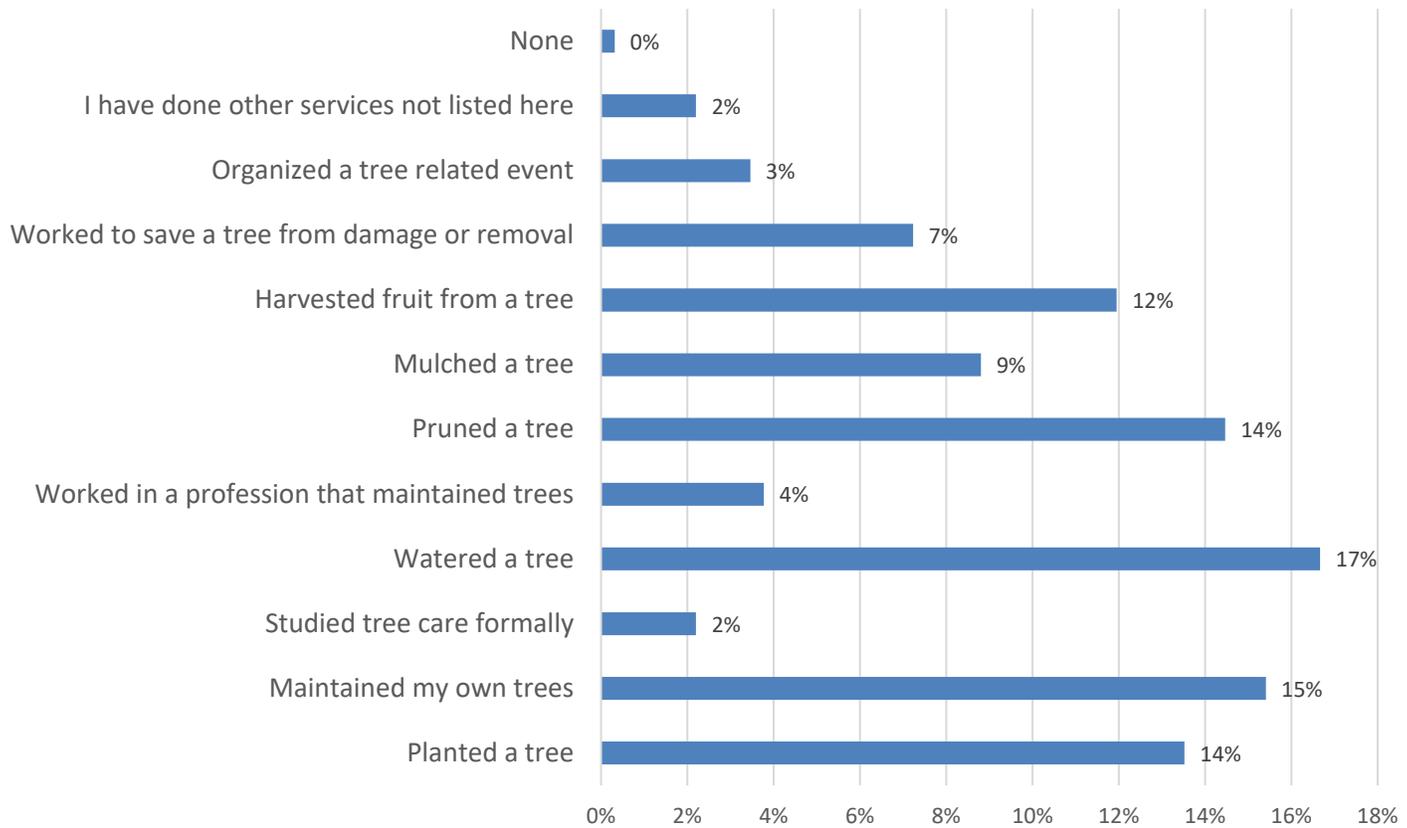
Slightly over a quarter (26%) of survey respondents both visit local parks of natural areas with trees and/or have trees on their street. Slightly less than a quarter

(24%) pass trees along their commute. A lesser number use trees for food (gleaning) or use trees as landmarks (11% and 12% respectively). Only 2% of respondents identify trees differently, which include trees outside office and work windows, and trees on private property.





