

# City of Philadelphia



Council of the City of Philadelphia  
Office of the Chief Clerk  
Room 402, City Hall  
Philadelphia

(Resolution No. 250126)

## RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on the Environment to conduct a hearing to evaluate progress on the implementation of the Philly Tree Plan, determine how to expedite progress and what, if any, additional policies might promote the City's sustainable greening goals.

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia released the Philly Tree Plan in 2023 as an ambitious 10-year strategy to grow, protect, and care for the urban tree canopy; and

WHEREAS, From 2008 to 2018, Philadelphia lost 1320 acres (6 percent) of its tree canopy, in large measure due to a lack of maintenance of residential and street trees, removal of yard trees, and the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, The number of street trees additionally decreased by 5 percent from 2021 to 2023, primarily in Northeast Philadelphia, the Navy Yard, and the Sports Complex neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, The City's urban forest covers 20 percent of City land but is not equitably distributed, as only 5 percent of land in many neighborhoods of the 1st, 2nd, and 6th districts are covered by tree canopy, while other areas, e.g. in the 8th district, have greater than 50 percent tree canopy cover; and

WHEREAS, Two years following the release of the Philly Tree Plan, though substantial progress is underway to accomplish all eight outlined goals, progress is lagging in others, such as coordinating support for trees and reducing tree-specific burdens; and

WHEREAS, Parks and Recreation hired Philadelphia's first City Forester in April 2024 and was awarded a \$12 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service for the creation of the Philly Tree Coalition and expansion of programs across partner organizations, including the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, City departments, the School District of Philadelphia, and the Sustainable Business Network of Greater Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, To grow the urban forest equitably across the City, Parks and Recreation received \$1.8 million for FY2023 from the City Operations budget and \$900,000 from the William Penn

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Foundation for street trees, City Council implemented new zoning code updates to increase tree planting requirements for new construction projects, and have increased the number of street trees in priority areas by 4 percent with 35 percent of new street trees planted in FY 2024 being in priority areas; and

WHEREAS, To reduce the burden of tree maintenance on residents, Parks and Recreation launched a new commercial corridor tree planting and care program as part of the Taking Care of Business Clean Corridors Program, in which the City is now providing training and compensation for ambassadors to care for new trees planted. This work force pruned 1,547 trees in FY2024, an increase of 80 percent from FY 2023, with 80 percent of these trees located in priority areas, and has removed over 700 trees; and

WHEREAS, in total, 2,421 trees were planted across Philadelphia by both the City and partner organizations during FY2023; and

WHEREAS, while the Philly Tree Plan as seen successes, it continues to face significant challenges, including tree planting exemptions for affordable housing developments, bureaucratic inefficiencies, workforce shortages due to retirements and job reassignments, and an overwhelming workload that hinders meaningful short-term progress; and

WHEREAS, Improving Philadelphia's tree canopy could have tangible social, environmental, economic, and health benefits, such as public safety through crime reduction, increased neighborhood harmony and cohesion, improving air quality, protecting residents from extreme heat, improving respiratory and cardiovascular health, creation of urban greening jobs and bolstering connections with spiritual and cultural practices; and

WHEREAS, The Philly Tree Plan can serve as a roadmap for the City as it invests in the urban tree canopy to improve the City's social, environmental, economic wellbeing and health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby authorizes Authorizing the Committee on the Environment to conduct a hearing to evaluate progress on the implementation of the Philly Tree Plan, determine how to expedite progress and what, if any, additional policies might promote the City's sustainable greening goals.

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Resolution, Adopted by the Council of the City of Philadelphia on the twentieth day of February, 2025.

Kenyatta Johnson  
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

Elizabeth McCollum  
CHIEF CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Introduced by: Councilmember Gauthier

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Gauthier, Phillips, Landau, Lozada, Brooks,  
O'Rourke and Ahmad