

CASEY TREES

CITIZEN ADVOCATE HANDBOOK

A Guide to Successful Tree Advocacy
in the Nation's Capital



Casey Trees

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Prepared by

Maisie Hughes, Director of Planning & Design

Emily Oaksford, Planning Associate

Elliott August, Graduate Advocacy Fellow

Special thanks to

Sue Erhardt, Director of Education

Stephanie Juchs, Community Education Coordinator

Report available online

www.caseytrees.org

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A LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARK BUSCAINO



Theodore Geisel, best known as Dr. Seuss, famously said that trees can't speak for themselves. He was right of course, and because of that, they are often undervalued and ignored—especially in cities across the U.S. where tree decline has been documented for years. Fortunately, Washington, D.C. was designed for trees, and in 1950 their leafy green canopies covered 50% of the city. Unfortunately, because trees can't talk, they've been slowly cut down and now cover only 36% of the city. In fact, our city now has more land covered by asphalt and concrete than by trees!

When will the loss of our beloved trees stop? We hope now, **and that's where you come in.** We proudly present this handbook to empower residents to stand up, get out, and speak for D.C.'s trees. And speak out we must.

As the city's population continues to increase, pressure to cut down more trees will escalate and each time a tree comes down, it takes a lifetime to replace. This handbook will help you fight to protect trees in your neighborhood and our city. Inside you'll find valuable information on D.C.'s tree laws, regulations, agency and governance structure, contacts, and what you can do on behalf of trees.

Trees are a renewable resource, but if they're cut down and concrete is poured where they once stood, no seed will ever be able to grow again. Washington, D.C. without its beautiful trees seems like a bad science fiction novel, but the reality is that we're heading that way. We need you to help ensure that book won't be written, and to lend your voice in support of a green, healthy city for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Buscaino', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Buscaino
Executive Director

OUR URBAN FOREST

Washington, D.C. has a long history of incorporating trees into its neighborhood fabric. In 1790, Pierre L'Enfant designed the original City of Washington in the European style with grand boulevards. These boulevards incorporated areas known as “public parking,” which allocated a place for parks—and trees—along every street in the city.



OUR URBAN FOREST

The L'Enfant Plan was just the beginning. In 1870 the last Governor of D.C., Alexander “Boss” Shepherd, a devout tree-hugger, planted 60,000 trees to grace the city’s streets and parks, earning the District its name, the “City of Trees.”

D.C. Tree Cover Change

American Forests conducted a regional analysis of tree cover. They selected three Landsat satellite images from 1972, 1985, 1997, which show a marked decline of tree canopy coverage over time.



- D.C. Boundary
- Heavy Canopy (>50%)
- Moderate Canopy (20-49%)
- Low Canopy (<20%)

In the 1900's the McMillan Commission designated and designed the many national parks which dot the city's landscape and famously planted rows of majestic elms on the National Mall. In 2013, Mayor Vincent C. Gray launched his Sustainable D.C. Plan, which included a District-wide tree canopy goal of 40%, to be achieved by 2032.

Despite this rich history, our trees have been suffering. From 1950 to 2006 the District's tree canopy shrunk from 50% to 38%; from 2006 to 2011 it dropped yet again to 36%. Today, D.C. is covered more by asphalt, rooftops, and sidewalks than trees.

The ironic twist is that while the District's canopy has been declining, we've been learning more and more about why trees are so important to our neighborhoods, communities, and our lives. We know that trees slow stormwater, reduce cooling costs, clean the air we breathe, reduce the noise of city living, reduce our stress levels, increase home values—and the list goes on. For benefits known and unknown, our urban forest is just as precious as its history, its monuments, the nation it represents, and its future.

WHY ADVOCATE FOR TREES?

Trees provide a host of environmental, economic, social, and psychological benefits. When you advocate for trees, you advocate for human and community wellbeing.

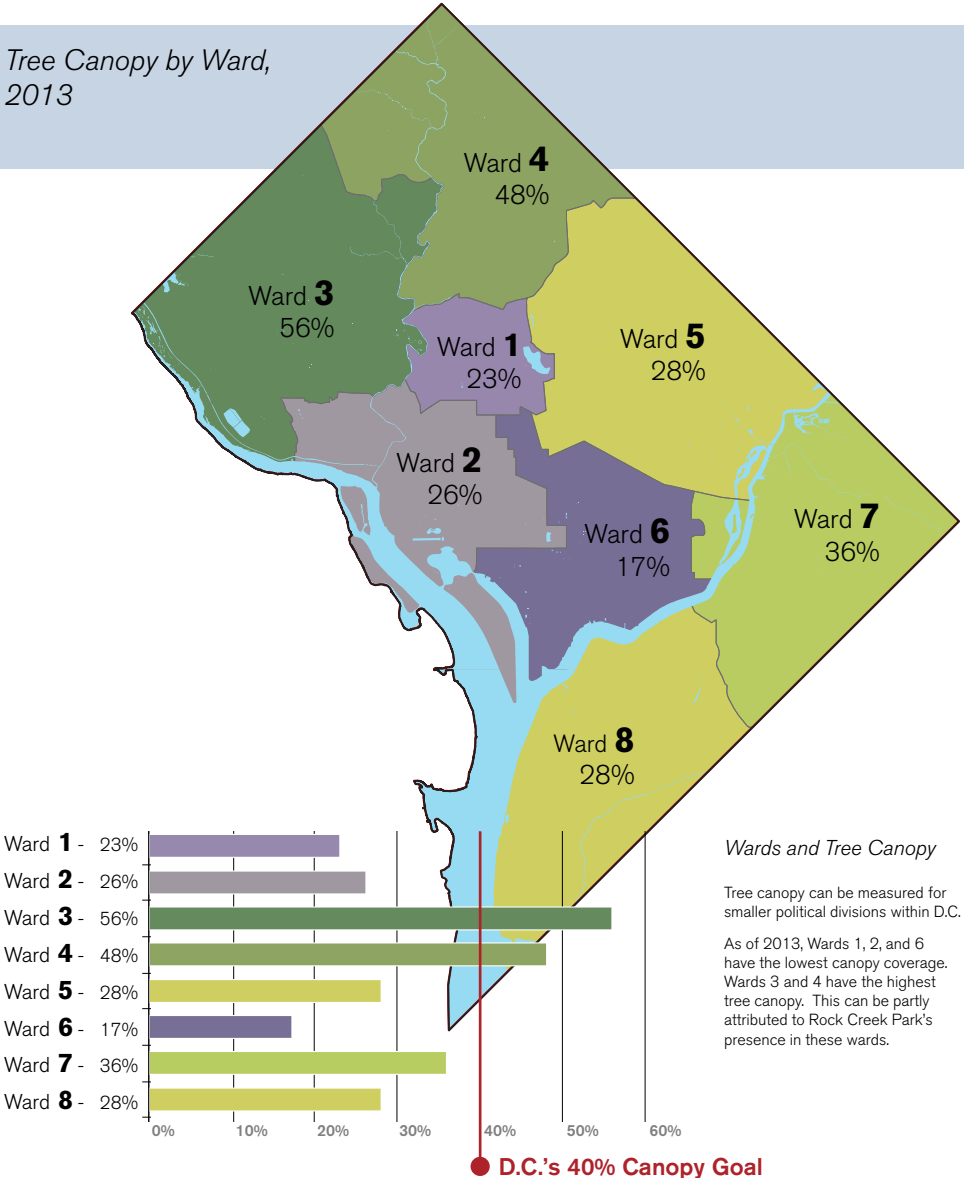


WHY ADVOCATE FOR TREES?

