

Tree grant to soften Clifton's most urban areas with greenery

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Nash Park in Clifton in September 2016.(Photo: Carmine Galasso/NorthJersey.com file)

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CLIFTON — About 50 trees will be planted in three neighborhood parks to soften the city's more urban locales with shade and greenery.

The hope is to spruce up parks largely used by residents out strolling with their dogs, or parents pushing their kids in carriages, officials said.

That won't mean necessarily spruce trees, of course, but ones chosen for each location and for their ability to provide shade and cooling.

Al DuBois, the city's recycling coordinator, said the goal is to make the city more livable. Officials decided that a \$20,000 grant for the project would be better used in parks than along city streets.

"We didn't want to plant trees somewhere where they might be dead in two years," DuBois said.

The plan is to plant 50 10- or 11-foot-tall trees of varying species to soften part of the city that is dense with blacktop and buildings.

The bulk of them, 32, are slated for Nash Park, with 11 others planned for Hird Park and seven for Randolph Park.

"We figured these parks are most need of refurbishment, so let's concentrate on these," DuBois said.

Adding trees, he said, will increase the canopy in the parks and improve species diversity, helping rebuild the city's ecosystem.

The money comes from a TD Bank Green Streets grant program for forestry initiatives in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

"Trees are important to the well-being of every city," Clifton Mayor James Anzaldi said.

He noted that for more than 20 years, Clifton has worked to obtain and maintain its designation as a "Tree City USA." This designation helps the city obtain grants to plant more trees.

Clifton is one of two cities in New Jersey to win the grant and one of 10 nationwide, including Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

TD Bank provides the funding for the grants, which are administered by the Arbor Day Foundation.

"Clifton is proud of its long-term quest to replace and replant," Anzaldi said. "Hird Park, Randolph Park and Nash Park will continue to have trees in future generations because of TD Bank's generous gift."

DuBois said the trees will be planted just before Arbor Day, which falls on April 27.

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