



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 remove English Ivy and other damaging vines from trees on their property

Motion

Recommendation:

I MOVE THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL allocate \$7,500 as incentive to residents for removal of tree-damaging vines, and for maintenance over a period of time sufficient to eradicate from tree canopy (up to \$75 per property, in 3 installments of \$25 over 1 year, for up to 100 residential properties).

Sponsor(s):

Paschall, on behalf of the Hyattsville Environment Committee

ATTACHMENTS

[NPS English Ivy Fact Sheet.pdf](#)

Summary Background:

English ivy is a non-native vining plant that can damage and kill Hyattsville's mature trees. It does this by growing up and over tree branches, blocking light to the leaves, and thus starving and weakening the tree. Over time large tree branches die, and the weight of the ivy in the canopy makes the tree branches or entire trunk more susceptible to wind. Additionally, ivy produces seed when growing up trees; removal will not only help the individual tree but will reduce the spread of ivy in the neighborhood. For more complete information on English ivy, please see documentation from the National Park Service at the following website: <https://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/hehe1.htm>

In Hyattsville, trees infested with English ivy are often also infested with vines of common greenbriar (a native but very thorny vine species), poison ivy (also native, but undesirable), porcelainberry (an invasive non-native vine), and others (JW personal observation). None of these vines are desirable on residential trees.

Although the National Park Service advises ivy removal using either mechanical/physical means or herbicides, we plan to specifically encourage mechanical/physical removal. Winter is an ideal time to begin this activity, because English ivy retains leaves through the winter but poison ivy does not, which may help prevent unintended exposure to poison ivy.

Removal of these vines takes perseverance and some effort. All vines must be removed from around the base of the tree and severed around the tree trunk approximately 1 foot above the ground, without damaging the tree's bark. The vines in the tree's canopy will then die over a period of several months, but for lasting removal, any new vines must be periodically removed from the base and trunk of the tree. Therefore, the Hyattsville Environmental Committee, with the support of the Hyattsville Horticultural Society, proposes offering our residents information, (?) assistance, and a financial incentive to remove ivy and other vines. The financial incentive would be \$25 after initial documentation of infested tree ("before") and removal of vines ("after") with photographs and/or a visit from HEC/HHS volunteers. An additional \$25 would be offered 6 months and 1 year after the initial removal (for a total of \$75) upon documentation of continued maintenance of a vine-free tree trunk and base. Volunteers working on this project will send out reminders at 6 months and 1 year to residents who have completed the first removal.

While there is no direct financial benefit to the city, this proposal does promote Hyattsville financial interests:

- i) Ivy removal will improve Hyattsville's appearance, which is important for property values and quality of life
- ii) Preserving an intact shade tree canopy minimizes residential cooling costs and promotes indoor and outdoor comfort; shade will become an increasingly important public and residential amenity as heat waves and summer power outages become more frequent
- iii) Ivy removal will reduce damage to residential and public property and infrastructure (e.g. power lines) by reducing mortality and vulnerability to wind of large limbs and entire trees. As part of proper tree management, ivy removal may also result in modest discount on homeowners insurance premiums or may reduce homeowner liability in case of damage from tree or limb windfalls, because they have documented proper tree maintenance.
- iv) Every tree that has ivy removed will promote an overall reduction in the spread of ivy to new trees in Hyattsville, by limiting both seed production and vegetative spread; this will have a positive impact on the whole community

Next Steps:

HEC and HHS volunteers interested in helping would need to coordinate their efforts and prepare brief educational materials for interested residents. HHS members suggested that local scout troops or student groups may be interested in participating (e.g. by assisting with the actual ivy removal) for badges or educational credits. The pros and cons (liability?) would need to be explored before finalizing project.

Fiscal Impact:

Up to \$7,500

City Administrator Comments:

Please see staff comments on summary sheet.

Community Engagement:

There is the possibility of engaging/educating students, scouts, and other interested parties. HEC and HHS members would like to make this a community endeavor.

Strategic Goals:

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

Legal Review Required?

N/A