



Legislation Text

File #: 17-234, **Version:** 1

Report Prepared by: Ken Elwin, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Authorization to Submit Grant Application for Urban Forest Tree Inventory, Assessment, and Management Project

REPORT IN BRIEF

Authorizes the Director of Public Works to submit a final Grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) for an Urban Forestry Management Activities Project.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council - Adopt a motion adopting **Resolution 2017-24**, a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, authorizing the Public Works Director to submit an application for funding from the Urban Forest Management Activities Grant program as provided through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and authorize the City Manager or Assistant City Manager to sign the necessary documents.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve as recommended by the Director of Public Works; or,
2. Deny; or,
3. Refer back to staff.

DISCUSSION

The Public Works Department is seeking authorization to submit a final grant application in the amount of \$475,000 with a local in-kind match of \$154,800 for total project amount of \$629,800. This CAL FIRE Urban Forest Tree Inventory, Assessment and Management Program Grant will be implemented over a three (3) year period. The Urban Forest Management Activities Grant Program requires applicants to contribute a 25% match either in cash, or in-kind, to the total project cost. In-kind matches can include staff hours, use of City equipment, and/or volunteer hours. To reach the 25% match required by the grant process, the project will include in-kind staff time of the Public Works Manager, Parks Supervisor and Maintenance Worker personnel; and use of City owned-equipment.

Council previously authorized the submission of a concept grant application on December 19, 2016. The submitted concept grant application was recently approved by CAL FIRE and the City was selected to submit a final project grant application. The Concept Proposal Acceptance letter is provided as Attachment 2.

If awarded, the Cal FIRE Urban Forest Tree Inventory Assessment and Management Program grant

will provide the Public Works Department with the necessary tools to better manage the City's urban forest. One of the first steps to managing the urban forest will be to create a dynamic complete tree inventory in all City managed areas and facilities. The tree inventory will evaluate the health of the urban forest; measure the economic and health benefits trees provide; quantify (in dollars) the eco-services the City trees provide; and allow an understanding of the type and distribution of trees within the City to better manage costs. This understanding will enhance and improve maintenance to the current tree canopy and act as the basis for a citywide urban forest master plan to sustain and grow the City's urban forest. Once the tree inventory has been completed, the tree planting phase will begin, a total of 720 new trees will be planted. In addition, a tree management software program will be developed to catalog and update data regarding the City's urban forest. The initial outlay for this program is an eligible cost for reimbursement through this grant program.

Project Goals

The objectives of the project include, but are not limited to:

- The initial phase for completing a full tree inventory for the all City managed areas and facilities (Parks, Street median trees, etc.).
- Provide guidance for the future that includes budgeting, planning, and making urban forestry a priority during budget changes.
- Provide an understanding of the benefits of trees to the community in the context of more than aesthetics, including the funding of urban forestry activities.
- Planting of 720 trees once tree inventory has been completed.
- Identify opportunities to strengthen and expand the relationships with our local non-profit groups.
- Update and improve existing ordinances, standards and specifications along with Best Management Practices related to trees.
- Improve and expand community education and outreach.
- Create a plan for addressing potential threats to the existing Urban Forest.
- Create a plan to address ongoing environmental changes.
- Cultivate advocacy for the Urban Forest by our local elected officials.
- Create a shared vision for all stakeholders within the Urban Forest.

Staff will return to the Council to accept the grant, should the final project application be awarded by CAL FIRE.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution 2017-24

2. Department of Forestry and Fire Protection - Concept Proposal Acceptance Letter