**Question 4: What is your experience of caring for trees?**  
 Select all that apply.



**How respondents care for trees**

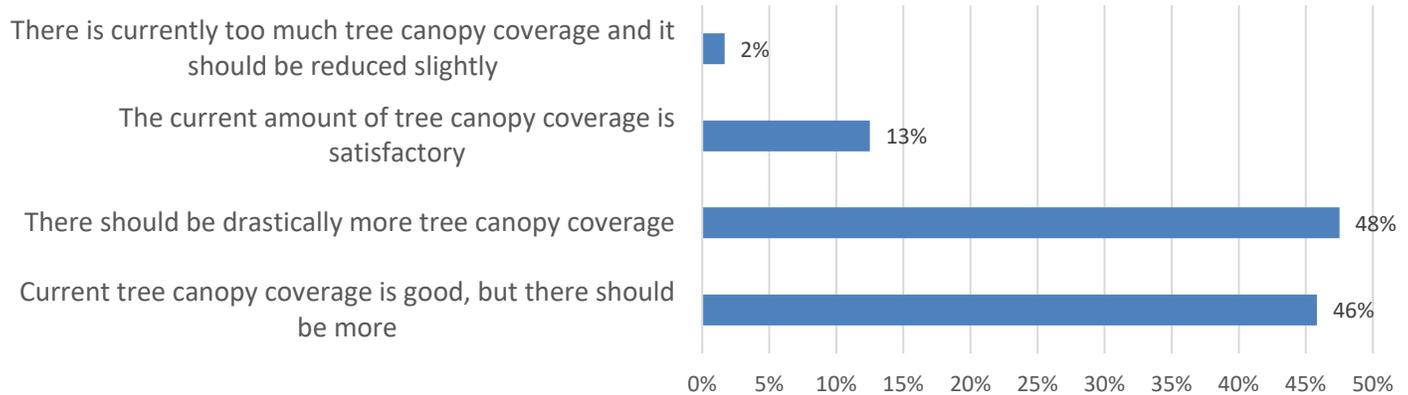
A number of participants had experience caring for trees around them. The majority (17%) had watered trees in the past, while many had maintained their own trees, pruned, planted trees, or gleaned from trees (15%, 14%, 14% and 12% respectively). Less than 10% had mulched trees (9%), helped retain trees or prevent tree removal (7%), or worked in a tree-related profession (4%). Few

respondents organized tree related events (3%) or studied trees (2%). Two percent of respondents had performed other tree care tasks.

Interestingly, all of the 123 participants had some interaction caring for trees.



### Question 5: Which of the following most closely describes your opinions on the amount of tree canopy coverage in the City?



#### **Renton’s urban tree canopy**

Over 50% of respondents believe the urban tree canopy in Renton should be improved, either drastically (48%) or a milder improvement (46%). A smaller number of participants, 13%, believe the tree canopy is satisfactory and 2% believe the canopy should be reduced.

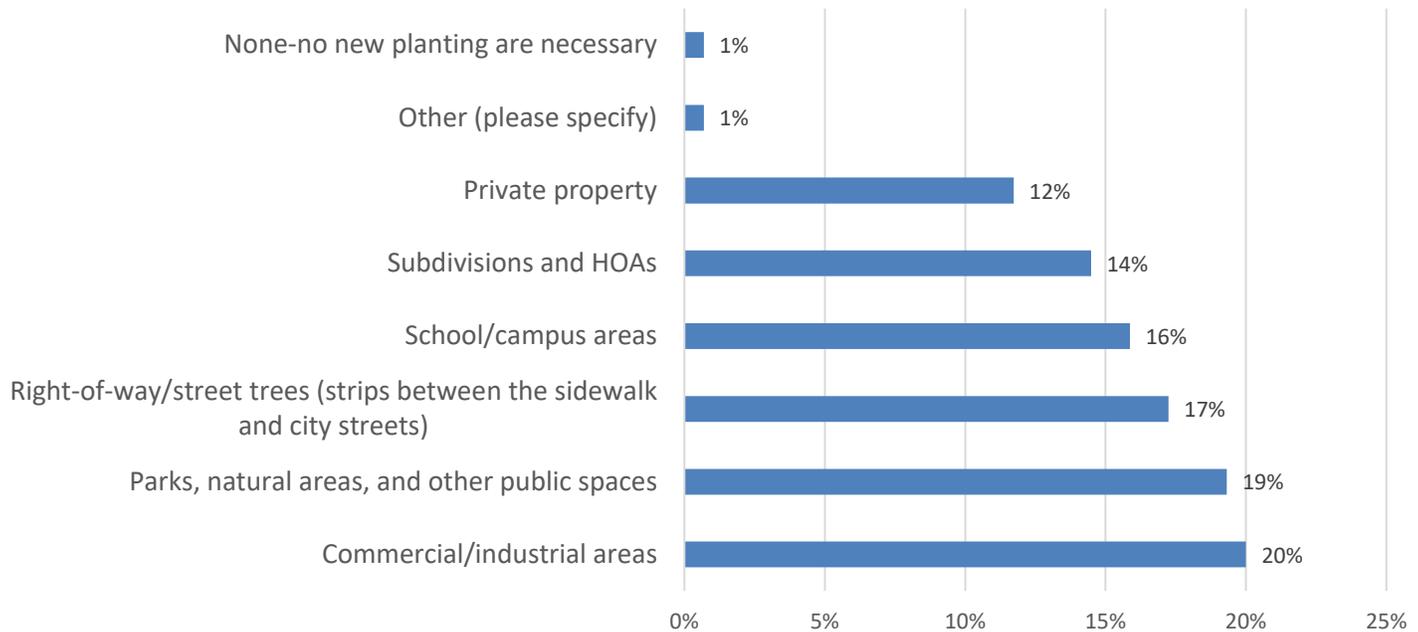
In total, 112 respondents of 123 (91%) believe tree canopy should be increased.



