



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CHICAGO'S FIRST URBAN FORESTRY
ADVISORY BOARD**

The UFAB builds on the City's continued commitment to equitably expand our shared tree ecosystem for the benefit of all residents

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, along with City and community leaders, today announced the appointment of the Urban Forestry Advisory Board (UFAB). The UFAB is tasked with investigating and offering recommendations on tree-related issues in alignment with Mayor Lightfoot's [Our Roots Chicago Initiative](#).

"I am thrilled to appoint this group of urban forestry experts to lead Chicago's efforts to create a more equitable distribution of trees throughout our neighborhoods and to support the City in the development of a management strategy to sustain the trees already in the ground," said Mayor Lightfoot. "As I've said before, trees are a critical piece of our urban infrastructure — they provide shade to cool streets and residences during extreme heat, they improve our air quality, and they help prevent flooding by absorbing water during heavy rainfall. And on top of all that, they're a beautiful addition to our city's landscape."

Board members were selected based on recommendations from the Bureau of Forestry, CDOT, CDPH, and the Mayor's Office, along with feedback from participants in the Tree Equity Working Group. The appointees are well-respected technical and community tree experts known for their work throughout Chicago.

The following individuals received appointments to the UFAB:

- **Rolando Favela**, environmental professional and Tree Ambassador representing the Southwest Side — appointed to four-year term
- **Nuri Madina**, Director of Community Development for Blacks In Green — appointed to four-year term
- **Daniella Pereira**, Vice President of Conservation at Openlands — appointed to two-year term
- **Cindy Schwab**, arborist leading the industry in DEI and workforce development-related initiatives — appointed to two-year term



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- **Jim Semelka**, regional tree expert and previous President of the Illinois Arborist Association — appointed to two-year term
- **Jessica Vogt**, academic arborist from DePaul University — appointed to four-year term

In addition to the full board members, the following City officials will serve as ex officio UFAB members:

- **Gia Biagi**, Commissioner, Department of Transportation
- **Andrea Cheng**, Commissioner, Department of Water Management
- **Maurice Cox**, Commissioner, Department of Planning and Development
- **Rosa Escareño**, General Superintendent and CEO, Chicago Park District
- **Angela Tovar**, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Chicago
- **Malcolm Whiteside**, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Streets and Sanitation
- **TBD**, Chair, Environment Committee, City of Chicago (position currently vacant)

“The appointment of UFAB members is another signal of progress to improve tree-related outcomes for the City of Chicago,” said Alderman Scott Waguespack of the 32nd Ward. “We have committed to a campaign of planting tens of thousands of new trees and preserving the trees already standing across the City, and this board will help keep us on track as we progress toward those goals.”

The UFAB will go into effect immediately with an initial meeting anticipated in February. Board members will serve in staggered four-year terms, with half of the initial board serving two-year terms.

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