

**FAIRFAX COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2022**

PRESENT: Andres Jimenez, Commissioner At-Large, Chairman
Mary D. Cortina, Braddock District, Vice Chairman
Daniel G. Lagana, Lee District
Julie M. Strandlie, Mason District
Timothy J. Sargeant, Commissioner At-Large
John C. Ulfelder, Dranesville District
Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner, Providence District

ABSENT: John A. Carter, Hunter Mill District
Walter C. Clarke, Mount Vernon District

OTHERS: Candice Bennett, Commissioner At-Large
Suzianne Battista, Planner V, Department of Planning and Development (DPD)
Joanne Fiebe, Senior Revitalization Program Manager, DPD
Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD),
Department of Public Works and Environmental Services
Ellen Alster, Planning Division, DPD
Kevin Jackson, Senior Deputy Clerk, Planning Commission

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Proposed Changes for Street Trees Presentation

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Planning Commission Vice Chairman Ulfelder called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Auditorium of the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

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Vice Chairman Ulfelder set the order of the Committee meetings scheduled for tonight. He explained that the Environment Committee would meet first to discuss revisions to the Urban Design Guidelines and Public Facilities Manual for tree planting standards in areas like Tysons and other transit station areas. Next, the Land Use Process Review Committee would meet to discuss the status of updates to the Public Facilities Policy Plan Amendment and related issues. Commissioner Ulfelder then turned the gavel over to Environment Committee Chair Jimenez.

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Chairman Jimenez reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to receive a presentation from staff on updates to the Urban Design Guidelines and proposed changes for street tree policies in areas like Tysons, Transit Station Areas, and Community Revitalization Districts/Areas. The Committee would also discuss with staff any outstanding issues or concerns.

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Joanne Fiebe, Senior Revitalization Program Manager, Department of Planning & Development (DPD) and Brian Keightley, Director, Urban Forest Management Division (UFMD), Department of Public Works & Environmental Services gave a presentation entitled Proposed Changes to Street Treas, a copy of which is included in Attachment A, which covered the following topics:

- Overview of the areas in the County where the proposed changes would apply;
- The purpose and rationale for this effort;
- Overview of the issues this effort was designed to resolve;
- The role of trees and tree cover in Urban Street Design;
- Overview of the urban heat island effect and how it impacted the climate in communities across the County;
- Explanation of the extent to which lower income areas were more at risk of climate impacts due to the deficit of trees and other greenery;
- Overview of the existing Public Facilities Manual tree planting standards, the canopy credit policy, and the alternative tree planting standard;
- Overview of the potential challenges that would occur as the updates were implemented, including the various issues with accessibility policies consistent with those prescribed by the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA);
- Visual illustrations of the proposed changes in other jurisdictions; and
- Explanation of the next steps in implementing the proposed changes, including public outreach efforts and the timeline for final approval by the Board of Supervisors.

There was a discussion between Ms. Fiebe; Mr. Keightley; Suzianne Battista, Planner V, DPD; and multiple Committee members on the following issues:

- Concerns raised by environmental associations on various issues with this effort;
- Clarification on how the County could implement the proposed changes in heat deserts without the aid of private redevelopment;
- Explanation that there were multiple pending transportation projects where street trees could be added;
- Explanation that many other local jurisdictions currently had tree planting project models that the County could consider funding;
- Clarification on how staff intended to use the various pieces of enabling legislation to guide this effort;
- Concerns on the proposals for smaller tree levels and the limited impact they provided;
- Explanation that the guidelines would aim to disincentivize developers from going after the lower tree planting standards unless they had minimum space that would appropriately fit the lower tree planting standard criterium;
- Concerns about the guidelines on apportioning credit for the tree planting standards and tree canopies;
- Concerns with the proposal discouraging the planting of larger trees or certain tree species, such as oaks;

- Confirmation that staff would evaluate defining a standard for when smaller tree plantings would be acceptable for certain application in development applications;
- Concerns on how the proposal would seek to address ADA accessibility concerns in certain developments; and
- Confirmation that staff responses to community groups would be made available to the Planning Commission.

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Chairman Jimenez thanked staff and adjourned the meeting.

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The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.
Andres Jimenez, Chairman

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Planning Commission Office,
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 552, Fairfax, Virginia 22035.

Minutes by: Kevin Jackson

Approved: September 28, 2023



Jacob Caporaletti, Clerk
Fairfax County Planning Commission

County of Fairfax
Commonwealth of Virginia

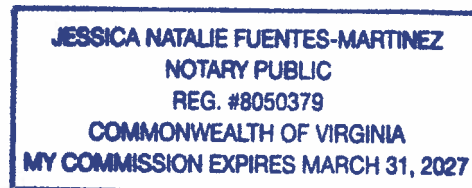
The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 28 day of September, 2023, by
Jacob Caporaletti.


