



Legislation Text

File #: RES. 2023-R061, **Version:** 1

To support the designation of the City of Richmond as an affiliate of Bee City USA for the purpose of supporting the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities commitment to enhancing and increasing pollinator habitats in the city of Richmond.

WHEREAS, the mission of Bee City USA is to galvanize communities to sustain pollinators, who are responsible for the reproduction of almost 90 percent of the world's flowering plant species, by providing them with healthy habitat rich in a variety of native plants and free to nearly free of pesticides; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the more than 3,600 species of native bees in the United States, along with introduced honey bees, we have very diverse dietary choices rich in fruits, nuts, and vegetables; and

WHEREAS, bees and other pollinators have experienced population declines due to a combination of habitat loss, poor nutrition, pesticides (including insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides), parasites, diseases, and climate change; and

WHEREAS, pollinator-friendly communities can benefit local and regional economies through healthier ecosystems, increased vegetable and fruit crop yields, and increased demand for pollinator-friendly plant materials from local growers; and

WHEREAS, an ideal pollinator-friendly habitat:

1. Is comprised of mostly native wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees blooming in succession throughout the growing season to provide diverse and abundant nectar and pollen, since many wild pollinators prefer or depend on the native plants with which they co-adapted;
2. Is free to nearly free of pesticides, as many pesticides can harm pollinators and/or their habitat;
3. Is comprised of undisturbed spaces (leaf and brush piles, unmown fields or field

margins, fallen trees and other dead wood) for nesting and overwintering; and

4. Provides connectivity between habitat areas to support pollinator movement and resilience; and

WHEREAS, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a long-term approach to maintaining healthy landscapes and facilities that minimizes risks to people and the environment by: identifying and removing the causes of pest problems rather than only attacking the symptoms (the pests); employing pests' natural enemies along with cultural, mechanical, and physical controls when prevention is not enough; and using pesticides only when no other method is feasible or effective; and

WHEREAS, supporting pollinators fosters broad-based community engagement in environmental awareness and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richmond should be certified a Bee City USA community because:

1. The Capital Trees Foundation has installed a 5.5 acre stretch of green space along the James River and Kanawha Canal. The Low Line park is an example of native pollinator gardens.

2. Richmond Grows Gardens, the City of Richmond's community garden program, has been in operation for over a decade and promotes the use of pollinators.

3. The Rain Garden at Bellemeade Park was chosen as the 2021 Virginia Master Naturalist Most Impactful Project.

4. The James River Association has been working alongside Richmond Public Libraries and the City of Richmond Department of Public Utilities RVAH20 to design and install green infrastructure at five branches across the City of Richmond using regionally native plants.

5. The City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities aims to implement the following goals within the department's portfolio of properties and facilities, as outline in Objective 17.7 of the Richmond 300 Master Plan:

(a) Implement strategies in Equitable Transportation to connect parks via greenways that could also serve as animal habitat corridors, explore using RMSs and RPAs to create green ribbons through the city, especially as it pertains to the establishment of James River Branch Trail, currently underway.

(b) Increase the prevalence of native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities at public facilities and promote such planting on private lands by hosting volunteer opportunities to plant native species within Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities properties and supporting efforts to supply the public with native trees, such as Arbor Day RVA.

(c) Implement the RVA Clean Water strategy to use 80 percent native plants in new landscaping at public facilities by 2023 within Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

(d) Develop a strategy to integrate invasive plant management into existing city programs and reduce invasive plant coverage within the city as also assigned to PRCF through the RVA Green 2050 Action Item ii from Strategy ENV-1.1.

(e) Create a plan for the control and minimization of the presence and impacts of invasive species, taking climate change into account by 2025.

(f) Discourage use of pesticides and herbicides and encourage organic practices to improve and maintain soil health and healthy habitat and ecosystems, as is required by Richmond Grows Gardens, the City of Richmond's community garden program, and for which protocol will be established in the Parks Maintenance Manual by 2025.

(g) Encourage use of bird-safe glass and other building materials and features that protect and enhance natural ecologies where appropriate in Parks, Recreation & Community Facilities properties.

(h) Encourage bird houses, bat houses, and other structures that provide important and safe shelters for wildlife at additional community gardens and parks and establish

interpretative signage to educate the community about our effort to leave tree snags intact for wildlife habitat.

(i) Revise the City's weed ordinance to allow for exemptions for native plant species and plants for healthy pollinator communities on private lands in collaboration with the City of Richmond Department of Public Works.

(j) Convert large City-managed non-recreational mown areas, such as floodwall impoundment areas, to native community wildflower/pollinator species meadows, mown or bush-hogged once or twice each year, beginning with the installation of meadows within Bryan Park and Fonticello Park, also known as Carter Jones Park, in late 2023 and 2024.

6. By Resolution No. 2023-R005, adopted February 13, 2023, City Council approved the Climate Equity Action Plan 2030. It includes:

(a) Objective ENV-1: Make sure all residents have the opportunity to engage with healthy natural resources, spaces, and biodiversity, and

(b) Strategy ENV-1.1: Green Space Management: Create a program and public-private partnerships to maintain and expand high-quality public green space.

WHEREAS, the Council believes that it is in the best interest of the citizens of the City of Richmond that the Council support the designation of the City of Richmond as an affiliate of Bee City USA for the purpose of supporting the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Facilities commitment to enhancing and increasing pollinator habitats in the city;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RICHMOND:

That the Council hereby supports the designation of the City of Richmond as an affiliate of Bee City USA for the purpose of supporting the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities commitment to enhancing and

increasing pollinator habitats in the city.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, only to the extent permitted by law, facilitation of Richmond's Bee City USA program is assigned to the Richmond Bee City Working Committee, to do the following:

1. **Celebration:** Host at least one educational event or pollinator habitat planting or restoration each year to showcase the city of Richmond's commitment to raising awareness of pollinator conservation and expanding pollinator health and habitat.

2. **Publicity & Information:** Install and maintain at least one authorized Bee City USA street sign in a prominent location, and create and maintain a webpage on the City of Richmond website which includes, at minimum a copy of this resolution and links to the national Bee City USA website; contact information for the City's Bee City USA Liaison and Committee; reports of the pollinator-friendly activities the community has accomplished the previous year (s); and the City's recommended native plant species list and integrated pest management plan.

3. **Habitat:** Develop and implement a program to create or expand a pollinator-friendly habitat on public and private land, which includes, but is not limited to, identifying and inventorying the City's real property that can be enhanced with pollinator-friendly plantings; utilizing and promoting the resource *Native Plants for Virginia's Capital Region*, a recommended locally native plant list, including wildflowers, grasses, vines, shrubs, and trees and a list of local suppliers for those species; and, tracking (by square footage or acreage) annual area of the pollinator habitat created or enhanced.

4. **Pollinator-Friendly Pest Management:** Create and adopt an IPM plan designed to prevent pest problems, reduce pesticide use, and expand the use of non-chemical pest management methods.

5. **Policy & Plans:** Review the Richmond 300 Plan and other relevant documents to consider improvements to pest management policies and practices as they relate to pollinator conservation, identify

appropriate locations for pollinator-friendly plantings, and consider other appropriate measures.

6. **Renewal:** After completing the first calendar year as a Bee City USA affiliate, each February, apply for renewal of the City's Bee City USA designation following the format provided by Bee City USA, including a report of the previous year's Bee City USA activities, and paying the renewal fee based on the City's population.