

8 View Ave development threatens vital tree canopy in Ward 3B

The proposed development at 8 View Ave in Northampton's Ward 3B poses a significant threat to the area's limited and declining tree canopy. This report highlights the role this woodland plays in mitigating heat, providing a crucial environmental buffer for the neighborhood. This woodland should be preserved to mitigate heat, maintain environmental balance, and protect the quality of life for residents. We urge the rejection of this project to safeguard this irreplaceable ecological resource.



Mature Norway spruce at the project site tower over homes on North Street

Ward 3B tree canopy is already critically low

Northampton has about 57% tree canopy coverage overall. Coverage varies widely by ward, from over 65% in the western reaches of the City to 20% or less in downtown Northampton and the Meadows.

Experts recommend a minimum of 30% tree canopy coverage for a healthy and sustainable neighborhood. Ward 3B had 24% canopy coverage in 2021.

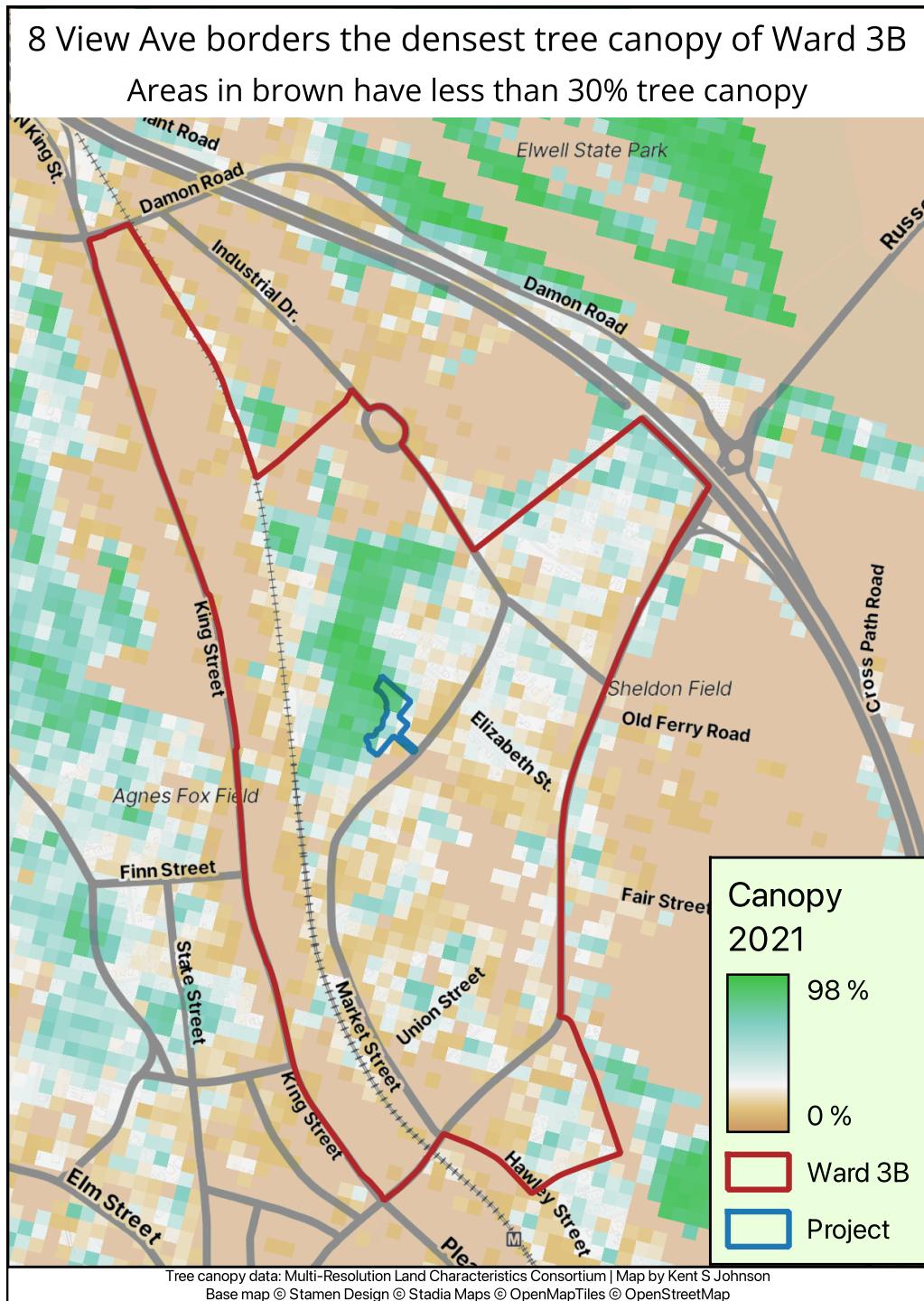
Tree canopy in Ward 3B is declining - from 2011 to 2021, Ward 3B lost 6 acres of trees.