The Tree Canopy of Washington, D.C.

Tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches, and tree stems that covers the ground when viewed from above. The current average tree canopy coverage for the city is 36% (the percentage of tree canopy coverage to overall land area). In order to achieve the District-wide tree canopy goal of 40% by 2032, as a city we must plant 8,600 trees annually. *

Tree Canopy by Ward, 2013



What Trees Can Provide for Urban Areas

A city-wide, 40% tree canopy will provide a cleaner, cooler, and healthier future for every citizen of D.C.

1) Trees clean the air

D.C.'s trees remove approximately 492 tons of air pollution every year.

2) Trees manage stormwater

Trees manage stormwater, a major environmental and financial problem for the city. By absorbing water through their roots, trees slow and reduce stormwater runoff, a great benefit in urban areas.

3) Trees provide much needed shade and cooling

Trees account for \$3.5 million annually in energy savings for District residents. Additionally, they help reduce the urban heat island effect by providing shade and cooling.

4) Trees help deal with climate change

In addition to conserving energy, it is estimated that the city's trees sequester up to 19,000 tons of carbon each year in the District. That's the equivalent of taking over 3,700 cars off the road.

5) Trees make for healthier communities and people

Studies have found that green surroundings refresh us and help combat stress, anxiety, and depression. Views of green are also associated with fewer sick days and faster recovery times. A study of over 10,000 people in the Netherlands found that greener neighborhoods were linked to better overall health. These benefits are especially important for those who spend more time close to home, like children, the elderly, and the poor.

6) Trees help businesses

People are willing to visit more frequently and travel farther to business districts with trees. They are also willing to pay more for goods and services (12% on average) in these areas.

And more!

Knowing how trees contribute to a healthier and more beautiful city will help make you a more effective advocate. To learn more about the many benefits of trees, visit the Casey Trees' Green Issue Briefs page on our website.

*Note: the 8,600 standard was first calculated for Casey Trees' 2035 canopy goal. The city chose to keep that value for its own 2032 goal.

WHY ADVOCATE FOR TREES?

Refining Your Message

Effective advocacy often requires a clear, consistent message, or an “elevator speech” (i.e. a speech you can deliver in the time it takes to get on and off an elevator). This “speech” will help you stay on point with your message when you have a limited meeting time or an unplanned opportunity to influence a stakeholder.

Here’s a quick rundown on what to do:

1. Say hello—get his/her attention.
2. Ask for a quick moment of his/her time.
3. Introduce yourself, and identify yourself as a constituent (if appropriate).
4. Bring up the issue.
5. Succinctly make your point.
6. Ask for an action.
7. Thank them.

An example:

1. Hello, Councilmember Stevenson, I’m so glad to see you here.
2. Do you have a quick moment to chat with a constituent about the proposed development on Grant Street?
3. My name is Eileen Degraux, and I live in your ward at Thomson Place Apartments.
4. Did you know that the developers are planning to cut down one acre of forest in order to complete their project?
5. Trees are an essential asset to this city—they clean air and water, provide much needed shade, and actually benefit businesses by creating a better retail environment.
6. Would you consider joining my ANC Commissioner in asking the developer to plant twenty trees to offset forest loss? Your support is imperative to achieving the city’s tree canopy goal outlined in the Sustainable DC Plan.
7. Thank you for your time and help.

Keep in mind, an advocate should be assertive while letting the conversation flow naturally.

KEY PLAYERS AND AGENCIES

Before you can advocate for trees, you should learn about the various agencies and organizations that impact them. Because of the varied missions of D.C. city agencies and the city's diverse land ownership, a number of entities are involved.



KEY PLAYERS AND AGENCIES

Land Owners, Managers, and Planners

Urban Forestry Administration (UFA)

The Urban Forestry Administration (UFA) is responsible for establishing and maintaining a population of healthy street trees, which accounts for about 7% of the tree canopy, or 125,000 trees. The UFA is a division housed within the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). The Urban Forestry Administration employs 1-2 arborists per ward who plant, inspect, maintain, prune, and remove trees within the public right-of-way. Citizens who have questions or witness violations regarding street trees can contact DDOT-UFA online (<http://311.dc.gov/>) or by dialing 311.

D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

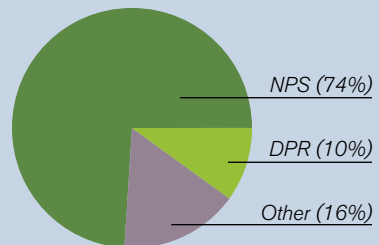
D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) facilitates quality urban recreation by overseeing the operations, improvements, and programming of area parks, community facilities, swimming pools, and recreation centers. DPR owns roughly 900 acres of parkland in the city, which is managed by the Department of General Services (DGS). This land constitutes approximately 10% of all parkland and open space in the city and includes some natural growth areas with trees. Major park renovation and capital improvement projects include public input opportunities where citizens are allowed to weigh-in on various public interests and concerns.

U.S. National Park Service (NPS)

The National Park Service (NPS) manages some of the nation's most prized outdoor resources. D.C. is home to 23 National Parks of various sizes, and 75 National Historic Landmarks. Total NPS land in the city encompasses approximately 6,800 acres. The National Park Service is responsible for the planning and maintenance of all forest resources on those lands. NPS properties include many large-parcel parks such as the National Mall as well as numerous neighborhood parks and green spaces throughout the District. Environmental statutes such as the National Environmental Policy Act often require that NPS involve the public in management decisions for these parks and forest resources.

