A regional plan for San Diego County's trees: what we have heard so far

Your community. Your perspective. Our regional urban forest.

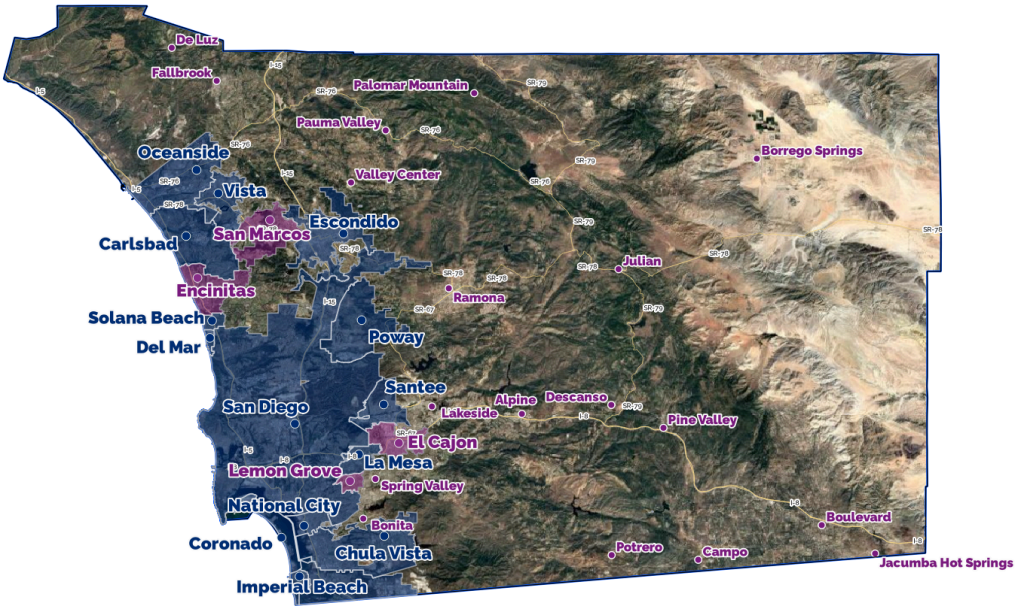
The Regional Urban Forestry Master Plan (RUFMP) is being developed by Tree San Diego in partnership with PlanIT Geo, supported by the Inflation Reduction Act and administered by the USDA Forest Service. It will guide Tree San Diego's work and give every city, community organization, and partner a plan they can use. Since June we have been asking cities, residents, nonprofits, focus groups, and agencies what they need. Here is what we have heard. Nothing is final yet, and we would like your input before and during the November 10 Workshop.

14 of 18
cities have met with us or answered the city survey

140+
community survey responses from residents, community groups, businesses, agencies, and Tribal organizations

3
online listening sessions open to everyone, with more than 60 comments and questions received in addition to the questions answered live during the session

And more
Focus groups with tree nurseries, tree care companies, and partner organizations; a Partner Outreach Toolkit; newsletter content; and social media outreach across the county



City engagement status

- **Blue**: cities that have met with us or answered the city survey
- **Magenta**: cities and unincorporated communities we have not yet heard from

The plan covers the whole county, including unincorporated communities. If your city or community is in magenta, the city and community surveys are still open until the Workshop is complete. Everyone can join the Workshop.

Six emerging themes

Trees need care after planting
Watering, pruning, and someone responsible for each new tree make the difference between a tree that is planted and one that survives.

Money is the biggest gap
Nearly every city said steady funding to plant, water, prune, and replace trees is what they lack most. Help finding grants was the top request.

Crews are small
Most cities have a few staff and rely on contractors. That limits how much any one city can take on alone.

Some neighborhoods need shade most
86% of community survey respondents said neighborhoods with the least shade should come first or be a major factor in where trees go.

Pests and heat are killing trees
Cities and nurseries want to know which trees will do well here in the years ahead, and an early warning when a new pest shows up.

People want to work together
Every city already works with partners. Many asked for a regular way for the region's tree staff, nonprofits, and nurseries to meet and share.

What we want to discuss with you on November 10

A regional plan needs regional voices.

The ideas on this page come from what cities, residents, community organizations, focus groups, and partners told us, and from the research done in 2025. They are starting points, not decisions. The Workshop is where we discuss them together and make changes where needed.

Start with the vision

"The region's urban forest should become a model of health, equity, resilience, and regional collaboration, ensuring that every community, regardless of geography, demographics, or municipal boundary, enjoys the full spectrum of social, economic, ecological, and climate benefits."

Written in 2025 from the first round of research. The Workshop opens with it: does it say what you want for the region's trees? What is missing? Your answers shape the final wording, and the final vision sets what the RUFMP's strategies and actions are built to achieve.

Six questions to guide decisions

1. **Need.** How big is the problem it solves?
2. **Fairness.** Does it reach the neighborhoods with the least shade first?
3. **Can we do it.** Can we carry it out and keep the trees alive?
4. **Ready to go.** Is someone in a position to start now?
5. **Partners.** Does it build on the people and groups already working together?
6. **Fits existing plans.** Does it help cities meet goals they have already adopted?

At the Workshop we will ask whether these are the right questions and which ones should count most.

Ten draft actions the region could take

1. Help cities find and secure funding for trees
2. A list of trees that will do well here, made with local nurseries
3. Plant where shade is needed most, with a plan for watering
4. Demonstrate how caring for trees saves money over time
5. Train more people for tree work
6. Help cities implement the tree goals in their climate action plans
7. A regular meeting for the region's tree staff and partners
8. An early warning network for tree pests and disease
9. One shared set of tree and canopy data for the county
10. Help residents adopt and water street trees

The draft actions and their order are based on what we heard most. Share your input on these and other potential actions during the Workshop.

Three ways to decide what comes first

All three fit the draft vision, and the region will likely do all three over time. But resources such as staff and funding are limited, so not everything can start at once. The Workshop will ask which should lead.

A. Care for what we have

Take care of the trees we already have first: keep them alive, watered, and pruned on schedule, and avoid bigger costs later, before major new planting.

B. Close the gap

Put planting and investment first in the neighborhoods with the least shade and the most heat.

C. Build the system

Set up the shared tools first: the regular meeting, the tree list, the data, templates cities can use, and training, so every city can act.

A plan for all: The RUFMP is being written so that Tree San Diego, each of the 18 cities, the County and its unincorporated communities, community organizations and nonprofits, focus groups, and other partners can each use it. A city without its own tree plan can use it as a starting point. Cities and organizations with their own goals can use it to connect those goals to the region's shared vision and track progress alongside their neighbors.

Join the Workshop

Tuesday, November 10, 2026, 12:00 to 1:00 PM, online. Register at treesandiego.org/regionalplan.

Take a survey

● City or community in magenta on the page 1 map? City staff take the city survey; residents and organizations take the community survey. Both close after the Workshop.

Learn more or ask a question

Findings and more information are available on the project page. Questions: info@treesandiego.org.