

Grant Request: *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard*

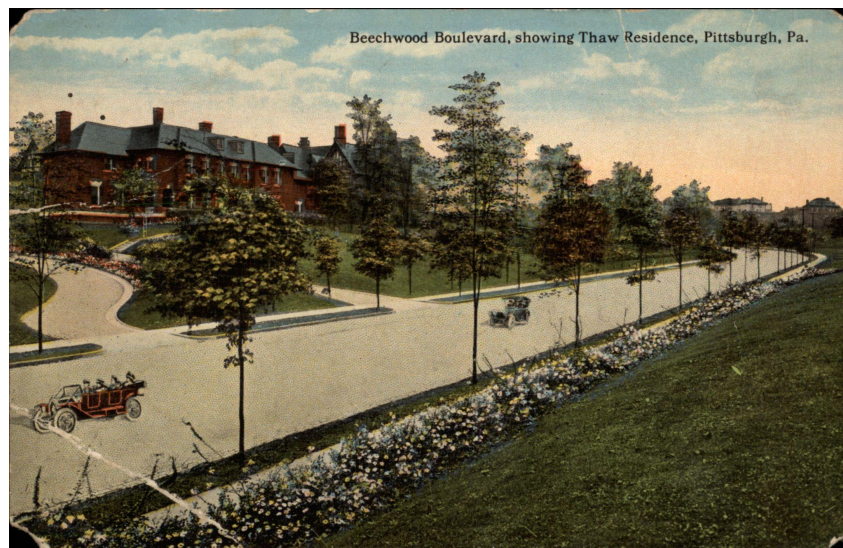
Submitted by the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition

Greetings,

On behalf of the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition (SHUC), I am writing to request funding from the Shade Tree Trust Fund to support *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard*—a multi-year reforestation initiative along one of Pittsburgh’s most historic and beloved corridors. This project builds on SHUC’s longstanding commitment to urban forestry and public stewardship. Our Tree Committee has partnered with Tree Pittsburgh for many years to secure grants, train neighborhood residents as certified Tree Tenders, and organize volunteer events for planting and maintenance throughout Squirrel Hill.

Beechwood Boulevard is a living legacy of the **City Beautiful movement**, a turn-of-the-century design philosophy that aimed to uplift American cities through civic beautification, equitable public access, and thoughtfully integrated parks and streetscapes. Pittsburgh’s embrace of this vision was led by **Edward Manning Bigelow**, the city’s first Director of Public Works and the architect of its early park system. Bigelow championed the creation of Schenley and Highland Parks, and designed Beechwood Boulevard in the 1890s as a wide, gracious, tree-lined route connecting the two. In 1910, the city commissioned **Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.**—renowned landscape architect and a co-founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects—to guide Pittsburgh’s long-range planning. Olmsted identified Beechwood as a key “pleasure drive,” calling for improved tree cover and green spaces to enhance public experience.

ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard is a direct continuation of that shared legacy—restoring a civic space designed to offer beauty, health, and access to *all* Pittsburghers.



Historic postcard illustrating the 1100 block of Beechwood Blvd in the early 1900's

The boulevard remains physically ideal for this effort. It was constructed with a remarkable **80-foot width** for most of its span, and later retrofitted with **sidewalks and public tree lawns over three feet wide**, allowing for tree planting without requiring new sidewalk cuts. These shovel-ready zones—many of which have lost mature canopy trees in recent decades—offer a clear path to ecological and aesthetic restoration.

The need for replanting is urgent. While Squirrel Hill and the East End have historically maintained one of Pittsburgh's strongest urban tree canopies, they are now losing trees at a faster rate than any other neighborhood. Large "gentle giants" are aging out, falling in storms, or being removed due to disease and instability. Replacing them is essential not only for environmental health, but to preserve the comfort, walkability, and identity of Beechwood Boulevard for generations to come.



The same section of Beechwood Blvd showing a casualty from the April 29, 2025 storm

Today, Beechwood Boulevard continues to serve as a vital civic and recreational space. It is part of the **Richard S. Caliguiri City of Pittsburgh Great Race**, which draws **more than 10,000 participants annually**, and **PedalPGH**, the city's largest bike ride, which brings **thousands more riders** onto Pittsburgh's streets each August. In addition to these citywide events, the boulevard is used daily by **kids biking after school, parents pushing strollers, joggers and cyclists training on long routes, and everyday commuters choosing cleaner, greener ways to move through the city**. These uses highlight Beechwood's unique role as a tree-lined connector that links people not just to parks and neighborhoods, but to the experience of public life itself.

