

Legislation Text

File #: 15-11137, Version: 1

Tree Canopy Goal Review

Action:

Approve modifications to the tree canopy goal to retain the "50 by 2050" tagline and pursue a set of 50-themed goals.

Committee Chair:

Justin Harlow, Neighborhood Development

Staff Resource(s):

Sabrina Joy-Hogg, City Manager's Office
Mike Davis, Engineering and Property Management
Tim Porter, Engineering and Property Management

Current Ordinance

- On June 27, 2011, City Council established an aspirational goal to strive for 50 percent tree canopy coverage by 2050.
- The "50 by 2050" tagline has been successful in communicating the value of trees to the community but does not reflect a benefits-based, place-specific goal-setting approach which is now industry-standard.
- Charlotte's tree canopy coverage has remained between 46 and 48 percent since 2002. The Urban Forestry Master Plan adopted by Council in 2017 indicates that overall canopy coverage could be as low as 41 percent in 2050 when modeled with future land use maps.

Proposed Changes

- Based on the current assessment of Charlotte's Tree Canopy Goal, it is recommended the "50 by 2050" tagline be kept but revised to represent "50-themed" goals which reflect the benefits of Charlotte's urban forest.
- The benefits of the revised goals will be:
 - Shade: Reduction of heat island effect/cooling/energy savings,
 - Clean Air: Pollution reduction and carbon capture,
 - Character and property value: Strong, safe, and beautiful neighborhoods,
 - Quality of life: Quality green spaces, public health, and stress reduction, and
 - Wildlife habitat: Contiguous, healthy urban forest where urban wildlife thrives.
- Specific goals will include the following:
 - Achieve shade and clean air,
 - Re-plant at least 50 percent of quantity of street trees removed annually, and
 - Provide 5,000 trees and 5,000 seedlings for neighborhood planting annually.
 - Protect the city's character and property values,
 - Celebrate and recognize neighborhoods with 50 percent or greater canopy,
 - Conduct 50 engagement/outreach events annually, and
 - Continue updating urban tree canopy analysis every five years.
 - Ensure quality of life and wildlife habitat
 - Create 50 Urban Arboreta by 2030, and
 - Add five or more acres to the Tree Canopy Preservation Program annually.
- This revised approach will be further developed and enhanced as the city continues to engage the

community through the "Charlotte Future 2040" plan. As place types are defined, tree canopy goals can be applied specifically to each area with additional integration through the Unified Development Ordinance.

Committee Discussion

- The former Environmental Committee received a referral from the Mayor on February 4, 2019 to review the city's tree canopy goal and held a discussion on the topic on February 14, 2019. The newly established Neighborhood Development Committee continued the work on April 17, 2019 and May 15, 2019.
- The Neighborhood Development Committee voted to unanimously to forward the proposed modifications of Tree Canopy Goals to the full Council for discussion.

Attachment(s)

City of Charlotte Tree Canopy Goal