

Policy Briefing Summary

City Council



Regarding:	By Motion Support for the City of Charlottesville's Efforts in becoming a Bee City USA locality
Staff Contact(s):	Riaan Anthony, Director of Parks & Recreation, Ashley Marshall, Deputy City Manager
Presenter:	Steven Gaines, Urban Forester, Chris Gensic, Park and Trail Planner
Date of Proposed Action:	September 2, 2025

Issue

The City of Charlottesville has engaged with our community to become a Bee City through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Background / Rule

Bee City USA (an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation) is a designation that cities can agree to obtain in recognition that bees and other pollinators are crucial to the reproduction and health of flowering plant species and a diversity of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and other crops. By becoming a pollinator-friendly community, the City of Charlottesville will continue to work to support local and regional economies through healthier ecosystems, increased crop yields, and increased demand for pollinator-friendly plant materials from local growers. Charlottesville will foster community awareness and engagement regarding environmental and sustainability challenges and solutions by supporting pollinators.

Analysis

As part of this designation, the City has committed to creating and maintaining pollinator-friendly habitats, raising awareness about the importance of bees, and implementing practices that help support their populations.

- **Planting Pollinator-Friendly Plants:** Charlottesville encourages planting native flowering plants that attract and support pollinators like bees. This can include adding more wildflowers, shrubs, and trees to public spaces and gardens, which will provide bees with the nectar and pollen they need.
- **Creating Pollinator Habitats:** Charlottesville has worked to create more natural spaces for pollinators to thrive, such as establishing pollinator gardens and habitats in city parks and other green spaces. Further, Charlottesville is committed to adaptive restoration practices to enhance the city's urban forest through controlling invasive vegetation and installing native trees and groundcover that will support pollinators and provide quality habitat, allowing pollinators to nest and forage.
- **Reducing Pesticide Use:** Charlottesville aims to reduce pesticide use in public spaces. As some pesticides can be toxic to pollinators, the City of Charlottesville strives to utilize herbicides responsibly and employ cultural practices where appropriate.

- **Partnering with Local Organizations:** Charlottesville collaborates with local schools, gardening clubs, and environmental organizations to promote pollinator-friendly practices and involve the community in conservation efforts.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact for this designation at this time.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the City Council, by motion, support the City's obtaining the designation of being one of the "Bee City USA" participants and support the City Manager in signing a memorandum of understanding between the organization and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

Recommended Motion (if Applicable)

Attachments

1. Bee City MOU Charlottesville - FINAL - 8.15.25 version_MSsign