



## MEMORANDUM

### Development Services Department

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the North Port Commission

**TO:** Environmental Advisory Board

**THRU:** A. Jerome Fletcher II, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**THRU:** Jason Yarborough, ICMA-CM, Deputy City Manager

**THRU:** Alaina Ray, AICP, Development Services Department, Director

**THRU:** Lori Barnes, AICP, Development Services Department, Assistant Director

**FROM:** Stefan Kalev MS, Development Services Department, Natural Resources Manager

**DATE:** June 5, 2024

**SUBJECT:** 2024 North Port Tree Canopy Assessment

In line with our dedication to urban forestry and to enhance our understanding and management of the City's tree resources, the Natural Resource Division team, is delighted to present this Tree Canopy Assessment report to the North Port City Commission and the Environmental Advisory Board. This comprehensive study encompasses a surface coverage dataset, both inclusive and exclusive of conservation areas owned by state agencies, the Myakka State Forest and the Orange Hammock Wildlife Management Area.

The Natural Resources Division has completed this assessment internally using the open-source and scientifically robust i-Tree methodology. Over three thousand aerial surface points were calibrated by our staff to establish the surface classification using i-Tree software. Additionally, we incorporated data from several external resources to enrich our findings. Having gained access to this data and completed the research in-house, we are now capable in conducting an updated canopy assessment approximately every two years. This will allow us to effectively track the change of canopy coverage throughout the City. Furthermore, not using an external software company for this project has resulted in substantial fiscal savings this year, with the added benefit of reducing recurring costs in subsequent years.

Natural Resources Division staff aims to present the North Port Tree Canopy Assessment to the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) to obtain feedback and the Board's recommendations to the City Commission regarding the study. This presentation is scheduled for the regular meeting of the EAB on July 1, 2024, at 5:30 PM. Additionally, the Natural Resources Division team is planning to present this study and its findings to the City Commission during their regular meeting on September 10, at 9:00 AM.

The 2024 North Port Tree Canopy Assessment has generated significant data on the extent of canopy coverage across various regions of the City. This data will serve as an important resource for future related projects, such as potential land preservation acquisitions, tree monitoring, and tree planting programs. Furthermore, it will



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complement our Environmental Scorecard metrics and will provide better overall understanding of North Port tree canopy coverage and distribution. We are excited about the potential of this study to strengthen our urban forestry initiatives and help us achieve the environmental goals of the Development Services Department, Natural Resources Division, and the City.