Change in tree canopy coverage by ward and precinct, 2011-2021							
Ward and precinct	Total area	Tree canopy coverage					Change
		2011	2021	Percent	Acres	Percent	
6A	1,833	1,384	75.5%	1,376	75.0%	-0.5%	-8.8
7B	5,434	3,979	73.2%	3,951	72.7%	-0.5%	-27.5
6B	3,317	2,153	64.9%	2,169	65.4%	0.5%	15.3
7A	2,354	1,554	66.0%	1,500	63.8%	-2.3%	-53.3
1A	1,909	1,145	60.0%	1,121	58.7%	-1.3%	-24.6
5B	928	469	50.5%	463	49.9%	-0.6%	-5.6
5A	352	171	48.6%	168	47.8%	-0.8%	-2.8
4B	2,717	1,237	45.5%	1,232	45.4%	-0.2%	-5.0
2A	175	78.6	45.0%	74.8	42.9%	-2.2%	-3.8
1B	430	192	44.8%	184	42.7%	-2.1%	-8.9
2B	528	228	43.1%	216	41.0%	-2.1%	-11.1
3B	296	76.5	25.9%	70.7	23.9%	-2.0%	-5.8
4A	134	29.9	22.2%	27.5	20.5%	-1.8%	-2.4
3A	2,471	387	15.6%	398	16.1%	0.5%	11.4

Data: Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium | Analysis: Kent S Johnson

The project area is a rare green oasis

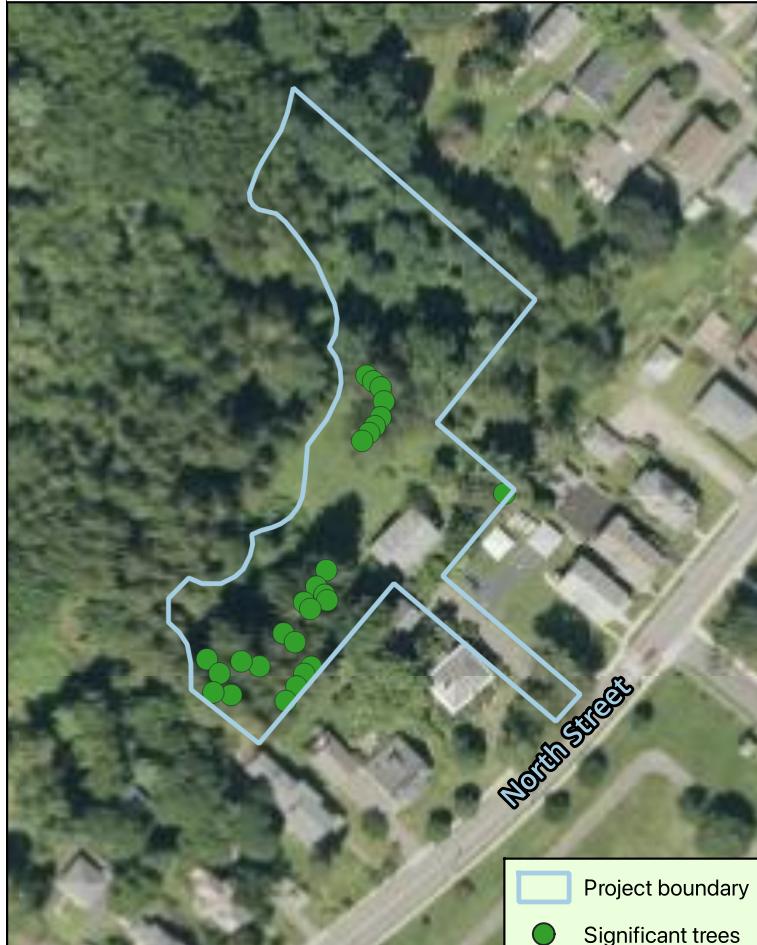
The woodlands that include the project area provide the **only dense tree canopy in Ward 3B**. The regions bordering this woodland have less than 30% canopy coverage. The adjacent King Street corridor and Industrial Drive have minimal tree canopy.



