



URBAN FORESTRY AND STREET TREES UPDATE

Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

Heather Wilson

June 10, 2025





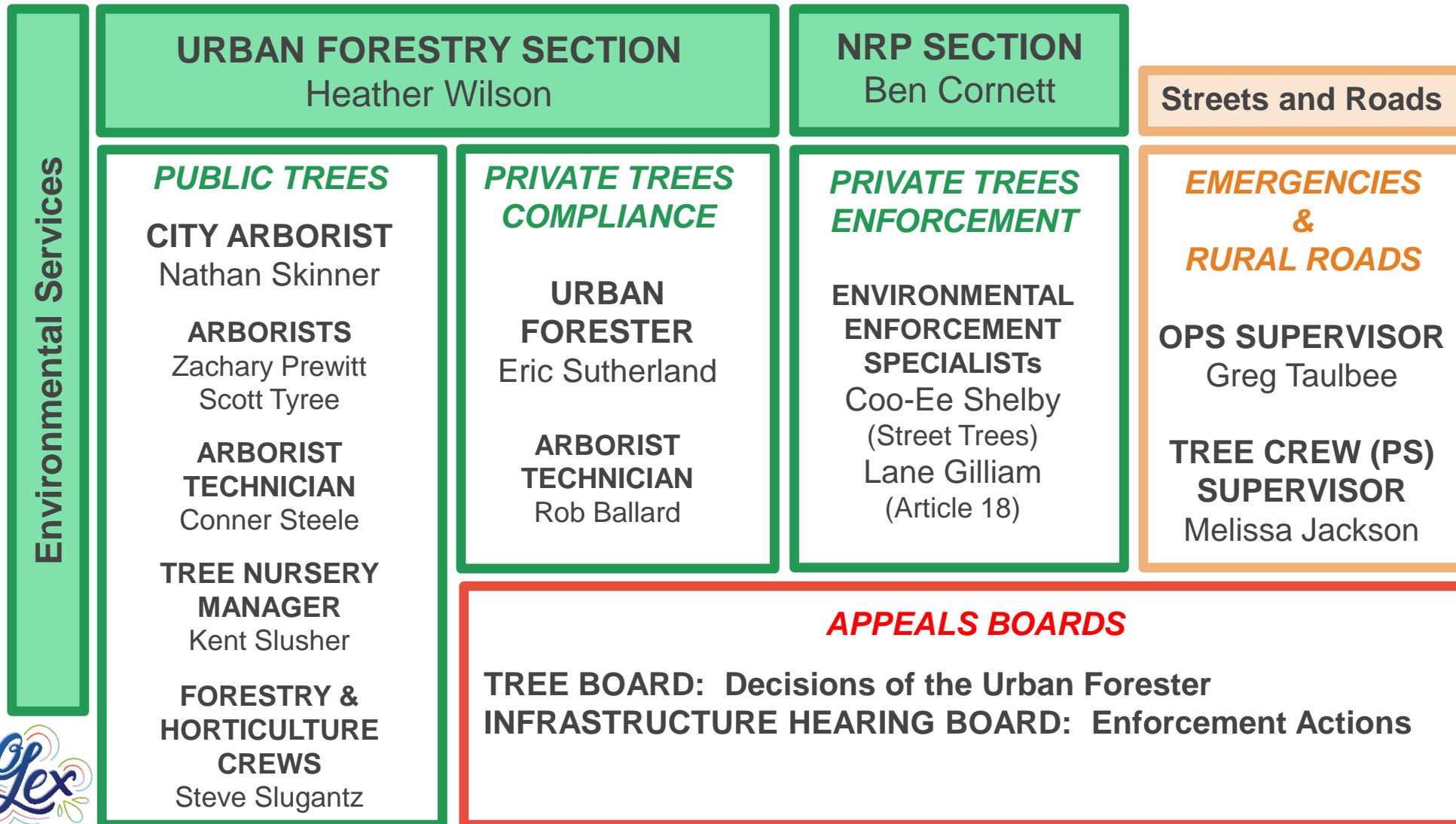
Topics

- **Urban Forestry Organizational Chart**
- **Background on Street Trees in Lexington**
- **Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program**
- **Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program**
- **What Urban Forestry Does/ Future Goals**
- **Questions**





