



ADVOCACY HANDBOOK

Casey Trees' Guide to Tree Advocacy in Washington, DC

Dear Future Advocates,

Congratulations! By following this handbook, you will have taken the first step towards being a capable and responsible advocate for your community. Washington was designed around the idea that trees not only connect our city, but also its residents. Because of this, in 1872, our city was given the moniker “City of Trees”. Since the 1800s, our government has supported the planting of tens of thousands of trees across all eight Wards and dedicated themselves to continuing this by setting a goal of 40 percent tree canopy by 2032. Today, the District is home to over two and a half million trees and is shy of our canopy goal by only a few percentage points. We cannot reach this goal without your help.

A 40 percent canopy goal is more than aspirational and to make this goal a reality, there are a multitude of challenges. It takes the combined effort of District and Federal agencies, nonprofits, residents, and volunteers (like you), to bring this vision to life. The only way to reach the canopy goal is with combined focus and advocacy for the importance of trees in our city.

By learning what it takes to be an effective advocate, you are gaining the tools you need in order to help restore, enhance and protect the District’s trees. By pairing this guide with Casey Trees’ classes and support, we can focus your passion for trees and environmental protection into persuasive advocacy.

We thank you for your commitment to helping us ensure Washington, DC, remains the “City of Trees” and we look forward to seeing everything you will do to impact trees in your neighborhood and around the city.

Congratulations again,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Mark Buscaino
Executive Director

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WHO IS CASEY TREES?

Casey Trees is a DC based nonprofit with the mission to restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of our nation's capital. To fulfill this mission, we plant trees; engage thousands of volunteers of all ages in tree planting, tree care and citizen science; provide year-round continuing education courses; monitor the city's tree canopy; develop interactive online tree tools; ensure that urban trees are reaching their full potential; work with elected officials, developers and community groups to protect and care for existing trees and to encourage the addition of new ones.



Much of the work we do could not be accomplished without the interagency partnerships that we have developed over time. Our vision for the District is closely aligned with many District and Federal agencies, allowing us to engage on development design, plant and maintain trees on District-owned property, conduct our citizen science inventory program on Federal property, host classes and youth programs at recreation centers across all eight Wards and collaborate on developing District environmental plans. These partnerships can be found throughout this guide, and your work as a Certified Tree Advocate may lead you to provide input and recommendations on how to make D.C a more sustainable, green and resilient city.

@caseytrees | caseytrees.org | 3030 12th St NE | W DC 20017



INTRODUCTION to ADVOCACY



Ad • vo • ca • cy

noun | the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal; to support or argue for (a cause, policy, etc.); to plead in favor of.

Merriam-Webster

WHY WE ADVOCATE

“Why am I an advocate?” This is the question that every advocate must ask themselves every time they engage with an audience. In our case, we are advocates for trees and advocates have answered this question by describing the environmental, health, and economic benefits that trees provide. We choose to advocate because we believe in the idea that trees are more than the benefits they provide – they are vital to the very existence of our cities. At the very soul of our advocacy efforts lies the belief that our city is better because of the trees in it and that all who visit, work, or live in the District deserve access to nature. Simply put, we speak for the trees because they don’t have a voice to speak for themselves.

This guide serves as a point of reference to help you remember the basic components of advocacy and the best ways to advocate for trees. It will ensure that you understand the science behind the benefits that trees provide, can navigate the District’s political structure, and have all the tools you need to craft a persuasive and effective argument. If there is something that you cannot find here or need help with you can always reach out to the advocacy team at advocacy@caseytrees.org.

BENEFITS *of* TREES

Trees do so much for our communities through ecosystem services that we may not even realize.

Here are a few facts you can include in your comments or testimonies:



ABSORB STORMWATER

Trees help clean our water through interception and absorption. This removes toxins from water and helps prevent flash flood events. Each year, DC trees filter nearly 45 million cubic feet of water – that’s about 500 Olympic swimming pools!

CLEAN AIR

Trees remove toxins from our air; study after study shows that the prevalence of respiratory illnesses such as asthma – especially in children – is lower in areas with higher numbers of trees. DC’s trees remove roughly 66 pounds of toxins per acre per year from the air (source: USDA).



MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE

All the trees in Washington store over 500,000 tons of carbon and remove an additional 16,000 tons of CO₂ from the air every year. This is equivalent to taking 3,000 cars off the road for a year (source: American Forests).



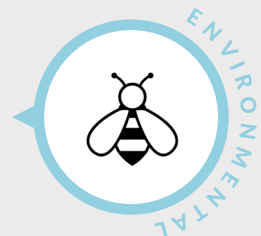
MITIGATE HEAT

Trees can decrease the ambient air temperature by up to 20 degrees by improving air flow and shading impervious surfaces that trap heat, such as sidewalks and streets. Shade trees next to your home can also help reduce your energy burden.



SUPPORT WILDLIFE

DC has 500+ species of birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians and thousands of invertebrate species. The Potomac and Anacostia Rivers provide habitat for 62 aquatic and semi-aquatic species. By keeping trees along these rivers, we can decrease pollution that could run off into the river and provide shade for riparian ecosystems that need to remain cooler.





COMMUNITY COHESION

Urban green spaces can provide a natural gathering place where people come together, socialize, and build relationships. Strong community relationships are a result of individuals being more likely to work together, exchange information and creates an overall strong sense of community and place. Well-designed urban green space promotes more visitors, which enhances community cohesion by increasing social interaction.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Urban adults living near high levels of greenery are three times more likely to be physically active and 40 percent less likely to be overweight or obese. A survey of 11,200 adults found a 42 percent decrease in stress levels when they lived within 0.6 miles from a green space.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Public housing buildings with a high amount of vegetation had 52 percent fewer total crimes, 48 percent fewer property crimes and 56 percent fewer violent crimes than buildings with low amounts of vegetation. A 10 percent increase in tree canopy cover was associated with a 12 percent decrease in the density of robbery, theft, burglary and shooting crimes per 0.4 square miles.

BENEFITS OF TREES



TRAFFIC CALMING

Landscape improvements resulted in a 46 percent decrease in crash rates across urban arterial and highway sites. For the suburban landscape, the presence of trees significantly dropped the cruising speed of drivers by an average of 3.02 miles per hour.

BUILDS BETTER BUSINESS

Trees attract businesses and tourists. Well-designed streetscapes can increase foot traffic in commercial areas by 20 to 40 percent.

