

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Environmental Quality and Sustainability Committee (“EQSC”)

**From:** Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee

**Date:** Approved December 7, 2021

**Re:** UHITS Accomplishments September 2020 through December 2021 and Recommendations for Additional Work in the Area of Heat and Shade

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In September 2020, the Urban Heat Island and Tree and Shade Subcommittee (“Subcommittee”) was tasked by the Environmental Quality and Sustainability Committee (“EQSC”) to: “Holistically evaluate, analyze, and recommend a suite of policies--with inclusion of Broad public sector, private sector, and community stakeholder input--to address, rapidly, the issues surrounding Urban Heat island and Trees and Shade in order to 1) Mitigate, manage, adapt to rising heat; 2) Create a more heat ready and resilient city; 3) Increase the economic, environmental, safety, equity, and health outcomes of the city; 4) Advance implementation of the City of Phoenix Tree and Shade Master Plan; and 5) Create a sustainable mechanism of tracking, value calculation, public reporting and continuous improvement of the above.”

At the February 2021 meeting of EQSC, the EQSC Chair stated that the Subcommittee sunsets on Dec 9, 2021 and all UHITS work must be concluded on that date.

This memorandum serves to provide a summary of the Subcommittee’s accomplishments from September 2020 through December 7, 2021 and provides recommendations for future work on the topic of Urban Heat Island and Trees and Shade that should be considered by EQSC. The Subcommittee strongly encourages EQSC and the City of Phoenix (City) to continue the work of the Subcommittee in order to maintain accountability and continued progress exploring new and innovative policies for shade, trees, and a cooler Phoenix.

### ***Accomplishments***

Over the past few years, citizen input via the UHITS Subcommittee has been integral to facilitating City adoption of policies and initiatives that aim to make our communities and environment more resilient to extreme heat and expand shade cover. Below are notable accomplishments of the UHITS Subcommittee.

- 1) Recommendations on the Phoenix 2010 Tree and Shade Master Plan.** In December 2019, UHITS and EQSC provided Recommendations on Implementation

of the 2010 Tree and Shade Master Plan to Phoenix City Council. The 2020-2021 Subcommittee has continued to advocate for implementation of these original Subcommittee recommendations, many of which have been accomplished over the past year, including funding of the Office of Heat and Mitigation (and pending hiring of a Tree Administrator), significant budget funding of trees/tree programs, and the passing of landscape maintenance text amendments (see details for each of these below)

- 2) Phoenix City Budget Funding for Trees & Heat Resilience Programs.** In 2021, UHITS and EQSC provided a business case for creation of a new staff Urban Forest Infrastructure Manager Position to City Council and the City Manager’s office. This advocacy resulted in over \$2 million in heat readiness investments, which includes \$500K approved funding for the creation of an Office of Heat Response and Mitigation and funding urban forestry resources throughout the City of Phoenix.
- 3) Zoning Code: Approved Landscape Maintenance Text Amendment (June 2021).** The UHITS Subcommittee reviewed and provided comments on the Phoenix Planning and Development Department Draft and Final Landscape Text Amendments. The 2021 PPD Landscape Maintenance Text Amendments detail that site inspection and certificate of occupancy are tied to the fact that the landscape that was said would be put in is actually in, that the approved landscape plan on file is the valid document guiding landscaping on the site, provides clarity and consistency on design guidelines, addresses the concept of “right tree right place” with regard to plant materials, includes tree protection zone<sup>1</sup> language to preserve existing trees, and describes landscape removal standards, installation and maintenance plans, and salvage and tree protection plans. NOTE: These text amendments apply to commercial, industrial, & multifamily/single family subdivisions, NOT individual homeowners.
- 4) Citywide Cool Corridors Recommendations.** The UHITS Subcommittee provided EQSC recommendations for the development of a citywide Cool Corridors Program. These recommendations were unanimously approved by the UHITS Subcommittee on April 6th, 2021 and by EQSC on June 10th, 2021. The recommendations to City Council and the City Manager urged the city to expand the concept of the Streets Department “Cool Corridors Program” to a citywide concept to establish a web of corridors along a variety of high traffic pedestrian areas throughout the city by strategically utilizing existing city programs and including a variety of city

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<sup>1</sup> The Tree Protection Zone language was largely successful due to efforts by UHITS member, Nicole Rodriguez.

departments in the mission to create a cool corridors network throughout the City. UHITS and EQSC advised the City to prioritize heat vulnerable communities and high pedestrian activity/need street segments and engage in robust and broad stakeholder engagement (with residents, staff, researchers, advocacy groups) for the cool corridors.

- 5) 2021 Climate Action Plan: Heat Resilience.** UHITS reviewed and commented on the Heat Resilience Policies for the Climate Action Plan. Goal H1 in the final CAP plan (“Create a network of 100 cool corridors in vulnerable communities by 2030 to facilitate movement of people walking, biking and using transit, particularly within and connecting to Transit Oriented Development Districts, Village Cores, and Center”) was increased from 30 corridors to 100 corridors by recommendation of the UHITS Subcommittee.
- 6) Cool Rooftops Policy Recommendations.** On December 7, 2021, UHITS approved to send to EQSC a comprehensive Cool Roofs memorandum, which provided information, policy recommendations, and achievable “next steps” for the City’s cool roof plan. UHITS urged the City to utilize a combination of regulation, incentives, and education to enhance and expand its current cool roof program.
- 7) Citywide Heat Equity Policy Recommendation.** On December 7, 2021, UHITS approved to send to EQSC a recommendation for the City of Phoenix to continue demonstration of national and international heat leadership by developing and passing a citywide Heat Equity Policy that would serve as the framework for ensuring that heat relief investments are equitable and just.

### ***Recommendations for Additional Work In the Area of Heat and Shade***

The work of the UHITS Subcommittee continues to ensure that our city is habitable for all residents. There is still work to be done to explore policies and recommendations to bring down temperatures in our city and protect the health, safety and wellbeing of residents. Additional work EQSC should consider in this area includes:

- **Planning/Zoning Code Recommendations for Low Impact Development and Green Infrastructure**
- **Policy Recommendations for Cool Pavement**
- **Policy/Building Code Recommendations on Artificial/Constructed Shade**
- **Tree Protection Policy Recommendations**
- **Community Surveying – Ongoing Input from Community, Not Necessarily Just a Survey**
- **C40 Urban Forestry Commitment Oversight**

- **Track Existing Goals**
- **Additional Cool Roofs Policy Recommendation Details**
- **New Development Policy Recommendations**

The UHITS Subcommittee therefore, urges the City to continue to build upon the work of Subcommittee, the existing heat readiness and tree/shade initiatives, and continue to seek community-driven, equitable solutions, that prioritize the most vulnerable communities first.