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Title: RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire's) Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program totaling up to \$1,500,000 in funding; and Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Application and Grant Agreement documents by the Public Works Director or Designee (Citywide)

Sponsors: Public Works Department

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Attachments: 1. 24-627 Resolution, 2. 24-627 Project Area Map

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5/23/2024	1	City Council	ADOPTED	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Authorizing the Submission of a Grant Application to the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire's) Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program totaling up to \$1,500,000 in funding; and Authorizing the Execution of a Grant Application and Grant Agreement documents by the Public Works Director or Designee (Citywide)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the submission of an application for grant funding from CalFire's Urban and Community Forestry Grants Program as provided through the California Climate Investments; and authorize the execution of all grant application and grant agreement documents by the Public Works Director or designee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff recommends the Council authorize the submission of an Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement grant proposal to the CalFire's Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program for funding to plant at least 770 trees throughout disadvantaged communities in the City of Fresno. CalFire administers grant funds made available as part of California Climate Investments.

BACKGROUND

This grant program is authorized by the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), UCF Program through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and administered through CalFire's UCF Program. The USDA Forest Service UCF Program is a covered program under President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, established through Executive Order 13985.

CalFire's UCF Program is responsible for leading the effort to advance the development of sustainable urban and community forests in California through technical assistance, grant administration, and resource and partnership development. This is accomplished through expanding and improving the planting and management of trees and associated vegetation in communities throughout California, with a strong emphasis on disadvantaged and low-income communities. The CalFire's UCF Program directly assists these communities with grants and hands-on scientific and technical assistance to achieve more equity in tree canopy distribution.

The program offers six grant types: Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement, Urban Forest Management Activities, Urban Forestry Education and Workforce Development, Urban Forestry Regional or Statewide Impact, Urban Forest Equity Capacity Building, and Green Schoolyards. The City is submitting an Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement application that can include: urban tree planting, maintenance, and associated vegetation to provide multiple benefits, tree and plant establishment care, and planting site preparation.

In May 2017, the City was awarded grant funding to complete a citywide tree inventory and planting project. The tree inventory was conducted and resulted in a geo-based record detailing the location, species, and general condition of all City-owned trees within the City's 112 square mile boundary. At the conclusion of the inventory, it was recommended that the City of Fresno prepare an Urban Forest Management Plan.

In FY2020, the City was awarded grant funding to plant up to 68 trees in disadvantaged community areas and to complete an Urban Forest Management Plan. In 2021, an inventory of City-managed trees indicated the City inventory included 131,732 trees, 276 stumps, and 29,086 vacant sites for trees. By 2023, the City planted 15 trees above the required amount for a total of 83 trees and in March 2024, a draft Urban Forest Management Plan was made available for public comment. The finalized Urban Forest Management Plan will include analysis of tree health, identify deferred maintenance, make recommendations on the prioritization of resources, discuss opportunities for urban forest restoration and expansion, and provide data needed to apply for future grant funding opportunities. The Urban Forest Management Plan process has included community engagement and key stakeholders to ensure that the plan represents community needs. The Urban Forest Management Plan is scheduled to be finalized by the end of FY2024.

The proposed project includes at least 770 trees that are proposed for planting in the disadvantaged communities throughout the City of Fresno. Residents and Council District representatives will be consulted early in the planting process to ensure community input is incorporated.

The total amount of funding requested for the planting is estimated not to exceed \$1,500,000. All cost share and match requirements are waived as projects must deliver 100% of the program benefits to disadvantaged or low-income communities.

Applications must be submitted by May 30, 2024, and all project scope items identified within the grant application are to be fully completed no later than March 31, 2028.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Adoption of a resolution of support for a grant application is not considered a project pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378; however, should this grant proposal receive funding, any CEQA requirements will be completed by CalFire.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference is not applicable because this resolution does not include a bid or award of a construction or services contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

This resolution will have no impact on the General Fund. No matching funds are required. Should the grant be awarded, funds will be incorporated into the City of Fresno annual budget for the fiscal year(s) in which they will be available.

Attachment(s):
Resolution
Project Area Map