Signature of Notary

Notary Seal

Notary registration number: 8050379

Commission expiration: 03/31/2027







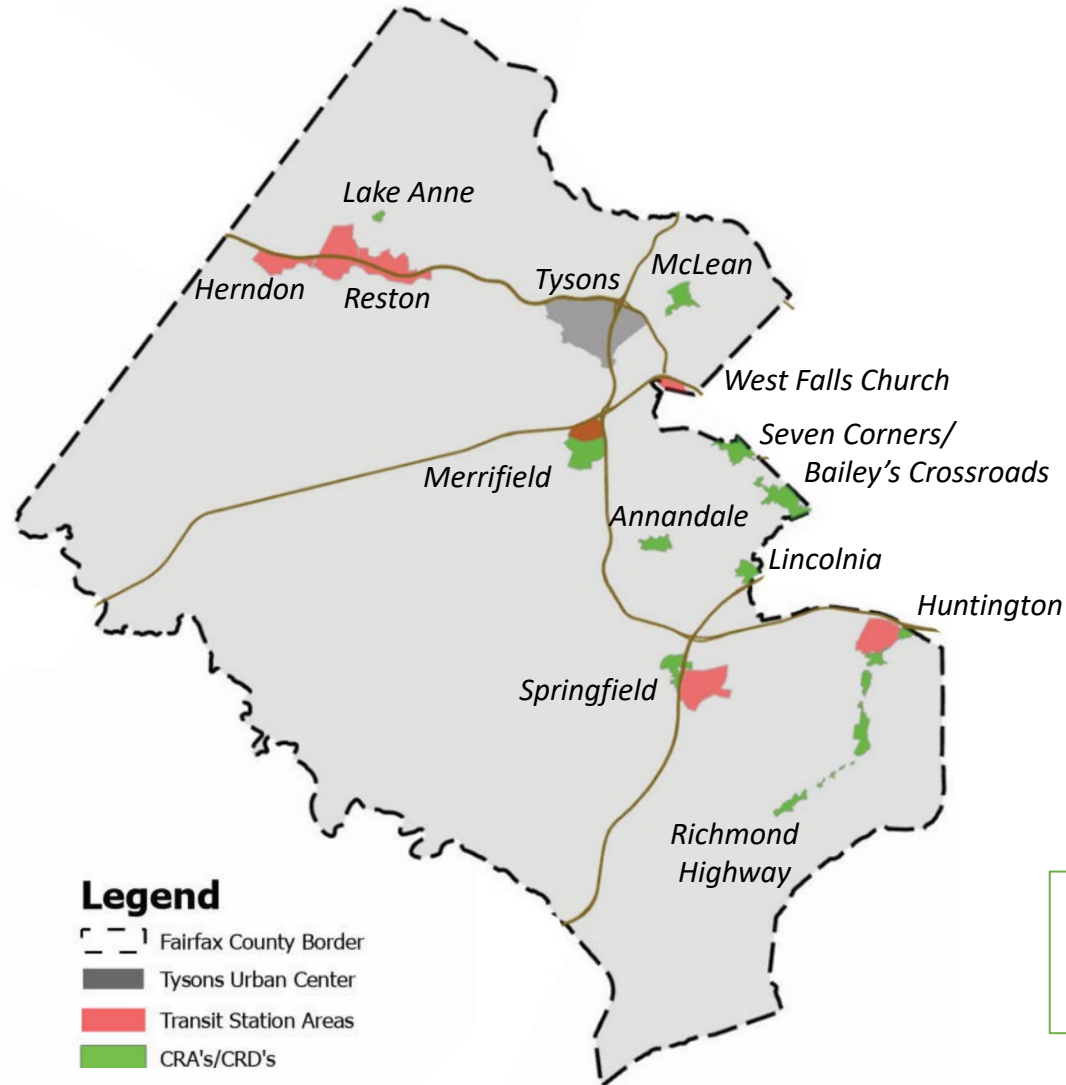
Proposed Changes for Street Trees

Tysons, Transit Station Areas,
& Community Revitalization
Districts/Areas

Planning Commission
Environment Committee
October 6, 2022

Where would changes apply?

Annandale CRD
Bailey's Crossroads/Seven
Corners CRD
Herndon TSA
Huntington TSA
Lake Anne CRA
Lincolnia CRA
McLean CRD
Merrifield CRA
Reston TSAs
Richmond Highway Corridor
(inclusive of the CRDs and
SNAs)
Springfield CRD and TSA
Tysons Urban Center
West Falls Church TSA



Less than 4% of Fairfax
County's land area

Purpose: Encourage Street Trees!

1. Count street trees toward 10-year canopy credit (currently canopy credit is offered in Tysons only)
2. Offer an Alternative Tree Planting Standard to make it easier to plant trees where:
 - Walking and biking are common
 - Constrained existing conditions makes planting difficult

Landscape architect Henry Arnold once said, *“Fifty percent of urban design is, street trees.”*

On a tree-lined street, look up; the canopy forms the ceiling of our collective room. Arnold wrote, *“An urban street without street trees is like a building without a roof.”*



What's the Issue?



