URBAN TREE CANOPY BY STREAM CORRIDORS

Stream corridors help maintain and promote a healthy natural environment in Bellevue by providing long-term protection of streams, enhanced wildlife habitat, as well as improved water quality. These corridors represent areas within 100 feet of a stream, on both sides of the stream.

These floodplains covered about 11% of the City's land area and contained 18% of the City's tree canopy cover. In 2021, Bellevue's stream corridors had an average of 66% tree canopy coverage, nearly 30% higher than the citywide average. The stream corridors studied contained 374 acres of possible planting area, or 9% of the City's total available space.

There are 385 acres (17%) of impervious surfaces within this riparian corridor. Trees planted near these impervious surfaces can aid in mitigating storm-water runoff that may otherwise carry unhealthy pollutants (such as nitrogen, phosphorous, and suspended sediment) into surface water bodies. Additionally, trees planted in these areas will provide shade for water bodies and in turn, reduce water temperatures to protect the aquatic ecosystem of endemic fish and reptile species. The Shoreline Management Act was created to empower Washington municipalities to restore and expand natural buffers in an effort to protect the state's 28,000 miles of marine shorelines. To fully comply with recommendations associated with this legislation, Bellevue should seek to increase canopy cover to near 100% to protect it's natural resources for future generations.

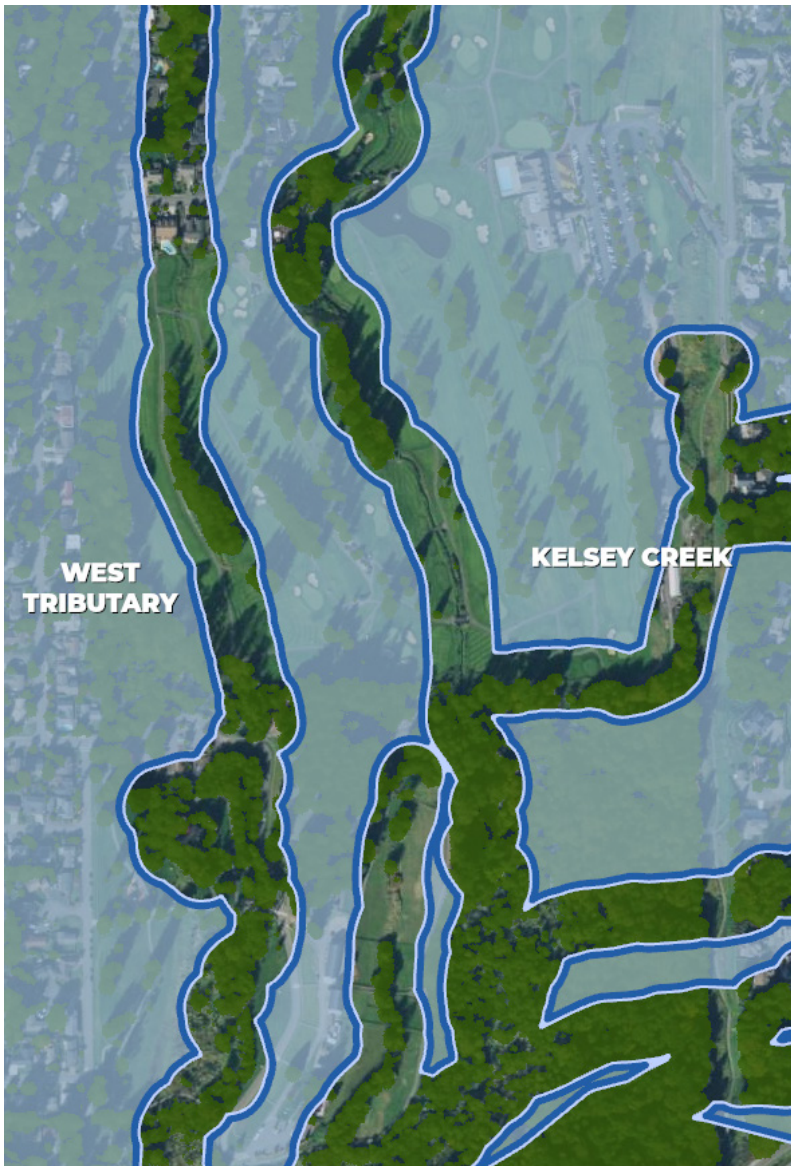

Figure 15. | Urban tree canopy in Bellevue's stream corridors.

URBAN TREE CANOPY CHANGE BY STREAM CORRIDORS

From 2011 to 2019, there was a slight decrease in tree canopy cover (-0.1%) in Bellevue's stream corridors. However between 2019 and 2021, 20 acres of canopy were gained in these areas. So during the entire ten year study period (2011 to 2021), the stream corridors experienced an overall increase in tree canopy. In total, there was a 1% net increase, or a gain of 19 acres. By 2021, 66% of these areas were covered with canopy, up from 65% in 2011.

These corridors provide a variety of important ecosystem services so it is important to preserve and protect the existing tree canopy in these areas.