

DATE ISSUED: January 27, 2005 REPORT NO. 05-030

ATTENTION: Rules, Finance, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee  
Agenda of February 2, 2005

SUBJECT: Status Report on the Community Forest Initiative and the Public  
Tree and Community Forest Ordinance

#### SUMMARY

Issues – 1) Should the Rules Committee accept this report on the status of the Community Forest Initiative, and 2) Should the Rules Committee direct the City Manager to prepare an evaluation of the implementation method and costs associated with the provisions of the proposed draft Public Tree and Community Forest Ordinance?

Manager's Recommendations – 1) Accept the status report, and 2) Direct the City Manager to identify the best method to implement provisions of the draft ordinance, prepare a cost analysis of the implementation of the ordinance requirements, and return to the Rules Committee to present the analysis.

Other Recommendations – The Community Forest Advisory Board approved the draft ordinance for staff review on October 13, 2004, and recommended that the current draft be brought before the Rules Committee for consideration and analysis of fiscal impact.

Fiscal Impact – None with this action.

#### BACKGROUND

In 1995 the City of San Diego recognized the value of developing additional regulations for the community forest when it adopted Resolution No. R-286098 creating the Tree Advisory Board. The main duties of the Tree Advisory Board include advocating and

formulating proactive urban forestry policies, ordinances and guidelines to promote the planting of more new trees and to protect existing trees. In 1999 the City Council adopted Municipal Code Sections 26.0501 through 26.0503 additionally charging the Board with providing advice and recommendations directly to the Mayor, City Council and the City Manager on all policy issues relating to urban forestry.

In 2002, the Tree Advisory Board, now referred to as the Community Forest Advisory Board, began working with City staff to draft an ordinance that would protect community trees, specifically ones that have historical value, by allowing for the designation of these trees as heritage and landmark trees. The draft ordinance also attempted to set guidelines for replacement of existing public trees and a procedure for saving existing trees. Also in 2002, Mayor Murphy announced the Community Forest Initiative objective of planting 5,000 trees on public property each year for 20 years, for a total of 100,000 trees for San Diego.

## DISCUSSION

### Tree Tally

The first year after the tree planting goal was announced, a total of 5,175 trees were planted on public property within the City of San Diego, excluding trees planted as a result of a development permit requirement. In the calendar year ending December 31, 2004, a total of 5,909 trees were planted. *Attachment 1* is the Calendar Year 2004 Tree Tally.

The Community Foerst Advisory Board expects to roll out its public outreach campaign beginning in the first half of 2005. The campaign includes informative brochures, newsletters, and presentations to community groups. This outreach effort is expected to increase awareness of the City's tree planting and tree protection goals, and thus help in increasing the number of trees planted per year.

### Additional Tree Planting in the Region

Another tree planting effort which is enhancing the community forest region-wide is the San Diego Regional Energy Office's "Cool Communities Shade Tree Program." Throughout the County of San Diego, the program planted 4,981 shade trees from January through December 2004, primarily on private property. The Program has enough funding to continue through March 2006 with a county-wide goal of planting 17,000 trees.

### Community Forest Initiative's Funding Status

Funding for the City's program for Fiscal Year 2005 comes primarily from \$400,000 of Citywide CDBG funds. To date, over 65% of the funds have been allocated, and it is expected that majority, if not all of the \$400,000 budget, will be expended by end of this fiscal year.

### Trees Destroyed by Recent Storms

As of January 25, 2005, it is estimated that over 1,350 trees within City parks, open space and right-of-way were lost due to the effects of the recent storms. Caltrans estimates an additional loss of 473 trees throughout highways within the City's boundaries. The City and Caltrans are still in clean-up mode. Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Governor's Office of Emergency Operations has toured the affected sites with the City's Urban Forest Superintendent to determine the damage and assess replacement of these trees.

### City Organizational Structure and Budgetary Elements for Trees

In FY 2005, the Water Department took over the administrative and program management functions of the Community Forest Initiative. The department's Water Resources Management section, which develops and implements water conservation programs, is providing support to the Community Forest Advisory Board. Urban forests play a key role in the management of watersheds and reduction of urban runoff.

### Draft Public Tree and Community Forest Ordinance

At the October 2004 Community Forest Advisory Board meeting, the Board approved a draft of the proposed Public Tree and Community Forest Ordinance. The attached ordinance provides for regulating certain aspects of tree planting, protection, removal and replacement. The draft ordinance further recognizes that the community forests play an important role in enhancing air quality, providing energy conservation, reducing storm water runoff, limiting erosion and increasing the quality of life for its residents as well as visiting tourists. These benefits result in financial savings, and are increased when the size and extent of the tree canopy is increased.

The goal of the draft Public Tree and Community Forest Ordinance is to have a thriving and sustainable tree canopy which extends over all areas of the City, especially where people live, shop and play. Specific objectives include, among others, a total tree canopy of 25% (to meet the goal recommended by American Forest, a national non-profit organization that promotes the benefits and proliferation of urban forests); to have an age and species diversified tree canopy; and no net loss in tree canopy due to development or redevelopment activities. The enclosed draft ordinance outlines how the Board hopes to achieve these through tree designations and guidelines for removal and replacement of trees.

The draft ordinance was initially shared with various City departments for input, and their comments have been incorporated into the draft. Remaining comments or issues surround the area of resource allocations implementation, and enforcement. The Board would like to see the development of this draft ordinance to continue and would like to see an economic analysis of its impact to City operations. Thus it is recommended that City staff prepare an evaluation of the implementation method and costs associated with the provision of the proposed draft ordinance.

ALTERNATIVE

1) Do not accept this status report, and 2) Do not direct the City Manager to identify the best method to implement provisions of the draft ordinance, prepare a cost analysis of the implementation of the ordinance requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

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Frank Belock, Jr.  
Water Department Director

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Approved: Richard Mendes  
Deputy City Manager

BELOCK/LG

Attachments: [1. Tree Tally for Calendar Year 2004](#)  
[2. Draft Public Tree and Community Forest Ordinance](#)