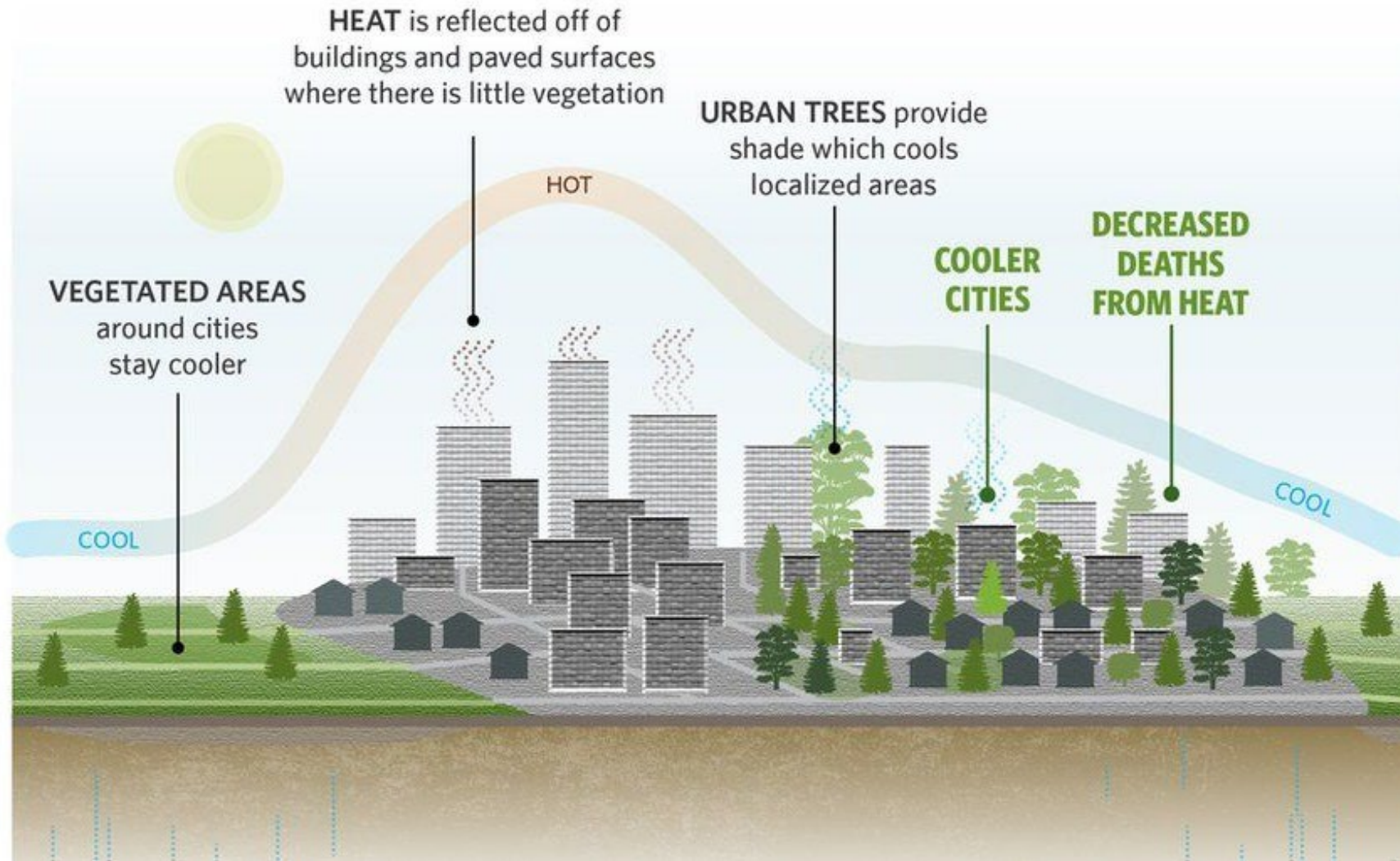
7 Roles of Trees in Urban Street Design

1. Define the street space.
2. Define the pedestrian space.
3. Calm traffic/separates pedestrian & cars.
4. Filter sunlight.
5. Bring order to street.
6. Visually soften streetscape.
7. Introduce nature.

(Victor Dover and John Massengale)