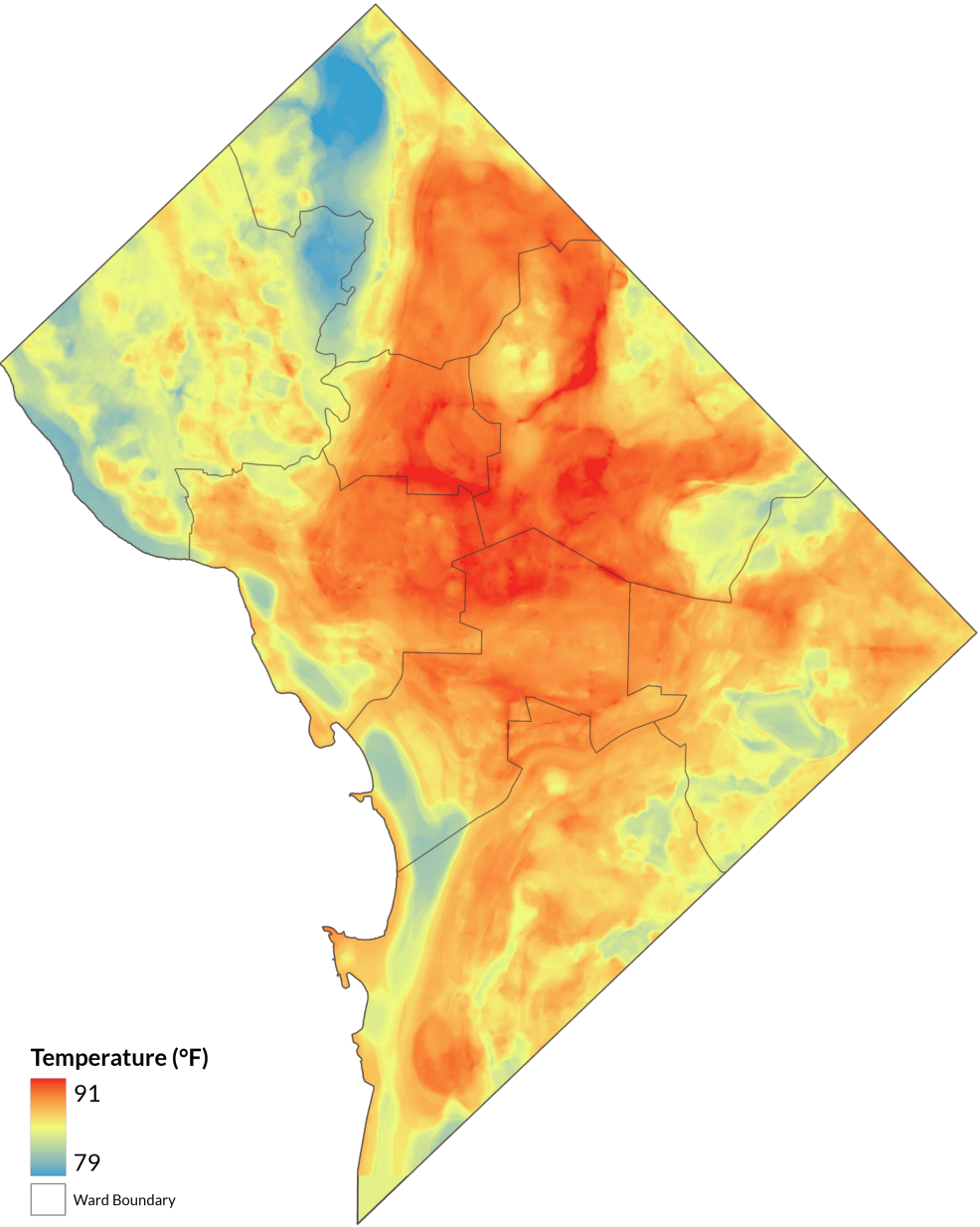


SAVES ENERGY

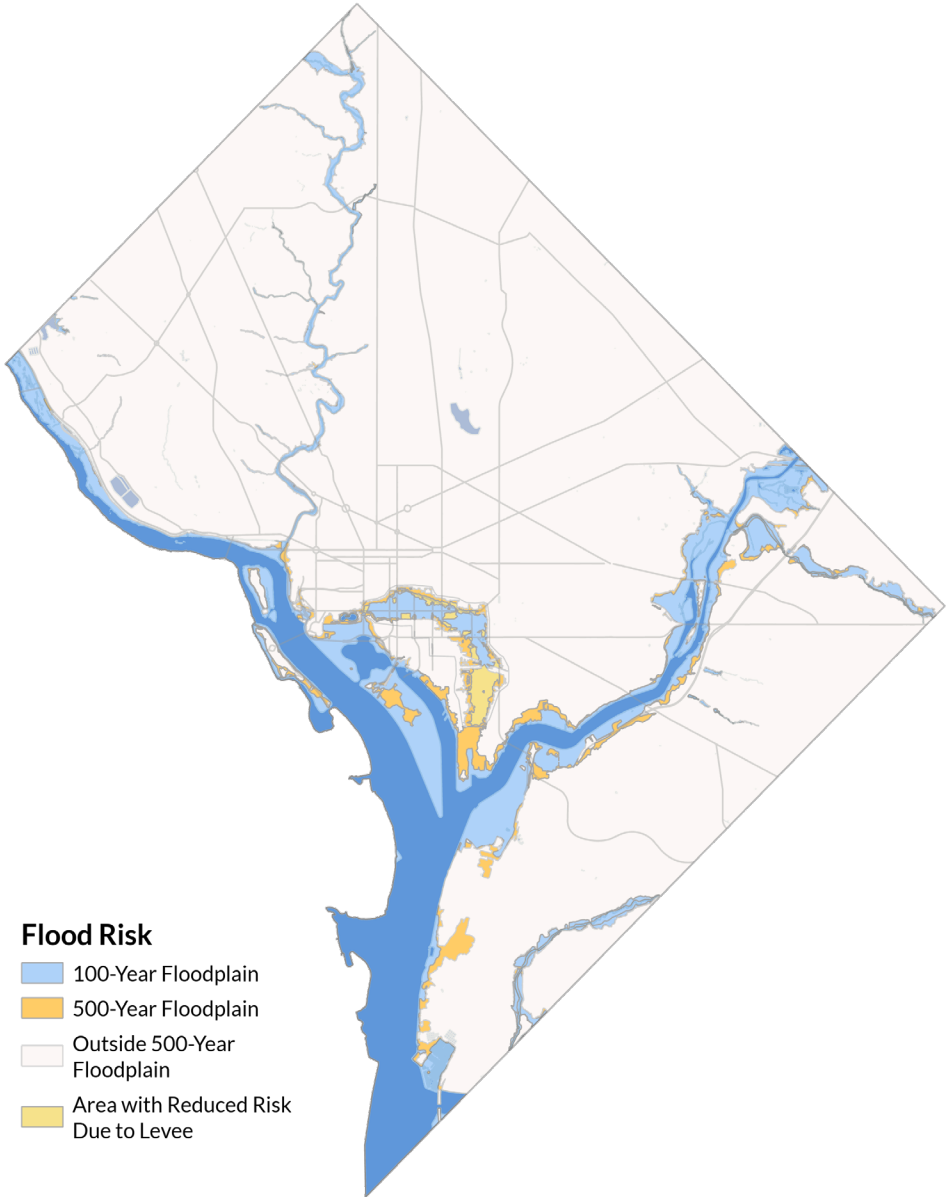
Shade trees can reduce home energy use by 16 percent annually. DC trees save residents and businesses \$3.5 million annually in energy costs.

