

Dear Vanessa,

I'm enthusiastically submitting my application for the Somerville Urban Forestry Committee. As a landscape designer with a background in educational non-profits, I bring a diverse background and a passion for urban trees. I'm curious to hear more about the role of the committee, the Public Works Division, City Operations and volunteers and the ways that the plan will be implemented to strategically share responsibilities between these groups moving forward. I would contribute my skills as a landscape designer, with experience working between scales, to look at the canopy health of the city as a whole and cultivate neighbor volunteer training programs to care for individual tree needs.

In my current position, I support both landscape design and planning projects. I developed the planting design for the renovation of a 25-acre historic, public park in Charlotte, NC through extensive study of the existing tree canopy, we proposed a robust diversity of oaks and regionally native species to sustain the park for its next 100 years. I am also working on a County-wide Park + Recreation Master Plan. I contributed to a parks inventory of the system, dove into historical and ecological research and currently support our community engagement strategies, both in-person and remotely. During graduate school, I learned from and worked with a fierce advocate for tough, urban trees while taking and TA'ing for Planting design courses. Before graduate school, I worked closely with schools in Central Texas to support informal STEM education during after-school and summer programming while building partnerships between the tech community and the schools.

In attending the Urban Forestry Plan meeting yesterday evening, I was invigorated by the enthusiasm of the group at this moment. It seems like a critical time for action, as the inventory has been completed and the Planning document is being finalized. The committee has an incredible knowledge of the documented canopy and it is at the crux of moving forward, empowered with this information. I would like to contribute to this momentum with knowledge of species and a drive to learn more about urban tree maintenance and develop educational outreach strategies. I'm excited to contribute to a diverse, healthy urban canopy and a community that has readily accessible tools to care for and learn about both new and historic trees.

Sincerely,

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

Leah Grossman