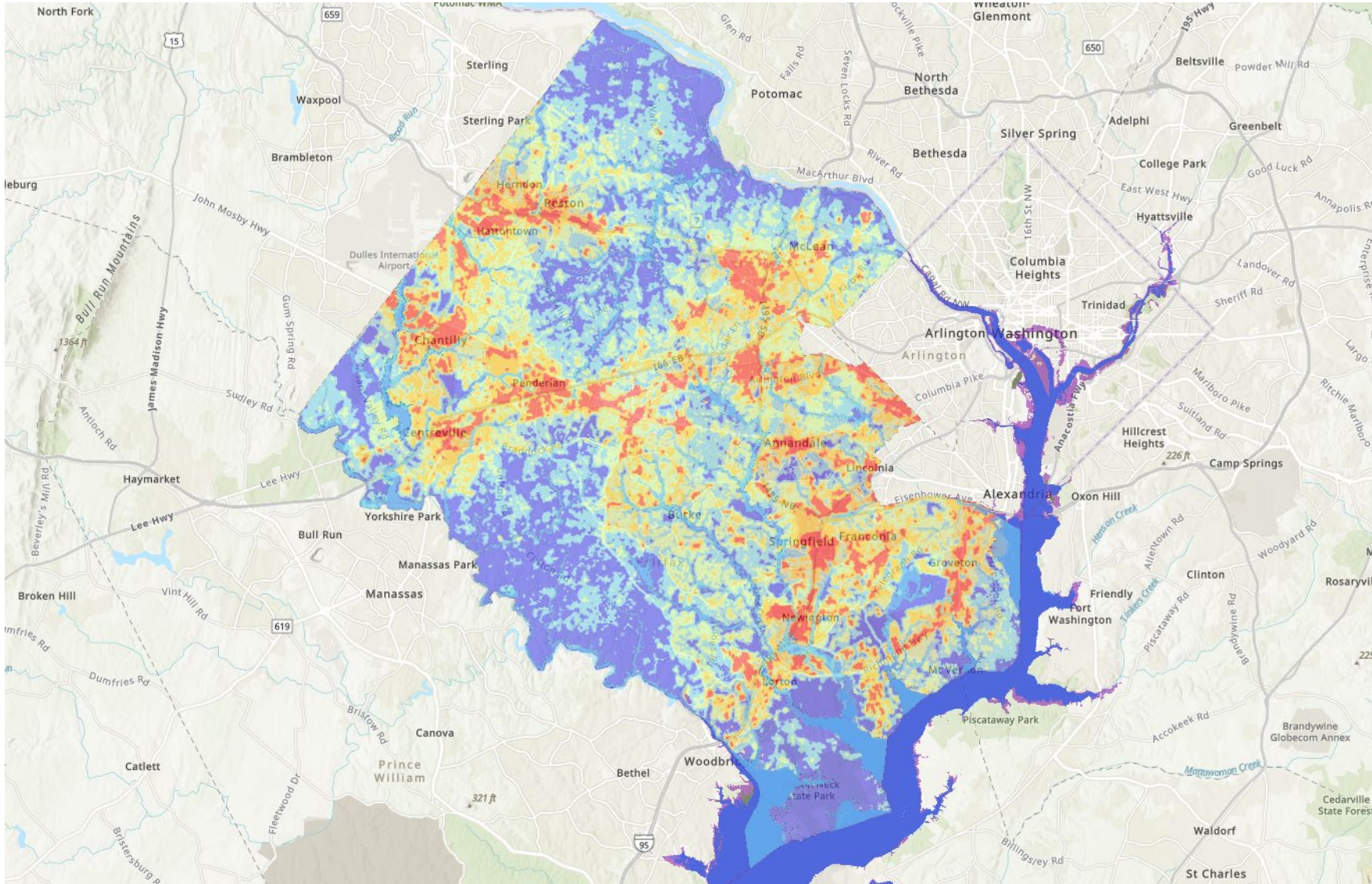


Urban Heat Island



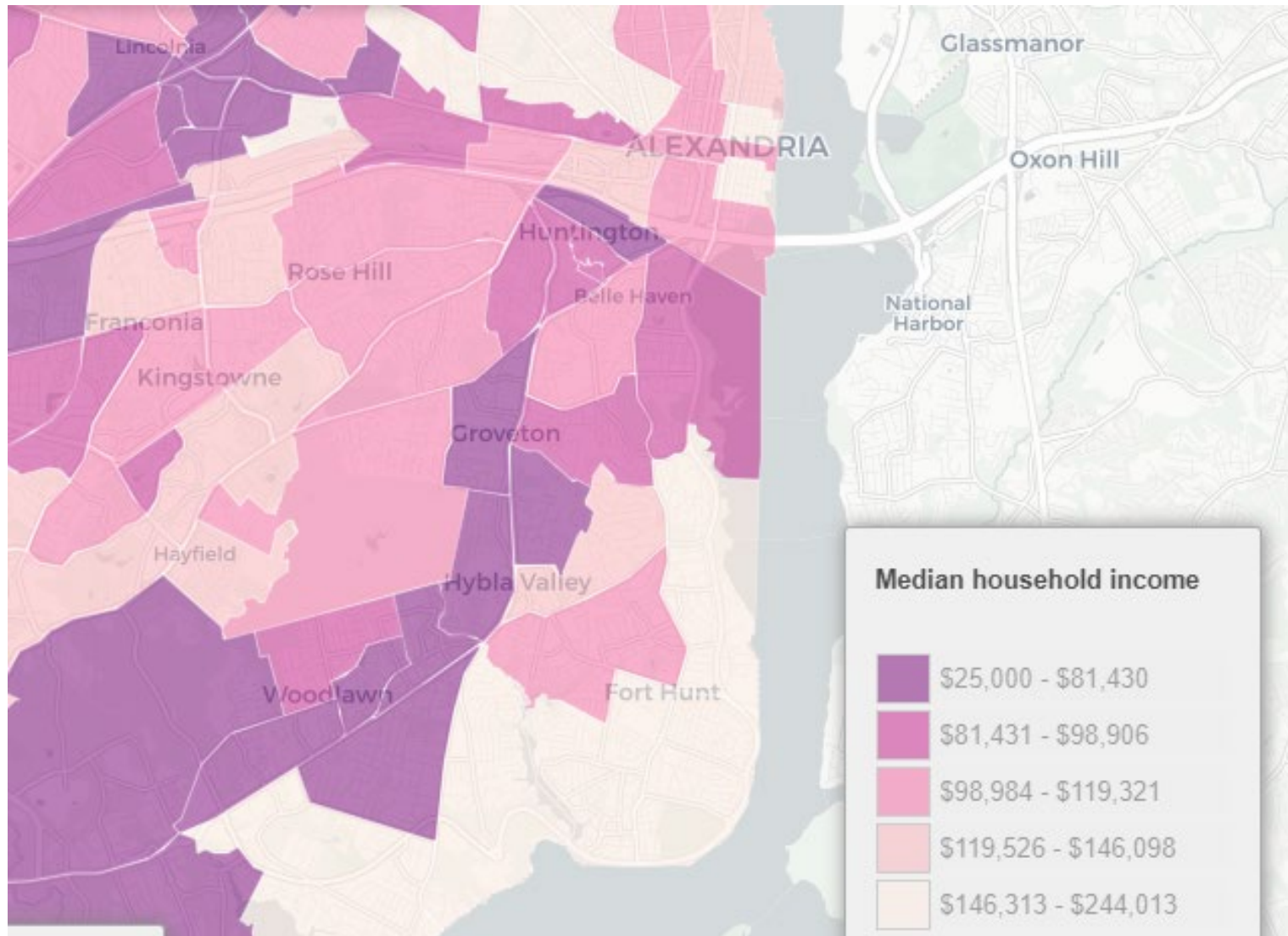
- Unshaded impervious surface increases urban heat island
- Increasing # of days > 95 degrees
- Disproportionate effect on lower income households
- CRDs have been left behind, higher rate of households without vehicles

