



THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

March 22, 2023

Mayor Eric Adams  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

**Subject: NYC Council Members Support NYC Urban Forest Agenda & Urge Collaboration to Achieve 30% Tree Canopy Coverage by 2035**

Dear Mayor Adams,

We write to express our support for the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#) to increase community resiliency and quality of life through canopy protection, maintenance and expansion of the New York City urban forest. **We believe that New York City must set a citywide goal of achieving at least 30% tree canopy cover by 2035 in an equitable manner.** This shared goal, being advanced by over 80 organizations in [Forest for All NYC](#) and supported by all five Borough Presidents, will help our city realize the many benefits associated with a healthy and extensive urban forest and cope with the myriad effects of climate change that threaten our city. These challenges include increased flooding, rising temperatures, increased energy use, and the compounded threats to flora and fauna native to our region. The time to act is now.

The New York City urban forest includes more than 7 million trees, with its canopy covering 22% of the city as of 2017, spans jurisdictions and can be found on both public and private lands, including parks, streets, New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) campuses, schools, businesses, institutions, and private residences. In addition to the trees, the urban forest includes the infrastructure (such as roots, soil and the people who care for it; those who dedicate their careers as well as volunteer caretakers.)

New Yorkers rely on the trees around them for the multitude of economic, environmental, and public health benefits that they provide. Trees make our city livable, improving our quality of life, health, and wellbeing. At a time when the effects of the climate crisis are real and increasing, trees support energy efficiency, protect our shoreline and absorb stormwater before it pollutes our waterways. In a single year, the city's trees absorb nearly 900 million gallons of stormwater and significantly reduce temperatures during dangerous summer heatwaves. By the 2080s, the frequency of heatwaves is expected to triple and extreme precipitation events are expected to increase by 50%. The urban forest plays an important role in mitigating these climate threats, and contributes meaningfully to public health by helping to shade and cool our neighborhoods, which can help mitigate the heat-related illness and death. Yet, the urban forest is not equitably distributed, and lower-income communities and communities of color who are often more heat vulnerable, tend to have lower canopy.



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As members of the City Council, we support the *NYC Urban Forest Agenda*. Implementing the *Agenda* not only will play a vital role in the protection, maintenance, and expansion of the New York City urban forest, and ensure that the many social, health, environmental, and economic benefits that trees provide are distributed justly and equitably to all New Yorkers.

We know New Yorkers love their trees and we've been encouraged to see so many taking the lead to care for the urban forest. The inaugural [City of Forest Day](#) empowered about a thousand local residents to show their support for our trees. This special day helped educate neighbors across all five boroughs about the benefits of our urban tree canopy and encouraged participation for the ongoing stewardship of such valuable assets.

Additionally, we're supportive of efforts by local Community Boards across the city who have begun drafting and passing resolutions focused on the urban forest both in their districts and citywide. These resolutions aim to help achieve the goal of equitably increased citywide canopy coverage with associated adoption of urban forest goals for individual Community Districts. They often call upon the City to implement the *NYC Urban Forest Agenda* and advance many of the targeted actions identified within the Agenda that can make a positive and meaningful difference for the urban forest and in the lives of New Yorkers. This upwelling of support by Community Boards for the urban forest underscores that trees matter in every neighborhood in New York City, contribute to livability for every resident, and are an imperative for greater social equity and racial justice for areas that have been neglected in the past.

New York City is a national leader in the fight to combat climate change. And yet, to date, the urban forest has not been a comprehensive part of the City's climate strategy. Together, we must set and implement a citywide goal of achieving at least 30% tree canopy cover by 2035.

We look forward to working collaboratively with City Hall to support these goals and to make the significant investment required to ensure a healthy and vibrant urban forest; one that supports the health, wellbeing, and economy of our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shekar Krishnan".

Shekar Krishnan  
Chair, Committee on Parks & Recreation  
Council Member, District 25



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