**Urban tree canopy models allow urban foresters to quickly capture tree canopy throughout a specific region.**



Question 6: From the list below, please choose the areas you feel are the most in need of more tree plantings.  
 Select all that apply.



**Where are more trees needed?**

A total of 145 selections were made for this question, meaning 22 additional selections were made per respondent. Overall, 20% of respondents believe commercial and industrial areas need more trees, followed by 19% who believe parks, natural areas and other public places need more trees.

Between 10% and 17% of respondents chose the following: rights of way/street trees (17%), schools and

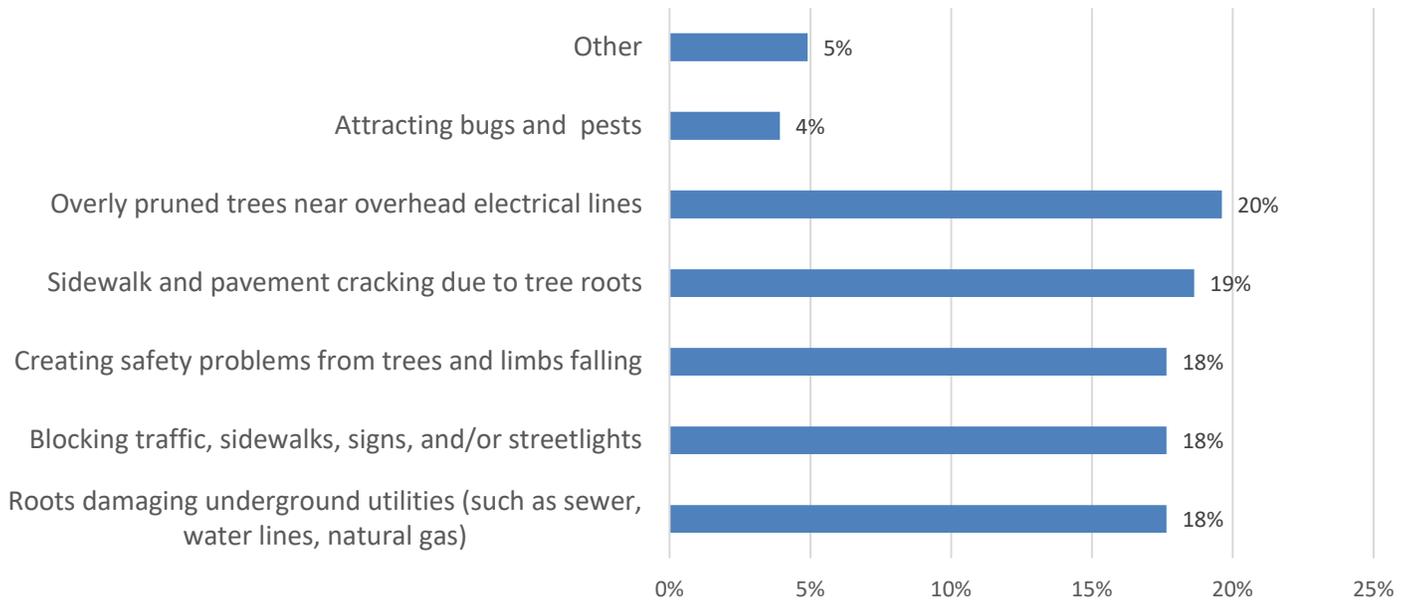
campuses (16%), subdivisions and HOAs (14%) and private property (12%). One respondent believed no further planting is necessary and one believed other areas were important.

In total, 112 respondents of 123 (91%) believe tree canopy should be increased.

**Of 123 respondents, 112 (91%)  
 believe urban tree canopy in Renton should be increased.  
 (Question 5)**



**Question 7: Of the following tree planting and care issues, which concerns you the most? Select all that apply.**



**Tree planting and care issues**

The majority of respondents aligned on their opinions that pruning, sidewalk cracking, tree risk and safety, blocking traffic and underground utilities were important to them. Overly pruned trees near electrical lines were selected 20 times, for a total of 20%. Trees causing sidewalk and pavement to crack and cause tripping hazards included 19 selections, or 19%. Tree limbs falling/tree risk, trees blocking street and transportation signs, and roots damaging belowground utilities were each selected 18 times for 18% each. Only 4% of respondents were of the opinion that pests and bugs were a concern, and 5% believed other issues were a concern.

