



Use of Tree Mitigation Funds for Tree Preservation

Presentation Outline

- Background and Purpose
- Overview of Property Selection Criteria
- Options for Consideration



Background and Purpose

- Response to citizen and Council requests for discussion on use of the Tree Mitigation Fund (balance of \$2,374,629 as of 9-30-16)
- Recently completed “State of the Denton Urban Forest” report found that:
 - 46% of Denton’s tree canopy was located on undeveloped land
 - Denton’s 3.4 million trees had a structural value of \$2.06 billion, and provide an additional \$7.2 million/year in environmental benefits
 - Trees that provide the greatest relative benefit (i.e., Post Oak, Pecan) are also the most difficult to replace/re-grow



Background and Purpose

- Tree Preservation is well-aligned with:
 - **City's Strategic Plan – KFA 5.4** Preserve Open Space, Natural Areas, and Tree Canopy
 - **Denton 2030 Plan elements 5.5** (Ensure the Protection of Denton's tree canopy as an essential element of Denton's cohesive, broad green infrastructure framework) and **5.6** (Promote the retention of essential ecosystems and habitat in Denton's land conservation strategies)
- **Preservation is vital to sustaining the City's urban forest**
 - One component of an urban forest management strategy



Background and Purpose

- **Purpose:** Develop a system for evaluating properties for tree preservation
- Staff team began work in January 2017
 - Collaborative effort between Parks & Recreation, Development Services, Legal/Real Estate, City's Urban Forester, and Keep Denton Beautiful
- Used Tree Fund Expenditure Criteria (DDC 35.13.7.7.e.i) and "State of the Urban Forest" study to develop a comprehensive evaluation system



Overview of Property Selection Criteria

- Tree Species Composition and “Quality Trees”
 - Canopy cover
 - Location in Cross Timbers eco-region
- Land use and potential for development
 - Availability/on the market
 - Public use potential, resident requests
 - Threatened by development
 - Current protections and zoning (i.e., flood plain, conservation easement)



Overview of Property Selection Criteria

- Future planning and impact
 - Consistency with existing plans (utility, mobility, parks)
 - Impact on tax rolls
- Criteria were weighted based on level of importance in meeting goal of tree preservation

Overview of Property Selection Criteria

- Narrowed to those with canopy cover of ~50% or greater
- Cross-referenced with Denton Central Appraisal District and City GIS records
- Removed those in heavy flood plain, existing protections, or those already very difficult to develop (thus reducing threat of tree removal)
- Compiled scores according to criteria – 105 possible points



Options for Consideration

- **Option 1: Purchase a property from the forthcoming list, and take action to limit future use. Would require:**
 - Increase in expenditure limit for property purchases
 - Tree Fund Expenditure Criteria: up to 15% of the Tree Fund balance for the “Purchase of Wooded Property to Preserve”
 - Current balance of Tree Fund was \$2,374,629 as of September 30, 2016 = \$356,194 available
 - Increasing to 40% limit = \$949,851 available
 - Temporary or permanent increase
 - Leveraging additional funds from other City departments
 - Parks – for properties with potential for public use, or alignment with long-range plans
 - DME – mitigation funds could be used for any property



Options for Consideration

- **Option 2: Explore a partial acquisition**
 - Consider acquiring a portion of property to reduce cost
 - This would not likely require a change to the DDC limit for property purchases
- **Option 3: Consider properties with less acreage.**
 - For this search, staff focused on properties with large stands of quality trees to provide the greatest preservation benefit
 - Smaller properties could be identified which would potentially preserve fewer trees, but at a lower cost





Questions

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