

Commitment to Sustainability, part 2: Protecting Our Infrastructure

Over the years, the District has made a substantial investment in its infrastructure, which may be defined as *the resources required for an activity*. In most cases when one thinks of these resources, things like buildings, water and sewer systems, roads and parking lots, and other constructed “improvements” come to mind. However, particularly in parks, things that live and grow are a considerable portion of our infrastructure: Try to imagine your neighborhood park without trees and grass!

Did you ever stop to think about the value of a tree? Sure, trees have value for the things they produce: oxygen, shade, fruits and nuts, and so forth; but they also have a capital value from both the money that has been invested in them over the years in pruning, water, and fertilizer, and the “compounded interest”, if you will, of their physical growth: a large tree is worth more in almost every way than is a small tree. In other words, the time invested in growing a tree to a good size is a resource invested in the tree.

In order to help protect all the resources invested in our trees, one of the things we will be doing is to undertake a tree inventory as the first step in preparing a management plan for our part of the urban forest. We will classify each tree by species, age, and condition, and ultimately will try to assign an actual fiscal value. The management plan, which will also include an inventory and assessment of the other parts of our infrastructure, will enable us to plan future work and future budgets to be as efficient as possible with our time and capital expenditures.

Next time we’ll begin talking about our soil, the single most valuable resource we have as a District (and, in the grand scheme of things, as a civilization!)

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