



A Statement on Funding an Urban Forester The Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods

I'm writing to you on behalf of the Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods (CAN), which represents 22 city neighborhoods. You and your colleagues recently made Neighborhood Resilience as part of your priorities for Asheville.

One of the key elements of improving and sustaining the quality and character of communities, whether they be Legacy Neighborhoods, older transitioning neighborhoods, such as West Asheville, or areas enveloping the Downtown Business District, is through thoughtful planning and development.

As envisioned in the Living Asheville Comprehensive Plan, this not only includes the development designs and uses, but also incorporates these planning techniques with a green infrastructure and a healthy quality of life that will define Asheville for the future.

One of the most cost-effective approaches to ensuring a healthy balance to development of our neighborhoods is through comprehensive urban forest management practices.

Developing and maintaining a vibrant green infrastructure, including an urban forest program, not only is essential to the healthy environment of neighborhoods, it also increases property values and contributes to the overall well being of neighborhood residents.

Accomplishing this piece of neighborhood resilience requires professional management in the form of an urban forester, who has the technical training and experiences to pull together policies and planning for promoting a healthy urban forest and a green infrastructure vital to the sustainability of our neighborhoods and our city.

Currently, there is no staff person who can fulfill the role of an urban forester. A city arborist only has the expertise to deal with individual trees, while an urban forester has the professional ability to view trees, green space and climate resiliency more holistically.

Asheville is the only major city in North Carolina without an urban forester.

The proposed fiscal year 2023 City Budget does not include funding for an urban forester, as requested by the Department of Development Services and supported not only by CAN. but other environmental organizations and the Urban Forestry Commission, which advises you on such matters.

The CAN Board of Directors, each representing one of our member neighborhood associations, strongly encourages you to insist on adjusting the proposed budget to include funds for an urban forester, and thus meet one of your other stated priorities, Improved and Expanded Core Services.

If Neighborhood Resilience is truly a major prerogative, and you want to see sustainable affordable housing, ensuring a healthy urban forest , a sustainable green infrastructure and a better quality of life through comprehensive urban forest management is a clear and easy choice.

Respectfully,
The Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods
Rick Freeman, President

The Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods has been representing Asheville communities for nearly 30 years .

VISION

Vibrant neighborhoods united in purpose, strong in voice, dedicated to equality and justice