The project site is mostly wooded

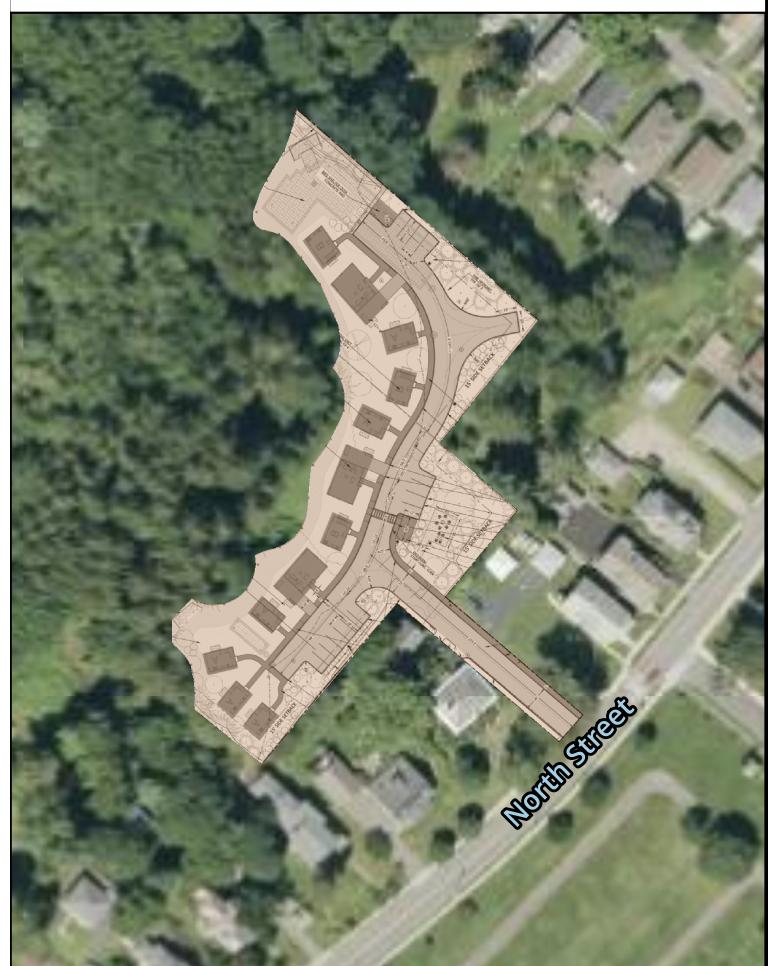
The development proposed for 8 View Ave would remove 27 mature Norway spruce, with diameters from 20 inches to 47 inches, and untold numbers of smaller trees with diameter less than 20 inches. This would lead to **an overall loss of more than one acre of tree canopy** - an unacceptable loss of tree canopy.

The project site is mostly wooded, including many smaller trees not counted in the project documents.



Significant trees from project application | Map by Kent S Johnson
Aerial view: USDA National Agriculture Imagery Program

