



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: February 7, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Resolution Authorizing Submission Of An Urban Forestry Grant Application In The Amount Of \$73,600 For The Development Of A Santa Barbara Urban Forest Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara for Funding From the Urban Forestry Grant Program Entitled, "An Urban Forest For Every City", as Provided Through Proposition 40 and/or Proposition 84.

DISCUSSION:

The City of Santa Barbara has a long history of municipal tree planting and a diverse urban forest. Initially spearheaded through the horticultural and civic leadership of prominent City residents in the late 1800s, the City's urban forest is currently comprised of more than 50,000 trees along public streets and in parks and other public places, and an estimated 250,000 trees on private property. There are more than 450 species of trees on public property.

Although the City has a Street Tree Master Plan (1977) and management of the public urban forest is guided by the tree preservation policies outlined in the Santa Barbara Municipal Code (Chapter 15.20 and Chapter 15.24), neither outline long-term management objectives including canopy cover, infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, land use, aesthetics and community objectives. In certain areas of the city, the urban forest is aging, mature trees conflict with infrastructure, and species diversity is in decline. An urban forest management plan will allow the City to establish and implement long-term objectives and effectively allocate resources.

In the last five years, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) completed a comprehensive inventory of city street, park and facility trees, and expanded its community education and outreach programs. In addition, Council approved updates to the City's tree preservation policies that established standards and clarified tree regulations. The next step is to develop a long-term guide for the preservation and enhancement of Santa Barbara's urban forest.

Project Description

The primary purpose of the urban forest management plan is to address long-term management objectives including canopy cover, infrastructure constraints, environmental resources, land use, aesthetics and community objectives. The Parks and Recreation Department will manage the project. The project proposes to establish a technical advisory committee with representation from the City's Street Tree Advisory Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission, Santa Barbara Beautiful, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the local nursery and tree care industries, and Southern California Edison. The Department will conduct community meetings and work with Community Development and Public Works Department staff in the development of the plan.

Urban Forestry Grant Program

The Urban Forestry Grant Program, administered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), provides funds to local agencies for the implementation of urban forestry projects. In September 2011, the Parks and Recreation (Department) submitted a concept proposal to CAL Fire for the development of an urban forest management plan. In January 2012, the Department was notified that its concept proposal had ranked high enough to be eligible for the next step, which is submission of a full proposal. The full proposal application requires a Council resolution authorizing the grant application and designating the City's agent to conduct all contract negotiations. If funded, the Department will return to Council with the full project scope and the project would begin in Fiscal Year 2013.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting \$73,600 in grant funding. The project budget includes matching funds in the amount of \$26,156, for a total project cost of \$99,756. Department matching funds represent the in-kind value of Assistant Director and City Arborist staff hours for project management and implementation in Fiscal Year 2013 and would not require new appropriations to the Department's annual operating budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

In addition to quality of life and aesthetic community benefits, the City's urban forest provides energy conservation, water quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat benefits.

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SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office