



PRESENTATION TO VIENNA TOWN COUNCIL

# A Tree Ordinance for Vienna

May 8, 2023 | Brian Land

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# Tree Ordinance – Recommend Three Components

1. Establish a Tree Commission
2. Track the Town's Annual Tree Planting
3. Update Vienna's Tree Ordinance by Adopting the Tree Conservation Ordinance



# Benefits of a Tree Commission

Vienna maintains a Conservation and Sustainability Commission (CSC).

- Broad mission: energy conservation, natural resource protection, trash, recycling, composting, sustainable development, and trees.
- The CSC also constitutes Town's tree board, but CSC's mission is *not solely dedicated to trees*.

A Vienna Tree Commission would be *focused solely on trees*:

- Continue and expand on CSC initiatives.
- Identify and use funding opportunities and grants for tree planting on public and private property.
- Help the Town implement the 100+ recommended actions to increase tree canopy and enhance tree management.



# Other Communities Have Tree Commissions

Fairfax County - Tree Commission	Advises and supports the Board of Supervisors regarding urban forest conservation and preservation.
City of Falls Church - Urban Forestry Commission	Advises on regulations, policies, practices and plans for the care and improvement of the city's urban forest.
Arlington County - Forestry and Natural Resources Commission	Provides with advice and recommendations to improve the health and sustainability of Arlington's urban forest and natural resources.
Town of Leesburg - Tree Commission	Provides leadership to enhance, expand, and preserve the tree canopy in Leesburg for the benefit of the community. Promotes tree preservation and planting to ensure a superior quality of life for all residents. Trees act as our "Green Civil Servants" and are a necessity.
City of Charlottesville - Tree Commission	Advises and assists in the planting, protection, preservation, and removal of trees located on public right-of-way and public property. Strives to protect and improve the urban forest to provide better quality of life and health outcomes for residents and to secure meaningful environmental and aesthetic benefits.
Town of Abington - Tree Commission	Sponsors tree planting projects and the observance of Arbor Day; conducts education programs; assists with the tree management plan; evaluates progress toward planting goals; assists in applying for grants; reviews municipal tree care.



# How a Tree Commission Would Help Vienna

- Advise and assist regarding the planting, protection, preservation, and removal of trees on public property.
- Advise the Town Arborist to ensure that planting, maintenance, pruning, and removal of trees on public property are done in accordance with accepted standards.
- Assist the Town Arborist with formulation of a tree management plan, which may include setting standards, goals, policies, and providing guidance.
- Attend regional meetings concerning urban forestry programs.
- Undertake public outreach and education to promote understanding and support of the Town's public tree management plan.
- Work with Town staff to compile and update information and statistics regarding the Town's efforts with regard to trees and tree planting.
- Recommend revisions and updates to the Town's tree ordinance.



# Track and Publish the Number of Trees Vienna Plants Each Year

- Vienna's Department of Parks and Recreation has an annual \$20,000 budget for planting trees.
- Parks and Recreation has two full time positions responsible for landscape and horticulture duties who also handle emergency tree maintenance requests.
- Vienna's annual budget for tree *pruning and removal* has ranged from \$30,000 to \$50,000 over the past few years. The current FY23 budget allocates \$80,000 specifically for tree maintenance.
- Interviewees stressed need to add skilled staff and allocate funds solely for purchasing, planting, watering, and maintaining trees—or for contracting out for these services.
- Other northern Virginia governments maintain and track their tree planting budgets and number of trees planted as part of their urban forest plan.

# Adopt Virginia's Tree *Conservation* Ordinance

- Virginia State Code authorizes adoption of a local tree ordinance under two sections. In 1990, the Virginia General Assembly granted localities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed the authority to adopt a tree **replacement** ordinance. (Section 15.2-961) The General Assembly also granted certain localities in Planning District 8 (which includes Vienna) the authority to a tree **conservation** ordinance. (Section 15.2-961.1)

Vienna Currently Has a Tree *Replacement* Ordinance While  
Fairfax County Has a Tree *Conservation* Ordinance

# Adopt the Tree *Conservation* Ordinance

Comparison of Tree Ordinances	
Tree Replacement Ordinance §15.2-961	Tree Conservation Ordinance §15.2-961.1
Adopted by Vienna in 1991 (for subdivisions) and in 2014 (for single lots).	Adopted by Fairfax County in 1990.
No requirement to preserve or make an effort to preserve existing trees.	Provides for the preservation of existing tree canopy where that canopy meets local standards, and where it is feasible to do so.
The extent of tree canopy on a site prior to development is not considered.	The percentage of the site covered by tree canopy at the time of site plan submission is the "tree preservation target."
Deviations for farmland, wetlands, or unreasonable hardship.	Same deviations as the replacement ordinance, plus deviations if: 1) meeting the preservation target would prevent the development of allowed uses; 2) the predevelopment condition of vegetation does not meet the locality's standards; or 3) construction activities could be reasonably expected to impact existing trees to the extent that they would not likely survive.
Tree canopy replacement is 20% at for a residential site zoned 10 units or less per acre.	Provides for 25% percent tree canopy for a residential site zoned more than two but not more than four units per acre.
No provision for a tree canopy fund.	Provides for the establishment of a tree canopy fund (or a tree bank) whereby any portion of the tree canopy requirement that cannot be met on-site may be met through off-site tree tree planting. Fairfax County reports that onsite planting waivers are infrequent (only 41 in 10 years). A tree canopy fund may be used for planting on public property or may be disbursed to nonprofit tree planting groups.