MAPS

AVERAGE SURFACE TEMPERATURE

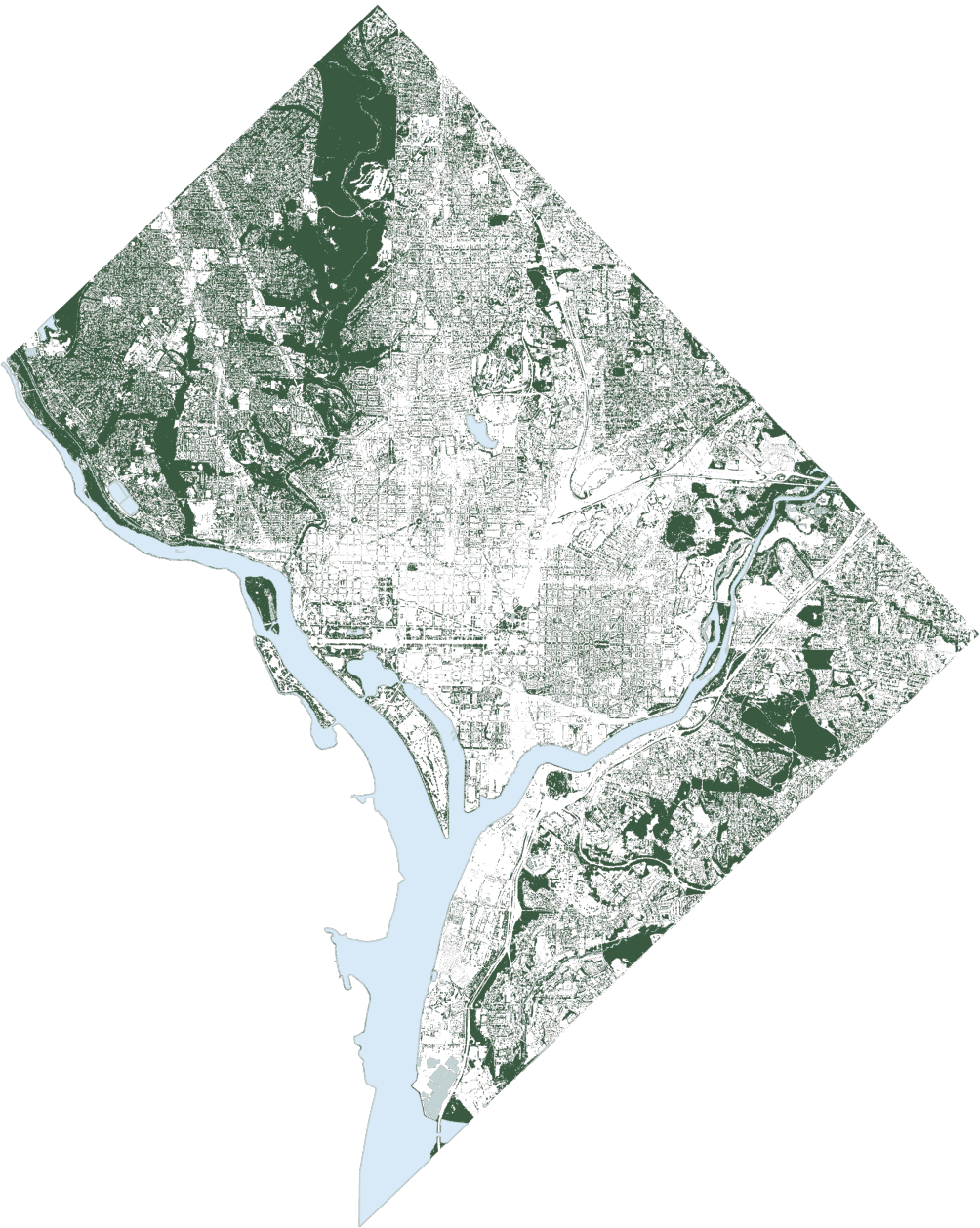


ANNUAL FLOOD RISK



MAPS

URBAN TREE CANOPY



AMERICAN BEECH
Fagus grandifolia



PAWPAW
Asimina triloba



NEED *to* KNOW

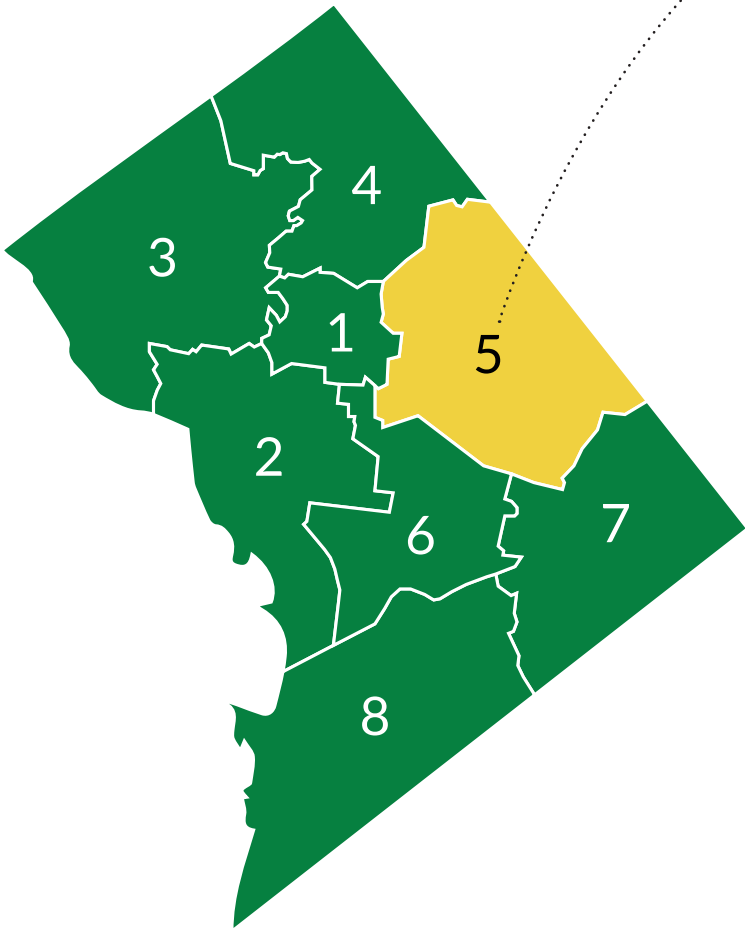
One of the most important things to know as an advocate is who your partners will be and the channels to use for advocacy. These sections will outline key partners and players for advocating in DC.

