



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: July 17, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: California Department Of Forestry And Fire Protection Urban Forest Management Plan Grant Award

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council increase revenues and appropriations by \$71,092 in the Parks and Recreation Department Fiscal Year 2013 Miscellaneous Grants Fund for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Urban and Community Forestry Grant.

DISCUSSION:

Background

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 will 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 project will begin in July 2012 and continue through March 2014. 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 CAL FIRE, provides funds to local agencies for the implementation of urban forestry projects. On February 7, 2012, the City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the Parks and Recreation Department to submit a grant proposal to CAL FIRE under the Urban Forestry Program. In May 2012, the Department was awarded grant funds in the amount of \$71,092 to complete an Urban Forest Management Plan.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The total cost of the project is \$120,342. The Parks and Recreation Department is providing matching funds in the amount of \$49,250. This includes the in-kind value of the Assistant Director and City Arborist staff hours for project management and implementation in Fiscal Year 2013 and does 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