

Subject: DPR- On-going Tree Resources

**FY 2018 Proposed Budget
Budget Work Session Follow-up**

4/10/2017

The following information is provided in response to a request made by Mr. Jay Fisette at the work session on 3/28/2017, regarding whether DPR has the appropriate resources to ensure that newly planted trees survive and thrive?

Tree Planting & Watering: The Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) is appropriately funded for tree planting and watering. In FY 2017, the County Board approved annual funding of \$205,000 from the Stormwater Fund to support the planting of up to 820 trees annually. A warranty is provided with each planted tree by contract, which ensures that trees are regularly watered by the contractor for the first two years of life – the most critical time for determining the long-term health and well-being of a tree. Tree watering beyond the first two years is supported by the Department’s annual budget, which is also sufficient.

Tree Pruning & Maintenance: Once trees are established after those first two critical years, attention is focused on regular pruning and maintenance to ensure their long-term health. The current inventory of DPR-managed street trees totals approximately 19,500. According to the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), the ideal pruning cycle for these trees is once every five years. However, DPR’s annual tree maintenance budget of \$120,000 only supports a 17-year pruning cycle (or approximately 1,100 trees pruned annually). In order to move to a five-year cycle, DPR would need to prune an additional 2,800 trees each year, which would require an additional \$305,000 in ongoing funding. Given the ISA’s 5-year pruning cycle recommendation may be a stretch goal, any measurable progress towards this 5-year goal will only benefit Arlington’s tree population.

Critical Measures	FY 2013 Actual	FY 2014 Actual	FY 2015 Actual	FY 2016 Actual	FY 2017 Estimate	FY 2018 Estimate
Number/Percent of Street Trees Pruned Annually	1,300/ 7%	1,100/ 6%	765/ 4%	1,100/ 6%	1,100/ 6%	1,100/ 6%

Metrics: DPR is in the process of developing metrics on the survival rate of trees and is currently working to increase the number of volunteers willing to check on the health of recently planted trees. DPR is also in the process of implementing a new work order management system which, once in place, should allow the Department to more efficiently track and monitor tree survival rates.

Arlington Public Schools and Tree Maintenance: As DPR mentioned in the work session, trees on Arlington Public Schools (APS) property are maintained by APS staff. DPR recognizes the value in having thriving trees throughout the County regardless of ownership responsibility, and works closely with APS staff to share information about tree

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care management. Several APS staff have gone through the Tree Stewards training, which has significantly improved their understanding of the complexities of tree management. As an example, lessons learned from Ashlawn and McKinley are already being applied to newer projects. In addition, Discovery Elementary School is a good example of an APS project where trees are surviving and thriving at a healthy rate. DPR Urban Forestry staff are currently working closely with APS construction managers and designers on the Stratford, Wilson, and Thomas Jefferson school projects to ensure schools environments have a thriving canopy.