

RESOLUTION NO.: 2020-19

INTRODUCED BY: COUNCILPERSON TRAKAS

A RESOLUTION COMMITTING THE CITY TO DOUBLE ITS TREE CANOPY BETWEEN THE YEARS 2020 AND 2030 FOR THE PURPOSES OF IMPROVING AIR AND WATER QUALITY, ABSORPTION OF CARBON DIOXIDE, REDUCING STORMWATER RUNOFF, AND IMPROVING THE AESTHETICS OF THE COMMUNITY*

WHEREAS, The Trillion Tree Initiative, established in 2007, has set the goal to repopulate the Earth's diminishing tree population by one trillion trees by the year 2050 in order to reverse the effects of deforestation due to development and growth; and

WHEREAS, The City of Independence currently ranks 21st out of 59 communities in Cuyahoga County, according to a 2019 Tree Canopy Survey conducted by Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, with a 40% tree canopy and another 35% available tree population, and another 12% possible tree planting area, providing substantial opportunity for the City to increase its tree canopy; and

WHEREAS, The City of Independence during the decade 2011-2019 had a net loss of approximately 8.2% of its tree canopy; and

WHEREAS, it has been evidenced over the same period of time that changes in weather patterns and climate has had an impact on the City that has increased the intensity and flow of rain for shorter periods of time that has led to substantially different stormwater runoff that has caused more incidents of both yard, home, and commercial building flooding, and required substantially more public resources to be employed to alleviate these problems, as well as more acute noise pollution in more neighborhoods due to deforestation; and

WHEREAS, trees intercept rainfall and help increase infiltration and the ability of soil to store water. By retaining water in their canopy - even for a short time - trees can disperse precipitation over a longer time period and reduce velocity of the water when it does fall. Depending on species, some trees can absorb water through their leaves and transpire it directly to the atmosphere; all trees absorb water through their root structure.

Depending on species, some trees can remove pollutants through a process called phytoremediation, and thus contribute to groundwater recharge; and

WHEREAS, Cuyahoga County has asked each of the communities within the county to establish a plan to repopulate trees to foster the laudable goals of the benefits of a strong tree canopy; and

WHEREAS, according to Cuyahoga County Planning Commission the tree canopy is the layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. Tree canopy provides many benefits to society including moderating climate, reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂), improving air and water quality, mitigating rainfall runoff and flooding, enhancing human health and social well-being and lowering noise impacts. It provides wildlife habitat, enhances property values, and has aesthetic impacts to an environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Independence, State of Ohio, that:

Section 1. The City of Independence resolves to double the size of its tree canopy over the next decade by providing a thorough plan for City property, and recommendations and options for residential and commercial properties to participate in the program.

Section 2. Private participation in the program shall be voluntary but efforts made to educate the public as to the values and need for the tree canopy and the costs of inaction as well as incentives from the city to encourage participation.

Section 3. The City may use available resources to help establish and implement a tree plan including the County Planning Commission, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, the City Tree Commission, informed citizens, arborists, civic organizations, private experts, and volunteer resources.

Section 4. Special attention should be paid to establishing tree recommendations for the various types of soil featured in the City so that the best possible trees to stop erosion are planted in the corresponding most appropriate soil areas that will take and continue to grow.

Section 5. The City shall review its current policies, ordinances, and Charter as it relates to development, forestation, stormwater drainage, tree cutting and planting, and recommend any changes that would foster a larger tree canopy.

Section 6. The City shall develop upon passage of this legislation a comprehensive strategic plan and implementation plan no later than December 31, 2021. An annual report as to the progress of the plan as to its implementation shall be made to the public via the City's website and newsletter and or other means in September of each year.

Section 7. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning and relating to the adoption of this legislation were adopted in an open meeting of this Council, and all deliberations of this Council, and any of its committees, that resulted in such formal action were in meetings open to the public, in compliance with all legal requirements, including Revised Code Section 121.22.

Section 8. This Resolution shall take effect and be in force at the earliest time allowed by law.

Introduced: November 10, 2020

First Reading: November 10, 2020

Passed: _____

Gregory P. Kurtz, Mayor

Attest:

Debra J. Beal, Clerk of Council