

URBAN FORESTRY AND STREET TREES UPDATE

Environmental Quality & Public Works Committee

Jennifer Carey

July 11, 2023



LEXINGTON



Topics

- **Urban Forestry Organizational Chart**
- **Background on Street Trees in Lexington**
- **Hazard 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 the Urban Forester

INFRASTRUCTURE HEARING BOARD: Enforcement Actions



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



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



Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

LFUCG-Assisted Hazardous Tree Removals/Replacements 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
TOTAL:	9	46	61	39	223	242	73	31	182	139	73	194	1312

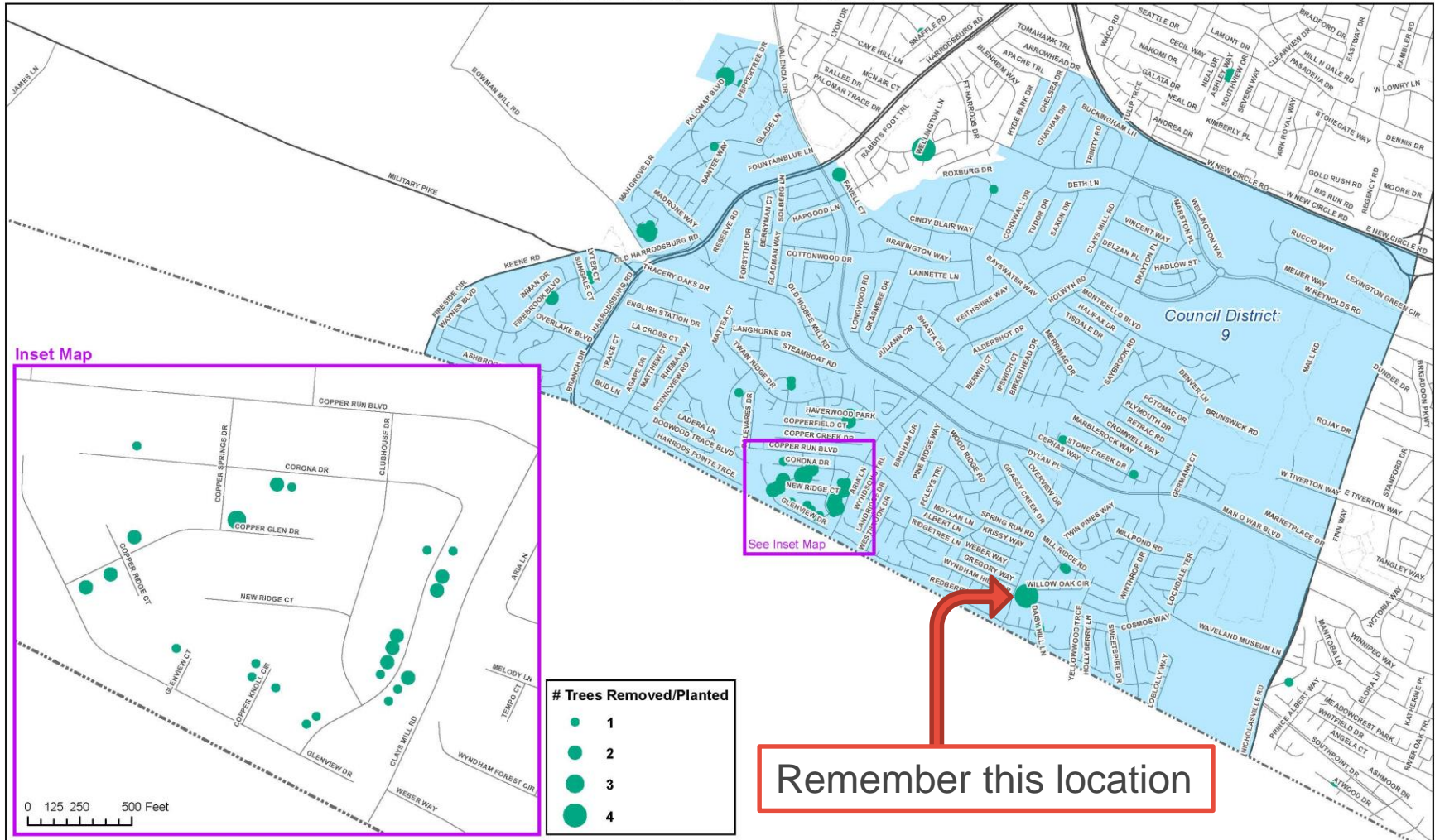
FY23 Program Participants by Council District

