



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Department of Parks, Montgomery County, Maryland
9500 Brunett Avenue Silver Spring, Maryland 20901

MCPB Date: 03/17/2016

Agenda Item #8

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 10, 2016

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MR*
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director *Mitra Pedoeem*
Shuchi Vera, Division Chief, Management Services *S.V.*

FROM: Nancy Steen, Budget Manager *Nancy C. Steen*

SUBJECT: FY16 Operating Budget Adjustment – Funding for the Emerald Ash Borer

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approval of the Request for FY16 Operating Budget Adjustment for the Department of Parks for the damage caused by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a non-native invasive beetle.

BACKGROUND:

All budget adjustments over \$50,000 require Planning Board approval. Since the amount of this budget transfer request is less than ten percent of the divisional appropriations, County Council approval is not required.

The budget resolution approving the Department of Parks operating budget is appropriated at the divisional level. The Planning Board has authority to transfer appropriation between these major divisions.

The Department requests approval to adjust the FY16 divisional line item budget, as shown below, to accommodate this specific need.

This transfer is included in the Park Fund Five Month Projections which will be presented to the Planning Board by the Finance Department on March 17, 2016.

REQUEST APPROVAL:

Staff is requesting the Board's approval to transfer \$400,000 from the Park Fund Debt Service Budget to the Horticulture, Forestry and Environmental Education (HFEE) division, to fund tree removal services for damage caused by the Emerald Ash Borer.

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a non-native invasive beetle. This destructive beetle is projected to damage all ash trees in the County within as few as three years. As the owner of most of the stream valleys in Montgomery County, the Parks are home to thousands of ash trees. The impact of the EAB on our trees has become a public safety concern which we need to urgently address. The destruction of trees by this pest is happening more rapidly than originally projected and has now affected hundreds of trees along trails and in parks. Our FY17 proposed budget request includes funding for services associated with the EAB. However, since many trees have died and are now falling and creating a safety hazard, we are forced to immediately start work on cutting down infested trees using FY16 funds. The FY17 requested funding will still be needed to continue this process.

Finance has determined that we have the capacity to generate savings in debt service cost by delaying the bond sale scheduled for this fiscal year. Thus, we are requesting to transfer the budgetary savings of \$400,000 from debt service to cover a portion of this unanticipated cost to mitigate this safety hazard. Note that we anticipate needing another \$381,000 in additional funding for tree services related to the EAB damage prior to the end of this fiscal year. When we have identified the source of the remaining funding to cover this program cost, we will submit another budget adjustment request to reallocate funding.

The HFFE division has created a work program that will proactively address this safety issue and is poised and ready to encumber funds, with existing tree contractors, upon your approval.

Approved by the Planning Board: _____

Date: _____