

RESOLUTION
By Schroeder

Recognizing Regenerative Agriculture and Biochar use as impactful climate action and resilience tools that deliver benefits to Minneapolis residents and our environment.

Whereas, the world's top scientists overwhelmingly agree that climate change poses significant near- and long-term threats to our communities, our economy, and our future; and

Whereas, Regenerative Agriculture is an approach to food and farming systems to regenerate topsoil, increase biodiversity, and increase ecosystem services by improving soil carbon content, fertility, availability of nutrients, soil life, and storm water quality and filtration, while producing food for human consumption; and

Whereas, Regenerative Agriculture strategies that can be adapted to an urban setting includes integrating compost into gardens and landscaping, planting a diversity of crops including cover crops, planting deep-rooted native species, eliminating pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, reducing tillage and soil disturbance, and reducing food waste through on-site composting as well as municipal organics recycling; and

Whereas, Biochar is carbonized waste biomass sequestered in soils to sustainably hold carbon and enhance the soils' agricultural and environmental value; and

Whereas, leading researchers on climate mitigation strategies have identified Regenerative Agriculture and Biochar use as effective climate action strategies with the potential to significantly capture, reduce, and store carbon dioxide and other harmful greenhouse gas emissions globally, including in our region; and

Whereas, Regenerative Urban Agriculture practices and Biochar use are complementary to municipal organics recycling, and can help to reuse food waste; and

Whereas, soil stores more carbon globally than do plants and the atmosphere combined, making it a critical tool in stabilizing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels; and

Whereas, the results from local demonstration plots show Biochar use can increase the productivity of our local urban soil by as much as 30% while it sequesters carbon for as many as 3,000 years; and

Whereas, Regenerative Agriculture and Biochar use are effective methods for rebuilding depleted soil carbon stocks and restoring urban soil health; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis is a national leader in the fight against climate change and is committed to investing in strategies that deepen its impact; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis can promote Regenerative Agriculture practices and the use of Biochar, particularly in overburdened communities facing disproportionate negative impacts from climate change, in order to restore poor urban soil health and support production of nutritious, locally grown food, reduce storm water runoff, limit the urban heat island effect, and sequester carbon including on City land; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis launched the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative in 2008 to expand the community's ability to grow, process, distribute, eat, and compost more healthy, sustainable, and locally grown food; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis operates the Garden Lease Program, making more than 100 vacant lots available to lease for community and market gardens to promote healthy food equity and access while expanding the local food economy; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis operates the Community Garden Compost Program, which provides free and reduced-price compost for community gardens annually which gives community gardens in locations with poor soil quality greater access to healthy soils; and

Whereas, partners across the City enterprise without whom this would not have been established include the Health, Public Works, and Finance & Property Services departments along with the Sustainability division; and

Whereas partners outside the City enterprise have made significant contributions to the success of related initiatives to date including the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the University of Minnesota, the United States Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Pillsbury United Communities, the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community, Little Earth of United Tribes, the Indian Health Board, and 24th Street Urban Farming Coalition; and

Whereas, the City of Minneapolis can work to deliver and maximize community benefits through Regenerative Agriculture and Biochar use, in partnership with international organizations, advisory committees, and new and existing external community partners, while prioritizing partnerships and economic opportunities in those communities which have been historically under resourced;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved by The City Council of The City of Minneapolis:

That the City of Minneapolis supports the integration of Regenerative Agriculture and Biochar use as valuable strategies to help limit the effects of climate change in Minneapolis while maximizing the opportunity to support local food systems.