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Title: ***RESOLUTION - Adopt a Resolution of the Council of the City of Fresno, California to Approve and Adopt the 2024 Urban Forest Management Plan (Subject to Mayor's Veto).

Sponsors: Public Works Department

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Attachments: 1. 24-620 Resolution, 2. 24-620 City Approved Tree List, 3. 24-620 CalFire Grant Close Out Report, 4. 24-620 Consultant Presentation

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

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SUBJECT

***RESOLUTION - Adopt a Resolution of the Council of the City of Fresno, California to Approve and Adopt the 2024 Urban Forest Management Plan (Subject to Mayor's Veto).

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council adopt a Resolution to approve the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP), establishing the plan as a comprehensive guide for managing and maintaining the City of Fresno's urban forest.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Works Department is responsible for maintaining and preserving the City's urban forest, which encompasses approximately 131,000 street trees. On June 25, 2020, the City was awarded a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) grant that provided funding to hire a consultant that would assess the City's current urban forest, tree inventory, green canopy, and City forestry program policies. The selected consultant, Dudek, has worked with City staff and stakeholder

groups over the past year to diligently develop an extensive UFMP. This comprehensive plan encompasses many crucial elements to effectively manage and preserve the City's urban forest.

For three consecutive fiscal years, the City has been able to fund proactive geobase tree trimming to provide a 10-year tree trimming cycle. This proactive work has assisted in reducing the number of emergency calls related to fallen trees, which will assist in being able to keep larger trees with significant tree canopies healthy. The City has also planted nearly 4,000 trees within the same timeframe.

The adoption of the UFMP provides guidance and strategies to maintain a well-managed sustainable urban forest, that provides multi-benefit solutions to environmental issues that result in a healthier, more resilient city. This plan helps identify future planting and tree canopy goals, identifies future budget needs corresponding to different service levels, and provides the Department with a framework for management of the urban forest. Staff recommends the Council adopt the Council adopt the UFMP, recognizing that the majority of implementation plan measures are subject to available funding.

BACKGROUND

On June 25, 2020, the City was awarded a California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) grant that provided funding to hire a contractor that would assess the City's current urban forest, tree inventory, green canopy, along with City policies. A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Urban Forest Management Plan was published on June 12, 2021, in the Fresno Business Journal and on Planet Bids. A public bid opening was held on June 24, 2021, and two bids were received. Staff conducted interviews with both companies and Dudek was selected as the most qualified and experienced. On July 21, 2022, Council approved the award of a Consultant Services Agreement with Dudek to create a forty-year Urban Forest Management Plan to provide guidance, direction, and recommend improvements to the City's current processes and policies. The original project scope was expected to take approximately 16 months to complete and originally scheduled to conclude with a presentation to the Mayor and City Council in December 2023. Two amendments were approved by the Council for no-cost time extensions to March 31, 2024, and again to June 30, 2024, to allow sufficient time for finalization of the UFMP including public outreach.

The project scope included community outreach which consisted of a community online survey, community meetings, and two Urban Forest Summits. City staff attended ten community meetings to explain the project and encourage feedback. Outreach materials were shared in Spanish, Hmong, Punjabi, and English. The draft report was also available for community input from April 15 to April 30. Dudek conducted a series of interviews which included City staff that are involved in design and management activities that may also affect tree preservation and green infrastructure design or planning efforts within the City. The goal during these interviews was to identify and build upon the following:

- Existing tree management and protection policies and regulations in comparison to model tree ordinances.
- Internal protocol and processes for design, tree removal requests, pruning, use of inventory database and GIS tools. Along with reviews of other maintenance and tree planting activities being conducted by all City departments.
- Financial and human resources dedicated to urban forestry management, plan review, and permitting.

Potential future tree management or planting activities.

- City ordinances, regulations, and permits in place that affect tree management, tree protection, tree removal, or tree planting.
- Goals, policies, and priorities of each department that relate to tree management, tree protection, or tree planting.
- Urban forest program funding.

The consultant developed four scenarios within the UFMP that explain how various levels of maintenance and tree planting efforts will impact the urban forest tree canopy in upcoming future years. These scenarios range in cost from \$5.4 million to \$16.8 million of annual investments in the urban forest. Adoption of the UFMP does not bind future City Councils to any particular level of funding, but rather seeks to guide and inform the City regarding the overall needs of the urban forest and projected outcomes.

Staff will implement all recommendations that do not have fiscal impacts. The following measures are currently being implemented within the current operation of the Public Works Department:

- (1A) Apply for state grants and increase nonprofit and other partnerships to increase funding for tree planting and care establishment.
- (1B) Pursue tree planting opportunities through community volunteer events or collaborating with local organizations to reduce the cost of tree planting.
- (1D*) Develop a strategy to increase tree maintenance funds as the City's trees age and require increased maintenance costs
- (1F*) Identify opportunities to leverage future development projects to increase resources for urban forest management
- (1I) Create a workplan with the tree contractor to increase pruning rates to achieve a 10-year pruning cycle.
- (1J) Designate a City Arborist or City Urban Forester to oversee all urban forest activities in the City.
- (1K*) Increase funding to meet BMP recommendations, and annually match funding with the inflation rate increase
- (1L) Improve continuing education opportunities for staff, to ensure they're operating under BMP's
- (2B*) Establish a pruning cycle of 10 years, with an eventual 5-7 year goal for all City-managed trees
- (2D) Align tree practices, such as planting, establishment care, and pruning with ISA BMP and ANSI Standards.
- (2E) Update planting guidelines according to ISA BMP and ANSI Standards. Ensure that planting guidelines are followed by city staff and contractors.
- (2F) Update plant material standards with current industry best management practices.
- (2H*) Implement an irrigation program so that that new trees receive adequate water. [through CFD's and capital improvement projects for parks and median island landscape improvements]
- (3B) Prioritize planting throughout Fresno census tracts based on the Priority Planting Score and map to increase canopy cover equitably throughout the City.
- (4D) Continue to work with Working Group members to regularly, and actively engage with community members to best plan for future urban forest-related endeavors.

- (5A) Decrease the frequency of tree species that are overrepresented in the inventory for new tree plantings.
- (5E) Limit planting of identified invasive species.
- (5F) Annually review the City recommended tree species list and update it as appropriate to ensure species are suitable for current and future climate conditions, are low water use, will achieve species diversity standards, and will prioritize well-adapted local and regionally native species.
- (6I) Ensure a City arborist is directly involved in reviewing new development designs, project permits and removal applications to ensure best arboricultural practices are enforced and trees protected where possible.

[*] this measure is in effect for median, buffer and pocket park trees maintained through the Community Facilities Districts

By forging partnerships and securing external resources, the City can maximize the impact of tree planting efforts, further enriching our City's landscape, improving air quality, and fostering a greener and healthier environment for our residents.

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the Urban Forest Management Plan (UFMP). Establishing the plan as a comprehensive guide for managing and maintaining City Trees (urban forest), ensuring their preservation and sustainable growth.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines section 15378, this is not a project as defined by CEQA.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local preference was not implemented because this is an existing contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts by adopting the Urban Forest Management Plan. All costs associated with the development of the plan have been funded through the CAL FIRE grant which was incorporated into the adopted budget for the Public Works Department.

Attachments:

- Resolution with Exhibit A - 2024 Urban Forest Management Plan
- City Approved Tree List
- CalFire Grant Close Out Report
- Consultant Presentation