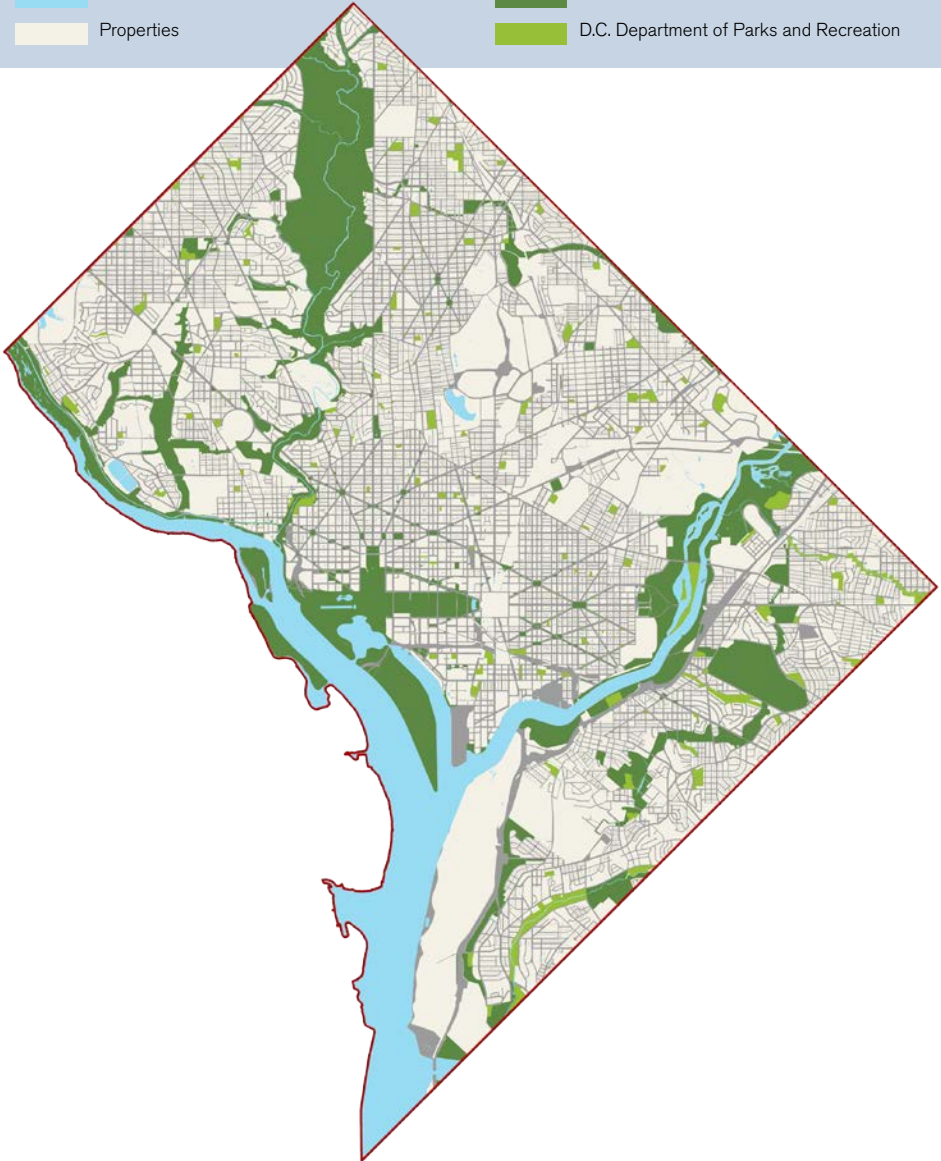
Key Parks and Open Space Agencies in D.C.

Twenty-four percent of Washington's land is parkland or other open spaces areas (around 9,300 acres). Of this land, NPS owns and manages 74%, DPR owns 10%, and 16% of this land is owned and managed by other public bodies, such as D.C. Public Schools, the National Zoo, National Arboretum, cemeteries, and reservoirs (according to the Capital Space Plan, adopted by NCPC in 2010).



Key Landowner Overview of Washington, D.C.

- D.C. Boundary
- Water
- Properties
- Streets, Right-of-way
- National Park Service
- D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation



KEY PLAYERS AND AGENCIES

Department of General Services (DGS)

The D.C. Department of General Services, established in 2012, is the key property management department for the city with a mission to elevate the quality of life for the District with superior construction, first-rate maintenance, and expert real estate management. DGS manages and maintains all D.C. land including parks, schools, and other properties and facilities. This department also oversees capital improvement and construction projects on D.C. land, which can have substantial implications for trees on these sites. Advocates can attend DGS public meetings to provide a voice for trees in the property management process.

National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC)

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) is the federal government's central planning agency for the National Capital Region. The National Capital Region includes the District of Columbia, as well as certain counties and cities adjacent to D.C. NCPC prepares the Federal Elements section of the city's Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, which guides the federal government in managing its facilities and properties in the region. The NCPC also reviews and comments on draft plans from surrounding jurisdictions and has a seat on the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital

The Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital is the official comprehensive planning document for the D.C. area.

A comprehensive plan is used as a guide to direct public policy on the built and natural environment. This includes the city's decisions on land use and transportation framework. Land use informs the Zoning Commission on how the zoning code should be written.

Policy Makers and Advisors

District Department of the Environment (DDOE)

The District Department of the Environment (DDOE) is the leading agency on energy and environmental issues affecting the District of Columbia. Created in 2006 from other agencies and offices, it seeks to improve the quality of life for the residents and natural inhabitants of D.C. by conserving resources, restoring and protecting the environment, and educating the public. Working collaboratively with other agencies, DDOE pursues its mission through regulations, outreach, education, and incentives. It also provides incentives for tree planting through the RiverSmart and tree rebate programs.

D.C. Office of Planning (OP)

The Office of Planning (OP) is the central planning agency for D.C., working to implement the city's Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital, by preparing zoning text and map amendments for submission to the Zoning Commission (ZC). The Office of Planning also reviews and provides recommendations on applications for amendments, variances, and special exceptions to the zoning code, as well as for Planned Unit Developments (PUDs). These written recommendations from the planning staff can heavily impact decisions of the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment.

The Office of Planning is often the first governmental agency that reviews large developments, which can include significant portions of the city's urban forest. Tree advocates should work with OP and maintain lines of communication as it reviews these large projects.

D.C. Zoning Commission (ZC)

Housed within the Office of Zoning, the Zoning Commission is tasked with preparing, adopting, and amending Zoning Regulations and the D.C. Zoning Map in a manner that is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital. An independent, quasi-judicial body, the Commission is made up of five members—three residents appointed by the Mayor, the Architect of the Capitol, and the Director of the National Park Service.

KEY PLAYERS AND AGENCIES

Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a tool that allows developers greater flexibility in site planning and building design. With greater flexibility allowed, the developer is required to create and provide significant public benefits within the planning, design, and construction of the development.

PUD regulations may include tree-specific benefits as a potential project amenity, such as the preservation of forested areas or the creation of community parks.

The Office of Planning has the ability to make recommendations to PUD developers early on in the planning process to include tree-related benefits in the project. The Zoning Commission's role is to approve or deny the final development application.

REGULATIONS AFFECTING TREES

The laws governing the District of Columbia contain regulations intended to protect the city's trees. Becoming familiar with these laws and other statutes will allow you to act for trees and respond to immediate problems within your community.



REGULATIONS AFFECTING TREES

Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002 (UFPA)

On January 22, 2003, the Council of the District of Columbia passed the Urban Forest Preservation Act (UFPA) to regulate the removal of Special Trees (trees with a circumference of 55 inches or greater) and establish a Tree Fund. Tree Fund dollars are collected from tree removal fees to fund replacement tree planting and defray administration costs.

In July 2014, Mayor Vincent Gray signed into law the Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014. Title IV, Subtitle C of this legislation moved the UFPA to a fee-only system which allows the City to manage and monitor all replacement tree plantings.

Special Tree Protection

The UFPA is implemented through a permitting process for the removal of Special Trees. According to the law, no person or nongovernmental agency can “top, cut down, remove, girdle, break, or destroy any Special Tree” without a permit. The penalty for removing a tree without a permit is a fine of no less than \$100 per inch of circumference (up to \$15,000).

Permits to remove Special Trees are granted to private property owners if:

- A tree is deemed hazardous or invasive.
- A fee of \$35/inch of circumference is paid into the Tree Fund.

The Urban Forest Preservation Act regulates the removal of Special Trees and provides a funding source for replacement tree planting and administration costs.

General Tree Damage

Under the UFPA, all trees in the city (both on public and private land) are protected against general damage. Residents can play an essential role by notifying the District when they observe tree damage to make sure the law is enforced.

