
City of Phoenix
Environmental Quality & Sustainability Commission Memorandum

Re: Tree and Shade Recommendations

Date: December 16th, 2019

To: The Honorable Councilwoman Thelda Williams,

Cc: Mr. Ed Zuercher, City Manager

From: Colin Tetreault, Chair
City of Phoenix Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission (EQSC)

Good day, Madam Councilwoman,

This memorandum is to convey the recommendations and information regarding trees, shade, city staffing, and policies associated with rapidly implementing, accelerating, and exceeding the City of Phoenix Tree and Shade Master Plan. The City Council requested that this work be conveyed back to Council at its completion. Below, you will find an accounting of our work, methods, and outcomes. This memo also includes commentary on the recommendations.

Deliberation and Recommendations

At the August 8th, 2019 meeting of the EQSC, the Subcommittee recommendations were formally proposed to the Commission. The Subcommittee worked on these recommendations for over one year. Following this, there was a one-month public comment period to allow for feedback from additional stakeholders. Comments and feedback were heard and considered by the full Commission on the September 12th, 2019 meeting.

The EQSC discussed and deliberated the proposed recommendations vigorously. The Commission (with a 13-1 vote) amended the Subcommittee recommendations and voted to convey them to Council and Management.

Key Recommendations:

The EQSC is proud to provide these recommendations. Of note and emphasis are the following:

1. The establishment of a full-time committee or commission to support the ongoing work of trees, shade, and urban heat island that is comprised of regional experts and stakeholders;
 - a. Consistent resident and stakeholder participation/leadership strengthens our City and helps ensure that goals are being fully supported and met.
2. The creation of a full-time City staff member (“Tree Administrator”), in the City Managers office, that has external and cross-departmental authority to advance the City of Phoenix tree, shade, and urban heat island goals in demonstrable and meaningful ways in an accelerated timeline;
 - a. It is imperative that the future of trees and shade have not only a full-time champion within City Hall, but that a consistent message and ethos permeates all facets of the City.
3. The consistent, multi-decade commitment of the Council in financial support to empower rapid and ongoing tree plantings and policy support to ensure that trees and shade are a primary point of consideration in the urban form.
 - a. We must invest in our future, today. Trees and shade should be given consistent funding from the General Fund.
4. The EQSC encourages the Planning and Development Department to adopt text amendments that will not only create canopy and shade from project inception but ensure continuous canopy and shade throughout a development’s entire lifespan. The EQSC will request updates on this on-going process and may provide further feedback to Council and City Management.

Commentary:

The work of the community, Subcommittee, and the EQSC in this endeavor is laudable. I stand behind these recommendations. Trees and shade are an integral part of the future of Phoenix. By investing today, we will create a healthier, safer, and more economically competitive 21st century city. The best time to start this work was 20 years ago. The second-best time to begin this work is today. I strongly encourage the City Council and Management to consider these recommendations and move to enact and empower them with all alacrity.

Should you have any questions regarding the Commission rationale or support, please reach out to me directly.

In partnership with thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Colin Tetreault".

Colin Tetreault, Chair

City of Phoenix Environmental Quality and Sustainability Commission

Enclosures:

Tree and Shade Recommendations EQSC 2019-9-11