

1 Introduced by:  
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3 **CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

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5 **RESOLUTION 2020-X**  
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7 **PRINCIPLES AND OVERARCHING GOALS**  
8 **FOR TREE CANOPY AND FOREST POLICIES**  
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10 WHEREAS, the City Council has identified as priorities preserving and expanding Takoma  
11 Park's existing urban forest, adopting changes to the tree ordinance, and  
12 developing tree canopy goals and urban forest policies to help achieve those  
13 goals; and  
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15 WHEREAS, trees and the urban forest provide many benefits to the community, including  
16 improving water quality, reducing stormwater runoff, lowering summer  
17 temperatures, reducing energy use in buildings, removing air pollution, absorbing  
18 emissions that contribute to climate change; enhancing property values,  
19 improving human health, providing wildlife habitat, and contributing to the  
20 beauty of our neighborhoods, many of which are correlated with the size and  
21 structure of the tree canopy; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, the Council has conducted a comprehensive review of the tree ordinance and  
24 discussed overarching forest canopy principles and goals, as well as ways of  
25 improving resident outreach and education on tree health, maintenance and  
26 related matters. Work sessions on these topics were held October 14, 2018; June  
27 19, 2019; July 22, 2019; September 11, 2019; October 16, 2019; October 23,  
28 2019; October 30, 2019; November 13, 2019; and January 29, 2020; and  
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30 WHEREAS, the Council has sought and obtained input from many sources, including a  
31 resident survey focused primarily on the tree ordinance with over 500 responses,  
32 public and written comments from individuals and non-governmental groups with  
33 expertise in tree issues, advice from County and State officials, discussions at  
34 neighborhood meetings, recommendations of the city Tree Commission and  
35 Committee on the Environment, and input from the Department of Public Works  
36 and the City Attorney; and  
37

38 WHEREAS, much of the input received has made it clear that the current focus on permits for  
39 individual trees is not broad enough to meet today's urban forest, climate,  
40 ecological health, and human safety challenges; and  
41

1 WHEREAS, an independent tree canopy assessment by the University of Vermont Spatial  
2 Analysis Laboratory documented a robust tree canopy in Takoma Park covering  
3 approximately 60 percent of the City’s geographical area over at least the last 10  
4 years with differences across city neighborhoods, identified that maintaining the  
5 health of existing trees is crucial when it comes to preserving the city’s tree  
6 canopy, and concluded that residents hold the key to both maintaining tree health  
7 and planting new trees; and  
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9 WHEREAS, the City has adopted a Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan and is  
10 working on a Public Space Plan and an updated Sustainability and Climate Action  
11 Plan, all of which intersect with tree canopy goals and planning; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, the Council declared a climate change emergency March 13, 2019, with  
14 Resolution 2019-15: Declaring a Climate Change Emergency; and  
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16 WHEREAS, there are challenges to maintaining and growing the City’s tree canopy, including  
17 heavy rainfall and weather-related impacts due to climate change, as well as  
18 recent infestations, blights and other such occurrences, including the recent fungal  
19 and beetle infestation that appears to have particularly targeted and caused the  
20 loss of many white oaks; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, the Council is pursuing the adoption of amendments to the existing tree ordinance  
23 and has identified a need to refocus and update ongoing efforts on tree canopy  
24 maintenance and urban forest management goals and policies in order to maintain  
25 tree canopy and improve the health of the urban forest, as outlined in the goals  
26 below.  
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28 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the City will adopt a goal of no net loss of  
29 the city’s urban forest canopy overall, maintaining an average level of approximately 60 percent  
30 tree canopy, and will seek to increase biodiversity (such as species, size) and planting of native  
31 species and species that may also be climate-adapted to anticipated future conditions.  
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33 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City will develop and implement urban forest  
34 management policies to achieve these goals with the following overarching principles:

- 35 • Recognition of the important role of the urban forest in climate change mitigation,  
36 adaptation, and resilience, and the wide range of ecosystem services provided by a  
37 healthy urban forest;
- 38 • A broad, holistic approach to managing the urban forest;
- 39 • Recognition of trees and the urban forest as a community resource to be protected and  
40 maintained;
- 41 • A focus on addressing inequities in distribution of trees and tree benefits citywide,  
42 through identifying and prioritizing underserved areas of the city;
- 43 • Emphasis on expanding resident outreach, education, and engagement;
- 44 • Proactive efforts to protect and improve the tree canopy; and
- 45 • Increased focus on private-property planting and on improving existing tree health and  
46 maintenance.  
47

1 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City should plan for:

- 2 • The reassessment of the urban tree canopy City-wide through lidar technology every five
- 3 years;
- 4 • An updated species planting list that recognizes these overarching goals, with a plan for
- 5 periodic review and modification of the list; and
- 6 • Aligning urban forest plans and actions with the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan,
- 7 Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan, Public Space Plan, and tree
- 8 ordinance amendments when possible;
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11 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the City Council anticipates moving forward on the  
12 initiatives described in this resolution as quickly as practicable in the context of other ongoing  
13 work, taking into account budgetary impacts and staff capacity.

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15 Adopted by the Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland this \_\_\_\_\_, 2020.

16  
17 Attest:

18 Jessie Carpenter, CMC

19 City Clerk

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