



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the City Council

DATE ISSUED: December 15, 2016 REPORT NO: 16-110

ATTENTION: Honorable Council President and Members of the City Council
Agenda of January 24, 2017

SUBJECT: Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan

REQUESTED ACTION:

City Council Adopt the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

City Council Adopt the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ITEM BACKGROUND:

To implement the City's General Plan and Climate Action Plan (CAP), the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan implements the urban forest goals of the General Plan and Strategy 5 – Climate Resiliency of the CAP, which state the goal of increasing the City's urban tree canopy coverage.

The Plan provides a long-range plan that coordinates the various City Departments to bring together existing policies, guidelines, and actions necessary to preserve, protect, maintain, and plant trees. Coordinated holistic management maximizes the benefits of trees, as well as the efficiencies in urban forest management, and minimizes the risk associated with trees in an urban environment. The Five Year Plan defines the Urban Forestry Program, the roles the various City Departments play, and discusses the challenges and opportunities that affect the City's public trees. The Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan was funded by a \$75,000 State Grant from CAL FIRE and included public outreach that began in 2014.

DISCUSSION:

The trees along streets, in parks, and in open space areas are the urban forest that provide many benefits to the City of San Diego (City), its residents, and visitors. Trees provide shade, save energy, improve air quality and public health, mitigate climate change, reduce storm water runoff, increase property values, create wildlife habitat, and enhance quality of life.

A. What is the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan?

The Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan began as the Urban Forest Management Action Plan (UFMAP) and has been revised to the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan. To implement both of the award winning General Plan and Climate Action Plan, the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan sets out a long-term plan that defines the program with a vision of growing a resilient world class urban forest for all San Diegans. The Plan sets the

goals, objectives and identifies the cutting edge actions and progressive steps in developing America's finest urban forestry program.

B. Why should City Council adopt the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan?

Council adoption of the Plan fulfills the CAL FIRE grant requirement of developing a plan to administer urban forestry programs that demonstrate urban forest management and ultimately enhance, protect, and grow San Diego's urban tree canopy cover.

The Plan recognizes that a diminished urban forestry program reduces public assets, costs taxpayers money, and eliminates grant-funding eligibility. The economic downturn and recent fiscal challenges have resulted in limitations to street tree planting, tree pruning and palm trimming, code compliance, and public education. Significant investments have been made in the urban forest program with the hiring of a Horticulturist in Transportation and Storm Water, the creation of the Urban Forestry Program Manager position in Planning, and the increased budget for tree pruning and palm trimming, however further investments are needed to implement a management program to achieve a healthy urban forest, particularly for street tree planting, watering, and pruning.

The Plan will help the City of San Diego maximize its urban forest benefits for years to come. Once approved, the Five Year Plan becomes the foundation for the Urban Forestry Program, which establishes a cohesive and comprehensive urban forest management plan.

The Plan is meant to be a working document that will be continually implemented and monitored during the next five years. Budget decisions will either limit or enhance the urban forest and its' contributions to air quality and public health, energy reduction, storm water retention, climate change adaptation, and desirability of urban neighborhoods.

CITY STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVE(S):

The Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan is in direct alignment with all three of the San Diego Strategic Plan goals; specifically goal 1 – provide high quality public service, goal 2 – Work in partnership with all of our communities to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods, and goal 3 – Create and sustain a resilient and economically prosperous City

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

No impacts related to the adoption of the Urban Forest Management Action Plan. Funding sources will be identified and costs associated with projects proposed in the Urban Forest Management Action Plan will be further defined at implementation. Budget decisions will determine the rate of implementation over time, affecting the quality and quantity of trees planted and managed, and their resultant contributions to air quality and public health, energy reduction, storm water retention, climate change adaptation, and desirability of urban neighborhoods.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONTRACTING INFORMATION (if applicable):

N/A

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

Environment Committee: At the December 8th, 2016 meeting, the Environment Committee voted unanimously to recommend that Council adopt the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan. As noted on record at committee the Implementation table timeline has been revised to accurately reflect a five year time frame with Phase 3 implementation complete before 12/31/2021.

Community Forestry Advisory Board Recommendation: At the October 12, 2016 meeting, the Community Forestry Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend the City Council adopt the Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan.

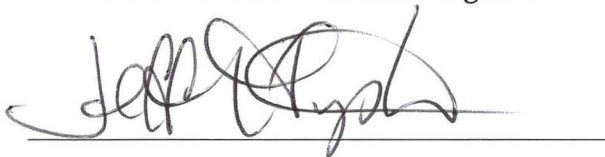
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS:

The first steps in preparing the Plan were to gather information from City residents. Presentations about urban trees and the Action Plan were given to 40 community-planning groups, business improvement districts, and other community groups from May to September 2014. Each attendee was invited to provide input on community forest benefits and related issues in their community.

The results of the survey showed that the respondents have a general understanding about the benefits of trees, identifying the most important as creating more pleasant neighborhoods and business districts, shading streets and parks, reducing air pollution, and mitigating climate change. Two-thirds would like to have more trees in their neighborhoods. Specifically, they would like to see more trees in the city, and they would support regulations that protect trees. More than half were concerned about the impacts of trees on the gray infrastructure, particularly damage to sidewalks, pavement, and underground pipes. Approximately half of all respondents were willing to plant new trees on their property, support new regulations, and increases in the city's budget for tree planting and maintenance. Other major concerns were leaf and fruit droppings and tree watering.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

There are a plethora of key stakeholders including; the citizens, elected officials, businesses, as well as multiple City Departments like Park and Recreation, Transportation and Storm Water, Planning, Development Services, Public Works, Public Utilities, and Economic Development. The Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan provides the vision, mission, goals, objective, and actions necessary to coordinate all of the stakeholders with a shared vision of growing a resilient world class urban forest for all San Diegans.



JEFF MURPHY, Director
Planning Department



DAVID GRAHAM, Deputy Chief Operating
Officer
Neighborhood Services Branch

Attachment(s): 1. Urban Forestry Program Five Year Plan