



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James R. Helmer

**SUBJECT: OUR CITY FOREST OPERATING
GRANT AGREEMENT, FISCAL
YEAR 2005-06**

DATE: 11-22-05

Approved

Date

12/1/05

Council District: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Operating Grant Agreement with Our City Forest for fiscal year 2005-06 in the amount of \$141,000.

BACKGROUND

Our City Forest was initiated in 1991 by the City of San José to establish a community based non-profit organization to help the City meet its urban forestry goals through involvement of community volunteers in tree planting projects and in the ongoing care of establishing newly planted trees. Our City Forest has been successful in obtaining well more than a million dollars in additional grant monies from other granting sources to fund the planting of tens of thousands of young trees along the City's streets and public properties. In the process, their projects have fostered community involvement by organizing the neighborhood residents in tree plantings, in which the residents learn how to properly care for their young trees. Our City Forest has a three year stewardship program to monitor the survival and health of the trees. As a result, our City's neighborhoods and parks are enhanced with the shade and beauty of additional trees and the residents are working together to improve their environment.

ANALYSIS

The grant amount totals \$141,000 to fund staff salaries and other operating expenses for Our City Forest. This amount reflects a percentage reduction in operating support from the previous year based on a similar percentage reduction in General Fund budgets. The operating grant supports Our City Forest in the following services and activities:

1. Organize, staff, and obtain materials for neighborhood tree planting projects which enhance the beauty and livability of the neighborhoods and help to combat the urban

- heat island effect, which is a dramatic increase in air temperature from the extensive coverage of asphalt and concrete in our urban environment
2. Establish Community tree stewardship programs for the residents to oversee the continued health and care of their young trees
 3. Organize volunteer recruitment and training programs, such as the Tree Amigos, which are volunteers that coordinate the projects within their neighborhoods
 4. Secure additional tree planting grants and solicit private donations that augment the City's contributions to improve the urban forest
 5. Conduct Tree education and outreach events to bring awareness in the community to the value that trees contribute to the urban landscape
 6. Distribute newsletters (2,000 copies a month) to elected officials, service clubs, schools, volunteers, and citizens highlighting the projects and their effect on the neighborhoods
 7. Maintain a website with information about trees, their care and community events
 8. Foster community building by mobilizing neighborhoods or blocks for tree planting events.

OUTCOME

The continuation of funding for Our City Forest's programs, which promotes tree planting projects throughout the City, and especially within the SNI neighborhoods, result in additional tree canopy along San José's streets and in other public properties. As these trees mature, they will help to counteract the urban heat island effect, provide shade and beauty to the neighborhoods, thereby increasing the desirability of our neighborhood communities

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Our City Forest recruits and trains public volunteers for their tree planting projects.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office and the City Attorney's Office.

COST IMPLICATIONS

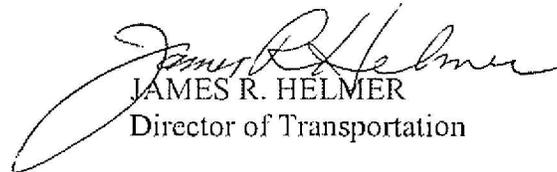
The cost for the Our City Forest grant is budgeted in the 2005-06 Adopted Operating Budget for the Department of Transportation. This project is consistent with the Council-approved Budget Strategy General Principles section in that it leverages volunteer efforts and delivers services through appropriate community partnerships.

BUDGET REFERENCE

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	RC#	Total Appn	2005-2006 Adopted Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
Current Funding Available						
001	0512	Department of Transportation Non-personal / Equipment		\$11,901,255	VIII-132	10/18/05 Ord. No. 27580
Total Current Funding Available				\$11,901,255		

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP04-313


JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation