

Urgent Issues in Richmond's Urban Forest

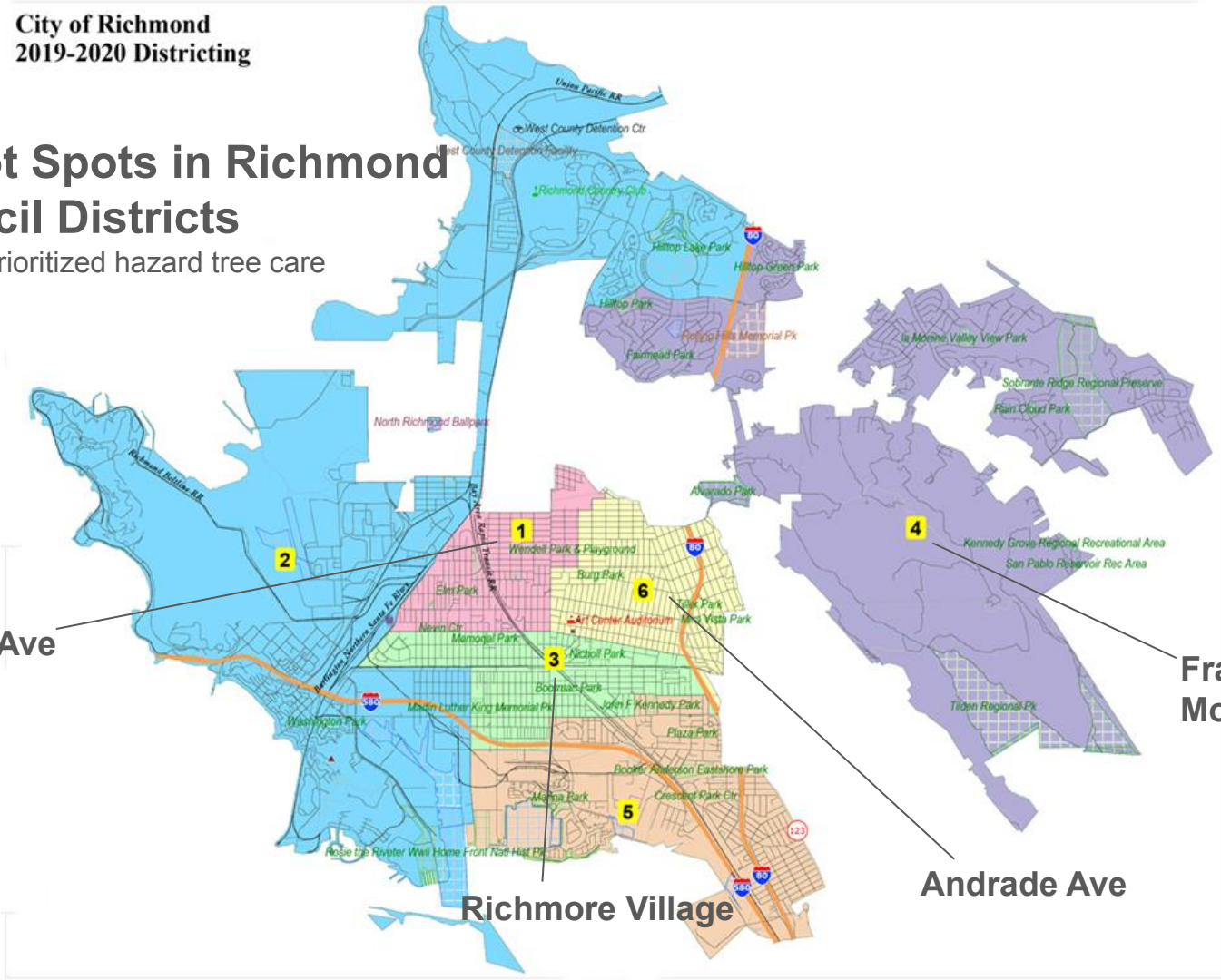
- Public safety
- Tree maintenance
- Tree loss
- Canopy growth / tree planting



A downed Eucalyptus blocks Hilltop Drive
Photo Credit: Arto Rinteela

Lincoln Ave

Andrade Ave



Caring for our Urban Forest

Urban Forest Advisory Committee (UFAC) makes recommendations for safety and vitality of our natural resources in compliance with the Urban Greening Master Plan, and is directed to “aggressively expand the City of Richmond’s tree canopy”.

The UFAC makes the following recommendations to the Richmond City Council on 3/26/24:

1. Hazard tree mitigation budget and plan;
2. Increase staffing in Parks and Landscaping Department to add one additional tree management crew (3 staff members);
3. A monthly standing report made to UFAC of tree losses, additions, and maintenance summary from parks and landscaping.

Hazard Tree Mitigation Budget and Plan

Determine and allocate annual budget for tree risks and mitigation. Tree hazard risks include damage to private and public properties, blocked roadways, utility service interruption, raised insurance rates, and potential for **catastrophic personal injury or loss of life**.

- Identify and prioritize projects by urgency of public safety risks.
- Hazard trees must be pruned or removed to balance the needs of safety and the urban canopy.
- Proactive measures are typically safer and more cost effective than a reactive approach.
- Preventative maintenance is often less expensive than removal, and doesn't reduce tree count.
- Identify budget needed for upcoming and future years, for the expected number of trees to be removed or maintained due to hazard.
- Allocate budget and departments to conduct outreach on tree hazard mitigation.

Staffing needs

Parks and landscaping is currently understaffed, overwhelmed with requests for services, and unable to meet all current demands. Demand for tree services are generated by:

- resident complaints and requests
- hazard trees
- diseased trees
- preventative maintenance

Parks & Landscaping Tree Crew staffing needs: Three additional tree crew employees

- Tree Supervisor - “working supervisor”; certified arborist will split time between administrative tasks and field work
- 2 crew members: one with with commercial driver’s license and certifications for operating bucket lift, etc. and one for general labor.

State of the Urban Forest Report

UFAC plans to compile and provide an annual “State of the Urban Forest” report as a resource for City Council and the community at large which will include discussion of; trees planted and removed, tree canopy expansion, and community outreach programs, with additional information on native tree species proliferation and progress toward tree equity.

To provide this service to our City, UFAC requests the following support:

- 1. Monthly reports from Parks and Landscaping and Groundwork Richmond detailing trees planted and removed, as well as major tree maintenance efforts.**
- 2. UFAC requests read-only access to the city’s ForestMetrics database.**

Only when UFAC is regularly receiving all of the above, will UFAC have the data necessary to produce the important State of the Urban Forest Report.