Fines for general damage:

- Small trees: \$ 5,000
- Trees with a circumference ≥ 55 " : \$15,000

If you witness unlawful tree damage, report the issue to the Mayor's Service Request Center by calling 311 or going online to <http://311.dc.gov> and navigating to “Request a City Service,” “Tree Inspection.” The city also offers a 311 smartphone app to enable users to report issues in their neighborhood.

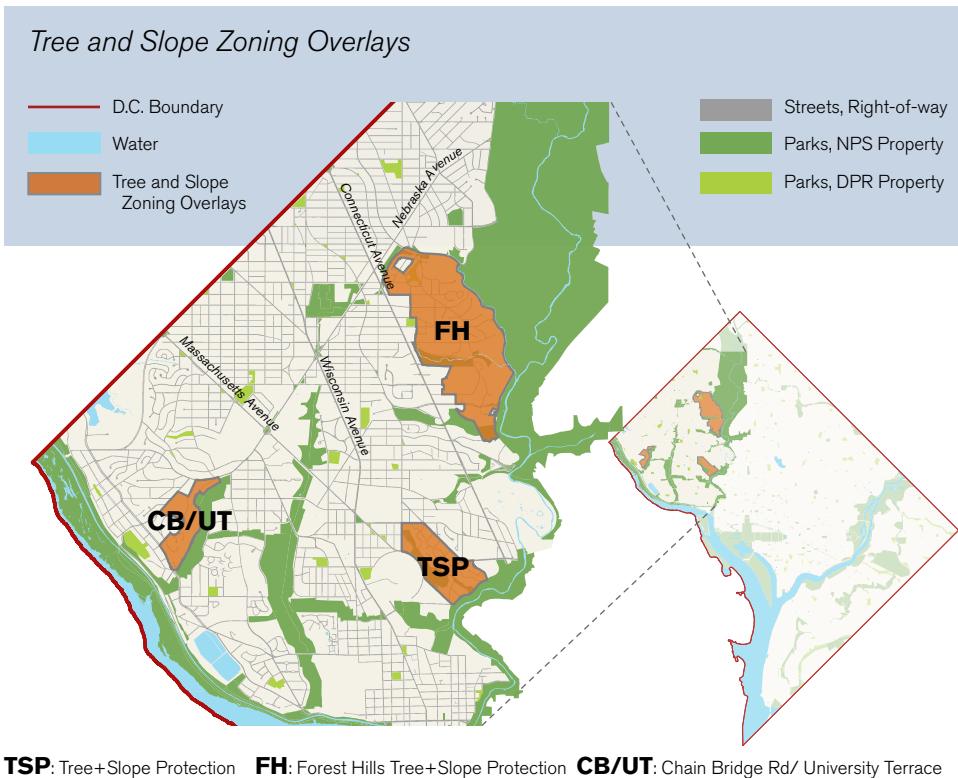
Tree and Slope Zoning Overlays

Zoning overlays are planning regulatory tools, placed over a base zoning designation that identifies special provisions for an area in addition to its existing zoning. Tree and slope zoning overlays exist in several Northwest neighborhoods primarily as a control method to preserve the existing topography and forested nature of the area and to protect the surrounding open space, parkland, and stream beds. Mature canopy trees provide soil stability and prevent topsoil degradation, and these zoning overlays help to reduce erosion, which can often occur on steep slopes after large storm events.

The tree and slope overlay requirements apply to private property and prevent the loss of canopy by prohibiting the following:

- A maximum removal of three trees with a circumference greater than 38".
- No removal of trees with a circumference greater than 75".

The punishment for violation of these rules is a seven year ban from obtaining new building permits. The permit ban is connected to the land even after transfers of ownership and is a powerful deterrent to violating the overlay regulations.



REGULATIONS AFFECTING TREES

Green Area Ratio

In spring 2013, the Office of Planning revised the city's zoning code to include a Green Area Ratio (GAR) requirement. This requirement affects all new buildings and all existing buildings undergoing substantial renovations and improvements. The GAR is an environmental site-sustainability metric that encourages site design and landscape elements that will help reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality, and mitigate the urban heat island effect. Trees are one of several landscape elements that can be added to a site to achieve an accepted GAR ratio.

Stormwater Regulations

When stormwater is neither absorbed into the ground nor evapotranspired into the air, it can pose serious environmental challenges – this is particularly the case in urban areas with high percentages of impervious surfaces. In D.C., one third of the city's stormwater management relies on an antiquated system that combines stormwater with wastewater, which is called a combined sewer system (or CSO). During storm events, the treatment plant is overwhelmed with excess stormwater. This stormwater, combined with industrial and untreated human waste, is then discharged into various outlets of our three tributaries: Rock Creek, and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.

Trees can help to reduce stormwater runoff. By directing runoff into infiltration planters and swales, trees can help to slow, filter, and absorb the stormwater that would have otherwise flowed untreated into the sewer system.

In 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a new stormwater permit to D.C. called the “District of Columbia (DC) Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Final Permit.” This permit has stricter performance standards than previous versions and is intended to reduce the amount of untreated wastewater to be discharged into D.C. rivers.

The requirements include initiatives to:

- Plant 4,150 trees annually.
- Install a minimum of 350,000 square feet of green roofs.
- Develop restoration plans for the impaired waterways of the Anacostia, Potomac, and Rock Creek waterways.
- Prevent more than 103,000 pounds of trash annually from being discharged to the Anacostia River.

THE DISTRICT'S POLITICAL MAP

Your local leaders have the power to make tree canopy issues a legislative priority. This section explains the District's political geography and where these leaders hold the power to give tree issues political weight.



THE DISTRICT'S POLITICAL MAP

Decision-Making Process

The Mayor

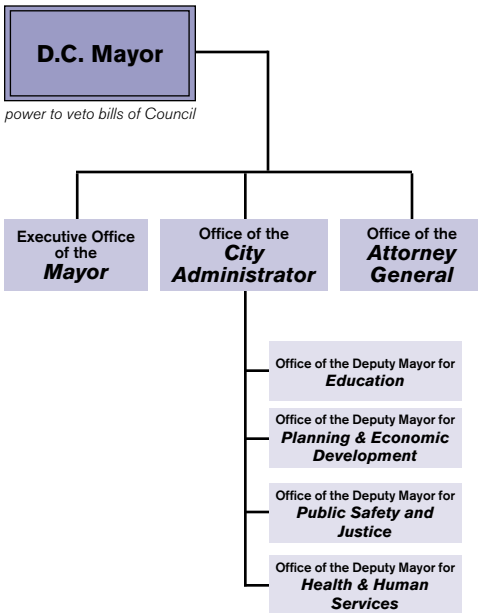
The Mayor, or Chief Executive of the District of Columbia, is tasked with enforcing city laws and may either approve or veto bills passed by the D.C. Council. The Mayor manages the operation of agencies that make the city run, including the public school system, public works, law enforcement, and city services, including the District Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Administration (DDOT-UFA). Each year the Mayor prepares a budget for the operation of city agencies. Mayors serve four year terms.

D.C. Council

The Council of the District of Columbia makes the city's laws, and oversees its governmental agencies. It is composed of thirteen members - eight ward representatives, and five at-large Councilmembers (including the chairman). Apart from writing city laws, the Council approves the Mayor's budget and agency appointees.