Within the other category, seven other opinions were provided:

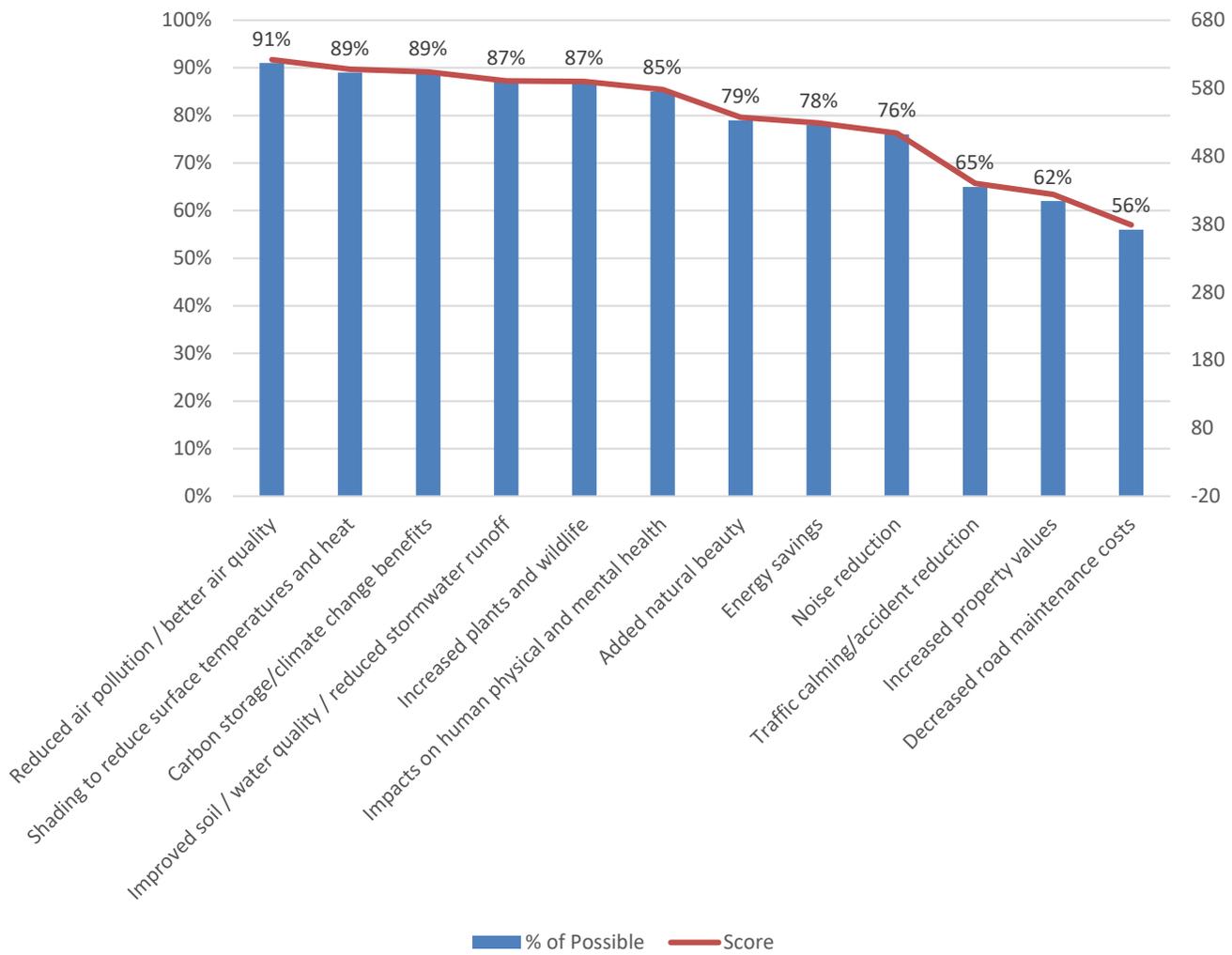
1. The disconnect between the science about the benefit of trees and public awareness.
2. Overgrown evergreens on Lincoln Ave off 44th obscure the already limited street lighting poles. The street is dark and a dangerous hazard for

people parking at night- lots of cat prowling on that street.

3. Lack of care and maintenance by the City.
4. Under-trimmed, maintained trees near power lines etc. mostly in Unincorporated areas.
5. Trees being cut down and land cleared of trees for development and housing.
6. City-owned Linden trees planted underneath the overhead wires 50 years ago, along the North side of SE 168th ST between 116th AVE SE & 128th AVE SE need to be replaced with more appropriate dwarf varieties, and the entire sidewalk replaced.
7. Blocking our lake views. That is why we live in Renton. This survey totally ignores that. Your code should not put in or require trees that block our lake views (and topping should be allowed to maintain existing views). Also, remove the trees near power lines, don't just prune them - we have too many outages in Lower Kenndydale.



