
12/7/2021

Dalia Zygas
Michigan City Council

To the Members of the Michigan City Council,

I write in support of the city arborist position and a wage rate that would be competitive in a market of specialized and skilled professionals in order to attract an experienced ISA (International Society of Arboriculture) Certified Arborist with municipal arboriculture/urban forest management experience.

Indiana community and urban forests are a resource, that by their nature, require a more specialized and intensive level of management than that of what most of us consider to be a forest. They must be managed as green infrastructure alongside grey infrastructure found in communities and urban areas across the state.

What I would like the council to consider most is that nearly daily we are learning that planting and maintaining existing mature trees is one of the most impactful and cost-effective ways to help communities reduce stormwater runoff and flooding, remove and avoid particulate pollution from the air we breathe, reduce the ever increasing urban heat island effect that exacerbates the production of ozone, sequester carbon, reduce hospitalizations due to cardiac and respiratory illnesses, improve student test performance, and positively impact infant birth weights. While this list may seem too broad to all be impacted by the same community infrastructure (trees), I encourage you to visit the [Vibrant Cities Lab](https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/) (<https://www.vibrantcitieslab.com/>) where you can find research reports, case studies , and additional resources.

I also encourage you to consider that trees, when maintained, are the only municipal infrastructure that provide more benefit to communities as they grow and age. Bigger trees provide bigger community benefits on all accounts. A study conducted in 2010 showed that on average in Indiana; for every \$1 invested into tree planting, care, and maintenance, (including removals when needed), the net benefits provided by trees produce a \$1.77 return on investment.

Significant federal resources are accessible to Michigan City in the form of grants based on urban forest resource need, demographics, and geographic location within the Great Lakes Watershed. I do not believe the community will have the capacity or structure to utilize these funds without a strong urban forester/arborist that is supported by their tree board and city

council. This cooperation is needed to maximize the resource and grow a greener and healthier community for the future of Michigan City.

Indiana's community and urban forest play a critical role in the quality of life for citizens across the state. We live our lives within these forests, but they must be cared for if we want our children to grow and thrive there too.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie Tauscher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carrie Tauscher
State Community and Urban Forestry Program Coordinator
Indiana DNR, Division of Forestry
ISA Certified Arborist IL-5450AM TRAQ