



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 22, 2014

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Urban Forest Management Plan

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission:

- A. Review the proposed Urban Forest Management Plan (Plan); and
- B. Recommend the Plan to City Council for adoption.

DISCUSSION:

Introduction

The City of Santa Barbara has a long history of municipal tree planting and a diverse urban forest. Initially spearheaded in the early 1900s through the horticultural and civic leadership of prominent City residents, the City has placed a high value on the development and maintenance of its urban forest for more than a century. It is estimated that the City's urban forest is currently comprised of more than 320,000 trees. City-owned trees along public streets and in parks and other public places are estimated to represent 20 percent of the urban forest. The remaining 80 percent is found on private and other public property. There are more than 450 species of trees on City property.

Urban Forest Management Plan Development

The Parks and Recreation Department (Department) began developing the proposed Urban Forest Management Plan (Plan) in July 2012. The purpose of the Plan is to provide a long-term guide for the preservation and enhancement of trees in Santa Barbara. The Plan was developed in collaboration with a technical advisory committee and staff in the Community Development, Public Works and Fire Departments, and through extensive public input. Public input was gathered through four community meetings, an online survey, individual meetings with stakeholders, and presentations to City Boards and Commissions, including the Single Family Design Board, Historic Landmarks Commission, Architectural Board of Review, Street Tree Advisory Committee, Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission. The

Commission last reviewed the draft plan at its March 27, 2013, meeting. The Sustainability Council Committee and the City Council also reviewed the draft plan goals, objectives and actions.

In addition to public input, development of the plan included a review of current urban forest management policies and practices, completion of a city-wide tree canopy assessment, evaluation of other community forest plans, and identification of key urban forest issues. The proposed plan documents these efforts and outlines a series of goals, objectives and action steps for the City and community to preserve and enhance Santa Barbara's urban forest over the next 30+ years.

There are four primary goals for the plan, including: 1) Elevate the importance of the urban forest, 2) Continue Santa Barbara's horticultural legacy, 3) Promote a vibrant and healthy community, and 4) Foster awareness and appreciation of trees.

Fifteen plan objectives are organized under three areas: Tree Resource Management, City Organization and Policy, and Community Involvement. Each objective has a series of actions. Tree Resource Management objectives and implementation actions are primarily focused on the planning, planting, and maintenance of trees as well as maximizing the economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits of the urban forest. City Organization and Policy objectives and implementation actions address enhancing the City's investment in the health and management of the urban forest through funding, inter-departmental coordination, and City policy and planning initiatives. Community Involvement objectives and implementation actions focus on enhancing and expanding community participation and investment in the urban forest through partnerships and education and volunteer programs.

Plan Review

With completion of the proposed Plan, the Department is reviewing the Plan with City boards and commissions prior to seeking City Council approval and adoption. Plan review is primarily focused on the proposed plan objectives and implementation actions. The implementation matrix presents whether implementation actions are new, existing, or expanding, as well as whether they are ongoing, short-term, or longer-term initiatives. The Department is also seeking input on priority actions for implementation.

To date, the proposed Plan has been reviewed by the Single Family Design Board, Architectural Board of Review, Historic Landmarks Commission, and Street Tree Advisory Committee. A summary of the comments are included as Attachment 2. At its meeting on January 9, 2013, the Street Tree Advisory Committee recommended that the Commission forward the proposed Plan to Council for adoption (Attachment 3). The Planning Commission will review the Plan on January 16, 2013. Staff will provide an

overview of the comments received from the Planning Commission at the January 22, 2013, Commission meeting.

Adoption and Implementation

Once adopted, a detailed plan will outline key steps, milestones, and funding needs for the first five years. Although the Parks and Recreation Department will play a lead role, plan implementation will be shared by multiple City departments as well as boards and commissions.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Final Draft Urban Forest Management Plan
2. Board and Commission Comments
3. Street Tree Advisory Committee Recommendations

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APPROVED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director