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Title: RESOLUTION - Authorizing the submission of an application for grant funds from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Urban and Community Forestry California Climate Investments Grant Program 2016-17 Call for Projects and authorizing the execution of documents by the Public Works Director or designee (Citywide)

Sponsors: Public Works Department

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Attachments: 1. CalFire Resolution v2.pdf, 2. Cal Fire Data Collection Attributes – Urban Tree Inventories.pdf

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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

December 8, 2016

FROM: SCOTT L. MOZIER, PE, Director
Public Works Department

BY: AARON AGUIRRE, Public Works Manager
Public Works Department, Landscape Division

SHELBY MACNAB, MPA, Grants Administrator
Public Works Department

SUBJECT

RESOLUTION - Authorizing the submission of an application for grant funds from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Urban and Community Forestry California Climate Investments Grant Program 2016-17 Call for Projects and authorizing the execution of 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 funds from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Urban and Community Forestry California Climate Investments Grant Program, and authorize the execution of

documents by the Public Works Director, or designee.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Public Works requests approval to submit a grant proposal to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) Program for an urban forest management project which includes conducting a citywide tree inventory and tree planting. Cal Fire administers grant funds made available as part of the California Climate Investments Program (CCIP). The U&CF Program works to optimize the benefits of urban forestry through projects which help meet the state's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets. Urban forestry projects eligible for funding include: tree planting, urban forest management activities, and urban wood and biomass utilization projects.

The application process occurs in two stages. The initial concept proposal is due on December 16th, 2016, with a complete proposal for invited applicants to follow. Authorization is requested to submit a concept proposal and a subsequent full application package should this project be selected to proceed.

BACKGROUND

This grant program is authorized by the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 (Public Resources Code, §§ 4799.06 - 4799.12) and funded through the California Climate Investments Program, or Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF). Auction proceeds from California's Emissions Trading Program, commonly referred to as Cap-and-Trade, pass through the GGRF as they are appropriated to grant programs by the state budgeting process. U&CF program objectives are also shaped by the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) which requires California to reduce its GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, and allows for sale of pollution allowances; and SB 535 which ensures 25% of greenhouse gas reduction investments/Cap-and-Trade revenues benefit disadvantaged communities.

The purpose of the U&CF Program is to promote expansion and better management of urban forests to help improve the quality of urban environments and the quality of life of urban residents. A net reduction in GHG emissions must be demonstrated in order for projects to be eligible for the program. The total amount of funding allocated to this program is \$15 million statewide with awards of at least \$13.5 million expected in the 2016/2017 fiscal year.

The City was previously awarded funding for a similar project which was unable to proceed during the economic downturn. Cal Fire's U&CF Program awarded a tree inventory project to the City of Fresno Department of Public Works as part of the 2008-09 grant funding cycle. However, due to State fiscal conditions and delayed state bond sales, grants were not formally awarded until fiscal year 2009-10. At the time State funding was made available to begin the project, the City was faced with severe financial constraints that cut funding to most non-essential programs. Ultimately, funding cuts eliminated the required matching funds for the awarded project. The elimination of funding resulted in an inability to move forward with the inventory, and the project was not continued.

Since the original 2008-09 grant, the need to complete an updated inventory has remained. The Department of Public Works operates asset management software with tree asset management capabilities. However, funding has not been available to archive historical information and comprehensively update the system. Although maintenance recordkeeping currently occurs, the last

time a comprehensive inventory of trees in the City of Fresno was conducted was 1989. A comprehensive inventory is essential to the long-term health and maintenance of urban forest assets. Since the original project was awarded, there is an added emphasis on GHG emission reductions as part of the application. This has resulted in the requirement to pair urban forest management projects with tree planting activities. Tree planting was not included in the original application, but will be included in this proposal. Community education and outreach is also required.

The Department of Public Works proposes funding to complete the following Urban Forest Management Activities:

- 1) **An inventory of all of the existing trees that the City maintains, including street trees, trees located in Special Landscape Districts and parks.** It is estimated that there are over 200,000 trees within the public right of way across over 111 square miles within City limits. At a minimum, the inventory proposed will include the following information: mapping coordinates, block side, right of way location, species, diameter, stems, condition, maintenance need, clearance required, hardscape damage, overhead utilities, grow space, and space size. Please see the enclosed attachment: *Minimum Data Collection Attributes for CAL FIRE Grant-Funded Urban Tree Inventories* for additional information.
- 2) **Tree planting and water-wise irrigation.** It is estimated that several hundred tree plantings will be included in the application. Tree planting locations and species will be determined based on criteria including, but not limited to: grant eligibility, canopy size, GHG emission reduction values, drought tolerance and irrigation needs, replacement of trees impacted by drought or disease and maintenance costs.
- 3) **Education and outreach components.** Educational outreach will be developed and conducted through partnership with community organizations such as Tree Fresno. It is anticipated that a volunteer-supported effort will be utilized to achieve tree planting objectives.

Once completed, the Department of Public Works will have a long-term management tool established to monitor and effectively maintain the City's urban forest resources.

The total project cost is estimated at approximately \$800,000 to \$1 million to implement the Citywide Tree Inventory Asset Management Program, tree planting and other project elements. The U&CF Program will fund 75% of the costs for the project, with a 25% match required. However, Cal Fire may allow disadvantaged communities (as determined by the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 tool) to request matching requirements be reduced or waived. A large majority of Census tracts in Fresno are identified as disadvantaged or are located within a ½ mile of areas which are disadvantaged. Therefore, a reduction or waiver of matching funds will be explored following the application guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

This item is not a "project" for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

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

FISCAL IMPACT

A local match of 25% or approximately \$200,000-\$250,000 is required; though matching funds may be reduced or waived for disadvantaged communities. The City will submit a request for this reduction or waiver. However, if the local matching fund waiver is not accepted, funding will be identified through in-kind and volunteer sources as well as future fiscal year operational budgets from Community Sanitation, Development Street Tree Inspection Fees, Special Landscaping Districts and the General Fund as appropriate for the project.

Attachment:

Resolution

Cal Fire Data Collection Attributes - Urban Tree Inventories