Urban Forestry Organizational Chart – Multiple Divisions





Background on Street Trees in Lexington

- **LFUCG-Maintained Street Trees (~10%)**
- **Privately-Maintained Street Trees (~90%)**
 - Adjacent property owners are responsible
 - City programs provide assistance
 - Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program
 - Courtesy Street Tree Pruning Program
- **Knowing the numbers matters**
 - A healthy urban tree canopy = money saved
 - Human health
 - Utility bills
 - Proactive tree management
 - Less emergency clean up
 - Reduced impact to public right of ways
 - How much does it cost to maintain our urban forest?





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

- Participation requirements:
 - Removal and replacement with acceptable tree species
 - Owner-occupied residential properties in the USA or Urban Areas
- Provides 50% cost-share for hazardous street tree removal and replacement
- Provides 100% grants for qualified property owners
- Process:
 - Property owner obtains quotes from two of the City's pre-qualified certified arborist vendors and completes / submits application form
 - Urban Forester confirms ownership, conducts an initial inspection, and provides applicant with an approval letter and a Street Tree Removal and Planting Permit
 - Selected vendor completes tree removal and replacement
 - Property owner submits copy of paid invoice to Urban Forester
 - Urban Forestry conducts follow-up inspection and issues reimbursement





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

- FY 2020: Original budget was \$150,000
Program suspended due to pandemic in March 2020
- FY 2021: Original budget request 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
- Spring 2022: Tree Canopy Ad Hoc Committee allocated \$150K
to clear backlog with an additional \$50K allocation following update to
program guidelines
- FY 2023: \$50,000 budgeted - \$202,122 paid out in FY23
- FY 2024: \$150,800 budgeted - \$150,800 paid out in FY 24
- FY 2025: \$150,000 budgeted - \$149,291.99 paid out to-date





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

FY25 Program Participants 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
FY23	0	4	8	6	37	23	8	4	73	18	9	15	205
FY24	0	2	4	3	11	13	2	1	15	18	4	29	102
FY25	3	3	7	7	22	3	3	5	17	7	1	18	96
TOTAL:	12	51	72	49	256	258	78	37	214	164	78	241	1510

FY25 Program Participants by Council District

FY25	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
# participants	2	3	5	4	19	3	2	4	12	5	1	12	
# 100% grants	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	11





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

LFUCG's 50% Share of Expenses FY2015 – FY2025



	# Trees Removed & Replaced	LFUCG \$ Expended	LFUCG \$/Tree Removed & Replaced
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	41	\$45,783	\$1,117
FY23	202	\$195,547	\$968
FY24	102	\$112,500	\$1,103
FY25	96	\$149,292	\$1,555
TOTAL:	1410	\$1,094,796	\$776

