

DATE ISSUED: August 27, 2003

REPORT NO. 03-177

ATTENTION: Rules Committee  
Agenda of September 3, 2003

SUBJECT: Quarterly Status Report on Community Forest Initiative

### SUMMARY

Issue – Shall Rules Committee accept this status report on various aspects of the Community Forest Initiative?

Manager’s Recommendation – Accept this status report.

Other Recommendations – None.

Fiscal Impact – None with this action.

### BACKGROUND

#### Tree Tally

A Community Forest Initiative objective announced by Mayor Murphy in January 2002 was to plant 5,000 trees on public property each year for 20 years, for a total of 100,000 trees for San Diego. Allowing time for Initiative start up, the target was to plant the first 5,000 trees by June 30, 2003 and to plant 5,000 trees each fiscal year after that. The last Tree Tally provided to this committee was dated March 6, 2003. *Attachment 1* is an updated Tree Tally, organized by 6 month periods so that fiscal year and calendar year totals can be obtained. The tally shows that the actual number of trees planted by June 30, 2003 was 5,101, exceeding the 5,000 tree target. The attachment also shows the actual number of trees planted in July 2003, the first month of the current fiscal year.

## Fiscal Year 2004 Community Forest Budget Plan

Fiscal Year 2004 Community Forest Budget Plan considers all potential funding sources, not just City funding sources. It is presented in *Attachment 2*. It includes planned funding to plant an estimated 4,818 trees, and potential funding to plant an additional 542 trees, for a total projection of 5,360 trees. It is unlikely that all potential funding sources will be received. However, the outlook appears favorable for meeting the target of planting 5,000 trees on public property in Fiscal Year 2004. The Budget Plan is updated quarterly.

## Urban Ecosystem (Tree Canopy) Analysis

The July 2003 American Forests' San Diego Urban Ecosystem Analysis was distributed to the Mayor and City Council in a memo dated July 22, 2003. The study used satellite imagery to show that the City of San Diego lost 27% "tree cover" defined as "tree canopy comprised of trees (including riparian and woodland trees) and chaparral over six feet tall" between 1985 and 2002.

The report also shows that in 2002 the City of San Diego's "tree cover" was 13% overall. Considering San Diego's existing tree cover, climate, rainfall and geography, the report recommends a target goal of 25% tree cover overall. The study indicates that existing trees and chaparral over six feet tall:

- \* Remove 4.3 million pounds of air pollution annually valued at \$10.8 million annually. The removed pollutants include nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone and particulate matter of 10 microns or less.
- \* Provide stormwater retention capacity of 82 million cubic feet. It would cost an estimated \$164 million to build infrastructure with a 20 year life to handle this amount of stormwater if this tree cover were lost.
- \* Sequester 9,144 tons of carbon annually, and store 1.2 million tons of carbon.

In late August 2003, City staff was trained to use American Forests' CITYgreen software. The software can be used with the City's new green data layer for its Geographic Information System (GIS) and with shape files of geographic boundaries in order to measure air and water quality benefits of tree cover within those boundaries. Examples of geographic boundaries include City Council Districts, Community Planning Areas, neighborhoods, environmental areas and proposed development projects. In addition, staff is currently working with two universities on potential research projects using the City's green data layer.

The Urban Ecosystem Analysis already calculated the air and water quality benefits of the 2002 tree cover for each of the 8 City Council Districts and 52 Community Planning Areas. On July 22, 2003, the study was distributed to members of the Community Planners Committee, and will be distributed to members of the Community Planning Groups as they meet over the next month or two. Plans are being developed to

make the GIS green data layer, CITYgreen software, and shape files of community planning areas available to the public for use at Community Service Centers.

Since large-scale planting of chaparral or of riparian or woodland trees is unlikely, any major tree planting efforts will need to be on public property (which is the objective of the Mayor's goal to plant 100,000 trees on public property by 2020), and on private property (either as required by City Development Permits, or at property owner initiative). To encourage private tree planting, the City's volunteer Community Forest Advisory Board is currently coordinating development of brochures, public presentations and an addition to the City's web site to educate and motivate the public about the benefits of trees and actions they can take to help develop, nurture and protect the community forest.

#### New Administrative Procedures Associated with Street Tree Removals

Community Forest Advisory Board recommended Street Division develop a process to better notify the public about street trees which have been proposed or approved for removal at property owners' expense. Beginning July 1, 2003, Street Division implemented administrative changes which do not add any time to the review process, but which better inform the public.

When a Request for Street Tree Removal at private expense per SDMC 62.0604 is received by Street Division, one new procedure entails a City Tree Inspector posting a "Notice of Removal Request" on the tree at the time of inspection. The 45-day public review period is concurrent with the existing review period by Council District Offices, Community Planning Groups and Community Forest Advisory Board. Another new procedure amends the monthly report to these groups, which lists Proposed Street Tree Removals, by including more information about the reasons for the tree removal requests. After this public review/comment period, if a Street Tree Removal Permit is approved by Street Division, a third new procedure entails a City Tree Inspector mailing a "Notice of Removal Permit" to the property owner, who must post it on the tree prior to the tree's removal.

#### Tree and Community Forest Ordinance

An amended draft "Tree and Community Forest Ordinance" is expected to be presented to the Community Forest Advisory Board and Rules Committee in early 2004. If approved in concept, it will be sent to the Community Planners Committee and individual Community Planning Groups for a 45-day review/comment period. Subsequently, it will be returned to the Community Forest Advisory Board and Rules Committee with any comments received, then docketed at City Council in Spring 2004.

ALTERNATIVE

Do not accept this status report.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Terri Williams  
Manager's Liaison to Community Forest  
Advisory Board

---

George I. Loveland  
Senior Deputy City Manager

Attachments: 1. [Tree Tally for January 1, 2002 – July 31, 2003](#)  
2. [Tree Budget Plan, FY 2004, Dated August 22, 2003](#)