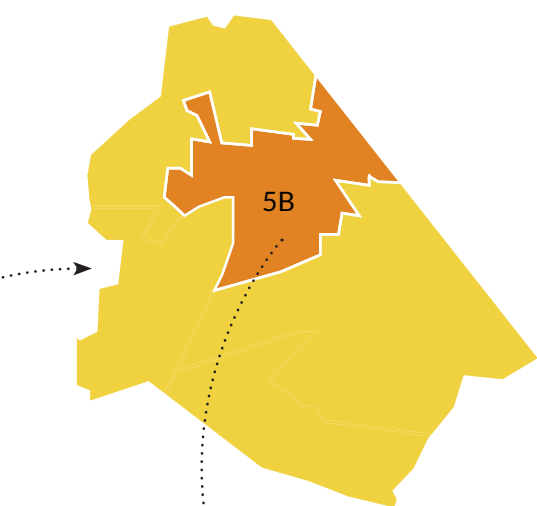
1. Political Geography
2. Governing Bodies
3. Key Tree Partners

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Wards

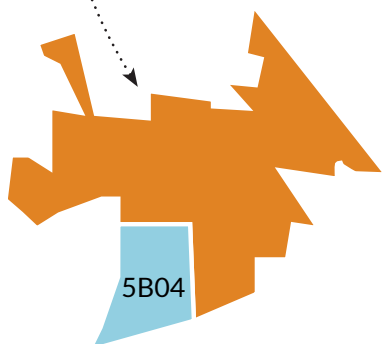
There are 8 Wards in the District. Each Ward is made up of a collection of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions or ANCs. Wards are redrawn every ten years to reflect changes in the city's population. Each Ward gets to elect one councilmember to sit on the DC Council.





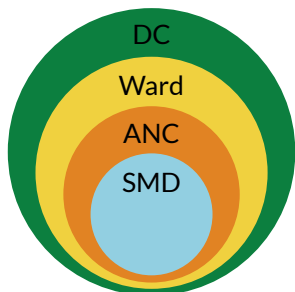
Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs)

ANCs are geographic areas comprised of multiple Single Member Districts or SMDs. ANC's hold monthly meetings to discuss changes in the neighborhood, including new developments that may impact trees. Many important planning and development decisions are made at the ANC level, such as reviews of new construction plans and approval of local zoning changes.



Single Member Districts (SMDs)

All neighborhoods in DC are part of an SMD, the smallest geographic area of the city. Each SMD is home to approximately 2,000 residents who elect a representative called an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner. This Commissioner then represents your neighborhood on the Advisory Neighborhood Commission.



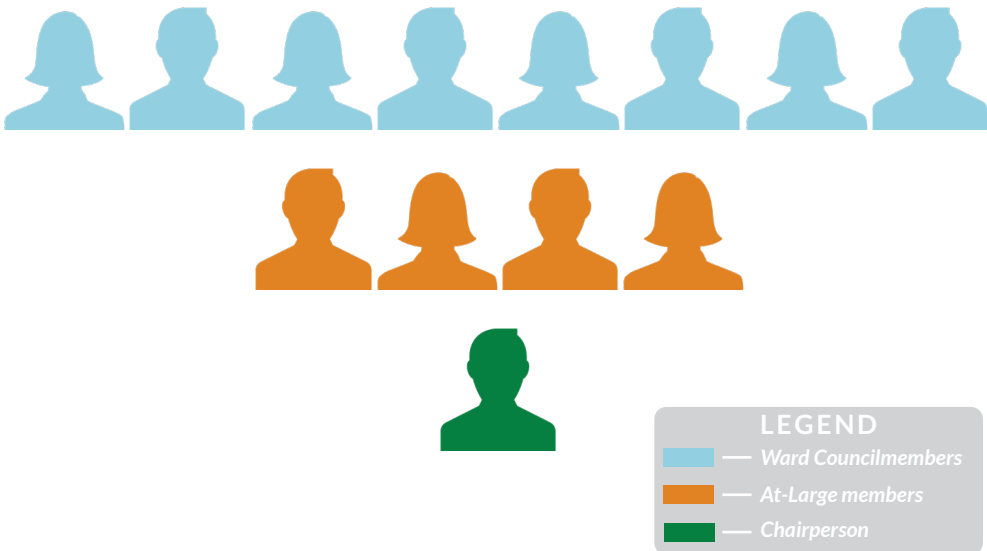
GOVERNING BODIES

The Legislative Branch

The DC Council is the legislative body for the District of Columbia. The Council is tasked with writing new laws, revising existing laws, and – to a degree – assessing their implementation.

The Council is comprised of 13 members. There are 8 members who each represent one of the Wards in DC and are elected directly by residents of those Wards. The additional 5 members are elected by all of DC – 4 At-Large members and the Chair of the Council.

The work of the Council is divided into Committees. Committees are defined by specific aspects of the District government's responsibilities. For example, Casy Trees works most closely with the Committee on Transportation and the Environment, which includes the Department of Energy and the Environment and the District Department of Transportation (where the Urban Forestry Division resides). Although agencies are part of the Executive Branch, each Committee conducts annual oversight of the agencies in their purview. Each bill that gets introduced to the Council is referred to the Committee that best suits the intended purpose of that bill.



The Executive Branch

The Mayor is the chief executive of the District of Columbia. They are tasked with enforcing city laws, issuing orders, have the power to veto bills passed by the Council and propose new bills. Under their direction, DC agencies implement the programs and policies that the Mayor or Council tasks them to carry out.

Agencies – like the previously mentioned Department of Energy and the Environment or the District Department of Transportation (which includes the Urban Forestry Division) – are in charge of managing every program that the District government offers. As facets of the Executive Branch they report to the Mayor, however the Council conducts Performance and Budget Oversight of the agencies. Every winter and spring, the Council holds hearings for every DC agency to review their performance and analyze that agency's budget. This is the biggest opportunity for both organizations like Casey Trees and residents of the District to advocate with the District government.

Federal Government

At the federal level, DC is represented by one non-voting delegate to the House of Representatives. DC is not represented at all in the Senate.



Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton has represented the District since 1981.

KEY TREE PARTNERS

Besides our elected officials, District agencies play a big part in policymaking. While the DC Council makes laws, the agencies carry them out as actors of the Mayor's Executive branch. Agencies also offer insight and expertise into how the policies they implement should be crafted and testify to the Council on proposals that impact their programs. Because of all of this, working with and understanding these agencies is a key part of advocacy. Additionally, the unique role of the federal government in DC requires that we work with federal agencies as well.



Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) is responsible for enforcing environmental regulations, monitoring and assessing environmental risk, issuing permits and providing residents and local businesses with funding and technical assistance.



Department of General Services (DGS) performs construction and property management on all District-owned property. They also manage capital improvement and construction programs for a variety of District agencies, participate in planning and redevelopment projects and purchase, lease and sell District-owned property.



Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) runs and maintains all of the city's parks, recreation and community centers. They supervise many of the city's athletic fields, playgrounds and community gardens and coordinate recreation programs.

d.

The Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Division (UFD) reviews permits and plans that have the potential to impact trees, plants and maintains trees on District-owned property and provides tree-related services such as pruning and tree removals on District-owned properties. They also review permit applications for removal of Special, Heritage and Hazardous trees.



National Park Service (NPS) runs and maintains all of the city's federal park land. This includes Rock Creek Park, Oxon Run and Lincoln Park. NPS is also tasked with protecting and maintaining all of the trees on their property.



Office of Planning (OP) creates designs for neighborhoods, corridors, districts, historic preservation, public facilities, parks and open spaces and individual site development. OP also reviews and conducts historic resources research and community visioning.



Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) oversees all federal education grant programs. They also create District education and early childhood education standards, oversee a variety of school programs and award education related grants, including ones for environmental education.



Office of Zoning (OZ) reviews and accepts zoning applications. There are two decision-making bodies in OZ: The Zoning Commission (ZC) and the Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA). The ZC prepares, adopts and amends zoning regulations and the zoning map. The BZA rules on zoning exceptions and appeals.

SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA
Magnolia grandiflora



TREE POLICY

The trees in Washington, DC are governed in many different ways, sometimes through lawmaking, other times through goal-making. This section will cover all of the rules of tree protection.

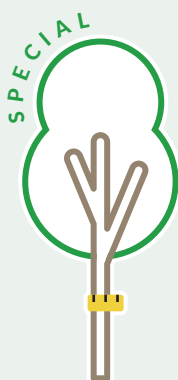
1. Law
2. Plans
3. Guidelines
4. Development

TREE LAW

In 2002, the DC Council passed the **Urban Forest Preservation Act**. This act created an outline to protect privately-owned trees in Washington, DC. This Act created an outline to protect privately-owned trees in Washington, DC by requiring a permit to removal healthy trees. Money generated through permit fees and fines are put into the city's Tree Fund which is used to plant new trees in the District.

There are two types of trees that are exempt from the law: Hazardous and Invasive trees. A **hazardous tree** is defective, diseased, dying or dead; poses a high risk of failure or fracture with the potential to cause injury to people or damage to property; is causing damage to property or structures that cannot be mitigated in any manner other than removal of the tree. **Invasive species** are trees that are not native and are not charged a fee for removal.

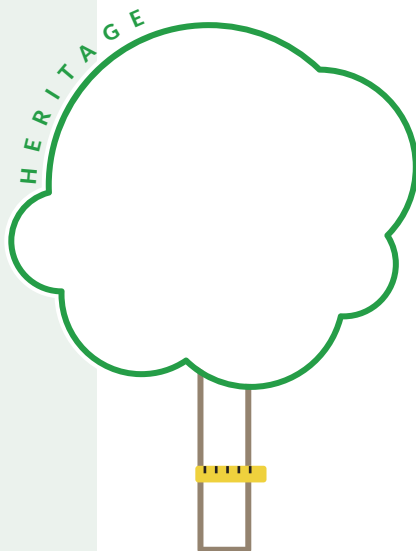
In 2022, the Council passed the largest revision to our tree canopy laws through the **Urban Forest Preservation Amendment Act**. The Act granted new authority to city agencies to better protect Special and Heritage trees and expanded existing protections to District-owned lands. Most importantly, District officials can now issue stop-work orders to projects that present direct harm to protected trees and can levy harsher penalties against developers who harm or remove protected trees.



Special Trees

CIRCUMFERENCE = 44" - 99.9"

Special trees are trees on private land with a circumference between 44 inches and 99.9 inches. Permits may be issued if the tree is Hazardous, if the tree is of a species that is appropriate for removal, or if a permit was purchased. A permit costs \$55 for each inch of circumference. Removing a Special tree without a permit will result in a fine of \$300 per inch of circumference in addition to the cost of the permit.



Heritage Trees

CIRCUMFERENCE = 100"+

Heritage trees may not be cut down unless they are determined to be hazardous or is a species that has been identified as appropriate for removal. Removal of a Heritage tree outside those parameters can only be done with a mayoral decree. Removing a Heritage tree without one of these determinations will lead to a fine of no less than \$300 per inch of the circumference.

TREE PLANS

Many of DC's environmental goals are from different plans. Of these, Climate Ready DC, the DC Comprehensive Plan, Resilient DC, Sustainable DC 2.0 and Vision Zero all have goals that help govern tree planting, tree canopy and tree equity.



Climate Ready DC

The goal of Climate Ready DC is to provide actionable items that the District can do in order to be proactive towards decreasing the inevitable impacts of climate change. Within this plan, there is a consistent focus on trees, green infrastructure and access to green space as a way to combat climate change.



Discuss Climate Ready DC when talking about protecting trees to help mitigate the effects of climate change, such as flooding due to intense storms and the urban heat island effect as a result of extreme heat.



DC Comprehensive Plan

The District's Comprehensive plan is the blueprint for DC's development over the 10 years. Created by the Office of Planning, this multi-volume plan discusses topics such as environmental protection, land use and transportation.

The Comprehensive plan is important because it lays out where development and zoning changes are expected to occur. This gives us the ability to prepare and plan for these developments.



Talk about the Comprehensive Plan when we discuss development and the need for equitable access to green space and balancing environmental benefits with growth.



Keep Cool DC

Keep Cool DC lays out steps that District agencies can take to adapt to hotter days by reducing the drivers of extreme heat and protecting District residents from the dangers of high temperature. Improving shade cover and sustainable development are key elements of this plan.



Talk about Keep Cool DC when discussing the need to protect ourselves from extreme heat and other effects of climate change.



Urban Forest Master Plan

The Urban Forestry Master Plan is an interagency and intergovernmental project that represents the District's commitment to shape a vibrant, healthy, and sustainable urban environment for its residents, workers, and visitors. It outlines how the District can continue to grow, maintain and sustain its tree canopy by providing tangible goals, defined responsibilities and a clear pathway to surpassing the District's 40 percent tree canopy goal.



Discuss the Urban Forest Master Plan when talking about the steps the District is taking to continue to grow, maintain and sustain its tree canopy.



