

URBAN FORESTRY AND STREET TREES UPDATE

Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

July 5, 2022



LEXINGTON



Topics

- **Urban Forestry Organizational Chart**
- **Background on Street Trees in Lexington**
- **Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program**
- **Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program**
- **Path Forward / Future Initiatives**
- **Questions**



Urban Forestry Organizational Chart

Environmental Services

URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM

Heather Wilson

NRP PROGRAM

Demetria Mehlhorn

Streets and Roads

PUBLIC TREES

CITY ARBORIST

Nathan Skinner

ARBORISTS

Zachary Prewitt
Scott Tyree

ARBORIST TECHNICIAN

Conner Steele

TREE NURSERY MANAGER

Kent Slusher

FORESTRY & HORTICULTURE CREWS

PRIVATE TREES COMPLIANCE

URBAN FORESTER

Tim Queary

ARBORIST TECHNICIAN

Rob Ballard

PRIVATE TREES ENFORCEMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT SPECIALIST

Ben Cornett

EMERGENCIES & RURAL ROADS

OPS SUPERVISOR

Kevin Dennis

TREE CREW (PS) SUPERVISOR

Greg Taulbee

APPEALS BOARDS

TREE BOARD: Decisions of Urban Forester

INFRASTRUCTURE HEARING BOARD: Enforcement Actions



Background on Street Trees in Lexington

- **Publicly-Maintained Street Trees (~10%)**
- **Privately-Maintained Street Trees (~90%)**
 - Property owners are responsible
 - City programs provide assistance



Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program

- Provides 50/50 cost share for hazardous street tree removal and replacement
- Low income assistance available at 100%
- Requires removal and replacement with acceptable tree in a suitable location (when appropriate)
- Property owner obtains competing quotes from City's pre-qualified certified arborist vendors, gets approval from Urban Forester, then has work performed
- Follow-up inspection by Arborist Technician prior to reimbursement
- Owner-occupied residential properties only
- Current program guidelines limit participation to homeowners in the Urban Service Area



Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program

- FY 2020: Original budget was \$150,000;
Program suspended due to pandemic in March 2020
- FY 2021: Original budget not funded;
\$50,000 allocated - \$32,729 paid out
(with 5 applications for \$8,300 deferred to FY22)
- FY 2022: \$50,000 budgeted - \$51,388 paid out as of mid-June

LFUCG-Assisted Hazardous Tree Removals by Council District

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
FY15	2	8	4	1	40	22	1	0	21	20	15	39	173
FY16	0	10	4	8	19	50	15	5	4	9	13	20	157
FY17	2	7	5	10	21	40	18	0	34	7	16	24	184
FY18	2	1	4	5	33	45	7	3	20	13	7	23	163
FY19	3	6	16	0	39	29	12	4	9	16	7	36	177
FY20	0	3	14	2	19	26	8	10	15	40	4	24	165
FY21	0	5	1	3	2	5	1	2	2	12	2	11	46
FY22	0	2	5	4	13	2	3	3	4	4	0	2	42
TOTAL:	9	42	53	33	186	219	65	27	109	121	64	179	1107



Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program

- Last 8 years – 1,107 trees removed with 1,038 replaced

LFUCG's 50% Share of Expenses and Tree Removal Statistics FY15 – FY22

	# of Trees Removed	LFUCG \$ Expended	LFUCG \$/Tree Removed
FY15	173	\$61,439	\$355
FY16	157	\$73,906	\$471
FY17	184	\$101,407	\$551
FY18	163	\$96,128	\$590
FY19	177	\$129,192	\$730
FY20	165	\$96,873	\$587
FY21	46	\$32,729	\$712
FY22	42	\$51,388	\$1,224
TOTAL:	1107	\$643,062	



Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program

A Compliance Success Story

- Reductions in:
 - ✓ LexCalls related to dead and dying trees
 - ✓ Time from identification of hazard to removal of hazard
 - ✓ Staff time and costs related to enforcement and abatement
- Many positive comments from citizens
- Low Income Assistance is essential to providing safe environments

Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program





Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

- Certified Arborists on contract perform the work
- Work occurs mostly in the winter / early spring
- 29,217 street trees pruned for clearance from FY16 – FY22
- \$367,328 spent in FY16 – FY22
- Average cost per tree is increasing: \$16.52/tree (FY17-FY21)
\$20.45/tree (FY22)

FY16 – FY22 Statistics by Council District

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
FY16							94						94
FY17	1				207	104	151						463
FY18	318	2832		367	96	1133	275	284	245	220	347		6117
FY19		1138				1468	3061		787	116	418		6988
FY20							1732	23	1418	2055			5228
FY21		3935				2418							6353
FY22	119			2600		592						663	3974
TOTAL:	438	7905	0	2967	303	5715	5313	307	2450	2391	765	663	29,217

LFUCG Environmental Services - 2022 Street Tree Pruning



0 0.125 0.25 Miles

Pinnacle/Waterford
Total Street Trees: 2708



Date: 2/7/2022

FY22 Subdivisions:

- Equestrian View (CD1)
- Homeplace (CD12)
- New Market (CD12)
- Westwind (CD6)
- Pinnacle (CD4)
- Waterford (CD4)



Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

Another Compliance Success Story

- Reductions in:
 - ✓ Ice and wind storm damage
 - ✓ Hanging and falling limbs
 - ✓ Storm damage response and overtime expenditures in neighborhoods where pruning has occurred
 - ✓ LexCalls related to trees blocking roads and sidewalks
 - ✓ Incidents related to auto-pruning
 - ✓ Damages to waste trucks, emergency vehicles, snow plows, school and Lextran busses, & postal and package delivery trucks
 - ✓ Staff time and costs related to street tree compliance assistance
- Many positive comments from citizens – a few complaints related to insufficient notifications

Path Forward / Future Initiatives

- Continue Street Tree Clearance Pruning each winter (\$85K in FY23 Budget).
- Continue Hazardous Street Tree Cost Share Program (\$50K in FY23 Budget).*
- Urban Tree Canopy Change Analysis and Planting Plan to be finalized and presented to Council this fall.
- \$1.5M allocated to Lexington's Tree Canopy. Ad Hoc Committee formed to provide guidance to DES.
 - Committee approved \$200K to augment the Cost Share Program as follows:
 - *\$150K supplement to clear backlog / waiting list
 - \$50K to supplement the \$50K in the FY23 Budget under revised program guidelines
- Updates to Chapter 17B of the Code of Ordinances.
- Continue a comprehensive annual Council update on the Urban Forestry Program.

Questions?



LEXINGTON