

# Indiana public media

## **Indiana Forest Alliance creates strategy for protecting, maintaining Indianapolis's trees**

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The Indiana Forest Alliance has come up with a strategy for how to better protect urban forests in Indianapolis. The group said urban forests help cool cities, capture stormwater, improve air quality and trap greenhouse gas emissions.

The strategy report said while there has been a big effort to plant trees in Indianapolis, there needs to be more of effort to protect and maintain them.

Paula Brooks is the environmental justice coordinator for the Hoosier Environmental Council. She said many mature trees in Indianapolis neighborhoods are owned by the city and it's the city's responsibility to maintain them and remove fallen trees and branches. But it's residents who often end up paying thousands of dollars for maintenance removing fallen limbs — and that's not always possible for lower-income residents.

"If a branch falls, if it blocks the sidewalk or the street — the city will come and remove it. But if it falls on your property or your neighbor's property, then it's your responsibility. So, it's — at the end of the day it's definitely inequitable," Brooks said.

This happens because the Department of Public Works is underfunded and can have long wait times. Rae Schnapp is the conservation director for the Indiana Forest Alliance. She said Indianapolis has a tree protection ordinance to save some older, larger trees — but only when there's a proposal to develop the property that the tree is located on.

"If the property is not changing hands, and/or no development is proposed, then those trees are vulnerable. So we'd like to strengthen the tree protection ordinance in some ways — and we're still kind of exploring that," Schnapp said.

Source:<https://indianapublicmedia.org/news/indiana-forest-alliance-creates-strategy-for-protecting,-maintaining-indianapoliss-trees1.php>