District of Columbia Government Structure

Executive Branch



Legislative Branch



Committees

Committees are an essential part of the legislative process in the District of Columbia. The D.C. Council currently has 10 committees; each is responsible for the oversight of specific government agencies and policy legislation. Generally speaking, a councilmember will chair one committee and participate in a few others.

In order for a bill to become a law, it must first be approved within a committee. Once a bill is introduced, it is assigned to the committee with the most expertise on that bill's subject matter. The assigned committee then has a two-year time period for review. After review, the committee can vote for the bill to be considered by the Committee of the Whole. From that point it must make it through the Committee of the Whole (which includes all members of the D.C. Council) and then two legislative meetings of the full Council. Legislation approved by the Council is sent to the Mayor for approval or veto (which can be overridden).

Apart from considering specific legislation, committees also play a key role in reviewing the Mayor's proposed budgets for their associated agencies. After a review period, they make proposed amendments to the budget.

The 10 committees, including the Committee of the Whole, are listed in the chart on the facing page.

Tree-relevant Committees

It is important for an advocate to know the committees (and the councilmembers that sit on those committees) that matter most to trees. The Committee on Transportation and the Environment and the Committee on Economic Development are two such committees.

- **Committee on Transportation and the Environment:** oversees the District Department of the Environment (DDOE), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), and Environmental Planning Commission (among others).
- **Committee on Economic Development:** oversees the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

THE DISTRICT'S POLITICAL MAP

Political Designations

Wards

The city is politically divided into eight wards, which are redrawn every ten years to ensure equal populations. Each ward elects a representative to the Council of the District of Columbia.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions

Each ward is subdivided into Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs). An ANC is both a geographic area and a political entity. ANCs are comprised of representatives from ANC Single Member Districts. They consider a wide range of policies and regulations affecting their neighborhoods, and make recommendations to various government bodies, including the D.C. Council and the Executive Office. ANCs strive to ensure citizen input in the functioning of government.

Single Member Districts

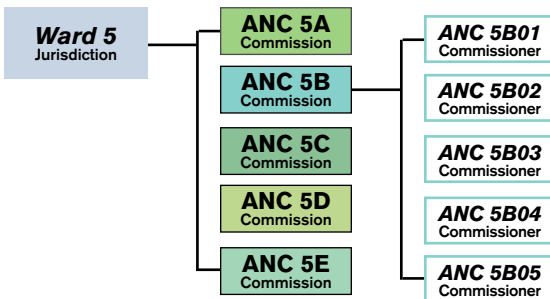
Advisory Neighborhood Commissions are comprised of Single Member Districts (SMDs), which contain approximately 2,000 people. D.C. citizens elect Commissioners to represent them at the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.

Ward and ANC Organization

Advisory Authority only

Ward Councilmembers meet with ANC Commissions to receive community-specific input regarding needs, interests, and values. ANCs receive funding from District revenues, which they can appropriate for community benefit.

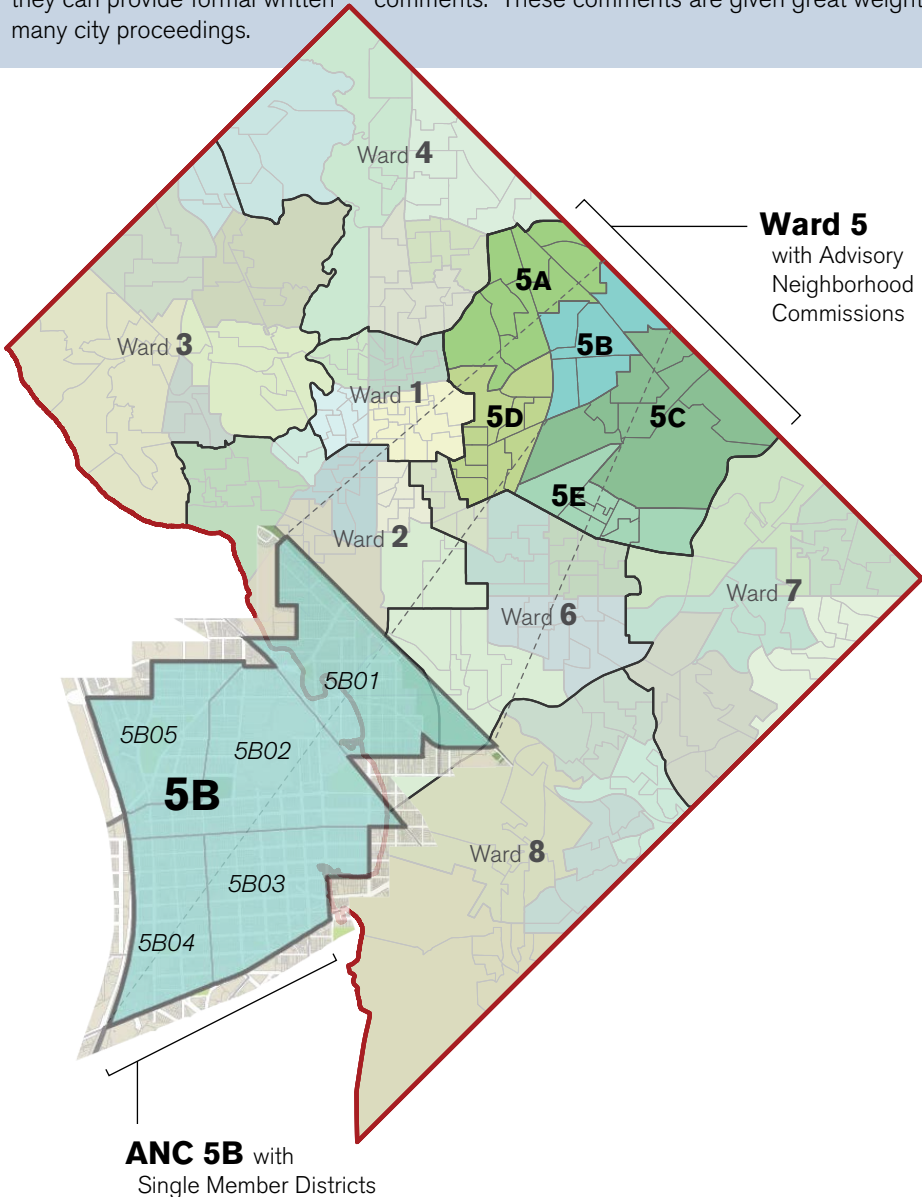
Ward 5 Organizational Example



Ward 5 ANC and SMD Designations

Combined, the representatives for each Single Member District make up one Advisory Neighborhood Commission (for example, ANC 5B is formed by: SMDs 5B01, 5B02, 5B03, 5B04, and 5B05).

ANC Commissioners have the ability to provide advice to their Ward Councilmember and government agencies on matters relevant to that specific community. As a commission, they can provide formal written comments. These comments are given great weight in many city proceedings.



THE DISTRICT'S POLITICAL MAP

Fostering Relationships

Effective advocacy requires more than an understanding of D.C.'s political process. It depends on growing strong relationships with elected officials, community leaders, and other influential citizens in your neighborhood and in the city. You will be most effective in presenting your case if the people you are speaking with know and respect you.

