



COUNCIL AGENDA: 12-14-04

ITEM: 2.29

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James R. Helmer

SUBJECT: OUR CITY FOREST OPERATING
GRANT AGREEMENT, FISCAL
YEAR 2004-05

DATE: 11-22-04

Approved

Date

11/30/04

Council District: Citywide

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the Operating Grant Agreement with Our City Forest for fiscal year 2004-05 in the amount of \$152,000.

BACKGROUND

Our City Forest was initiated in late 1991 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 became a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation in May 1994 and has operated independently from the City since that date. The City has provided financial support in the form of an operating grant each year since 1994. To date, Our City Forest community volunteers have planted over 30,000 trees in San José and provide ongoing stewardship for these trees.

ANALYSIS

The grant amount totals \$152,000 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 their efforts to provide the following services and activities:

1. Community tree planting projects
2. Community tree stewardship
3. Volunteer recruitment and training
4. Secures tree planting grants and private donations
5. Tree education programs and outreach events
6. Tree newsletter (2,000 copies a month) to elected officials, service clubs, schools, volunteers, and citizens
7. Community building by mobilizing whole neighborhoods or blocks for tree planting events.

Our City Forest is instrumental in providing street tree planting for neighborhood improvements in Strong Neighborhood Initiative areas and other economic development projects. The Department of Transportation receives funding from the San José Redevelopment Agency for these SNI tree plantings, and funding is then awarded to Our City Forest through a separate grant agreement.

Our City Forest has been very successful obtaining grants for tree planting projects in the neighborhoods from a variety of funding sources. However, the availability of grants that cover basic operating expenses and salaries are much more limited. Therefore, the City is instrumental in providing support for their basic operations, which allows them to pursue the more readily available tree-planting grants. As part of this agreement, Our City Forest agrees to use these other sources to fund projects that will plant at least 300 15-gallon trees along the public right-of-way in San José.

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, the City Attorney's Office, and the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement.

COST IMPLICATIONS

The cost for the Our City Forest grant has already been budgeted in the 2004-05 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.	Amt. for Contract	2004-2005 Adopted Budget	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
001	0512	Non-personal/Equipment		\$11,990,094	N/A	Appropriation Ordinance, Section 2.21	10/12/04, #27267

CEQA

Not a Project.

for James R. Helmer
James R. Helmer
Director of Transportation

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