



Hyattsville City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: February 1, 2017

Submitted by: Laura Reams

Submitting Department: Legislative

Item Type: Budget

Agenda Section: Discussion Items (8:20 p.m. - 9:50 p.m.)

SUBJECT

Incentive for residents to plant native trees on their residential property

Motion #

Recommendation:

I MOVE THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL allocate \$5,000 as incentive to residents to purchase a native tree for their residential property (up to \$50 per property, for up to 100 residential properties).

Sponsor(s):

Paschall, on behalf of the Hyattsville Environment Committee

ATTACHMENTS

Summary Background:

This initiative will help the City of Hyattsville encourage its residents to plant large-sized native shade trees on private (residential) property. Urban trees are decreasing throughout the country; in fact, Tree City USA has found that in some cities, as many as four trees die or are removed for each new tree planted. Trees provide a host of benefits, including aesthetic appeal, shade and protection from extreme sun and wind, wildlife and bird habitat, cleaner air, stormwater runoff mitigation, and have been found to help boost property values. Native trees have added benefits: they require less water and fertilizer because they are better adapted to local climate conditions and soil types, and they can prevent the introduction of invasive plants.

The State of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) offers a \$25 rebate for the purchase of a native tree from a participating nursery with a retail value of \$50 or more. The list of eligible trees, participating nurseries, and other information on the program is available at <http://www.trees.maryland.gov/pickatree.asp#trees>.

To further incentivize Hyattsville residents to plant large native shade trees, we recommend that the City offer a matching rebate of up to \$50, limited to one (1) rebate per household for City of Hyattsville residents toward the purchase of a large over-story native shade tree from this list ("Large" size only):

<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/forests/Pages/MarylandersPlantTrees/Recommended-Tree-List.aspx>

This added rebate from the City could make up the difference to meet the minimum \$50 purchase of a native shade tree free for a resident who wishes to purchase one.

Included in the \$50 incentive would allow Hyattsville residents to apply up to \$35 out of the \$50 allotment per household toward the purchase of products to help care for their new tree. Such products might include soil amendments such as organic composted leaves for soil conditioning (\$5.00 per bag such as LeafGro) or organic plant food (\$9-10/bag such as Bio-tone organic "Starter Plus") or the purchase of a tree watering bag (for larger trees <3-5 years old; \$20 each).

This initiative is a relatively low-cost way for the City of Hyattsville to promote the planting of large native shade trees on private property. It aligns well with the city's commitment to being a Tree City (recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation) and will complement existing City efforts to plant native shade trees on the City's public property. In recent years, the City has taken steps to inventory all street trees on public property and has set up a program to replace those that are dead or dying. However, no program currently exists to encourage planting trees on private residential property. This initiative would help to enhance Hyattsville's tree canopy by assisting residents with their purchase of a native shade tree with built-in safeguards to increase its likelihood of survival.

Next Steps:

Once this initiative is approved, a resident who buys a native shade tree and who takes advantage of the Maryland DNR rebate would provide to the City of Hyattsville Department of Public Works a photocopy of both their DNR rebate receipt and the receipt of the purchase of their tree from the participating nursery. The type of tree MUST be selected from the "Large" category from the Maryland DNR list referenced above. The resident would also have the option to include photocopies of receipts showing the purchase of accessories such as soil amendments and/or a tree watering bag. The City of Hyattsville would issue a check to the resident to cover the cost of the accessories in the amount not exceeding \$35, and cover the remaining difference of the purchase of the native tree (minus both the Maryland DNR \$25 rebate and the cost of the soil amendments and/or tree watering bag) up to the \$50 maximum cap.

Fiscal Impact:

\$5,000

City Administrator Comments:

Please see staff comments on summary sheet.

Community Engagement:

This incentive could be advertised on the Hyattsville HOPE email listserv and Hyattsville Life and Times newspaper, along with information about native trees, their benefits, and provide information about the Maryland Dept of Natural Resources rebate program.

Strategic Goals:

Goal 5 - Strengthen the City's Identity as a Diverse, Creative, and Welcoming Community

Legal Review Required?

N/A