Urban Heat Island - Fairfax County



Hottest areas
overlap areas
where street trees
changes would
apply

Treeless Areas are Lower Income Areas



Ten-year Tree Canopy Credit for Trees in ROW

Incentive
to follow
current
PFM
standards



PFM 12-0310.4E
standards met!

1st
Place



*Soil volume standards
met, but other PFM
provisions are not.*

2nd
Place



**ALTERNATIVE TREE
PLANTING
STANDARD**

*Smaller planting
area =
less credit + more
responsibility*

3rd
Place

Existing PFM Tree Planting Standard



Soil Volumes:

- 700 CF soil/tree
- 1200 CF soil/2 trees
- 1500 CF soil/tree for 3 trees.
Each additional tree in grouping requires an extra 500 cubic feet of soil.

Width: 8' min. (6' min. at surface)

Distance from curb (or any restrictive barrier): 4' min.

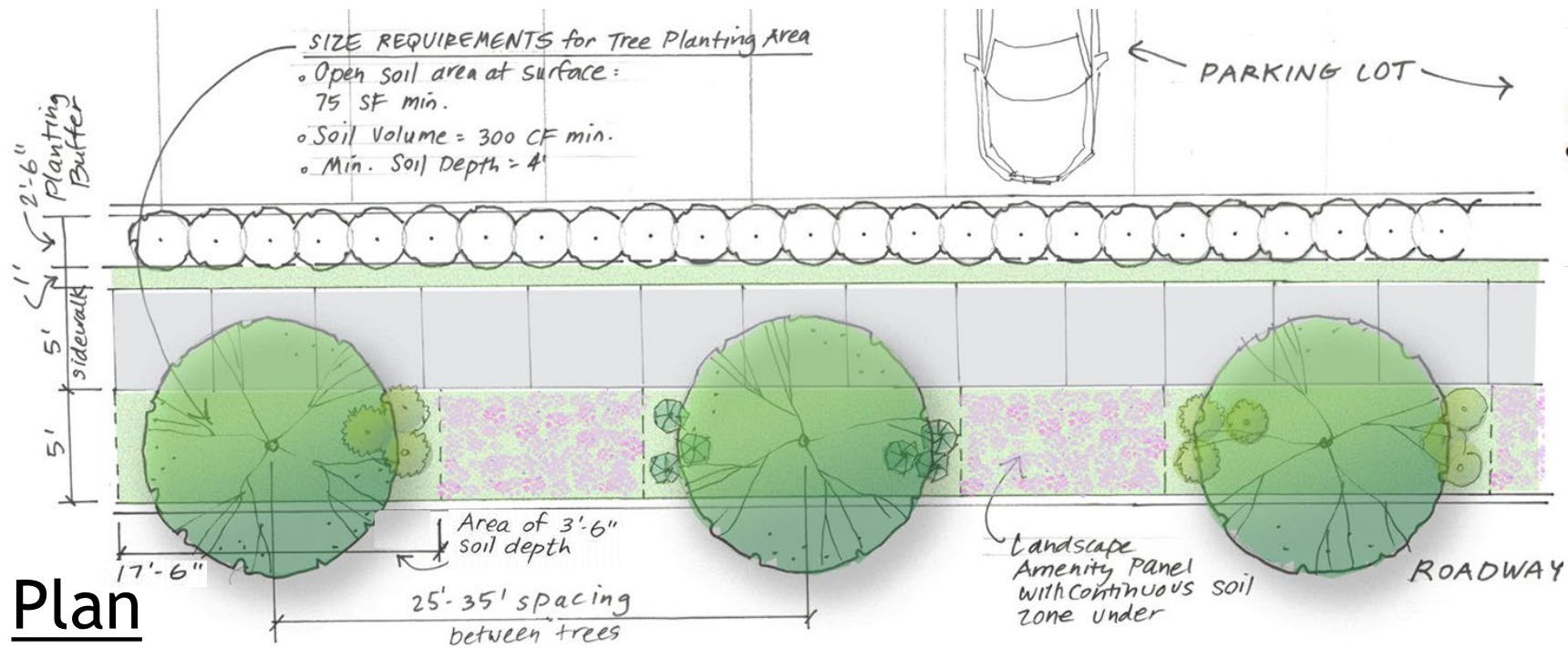


Key Features of the Alternative Standard

Trees planted in the right-of-way of the designated districts will now receive partial 10-year canopy credit if the following minimum conditions are met:

