



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAYOR LICCARDO

**FROM:** Councilmember Matt Mahan

**SUBJECT:** BUDGET DOCUMENT

**DATE:** May 25, 2022

Approved 

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.) Complete a three-year pilot to investigate the total number of new trees planted, new trees established, new volunteers engaged and new planting sites identified and utilized through a Council Office tree planting grant program to help expand San Jose’s community forest.

## **Proposal**

**Program/Project Title:** Expanding Our Community Forest Pilot

**Amount of City Funding Required:** \$347,960

**This change is:**

One-time       Ongoing

**Cost Estimate Number (if applicable):** CE-FY22-23:064

**Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):**

San Jose’s community forest has lost 1728 acres or 11.8 percent of its total canopy coverage over the past decade. If the trend continues, citywide canopy coverage will shrink to 6.28 percent by 2042, a huge shortfall from the healthy 20 percent benchmark. Already, San Jose’s current canopy cover of 13.54 percent pales in comparison to similar California cities, namely Los Angeles with 25 percent, Oakland with 24.8 percent and Sacramento with 19.1 percent. Canopy coverage decline signifies a troubling environmental trend. If we fail to prioritize expanding our community forest moving forward, San Jose will face worsening social and economic opportunity costs.

Expanding San Jose's tree canopy helps build a healthier, cleaner and safer city. Altogether, the City's community forest captures 100,181 tons of greenhouse gasses annually, generates a \$5.82 return for every \$1 spent and improves physical and mental health. A robust community forest further bolsters residential property values and reduces City spending through carbon sequestration, stormwater management and air pollution removal.

Our City Forest (OCF), San Jose's longest standing tree planting partner, currently administers a number of successful tree planting and maintenance care initiatives. These programs help curb continued tree canopy decline, but to progress closer and faster towards our 20 percent canopy coverage goal, we must mobilize additional capacity and resources. This pilot serves to address both capacity and resource deficiencies through strengthening community participation in tree planting/maintenance care and directing staff to secure previously unexplored sources of funding.

Each of the City's ten council offices has eyes and ears on the ground in their district's different communities. The unique relationship Council Offices possess with their constituents provides elevated visibility into the individual needs, circumstances and dynamics of neighborhoods other stakeholders do not have when it comes to tree planting and maintenance care. For example, Council Offices could help identify new potential tree planting hosts and volunteers who may otherwise have gone unnoticed or been unengaged. Council Offices helping identify new tree planting sites will mobilize community engagement and lessen existing burdens for OCF and City Staff: for instance, significantly lowering the current 20 hours OCF spends locating each new tree planting site.

This pilot calls for the creation of a tree planting and maintenance care grant program administered by Council Offices, who will help identify new volunteers and tree planting hosts from local neighborhood associations, HOAs and other interested residents. To ensure an equitable distribution of funds amongst different council districts, the grant program is structured to direct the most dollars to the districts with the least canopy coverage. Funds will be distributed as following:

- 1.) Tier 1 ("lowest relative canopy coverage"): \$29,700 for each district with less than 12 percent canopy coverage. This will enable each Tier 1 district to plant up to 45 trees.
- 2.) Tier 2 ("moderate relative canopy coverage"): \$25,080 for each district with between 12 and 15 percent canopy coverage. This will enable each Tier 2 district to plant up to 38 trees.
- 3.) Tier 3 ("highest relative canopy coverage"): \$19,800 for each district with above 15 percent canopy coverage. This will enable each Tier 3 district to plant up to 30 trees.

During the pilot, the Department of Transportation (staffing allotted under 0.5 FTE Assoc. Construction Insp) and Our City Forest staff will collect data on the efficacy of the tree planting and maintenance care grant program. The success of the pilot will be measured by the number of trees planted, trees established, new volunteers engaged and new tree planting sites identified and utilized. As per usual operating procedure, Our City Forest will also track data on the location and species of trees planted.

The City will be able to expedite tree planting and hit its target of planting at least 1,000 new trees each year through delivering a tree grant program that mobilizes previously untapped relationships and resources from Council Offices. Engaging neighborhoods across San Jose in these efforts facilitates a quicker and more effective expansion of the tree canopy and raises awareness around the environmental, economic and social importance of San Jose's community forest.

## **Funding Source**

Essential Services Reserve:

Other (Please specify program/project/fund):

<b>Fund</b>	<b>2022-2023 Cost</b>	<b>Ongoing Cost</b>
F001 - GENERAL FUND - Non-Personal	\$267,960	\$0
F001 - GENERAL FUND - Personal Services	\$80,000	\$87,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$347,960.00</b>	<b>\$87,000.00</b>

**Position Changes (if applicable):**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Ongoing FTE</b>
Assoc Construction Insp (JC_3771)	08/01/2022	06/30/2025	0	0.5
<b>Total FTE</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0.5</b>

**Department or Organization Contact**

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

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Department or Organization: Department of Transportation

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