



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 3548-2023, **Version:** 1

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**Background:** This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Urban Forestry Grant Program, which will be used to plant up to 2,500 street trees in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Columbus.

Street trees provide critical benefits to residents. They filter the air, cool the air, reduce flooding, and provide shade. Columbus has the fastest-growing and eighth-most intense heat island of 60 major cities studied. In 2022, a summer heat mapping campaign found a 13.2 degree difference in evening temperatures, confirming some residents are inequitably experiencing more heat stress. Planting public trees will reduce temperatures in neighborhoods disproportionately affected by urban heat.

The grant funds will be used to contract with local vendors to plant up to 2,500 street trees in the next five years, in neighborhoods that are considered disadvantaged based on the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool, a requirement of the grant. The City's recently completed street tree inventory identified 96,498 available planting sites. The estimated unit price per tree planted is \$400.

**Principal Parties:**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry  
2045 Morse Road, H-1  
Columbus, Ohio 43229  
Alistair Reynolds, (614) 265-6547

**Emergency Justification:** Emergency action is requested so the grant application can be submitted before grant awards are decided in January 2024.

**Benefits to the Public:** Increased tree canopy in under-served neighborhoods, providing air filtration, reduced flooding, shade, and other benefits to residents.

**Community Input/Issues:** The Urban Forestry Master Plan engaged thousands of stakeholders during its creation. Since its approval in 2021, numerous area commissions and civic organizations have requested street tree investments from the City.

**Area(s) Affected:** Citywide (99)

**Master Plan Relation:** This project will support the Recreation and Parks' Master Plan by conserving, protecting, and enhancing the city's natural resources and overall environmental health, benefiting current and future generations.

**Fiscal Impact:** No fiscal action is required at this time. Future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

To authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Urban Forestry Grant Program, which will be used to plant up to 2,500 street trees in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Columbus; and to declare an emergency. (\$0.00)

**WHEREAS**, it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Urban Forestry Grant Program, which will be used to plant up to 2,500 street trees in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Columbus; and

**WHEREAS**, this ordinance shows the City of Columbus' support for all application requirements; and

**WHEREAS**, an emergency exists in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to apply for this grant funding so the grant application can be submitted before grant awards are decided in January 2024, all for the immediate preservation of public health, peace, property, and safety; **NOW, THEREFORE**

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department be and is hereby authorized and directed to apply for grant funding from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Urban Forestry Grant Program, which will be used to plant up to 2,500 street trees in disadvantaged neighborhoods in Columbus. This Council hereby supports this action.

**SECTION 2.** That this ordinance authorizes an application for the grant funds only and is not a commitment to expend City funds.

**SECTION 3.** That future legislation will accept, appropriate, and encumber funding for this project as needed if the grant is awarded.

**SECTION 4.** That the City of Columbus does agree to obligate the funds required to satisfactorily complete the proposed project and become eligible for reimbursement under the terms and conditions of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Urban Forestry Grant Program.

**SECTION 5.** That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.