

Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

Request By: Supervisor McKay

Question: Discuss cost savings if the Park Authority were to take over currently contracted arboreal services.

Response: Response provided by the Park Authority and Facilities Management Department:

It is not anticipated that there would be any cost savings if the Park Authority took over arboreal services currently contracted out by FMD. Average per hour rates are very similar, with the Park Authority rate being slightly higher.

In FY 2008, the Facilities Management Department (FMD) actual expenditures for contracted arboreal services were \$141,449. Funding supports the clearing of downed trees, removal of dead or unsafe trees, planting new trees where necessary at over 700 parcels where FMD has maintenance responsibility. The funding is used primarily for reactive and proactive tree work. FMD pays approximately \$120 per hour for tree work and most jobs require four to six hours. For emergencies, the hourly rate increases to \$125 per hour. The average cost of a four to six hour job is approximately \$600-\$625, allowing for some emergency work.

The Facilities Management Department's budget for contracted arboreal services in FY 2009 is \$150,000. The agency has proposed a Lines of Business reduction in contracted arboreal services in the amount of \$100,000. The remaining \$50,000 will be used to address emergency calls and could result in increases insurance claims from citizens and the business community whose property may be damaged by fallen trees.

The Park Authority uses merit staff for its arboreal services, which include the clearing of downed trees, removal of dead or unsafe trees, and pruning of dead or damaged tree limbs on Park property. To manage over 24,000 park acres, the Park Authority has a General Fund budget of approximately \$468,815 for eight merit staff positions, operating costs for tools, and ground maintenance supplies. In FY 2008, Park Operations exceeded their arboreal operating budget by approximately \$8,300 in response to emergency tree-related issues.

In FY 2008, the Fairfax County Park Authority's Park Operations Division received approximately 900 service requests for arboreal work (clearing of downed trees, removal of dead or unsafe trees, pruning of dead or damaged tree limbs, etc.). Currently, there are approximately 200 requests still pending completion. The average cost per service request completed was \$670 (\$468,815 divided by 700 equals \$670).