



Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 300
Arlington, VA 22201

March 9, 2020

RE: FY2021 DPR Proposed Expense Budget

Dear Chair Garvey:

On February 27, the Urban Forestry Commission (UFC) was pleased to receive a briefing by Department of Parks and Recreation staff on the FY2021 DPR Proposed Expense Budget. The UFC strongly endorses changes and enhancements reflected in the budget, including specific proposals that will directly benefit the urban forest. Indeed, these proposals begin to address overdue needs to preserve the urban forest and improve its condition.

We applaud the addition of an urban forester: while the number of single family site plan reviews is rising steeply, for example, the number of foresters has stagnated. Urban foresters are a crucial line of defense in preserving mature trees during redevelopment; with enough time for each single family construction review, they can advise how best to protect mature trees.

The UFC strongly supports the proposed increase in tree maintenance funds to reduce the pruning cycle from 17 to 10 years, and handle threats to public trees caused by severe weather events increasing with climate change. As a significant boost to the current tree maintenance budget, the proposed budget will also make it possible to strengthen pest management programs. We look forward to the County continuing to reduce the pruning cycle to the goal of five-years in future budgets.

We encourage increases in future DPR budgets, too, in order to boost data collection and strengthen staffing needed to implement tangible steps toward becoming a biophilic county. As the pressures of faster growth and climate change intersect, DPR will play a growing role in protecting the urban forest, which is in turn vital to combating climate change and ensuring a clean, sustainable environment for all residents.

Thank you for the chance to share the UFC's full backing of DPR's FY2021 proposed budget.

Sincerely,



Phil Klingelhofer
Chair, Urban Forestry Commission

Cc: Members, Arlington County Board
Mark Schwartz, Arlington County Manager
Jane Rudolph, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation