



# Community Board 12 - Manhattan Washington Heights & Inwood

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Eleazar Bueno, Chairperson  
Ebenezer Smith, District Manager

December 29, 2022

Hon. Susan M. Donoghue, Commissioner  
NYC Department of Parks & Recreation  
830 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10065

## Re: Increasing Community Resiliency and Quality of Life through New York City Urban Forest Canopy Protection, Maintenance, Expansion, and Planting at least a Million More Trees

Dear Commissioner Donoghue:

At the General Meeting on Tuesday, December 20, 2022, Community Board 12, Manhattan, passed the following resolution with a vote of 31 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1, not voting, due to conflict, Supporting the five Borough President's goal of planting a million more trees by 2030, endorsing the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#); and adopting a goal of 38.3% canopy cover, equitably distributed, for our Community District.

- Whereas:** The urban forest refers to the more than seven million trees in New York City and the physical and social infrastructure on which they depend, and the urban forest canopy refers to the area of the tree leaves, branches, and stems when viewed from above; and
- Whereas:** The urban forest is found on both public and private lands, including parks, streets, NYCHA campuses, schools, businesses, institutions, and private residences with approximately 28% in city parks, 25% in the public right-of-way, and 47% on other property types citywide; and
- Whereas:** New York City's urban forest canopy covers approximately 22% of the city overall and 21.4% of Manhattan; and
- Whereas:** The urban forest serves as a critical natural infrastructure and provides myriad social, environmental, economic, and public health benefits, including but not limited to cooling, shading, energy efficiency, cleaner air, stormwater absorption, and filtration, increased property values, enhanced mental and physical health, and improved business activity (See Chapter 3, [State of the Urban Forest in NYC](#); <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5353de3dea91420faaa7faff0b32206b>); and
- Whereas:** Extreme heat and flooding are a threat to the health, well-being, and economy of our communities and the New York Panel on Climate Change predicts up to three-to-five times the number of extreme heat days and 1.5 times the amount of precipitation by the 2080s; and

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- Whereas:** The urban forest canopy is disproportionately distributed throughout the City and communities of color and low-income communities tend to have significantly less canopy while often being more vulnerable to heat and other health risks and African Americans in the city are twice as likely to die from heat exposure as white New Yorkers, according to the city's health department; and
- Whereas:** Each Community District has a unique distribution of urban forest canopy across property types, and CD12, Manhattan, which is almost 40% parkland is fortunate to have a higher-than-average percentage (32.45%) of urban canopy for the Borough and City, including the Borough's only old-growth forest; and
- Whereas:** There is a significant opportunity to expand the urban forest in New York City and to plant at least a million more trees on public and private land, and this must be a collaborative effort across the entire city and in every of its Community Districts; and
- Whereas:** The City of New York does not plant trees on private property but can work with private landowners to educate them on the value of planting trees on private property for both private and public benefit, and requires as a matter of law in the Zoning Text the planting of street trees in connection with development projects; and
- Whereas:** Tree species do not sequester carbon equally, and fast-growing species with large trunks, dense wood, large leaves, and wide crowns tend to catch and absorb carbon best; and
- Whereas:** Urban Forest canopy expansion requires protecting existing trees, planting more trees, and maintaining all trees; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved:** That Community Board 12, Manhattan:
- Supports the five Borough Presidents' goal of planting a million more trees by 2030.
  - Endorses the [NYC Urban Forest Agenda](#);
  - Adopts a goal of 38.3% canopy cover, equitably distributed, for our Community District: and be it further
- Resolved:** That Community Board 12, Manhattan calls on the city to:
- Plant on public lands and encourage private landowners to plant on private lands at least one million new trees citywide by 2030 with an emphasis on increasing equity in canopy distribution by expanding canopy in the most heat-vulnerable communities and other environmental justice communities, and areas with high levels of vehicular traffic and high rates of asthma.
  - Implement the NYC Urban Forest Agenda.
  - Set a citywide goal of equitably achieving at least 30% canopy by 2035.
  - Develop and implement a citywide Urban Forest Plan that centers on health, well-being, climate resilience, equity, environmental justice, and sustainability.
  - Support the development of community-scale urban forest plans and goals.
  - Invest in urban forestry workforce development.
  - Increase and equitably distribute public funds for public urban forestry projects.
  - Strengthen regulations and develop incentives to protect and increase urban forest canopy on private property.

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- Continue to enforce the zoning regulation that requires planting street trees in connection with development projects.
- Develop and establish tree planting and management standards for all property types.
- Develop enabling conditions to transform wood waste into a sustainable local resource.
- Ensure that tree species with higher carbon intake capacity are prioritized for planting.
- Track canopy health and change over time; and
- Invest in citywide stewardship education and events.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eleazar Bueno', written over a horizontal line.

Eleazar Bueno  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Anthony Perez, Borough Commissioner NYC Parks  
Hon. Eric Adams, Mayor  
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President  
Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate  
Hon. Brad Lander, Comptroller  
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Congressman

Hon. Robert Jackson, State Senator  
Hon. Cordell Cleare, State Senator  
Hon. Al Taylor, Assembly Member  
Hon. Manny De Los Santos, Assembly Member  
Hon. Carmen De La Rosa, Council Member  
Hon. Shaun Abreu, Council Member  
Ms. Jennifer Hoppa, Parks Administrator