

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MAY 19, 2004

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN URBAN FORESTRY STEERING COMMITTEE AS A CITY MANAGER COMMITTEE, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE URBAN FORESTRY PLAN

ISSUE: Approval of the establishment of an Urban Forestry Steering Committee as a City Manager Committee, and the development of a comprehensive Urban Forestry Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Approve the establishment of an Urban Forestry Steering Committee as a City Manager Committee; and,
- (2) Support the development of a comprehensive Urban Forestry Plan for the City.

BACKGROUND: At the request of Councilmen Krupicka and Macdonald, a meeting was held with staff and interested citizens on January 13, 2004, to discuss City policies and procedures for the management and preservation of trees on public and private property. The recommendation to establish an Urban Forest Steering Committee and to develop an Urban Forestry Plan to guide our tree preservation and expansion efforts in the years ahead, is a result of this meeting, and subsequent discussions with Council Members and staff.

DISCUSSION: The charge of the Steering Committee is to prepare a comprehensive Urban Forestry Plan for the City, and in doing so, to characterize and quantify the current state of Alexandria's urban forest and to identify strategies to improve its health, quality, density and diversity.

The Steering Committee's work will focus on three primary areas of interest that have been identified through our meetings and input from City staff, and are derived from the goals and strategic recommendations set forth in the *Alexandria Open Space Plan* (Attachment 1) and *The City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Strategic Master Plan* (Attachment 2).

The work of the Committee in those areas will be to:

1. Review City policies, operations, programs and services that address the planting, maintenance, protection and preservation, and the removal, of publicly-owned trees located along City streets, in parks and on other public property, and recommend changes;
2. Review City ordinances, regulations, procedures and operations that address the planting, maintenance, protection and preservation, and the removal, of trees located on private property, and recommend changes; and
3. Identify programs that will enhance the public's awareness of trees and their benefits to the community, will educate the public regarding the proper maintenance and protection of trees, and will encourage members of the public to preserve and enhance the health of trees on their property and to plant new ones.

The Urban Forestry Plan, which the Steering Committee will propose to the City Manager, will include proposed new or revised City (1) policies, (2) ordinances and regulations (that have undergone legal review), (3) procedures, and (4) operations, programs and services regarding the management, maintenance, protection, preservation and planting of trees on public and private property. Recommendations to expand existing programs and undertake new initiatives will include performance measures and cost estimates required for implementation.

The Urban Forestry Steering Committee will consist of twelve members: (a) one representative designated by each of the following commissions: the Alexandria Beautification Commission, the Environmental Policy Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Planning Commission; (b) four citizens who have significant knowledge and experience in the fields of arboriculture, horticulture, urban forestry or landscape architecture, or a demonstrated intense interest in the City's trees; (c) one representative from the Tree Stewards of Arlington and Alexandria; and (d) three citizens at large. The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities will provide staff for the Steering Committee, and will be assisted by staff from the Departments of Planning and Zoning, and Transportation and Environmental Services. The Steering Committee also will work collaboratively with the Open Space Committee toward the achievement of the goals set forth in the *Alexandria Open Space Plan*.

If this recommendation is approved by Council, we will form the Urban Forestry Steering Committee in late June so it can begin its work during the summer.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Steering Committee will determine, in the preliminary stages of its work, the need to retain consulting services to assist it in carrying out its charge. Any scopes of work and budgets for consulting services will be prepared by staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1. Goal 12. ALEXANDRIA OPEN SPACE PLAN

Attachment 2. Strategy Recommendation Policy 1.5. The City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities Strategic Master Plan

STAFF:

Kirk Kincannon, Director, Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Rich Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services

Eileen Fogarty, Director, Planning and Zoning

John Noelle, City Arborist

CHAPTER 5 THE PLAN

GOAL 12. EXPAND CITYWIDE STREET TREE PROGRAM AND PROTECT EXISTING TREES AND WOODLAND AREAS

Our City's beauty is created, in part, through its street trees, wooded properties and environmental corridors. The City has an active program to continue planting street trees and protect vegetation in its parks. The City should maximize opportunities to enhance its tree coverage and protect its natural woodland resources.

Recommendations for Goal 12

- Protect significant tree-lined arterials, parkways, thoroughfares, and boulevards, including:
 - Holmes Run Parkway
 - Taylor Run Parkway
 - Timber Branch Parkway
 - North Beauregard Street
 - Commonwealth Avenue
 - Ft. Williams Parkway
- Identify and address potential tree cover protection areas, including:
 - Beverly Hills
 - Episcopal Seminary / High School site

