



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: James R. Helmer

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 10-05-09

Approved

Date

10/8/09

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

SUBJECT: OUR CITY FOREST 2009-2010 OPERATING GRANT AND MATCHING GRANT AGREEMENTS

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Approval of an Annual Operating Grant Agreement with Our City Forest for 2009-2010, in an amount not to exceed Two-Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand (\$275,000) dollars; and
- (b) Approval of a Matching Grant Agreement with Our City Forest in an amount not to exceed One-Hundred Twenty Thousand (\$120,000) dollars for Our City Forest to apply towards its local match required for the AmeriCorps Grant.

OUTCOME

Approval of the above recommendations will support Our City Forest (OCF), a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation, in its pursuit and acceptance of grants from the State of California and other agencies to enhance and expand community forestry activities in San José.

BACKGROUND

The City of San José initiated the establishment of OCF as a community-based non-profit organization in 1991 to help the City meet its community forestry goals, including increasing public awareness, building the capacity within the community for proper tree planting and care, and leveraging additional funds for community forestry services. For each of the past 17 years, the City has provided an annual operating grant to OCF that provides base funding and assists OCF in its pursuit of additional tree planting and community forestry grants from other funding sources. In turn, OCF uses these additional grants to organize and implement tree planting projects in the public right-of-way, at many City facilities, in City parks, and on school grounds within San José; conduct research; and to perform public outreach and education activities that enhance, promote and protect a healthy community forest.

ANALYSIS

2009-2010 Operating Grant

In order for OCF to continue to be an effective extension of City tree services and to obtain grants from other agencies, the Department of Transportation included \$149,000 in its 2009-2010 Adopted Operating Budget for an operating grant to OCF. This grant provides the base funding level for OCF operations related to fund development, finance and grants administration. As part of this grant, OCF is required to obtain outside grants to conduct community education, outreach, volunteer training, perform young tree care, and support the planting of at least 1500 public and private trees in San José during 2009-2010.

The City is working towards the development of a Community Forest Master Plan which will provide the strategic framework and implementation work plans necessary to achieve its community forestry goals. This year's operating grant agreement with OCF includes two specific projects that are critical elements of this Master Plan effort. The completion of a Citywide sustainable street tree inventory has been prioritized as the crucial step in the development of the Master Plan and the pursuit of future alternative funding for street tree maintenance. To accomplish this, the City has pooled limited amounts of funding and resources from a variety of sources to build the database and begin the field data collection effort in a cost-efficient manner.

As part of this year's OCF operating grant, \$66,000 from the Maintenance Backlog appropriation will be provided to OCF to perform a portion of the City's street tree inventory across approximately 8 percent of the City's geographical area. This work includes utilizing handheld data entry devices to collect field data about the species, size, and condition of the street trees, their planting sites and location of potential planting sites that are currently vacant. The data is then downloaded into a comprehensive database application that facilitates the ongoing maintenance and sustainability of the data. This information is vital for monitoring progress on the Urban Environmental Accords and Green Vision goals, as well as securing state grant funding for the eventual formulation of the Master Plan.

The second project allocates a portion of the existing CalFire state grant funding in the amount of \$60,000 for OCF to provide technical services in the research, technical writing, editing and community outreach necessary for the preparation of the City's Community Forest Best Management Practices Manual. This manual will provide a resource to developers, contractors, residents, property owners, City staff and a multitude of other users who need to know and understand the City's policies and guidelines regarding tree planting and tree care. This project expands the City's strategic partnership with OCF and leverages existing funding sources to accomplish this vital body of work.

2009-2010 Matching Grant

In 2007, OCF received a three-year federal AmeriCorps grant of approximately \$1 million to assist the City by helping to build a stronger community forest through training, education,

young tree care and planting. The City provided a matching sum of \$120,000 in 2007-2008 and again in 2008-2009, and will provide a third and final year of matching funding of \$120,000 in 2009-2010. The grant funds the hiring of 22 trainees to provide community forestry services to the neighborhoods. Each AmeriCorps member receives 350 hours of vocational training in the field and classroom. They are each expected to provide 1,400 hours of community service supervised by a certified arborist/urban forester and, upon completion of their 10-month service, each trainee will have earned a \$15,000 stipend. OCF has experienced great success with this effort, with a high number of the members successfully completing all of the requirements of the program.

In the third year of this program, a selected group of the AmeriCorps members will provide valuable assistance to the City by working on the citywide street tree inventory specified in the operating grant.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The proposed OCF grant agreements include performance measures and other special provisions to provide adequate accountability. In general, the operating and matching grant agreements allow for six payments to OCF as various target dates and submittals are met or are on schedule for completion.

The following is a summary of the key performance measures and special provisions in the Operating Grant agreement:

- OCF must procure grants that support the planting of at least 1500 trees by October 15, 2010;
- Submittal of required financial reports by February 1, 2010;
- Submittal of two interim drafts and a print-ready final version of the Community Forest Best Management Practices Manual by February 21, 2010;
- OCF must be on schedule to inventory the street trees and planting sites of four neighborhood zones by June 1, 2010.

The following is a summary of the key performance measures and special provisions in the Matching Grant agreement:

- OCF will enroll at least 22 trainees in the AmeriCorps program by November 1, 2009.
- OCF must be on schedule to graduate at least 15 trainees by August 31, 2010.
- OCF will update the Green San José federal grant training curriculum, handbooks and timelines.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

Not applicable.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

- 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)**

The proposed agreements do not meet any of the criteria above; however, this memorandum will be posted on the City's website for the October 27, 2009 Council agenda. This report and the recommended actions have been coordinated with the Executive Director of Our City Forest.

COORDINATION

This report has been coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office; the Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement; the City Attorney's Office and Our City Forest.

FISCAL/POLICY ALIGNMENT

The proposed agreements support the Council-approved Green Vision goal to plant 100,000 trees by 2022 and to fulfill the City's commitment to the Urban Environmental Accords, Action 11, to plant 50% of the available sidewalk tree planting sites by 2012. They also support the City's goals for energy-reduction, watershed protection, air quality, tree planting and community forestry community education.

COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS

The cost for the OCF operating grant is budgeted in the 2009-2010 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.

The OCF matching grant agreement will be funded from one-time funds budgeted in the Department of Transportation's General Fund non-personal/equipment appropriation.

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BUDGET REFERENCE

The table below identifies the fund and appropriations proposed to fund the grant agreements with OCF as recommended in this memo.

Fund #	Appn #	Appn. Name	Total Appn	Amt. for Contracts/Improvements	2009-2010 Proposed Operating Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
001	0512	Non-Personal/Equipment – Department of Transportation	\$12,151,647	\$120,000	VIII - 254	6/23/09 Ord 28593
446	0512	Non-personal/Equipment – Department of Transportation	\$2,233,697	\$149,000	VIII - 254	6/23/09 Ord 28593
001	3667	Urban Forestry Grant	\$123,000	\$60,000	N/A	6/23/09 Ord 28593
001	6536	Maintenance Backlog Transportation Infrastructure	\$187,000	\$66,000	IX - 38	6/23/09 Ord 28593
Total Current Funding Available			\$14,695,344	\$395,000		

CEQA

Exempt, File No. PP04-313.

/s/

JAMES R. HELMER
Director of Transportation

For questions please contact Ralph Mize, City Arborist, at (408) 277-5514.