

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS- STREET TREES

INTRODUCTION

"Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago"

Warren Buffett.

Arlington's forest canopy coverage has diminished dramatically from 1973 to 1997.

Insert maps

The Urban Forest Master Plan of 2004 showed that the Aurora Highlands area had lost a tremendous amount of tree cover. Many aging trees such as silver maples have died and been removed. Many trees have been lost due to construction projects.

The preservation of Arlington's trees and enhancement of tree canopy coverage has been identified as a top priority by the Arlington County Board and citizens.

Conservation of the Aurora Highlands neighborhood means a strong and ongoing commitment to preservation of our existing trees and of planting new trees.

Arlington County already has numerous programs that involve Trees

1. Arlington participates in the **Tree City USA Program** sponsored by the National Arbor Day foundation

Among the requirements for becoming a "Tree City" are

1. Establishment of a Tree Board or Department
2. Enacting a Tree Care Ordinance
3. Having a Community Forestry Program with an annual Budget of at least \$2 per capita
4. Having an Arbor Day Observance and Proclamation

2. Arlington County has a **Tree Care Ordinance**

This provides clear guidance for planting, maintaining removing and replacing trees from streets, parks and other public places.

3. Arlington County released its **Urban Forest Master Plan** in 2003

The many recommendations of the UFMP are listed on County website, including a section on how to encourage preservation and planting of trees on private property

4. Arlington County has a **Public Tree Planting Program**, established by the Park and Natural Resource Division and the Arlington County Beautification Committee.

Applications are accepted from civic associations, neighborhood groups - formal or informal, civic groups, PTA's and garden clubs. They provide trees to be planted on public land.

5. Arlington County's **Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural resources**

covers 1377 acres of park. The Park and Natural Resource division coordinates management of our urban forest

6. The **Arlington County Beautification committee** works with the Natural Resources Program Coordinator for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural resources. They provide advice on the planting and maintaining of landscaped public areas

7. The Park and Recreation Commission, a volunteer, citizen Commission, has a **Park Enhancement Grant Program**.

Groups eligible to apply for and receive program grants include civic and homeowner associations, community non-profit organizations, civic service clubs, school-related groups and ad hoc neighborhood-based groups.

8. On **Neighborhood Day**, civic associations distribute hundreds of free trees to homeowners.

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase overall tree cover across the neighborhood
2. Identify locations within the AHCA area where additional trees can be planted, not just on public streets and parks, but in commercial areas and on private property.
Identify mechanisms by which the trees can be placed in those locations
3. We are at a point where drastic action is necessary. We need to find ways to get trees planted and sustained and ways to eliminate barriers to that goal.
4. Establish some benchmarks and goals that can be monitored by the County to determine if goals are being met.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

From our NC survey:

26% of respondents indicated that their block needed more trees

30% of respondents indicated that other blocks in the neighborhood needed more trees

38% listed tree planting as first or second highest priority for neighborhood improvement projects

Include map from UFMP

We need to include some pictures of "naked" blocks

Photos:

Joyce street from 18th to 22nd has no street trees on the north side at all

Joyce street from 21st to 22nd- NO planting strip on the north side

Overhanging wires and no sidewalk on south side

New sidewalk makes it safer for pedestrians, but it's UGLY

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are largely based on principles set out in the Urban Forest Master Plan of 2003.

TREES ON COUNTY STREETS

The Urban Forest Master Plan recommended:

Create more opportunities for tree planting in the public Right of way such as tree nubs, street narrowing; larger planting strips; curb, gutter and sidewalk design and material innovations.

Work with streetscape designers and planners to ensure tree species diversity.

Implement a street tree planting plan

Using the tree inventory, develop a realistic plan for a five year pruning cycle of the trees in the street Right-of-way

Our recommendations:

1. All new sidewalk projects should consider widened planting strips along the street, at least four feet to allow for the planting of street trees.

2. The county should pursue all possible avenues for adding street trees to the neighborhood.

3. The County should begin a program to remove overhead utility wires which are obstructions to street trees.

4. No street tree should be removed without appropriate replacements being planted

5. The county should establish written protocols for tree conservation, at the time of repaving of streets so that the street repair crew doesn't damage or kill the existing trees.