FY23	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
# participants	0	4	7	5	33	16	5	3	49	11	6	10	149
# 100% grants	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3



Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program - FY23





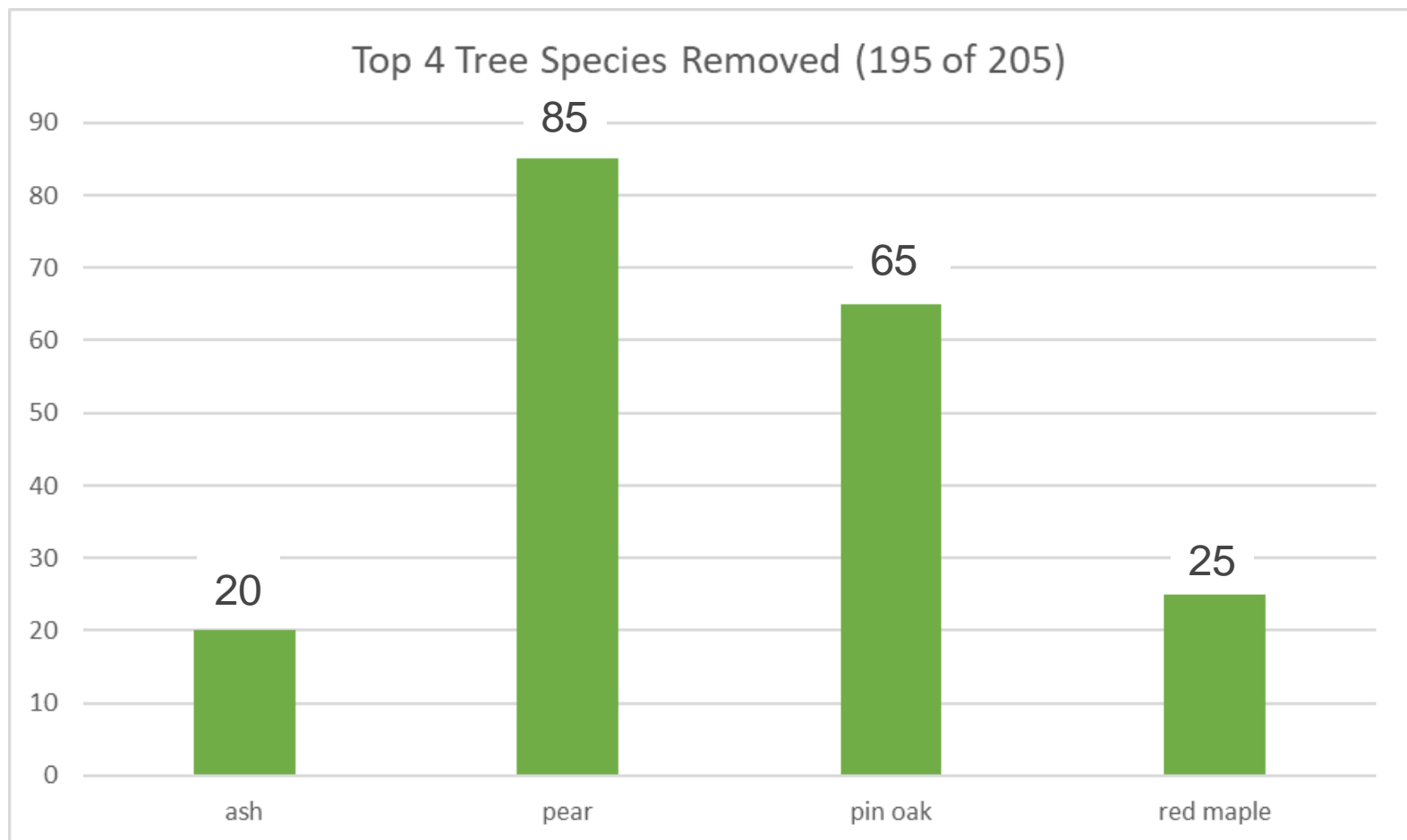
Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

