



Update on the Urban Forestry Policy Manual, United States Department of Agriculture Urban and Community Forestry – Fire Service Inflation Reduction Act Grant Award, Tree Plantings, Removals and Trimmings for 2024

Public Works Department

**Park and Recreation Commission
September 16, 2024**

BACKGROUND

1. Designated by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a “Tree City, USA” every year since 1987, the city strives to preserve and protect this tree heritage.



2. The purpose of the Urban Forestry Policy Manual (Manual) is to provide guidelines for the planting, pruning, preservation and removal of all trees in city rights-of-ways based on industry standards and specs.

BACKGROUND

1. On January 09, 2023, staff provided a progress update on the Manual before the Utility Services/Land Use/Energy Development Committee for feedback and approval – the most recent of which was shared with the Committee On January 30, 2023



LUSR COMMITTEE DIRECTIVES

1. Update the branding of the Manual so it has a City of Riverside look and is consistent with City branding;
2. Provide a clear method on notification of removals to the community;



Pictures courtesy of TreePeople.

LUSR COMMITTEE DIRECTIVES

3. Provide options relative to a Perpetual Tree Care and Planting Fund for the City of Riverside; and
4. Bring updates to the Committee on the Manual periodically.



DISCUSSION

1. On March 03, 2023, an updated draft of the Manual was received that incorporated the look of the City and is consistent with the branding of the City amongst other revisions by Staff.
2. On March 13, 2023, a Standard Operating Procedure (S.O.P.) came into effect for tree removal notifications.
3. Staff is currently researching options on the most effective method on hosting a Perpetual Tree Care and Planting Fund.
4. Staff is committed to providing updates to the Committee and Commission as they come forward.



DISCUSSION

- On January 30, 2023, staff provided an update on the progress of the Manual to the Park and Recreation Commission. It was received and filed.
- On May 08, 2023, staff provided a progress update on the Manual to the Committee to provide any further modifications and recommend that the City Council approve the Manual. The Committee unanimously approved the Manual with no further modifications and recommended that Council approve the Manual.
- On October 10, 2023, the City Attorney's Office (CAO) provided a workshop to the City Council on an Overview of Legal Analysis for Sidewalks and Trees and was recommended by Council that CAO present this item to the Land/Use/Sustainability Committee for further review.
- The CAO provided a workshop to the Committee for further review and discussion on December 11, 2023.
- On February 06, 2024, the City Council unanimously approved the updated Manual.



DISCUSSION

- On September 14, 2023, the Public Works Department received notification from the USDA-FS that we were awarded \$1,000,000.
- Following notification of the award, staff met with USDA-FS grant administrators to discuss a revised project narrative and budget based on the awarded amount.
- The narrative was modified to include creating a comprehensive tree inventory and developing an in-house database/inventory management system during the grant's five-year performance period with a budget of \$1,000,000 from the USDA-FS grant and in-kind match of City funds in the amount of \$1,000,000.



MOVING FORWARD WITH GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

- Over the next five-year grant performance period, the Public Works Department will work closely with other City departments such as IT, Parks, Recreation, & Community Services, Riverside Public Utilities, and General Services to develop the look and functionality of the database.
- Community engagement with civic organizations, non-profits, and neighborhood groups in disadvantaged areas to ensure they have a voice and to help the community better understand and interact with our urban forest.
- Public Works will leverage its existing tree planting budget to add new trees in disadvantaged communities across the city and help build the urban forest.



GRANT SUPPORT

- The City's grant application was made successful by the enormous support of the City Council and many City departments including:
 - The City Manager's Office
 - Riverside Public Utilities
 - Parks, Recreation & Community Services
 - Innovation & Technology (IT)
 - General Services

In addition, letters of support were submitted with the grant application from:

- The Inland Empire Community Foundation
- The Riverwalk Community
- Victoria Avenue Forever; and
- The Rivers and Lands Conservancy.



ON GOING ACTIONS

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 a new urban farmland resource & training center.
5. The awarded 2022 CaliforniaforAll 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.



NOTEWORTHY ENDEAVORS

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 through Measure Z funding to trim all city palms on a two-year cycle.
4. An additional \$250,000 was allocated through Measure Z funding to plant additional trees throughout the city.



OUR URBAN FOREST



The City's Urban Forest provides social, communal, environmental, and economic benefits to the entire community.

The Benefit of Trees



Trees help improve the quality of air by capturing pollutants like ash and gases.



Trees help prevent flooding. One tree can absorb 2,000 gallons each year.



Trees are known to promote feelings of relaxation and well-being.



Trees provide shade that help cool down buildings, parks and pathways.



Shade provided by trees can reduce the use of air conditioning, saving people money.



Trees are known to increase property values by as much as 10%.

FUN FACT!!!

Our urban forest has an estimated value of more than **\$449,000,000!**



It is more important than ever to continue pursuing funding opportunities that will augment and care for our urban forest.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

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.

Cross-Cutting Threads



Community Trust



Fiscal Responsibility



Sustainability &
Resiliency



Equity



Innovation

RECOMMENDATION

That the Park and Recreation Commission receive and file an update on the Urban Forestry Policy Manual, United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act Grant Award, Tree Plantings, Removals and Trimmings for 2024.