

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James R. Helmer

**SUBJECT: ACCEPTANCE OF STATE
URBAN FORESTRY GRANTS**

DATE: 03-03-08

Approved

Date

3/4/08

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Adoption of a resolution authorizing the City Manager to:

- (a) Submit a grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for up to \$105,000 in grant funding from the Urban Forestry Grant Program entitled, "An Urban Forest for Every Community," to be used for the development of Best Management Practices for San Jose's urban forest, with a total local match requirement of up to \$105,000; and
- (b) Submit a grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for up to \$114,000 in grant funding from the Urban Forestry Grant Program entitled, "An Urban Forest for Every Community," to assist in the development of an inventory of San Jose's urban forest, with a total local match requirement of up to \$114,000; and
- (c) Execute all documents necessary to effectuate the applications and the grants

OUTCOME

Recommendation (a) will provide financial assistance from the State in developing a set of urban forest Best Management Practices applicable to the City of San Jose's urban forest. These Best Management Practices will establish citywide policies, procedures and accountability for all urban forest activities. Recommendation (b) will provide additional funding from the State to further develop an urban forest inventory. The inventory will help the City to understand the depth and condition of its urban forest assets and serve as decision-making tool for the City and our stakeholders in managing, enhancing, and maintaining the urban forest. Adoption of the resolutions will support the City of San Jose's "Green Vision" and promote a healthy and sustainable urban forest.

BACKGROUND

In early 2007, the City Manager's Office spearheaded an effort to review City policy and procedures related to tree preservation. After an extensive outreach effort to solicit comments from the community, seek out best practices from other jurisdictions, and consult with recognized tree professionals, a set of six tree preservation and improvement strategies were submitted in a report accepted by the Transportation and Environment Committee on February 18, 2008. Within those strategies were specific actions to develop a set of urban forest Best Management Practices and establish a citywide inventory of trees in order to better manage, enhance, and maintain the urban forest.

In line with these strategies, the Department of Transportation (DOT) presented proposals to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) for funding from the Urban Forestry Grant Program entitled, "An Urban Forest for Every Community." The proposals requested separate funding to develop both a set of Best Management Practices and an inventory of the City's urban forest. CDF has accepted the proposals contingent on the City Council resolution accepting the grants and approving matching funds to be used in the completion of these projects. The project must be completed by March 1, 2010, with grant funding expiring at that time.

ANALYSIS

Best Management Practices

Throughout the recent review of the City's tree preservation policies, the public raised concerns regarding the City's confusing and, what often appeared to be, contradictory tree-related policies, procedures, and practices in the delivery of tree-related services. In response to these concerns and under the leadership of the City Manager's Office, several departments began discussing, reviewing, and researching various approaches to strengthen this area. As a result, it has been determined that having a set of Best Management Practices – a single collection of policies, procedures, and reference materials utilized and followed by all City departments and urban forest stakeholders – would be greatly beneficial.

The Best Management Practices will be created using the policies, procedures, and practices that best promote a healthy and sustainable urban forest and that can be most efficiently implemented and utilized by the City, the community, contractors, PG&E, and other stakeholders. The Best Management Practices will, among other things, guide decision-making processes; standardize tree planting and replacement requirements; standardize maintenance and pruning techniques; and generally provide a single source of information and policy guidance for use by City staff, developers, and the community as a whole. It is envisioned that the Best Management Practices will be easily accessible and available to the public. The document will also serve as a tool to ensure accountability for the urban forest among all City departments and stakeholders.

Developing a comprehensive Best Management Practices for our urban forests is a considerable undertaking. In completing this project, the City will utilize existing staff and resources to

further research and review needed elements, perform coordination and outreach with various stakeholders, and recommend final content. CDF grant funds will be used to engage consulting services to perform professional level technical writing, formatting, and final document compilation. Grant funding may also be utilized for final document production, distribution, or other related activities.

Citywide Tree Inventory

Creating a comprehensive and accurate inventory of the City's urban forest assets has been a long-time goal of the City. To date, several solid individual efforts have been made by the City, contractors, and Our City Forest, but none have created a comprehensive and fully useful inventory or established a sustainable system for achieving one. With the City's Green Vision goal to plant 100,000 trees within 15 years, along with its commitment to the Urban Environment Accords by planting 50% of the vacant street tree planting sites (estimated at 60,000) by 2012, having a tree inventory has become a necessity in order to identify suitable planting locations. Equally important is the need to know a variety of specific information about each tree, such as its location, species, size, and condition in order to properly manage, maintain and protect the urban forest.