Sustainable DC 2.0

The primary goal of Sustainable DC 2.0 is to address the question of how to serve a growing population while also conserving green space. This plan has the most tree related goals: it reinforces the 40 percent canopy cover goal by 2032 and creates a goal of planting 10,500 new trees every year, emphasizing native and resilient tree species. Sustainable DC 2.0 also supports long-term development goals for improving green infrastructure, creating green roofs, and protecting existing green spaces.



Talk about Sustainable DC 2.0 when we discuss tree-specific goals, like the tree canopy and tree planting goals, also when we are advocating for increasing green infrastructure in new developments.

TREE GUIDELINES

Public Realm Design Manual



The Public Realm Design Manual is a set of guidelines for how public space between property lines on a block should be built. The goal of this document is to provide a comprehensive guide to construction in the public right of way and includes standards for tree boxes, street trees and public areas.

These guidelines are used to regulate projects that may impact or interfere with streets or sidewalks- areas that can be used to include street trees.

Stormwater Retention Requirements



The Stormwater Retention Requirements determine the stormwater volume a site must be able to retain. Currently, if a site undergoes a major land-disturbing activity it must retain the first 1.2 inches of rainfall during a 90th percentile rainfall event. DOEE is currently working to update their requirements, but they have not been finalized.

This document is used to ensure a site mitigates stormwater runoff through green infrastructure like trees and green roofs.

RED MAPLE
Acer rubrum

Green Area Ratio Requirements



The Green Area Ratio (GAR) is a zoning requirement that sets standards for landscape and site design to help reduce stormwater runoff, improve air quality and mitigate the urban heat island effect. Each zoning district has a required GAR score that is calculated by giving values to different landscape elements, such as trees, permeable pavement, vegetated roofs and rain gardens.

The GAR requirements are used to maintain permeable land area as development pressure increases.

Small Cell Guidelines



The Small Cell Guidelines are a set of requirements for telecommunication companies as they begin to install small cells across the District. These guidelines enforce the protection of street trees by preventing the pruning and/or removal of a tree for the purpose of installing a small cell. Additionally, no small cells may be installed in a space where current or future trees may reside.

These strict guidelines will ensure that trees are protected both now, and in the future.



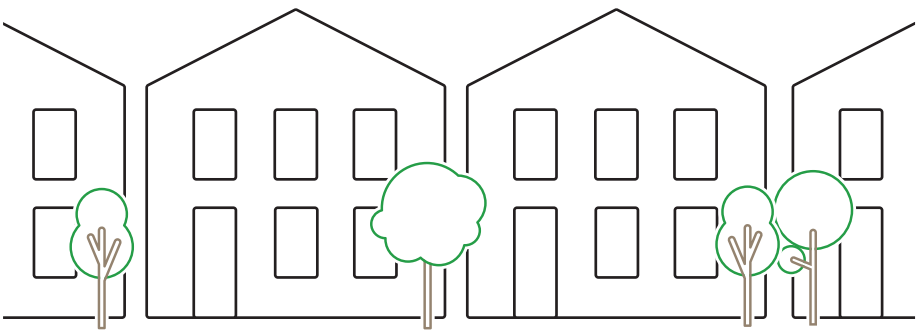
DEVELOPMENT

The District's population is steadily increasing, putting significant pressure on DC's tree canopy to compete for space with new developments. As the climate worsens and we see hotter temperatures and more extreme precipitation and flood events, we advocate for maintaining or increasing tree canopy and green space during the development design process.

Matter-of-Right

Property owners are permitted to develop land as a “matter of right” (also called “by-right”), This means the owner's proposed building design and land use is within the current zoning code. In DC, these projects are required to adhere to the District Comprehensive plan and are often permitted if they are consistent with current or future Comprehensive Plan zoning regulation. In matter-of-right developments:

- The property owner is not required to seek community input into to the supposed use for the site
- The site may be restricted to a specific height, density, and use.



MATTER-OF-RIGHT

Planned-Unit Development (PUD)

When a property owner seeks to build outside of the current zoning regulation, they must undergo a regulatory process known as a Planned Unit Development. This process, done through the Zoning Commission, requires a developer to engage with the community and collect input as to the use and design of the site. PUDs:

- May include denser developments to provide an increase in housing, as well mixed-use retail and recreational amenities.
- Are required to draft a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), a project-specific agreement developed with a community coalition or neighborhood association, in which the developer details their contributions to the community in exchange for community support for the project.

Matter-of-Right zoning in this neighborhood permits single family detached dwellings with larger individual lot sizes. In this case, upzoning to allow taller and denser townhomes provides more community green space to support tree planting.



PLANDED UNIT DEVELOPMENT

HOW *to* ADVOCATE EFFECTIVELY



Successful advocacy depends on well-crafted, inspirational messages delivered to the right people at the right time.

1. How to write a persuasive testimony
2. Best practices
3. Casey Trees' Advocacy Goals
4. What you can do

Writing a PERSUASIVE TESTIMONY

The key to advocacy is good communication. Good advocacy is about being direct and understandable to your audience. In this section, we will talk about the steps to writing effective testimony or letters that will both convey your concerns and build towards finding a solution.

1. Know Your Audience:

As an advocate, you must first ask yourself two questions: what is the issue you care about, and why are you talking to your audience specifically?

Drawing the connection between what you are advocating for and who you are advocating to is the most important piece of effective advocacy.

The very first thing you should do is identify your issue. You can use advocacy to voice an opinion on any topic, regardless of whether it is currently being legislated. If you have something to say, say it! Advocacy is more accessible than voting, for example, in the sense that you can do it at any time and for any reason. If there is a hearing on a topic you care about, sign up to testify. If there is no hearing, you can write a letter or an email to a person who can help with that issue.

Which brings us to the second question: who are you advocating to? This question may seem unnecessary at first but finding the right person to talk to is arguably the most important part of advocacy. You can write the most persuasive argument in the world on a topic such as youth education reform, but if you're presenting it to the Director of the District Department of Transportation who has no oversight of anything related to youth education. You want to make sure that the audience you are speaking to has some influence over the issue at hand, so that when you present your issue, they understand the role they have in fixing it. Remember back to the Committees that are in the DC Council – you can check to see which Committee has oversight of the issue you are planning to speak about and who is on that Committee.

WRITING A PERSUASIVE TESTIMONY

Once you have identified who you want to talk to about your issue, you should establish your relationship with them. In most cases, local advocacy is done with the DC Council. If you are talking to the Council as a whole, you would want to open with the fact that you are a DC resident, and if you are speaking to your specific Councilmember, tell them that you live in their Ward. It may seem obvious, but now they know that their choice on the issue does have an impact on you. Here is an example of how you might address testimony to your Councilmember:

Councilmember _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on _____. As a resident of Ward [X], the impact of this decision will affect myself and my community.