Trees will be replaced by impervious surfaces



Map by Kent S Johnson | Aerial view: USDA National Agriculture Imagery Program

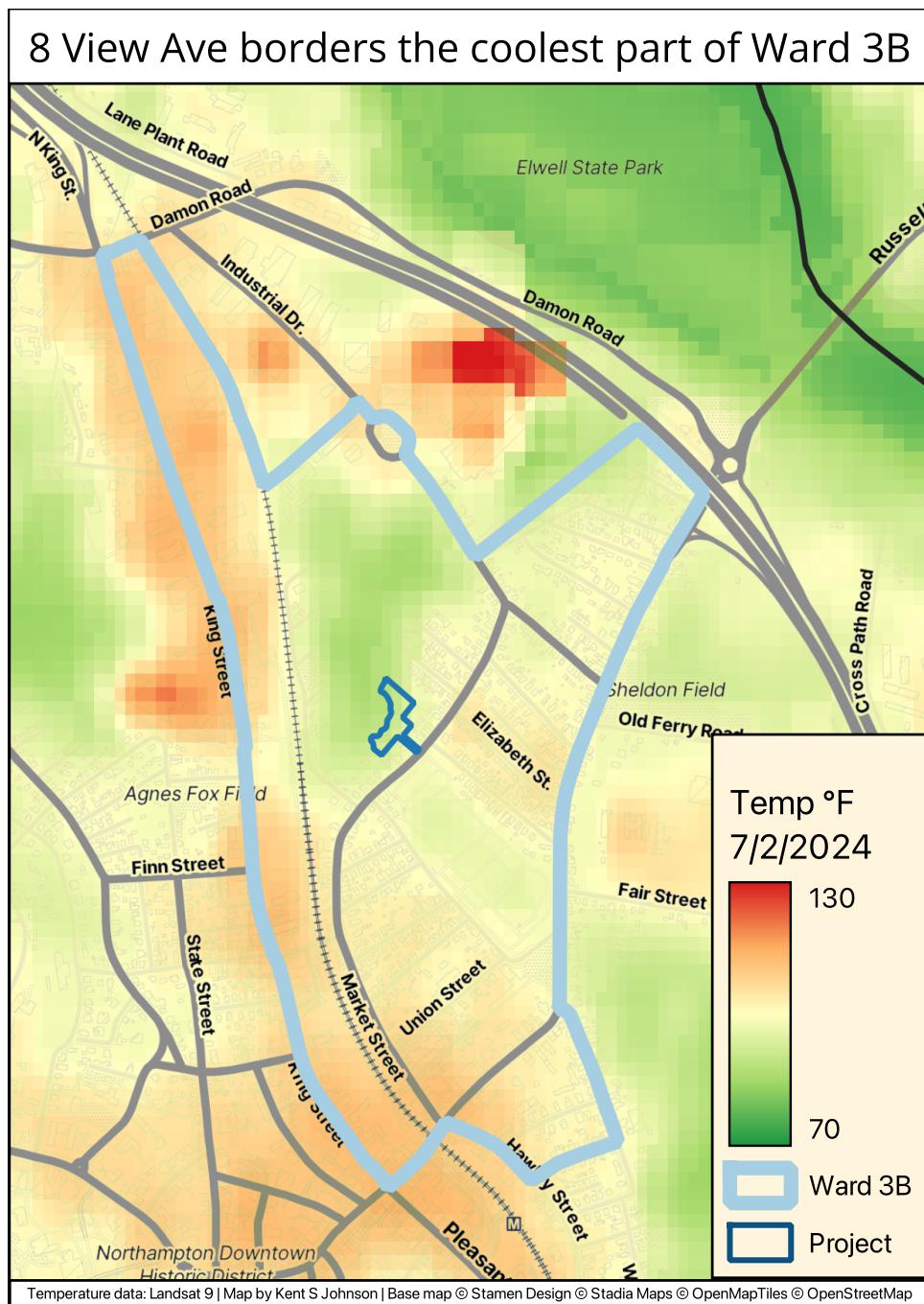
Before

After

Trees have important benefits for temperature mitigation

Ward 3B is one of the hottest wards in the city. It includes the east side of King Street, lined with parking lots and few trees, and residential neighborhoods with limited tree canopy. At noon on July 2, 2024, when temperatures were soaring all over the city, Landsat data shows that the average surface temperature in Ward 3B was over 100 degrees. Some parts of King Street reached as high as 110 degrees. In contrast, the temperature in the woods that this project would impact was in the mid-80s.

Compare the cooler, green area north of the project area in this map with the tree canopy in the first map to see the clear effect of this woodland on temperature.



8 View Ave should be preserved as woodland

The 8 View Ave woodland is a critical environmental asset for Ward 3B and Northampton as a whole. Its preservation is essential for maintaining ecological balance, mitigating urban heat, and ensuring a livable future for our community. I urge the Conservation Commission to prioritize long-term sustainability over short-term development gains and to reject this project.

Kent Johnson, Aldrich St, September 1, 2024

Data Sources: Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium, Landsat 9,
USDA National Agriculture Imagery Program