

RCW 76.15.100 Analysis—Priority regions—Consultation—

Vulnerable populations—Statewide inventory. (1) The department must conduct analyses of the needs and opportunities related to urban forestry in Washington by assessing tree canopy cover and urban forestry inventory data.

(a) The department must utilize existing recent tree canopy study and inventory data when available.

(b) The department may add additional canopy analysis in regions where adequate data is not available through internal analysis and the use of research consultants as needed.

(c) In collaboration with local governments, the department may conduct prioritized inventories of urban forests where adequate data is not available.

(2) The department must identify priority regions for the implementation of urban forestry programs. Priority must be determined through the use and review of analyses and tools including, but not limited to, the following:

(a) Canopy analysis and inventory of urban and community forestry data as determined in subsection (1)(a) of this section;

(b) Health disparity mapping tools that identify highly impacted communities such as the department of health's Washington tracking network. Communities should be identified at the census tract level;

(c) Salmon and orca recovery data including, but not limited to, the Puget Sound partnership action agenda and other regional and statewide salmon and orca recovery plans and efforts, to target program delivery in areas where there are significant opportunities related to salmon and orca habitat and health; and

(d) The department's 20-year forest health strategic plan.

(3) The department may consult with external experts as part of the review and analysis that will determine priority regions for the purposes of this chapter. Consultation may be conducted with experts such as: Other state agencies; a statewide organization representing urban and community forestry programs; health experts; salmon recovery experts; and other technical experts as needed.

(4) The department must consult with the appropriate tribes in watersheds where urban forestry work is taking place.

(5) The department shall, through its analysis and consultation, seek to identify areas where urban forestry will generate the greatest confluence of benefits in relation to canopy needs, health disparities, and salmon habitat.

(6) The department must ensure a minimum of 50 percent of the resources used in delivering the policies, programs, and activities of this chapter are benefiting vulnerable populations and are delivered in or within one-quarter mile of highly impacted communities as identified by the tools described in subsection (2)(b) of this section, and scale these resources so the most resources are allocated to the highest impacted communities within these areas. This includes resources for establishing and maintaining new trees as well as maintenance of existing tree canopy.

(7) The department shall conduct a statewide inventory of urban and community forests using urban forest inventory and assessment protocols established by the United States forest service to produce statistically relevant estimates of the quantity, health, composition, and benefits of urban trees and forests. Inventory data must be maintained and periodically updated. [2021 c 209 § 9.]

Findings—Intent—2021 c 209: See note following RCW 76.15.005.