



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 22-0235, **Version:** 2

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Resolution on Deer Management to Resume Funding for Vegetation Studies and Consider Resuming Funding for Regular Population Management

Whereas, On August 17, 2015, City Council approved a resolution to Establish a Deer Management Program within the City of Ann Arbor for four years, implementing a lethal cull;

Whereas, The City contracted with White Buffalo to conduct the Deer Management Program;

Whereas, This program aimed to decrease the deer population in Ann Arbor in order to reduce deer-human negative interactions and support biological diversity in natural areas by not placing one species above another;

Whereas, Subsequently the City of Ann Arbor was granted a research permit from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to incorporate sharpshooting and surgical sterilization into deer management operations through March 31, 2020;

Whereas, On December 13, 2018, the Michigan House of Representatives passed a bill that prohibits the MDNR from issuing deer sterilization permits until 2022;

Whereas, Surgical sterilization is a crucial tool for deer management in Ann Arbor because many deer woodland habitats lie in close proximity to densely developed neighborhoods, particularly in Wards 1 & 2;

Whereas, City Council approved funding in the FY20 and FY21 budget to continue deer management program operations;

Whereas, On November 18, 2019, City Council authorized a one-year extension of the Deer Management Program to complete the term of the MDNR research permit;

Whereas, Deer management correlates with a decrease in Deer Vehicle Crashes, which peaked at 90 (2.5%) in 2015 and had decreased to 50 (1.5%) by 2019;

Whereas, Deer management also correlates with a decline in deer browsing on red oak seedlings, although vegetation studies suggest that deer populations remain high enough to “potentially reduce forest regeneration and trillium populations, and to significantly decrease wildflowers that provide important resources for pollinators and other wildlife” (Courteau, 2019, p. 38).;

Whereas, On May 26, 2020, White Buffalo reported the following measures of deer population reduction:

- A 53% population reduction overall (152 deer) within City limits since Year 1 (2016), based on direct counts gathered via helicopter survey followed by camera surveys in the South Study Area (SSA), where surgical sterilization occurred;

- A 47% population reduction (44 deer) in the SSA, with 88% of the adult females sterilized (32), and no deer mortality or human safety issues;
- A 60% reduction (43 deer) in the North Study Area (NSA), with no deer mortality or human safety issues;
- Overall, deer management in the NSA and SSA resulted in a reduction to 13 deer/mi in Wards 1 & 2:
- The program achieved a significant, steady decline in the doe:fawn ratio from 1.1 (2017) to 0.15 (2018) to 0.11 (2019) and remained at 0.11 in 2020;
- Consistent with academic studies demonstrating that female white-tailed deer tend to remain in their local habitats (“philopatry”), there has been “minimal” migration into the SSA and NSA since deer management has reduced local populations;

Whereas, The proximity of deer habitats to densely developed neighborhoods in the SSA means that successful deer management in Ann Arbor requires a combined approach of lethal and non-lethal methods;

Whereas, The City’s deer management program is very likely losing ground toward reaching its aims of reducing deer-human negative interactions and supporting biological diversity in natural areas due to the decision by the MI legislature to suspend issuing sterilization permits;

Whereas, City Council suspended funding for the Deer Management Program in FY20 in response to budget shortfalls due to COVID-19;

Whereas, City Council voted to defund the city’s deer cull program in FY21, reallocating \$40,000 of its \$120,000 budget to preliminary design work for the Center of the City;

Whereas, The City’s deer management program is likely losing ground toward reaching its aims of reducing deer-human negative interactions and supporting biological diversity in natural areas due to the decision by City Council to defund the program;

Whereas, The Living Planet Report 2020, published by the WWF, reports an unprecedented, catastrophic decline in global biodiversity, with numbers of mammals, birds, fish, plants and insects having fallen an average of 68% in less than 50 years from 1970 to 2016; and

Whereas, The UN’s Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 (2020) report emphasizes the need for greater popular awareness of the values of biodiversity and the urgency of acting to conserve and restore biodiversity;

RESOLVED, That City Council direct the City Administrator to strengthen public education by providing clear and accessible metrics with respect to both the aim of reducing deer-human negative interactions and that of supporting biological diversity in natural areas;

RESOLVED, That the City Council direct the City Administrator to report on the prospects for a successful advocacy campaign to persuade the MIDNR to resume issuing permits for non-lethal deer management; and

RESOLVED, That City Council direct the City Administrator to resume funding for conducting and

reporting the results of vegetation studies measuring the effects of deer browsing on biodiversity in natural areas.

Sponsored by: Councilmembers Disch, Grand, and Griswold

**As Amended by Ann Arbor City Council on February 7, 2022  
(Final Amended Resolution was defeated on February 7, 2022)**