

# MEMORANDUM

## *Department of Planning & Neighborhood Services*

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**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council  
**Through:** Thomas C. Williams, City Manager  
**From:** Steve McHarris, Director of Planning and Neighborhood Services  
**Subject:** **Tree Planting Plan and Program-Community Advisory Commission**  
**Date:** January 6, 2015

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### **Background**

On June 18, 2013, City Council approved the Community Advisory Commission (CAC) amended Work Plan 2013 to include Tree Planting Program. The goal of the CAC Tree Planting Program was to plant approximately 100-500 trees annually throughout the City including city parks, entryways, gateways and along the perimeter boundaries of the City. The Council further directed the CAC to seek grants and donations to fund the program.

In September 2013, the CAC obtained a grant "Invest from the Ground," a statewide program which promotes the values of tree plantings. The grant included a total of 100 trees to be planted in City parks and required training 100 volunteers to participate in the tree planting event. Cardoza and Murphy Parks were the sites selected for the tree planting which took place on February 15, 2014.

On April 26, 2014, the CAC participated in a second tree planting event at Jerry Arnold Park (adjacent to Apex Apartments) with the donation of 26 trees by Lyon Communities to plant within the park. A total of 52 volunteers participated in the event. Since this time period, CAC sought monetary donations for the tree planting program with no success. However, Our City Forest, a non-profit organization, has agreed to partner with the CAC on a State grant to plant trees within a three mile radius of the San Jose International Airport. The grant has a limited restricted area where trees can be planted (under the flight path) which only includes the McCarthy Ranch/Highway 237 area within the city, and requires a matching donation of \$50.00 to \$75.00 per tree, which includes instruction, supervision, hole digging, planting, and staking service.

### **Tree Planting Plan and Program Discussion**

The CAC has met with staff on developing a more sustainable funding source for a future tree planting plan and program. The CAC would like the City Council to consider contracting with a licensed Landscape Architect to assist the CAC on preparing a City-Wide Tree Planting Plan and Program that would include:

- Determining the number and types of trees to be planted;
- Addressing the current severe drought condition and City-wide policies for drought restrictions on new landscaping;
- Mapping tree locations (entryways, gateways, exterior perimeter boundaries);
- Evaluating costs of extending and installing domestic and reclaimed irrigation;
- Addressing short and long-term tree maintenance costs;
- Timing conditions associated with a tree planting schedule; and
- Providing tree recommendations to address soil conditions, drought tolerance, and City liability.

### **Community Benefit Discussion**

The CAC is also requesting the City Council consider funding for this program through planning entitlement permits that requires a public benefit, such as planned development permits, or seeking voluntary contributions from developers through the entitlement process. These contributions could be used for hiring a licensed Landscape Architect, purchasing trees, grant matching, supplies, tools, equipment and educational workshops. The CAC would continue to seek grants and donations to help fund the program.

### **City Council Funding Discussion**

The CAC would like to plant trees in early 2015 and has identified a guaranteed tree planting grant from Our City Forest. However, the grant requires an immediate match of \$50.00 to \$75.00 per tree. The CAC would like to discuss the possibility of City Council funding for an early 2015 tree planting event. Additionally, consideration needs to be given to identifying short term and long term maintenance funding for each planted tree, City short term and long term obligations and liability related to City planted trees, and other funding considerations for each planted trees.

### **Tree Planting Plan and Program – Next Steps**

If the Council supports the CAC's Tree Planting Plan and Program proposal, the next steps in the process would include:

- Require or seek community benefit funding of certain entitlement permit applications towards proposed CAC Tree Planting Plan and Program;
- Contract with a licensed Landscape Architect to prepare a draft Tree Planting Plan and Program for CAC/City Council Review; and
- Develop and approve Tree Planting Plan and Program.

### **Recommendation**

Consider CAC's request and provide direction to CAC and/or staff regarding funding and development of Tree Planting Plan and Program, and long-term tree maintenance costs.