



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – June 19, 2019 Agenda Item 7

Work Session

Overview of Tree Ordinance Process, Tree Canopy Assessment Report and Results of Tree Ordinance Survey

Recommended Council Action

Receive the information.

Context with Key Issues

The City Council Priorities for FY19 included goals to review the City's Tree Ordinance policies and procedures, as well as consider a tree canopy goal for the city. The Council held the first work session discussion on the topic on October 24, 2018 to establish their strategy for moving the effort forward. The Council has scheduled Council work sessions on June 19, late July and September to provide opportunities for public engagement on the topics. Additionally, an online Tree Ordinance Survey was created to gather residents' experiences with the current Tree Ordinance as well as recommendations for modifications.

The City's Urban Forest Manager and Public Works Director will provide an overview of the current Tree Ordinance process, present the City's tree canopy evaluation, which was completed by the University of Vermont, and provide the results of the Tree Ordinance Survey.

Council Priority

Environmentally Sustainable Community, Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

The Tree Ordinance establishes the protection and preservation of trees as a fundamental goal in the City. As noted in the Takoma Park Tree Canopy Assessment, "Trees provide many benefits to communities, such as improving water quality, reducing stormwater runoff, lowering summer temperatures, reducing energy use in buildings, removing air pollution, enhancing property values, improving human health, providing wildlife habitat, and aesthetic benefits."

Fiscal Considerations

Fiscal considerations will be examined as the Tree Ordinance and the other tree-related matters being studied are discussed. The FY20 Budget for the Urban Forest Division is \$267,330, including staff, consultant services, tree purchases and services. The cost of tree maintenance for an individual property owner is ongoing and should be budgeted for as any other ongoing home maintenance expense. Energy savings and increased property values may offset or exceed these costs. The costs of complying with the Tree Ordinance can be substantial when a construction project is proposed or when a property owner wishes to remove a tree that is not dead or imminently hazardous.

Racial Equity Considerations

Race equity considerations also will be examined as these tree-related matters are being discussed. Tree canopy is not spread equally across the City of Takoma Park and so the costs and benefits of trees vary by location and type of property, which can have a race equity component. 75% of the

respondents to the Tree Ordinance Survey were residents of Wards 1, 2, and 3. These three wards are majority white and have fewer multifamily properties than do Wards 4, 5 and 6.

Attachments and Links

Tree Permit Process Overview

Tree Canopy Evaluation, March 2019

Results of Tree Ordinance Survey