



The Fairfax County Tree Commission  
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 518  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035  
703.324.1770

May 24, 2023

Beattra Wilson, Assistant Director  
UCF / State & Private Forestry  
USDA Forest Service  
201 14<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ms. Wilson:

The Tree Commission of Fairfax County, Virginia, strongly supports the attached grant application for USDA-FS-2023-CF-IRA-0. The application's project is designed to plant and maintain street trees and to provide invasive species management, forest management, and afforestation/reforestation efforts in Fairfax County's most vulnerable communities.

The Tree Commission, an appointed board of local residents, was created by ordinance 50 years ago to advise the Board of Supervisors on tree conservation ordinances on how best to preserve, protect and expand the county's urban canopy. Part of that advice includes suggestions on how to improve urban forestry policies and practices to achieve those goals. The Tree Commission has also recently advised the Board on how trees can help the county meet the goals of its Community-wide Energy and Climate Action Plan and its award-winning climate Resiliency Plan.

The current grant proposal would enable the county to undertake critical urban forest management and tree planting in vulnerable areas of the county that are experiencing heat island and flooding impacts due to climate change. This grant will allow trees to be part of building climate change resilience in those areas. The Tree Commission is also pleased that the county has prioritized invasive species management as essential in preserving our urban forests and ecosystems. We cannot maintain a healthy forest or engage in reforestation without addressing that threat.

Additionally, this grant proposal outlines Fairfax County's commitment to creating and maintaining green jobs by including entry level positions that have a path towards professional certifications, such as Virginia Registered Pest Control Technician or International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Tree Worker. This will help support job growth in the county in a positive way.

The Tree Commission's experience with Fairfax County staff at all levels of engagement has been extremely positive, and it can report that staff interactions with county residents about trees are timely, informative and helpful. Pilot programs and other efforts by the Urban Forestry



The Fairfax County Tree Commission  
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 518  
Fairfax, Virginia 22035  
703.324.1770

Management Division, as well as agencies with purview over natural resource areas, have successfully engaged neighborhood participation and buy-in for recent tree planting and tree maintenance efforts.

This grant proposal incorporates the county's One Fairfax policy as a key component. Prioritizing areas of highest vulnerability will expand equitable access to the many environmental, health and social benefits of our urban forests. If those areas can see tree canopy grow and thrive, the entire county benefits. In addition, the Tree Commission notes that, should the grant be awarded, the work to be undertaken will support the President's April Executive Order to Revitalize our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for all.

For all these reasons, the Tree Commission heartily endorses Fairfax Country's grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Forestry, and if awarded, the Commission will work to the best of its ability to support those working to achieve these stated goals.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Commission at your convenience.

Sincerely,

*Please email [TreeCommission@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:TreeCommission@fairfaxcounty.gov) for official signed version of letter*

Cindy Speas, Chair  
Fairfax County Tree Commission