Nowhere is this more evident than in its relationship with **Frick Park**. Though the park was established more than a decade after Beechwood was constructed, it was explicitly designed around the boulevard's route and entrances. The park's layout was shaped in part by the firm **Innocenti & Webel**, whose naturalistic design principles harmonized with Beechwood's gracious, tree-lined profile. Today, Frick Park has **multiple formal and informal access points directly off Beechwood Boulevard**, including the iconic gatehouses at Clayton Hill and trailheads leading to the Blue Slide Playground and ballfields. These entrances are **used**

year-round by families arriving on foot, by bike, or by car. Restoring the boulevard's canopy will enhance both the **ecological value and public accessibility** of these vital green gateways.

SHUC is requesting funding to support the phased planting of approximately **350 trees**. Our plan is to plant approximately **50-70 trees every fall and spring** beginning in **Fall 2025**, proceeding through six geographic phases. Prioritization is based on canopy loss, pedestrian use, park and school adjacency, and infrastructure constraints. Trees will be selected from the Approved Shade Tree List based on location and to ensure a variety of species are planted.

A **planting map** and **Tree Tender roster** are included as **Exhibit A** and **Exhibit B**, respectively. All tree species will be selected in accordance with the *Approved Tree Species for Pittsburgh's Streets* list.

Planting Phases:

- **Phase 1 (Fall 2025): High-Need Priority Zone**
1600-1777, 2100-2293, 2800-2998 Beechwood Blvd
This stretch has suffered significant tree loss due to disease and storm damage. It contains minimal overhead wire conflicts and high visibility, making it ideal for early impact.
- **Phase 2 (Spring 2026): School & Youth Access Zone**
2300-2333, 2600-2661 Beechwood Blvd
Located near Colfax K–8 and Community Day School, this segment will provide much-needed shade and safety for children walking and biking to school.
- **Phase 3 (Fall 2026): High-Use Recreational Corridor**
1800-2093, 2400-2581 Beechwood Blvd
This section borders Frick Park trailheads and bike routes and is used year-round by pedestrians, cyclists, and families accessing park facilities.
- **Phase 4 (Spring 2027): Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone**
3000-3500 Beechwood Blvd
This segment has reduced tree coverage, more densely populated housing, and higher surface temperatures, making it a key target for heat relief and environmental justice.
- **Phase 5 (Fall 2027): Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone**
1000-1500 Beechwood Blvd
This phase covers segments with intact historic homes and original street layout. Replanting here will reinforce the historic aesthetic intended by the boulevard's creators.
- **Phase 6 (Spring 2028): Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)**
3600 - 4073 Beechwood Blvd
This section is adjacent to I-376 and affected by an upcoming federal Department of Transportation redesign project. Due to expected construction, planting will be deferred until project completion to protect new trees.

Throughout the planning of *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard*, SHUC has engaged in conversations with community stakeholders and advocacy organizations, including the **Greenfield Community Organization, Point Breeze Organization, Friends of Mellon Park, Frick Park Friends, Uncover Squirrel Hill** and **Bike Pittsburgh**. Their feedback helped shape the planting strategy and underscored broad public support for preserving Beechwood as a shaded, walkable, and inclusive green corridor.

General community interest in this project has been overwhelmingly positive. SHUC volunteers have begun collecting tree planting permission forms from property owners in Phase 1 of the planting plan. To date, more than **85% of homeowners contacted have signed the form**, affirming their support and willingness to host a new street tree. This high participation rate reflects not only enthusiasm for restoring Beechwood's canopy, but a deep appreciation among residents for the boulevard's history, shade, and civic value.

Thank you for considering this request. With your support, we can ensure that *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard* becomes a lasting investment in equity, environmental resilience, and civic beauty—reconnecting Pittsburghers with one of the city's great public spaces.