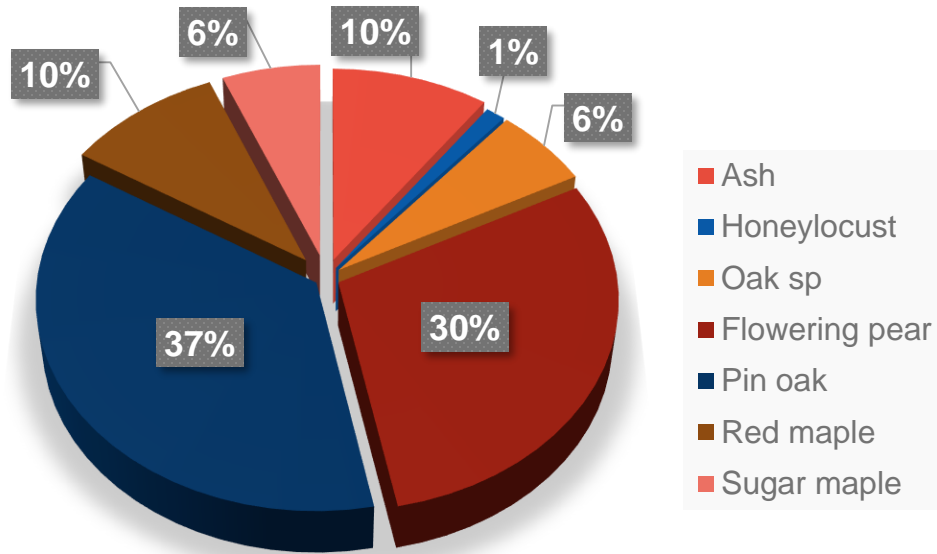




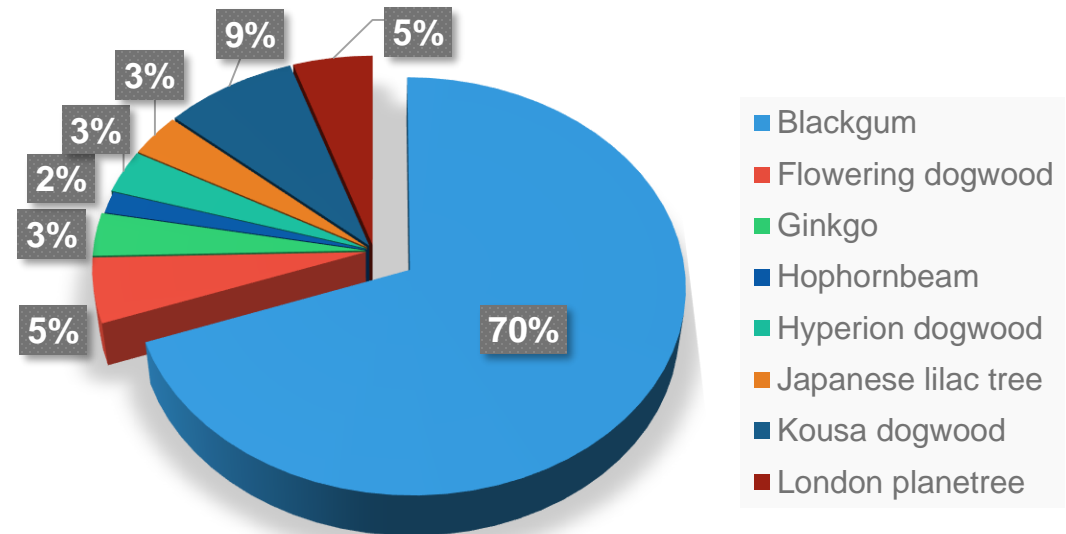
Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

FY25 Program Trees

REMOVED: BY SPECIES



PLANTED: BY SPECIES





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program- *Benefits & Goals*

- 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
- Continue to increase participation in CD's: 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 11
- Continue to encourage vendors to promote and offer a variety of trees
- Increase communication with Landscapers, Tree Nurseries, and Other Tree Care & Lawn Care Services about this program





Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

- Certified Arborists on Arboricultural Services Contract perform the work
- Work occurs mostly in the winter / early spring
- 38,249 street trees pruned for clearance from FY16 – FY25
- \$535,003 spent in FY16 – FY25
- Average cost per tree:
 - \$13.66/tree (FY16-FY24)
 - \$19.19/tree (FY25)
 - \$13.99/tree (FY16-FY25)

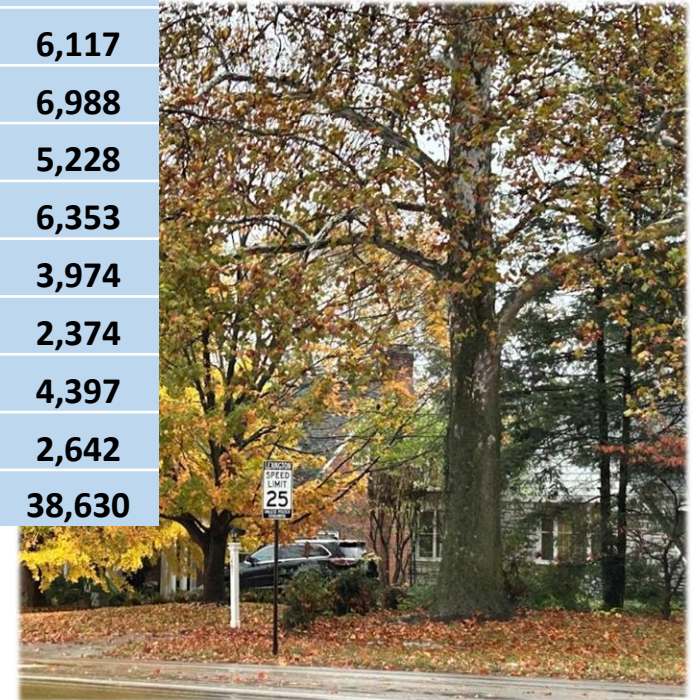




Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

FY16 – FY25 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		6,117
FY19		1138				1468	3061		787	116	418		6,988
FY20							1732	23	1418	2055			5,228
FY21		3935				2418							6,353
FY22	119			2600		592						663	3,974
FY23		134		950			156	387				747	2,374
FY24	82				624			1079	2222	158	24	208	4,397
FY25	180		5	167	333			211	1736		10		2,642
TOTAL:	700	8,039	0	4,084	1,260	5,715	5,469	1,984	6,408	2,549	799	1,618	38,630





Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

FY25 Subdivisions:

- CD1 – E 7th St (Maple to Ohio)
- CD3 – Pine St
- CD4 – Southpointe Dr
- CD5 – Mt. Tabor Heights, Groves Point
- CD8 – Carriage Ln Estates
- CD9 – Palomar Hills, The Woods, The Green, Wyndham Hills, Plantation,
- CD11 – Pine St





Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program – *the why?*

- Reductions in:
 - ✓ Storm damaged trees
 - ✓ 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 vehicular-pruning
 - ✓ Damages to waste trucks, emergency vehicles, snow plows, school and Lextran buses, & postal and package delivery trucks
 - ✓ Staff time and costs related to street tree compliance assistance
- Many positive comments from citizens





Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program - *opportunities for improvement*

- Continue to strive for “proactive” pruning program vs. being “reactive” or “complaint-based”
- Expanded clearance pruning to include crown cleaning
 - Immediate benefits:
 - lessens risk of damage to or by the tree by removing dead, damaged, and diseased limbs
 - improves air flow through the tree’s canopy
 - reduces excessive weight on tree’s limbs
 - Long-term benefits:
 - enhances stability of the tree’s canopy
 - improves tree’s overall canopy health by removing dead, damaged, diseased, and crossing branches
 - reduces tree’s susceptibility to weather-related damage





What Your Urban Forestry Program Does

- Prune Trees
 - Medians, Parks, LFUCG Facilities, WQ Projects, Sanitary Sewer Projects, Capital Projects, County Roads, Greenways, WQ Lots, Rights of Ways
- Remove and Replant trees
 - LFUCG managed spaces, facilities, greenways, water quality lots, county roads
- Connect with the Community
 - Reforest the Bluegrass, Tree Week, Reforest @ Home, Neighborhood Planting Projects
- Plant Health Care & Protection
- New Development Oversight
- LFUCG Tree Nursery
- Beautification Projects & Horticultural Services
- Downtown Streetscape Trees
 - Town Branch Commons, Town Branch Trail
- Legacy Trail, Brighton Trail
- Emergency clean up/assistance



Conner Steele





Path Forward / Future Initiatives

- Continue Street Tree Clearance Pruning each winter (\$85K - FY25 Budget)
- Continue Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program (\$150K - FY25 Budget)
- Tree Inventory – continue to improve database
 - Software Purchased (FY 25)
- Urban & Community Forest Master Plan
 - In Need



Questions?



LEXINGTON