Fostering relationships takes time, something many of us lack because of busy work lives, family, and other commitments. Yet, if you want your voice to be heard, you'll have to get out and show your face at community events, ANC meetings, and other gatherings. You can even volunteer for a campaign or event planning committee. Try to find out about important attendees in advance. When you spot your ANC Commissioner or a city planner, don't be shy. Be sure to say hello and introduce yourself as an active member of the community. Over time they'll get to know you, and you them. If you follow our other advice in this handbook, they'll also learn quickly that you represent a broad number of voices, and that your input in decisions is valuable and worth their consideration.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Now that you understand the District regulations relevant to trees and who the key stakeholders and decision-makers are, here's how you can stand up for trees.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Action 1: Attend a Public Meeting

D.C. public bodies (ANC, D.C. Council, Zoning Commission, etc.) meet regularly but with different frequency.

The D.C. Council

The D.C. Council and its committees meet weekly, with multiple gatherings most business days. The Council's schedule can be located at: <http://dccouncil.us/calendar>.

Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs)

Your neighborhood ANC meets once a month to discuss issues and draft recommendations for the D.C. Council and other city agencies. Recommendations from ANCs can impact an agency's ruling on new developments where a neighborhood's tree canopy may be affected. Information on your ANC Commissioners and upcoming meetings, visit the ANC homepage: <http://anc.dc.gov/>

Attend meetings and be ready to identify yourself and push for trees. Explain why trees are beneficial to communities, why existing trees should be protected, and why new ones should be planted. Remember to emphasize the Sustainable DC Plan's goal of a 40% tree canopy across the city by 2032.

In early 2013, the District released a comprehensive sustainability plan called Sustainable DC. Use this document as a resource to understand the city's goals and hold officials accountable. Remember to emphasize the plan's goal of a 40% tree canopy across the city by 2032.

Action 2: Get Involved with your Neighborhood Association

Many neighborhoods have neighborhood, community, civic or citizens associations organized to advocate for issues at the local level. Membership to these organizations provides an opportunity to increase awareness about trees. Membership may also allow Tree Advocates to form relationships with leaders in the area. At these meetings, Tree Advocates may encounter other advocates for trees and enlist their help in achieving our shared mission to restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of the nation's capital.

Mock Case Study

Below is a mock case study to illustrate when, where, and how you can fight for more trees.

Case Study: Grein Luxury Condos and Shops

Grein Luxury Condos and Shops (aka Grein Place) is a proposed commercial and residential project that features 13,000 square feet of retail space, 200 residential rental units, and 150 parking spaces. The project's developers are lauding its bold approach to design, and assert that it will introduce density in a responsible manner. According to planners, the shops and luxury condos will help revitalize the community and attract increased revenues to the area.

Density, as conceived by the Grein Place developers, includes a residential space that is five stories tall. The neighborhood's existing building and zoning codes only allow for spaces two to three stories high. This deviation from the building code requires planners to seek zoning relief. In moving through the project as a Planned Unit Development, developers must have an initial private hearing with the Zoning Commission, followed by a public hearing.

This kind of undertaking carries a large footprint, and can be a positive or negative force in your community. Though this case did not require extensive tree cuttings, many do, and such developments pose a need for public oversight and participation. Tree Advocates should stand up to ensure developers include trees and green design in their building plans.

A Tree Advocate would have two main opportunities to comment on the Grein Place development: ANC Meetings and Zoning Commission hearings. He/she should also seek to communicate directly with the developers, who are encouraged to work with the ANC and community groups during the planning process.



Following on page 31 are helpful tips on how to make the case for trees in this particular scenario.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Action 3: Communicate with your local elected official

Direct communication with your elected officials is one of the best ways to show support for your cause. There are a few means through which you and your partners can communicate. The most common are face-to-face meetings, letters, and phone calls.

Schedule a Face-to-Face Meeting

Face-to-face meetings are a great way to build rapport with an elected official while delivering a compelling case for trees. These requests should be reserved for larger issues with substantial implications for our urban forest. Elected officials will be more likely to allot you time in their busy schedules if you've previously made an introduction and shown yourself to be a valuable member of the community.

Scheduling a meeting

- Know your elected official's scheduler by name. This person is the one who will be able to take your request for a meeting.
 - D.C. Council information: <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/>
 - ANC information: <http://anc.dc.gov/>
 - If you don't know your ANC, visit: <http://ancbrigade.com>
- Begin by calling the scheduler with your request, and be prepared to follow-up with an email containing proposed dates and more information about the cause.
- Call the scheduler, introduce yourself, and remind them of what materials you sent and when you sent them.
- Thank them!

Preparation

- Prepare your strongest talking points.
- Understand the opposition's stance.
- Know the councilmember or commissioner's issues of interest and weave your story into their goals for the community.
- Draft materials to bring to the meeting (utilize the Casey Trees website).

At the meeting

- Be polite, and timely.
- Limit your group size: in general, don't bring more than 3-5 people, and be sure each person knows his/her role.
- Identify yourself and everyone in your group, including where they live (especially if they are local constituents of the neighborhood). Remember, elected officials are supposed to serve you.
- Stay on message. Deliver clear points. Explain your position, but don't disparage or criticize other legislators or advocacy groups.
- Make an actionable request.
- Share your materials.
- Thank them at the end of the meeting.

After the meeting

- Write or call the official and his/her staff to thank them for meeting with you.
- Send any additional materials you had promised.
- Maintain communication with letters, calls, or visits as appropriate.

Call your elected official

- Identify yourself as a constituent.
- Ask to leave a message for your elected official.
- Explain why you want to leave a message (have facts of the case on hand).
- Ask for a response.

Write to your representative

We have included tips and recommendations for writing to your elected official. A sample letter to an elected official can be found on page 32.

- Be respectful. Use proper titles in the letter when appropriate.
- State your name, who you are, and identify yourself as a constituent.
- Clearly indicate your purpose for writing and your position on the matter.
- Be concise.
- Pick your strongest points, and assert them. Statistics or examples help.
- Be personal and explain your specific connection to the area.
- Ask for a response.
- Follow up with a phone call, letter, or visit as appropriate.

ANCs and the Zoning Review Process

Navigating the zoning process can be quite complicated. Here are a few helpful tips that will guide you along the way:

The D.C. Office of Zoning provides many important resources to the public, including zoning tutorials, a D.C. zoning guidebook, and a schedule of upcoming Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustment public meetings.

When a party files for a variance or special exception, notice is sent to the affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC), Single-Member District (SMD), Councilmember, and others. Once a public hearing has been scheduled, notice is sent to the appropriate ANC and surrounding property owners, among others.

ANCs are an important partner during variance, special exception, or Planned Unit Development (PUD) review processes. Properly filed ANC written reports are given great weight by the Board of Zoning Adjustment and Zoning Commission. Individuals who wish to participate in a public meeting must request party status at least 14 days prior to a meeting (residents can participate even if they are not granted party status).

