



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAYOR LICCARDO

**FROM:** Councilmember Khamis

**SUBJECT:** BUDGET DOCUMENT

**DATE:** May 22, 2019

Approved  Date 5/22/19

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the following recommendation be enacted.

**Proposal**

Program/Project Title: **Additional Funding for Our City Forest**

Amount of City Funding Required: **\$120,000.00**

Fund Type (i.e. General Fund, C&C funds, etc.): **General Fund**

This change is:

  X   One-time             Ongoing

Proposal Description, including anticipated outcomes (Please describe how change would affect services for San José residents, businesses, community groups, etc.):

**Our City Forest (OCF), City of San José Staff, and the City Council share the belief that our urban forest is an extremely important City asset that contributes to the wellbeing of our residents and natural environment each and every day. We agree that, as OCF states, “Trees are the number one natural combatant against city pollution, not only generating the oxygen we breathe, but simultaneously absorbing and reducing harmful dust and toxins... and a healthy urban forest is a vital component to helping fight drought... Trees clean and protect our waterways by reducing soil erosion, flooding and pollution, components all managed by our urban water systems.” Further, our tree canopy is home to numerous species of birds and will help us achieve our Climate Smart San José goals.**

**For the past year or so, the District 10 Council office has been talking with Staff about the confusion and shared frustration caused by the distributed way we manage trees in the City. Recently, Staff has taken steps to look at the situation more closely and has issued an RFP to bring in a consultant to analyze the current practices and recommend changes. The resulting analysis is expected in spring of 2020.**

Regardless of what changes may occur in the future, the City values the relationship with OCF and especially the work they do with the community. Our continued support of OCF is also indication of the importance we place on the relationship. Currently we are supporting the organization for an average of approximately \$600,000 per year, projected out through the 2021-2022 budget.

During last year's budget process, Council directed OCF to increase their fundraising efforts. Reports were expected last December, but have not yet been received. Without knowing what efforts and progress has been made, and considering the significant amount of support currently provided, it is difficult to consider a request for additional funding. However, here are a few suggestions to consider:

- 1) Provide \$15,000 in one-time funding to support the watering of the 50 trees planted in TJ Martin and Jeffrey Fontana Parks. During negotiations with OCF and PRNS over the mitigation of the trees removed by PG&E for their pipeline project, a former OCF employee agreed that OCF would provide the truck and labor to water the trees for the required three years, with water provided by the City. However, that employee left shortly after the project was completed and OCF management has indicated they were not aware of this commitment, and would not have agreed to such a commitment. OCF felt compelled to provide this service, after the fact, since the trees were already planted and they didn't want them to die, however, this was a cost they had not anticipated.
- 2) Provide \$50,000 so that they may hire a Tree Care & Stewardship Manger and \$25,000 for a part-time Education Coordinator, as requested by OCF. These roles are critical to ensuring the proper care of our investment in trees and to ensuring our community is educated on urban forestry and tree selection, planting, and care - an important service that OCF provides for our residents.
- 3) Provide \$30,000 requested by OCF for a contract Government Grants Manager/invoicing to ensure that they are able to seek out and maintain additional government grant funding and comply with the requirements of government grants.
- 4) Encourage OCF to seek a less expensive facility for the Nursery. When the FAA required the City to charge OCF market rent for the FAA-controlled land they were using, we helped them find another location and agreed to pay the rent for that location. Now that the AmeriCorps program has been reduced, a smaller facility could be considered. Suggestions might be to work with the County Parks department to expand their usage of Martial Cottle Park, or work with PRNS to find a suitable location within a City owned park, such as Emma Prush Park. Any cost savings could be returned to OCF to support their operations.

#### Funding Source

Essential Services Reserve (\$4 million): \$120,000

Other (Program/Project/Fund):

**Department or Organization:** Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services  
Department of Transportation

Department or Organization Contact (list contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation):

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