



MEMORANDUM

May 29, 2025

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
Commissioner Christine Moore, District 2
Commissioner Mayra Uribe, District 3
Commissioner Maribel Gomez Cordero, District 4
Commissioner Kelly Semrad, District 5
Commissioner Mike Scott, District 6

FROM: Commissioner Nicole Wilson, District 1

SUBJECT: Request for Discussion - County Tree Replacement Program

I am writing to respectfully request the inclusion of an agenda item for an upcoming Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting to discuss the development of a County tree replacement program. This initiative would focus specifically on replacing trees that have been removed as a result of County actions—such as infrastructure projects, roadway expansions, and other necessary operations.

As Orange County continues to grow, we must remain committed to preserving and restoring our natural environment. In that spirit, I propose that this tree replacement program be funded through revenue generated from fees and fines collected under the County's recently adopted tree protection ordinance.

The overarching goal is to ensure that tree removals tied to County activity do not lead to a net reduction in tree canopy. Instead, we should take proactive steps to preserve, replenish, and expand the urban forest that contributes so meaningfully to the quality of life for our residents.

Supporting Data and Rationale:

- **Heat Reduction & Energy Savings:** According to the U.S. Forest Service, strategically planted shade trees can reduce residential cooling costs by up to 30%. Urban tree canopies also mitigate the urban heat island effect, helping to lower ambient temperatures by up to 10°F in developed areas.

- **Stormwater Management:** A single mature tree can intercept more than 1,000 gallons of stormwater annually. Tree canopies reduce runoff and improve water quality—key benefits for Orange County’s extensive watershed areas.
- **Air Quality & Public Health:** Trees absorb pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, ozone, and particulate matter, while producing oxygen. The American Lung Association and EPA cite urban forests as vital in reducing respiratory illnesses and improving overall air quality.
- **Carbon Sequestration & Climate Resilience:** Mature trees are among the most effective tools for carbon sequestration, absorbing significant amounts of CO₂. This directly supports our climate goals and enhances our ability to withstand and recover from extreme weather events.
- **Neighborhood Livability & Property Value:** Numerous studies, including those from the University of Florida and the National Arbor Day Foundation, demonstrate that tree-lined streets and well-canopied neighborhoods improve community well-being, reduce stress, encourage walking, and can increase property values by as much as 10–15%.

By investing in a formal replacement program for trees removed by County action, we can lead by example—aligning our infrastructure needs with our environmental responsibilities. I welcome the Board’s input and look forward to a productive discussion on how we can structure a program that is both equitable and effective in advancing our sustainability goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Nicole H. Wilson



Commissioner, District 1

C. Byron Brooks, Orange County Administrator
 Jon Weiss, Deputy County Administrator
 Carla Bell Johnson, Deputy County Administrator
 Lisa Snead, Assistant County Administrator
 Jeff Newton, Orange County Attorney
 Georgiana Holmes, Deputy County Attorney
 Tanya Wilson, Director, PEDS
 Scott Skraban, Deputy Director, PEDS