

**METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20002**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING A NEW REGIONAL TREE CANOPY GOAL**

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, the COG Board of Directors adopted Resolution R45-2020 endorsing an interim climate mitigation goal of 50 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions below 2005 levels by 2030; and

**WHEREAS**, the Climate, Energy and Environmental Policy Committee (CEEPC) adopted the Metropolitan Washington 2030 Climate and Energy Action Plan (2030 CEAP) to support meeting the Board's climate goals. The 2030 CEAP prioritizes the expansion of tree canopy through planning, funding, and implementation of carbon sequestration and resilient green infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2030 CEAP called for the prioritization of expanding tree canopy through strategic planning, enhanced regulations, and improved incentives; and

**WHEREAS**, COG's Region Forward Vision calls for conserving and enhancing a network of protected open spaces, parks, and green infrastructure which is inclusive of tree canopy which aids the efforts to meet the goals defined in the 2030 CEAP; and

**WHEREAS**, COG seeks to support integrated multi-sector approaches to accelerate action on climate change and recognizes that enhancing urban forestry and increasing tree canopy coverage are effective strategies for mitigating the urban heat island effect, improving air quality, and sequestering carbon dioxide emissions, thereby contributing to overall climate resilience and mitigation efforts; and

**WHEREAS**, the COG Board established a Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee under its Climate Energy Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) in 2019 to oversee urban forestry initiatives, including the development of a regional urban forest action plan and tree canopy goal; and

**WHEREAS**, current tree canopy coverage for entire COG membership area (2,213,976 acres) is estimated at 49.6 percent (Chesapeake Bay Program Land Use/Land Cover Project); and

**WHEREAS**, studies conducted in the Metropolitan Washington region have indicated a steady decline in tree canopy coverage over the last 25 years, underscoring the need for proactive measures to protect, maintain, and enhance the region's tree canopy; and

**WHEREAS**, the Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee working with the staff of the COG member agencies has developed a report entitled, *Conserving Trees And Forests In Metropolitan Washington*, as a resource and reference document to assist in the development of an action plan to guide the efforts of COG member agencies to help the region preserve and enhance regional tree canopy; and

**WHEREAS**, in developing this resource document environmental equity considerations have been considered from the perspective of inequities in health outcomes associated with lower levels of tree canopy in underserved communities based on studies that shows that increased levels of urban tree canopy are linked with increased levels of human health, socially cohesive neighborhoods, lower crime rates, increased local retail business, and attraction of highly skilled, creative, and productive workforces; and

**WHEREAS**, recognizing the importance of healthy levels of tree canopy and its contribution to COG's several regional goals of livability, sustainability, prosperity, equity and climate change, the Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee and CEEPC recommend that a goal for maintaining a minimal level of tree canopy in the region be adopted to support and advance several regional goals.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:**

1. The Board establishes a regional goal of maintaining a minimum tree canopy coverage of 50 percent across the Metropolitan Washington region, as recommended by the Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee (RTCS); and
2. The Board accepts the *Conserving Trees and Forests in Metropolitan Washington* as a resource document and urges member jurisdictions to develop and implement strategies, policies, and programs to achieve the regional tree canopy goal, including updates to relevant policies, procedures, ordinances and the development of tree planting and preservation initiatives and goals; and
3. The Board requests that CEEPC and the Regional Tree Canopy Subcommittee reassess the regional goal and supporting target goals every five years until at least 2050 to evaluate regional efforts to protect, manage, and expand the region's tree and forest assets and to monitor progress towards achieving the established overall tree canopy goal and related target goals in the Metropolitan Washington region.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT the foregoing resolution was approved by the COG Board of Directors on April 10, 2024.**

**Amanda Lau COG Communications Specialist I**