2. State Your Position:

Now that you have determined how you would like to advocate and to whom, you will need to communicate what you are advocating for. Using the example format above, we will build out a tree-focused advocacy ask. Keep in mind, the practices discussed here can be used on any topic, not just environmental ones!

Councilmember _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on tree planting in DC. As a resident of Ward 5 (where the Casey Trees office is located), the impact of this decision will affect myself and my community.

In their 2021 Tree Report Card, Casey Trees found that tree canopy coverage across the District shrank from 38% to 37% over the 2015-2020 period. A healthy and growing tree canopy is critical to the well-being of every District resident. Losing tree canopy coverage reduces the quality of life for all communities and should be reversed so we can build a more climate-ready city.

This is a simple and direct example of stating an argument. We avoided adding extra information (for now) so that my audience understands my position: trees are vital to our city, and we are not happy that our tree canopy shrank. The ability of your audience to understand your position right from the start will allow them to understand the argument you build to support your position – if you choose to build one.

The next steps, Building Your Argument and Sharing Your Solution, are not required. In some cases, just telling your Councilmember that you are against or in favor of something is all you need to do. If you know that a vote is coming up in the Council, letting them know that they have constituents who feel strongly about the issue is enough.

3. Build Your Argument:

The beauty of advocacy writing is that, at the end of the day, what you are saying is simply how you feel; you can choose whether to just share your opinion and leave it at that or add on evidence. If the issue you are talking about is related to personal experience, you can describe that experience as your evidence. An emotional appeal can be just as effective as a data-driven appeal. Here, we will look at adding data to our argument. Remember how in the last example we did not add any additional information on trees and why they are good? You can choose to support your argument with evidence you've found. Using the same example, here is how you can add evidence to your argument to make it more persuasive:

Councilmember _____,

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Trees provide several environmental and social benefits. They reduce stormwater pollution by slowing rainfall and filtering out pollutants before they enter our waterways.

They reduce the Heat Island Effect to keep our communities cooler and to protect our health. Trees act as carbon sinks, and the trees in DC sequester enough carbon to offset the yearly emissions of over 3,000 personal cars (source: EPA). All of these factors benefit our short-term climate goals and long-term resiliency.

In this example, we used the environmental benefits of trees to explain why we are in support of maintaining our tree canopy. The arguments we made also help to inform our audience on the ecosystem services trees provide, in case they did not already know them. We also used a reputable source to provide a qualitative data point in my argument (this kind of information may not be readily available – do not worry if you can’t always find it). Both data-driven evidence and the emotional appeal we discussed earlier can help you convince your audience that their support is not just important to you, but to other people as well, and even to whole communities.

4. Share Your Solution:

In the last step of writing testimony or a letter, you want to finish your statement by sharing how you think the problem can be solved. If you are testifying at a hearing, your solution can be asking for a “Yes” or “No” vote from your Councilmember depending on the piece of legislation. In a letter, you can potentially offer a solution of your own. Feel free to get creative, too! Sometimes, legislative solutions are inspired by suggestions from constituents.

With that in mind, we can add on to our example letter:

Councilmember _____,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on tree planting in DC. As a resident of Ward 5 (where the Casey Trees office is located), the impact of this decision will affect myself and my community.

In their 2021 Tree Report Card, Casey Trees found that tree canopy coverage across the District shrank from 38% to 37% over the 2015-2020 period. A healthy and growing tree canopy is critical to the well-being of every District resident. Losing tree canopy coverage reduces the quality of life for all communities and should be reversed so we can build a more climate-ready city.

Trees provide a number of environmental and social benefits. They reduce stormwater pollution by slowing rainfall and filtering out pollutants before they enter our waterways. They reduce the Heat Island Effect to keep our communities cooler and to protect our health. Trees act as carbon sinks, and the trees in DC sequester enough carbon to offset the yearly emissions of over 3,000 personal cars (source: EPA). All of these factors benefit our short-term climate goals and long-term resiliency.

I would like you to support more tree planting initiatives in the District. Community pocket parks are great places for people to enjoy the benefits that trees provide, and would be an ideal place to shore up our canopy coverage. In the case of development where trees are lost to build new buildings, we need to make sure that the same amount of, if not more, trees are planted on-site elsewhere to offset that loss. We need to be planting more trees than we lose to make sure our canopy stays intact.

You can sign off with a quick thank you, and then you are done! Your piece of written advocacy is finished and you can thank yourself for helping your community.



EASTERN
REDBUD
Cercis canadensis

BEST PRACTICES

Now that you know how to craft persuasive comments and testimonies, here are some things to remember when you are writing or presenting them.

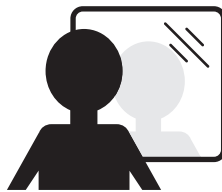
1



FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE

This seems like a no brainer, but when people are mean, the person they are speaking to is less likely to listen to what they have to say. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, so, it is ok to disagree with them! Just make sure that when they speak, you listen.

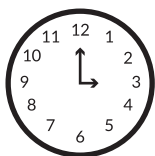
2



PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

You only have a limited time to speak, so practice what you are saying out loud and time yourself. This way, you will feel confident when it is your turn to go up and you will be looking at the people you are presenting to, not down at your notes.

3



WATCH THE CLOCK

When you are presenting at the DC Council, the Zoning Commission, or the Board of Zoning Adjustments, you are only given a few minutes to speak. Make sure what you are saying isn't too long, otherwise you may get cut off. Do not plan on going over time. If when you practice you are running long – take things out!

4



IT IS OK TO SAY “I DON’T KNOW”

Sometimes after you present your comments or testimony, you will be asked questions. If you do not know the answer to it, that is OKAY! Do not make things up, simply tell your audience you aren't sure and let them know that you will find the answer and send it to them. Not only will they appreciate you going the extra mile, but you can be sure you are giving them correct information, not just guessing.

CASEY TREES' ADVOCACY GOALS



PROTECT EXISTING TREES

Large canopy trees can take up to 30 years to reach full maturity. When a development threatens to remove mature trees on a project site, along with the full range of environmental and human well-being benefits they provide, it's essential that we protect them. Therefore, we advocate for continued (if not an increase in) government protection for existing trees and that they are consistently incorporated in development plans. These large trees are important because they help to mitigate the urban heat island effect, capture and filter rainwater and significantly beautify neighborhoods while providing a sense of place for all who live there.



PLANT NEW TREES

For every tree removed, we recommend a three to one replanting ratio to account for the survivability of the new trees and to ensure that the net canopy on the site does not decrease. As the District expands its housing supply to meet the demands of a growing population, we must also plan our communities to be resilient, innovative and sustainable. Planting trees in streetscapes, on structures and as part of green infrastructure can maximize the tree canopy cover in DC neighborhoods.