LFUCG's 50% Share of Expenses FY15 – FY23

	# of 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
TOTAL:	1308	\$833,005	

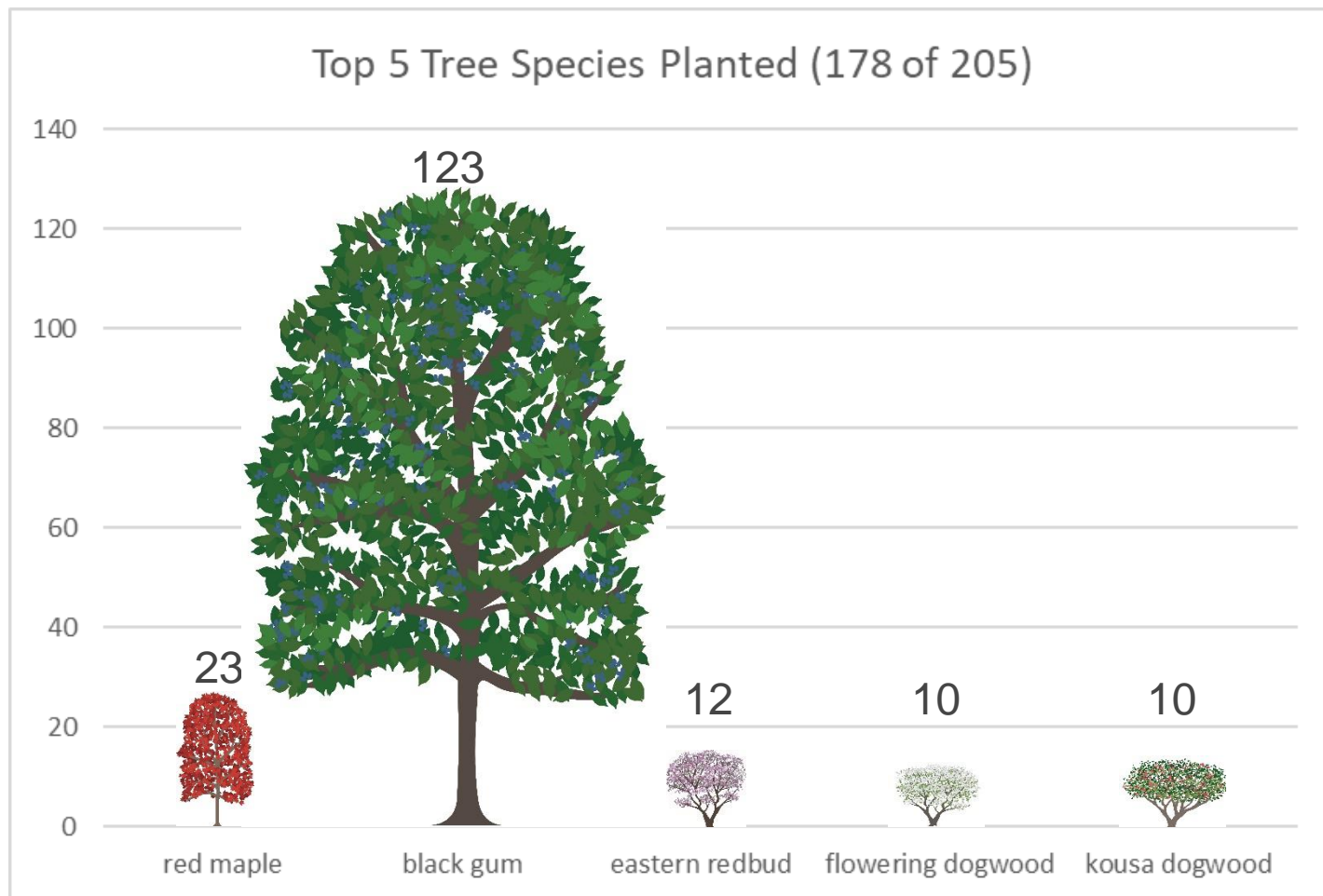
Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