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Action 4: Organize and distribute petitions

Distributing a petition can be an effective tool for quantifying support for a cause. Many people who would be unwilling to write a letter or call their local official will sign a petition. Furthermore, when meeting with a public official, presenting a petition can help solidify a position and demonstrate broader support. Some advice:

- Identify the best person to receive the petition.
- Write the petition with a clearly defined message. Actionable requests are preferred (i.e. we urge person X to support the revision of the Green Area Ratio specifications).
- Include background information.
- Make multiple copies, and ensure your partners seeking signatures are well-educated on the issue.
- For creating online petitions, change.org is a free and popular option.

Other Actions

- Submit public comments.
- Work with Casey Trees to train new Tree Advocates.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newsletter.
- Organize a community meeting.
- Conduct outreach through social media.

Your Opinion Counts

Public comments are an essential tool for advocates.

Public comment periods are widely used (and often even required) in the formal decision-making process. Governmental agencies will provide a public comment period to receive input on new plans, policies, regulations, and laws. Written comments by private citizens can be highly effective for advocates as a tool to bring your issue directly to a mayor, councilmember, director, or committee head's desk. Encouraging other advocates to submit comments can help make your shared opinion have a greater impact.

Case Study: Grein Luxury Condos and Shops (continued)

Making the Case for Trees: At the Meeting

Clearly define the benefits of trees

- Trees at Grein Place will create many positive effects:
 - Businesses will benefit from increased foot traffic and shoppers will be willing to stay in the area longer because of increased shade.
 - The community will value improved vistas and cleaner air.
 - Trees will absorb rainwater runoff and help the city move toward its goal of 40% tree canopy.

Ask important questions

- How many existing trees are on the site and scheduled for removal? Are any of them Special Trees?
- Have the developers incorporated trees and green space into their plans?
- How many trees are they planning to plant, and where?
- Who is advising their plantings?

Make an actionable request

- The developer needs to commit to planting 20 trees on property, and an additional 20 trees in community parks or school grounds. That amenity is essential to preserving the health and livability of our community.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Sample Letter

The Honorable Layne Asfalt
Ward Five Councilmember
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Councilwoman Asfalt,

I am a citizen of the District of Columbia and a Ward Five constituent. As a resident of the Brookland neighborhood, I am writing to urge you to push the developers of proposed 'Grein Luxury Condos and Shops' to include trees in the plans for their development. Tree plantings and other green infrastructure will help ensure community health and benefit businesses by creating a more attractive retail environment. The developers should be required to include 20 trees on the site as part of their PUD design. In addition, the city must ensure that the environmental costs of construction are mitigated. Therefore, the developers should also commit to planting 20 trees at local schools or parks to offset the impacts of construction.

Trees, which provide a host of environmental, social, and psychological benefits, are a needed element in this development for the following reasons:

- New retail space and parking will increase automobile traffic, introducing more particulates into the air. The planting of trees would help filter out those same particulates.
- The city faces a huge problem of stormwater polluting the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. Trees are a natural and inexpensive way to manage stormwater.
- The owners, developers, and nearby business owners can benefit financially from tree planting. Studies show that people are willing to travel farther, visit more frequently, and pay more for goods and services in business districts with trees.

The mayor made a commitment in 2012 to reach a 40% tree canopy by 2032. In order to reach this goal, we must work together to not only protect our current tree canopy but also enhance and restore it, by demanding smarter, more sustainable development for all future projects in the District. The inclusion of trees within development plans is a clear choice for a more sustainable D.C.

I look forward to hearing from you in response to my concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Lily Woodworth

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

The following preparatory tools and actions will equip you for success advocating for trees.



1. Have a clear, realistic, measurable goal

- It's much easier to advocate for something tangible or quantifiable.
 - For example, instead of pushing for healthier urban forests, advocate for a 50% increase in budgeted tree planting.

2. Know the issue

- What exactly are you advocating for?
- Why is it important?
 - Have multiple points, preferably backed up by data/statistics.
- What is your opponents' argument?
- Learn to concisely, clearly assert your position.
- Consult the "Why Trees" section of this handbook. Refer to our website to read Green Issue Briefs.
- If you haven't already, attend a Casey Trees event or class.
 - In particular, our Stand up for Trees program is a great resource for advocates.
- Stay informed using social media and community listservs.

3. Educate others

- Work to create public awareness of tree canopy issues and activities.

4. Identify stakeholders and potential partners

- Who else cares about the issue?
- How can you join forces with other groups or people?

5. Get to know your representatives

- What is their background?
- Who/what influences them?
- What issues are most important to them?

6. Identify other important players in the community

- Local, non-elected leaders can play a key role in your advocacy efforts.
- These influential individuals can include clergy, local chamber of commerce officials, business leaders, and union heads, among others.
- Non-elected government officials - including staff from DC Parks and Recreation and the U.S. National Park Service - are also valuable resources.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Useful Terms ii

Appendix B: Works Cited vi

Appendix C: Helpful Links vii

Appendix A: Useful Terms

Arboriculture: The cultivation of trees, shrubs, and woody plants for shading and decorating.

American National Standards Institute A300: In the U.S., industry-developed national consensus standards of practice for tree care (pruning, soil management, planting and transplanting, etc).

American National Standards Institute Z133.1: In the U.S., industry-developed, national consensus standards of safety criteria for those engaged in tree care.

Balled and burlapped (B&B): A tree or other plant dug and removed from the ground for replanting, with the roots and soil wrapped in burlap or a similar fabric.

Bare root: Tree or other plant removed from the group for replanting without soil around the roots.

Biodiversity: The existence of a wide range of different types of organisms in a given place at a given time. The diversity of plant and animal life in a given habitat.

Bioretention: Bioretention is a terrestrial-based, water quality and water quantity control practice using the chemical, biological, and physical properties of plants, microbes, and soils for removal of pollutants from stormwater runoff.

Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA): A five member board created to handle unusual cases regarding property and regulation. The BZA is authorized to grant variances and special exceptions to the Zoning Regulations. It also hears appeals to administrative decisions made while enforcing and administering the Zoning Regulations.

Caliper: A device used to measure the diameter of a tree.

Canopy: The branches and foliage of a tree above ground or water.

Charrette: An intensive design process that involves the collaboration of all project stakeholders at the beginning of a project to develop a comprehensive plan or design.

Containerized: Field grown plant placed into a container for a time and then sold as a potted plant. Does not refer to a plant initially grown in a container.

Cultivar: A cultivated variety of a plant. Cannot be reproduced without human assistance. Usually propagated asexually (cloned).

DBH (diameter at breast height): A standard measure of the diameter of the trunk of a standing tree. Breast height is measured at 4.5 feet above the ground.

Girdling root: Root that encircles all or part of the trunk of a tree or other roots and constricts the vascular tissue and inhibits secondary growth and the movement of water and photosynthates.

Green Area Ratio: A sustainability zoning measure that sets standards for landscape and site design that contribute to the reduction of stormwater runoff, improve air quality, and reduce the urban heat island effect. It is based on a point system for different environmental elements.

Green Infrastructure: Natural elements (rain gardens, green roofs, etc.) incorporated into developed areas. Can be coupled with gray infrastructure to perform important ecological functions such as stormwater management, erosion control, temperature buffering, and more.

Greywater: Wastewater generated from activities such as laundry, dishwashing, and bathing. In some parts of the country it is lawful to collect greywater, filter it, and subsequently recycle it on-site for landscape irrigation or constructed wetlands.

