Agenda Item Summary Report

Meeting Date: November 10, 2025	Submitted by: Michelle Bailey-Hedgepeth

Item Title: Council Presentation | Department of Environment and Clean Water Partnership Grant | Tree Canopy Update – November 2025

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Work Session Item [X] Council Meeting Item [X]	Documentation Attached: Presentation and Report

Recommended Action:

This is an update on the in-kind services, specifically shade trees, that will, in turn, support an environmentally sustainable community. The total value of this grant is anywhere from $750,000 to $1,000,000 for the overall work effort that will be provided. The Town has been working with the County over the last year to conduct this analysis.

The Town Council is being asked to provide its input on this process.

Item Summary: The Department of the Environment's Urban Tree Program team finalized a comprehensive tree planting strategy for Bladensburg, targeting the installation of 442 trees to enhance canopy coverage while respecting utility lines and right-of-way limitations.

- Larger canopy trees will be planted in open areas to maximize shade and carbon capture, while smaller trees will be placed under power lines to ensure safety and longevity. The town has been divided into 17 planting zones with detailed mapping to optimize location, species diversity, and environmental benefit.

- Public right-of-way areas and town-owned lots were prioritized due to funding and long-term maintenance requirements, while planting on private property is restricted by the Woodland Conservation Fund's public land mandate. The team also identified Eco City Farms as a community partner to expand edible landscapes and discussed possible future collaboration with the school district, pending additional approvals.

- To support community engagement, the team developed a proactive communication plan centered on transparency and education. Residents will receive advance notices with visuals showing how new trees will transform their streets, with an opt-out option for those who prefer not to participate. A coordinated approach among public works, police, and code enforcement will help address objections and misinformation, while educational events will clarify right-of-way boundaries. Staff briefings before planting will ensure consistent messaging, and a November-to-February planting window was chosen to align with funding cycles and ensure higher survival rates.

- Site assessments revealed both opportunities and constraints across planting zones, emphasizing proper spacing for canopy connections and avoidance of conflicts with utilities and sightlines. Selective pavement removal will enable the creation of tree trenches and bump-outs, enhancing cooling and stormwater management.

- Bostwick House will serve as a central staging site for storage and operations, with water and facilities available through an informal agreement. The species list includes diverse, resilient

trees such as tulip trees for their pollinator value, with substitutions allowed to ensure availability. Edible species like figs and pears will support food forest efforts, while a "celebration tree" at the town's entryway will promote community pride.

- This project is an investment "for our great-grandchildren." The initiative reflects a long-term vision of urban cooling, carbon capture, and enhanced public spaces. Partnerships with Eco City Farms, Joe's Movement, and municipal agencies will ensure success and position Bladensburg for future sustainability grants.

The Town Administrator will provide an update on this project with Carole Barth and others from CWP and the County.

Budgeted Item: Yes [X] No [ ] **Budgeted Amount: NA – IN-KIND SERVICES** **One-Time Cost:** **Ongoing Cost:**	**Continued Date:**
Council Priority: Yes [ ] No [ ]	**Approved Date:**