FY23 Tree Species Removed



Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

FY23 Tree Species Replanted





Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

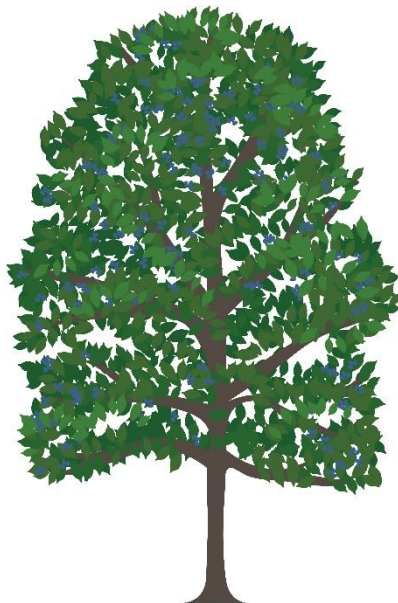
Importance of Tree Species Diversity

Best Example from FY23:

Remember the location highlighted on the map of CD 9?

This homeowner removed 4 pin oaks, and replanted with 4 different tree species:

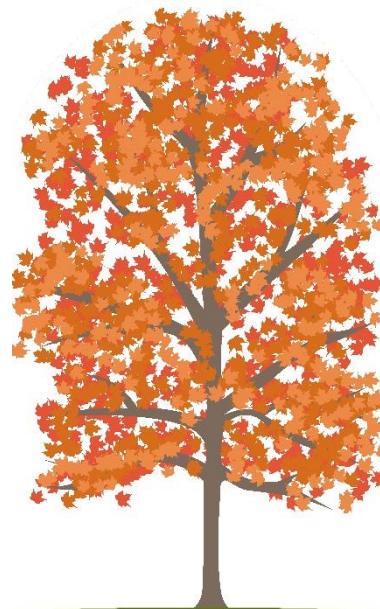
Black gum



Sugar maple



Yellow-poplar



Yellowwood





Hazard 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



Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program

Opportunities for Improvement

- Increase participation in CDs 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 11
- Encourage vendors to promote and offer a variety of trees

Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program



7 feet
Minimum 7 feet of clearance from sidewalk surface.

12 feet
Minimum 12 feet of clearance from street surface.

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Urban Forestry

STREET TREE PRUNING COMING SOON

Information about how to properly prune can be found at LexingtonKY.gov/TreeCare.



Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program

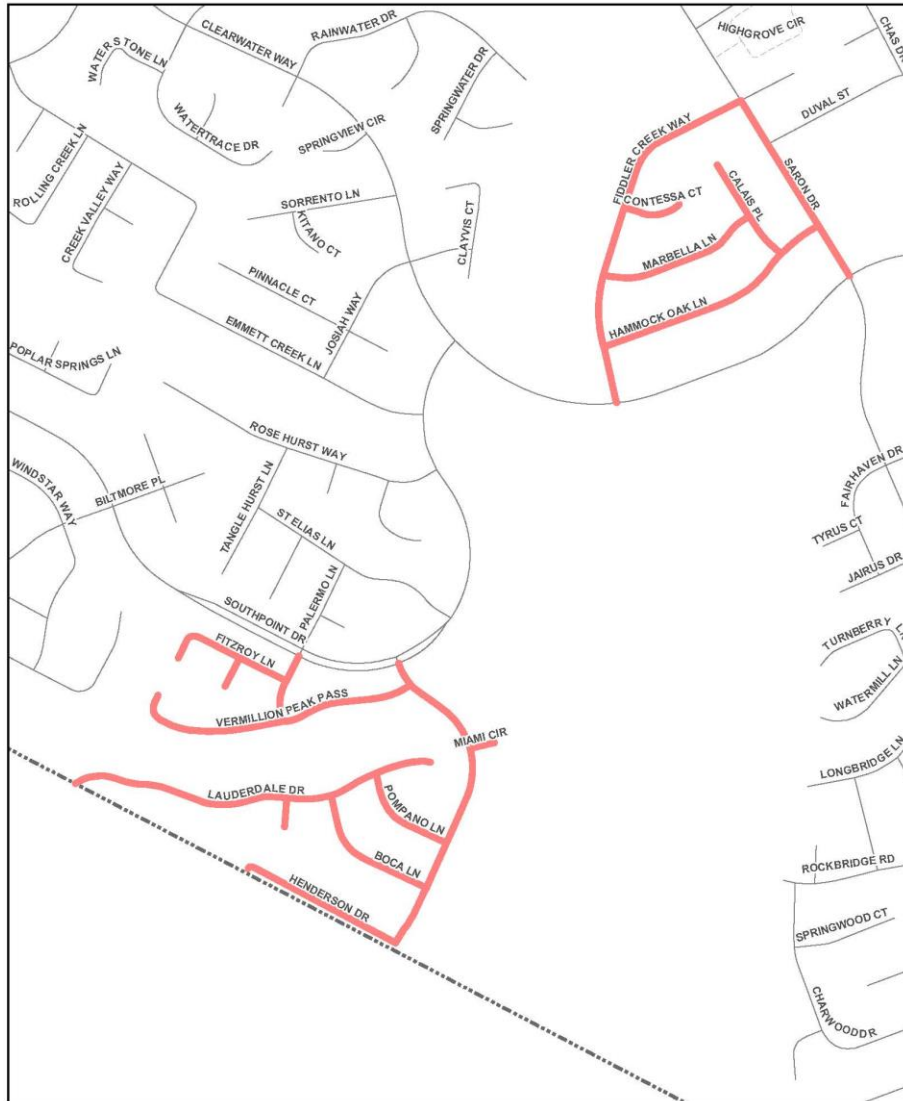
- Certified Arborists on Arboricultural Services Contract perform the work
- Work occurs mostly in the winter / early spring
- 31,591 street trees pruned for clearance from FY16 – FY23
- \$410,914 spent in FY16 – FY23
- Average cost per tree:

	\$12.57/tree (FY16-FY22)
\$18.36/tree (FY23)	\$13.01/tree (FY16-FY23)

FY16 – FY23 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
TOTAL:	438	8,039	0	3,917	303	5,715	5,469	694	2,450	2,391	765	1,410	31,591

LFUCG Environmental Services - 2023 Street Tree Pruning



Veterans Park
Total Street Trees: 618

N
Date: 2/7/2022

FY23 Subdivisions:

- Pinnacle (CD4 & CD12)
- Cumberland Hill (CD12)
- Myers Property (CD2)
- Bradford Colony & Glasford (CD4)
- Liberty Corners (CD7)
- Squire Oak & Hunting Hills (CD8)

FY23 Pruning by UF Staff:

- Clays Mill Rd (34)
- Pebble Creek Median (15)
- Tates Creek Medians (44)
- Old Mt. Tabor ROW & Tates Creek ROW (82)



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 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

