



County of Fairfax, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 15, 2022

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Bryan J. Hill
County Executive *B Hill*

SUBJECT: Residential Tree Planting Pilot Project

This memorandum provides an update to the Board of Supervisors on the implementation of Green Initiative #1.5a relating to low and no cost tree planting options for Fairfax County residents.

In April 2021, the Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD) of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) initiated a no-cost residential tree planting program pilot project with the 501(c)(3) non-profit Casey Trees. The pilot project applied a One Fairfax lens to focus residential tree planting efforts in areas with higher social vulnerability and lower tree canopy coverage. Analysis overlaying the County's Social Vulnerability map with the County's most current Tree Canopy Coverage identified 24 census tracts meeting a criterion of "high impact service opportunity" for increasing tree canopy. The pilot project focused on three of those census tracts to determine the feasibility of County-supported residential tree planting efforts implemented by a non-profit partner. All the pilot project areas are within the Commercial Revitalization District along the Richmond Highway Corridor (Route 1) in the Alexandria areas of the Mount Vernon and Franconia Districts.

Staff from the Urban Centers Group of the Department of Planning and Development worked with DPWES staff to identify 4,000 single-family and multi-family residential addresses closest to the CRD. Based on their prior experience working in the District of Columbia, our non-profit partner Casey Trees developed a strategic marketing plan and mailed information about the tree planting program to the 4,000 residences. At present, these efforts resulted in a successful planting rate of 3.75% and 139 new trees have been planted on residential properties in the pilot project area.

Based on the success of this program, UFMD plans to convert the pilot project into a recurring program. Funding from the Tree Preservation and Planting Fund¹ will be used to sponsor residential tree planting efforts managed by a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization to efficiently

¹ <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/trees/tree-preservation-and-planting-fund>

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educate the community about the benefits provided by our urban forest and to encourage more residential tree planting.

If you have questions or would like additional information about tree planting in the County, please contact Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division, at brian.keightley@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Attachment: Casey Trees Final Report

cc: Rachel Flynn, Deputy County Executive
Christopher Herrington, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Kambiz Agazi, Director, Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination
Karla Bruce, Chief Equity Officer

FINAL REPORT

RESIDENTIAL TREE PLANTING PILOT



Prepared by:
Casey Trees, Washington, DC

Prepared for:
Brian Keightley, Director
Fairfax County Urban Forestry Management Division
Department of Public Works and Environmental Services

Executive Summary

In March of 2021, the Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD) engaged Casey Trees (CT) to pilot a residential tree planting initiative in/around the Richmond Highway Commercial Revitalization District. The subject area was chosen to help meet the County's environmental, public health, equity, and related goals by planting up to 150 trees on residential lots free of charge. In total, 139 trees were planted, just short of the goal due to a late cancellation which could not be rescheduled due to seasonal planting constraints. Just under 90% of the trees planted were medium-to-large in stature (e.g., oaks, maples); 11% were small (e.g., redbuds, hornbeams). This tree size mix is significant; larger trees provide more shading, cooling, stormwater control, and related benefits over their smaller counterparts, not just to the property where the tree is planted but also to the neighborhood at large.

Outreach & Communications

Mailer Details:

- ✓ 4000 total: 2000 letters, 2000 greeting cards (see page 3 for examples)
- ✓ Group 1 (single, duplex, townhouse): 2,577 recipients
- ✓ Group 2 (multiplex): 1,423 recipients
- ✓ 50% of each group received greeting cards, 50% received letters
- ✓ Total cost: \$11,301 (\$20K budgeted)

Mailer Analytics:

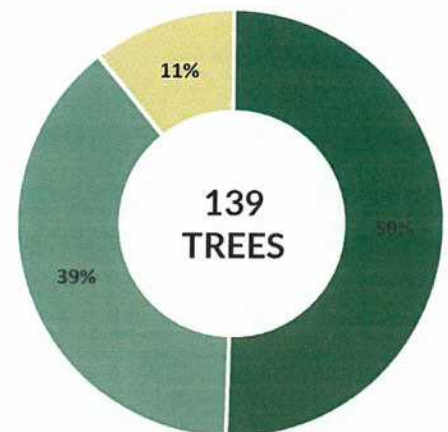
- ✓ Response rate (hits to caseytrees.org/Fairfax): greeting card, 229 hits; letter, 75 hits
- ✓ The greeting card was 3x more effective than the letter
- ✓ Trees planted to mailers sent: 3.5% (average industry success rate: 2%)

Tree Planting & Field Execution

See page 3 for tree species breakdown and photos.