Warmly,



Scott Bluman, Chair SHUC Tree Committee

sbluman@shuc.org

Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition

Wightman School Building 2nd Floor

5604 Solway Street

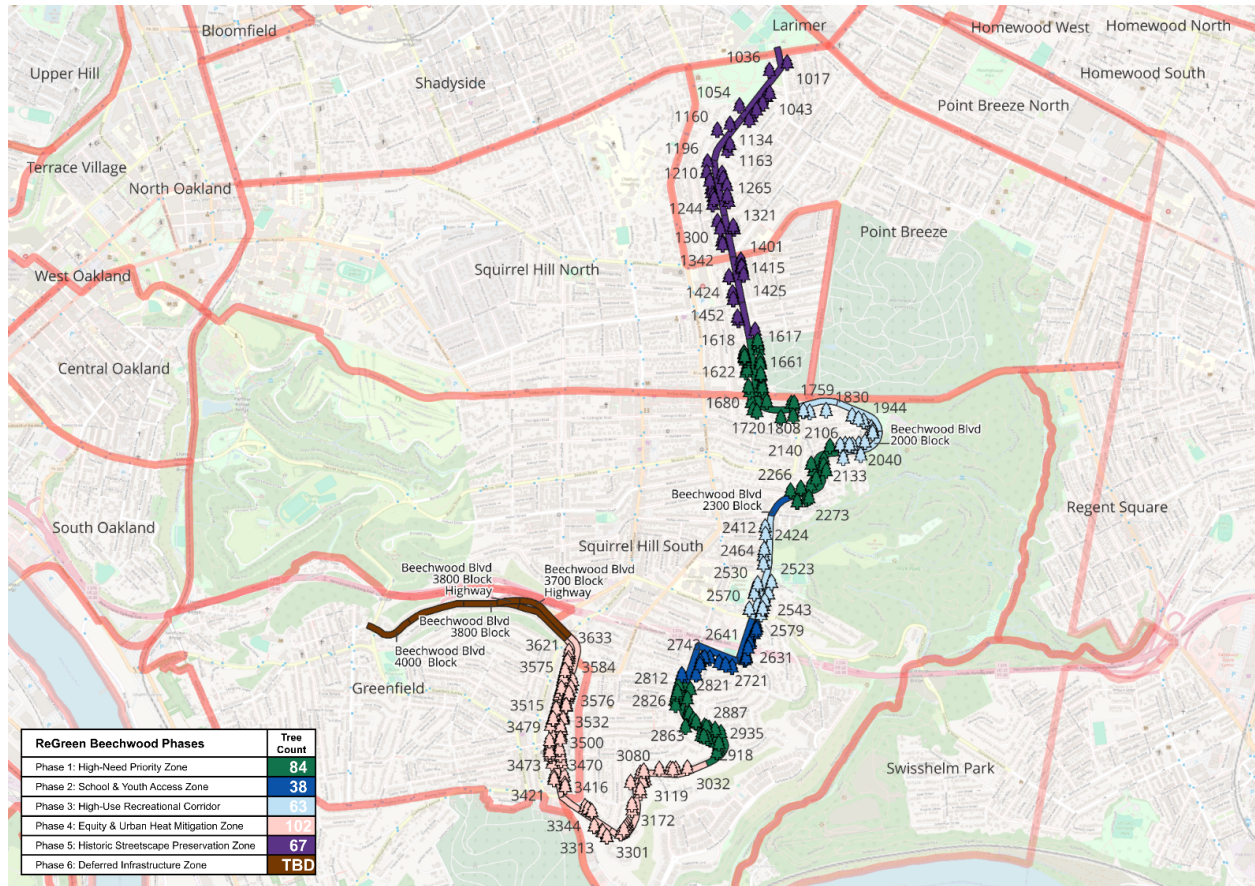
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

412.422.7666

Enclosures:

1. Planting Map and Tree Counts (Exhibit A)
2. Squirrel Hill Certified Tree Tender Roster (Exhibit B)
3. Letters of Support from Councilmember Warwick - District 5, Friends of Mellon Park, Point Breeze Organization, Squirrel Hill Historical Society, Uncover Squirrel Hill (Exhibit C)

Exhibit A - Planting Map and Tree Counts



Tree Count by Phase

Phase	Requested Tree Count
Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	84
Phase 2: School & Youth Access Zone	38
Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	63
Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	102
Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	67
Phase 6: Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)	TBD
Grand Total	354+TBD