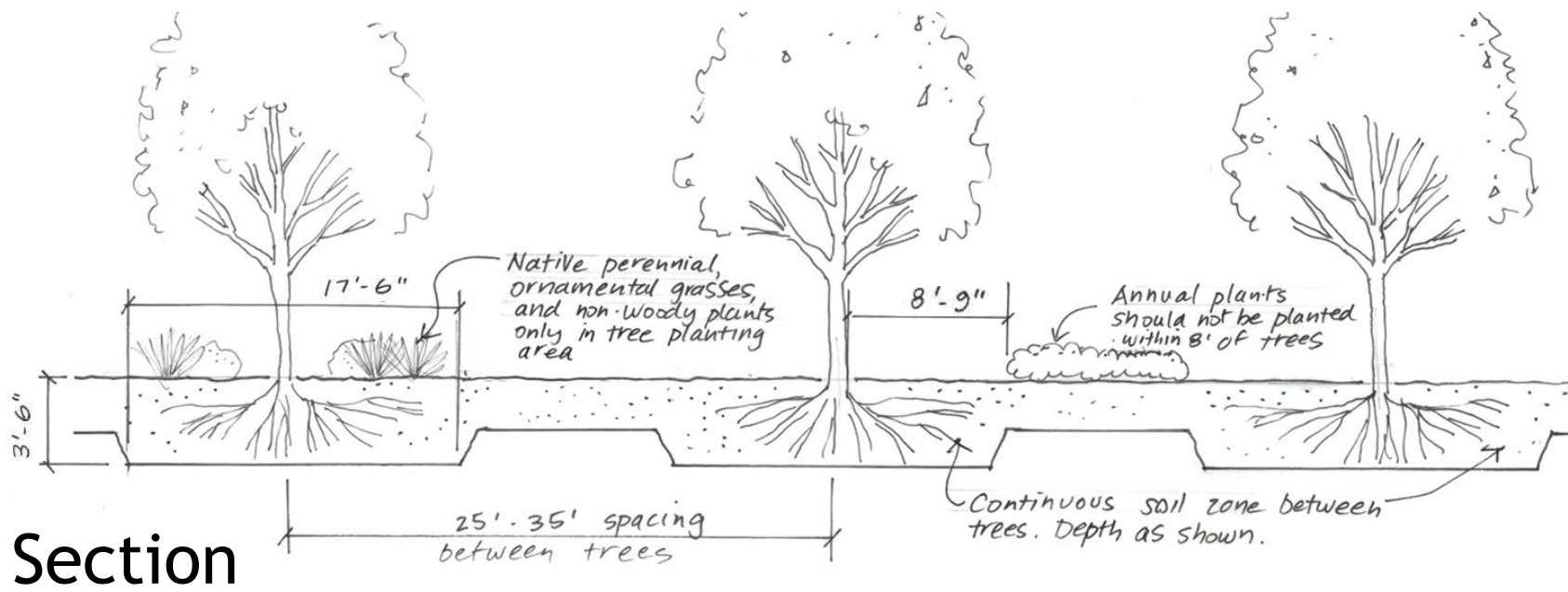
<u>Min Planting area</u>	<u>Soil volume</u>	<u>Tree species</u>	<u>Tree size</u>	<u>Maintenance</u>
5' wide x 17.5' long x 3.5' deep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 300 CF soil/tree• 75 SF open soil at surface	Per applicable Urban Design Guidelines	2.5" - 3.99" caliper	Perpetual maintenance & replacement

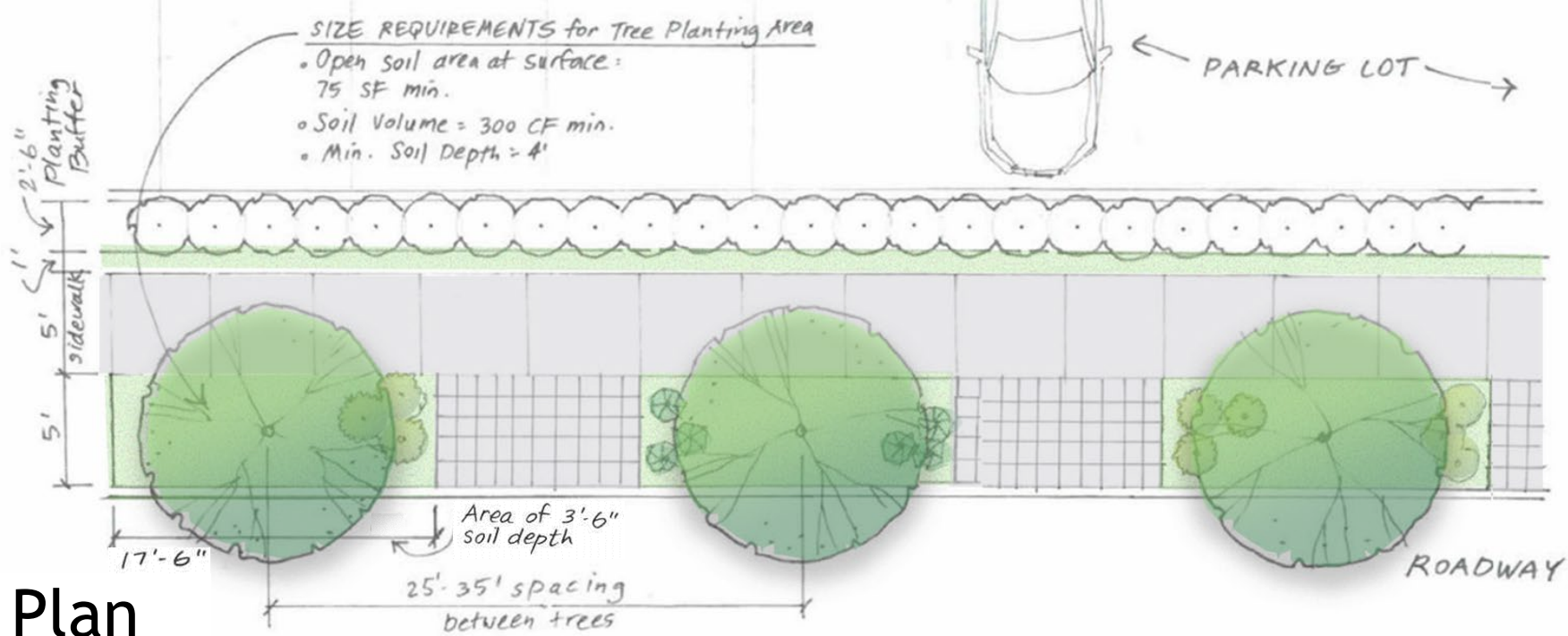
*** These are minimums and do not negate the current Comp Plan recommendations or Urban Street Standards**



