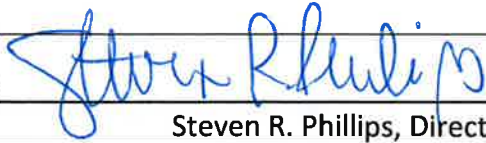


Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department	No. 1.6.1a
POLICY	Issued: November 20, 2014
Subject: Use of Tree Mitigation Funds	Revised: 03-11-2015
Approval:  _____ Steven R. Phillips, Director	

Approved by the Tree Advisory Board on February 9, 2015.

POLICY: This policy provides guidance as to the appropriate uses, intent, and mechanism for expenditure of funds from the City of Gainesville’s Tree Mitigation Fund.

INTENT: The intent of the Tree Mitigation Fund is to augment the City’s Urban Forestry Programs by funding projects that exceed the basic service levels for tree planting, routine pruning maintenance and hazard abatement, and removal of hazardous trees that were funded by the City at the time the changes to the Land Development Code were adopted by the Gainesville City Commission in 2013. These changes allowed the removal of significant high quality Heritage trees from the Urban Forest in exchange for money that would then be used for enhancement projects only. The Tree Mitigation Fund was never intended to pay for the City’s routine, basic urban forestry services.

PRACTICE:

The City of Gainesville’s Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department receives mitigation funds resulting from the removal of trees, tree violations, and other tree related consequences. These funds are placed in the City’s tree mitigation fund, a separate city fund that holds funds collected as tree mitigation. Section 30-254 (b)(2) of the City’s Land Development Code provides guidance for the use of these funds. Specifically, the Code states that “This fund may be used for new tree plantings associated with public improvement projects or for the preservation of trees through the purchase of conservation lands, but shall not be used for tree maintenance or for the installation of new trees that are required for a development.” This policy is intended to provide additional guidance and clarification for the use of the Tree Mitigation Funds. The City Manager or his designee approves the use of all Tree Mitigation project funds as recommended by staff.

PROCEDURE:

The following provides additional detail regarding appropriate uses, intent, and mechanism for expenditure of funds from the City of Gainesville’s Tree Mitigation Fund.

1. Tree Planting: The City of Gainesville's Tree Mitigation Funds may be used to fund the following tree planting related activities.
 - a. Purchasing trees for planting on public lands.
 - b. Purchasing irrigation and/or irrigation supplies related to the establishment of new tree plantings on public land.
 - c. Purchase of mulch, staking materials, or other necessary supplies to ensure the proper installation and long-term survival of new tree plantings on public land.
 - d. Contractual services related to tree planting and establishment on public lands.
 - e. Funds shall not be used for tree maintenance or for the installation of new trees that are required for a development.
2. Establishment of newly-planted trees: The Tree Mitigation Funds may be used for establishment of newly-planted trees on public land for a period of no more than three (3) years. Funds shall not be used for tree maintenance or for the installation of new trees that are required for a development. Related establishment functions could include but are not limited to: watering, fertilizing, mulching, and pruning.
3. Land Acquisition: The Tree Mitigation Funds may be used for the following land acquisition activities:
 - a. Acquisition of land to preserve high quality trees, heritage tree(s), or high quality natural habitat for public parks and preserves.
 - b. To meet the recommendations of PRCA Master Plan to acquire neighborhood parks as long as a park preserves high quality shade trees or heritage trees.
4. Habitat Restoration Projects: The Tree Mitigation Funds may be used for City nature park habitat restoration projects provided the projects include planting of new trees of species native to our region and that the projects have the recommendation of the Tree Advisory Board.
5. Staffing: The Tree Mitigation Funds may be used to fund City employees or interns to facilitate tree planting and establishment programs and projects funded with Tree Mitigation Fund.
6. Tree Advisory Board Updates: Each Tree Advisory Board meeting will include from staff a summary of expenditure and inputs to the Tree Mitigation Fund to date. The Tree Advisory Board will be appraised at an early point during the planning phases of proposed expenditure which will remove more than \$25,000 from the fund.