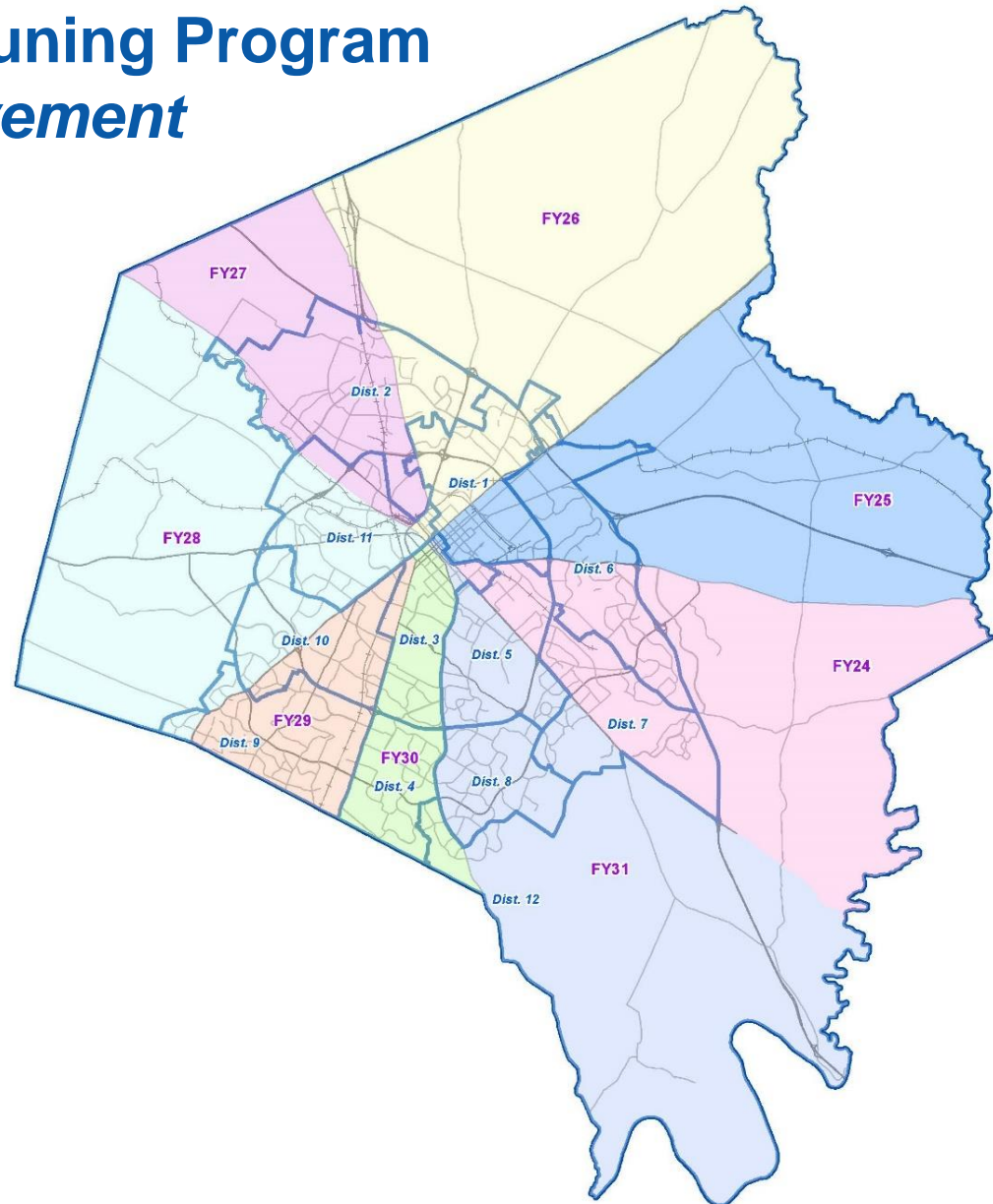
Opportunities for Improvement

- Change in program funding from 1115 to 1101 in FY24
- Change from “reactive” or “complaint-based” to “proactive” by creating a multi-year schedule
- Expand 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



Street Tree Clearance Pruning Program *Opportunities for Improvement*

Proposed 8-Year
Pruning Schedule to
Begin Fall 2023





Path Forward / Future Initiatives

- Continue Street Tree Clearance Pruning each winter (\$85K in FY24 Budget)
- Continue Hazard Street Tree (Cost-Share) Program (\$150K in FY24 Budget)
- Tree Canopy Ad Hoc Committee (\$1.5M)
 - \$200K to augment the Cost-Share Program
 - \$144K to develop Communications and Marketing Plans
 - \$55K to support near-term projects by Trees Lexington! and Geomancer Permaculture

Questions?



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