Soil volume standards met, but other PFM provisions are not.

2nd
Place

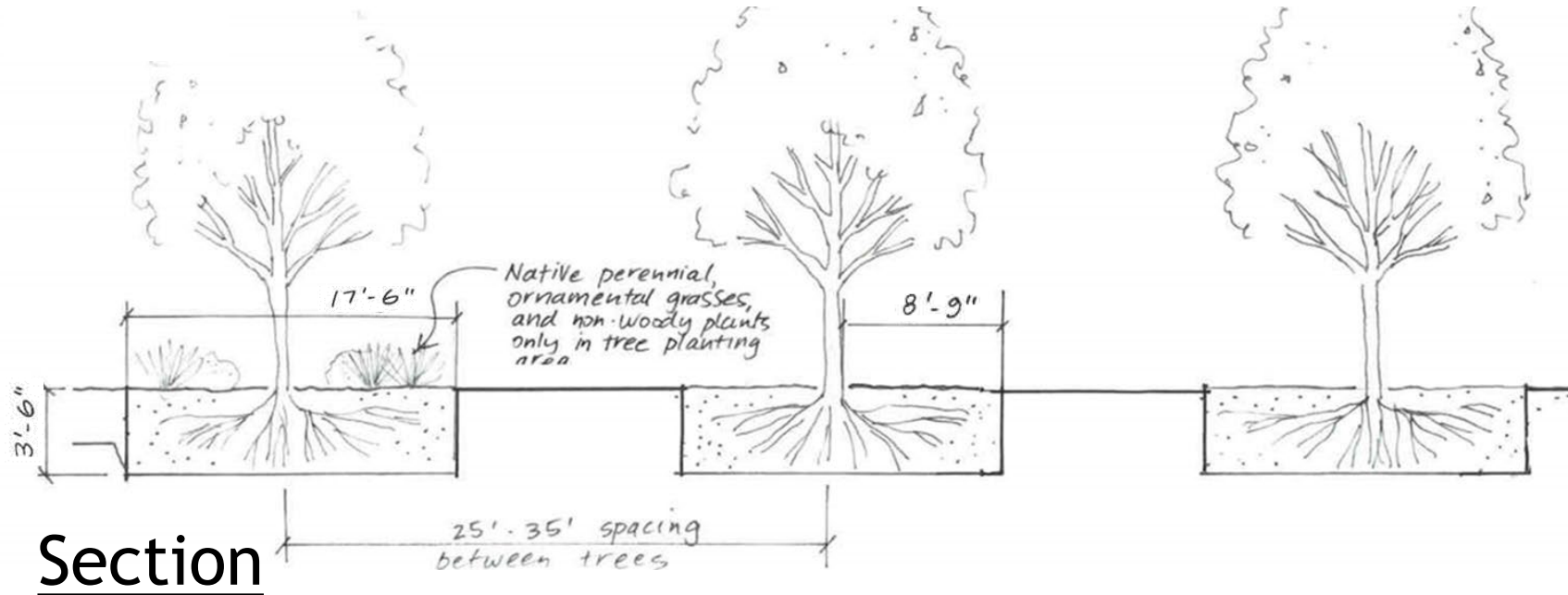




ALTERNATIVE TREE PLANTING STANDARD

Smaller planting area = less credit + more responsibility

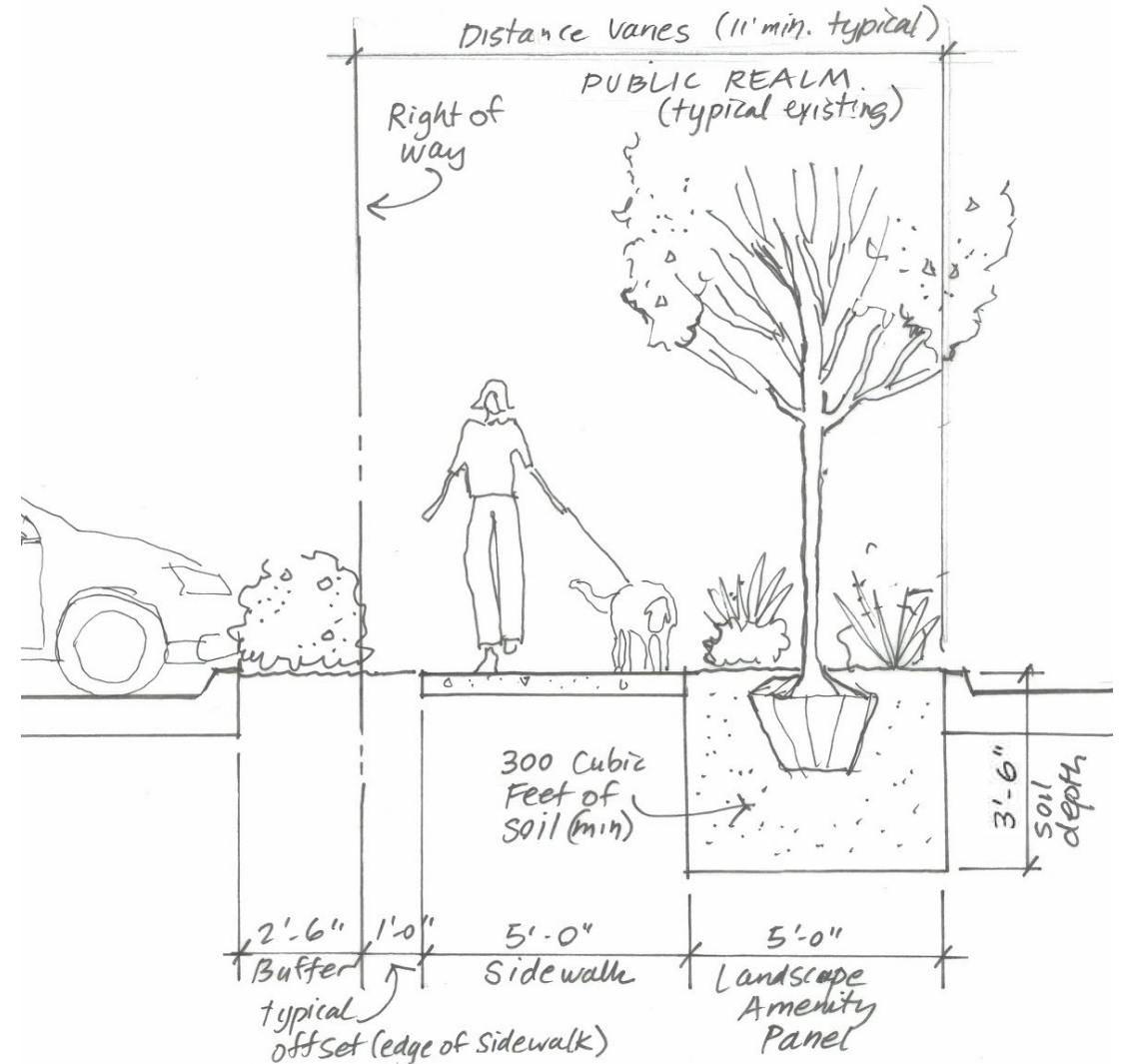
3rd Place



Example: Retrofit Site



Plan



Section

Challenges moving forward

- Enforcement of perpetual maintenance agreement
- Monitor potential ADA issues with sidewalks heaving
- Future project impacts (DOT and utility)
- Accessibility needs adjacent to on-street parking
- Limited species selection
- No stormwater credit for smaller tree planting areas
- Soil – high quality required

Next Steps

(Held 6 meetings with internal stakeholders on the proposed recommendations in June and July)

- External outreach – late summer/fall 2022
 - September 1 Tree Commission
 - September 7 DPAC
 - September 14 EQAC
 - September 15 NVBIA
 - September 29 Transportation Advisory Committee
 - October 6 Planning Commission Environment Committee
 - October 14 BOS Land Use Aides Meeting
- Prepare an amendment to the Urban Design Guidelines
- Present to Board of Supervisors (December 6)

Let's Look at Some Examples





5 x 17.5 feet

Assuming quality
soil, this
example would
get 0.5 or 0.75
canopy credit
(depending on species)

Penrose Apartments, Columbia Pike, Arlington County



Arlington County

X

Expand planter
box size to
5 x 17.5 feet
and
add good soil
= 0.50 or 0.75
credit
(depending on species)



Arlington County

X

Arlington County
Minimum Planting
Space Standard

4 feet x 8 feet

Expand planter box
to 5 x 17.5 feet
to receive
0.50 or 0.75 canopy
credit
(depending on species)



Arlington County



Current PFM Standards
continue to work and will
be incentivized

This is what we prefer,
planting spaces that will
work in the long run

Knowing that there are
structural soil cells, this
example would get 1.5x
credit



Eisenhower area, City of Alexandria



Fairfax County

More Examples



Arlington County



What we are trying to avoid:

- Sidewalk lifting
- Damages to utilities
- Outgrowing Planting Spaces
- Unneeded risk to Public Spaces

Smaller planting spaces can work



Pickett Road/Blake Lane, City of Fairfax



6-feet wide
x
continuous
landscape
panel



Proposed Changes for Street Trees

Thank you