Question 8: Understanding which tree benefits are most appreciated by residents can help guide long-term management strategies. Please rate the importance of each of the following on a scale (1-5).



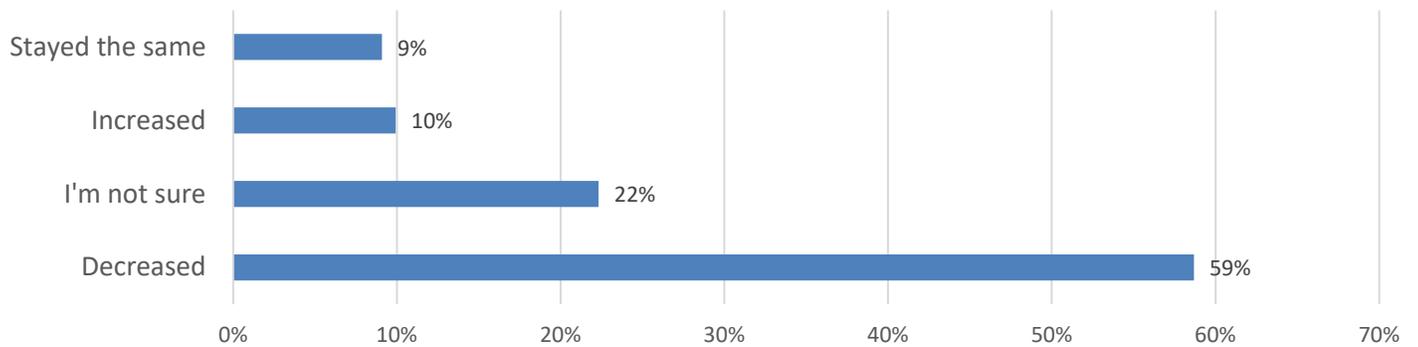
**Community perspective on tree benefits**

Respondents primarily appreciate air quality improvement (91%), shading (89%), and carbon sequestration (89%) benefits of trees. Closely followed are improved water quality (87%), wildlife and plant habitat (87%), and human health improvements (85%). Natural beauty (79%), energy savings (78%) and noise reduction (76%) are other benefits chosen by the respondents. Traffic calming (65%), increased property

values (62%), and road decreased maintenance costs (56%) were chosen least. Provided Question 12 noted 82% of respondents owned homes, data show community benefits of trees (air/water quality, habitat, carbon) outweigh the individual benefits of trees (noise reduction, energy, increased property values, and delayed maintenance costs on roads).



Question 9: In general, do you think the total number of trees (both public and private) in the City has increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past 10 years?



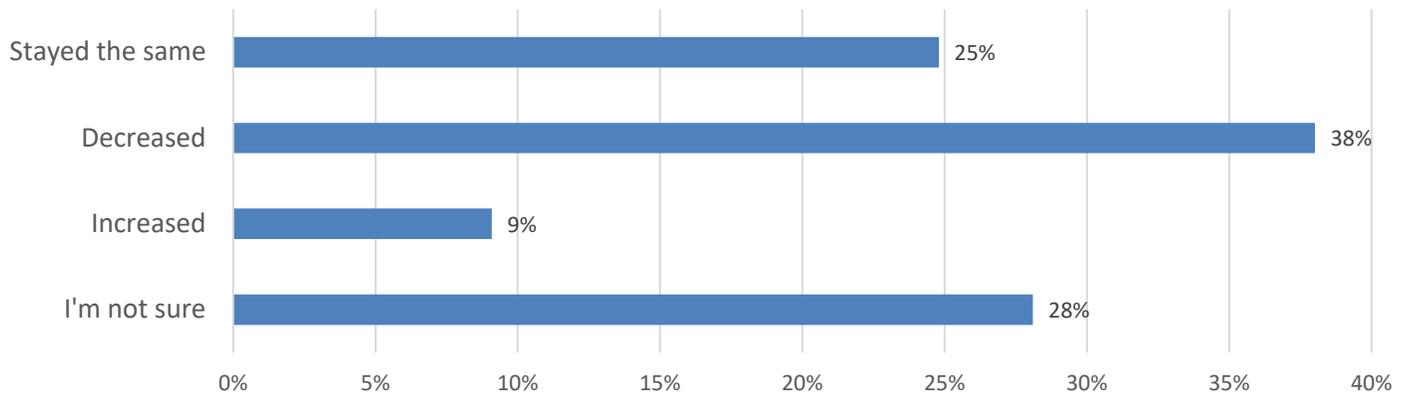
**Number of trees throughout the City in the last decade**

A large majority of respondents believe the City's number of trees has declined in the past decade (59% and 71 respondents). Although Question 5 identified 112 respondents who believe Renton's tree canopy should be increased, only 71 respondents noted the tree canopy

has declined, inferring large, mature trees that produce canopy in Renton are preferred. Ten percent of respondents believed the tree canopy had increased, while 9% believe the canopy has stayed the same. 27 respondents, or 22% did not know if canopy had increased or declined.



