



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Submittal of Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement Grant Application

1. Resolution authorizing the Director of Public Works or his designee to submit an application for funding from the Urban and Community Grant Program of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention for the planting and care of 500 new trees in South Glendale.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Consent Calendar

Approved for November 16, 2021 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Public Works was invited by Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) to submit an Urban Forest Expansion and Improvement grant application for the planting of 500 new trees in South Glendale, including watering and maintenance for three years, beginning in winter 2022-23. Public Works' concept proposal application, titled 'Greening South Glendale,' was approved by the agency in October 2021. A City Council resolution provided by Cal Fire is required with the final application submittal due December 10, 2021.

The proposed project is valued at \$853,802. Of this, \$614,202 is reimbursable, with an additional \$239,600 in-kind contributions for staff time to be provided as match. These matching costs consist solely of Public Works staff time over the course of the 3-year project providing young tree maintenance and reporting. The planting and watering of these trees will be performed by the City's contractor at existing rates. If the application is successful, Public Works will eventually request appropriations of funding equal to \$853,802 for all costs over the length of the project, and a contract change order to accommodate this new amount in the existing West Coast Arborists Inc. (WCA) tree maintenance contract increasing the amount by \$548,395. Reimbursable indirect costs total \$65,807. These grant expenses will be reimbursed twice yearly.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES

1. Fiscal Responsibility: The funding provided by this grant are costs that the City would otherwise bear when planting and watering 500 trees.
2. Exceptional Customer Service: Planting additional trees and performing timely maintenance on City trees enhances the quality of life in Glendale.
3. Economic Vibrancy: Trees not only improve property values, they have also been shown to increase consumer spending in nearby businesses, and natural views increase employee productivity.
4. Safe & Healthy Community: Trees help to calm traffic, improve air quality, and reduce crime when well-kept.
5. Infrastructure & Mobility: Shade from trees encourages use of public sidewalks and trees are the only public infrastructure to increase in value with age.
6. Sustainability: A large and healthy urban forest is a critical component of a sustainable community due to a tree's positive impact on health outcomes, pollution reduction, and water savings.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council adopt this Resolution approving the filing of an application to Cal Fire for 'State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding' Urban and Community Forestry grant program funds, for a project amounting to \$853,802.

BACKGROUND

Reports on the Community Forest from the Department of Public Works to Council in May and September 2021 have highlighted the lack of trees in portions of Glendale, particularly South Glendale. Council provided direction that staff look into relevant grant programs, and this is one such grant.

In June 2021, Cal Fire issued grant guidelines for their 'State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding' Urban and Community Forestry program. Public Works staff attended two virtual meetings covering grant guidelines and aspects of a successful application. Based on this information, staff submitted a concept proposal on July 14, 2021. On October 4, 2021, Cal Fire invited Public Works to submit a full application. The application is due December 10, 2021 and award announcements are expected by February 2022.

ANALYSIS

'State Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funding' grants are highly technical and competitive opportunities, open to municipalities and nonprofits statewide. Successful applicants must plant trees to most effectively reduce greenhouse gases. Applicants must ensure the project meets strict criteria on planting locations, tree type, and costs. Successful projects must calculate the benefits of trees using state-provided formulas, based on their precise planting locations, and subtracting the emissions created from project activity. Regular planting efforts must also not be supplanted by this project.

The trees must be drought-tolerant and 15-gallon size, as these trees establish more quickly than larger planting sizes, but are still large enough to handle the rigors of urban life. Mature trees should ultimately grow as large as possible for the planting site, which must be at least 3' wide and have 30 sq. ft. of area – equivalent to a 6' x 5' tree well.

