



Legislation Text

File #: 21-556, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

CAL FIRE URBAN FOREST AND COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM (CFR 2.0) AUTHORIZATION

DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT/MAINTENANCE SERVICES
DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: RAJA SETHURAMAN, PUBLIC SERVICES DIRECTOR

CONTACT INFORMATION: ROBERT RYAN, MAINTENANCE SERVICES MANAGER, (714)
327-7499

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2022-xx (Attachment 1), authorizing the Public Services Director to submit an application, and the City Manager or designee to execute the necessary Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 2) to participate in the CAL FIRE Urban Forest and Community Grant Program (CFR 2.0).

BACKGROUND:

The City of Costa Mesa's Urban Forest contains approximately 24,000 trees located on city property. This includes city facilities, parks, parkways, sports complexes, streets and medians. The City is divided into thirty (30) maintenance districts. The City's tree inventory has an estimated value of \$79,320,710 and has a diversity of over 270 different tree species.

Trees provide energy conservation, reduction of storm-water runoff, extend the life of surface streets, improve local air, soil and water quality, reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide, improve public health, provide wildlife habitat and increase property values. In short, they improve the quality of life in our urban environment.

Trees located in city parks are currently trimmed every other year, and the City Arborist inspects all twenty-nine (29) parks on a monthly basis. The Public Services Department's goal is to have all other City maintained trees trimmed on a three (3) to five (5) year trim cycle; and to have the over 2,000 City owned palm trees trimmed on an annual basis. This will reduce liability, improve the health of the urban forest and decrease the number of service requests and the higher costs associated with those requests.

The maintenance of the City's Urban Forest is currently contracted out to West Coast Arborists. Maintenance practices include tree trimmings, tree removals, tree plantings, root pruning, inventorying of trees and supplemental Arborist support services. West Coast Arborists has been in business for over forty-seven (47) years and is the primary tree maintenance contractor for several

Public Agencies in Southern California.

The City's Urban Forest is inspected by the City Arborist on a regular basis. The trees are also inspected by the City's tree maintenance contractor while performing the trimming and other maintenance services. Assessments and recommendations are provided for the overall health of the palms and trees after they are trimmed.

The previous five (5) years of drought along with State mandated watering restrictions has negatively affected the overall health and vitality of some of the trees within the City's Urban Forest. Drought constitutes the largest concern for maintaining a healthy and vigorous Urban Forest.

In addition to the annual Capital Improvement Projects, which include the addition of new trees to landscape improvement projects, the City has several programs for the planting and reforestation of its urban forest. The first is the Parkway Tree Planting program where Costa Mesa residents can request to have a tree planted in the parkway in front of their home at no cost to the resident. The resident is only responsible for ensuring that the newly planted tree receives the proper amount of irrigation to establish and sustain the tree. The second program is the replacement of trees in parks and parkways that are vacant sites. These are locations where the original tree failed due to pests, disease, accidents or acts of nature such as storms or severe winds.

The City also holds two annual community tree planting events, Love Costa Mesa Day and Arbor Day. Members of the community gather at a selected park on the day of these events to plant trees provided by the City. These events provide an opportunity for the volunteers to gather and learn the important role that trees play in the environment as well as in their neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS:

Under the authority of the Urban Forestry Act (PRC 4799.06 - 4799.12)

https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayText.xhtml?lawCode=PRC&division=4.&title=&part=2.5.&chapter=2.&article=

CAL FIRE's Urban & Community Forestry Program (UCF) works to expand and improve the management of trees and related vegetation in communities throughout California.

The program advances the development of sustainable urban and community forests to improve the quality of life in urban environments, which are where Californians live, work, and play. The program administers grants throughout California communities to advance urban forestry efforts.

One of the aforementioned grants administered by the UFC is the City Forest Renewal 2.0 Grant. The sole eligibility requirement is that the services be provided to a non-profit organization or public agency. Through the CFR 2.0 grant, the City would receive the following deliverables through the City's tree maintenance contractor, West Coast Arborists:

- CALFIRE CFR 2.0 Grant Funded Items:
 - **\$90,000** budget for dying and deceased tree and stump removal (at \$45 per inch with an estimated average DSH of 20 in.)
 - **\$2,500** budget for ISA Certified Arborists Final Inspections
 - **\$8,000** budget for Urban Wood Products to be donated to City
 - **\$550** budget for WCISA volunteer and project consultation

- **\$1,000** budget for Urban Forestry and Maintenance Policy Workshops/Webinars
- **\$1,000** budget for Urban Wood Site Open House
- **\$4,550** budget for consultations for public agencies to adopt improvement plans and policies
- **TOTAL: \$107,600 grant funded benefits to City**

The City would be responsible for the following Cal Fire CFR 2.0 Match Items:

- CALFIRE CFR 2.0 Grant Match Items:
 - **\$29,000** 15 gallon tree replanting at 2:1 ratio using WCA Contract prices at \$145 per tree
 - **\$10,000** Estimated City staff time in completing grant deliverables (reviewing MOU, internal discussions, etc.)
- **TOTAL: Estimated \$39,000 grant match**

As a part of the City's Urban Forestry Management program, an average of 175 trees annually that are deemed by the City Arborist to be dead, diseased or dying; or posing a potential liability to the City are removed. The removal and replacement of trees costs the City a little over \$103,000 annually, which is approximately 18% of the City's annual budget for all tree maintenance related services.

The City is eligible to receive up to \$92,500 in tree inspection and removal services. The grant benefits for the removal services would allow the City to focus a majority of its annual budget on tree planting and tree maintenance operations, which could potentially double the number of trees planted through the City's tree planting programs.

In addition, the City is eligible to receive grant services in urban forestry workshops and community outreach programs that will help educate and engage the community in preserving and improving the City's urban forest.

While the grant benefits/services will increase the City's ability to improve the urban forest city-wide, the tree planting efforts and community outreach would focus on expanding the percentage of tree canopy coverage in pollution burdened communities such as West Side Costa Mesa.

All services will be provided by West Coast Arborists, which will request direct reimbursement from the California Urban Forests Council through the Cal Fire Grant.

The City Manager or designee will be the designated signature authority to execute all documents necessary to implement the program.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City may forego the opportunity to apply for the funding through the Cal Fire City Forest Renewal Grant program. In lieu of the grant funded benefits, the City would be required to rely on internal budget resources or grant opportunities from other sources to implement such urban reforestation

efforts.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There is no cost to the City to submit the grant request. The City has a required match of \$39,000, which is included in the Public Services Department's FY2021-22 Approved Public Services Department's General Fund Operating Budget. The City will be eligible to receive a total of \$107,600 in grant benefits/services that will fund tree and stump removals as well as various community education and engagement programs.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this agenda report, prepared the attached Resolution and approves them both as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

In 2021, the City Council adopted a list of three-year goals. The program works toward achieving the following City Council goals:

- Strengthen the public's safety and improve the quality of life.
- Advance environmental sustainability and climate resiliency.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2022-xx (Attachment 1), authorizing the Public Services Director to submit an application, and the City Manager or designee to execute the necessary Memorandum of Understanding (Attachment 2) to participate in the CAL FIRE Urban Forest and Community Grant Program (CFR 2.0).