The tree inventory project will establish the processes needed to integrate existing inventory and geographical data, collect and input new data, and purchase the necessary software and hardware systems. It is anticipated that only a portion of the trees in the City will be inventoried, which will serve as a pilot process to help define the parameters and needs for completing a citywide tree inventory, including what data need to be collected and how Our City Forest, residents, contractors, and other tree professionals may be utilized in creating the inventory. The CDF grant will fund costs associated with the purchase and setup of data collection equipment and tree inventory and management software, computer and server hardware, and any other technical services needed.

City Matching Funds

DOT staff met with the CDF grant administrator to discuss the requirements of the City to provide matching funds. The CDF representative explained that all funding allocated or resources used by the City, local businesses, volunteers, and any Federal grants to deliver these projects may be applied to meet the matching obligations. The following outlines some of the resources that will be used in meeting the matching requirements:

- City contributions will include staff time, equipment, and supplies used to complete these projects. The development of a set of Best Management Practices and a tree inventory are already on the work plans of several staff throughout the City. DOT will be the lead department in completing the projects with support from other departments as necessary and as resources allow.
- The ongoing volunteer support and development of website projects by San José State University Honor Students may be used as matching funds.

- Our City Forest is supportive of both projects. Some of their associated volunteer efforts and costs may contribute to the matching funds requirements.
- PG&E has agreed to donate staff time for general review of the Best Management Practices document and more focused input on tree management near utility connections.
- Staff will continue to look for and recommend other possible funding sources, such as Green Vision funding allocations.

The City's matching contributions will be funded in fiscal year 2007-2008 by DOT's "Maintenance Backlog – Neighborhood Appearance Fund" and from DOT's "Personal Services Fund". It is estimated that the matching contributions for the Best Management Practices grant will be approximately \$105,000. It is estimated that the matching contributions for the Inventory grant will be approximately \$114,000.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

By enabling fundamental improvement in the systems and procedures that support tree maintenance activities, acceptance of the CDF Grants and completion of the projects will contribute to the current performance measure for general condition of the City street trees, which currently is estimated at 37% of the urban forest in good or better condition.

Some of the recommended changes in City policies or guidelines as a result of the Best Management Practices project may require approval by the City Council. These recommendations will be brought forward to the City Council when appropriate. The City may apply for additional grants from CDF once the original projects are successfully completed. Any additional grants would require City Council resolutions to accept and Council would have an opportunity to review their appropriateness.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The City Council could choose not to accept the grants or provide the matching funds.

Pros: While the City would still likely perform these projects, it would not be obligated to comply with the schedule and matching funding requirements specified by the State and the grant.

Cons: The City would miss an opportunity to leverage State Funds.

Reason for not recommending: The development of a set of Best Management Practices and a tree inventory is necessary to improve the condition and sustainability of the urban forest and improve all tree-related services delivered to the community.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

Significant public outreach has occurred during the review of the City's Tree Preservation Services. These grant applications are a result of those community meetings. Additional public outreach will be conducted during the projects as appropriate and prior to final publication or submittal of the urban forest Best Management Practices to the City Council for approval.

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the Department of Environmental Services, the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, the Department of Public Works, and the City Manager's Budget Office.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

Acceptance of these grants will continue to support public/private partnerships as well as State/City partnerships.

COST IMPLICATIONS

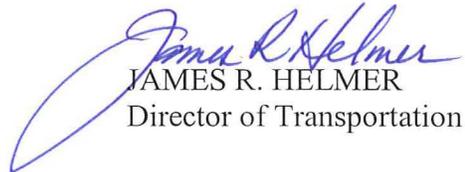
Approval of the recommendations above would result in a commitment of up to \$219,000 of existing City resources from the City's General Fund for the matching funds for the two grants.

BUDGET REFERENCE

| Fund # | Appn # | Appn. Name | RC # | Total Appn | City's Matching Fund | 2007-2008 Adopted Capital Budget (Page) | Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.) |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|------|---------------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 001 | 4465 | Maintenance Backlog – Neighborhood Appearance | | \$ 2,060,000 | \$ 198,000 | V - 1153 | 10/16/07 Ord. No. 28143 |
| 001 | 0511 | Department of Transportation – Personal Services | | \$21,178,141 | \$21,000 | N/A | 02/12/08 Ord. No. 28241 |
| Total Funding Available | | | | \$23,238,141 | \$219,000 | | |

CEQA

CEQA: Not a project


 JAMES R. HELMER
 Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Kevin O'Connor, at 277-3028.