



**Our Mission: Sustainable Delaware is a group of residents focused on promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability for the Delaware community through awareness, advocacy, and action.**

October 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Sustainable Delaware Ohio (SDO) is pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the City of Delaware's Amendments to Replace Chapter 1168 pertaining to Tree Preservation Regulations. Trees are essential to the current and future health of our community. SDO's goal is to support the preservation and planting of as many trees as possible as the city continues to undergo rapid development and growth. The following suggestions are offered with that goal in mind:

- While we are happy to see several benefits of trees listed in Section 1168.01 (Purposes), we believe that it is important to include fuller evidence-based coverage of these benefits. Points regarding carbon sequestration, habitat preservation, environmental justice, and quality of life should be added to this list.
- We also believe it is essential that the public have opportunities to view and comment on Tree Canopy Management Plan applications. Because tree preservation is an issue that impacts all of us, these decisions should not take place behind closed doors in the City's planning office.
- We feel strongly that an exceptional community like Delaware should set high goals, which will serve as a positive model for others. For this reason, we should increase the tree canopy goal to at least 40%. This mirrors the goal set by large cities (including Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland) in Ohio.
- Regarding Section 1168.05 (Payment in Lieu of Minimum Tree Canopy), the current document states that it may sometimes be "impractical" due to site conditions or other factors to meet the minimum tree canopy. Simply being impractical should not excuse anyone from doing the right thing. We propose strengthening this wording to "impossible" or "unfeasible."
- Finally, we recognize that development in Delaware is not going to stop anytime soon. This Tree Preservation Code revision is an opportunity to request more financial support from developers who will be undeterred by a slightly higher "payment in lieu" amount. Compared to plans in Columbus that ask for much higher payments, we are selling ourselves, our trees, and our future citizens short.

Thank you for considering these suggested changes as we work together toward a sustainable community.

Sincerely,

Sustainable Delaware Ohio

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