

March 10, 2020

Dear Property Owner,

In the coming months, for environmental and liability reasons, the City of Bowie will be embarking on a tree removal and replacement program in various communities throughout the City, including Gradys Walk. Bradford Pear trees were planted extensively in the past 50 plus years throughout this region as ornamental landscape trees. The Gradys Walk subdivision has a very high percentage of these street trees, many of which are now 40+ feet in height. Since the initial planting of these trees, it has been determined, that these trees are a liability on multiple levels. While they have beautiful flowers and fall color, and are very nicely shaped in their younger years, they, unfortunately, become structurally unsound as they age resulting in brittle and weak branching making them a danger to people and property. They are also often shallow rooted damaging sidewalks and underground utilities. In addition, the Bradford Pear has been designated as a non-native, invasive plant and the natural spread of the fruit/seeds of these trees by wildlife and other factors has caused the Bradford Pear tree to overrun this area and others. This combination of factors makes their removal necessary.

The State of Maryland has an ongoing program to remove invasive species of the Bradford Pear and other similar trees throughout the State. Prince George's County no longer allows Bradford Pears to be planted in the ROW and has instituted a phased-in program to remove these trees throughout subdivisions in the county. The City of Bowie is preparing to begin a three-year program to remove the Bradford Pears in Gradys Walk and replace them with new flowering street trees. This same approach has and will be followed in communities throughout Bowie. The City's Community Forester is recommending the use of flowering, ornamental trees to retain the color the community has been accustomed to since its inception.

It is best practice to replace all the trees on a street with the same variety. In keeping with this, the Community Forester has established the following schedule for tree replacement in Gradys Walk:

- Crape Myrtle (tree form) - Galaxy Ct., Gradys Court, Grason Court, & Grason Terrace
- Yoshino Flowering Cherry - Grason Lane & Gradys Walk
- Kwanzan Flowering Cherry - Galaxy Lane

It should be noted that this removal and replacement plan would be executed over a 3-year, 3-phase program. Each phase would be composed of approximately 60 trees. Phase I will be implemented in 2020, Phase II in 2021 and Phase III in 2022. Each phase would have the trees and stumps removed in late summer, and the replacement trees would be planted in the Fall of the same year. Phase I will be approximately 60 Yoshino Flowering Cherry trees in the right-of-way along Gradys Walk between Rt. 197 and Grason Lane. Phase II will be 60 Yoshino Flowering Cherry trees along Grason Lane between Rt. 197 and Gradys Walk. The final phase will be the appropriate mix of Kwanzan Flowering Cherry trees for Galaxy Lane and the Crape Myrtle trees for Galaxy Court, Gradys Court, Grason Court and Grason Terrace.

A meeting will be held at 7 PM Thursday, April 9th in Room #101 of the Kenhill Center located at 2614 Kenhill Drive. At this time City staff will make a short presentation, have photos of the various recommended trees and be able to answer questions. Please join us if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Sally Cannon Hein
Director
Department of Community Services