Legend

- Streetscape Improvements/Street Tree Program
- Significant Tree Cover
- Parks

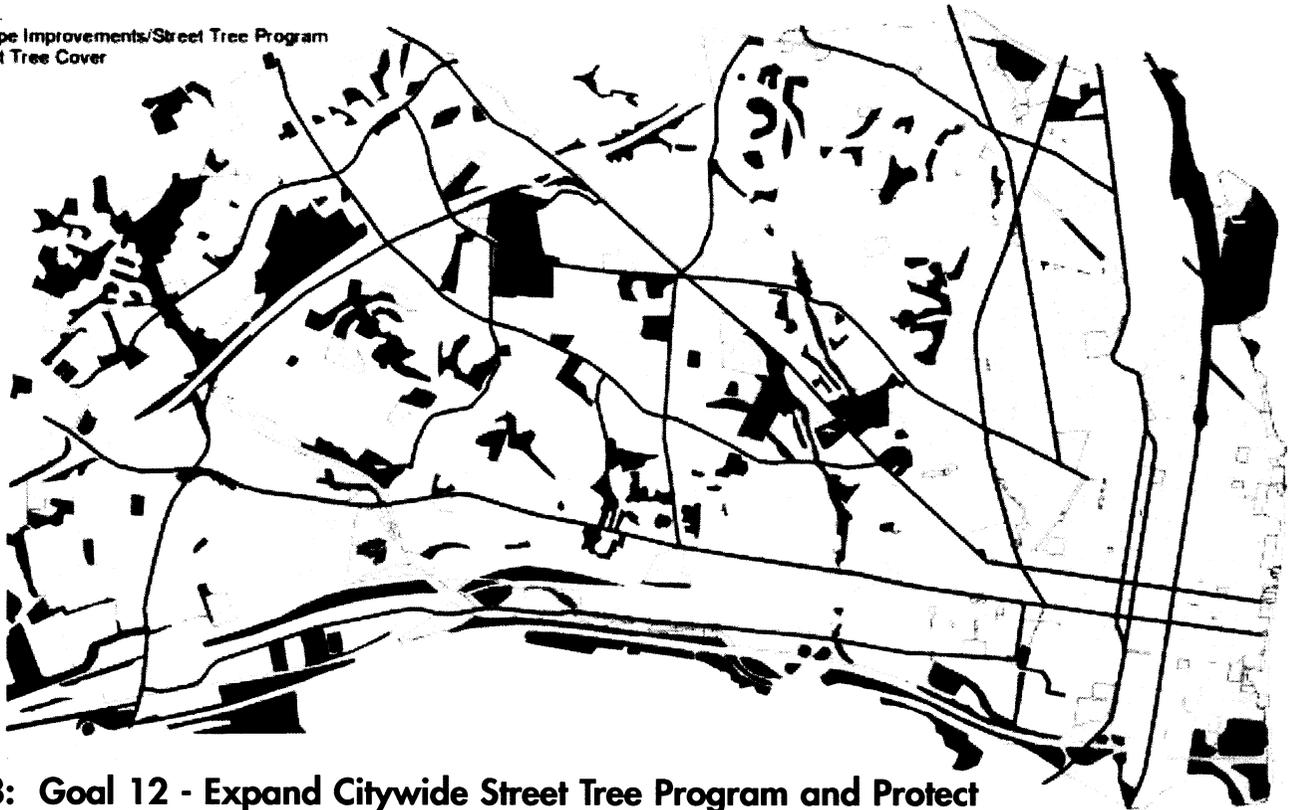


Figure 28: Goal 12 - Expand Citywide Street Tree Program and Protect Existing Trees and Woodland Areas



Woodland area

- Inova Hospital
- St. Agnes / St. Steven's School sites
- Rosemont
- Del Ray
- Park Fairfax
- Old Town
- Neighborhoods bordered by:
 - Seminary Road, I-395 and Fairfax County
 - I-395, King Street, Quaker Land and Seminary Road
 - Braddock Road, Russell Road, Quaker Lane and Janney's Lane
 - Quaker Lane, West Glebe Road, Cameron Mills Road and Crestwood Drive
- Address stream valleys protection areas including:
 - Four Mile Run, Holmes Run, Cameron Run, Taylor Run, Old Cameron Run, Timber Branch, Backlick Run, Strawberry Run, Hooffs Run, Great Hunting Creek, and Lucky Run
- [See recommendations for specific streetscape programs below.]

Implementation Strategies for Goal 12

- Establish an aggressive campaign to involve community organizations in protecting existing trees and planting new trees within each neighborhood. Provide incentives for the planting and maintenance of trees on private property.
- Strengthen existing tree protection regulations. Establish a City Tree Plan and identify areas for increased forestation.
- Support and strengthen the newly established Arlington and Alexandria Tree Steward Program to assist in tree maintenance, planting, and public education.
- Request the Department of Planning and Zoning to research the feasibility of establishing a Tree Cover Overlay District. This designation would provide an additional means of protection for trees in areas of the City where these are essential to their quality and character. Distinguish between areas where tree crown cover is provided on private versus public lands.
- Amend City's landscape and streetscape guidelines to improve tree planting areas (e.g., continuous trenches, enlarged planting areas, greater soil volumes, irrigation and drainage) and increase tree coverage requirements for new developments where possible.
- Strengthen the City's ability to maintain its existing tree inventory (e.g., institute a watering program for new trees, etc.).

- Evaluate existing City tree crown cover based on current American Forests recommended standards for residential and commercial areas.
- Create specific agreements with VDOT for maintenance of wooded areas along highways through the City.

The City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities

Implementation & Vision Matrix

		the City. Strategically seek and develop additional funding sources that will allow the City to realize the recommended strategies for creating open space opportunities and maintain existing open space.			
Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date
1.5	Protect, restore and enhance the urban forest and beautification of the city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an urban forestry plan for the city. • Seek council approval for funding the plan. • Implement a work plan that is 70% planned work and 30% reactive work. • Protect existing trees and woodland. • Expand city wide tree planting program. 	Coordination with Community Groups, Planning and Zoning Department, VDOT Potential additional funding required	City Manager's office, City Arborist, Private consultant to assist in developing urban forestry plan, Office of Management & Budget, Planning & Zoning	Spring 2003 Spring 2004
Strategy Recommendation Policy		Tactics	Operational Impact	Staff Group Responsible	Start Date End Date

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