

4. Bring updates to the Committee on the Manual periodically.

DISCUSSION:

On March 3, 2023, an updated draft of the Manual was received from the City Manager's Office/Office of Communications Division. It incorporated the look of the city and is consistent with the branding of the city.

On March 13, 2023, a Standard Operating Procedure came into effect for tree removal. Anytime a tree is scheduled for removal that has not been deemed a hazard to public safety, the following will occur:

1. Personal notification is provided to the resident/property owner via telephone call, in-person, email, and/or text.
2. A door hanger is left at the door of the property/residence or mailed within one working day.
3. An 18" x 24" removal notification sign is placed on or near the tree depending on the site location.
4. A Work Order will be created for removal within three working days of the inspection.
5. 48-hours prior to removal, the tree removal contractor will provide a door hanger to the affected address advising of the tree removal.
6. 48-hours prior to removal, the tree removal contractor will place a No Parking sign on the tree.

Staff will evaluate the new standard operating procedure over the next several months and make modifications, as needed, while ensuring the core objective of transparency and communication is met.

Staff is currently researching options on the most effective method on hosting a Perpetual Tree Care and Planting Fund to pursue and secure additional funding to assist with the long-term care of the urban forest.

Staff is committed to providing continuous updates on the Manual to the Committee as they occur.

City staff conducted additional review of the Manual and made several other revisions to ensure the document reflects our current best practices, and these updates are included in the attached draft Manual.

Moving Forward with the Urban Forestry Policy Manual and Sustainability

To update the Manual in a timely fashion, the Public Works Department will provide informational updates to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Park and Recreation Commission while advancing the items to Council, these groups will be encouraged to monitor the item's progress through Committee and Council. Staff may elect to make minor revisions to the draft Manual prior to its presentation to Council, but the attached draft represents the substantially complete version of the Manual.

Staff is currently monitoring a CalFire grant that will help assist with an even more extensive overhaul of the Manual. The grant can provide funds to assist the City in selecting tree species that maximize carbon sequestration and building energy reduction potential (contributes to Envision Riverside Strategic Plan Goal 4.6). The grant may also fund an in-house tree inventory database. Staff would like to pursue this grant as soon as CalFire begins accepting applications as it will allow for future meaningful additions to the Manual at a later date, following Council's consideration of

adoption of the draft Manual presented to the Committee. Additional grants, like the Inflation Reduction Act's Urban and Community Forestry opportunity, may also assist with the efforts outlined above. Because the outcome of the grant applications is unknown, staff does not recommend waiting for any grant funding prior to adopting the current draft Manual.

The City's Urban Forest provides social, communal, environmental, and economic benefits to the entire community. These benefits include calming effects associated with being around trees, reduced noise and glare, habitat for wildlife, improved air quality, reduction of heat indexes and water runoff, and help to increase property values. With an estimated value of over \$449,000,000, the City's urban forest provides value to the entire community.

Ongoing Actions Related to Urban Forestry

To meet the objectives set forth within the City's planning documents, staff have worked diligently to pursue grant funding to allow for the planting of additional trees:

1. The awarded 2020 Transformative Climate Communities grant program includes the planting of 1,000 trees on city right-of-ways and 1,000 trees on private property in the Eastside Neighborhood.
2. The awarded 2019 Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities program grant includes the planting of hundreds of trees across the right-of-way and surrounding the upcoming Vine Street Mobility Hub.
3. The awarded 2019 Urban Greening Grant includes planting of trees along a two-mile stretch of the planned Gage Canal Trail.
4. The awarded 2018 Urban Greening Grant includes the planting of 453 trees at the Northside Ag Innovation Center.
5. The awarded 2022 CaliforniansforAll Grant includes funding for Youth Fellows that are being assigned to both the TreePeople non-profit organization and the City of Riverside Public Works Department, Landscape and Urban Forestry Division, to assist with planting, caring for and assessing trees throughout the city.

The City will continue to pursue funding opportunities to augment and care for its Urban Forest.

Noteworthy Endeavors Pertaining to the Urban Forest

1. The Public Works Department is partnering with Feeding America, to glean fruit from the public right of way City maintained orange trees along Victoria Avenue, to stock local food pantries and feed the hungry.
2. The Complete Streets Ordinance increases opportunities for tree plantings as part of public roadway projects and requires that all participating development projects provide street trees.
3. An additional \$2,000,000 was allocated from Measure Z funding to trim all city palms on a two-year cycle.
4. An additional \$250,000 was allocated from Measure Z funding to plant additional trees throughout the city.
5. The City's Grant Administrator continues to monitor and share grant opportunities with the Public Works Urban Forestry & Landscape Team.

6. A cross-cutting, inter-departmental team collaborated on the Urban Forest, Water and Climate Project presented to City Council on April 12, 2022, which included the benefits of trees and challenges presented to the urban forest given the state of water and climate.
7. The City's Tree Power Shade Tree Rebate Program is a year round program where Riverside Public Utilities' electric customers can purchase up to 5 shade trees per calendar year from a participating Riverside nursery and receive a rebate of \$40 per tree. This allows for the planting of trees on private property. This was last approved by City Council on February 28, 2023.
8. The comprehensive General Plan Update Request For Proposals was published April 2023. This opportunity will include an Open Space and Conservation Element that covers the city's vision for urban forests over the next 15 to 20 years. This endeavor will also include a Climate Action Plan that will help to establish urban forestry and tree planting targets along with tools to better measure carbon sequestration by trees/urban forest.
9. The Public Works Urban Forestry & Landscape Division, in coordination with other Departments, maintains a count of trees planted as pthe Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan.
10. The Innovation and Technology Department/GIS Division has collaborated with multiple departments over the past year to create and continuously update a digital layer dedicated to recording the tree canopy layer within the City's geographic information system.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 4 – Environmental Stewardship and Goal 4.5 - Maintain** and conserve 30% of Riverside's natural lands in green space including, but not limited to, agricultural lands and urban forests in order to protect and restore Riverside's rich biodiversity and accelerate the natural removal of carbon, furthering our community's climate resilience.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – Management of the city's urban forest and landscapes benefit all city residents, businesses, and visitors by helping to remove gaseous air pollutants, sequestering carbon, and provides shade helping to cool our city during hot summer days.
2. **Equity** – Approval of this action benefits all who live near or travel through the city.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Maintaining City-owned trees and landscapes and their infrastructure supports Public Works' efforts to minimize inefficiencies and maximize reliability.
4. **Innovation** – By updating the Urban Forestry Policy Manual and looking for additional methods of funding, such as grants to improve technology that manages the urban forest, the Public Works Department is committed to using the best possible resources available in today's ever-changing markets.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Trees have been noted as being the “lungs of the earth.” By updating the Urban Forestry Policy Manual through researching and implementing current improved methods in the industry that will better enhance the long-term care of our urban forest, provides proof that the City of Riverside and the Public Works Department, are committed to sustainability and resiliency by maintaining and supporting our valuable urban forest on a continuous basis, helping to improve the environment and the quality of life for our community.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

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availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer
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Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Draft of Urban Forestry Policy Manual
2. Standard Operating Procedure for Tree Removals
3. Presentation