Trees by Block

Beechwood Blvd Block #	Phase	Recent Tree Canopy Lost 2015 to 2020 ¹	Requested Tree Count
1000	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	10.88%	19
1100	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	15.47%	13
1200	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	12.20%	14
1300	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	9.06%	8
1400	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	11.82%	9
1500	Phase 5: Historic Streetscape Preservation Zone	9.16%	4
1600	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	18.28%	29
1700	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	14.82%	14
1800	Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	14.62%	4
1900	Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	5.04%	7
2000	Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	11.80%	14
2100	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	5.78%	5
2200	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	9.85%	8
2300	Phase 2: School & Youth Access Zone	18.46%	0
2400	Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	17.60%	5
2500	Phase 3: High-Use Recreational Corridor	16.37%	33
2600	Phase 2: School & Youth Access Zone	5.96%	26
2700	Phase 2: School & Youth Access Zone	15.03%	12
2800	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	25.27%	17
2900	Phase 1: High-Need Priority Zone	22.18%	11
3000	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	10.63%	5
3100	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	9.63%	10
3200	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	8.76%	6
3300	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	17.11%	8
3400	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	15.99%	25
3500	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	21.10%	32
3600	Phase 4: Equity & Urban Heat Mitigation Zone	14.29%	16
3700	Phase 6: Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)	29.10%	TBD
3800	Phase 6: Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)	70.19%	TBD
3900	Phase 6: Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)	19.26%	TBD
4000	Phase 6: Deferred Infrastructure Zone (Greenfield Segment)	15.64%	TBD
Grand Total			354+TBD

¹ Based on % of canopy lost between 2015 and 2020 within 50 feet of the center of Beechwood Blvd using the Allegheny County Tree Canopy Change Between 2015-2020 GIS survey data.

Exhibit B - Squirrel Hill Certified Tree Tender Roster

Name	Email
Abby Chen	abigailpchen@gmail.com
Anne Jensen	aej6qm@virginia.edu
Barbara Litt	brlitt@gmail.com
Cathleen Malmstrom	calmalm1@gmail.com
Chelsea Arnold	chelsea@treepittsburgh.org
Claire Deahl	ccdeahl@gmail.com
David Clark	drc8892@gmail.com
Devin Kellar	dmkellar@ymail.com
Emily Sweeny	emily@ssweeny.net
Estora Miller	kaylawitherspoon@yahoo.com
Gary Crouth	garycrouth@gmail.com
Glenn Corliss	gcorliss77@gmail.com
Jenny Smith	jsmith.pgh@gmail.com
Jonas Heleno Portillo	jhportillo94@gmail.com
Kenneth Levin	kenplevin@gmail.com
Keri Rouse	kerouse78@gmail.com
Kris Cummings	krisandlucy@hotmail.com
Kryn Sausedo	ksausedo@ura.org
Lan Tran	lantran2006@gmail.com
Laura Hoffman	lah118713@gmail.com
Marcie Persyn	marcie.persyn@gmail.com
Mardi Isler	marthaisler@gmail.com
Matthew Plecity	mplecity@gbbn.com
Maxwell Hutchinson	maxhutch@gmail.com
Meghan Stone Olson	meghan@meghanolson.com
Noble Smith	noble.smith@eastliberty.org
Paper Buck	paperbucks@gmail.com
Paul Pagoda	paul@growpittsburgh.org
Rachel Walton	rachelwalton44@gmail.com
Ryan Moore	rwmoore07@gmail.com
Ryan Walsh	ryankwalsh@gmail.com
Scott Bluman	sbluman@bluman.com
Stephen Tirone	stephen.tirone@gmail.com
Tracey Ziev	tracey.ziev@gmail.com

Exhibit C - Letters of Support from

- (1) Councilmember Warwick - District 5
- (2) Friends of Mellon Park
- (3) Point Breeze Organization
- (4) Squirrel Hill Historical Society
- (5) Uncover Squirrel Hill



The Office of
City Councilmember Barb Warwick

TO: City of Pittsburgh Shade Tree
Commission
414 Grant St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15

FROM: Barb Warwick
Pittsburgh City Councilmember
District 5
DATE: August 7, 2025

Re: Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard Project

Dear Members of the Shade Tree Commission,

As the City Councilmember for District 5, representing many of the neighborhoods this project will serve, I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's (SHUC) "ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard" project and associated grant application. This community-led initiative represents the best of Pittsburgh: a commitment to our environment, a respect for our history, and a focus on improving the quality of life for all residents.

