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Today's Discussion

- ▶ **Policy Question & Committee Charge**
- ▶ **Charlotte's Tree Canopy**
- ▶ **Policy Framework**
 - Tree Canopy Action Plan
 - Unified Development Ordinance
 - Tree Ordinance
- ▶ **Tree Canopy Programs**
 - Previous and Current Initiatives
 - Canopy Care Grant Concept

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Policy Referral: Tree Health

Policy Question:

What is the best approach to assist residents in caring for heritage trees?

Committee Charge:

- ▶ Review current programs and policies related to tree canopy maintenance
- ▶ Review past initiatives that provided for tree assessments on private properties
- ▶ Survey best practices being used in other cities to provide support for maintenance of trees on private property
- ▶ Determine if there are other feasible options to promote the health of heritage trees and their removal when any become a potential hazard
- ▶ Propose any new or revised plans or policies that the Committee recommends for providing assistance to residents with tree maintenance

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Charlotte's Tree Canopy

- ▶ Improves air quality – 3,318 tons/year of pollutant removed
- ▶ Carbon sequestration – 122,075 tons/year sequestered
- ▶ Increases property values - \$163 million added value
- ▶ Energy savings - \$15 million in avoided cooling costs
- ▶ Storm water benefits – 1.2 billion gallons intercepted/year

* Per Tree Canopy Action Plan and Urban Forest Master Plan data analysis

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Heritage Trees and Large Trees

► Heritage Tree

- Native NC tree species, 30" trunk diameter
- Examples: willow oak, red maple, tulip poplar

► Large Tree

- Large mature shade trees commonly found in residential areas

► Pros & Cons

- Provide significant environmental, economic, and social benefits
- Costly to maintain, removal often costs thousands of dollars

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Tree Canopy Action Plan (TCAP)

► Resident Feedback

- Assistance to help low-income residents manage large mature trees on private property was a key theme

► Analysis

- Compared Charlotte's tree canopy practices and regulations to Atlanta, Austin, Raleigh, and Washington, D.C.

► Policy Recommendation

- Pursue a Large Tree Assistance Program (LTAP) to support residents, address tree canopy equity and tree preservation

► Adopted Policy

- 2040 Comprehensive Plan adopted policy(7.49) supporting tree maintenance on private land in underserved and/or vulnerable neighborhoods

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Unified Development Ordinance (Article 20)

► Tree Protection Requirements

- Development regulations balancing tree preservation, tree planting, and development on private and public property

► Heritage Trees – Developers

- Removal allowed with demonstrated conflict, requires a City-issued land development permit
- Declining or hazardous trees may be removed without a permit, no mitigation
- Mitigation required: \$1,500/tree removed & re-plant one tree on property
 - Reduced \$250 for each additional tree planted

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Tree Ordinance (City Code Chapter 21)

► Tree Protection Requirements

- Non-development regulations intended to preserve and protect trees; regulates planting, maintenance, and removal of trees on public and private properties

► Heritage Trees – Property Owners

- Removal allowed, required City-issued tree work permit (\$150)
- Declining or hazardous trees may be removed without a permit, no mitigation
- Mitigation trees have size/quality standards, available at garden centers or via TreesCharlotte
- Mitigation required: \$500/tree removed & re-plant 1 tree on property
 - Reduced \$250 for each additional tree planted

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Canopy Programs

► Tree Canopy Preservation Program

- Conservation program, acquires and protects land for long-term tree canopy preservation

► TreesCharlotte Partnership

- Collaborative effort between TreesCharlotte and City, implements tree planting and education programming to achieve tree canopy objectives

► Tree by Tree Initiative

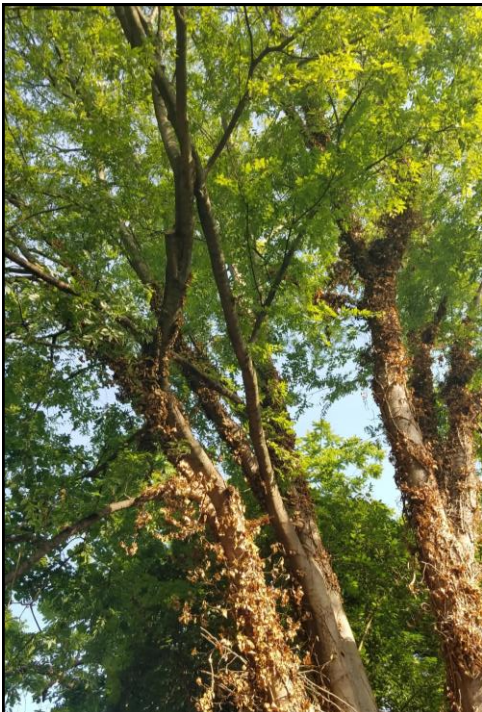
- Citywide program to engage residents and increase tree canopy awareness, track private trees in online map interface

► Canopy Assistance Pilot Program, 2018

- Pilot program in Wesley Heights providing maintenance support and assistance to low-income homeowners on private property, tree planting support, tree grant programming

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Canopy Assistance Pilot Program, 2018

► Partnership in Wesley Heights

► Work Completed

- \$25,000 assisted 9 homeowners (60% AMI)
- 17 trees evaluated
- Resulting in 7 removals and 10 prunings/other work

► Lessons Learned

- The need is great
- Large trees need regular inspections
- Residents need 1:1 assistance

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Staying in Place Pilot Program, 2022

- ▶ **Large tree assistance is a component piece of the Staying in Place pilot program – Washington Heights, Hidden Valley, Winterfield**
 - Engagement and outreach, and coordinated program/service delivery
- ▶ **Program Details**
 - \$200,000 allocated to large tree assistance – maximum grant of \$10,000
 - Owner-occupied households up to 80% AMI or \$72,000
 - Large trees on private property that could pose a threat to a resident or structure
- ▶ **Tree Assessments and Maintenance/Removal**
 - Potential participants identified through Community Visualization Surveys and Interest Form
 - Landscape Management “Assessment Days” scheduled for October and November
 - For qualified applicants needing assistance, Landscape Management will then procure a contractor to complete the tree work

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Charlotte's Tree Canopy

- ▶ **Framework adopted in the UDO**
- ▶ **Canopy Care Grant Concept**
 - Large Tree Assessments
 - Removal/Critical Needs Grant
 - Long Term Maintenance Grant
 - Partnerships to replant where needed
- ▶ **Next Steps**
 - Refine program design/parameters through Staying in Place pilot
 - Identify program funding needs and sources

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