**Question 10: Do you think the overall health and quality of Renton's public trees has improved, declined, or stayed the same in the last 10 years?**



**Tree quality and health in the last decade**

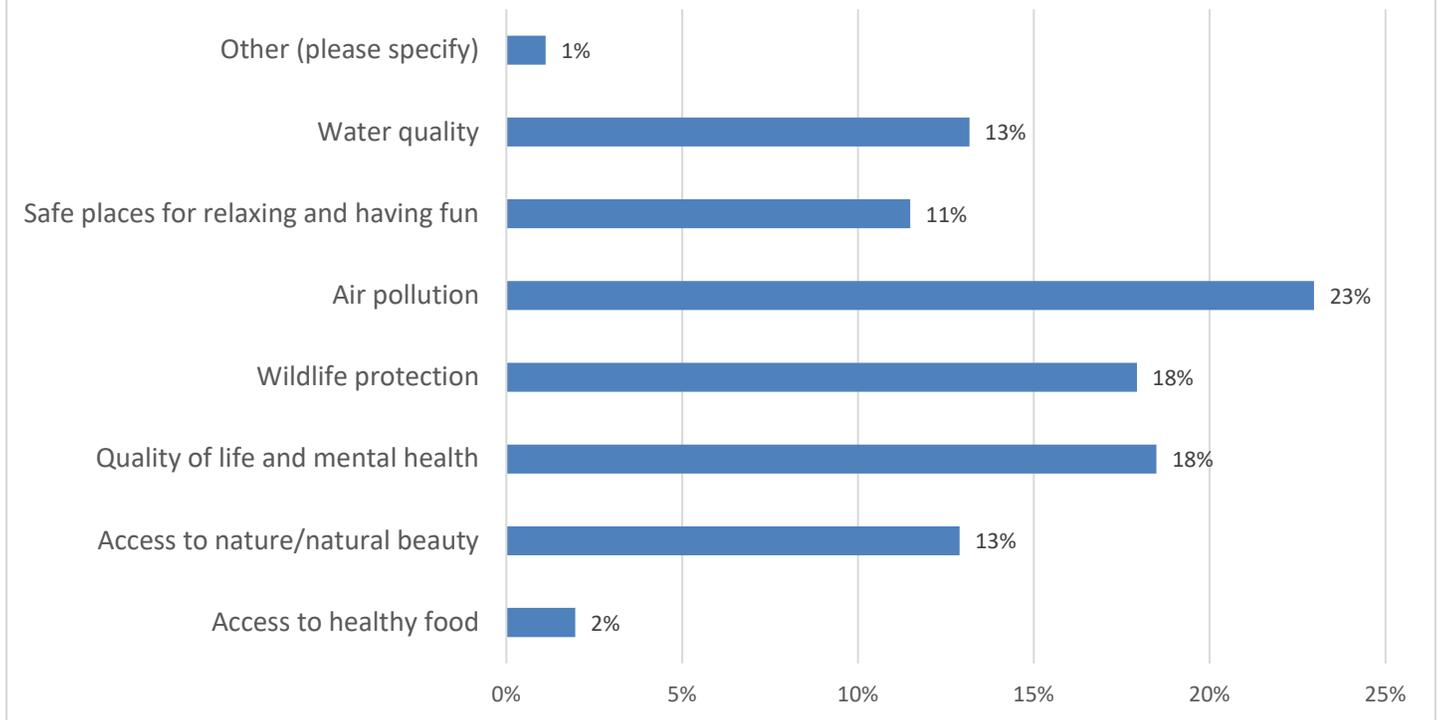
The majority of respondents, 38%, believe the Renton's public tree health and quality has declined over the last decade, while only 9% believe those trees have increased in health and quality. A quarter of respondents (25%) believe public tree health and quality have remained the same, while slightly more (28%) are unsure.

As referenced in Question 5, 112 community members support increasing tree canopy while noted here, 46 believe tree health has decreased. This decrease in overall urban forest health likely factored into community members desires to increase tree canopy.





### Question 11: What are the three most important environmental and community health issues to you as they relate to trees?



#### Community perspective on human and environmental tree benefits

Most respondents noted air pollution is important to them (23%), with wildlife protection and quality of life and mental health both second at 18%. Following that, access to nature/natural beauty and water quality come up with 13% of support from respondents. Safe places for relaxing and having fun is important to 11% and only 2% consider access to healthy food important in relation to trees. One percent had other important considerations outlined below.