As a resident of Greenfield, I have a personal appreciation for Beechwood Boulevard and its role as a vital artery connecting our communities. I am particularly encouraged that the "ReGreen Beechwood" plan includes targeted planting in areas of greatest need. This phase will bring critical shade and cooling to the denser, more heat-vulnerable blocks along the Greenfield and Squirrel Hill South border, addressing environmental justice issues. Furthermore, the plan's foresight in coordinating with the upcoming 376 infrastructure work ensures that our investment in new trees will be protected for the long term.

My work on City Council has always been driven by the belief that public funds and resources should be directed toward projects that fulfill long-standing community needs and protect our public green spaces. The "ReGreen Beechwood" initiative, with its impressive roster of neighborhood Tree Tenders and the overwhelming support from homeowners, is a model for resident-driven, grassroots-led civic improvement.

Restoring the tree canopy on this historic boulevard is an investment that will pay dividends for generations. It will enhance a critical recreational corridor used for events like the Great Race and PedalPGH, improve air quality, mitigate stormwater runoff, and beautify the gateways to Schenley and Frick Parks. It honors the original vision of the City Beautiful movement while adapting it to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

For all these reasons, I strongly urge the Shade Tree Commission to approve and fully fund the SHUC's grant request. This is a shovel-ready, high-impact project that will deliver measurable benefits to my constituents and to all residents of Pittsburgh. Thank you for your time and consideration of this essential initiative.

Sincerely,

Barb Warwick
Pittsburgh District 5 City Councilmember



Friends of Mellon Park

August 7, 2025

Board of Directors

Cynthia Berger
President

Basil Cox
Vice President

Larry Gerson
Vice President

Regina Kakadelis
Treasurer

Abby Wilson
Secretary

Cathy Cohen Droz
Victoria Lee
Rhodora Noethling
Elizabeth Seamans
Margaret Whitmer

Scott Bluman, Chair SHUC Tree Committee
Wightman School Building, 2nd Floor
5604 Solway Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Dear Members of the Shade Tree Commission,

On behalf of the Friends of Mellon Park, I am writing to express strong support for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's (SHUC) request for funding from the Shade Tree Trust Fund for their proposed ReGreening of Beechwood Boulevard project. We have enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the SHUC on many important projects in our community and look forward to seeing them be able to enhance the beauty of this important, much-loved, and well-used thoroughfare.

This funding will help sustain the essential landscape beautification, maintenance, and ecological restoration efforts already completed by SHUC in its longstanding efforts in urban forestry and public stewardship. SHUC's past efforts and this proposed project will help keep our beloved green spaces healthy, safe, and welcoming for all.

Beechwood Boulevard is a historically significant beautiful street that winds through many East End neighborhoods. This tree-lined boulevard, a product of the City Beautiful movement, is filled with walkers, runners, bicycles, and cars.

Unfortunately, the loss of trees along the boulevard has accelerated, and the area is now losing trees faster than any Pittsburgh neighborhood.

Public investment is essential to maintain the quality and reach of this critical work across these neighborhoods. We urge the Members of the Tree Commission to support this request as a meaningful investment in the ongoing care, beauty, and ecological health of one of Pittsburgh's most iconic "pleasure drives".

Your support will directly benefit thousands of residents and visitors, while protecting and enhancing vital urban trees for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Cindy Berger
President, Friends of Mellon Park



August 7, 2025

Scott Bluman, Chair SHUC Tree Committee
Wightman School Building 2nd Floor
5604 Solway Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Dear Scott,

I am writing to offer the support of the Point Breeze Organization for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's (SHUC) *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard* initiative. This project is the next step in their longstanding commitment to urban forestry and public stewardship.

Beechwood Boulevard is a beautiful and much-loved byway that goes through much of Point Breeze. On any given day its sidewalks will be busy with walkers and runners, while bicyclists and cars fill the road. The old trees that line Beechwood make it a beautiful, cool, and peaceful journey for everyone. It's easy to see Frederick Law Olmstead Jr.'s vision of this road as a "pleasure drive" meant to enhance the public's experience.