PROTECT GREEN SPACE

As the city adapts to a growing population, we must also consider the value of protected, accessible, street-level green spaces. Ground-level green areas are the best places to grow the mature trees that are essential for effectively managing intense storms and flooding, mitigating the urban heat island effect and more. Once these green spaces are gone, they are gone forever. That is why it is essential that we encourage developers and planners to always maximize and maintain available green space and save our valuable city soil.



ADVANCE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Developments are required to have a certain amount of permeable land on their property to meet a Green Area Ratio (GAR). Developers often provide green roofs and rain gardens to meet this requirement, but we can maximize the productivity of these green technologies by adding trees. Trees can capture between 10 and 40 percent of rainfall, so by planting more trees, rain gardens can absorb more stormwater runoff while increasing our tree canopy.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The most powerful action you can take to protect and enhance the District's tree canopy is in your own community. From redevelopments to policy changes, every neighborhood is impacted in some way. If you want to learn more about what is going on in your community you can go to your local ANC meetings, neighborhood, community or civic association meetings or other community engagement events. Your involvement will help shape developments, impact policy decisions and help keep DC 'The City of Trees'. Thank you for supporting Casey Trees, your community, and the environment.

@caseytrees | caseytrees.org | 3030 12th St NE | W DC 20017



SCARLET OAK
Quercus coccinea



CODE OF CONDUCT

PURPOSE This handbook is meant to give District residents a better understanding of our local government and how they can be involved in the decisions that impact their communities. Choosing to be involved in these ways means that you are trying to represent your community, which means you need to be setting the best example you can. Advocacy is an approach for resolving disagreements; remember that you may not get what you want, but making your voice heard is important in its own right. The Code of Ethics below lays out the standards you should adhere to as a positive representative for your community.

Code of Ethics

- Act honestly, truthfully, and with integrity in all your statements.
- Avoid conflicts of interest – actual, potential, or perceived.
- Appropriately handle sensitive or proprietary information and respect the privacy and integrity of your community members.
- Treat every individual you are advocating to and alongside with dignity, respect, fairness, and good faith.

GLOSSARY

ARTERIAL SITES

Arterial sites are high-capacity urban roads. The primary purpose of these roadways is to move traffic from main roads to freeways or expressways (think 14th Street or Wisconsin Avenue).

CIRCUMFERENCE

The distance around a curved object; the perimeter of a circle.

CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Conservation easements are a legal agreement between two entities, a landowner and an easement holder, with the intention of keeping that land green forever. This legal agreement can be tailored to meet the needs of each unique property, but it has the ultimate goal of preventing development on a plot of land.

CRITICAL ROOT ZONE

The Critical Root Zone (CRZ) or the Root Protection Zone is the area on the ground that corresponds with the root area required for future tree health and survival. The CRZ varies by tree species and site condition and is typically calculated as a 1-foot radius from the trunk for every 1 inch in trunk DBH. However, this can vary depending on government regulation.

DIAMETER AT BREAST HEIGHT

Diameter Breast Height (DBH) is the standard for measuring trees and is defined as 4.5 feet above the ground.

EVAPOTRANSPIRATION

Evapotranspiration is a process by which water is transferred from the land to the atmosphere. Water is pulled through plants and then eventually evaporates from plant surfaces. It is through evapotranspiration that trees cool the ambient air temperature, thereby decreasing the urban heat island effect.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is a landscape design method that allows us to mimic the environment's natural ability to absorb stormwater. By using vegetation, soils and other environmental elements, we can increase flood protection, decrease stormwater runoff and prevent pollution from reaching our waterbodies.

HAZARDOUS TREES

Hazardous trees are a designation created in the Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016. They are defined as trees that, in the opinion of a certified arborist, are defective, diseased, dying or dead and should be removed; poses a high risk of failure or fracture with the potential to cause injury to people or damage to property and should be removed; or is causing damage to property or structures that cannot be mitigated in any manner other than removal of the tree.

HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

The heat island effect is a phenomenon seen in urban or metropolitan areas where the urban area is significantly warmer than the surrounding rural areas due to human activities. Vegetation, especially trees, can play a big part in preventing this through evapotranspiration and by providing shade from sunlight.

HERITAGE TREES

Heritage trees are a designation created in the Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016. They include all trees on private land with a circumference of 100 inches or more.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE

Impervious surfaces are land areas that have been covered by materials, such as asphalt, concrete, bricks or rooftops, that do not allow water to infiltrate into the ground. You may also hear people refer to impervious surfaces as "grey infrastructure".

GLOSSARY

PUBLIC PARKING RIGHT OF WAY

Public parking is the area of public space between the sidewalk and the property line devoted to open space, greenery, parks or parking. More information about this space can be found in the DDOT Public Realm Design Manual.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public space is defined as all the publicly-owned property between the property lines on a street, park or other public property including roadways, tree space, sidewalks or parking areas.

SMALL CELLS

Small cells is a term used to describe the antennae and equipment telecommunication providers (like Sprint or Verizon) plan to install in order to deploy a 5G network across the District.

SPECIAL TREE

Special trees are a designation created in the Tree Canopy Protection Amendment Act of 2016. They include all trees on private land with a circumference between 44 inches and 99.9 inches. Special trees can be removed if the owner of the tree applies for a Special Tree Permit through the Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Division.

STORMWATER RETENTION

Stormwater retention is a method used to manage excessive stormwater generated from large rain and snow events. This could be through processes such as green infrastructure or manmade water bodies, such as ponds.

STORMWATER RETENTION CREDITS

Stormwater Retention Credits are a market-based instrument representing the right to a certain amount of stormwater retention. These credits can be bought and sold to help property owners meet up to 50% of their stormwater retention requirements.

TREE FUND

The Tree Fund is a specialty fund that is used to support tree planting on private land, conduct tree survival checks for replacement trees and any other tree protection costs. The money for this fund is generated from payments for Special tree permits and fines for illegal tree removal.

90TH PERCENTILE RAINFALL EVENT

A 90th percentile rainfall event is when the total rainfall is greater than or equal to 90% of all 24-hour storms on an annual basis. This means that, if an area is redeveloped and 5,000 square feet (about the size of a basketball court) or more of that land was natural before the project occurred or half of it is impervious surfaces after the project concluded, that site must retain the first 1.2 inches of rainfall.



**For more ways to get involved at Casey Trees,
check out our:**

Volunteer Event Calendar | caseytrees.org/events

Advocacy Page | <https://caseytrees.org/advocacy>

If you have any questions, please email us:
advocacy@caseytrees.org

My ANC: _____

ANC meeting location: _____

ANC meeting dates and time: _____