6. The county should consider adding and maintaining median strips with trees wherever possible. Examples: Eads street between S. 18th St and S 20th St.
Hayes street near Pentagon City Mall

7. The County should keep record of numbers of new street trees planted in each neighborhood (streets, parks, medians, others) and make those records available to the NC program and participating civic associations

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TREES IN PARKS, SCHOOLS AND AROUND OTHER COUNTY FACILITIES

The UFMP recommended:

Continue to monitor tree health, forest structure and the occurrence of invasives in Parks and naturally forested areas throughout the County.

Begin to inventory trees in parks, natural areas and other public facilities.

Plant Parks and other County facilities at the optimal level. Passive open space will be forested wherever appropriate.

Continue to work with Schools to plant and maintain trees on their grounds

Our recommendations:

1. The county should replace all dead/dying trees in parks promptly

2. The county should be adding to tree cover in parks each year, except where there are playing fields, such as in Virginia Highlands Park or Eads Park.

3. The County should keep record of numbers of new trees planted on public property in each neighborhood (streets, parks, medians, others) and make those records available to the NC program and participating civic associations

TREES ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

Recommendations from the UFMP:

Explore reviewing the Tree Replacement Guidelines to ensure that the tree replacement formula better reflects an equitable calculation for the value of trees lost.

Ensure early review of development plans during the design process to promote tree preservation as opposed to tree replacement, when feasible.

Establish a tree fund (funds from special exception projects that can not plant required replacements on-site) that will be dedicated to planting on public and private properties.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The county should encourage businesses to plant trees on their property.

2. Trees removed for development must be replaced according to an appropriate replacement formula and must be at or near the place they were removed.

Every tree removed from Aurora Highlands should be replaced within Aurora Highlands.

TREES ON RESIDENTIAL PRIVATE PROPERTY

Recommendations from the Urban Forest Master Plan

Establish a tree fund that is dedicated to planting trees on private property and educating citizens about the value and stewardship of trees. The tree fund could be established through contributions for special exception projects that cannot meet planting requirements on-site.

Establish a program working with Civic Associations, in cooperation with volunteers, to plant trees on private property.

Explore options for establishing a funded County program to plant trees on private properties that abut street ROW.

Explore the options to offer incentives to preserve canopy and encourage planting on private property.

Explore reviewing the tree replacement guidelines to ensure that the tree replacement formula better reflects an equitable calculation for the value of trees lost.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The County should establish programs to encourage homeowners in Aurora Highlands to plant trees on their property. Existing programs should be better publicized, better funded and supported with a high level of enthusiasm and support.

2. Homeowners should be given trees for free as long as they agree to plant and care for the trees. Existing programs such as Neighborhood Day Tree Giveaway should be better publicized, better funded and supported with a high level of enthusiasm and County personnel.

3. The county should pursue all possible avenues for adding street trees to the neighborhood. However, if there are no opportunities for tree planting in the public right of way, then the county should establish a funded County program to plant trees on private properties that abut street Right-of-way.

4. All Neighborhood Conservation projects should include, as a matter of routine, additional street trees on private properties that abut street right-of-way if they cannot be planted on the county right-of-way.

5. We support a County program to help homeowners maintain, rather than remove, large mature trees. This should be on an optional/strongly encouraged, but not mandatory basis. The County should develop a program to provide arborist services to homeowners.

6. Programs to encourage tree planting must reach out not only to owner-occupied homes but also to rental properties.

7. The County should keep record of numbers of new trees planted on private property in each neighborhood (streets, parks, medians, others) and make those records available to the NC program and participating civic associations

Some Other Possible recommendations- To be dropped if not further incorporated

- 1, Surface parking lots are usually devoid of trees- ugly, heat island
The County should develop an ordinance that requires a certain amount of tree cover for surface parking lots, including both public and private parking lots.
2. Partner with businesses near Aurora highlands to plant more trees. This includes big businesses like Hotels, Smith Companies who have extensive landscaping already.
3. The County should foster good tree practices:
 - Replacement of invasives with appropriate trees
 - Discourage volcano mulching and advise homeowners and businesses against it
 - Insist that Virginia Power notify residents in advance when they are coming to trim trees
 - Explore street surfaces that enable trees to be planted in less than ideal conditions