



February 22, 2026

Dear Mayor Gaskins, Vice Mayor Bagley, and Councilmembers Aguirre, Chapman, Elnoubi, and Greene,

We respectfully urge the City to promptly post and fill the vacant Urban Forest Manager position, which has been vacant since June 2025. A specialized manager is essential to sustain and advance Alexandria's urban forestry efforts.

While the City's three arborists are fully engaged in operational tree care, the absence of a manager leaves critical gaps in coordination and long-term planning. Alexandria's forestry team remains smaller on a per capita basis than neighboring jurisdictions, and the addition of a fourth arborist three years ago translated into more plantings, better pruning, and enhanced community collaboration. Leaving the manager role unfilled slows, and in some cases, reverses that progress.

An Urban Forest Manager would set strategic priorities, align resources and activities, and both revise and implement the outdated 2009 Urban Forestry Plan. We also recommend that the new manager evaluate whether the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) would further strengthen Alexandria's long-term tree management.

We respectfully request an update on the timeline for posting and filling this position. We remain committed to supporting the City's urban forestry efforts and appreciate your continued leadership and the opportunity to advise City Council.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Trice  
Chair, Beautification Commission

cc: James Paragon, City Manager  
Hashim Taylor, Director, Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities  
Oscar Mendoza, Division Chief, Department of Recreation