Results

Trees scheduled to be planted: 153
Cancellations: 14
Trees planted: 139
Tree size breakdown: see graphic
Total Cost: \$48,650 (\$52K budgeted)
Cost/Tree: \$350



Recommendations for Future Efforts

1. The number of trees allowed per lot was capped at three, but residents often requested more. Increase the limit to five to maximize project benefits for both the recipients and neighborhood at large.
2. Test deployment of UFMD arborists for some homeowner site visits to see if this helps build relationships and appreciation of UFMD's work in the eyes of County residents.
3. Display "Free Tree" yard signs to see if it increases program awareness and participation.
4. Test one additional run of greeting cards vs. letters to corroborate/refute initial outreach results.

Site Photos & Tree Details



TREE TYPES & NUMBERS

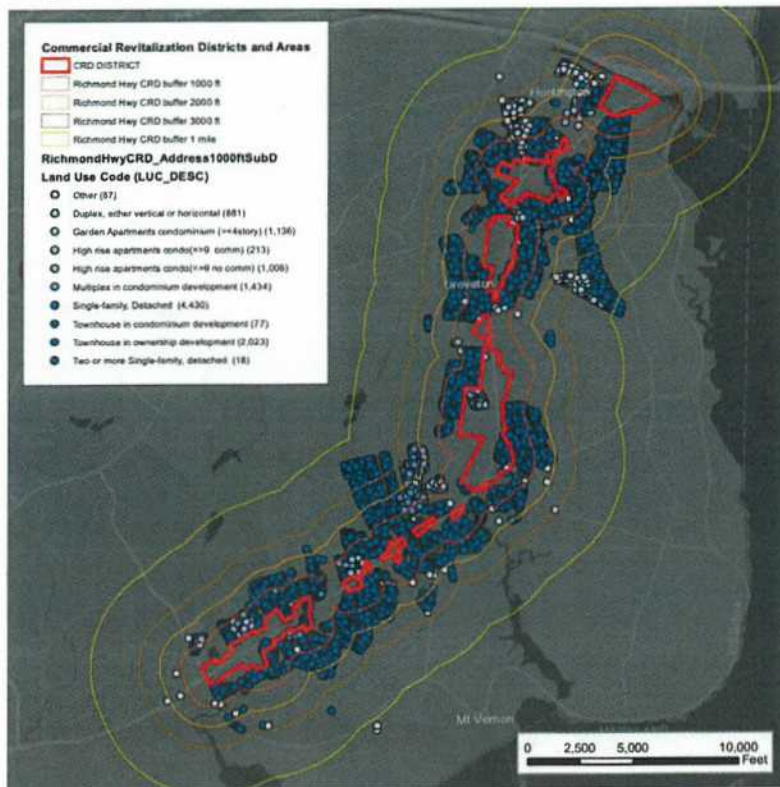
LARGE TREES	
American beech	6
Honeylocust 'Shademaster'	11
American sweetgum 'Happidaze'	1
Tulip tree	5
Southern Magnolia 'Bracken's Brown Beauty'	5
London Planetree 'Exclamation'	10
Swamp white oak	1
Scarlet oak	3
Shingle oak	16
Southern oak	1
Chestnut oak	1
Nuttall oak	2
Willow oak	1
Bald cypress	5
American elm 'Jefferson'	2
MEDIUM TREES	
Red Maple 'October Glory'	9
Pawpaw	1
River Birch	14
River Birch 'Dura-Heat'	5
Hackberry	12
Kentucky yellowwood	4
American Holly	4
American Holly 'Greenleaf'	3
Flowering Cherry 'Okame'	2
SMALL TREES	
Serviceberry 'Autumn Brilliance'	1
American hornbeam	4
Eastern redbud	6
American witch-hazel	2
Crabapple 'Sugar Tyme'	1
American hophornbeam	1
PROGRAM TOTAL	139

Outreach & Communications

Greeting card and letter samples:



Targeted area for outreach:



This map depicts 11,305 homes within a one-mile buffer of the Commercial Revitalization District. Four thousand addresses closest to the CRD were selected to receive direct mail outreach.