Within the other category, four other opinions were provided:

1. Temperature moderation in heat waves and winter storms
2. Shade/cover for those that need it
3. Climate Change
4. Fire safety with climate change - not too many (or big) trees near residences; also fire-resistant trees, or at least not trees that burn quickest/easiest. Trees will feed climate change mass fires in residential neighborhoods. Strategic selection and placement is important.



### 3 Appendix A: Survey Instrument



**Renton, WA Urban Forest Management Plan**  
**Community Survey #1 - Online June 30<sup>th</sup> through July 31<sup>st</sup>**



# ROOTED IN RENTON

The City of Renton, planning consultants, and community members are developing an Urban Forest Management Plan to create a shared vision and road map for Renton’s trees that enhances the quality of life in the City. Caring for Renton’s urban forest is an important part of growing a sustainable, healthy, and vibrant city.

The following survey consists of questions to gather an understanding of community values and preferences around trees and to improve the City’s community outreach and engagement efforts. The results of this brief survey will help guide the development of the City’s Urban Forest Management Plan. This survey considers your perception of trees on public property (streets right-of-way, natural areas, and parks). This is the first of two planned surveys, with the focus of gathering community input on “what we have”. It will also help to identify the needs, goals, and vision for the urban forest.

Your participation is crucial to the success of this project – Thank You!

# Rooted in Renton – Urban Forest Management Plan Community Survey #1 Analysis

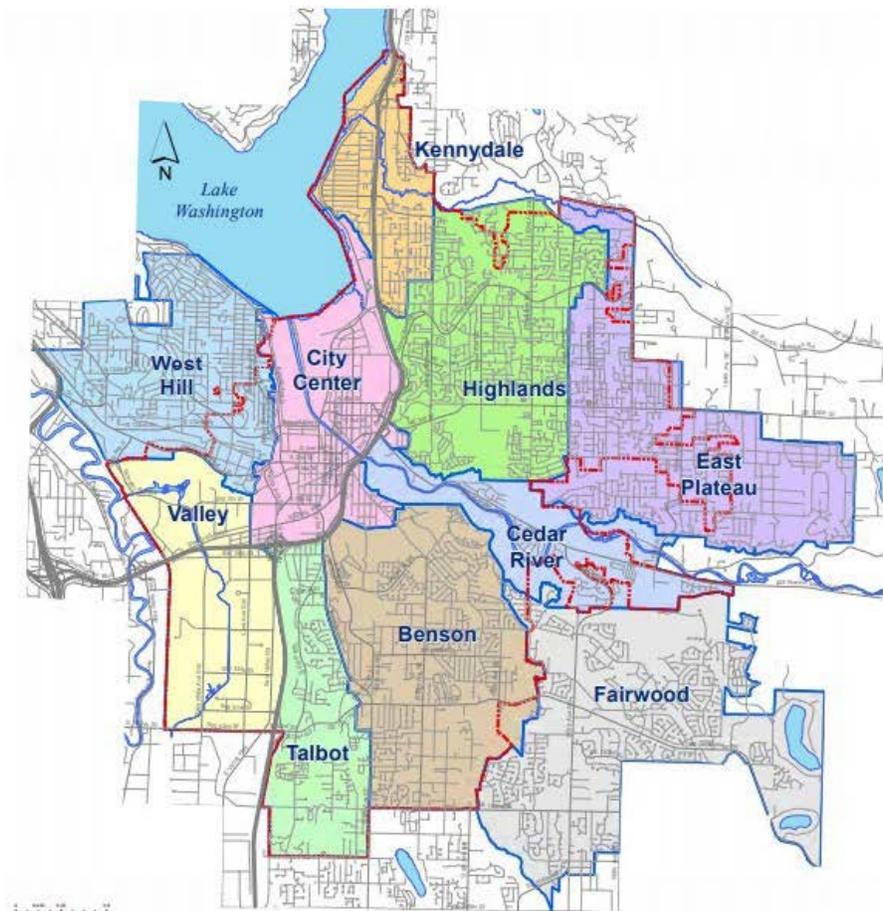


1. Please select from the following. Select all that apply.

- I live in Renton
- I work in Renton
- I visit Renton
- I go to school in Renton
- None of the above

2. Please indicate which neighborhood (if applicable). Select all that apply.

- Highlands
- Kennydale
- City Center
- West Hill
- Valley
- Talbot
- Benson
- Cedar River
- Fairwood
- East Plateau
- I do not live in Renton





**3. Are trees present in your life or normal routine? If so, how? Select all that apply.**

- I pass trees along my commute
- I visit my local park or natural area where there are trees
- Trees are on my street
- I use trees as landmarks
- I get food from trees
- No, trees are not present, or I do not notice them
- Other (please specify):

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**4. What is your experience of caring for trees? Select all that apply.**

- Planted a tree
- Maintained my own trees
- Worked in a profession that maintained trees
- Studied tree care formally
- Watered a tree
- Pruned a tree
- Mulched a tree
- Harvested fruit from a tree
- Worked to save a tree from damage or removal
- Organized a tree related event
- I have done other services not listed here
- None



5. Which of the following most closely describes your opinions on the amount of tree canopy coverage in the City? Select all that apply.

