



TO: Mayor Buckley and City Council  
FROM: Annapolis Environmental Commission  
DATE: July 19, 2024  
RE: Annapolis Environmental Commission Supports the 50% by 2050 Tree Canopy Goal in Adopted Comprehensive Plan

Dear Mayor Buckley and Members of City Council:

The City of Annapolis Environmental Commission (AEC) supports the revised 50% by 2050 Tree Canopy Goal in the Comprehensive Plan adopted on July 8th. The AEC pays close attention to the remaining forest and tree cover in our city, and we reaffirmed that the protection and expansion of our City's tree canopy is one of our top priorities for 2024.

The recent summer heat illustrates the vital role that our tree canopy plays to mitigate the impacts of urban heat island impacts. The residents and buildings in our city need shade, and robust tree canopy also mitigates the heat stress to understory plants. This is evident when looking around local neighborhoods in areas with and without tree coverage.

In our monthly meetings we often discuss vital, ongoing efforts by City Staff and partner groups such as the Watershed Stewards Academy through Replant Annapolis or Save our Trees. We are thus well aware of the difficulty to achieve the desired goal of 50% coverage. It is a distant goal, but trees need time to reach maturity. Furthermore, the City has struggled to keep pace with tree loss in recent years. If we achieve the stated goal to end net tree loss within the city by 2028, it will still require significant levels of tree planting within the next 15 years to realize 50% coverage by 2050. However, we concur that the benefits of tree cover are worth striving for, as they improve health, environmental and economic outcomes for all residents.

We are grateful to the Mayor, the Council and City Staff for their continued support of our city's natural infrastructure, particularly our trees. The Commission supports the 50% by 2050 goal as revised in the July Comprehensive Plan and thanks the Council for passing the Comprehensive Plan, as amended. We also wish to reiterate the Council members' many thanks to the hardworking staff of the city who spent many hours on the Comprehensive Plan.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Hanson  
AEC Chair

Jenny Janis  
AEC Vice Chair