



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Sustainability

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: April 7, 2025

Re: Arbor Day Foundation Community Tree Distribution Program

Executive Summary

The Office of Sustainability, Public Works, and the Good Stewards CAAP Team will partner with the Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) to pilot their Community Canopy Tree Distribution program in Columbia. Using an online portal supported by the ADF and focused outreach the program will make 200 trees available to neighborhoods identified as high need for increased canopy through the Show-Me the Heat Project and Show-Me the Relief Program. The Office of Sustainability is coordinating outreach with the Office of Neighborhood Services, the Love Your Block Program, Community Connectors, the Tree Board, and Missouri Conservation Corps.

Discussion

The Arbor Day Foundation's Community Canopy program provides cities and organizations with a turnkey online tree reservation portal. This allows participants to choose between having a tree delivered directly to their residence or picking it up at a local site. City staff have collaborated with Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) staff to select tree species suitable for Columbia. Trees are reserved through a customized, ADF-hosted portal designed for this specific project. All participants must reserve a tree, regardless of whether they opt for home delivery or in-person pick-up. The tool evaluates the participant's property, recommending suitable tree species and planting locations, along with the projected benefits the tree will provide at maturity.

The program will initially be piloted in the Ridgeway and West Ash neighborhoods, which have been identified as areas experiencing elevated heat levels through the Show-Me the Heat project. Outreach through the Show-Me the Relief Program and other city efforts indicates significant interest from residents in these areas in planting trees to help mitigate heat.

Direct Mail Program

A total of 150 trees will be available for direct delivery via the online portal. These trees, provided in 1-gallon containers, will be accompanied by educational materials on planting and care. City staff and volunteers will promote the program in the Ridgeway and West Ash neighborhoods initially. If all trees are not reserved by residents of these focus areas, the program will be expanded citywide.



In-Person Tree Pick-Up Event

Fifty trees, in 5-gallon containers, will be available for pick-up at a neighborhood event in late April. City staff and volunteers will be present to provide educational support and planting supplies.

Program Evaluation

The ADF portal enables tracking of tree deployment by address. The Good Stewards CAAP Team will assess the program's effectiveness in tree distribution and conduct visual inspections of the trees distributed through both delivery methods over the next three years. Good Stewards plans to evaluate the program for potential inclusion in a broader community tree canopy development initiative.

This project supports the City's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans; the Urban Forest Master Plan and CAAP Goals NR-1 (Increase climate resilience and carbon sequestration potential of public and private lands) and NR-3 (Reduce negative impacts from stormwater runoff and flooding).

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: \$12,000.

Long-Term Impact: None.

Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Reliable Infrastructure, Secondary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Tertiary Impact: Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Legislative History

Date	Action
N/A	N/A

Suggested Council Action

Informational.