Unfortunately, with the passage of time, many of the original trees have fallen or been removed due to damage, disease, or weakening. Efforts have been made over the years, but the rate of loss has accelerated and we are now losing trees faster than any other Pittsburgh neighborhood.

Point Breeze residents understand very well the value of trees to their personal well-being and to the greater climate of our area and the planet. A strong majority would like to host a street tree and see this program in place.

We strongly support SHUC's efforts with the *ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard* program and look forward to an investment in equity, environmental resilience, and civic beauty.

Regards,

Regina Kakadelis, President
Point Breeze Organization

6657 Reynolds Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
pointbreezepgh.org
info@pointbreezepgh.org

The Point Breeze Organization is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.



**Squirrel Hill Historical
Society**

PO Box 8157, Pittsburgh,
PA 15217
squirrelhillhistory.org
sqhillhist@shhsoc.org

August 5, 2025

Scott Bluman, Chair SHUC Tree Committee
Wightman School Building 2nd Floor
5604 Solway Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Dear Mr. Bluman,

On behalf of the Squirrel Hill Historical Society, we are writing to express our strong support for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's proposal to re-green Beechwood Boulevard. Those of us who have been driving down the boulevard for years have noted with dismay the demise of some of the largest trees and the unappealing appearance of the trees that have been pruned. On the other hand, we've also noticed where new trees have been planted and how much better that makes the boulevard look.

Beechwood Boulevard's construction in 1899 was part of Edward M. Bigelow's grand design of a gracious boulevard connecting the city's new Schenley and Highland Parks. It was always intended to be a pleasure drive, first for carriages and then for automobiles. The trees lining it added greatly to that effect. Our research on the boulevard resulted in an entire chapter by Wayne Bossinger in our *Squirrel Hill: A Neighborhood History* book, who wrote this about the boulevard's conception:

Aesthetics played a major role in both the boulevard's layout and its physical construction. In some ways, it was an embodiment of the City Beautiful movement, which was beginning to influence urban development across the country. The movement advocated using classical architecture, monumental buildings and gracious boulevards to beautify the grimy industrial cities of the late 1800s. ... Beechwood Boulevard was designed to be a pleasure to drive. ...

The trees lining the boulevard were a key element in achieving the goal of it being such a pleasure drive, including the cooling effect the trees produced.

At present, in many blocks of Beechwood Boulevard, the trees have been deformed by pruning or are missing altogether. The Squirrel Hill Historical Society would love to see the boulevard look like a pleasure drive again!

Sincerely,

James Hammond, President, SHHS

Helen Wilson, Vice President, SHHS



5884 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15217

Shade Tree Commission
City of Pittsburgh
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

August 4th, 2025

RE: Letter of Support for SHUC and the ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard Initiative

Dear Members of the Shade Tree Commission,

On behalf of Uncover Squirrel Hill, the neighborhood's business association, I am pleased to offer our full support for the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition's ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard initiative.

Our business district thrives because Squirrel Hill is a place where people love to walk, shop, and gather. Beechwood Boulevard is the gateway that connects residents and visitors to our community, to Frick Park, and to the small businesses that give Squirrel Hill its unique character. A healthy, shaded streetscape is essential to maintaining the inviting atmosphere that brings people to our stores, restaurants, and cultural events.

Over the past decade, the decline of our mature tree canopy along Beechwood has been noticeable and concerning. We have experienced:

- Hotter sidewalks and less comfortable walking conditions in the summer
- Fewer scenic routes for pedestrians and cyclists traveling to the business district
- A diminished first impression for visitors arriving via Beechwood Boulevard

The ReGreen Beechwood Boulevard project is exactly the type of forward-thinking investment our neighborhood needs. It balances historic preservation, environmental sustainability, and economic vitality by restoring the tree canopy that protects our public spaces and enhances the experience of everyone who comes to Squirrel Hill.

We strongly encourage the Shade Tree Commission to approve and fund this request. By supporting this project, you are investing not only in the beauty and ecology of Beechwood Boulevard, but also in the continued success of the small businesses that rely on a vibrant and walkable Squirrel Hill.

Thank you for considering this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Katz", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

John Katz
President, Uncover Squirrel Hill