- There should be drastically more tree canopy coverage
- Current tree canopy coverage is good, but there should be more
- The current amount of tree canopy coverage is satisfactory
- There is currently too much tree canopy coverage and it should be reduced slightly
- There should be drastically less tree canopy coverage

6. From the list below, please choose the areas you feel are most in need of more tree plantings. Select all that apply.

- Right-of-way/street trees (strips between the sidewalk and city streets)
- Parks, natural areas, and other public spaces
- Private property
- Commercial/industrial areas
- School/campus areas
- Subdivisions and HOAs
- None – no new tree plantings are necessary
- Other (please specify):

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7. Of the following tree planting and care issues, which concern you the most? Select all that apply.

- Sidewalk and pavement cracking due to tree roots
- Roots damaging underground utilities (such as sewer, water lines, natural gas)
- Overly pruned trees near overhead electrical lines
- Leaves and fruit dropping/ongoing maintenance
- Blocking traffic, sidewalks, signs, and/or streetlights
- Creating safety problems from trees and limbs falling
- Attracting bugs and pests
- Other (please specify):

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**8. Understanding which tree benefits are most appreciated by residents can help guide long-term management strategies. Please rate the importance of each of the following benefits on a scale from 1-5 (5 being the most important).**

Least                      Most  
Important                Important

- 1 2 3 4 5 Added natural beauty
- 1 2 3 4 5 Impacts on human physical and mental health
- 1 2 3 4 5 Reduced air pollution/better air quality
- 1 2 3 4 5 Improved soil/water quality/reduced stormwater runoff
- 1 2 3 4 5 Noise reduction
- 1 2 3 4 5 Traffic calming/accident reduction
- 1 2 3 4 5 Decreased road maintenance costs
- 1 2 3 4 5 Increased property values
- 1 2 3 4 5 Carbon storage/climate change benefits
- 1 2 3 4 5 Increased plants and wildlife
- 1 2 3 4 5 Energy savings
- 1 2 3 4 5 Shading to reduce surface temperatures and heat

**9. In general, do you think the total number of trees (both public and private) in the City has increased, decreased or stayed the same over the past 10 years?**

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the Same
- I'm not sure

**10. Do you think the overall health and quality of Renton's public trees has improved, declined or stayed the same in the last 10 years?**

- Increased
- Decreased
- Stayed the Same
- I'm not sure



**11. What are three (3) most important environmental and community health issues to you as they relate to trees? (Select 3)**

- Air pollution
- Water quality
- Safe places for relaxing and having fun
- Access to healthy food
- Access to nature/natural beauty
- Quality of life and mental health
- Wildlife protection
- Other (please specify):

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**12. What is your age?**

- Under 20
- 20-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and older

**13. Do you own or rent your residence? Select all that apply.**

- Own home
- Own condo
- Rent
- Other



**14. Please specify your race/ethnicity. Select all that apply.**

- White / Caucasian
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black, African, or African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian or Asian American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Prefer not to answer
- Other (please specify):

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**If you would like to be added to the City’s email list to stay current on all urban forestry related information and events please provide your email address:**

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!**

For more questions or information, contact the City at [igray@rentonwa.gov](mailto:igray@rentonwa.gov) or (425) 430-6601 and stay engaged by checking in at [RentonForestryPlan.com](http://RentonForestryPlan.com)!



## 4 Appendix B: Survey Methods

In collaboration with the City of Renton urban forest project leader, and other staff, the Consulting Team developed a 14-question public survey. This was estimated to take 10 minutes to complete and contained both demographic questions and urban forest related questions. Demographics include age, location, homeownership status, and ethnicity.

The survey was completed online through the Rooted in Renton project website: <http://rentonforestryplan.com>. No hard copies of the survey were generated in an effort to reduce paper waste. Information regarding the survey – and the UFMP project in whole – was available online to users at this website.

August 1, 2021, marked the survey being published live online. Between then and August 31, 2021 we received 123 responses. Social media was used to share the posts

throughout Facebook, Instagram, and the Neighborhood application. Additional paid promotion was used to supplement organic Facebook and Instagram views. A second online public survey for Renton’s UFMP project is planned for release September 1.

This report includes findings on the recorded community opinions from the first survey. Data are summarized for the online survey highlighting overall community preference and responses.

The survey data was cross tabulated with the demographic data to examine if differences existed between the various respondent subgroups. Percentages in this report may add up to more than 100% due to respondents’ selecting multiple response options.