Trees must be planted in California EPA-defined 'Disadvantaged Communities.' These are communities within census tracts that are disproportionately impacted by pollution as compared to the rest of the state, or be populated with households at or below 80% of the statewide median income, or both. In Glendale, these tracts align nearly entirely with our lowest-canopied areas. The project area is thus all of Glendale south of and adjacent to the SR-134 freeway, and neighborhoods adjacent to the I-5 freeway. Public Works staff estimates there are over 3,500 vacant eligible planting locations within this project area, and according to the California EPA, 117,000 residents live within these areas. Exact specific planting site would be determined after the project is awarded.

Staff is proposing a project, titled 'Greening South Glendale,' to plant 500 trees within these areas in the winter of 2022-2023. Importantly, this grant also funds tree watering for the first three years following planting and informational tree tags and brochures regarding tree benefits and care, to be sent to each address receiving a tree. As Public Works does not have the in-house resources to procure and plant this quantity of trees, or perform weekly watering, we plan to use the current City tree maintenance contractor, WCA for this work.

Based on current contract rates, planting 500 trees at the 15-gallon size will cost \$90,000. Watering these trees for three years will cost \$437,760. An additional \$9,000 will be set aside for replacing up to 50 trees in the event of their death or destruction. In sum, staff is proposing \$536,760 of this grant funding be utilized for work assigned to WCA.

In addition, the grant covers general supplies, which will consist of green watering bags and Graphics Department produced educational brochures and weather-resistant tree tags. The bags will cost \$11,135, and the educational collateral \$500. Indirect costs to the City, in the estimated amount of \$65,807 are also covered by the grant. Indirect costs are for the expenses of doing business that are of a general nature and are necessary for the general operation of the organization. Examples of indirect costs include salaries and benefits of support employees not directly assigned to the project such as human resources, business services, information technology, janitorial, and supervisors and managers.

The project requires tree maintenance to be performed annually on each new tree, and for twice-yearly reporting on progress and benefits. These aspects of the project will be performed by Public Works staff who are already accounted for within the FY 21-22 budget. Over the course of the 3-year project, we estimate this will amount to 1,900 hours, with 400 of those being dedicated to project management, reporting, and inspections, and 1,500 hours dedicated to young tree maintenance. This is expected to not significantly impact Public Works operations. The staff time amounts to billable rates totaling \$239,600. A table summarizing these quantities is included below.

	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Amount	Funding Type
Trees	\$180.00/tree	550 trees	\$99,000	Direct
Watering	\$3,040/week	144 weeks	\$437,760	Direct
Watering bags	\$22.27/bag	500	\$11,135	Direct
Educational collateral	\$1.00/brochure	500	\$500	Direct
Staff time	Varies	1900 hours	\$239,600	Matching
Indirect City costs	N/A	N/A	\$65,807	Indirect
Total			\$853,802	

The quantity of trees, matching amount, and total project cost was carefully considered in light of guidance from informational sessions with the City Council. Staff believes it has a competitive application due to the location of the project, the funding requested is commensurate to the efforts involved, and a clear statement of need was made thanks to Council's recent discussions on the state of the community forest.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

The planting of 500 trees in the most disadvantaged portions of Glendale will provide direct environmental improvement to these areas, as well as the City generally, given the number of visitors and business in this most populated part of our City.

At this stage, no direct outreach has occurred. Should the City be awarded this grant, local community groups, business owners, and homeowners within the project area will be contacted. Specific outreach methods beyond direct mail to the chosen planting locations will be determined following a grant award, but City website, social media, and direct email contact to relevant groups is planned at minimum.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report. At this time, staff is only asking for approval to submit the grant application. If approved and upon award of the grant, staff will return to Council with a request for appropriation.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This item is considered a ministerial activity and therefore, not subject to CEQA review. The planting project is designed to be categorically exempt from review under CEQA.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

This item is exempt from campaign disclosure requirements.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Authorize the Director of Public Works or his designee to submit a grant application to Cal Fire for the planting and subsequent watering of 500 trees, and approve the Resolution required as part of this application submittal.

Alternative 2: Do not approve the Resolution required as part of a successful grant application.

Alternative 3: Consider any alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

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EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS

N/A.