

# COALITION TO ADVANCE URBAN FORESTRY IN SAN JOSÉ

February 7, 2022

Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Councilmembers  
City of San Jose  
City Hall - 200 East Santa Clara Street  
San Jose, CA 95113

## **Re: February 8<sup>th</sup> City Council Agenda Item 5.2: Additional comments re: Community Forestry Management Plan (“CFMP”)**

The Coalition to Advance Urban Forestry in San Jose respectfully submits the following recommendations for City Council action:

### **1. ACCEPT THE DRAFT CFMP AS A “PRELIMINARY REPORT” ONLY**

Accept the Draft CFMP as a “preliminary report”, not as San José’s official Citywide Community Forestry Management Plan. The reasons include:

- a. The Plan does not contain critical financial data to inform any future budgeting or programming. This includes in-house program assessments, revenue streams and expenditures for mature tree work on city property, fees paid by residents, special district budgets, and other programs managed by DOT. This also pertains to Planning in-lieu fees, as well as tree work performed through Public Works, Parks, Airport. etc.;
- b. The Plan does not provide data or discussion regarding the City of San Jose 10-year cycle street tree pruning provided for residents through 2008 (no baseline or assessment for council);
- c. The Plan contains misleading information regarding support to OCF - inflated funds from the City have not been corrected;
- d. Delaying adoption has no impact to any operations, programming, or planning -- and the City can move forward on no net loss policy work and other important initiatives without an adopted Plan;
- e. Delaying adoption will have no impact on grant funding to DOT (contract was ended, after 2 or more extensions, due to failure to complete parks tree inventory, etc. since 2017 - there were two years prior to the consultant being hired to get that underway); and
- f. Delaying adoption shows that the City Council seeks greater transparency and accountability within City Hall.

### **2. FULL ACCOUNTING – Department of Transportation (DOT) TREE EXPENDITURES**

Request a full accounting for the past 5 years of all revenue and expenditures pertaining to DOT urban forestry staffing and commercial contractor work, by program. This accounting should include infrastructure maintenance, special assessment districts, tree removals, fees paid to DOT, and all commercial tree contractor expenditures throughout these programs administered through DOT and include recommendations related to this data as an essential component of San José’s citywide tree management plan

### **3. FULL ACCOUNTING - IN-LIEU PROGRAM**

Request a full accounting for last 5 years of the Planning Department in-lieu fee program, the rate used, how revenue is tracked and spent, and request recommendations regarding the program as an essential component of any citywide tree management plan. (Refer to the November 6, 2018 City Council meeting staff memo and minutes which outlines this new program including reporting requirements).

### **4. TRANSPARENT COST ANALYSIS FOR BUDGETING TREE PLANTING**

Direct staff to compile more complete data to assess all actual costs, including overhead, and all benefits of various tree planting campaigns and models prior to budgeting and implementation. Please consider project development work such as identifying planting sites, obtaining permits, arborist expertise, maintenance plans, etc. that is required prior to planting -- and providing or tracking tree stewardship for 3 years after planting. The City also should consider whether trees will be planted on city-managed property only (major thoroughfares and medians) or throughout the community and transcending jurisdictional boundaries such as for private yards, streets, schools businesses, parking lots, other public agency lands, and more (the other 85%).

For pertinent background information about OCF tree plantings throughout San Jose (100%), use this link [OCFTreesThroughTime.mp4](#) to view GIS map of OCF tree installations using database records with planting site longitude-latitude data.

### **5. CITY-DIRECTED TREE REMOVALS**

Direct staff to collect tree removal data from all departments and include a recommendation to track tree removals as a critical component of any citywide tree management plan.

### **6. OUTSTANDING CONCERNS**

Appoint the City Manager's office to conduct a review of outstanding issues cited in previous letters from the members of the public. These include comments from California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Audubon, Our City Forest, and many others.

Thank you for your careful attention to this important issue. It's important to get it right and we simply aren't there yet.

Sincerely,

***The Coalition to Advance Urban Forestry in San José***

Linda J. LeZotte

*Director, Valley Water and Former City of San Jose Councilmember*

Vicki Moore

*Chair, Santa Clara County Planning Commission*

Barbara Marshman

*Former San Jose Mercury News Editorial Page Editor*

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*Vice-Chair, Santa Clara County Planning Commission; former San Jose Planning Commissioner*

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*Retired Professor, San José State University*

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