Included bark: Bark that becomes embedded in a crotch (union) between branch and trunk or between codominant stems. Causes a weak structure that may result in branch failure (falling).

Low Impact Development: LID is an approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features, minimizing effective imperviousness to create functional and appealing site drainage that treat stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product. (EPA)

Mixed Use: A development in one or several buildings that combines several revenue-producing uses that are integrated into a comprehensive plan, such as a project with elements of housing, retail, and office space.

Municipal arborist: An individual specializing in the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry and having responsibility for the management of all or part of planted and naturally occurring greenspaces on public land in communities.

Permaculture: Permaculture is a holistic approach to landscape design and human culture. It is an attempt to integrate several disciplines, including biology, ecology, geography, agriculture, architecture, appropriate technology, gardening and community building.

Planned Unit Development (PUD): A zoning tool which gives a developer greater flexibility in site planning and building design (usually height and density), but requires that the project offer significant public benefits. A PUD must protect and advance public health, welfare, safety, and convenience. The public amenity offered by a PUD can include the preservation/addition of trees and green space.

Public right-of-way (ROW): See "Right-of-way (ROW)".

Permit: Written order granting permission to do something. D.C. law requires a tree removal permit to cut down trees with a circumference of 55 inches or greater.

Pruning: The selective removal of parts of a tree or plant such as buds, branches, or roots. Performed to maintain plant health or induce other desirable qualities.

Root ball: Soil containing all (e.g., containerized) or a portion (e.g., balled and burlapped) of the roots that are moved with a plant when it is planted or transplanted.

Root collar: Process of removing soil to expose and assess the root collar (root crown) of a tree.

Root pruning: 1) In transplanting, the process of pre-digging a root ball to increase the density of root development within the final root ball. 2) In tree conservation and preservation, the process of pre-cutting roots behind the line of a planned excavation to prevent tearing and splintering of remaining roots. 3) In tree disease management, severing tree roots to prevent disease transmission through root grafts.

Right-of-way (ROW): The right-of-way (ROW) consists of the travel lanes, on-street parking, sidewalk area, and other public space situated between the property lines on either side of a street.

Specifications: Detailed plans, requirements, and statement of particular procedures and/or standards used to define and guide work. Used in construction.

Stormwater runoff: Water originating from precipitation (rain or melting snow and ice) that flows above ground rather than infiltrating into the soil. May occur if soils are frozen or saturated or if the rate at which precipitation falls is greater than the infiltration rate of a soil.

Structural soil: Pavement substrate that can be compacted to meet engineering specifications yet remains penetrable by tree roots in the urban environment. Composed of angular crushed stone, clay loam, and hydrogel mixed in the weight ratio of 100:20:0.03

Silva Cells: A modular suspended pavement system that uses soil volumes to support large tree growth and provide powerful on-site stormwater management through absorption, evapotranspiration, and interception.

Special exception: A conditioned permitted property use granted by the Board of Zoning Adjustment.

Suspended sidewalk: Sidewalk that is reinforced and supported with piers or other structures so that it does not rely on compacted subgrade or soil for support. Can incorporate Silva Cells and structural soils.

Sustainability: The ability to manage ecological, social, and economic benefits over time.

Sustainable Sites Initiative: A program created to establish national (U.S.) guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction, and maintenance practices.

Taper: Change in diameter over the length of trunks, branches, and roots

Tree Bill: The Urban Forest Preservation Act of 2002, which set up a permit for Special Tree removal, and established a Tree Fund to plant replacement trees and defray costs associated with the Act.

Tree Canopy Goal: Casey Trees' goal for the District of 40% tree canopy by the year 2035. This goal has been adopted by the D.C. government.

Tree spade: Mechanical equipment to dig, transport, and replant trees with a sufficiently large volume of roots and soil.

Tree stress: A factor that negatively affects the health of a plant; a factor that stimulates a response.

Tree wrap: Material used to wrap the trunks of newly planted or transplanted trees or to protect thin-barked mature trees when they are newly exposed to the sun.

Tropism: Tendency of growth or variation of a plant in response to an external stimulus such as gravity or light.

Trunk flare: Transition zone from trunk to roots where the trunk expands into the buttress or structural roots. Root flare.

UFARA: Urban Forestry Administration and Reorganization Act. This bill (never enacted) was introduced in 2011 and addresses management of the Tree Fund.

Urban forest management plan: Document that describes how urban forestry goals are to be accomplished within a defined time frame; includes tasks, priorities, best management practices, standards, specifications, budgets, and staffing analyses.

Urban Forestry: Management of naturally occurring and planted trees and associated plants in urban areas.

Urban Forest Preservation Act (UFPA): See “Tree Bill”

Urban Forests: All of the trees (street trees, park trees, private trees) within a city proper.

Urban Heat Island Effect: The term “urban heat island” describes metropolitan areas that are hotter than nearby rural areas. A city of 1 million people or more can have an annual mean temperature 1.8 - 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit higher than surrounding areas. Urban heat islands have many causes, including waste heat, and energy from people, buses, cars, and trains.

Utility Pruning: The pruning of branches by utility companies away from high-voltage electric lines to ensure reliable electric service.

Variance: An exception or modification of the Zoning Regulations granted when the Board of Zoning Adjustment rules that regulations impose “exceptional practical difficulties or exceptional and undue hardship.” BZA only grants a requested variance when it finds the request would not cause substantial detriment to the public good.

Visual Tree Assessment: Method of assessing the structural integrity of trees using external symptoms of mechanical stress (i.e. bulges) and defects.

Volcano mulching: A mulching method in which the material is piled up in a mound around a tree's trunk. This can cause problems by encouraging roots to grow up into the mulch (as opposed to ground soil) and also may act to shed water to the surrounding area.

Wetland: Land that is transitional between aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and is covered with water for at least part of the year. These lands are important as buffer zones to help control flooding and also provide an ecosystem for a diverse number of species.

Wire basket: Type of metal basket used to support the root ball of a balled and burlapped tree or a tree dug with a tree spade.

Xeriscaping: Creative landscaping design for conserving water that uses drought-resistant or drought-tolerant plants.

Zoning Code: The group of rules that regulate construction and land use in a city.

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Appendix C: Helpful Links

General Links

DC Sustainability Plan - <http://sustainable.dc.gov/finalplan>

DC Zoning Guidebook - <http://dcoz.dc.gov/main.shtm>

ANC Homepage - <http://anc.dc.gov/>

Casey Trees Links

Policy & Advocacy - <http://caseytrees.org/programs/policyadvocacy>

Tree Canopy Goal - <http://caseytrees.org/programs/policyadvocacy/utc/>

Public Comments - <http://caseytrees.org/programs/policyadvocacy/comments/>

Tree Report Card - <http://caseytrees.org/resources/publications/treereportcard/>

CASEY TREES

WHO WE ARE

Casey Trees is a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit, established in 2002, committed to restoring, enhancing and protecting the tree canopy of the nation's capital.

To fulfill this mission, we plant trees, engage thousands of volunteers of all ages in tree planting and care, provide year-round continuing education courses, monitor the city's tree canopy, develop interactive online tree tools and work with elected officials, developers, community groups to protect and care for existing trees and to encourage the addition of new ones.



3030 12th Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017

caseytrees.org