



Legislation Text

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A Resolution Approving the City of Colorado Springs Urban Forest Management Plan

Presenter:

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Summary:

The City began developing the Urban Forest Management Plan (herein referred to as the “Plan”) in July of 2019. PlanIt Geo, LLC was selected as the consulting firm that would write the Plan. They were the same firm that provided our Urban Forest Canopy Analysis. Funding was provided by the City of Colorado Springs General Fund.

The Plan is a citywide management plan and is adopted by resolution. The Plan was developed in response to and as a recommendation of the City’s Urban Forestry Canopy Analysis next steps.

The Urban Forest Management Plan was developed after the Tree Canopy Assessment as the next logical progression in a series of analytics that would focus on preserving, maintaining, and managing the urban forest ultimately to benefit the residents of Colorado Springs. This plan outlines recommendations, projections, and procedures to achieve these goals for various management scenarios depending on resources.

Public engagement included an online survey with 389 respondents where 89% stated that healthy public street trees are important for maintaining a healthy community atmosphere. In addition, a stakeholders meeting was held in October, 2019 which included Colorado Springs Utilities, City Fire, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services, City Police, El Paso County, Colorado State Forest Service, City of Colorado Springs Public Works, Stormwater, Planning, Neighborhood Services, Legal and others.

City Forestry staff led the Plan’s development process. Through an iterative process with PlanIt Geo it identified four management scenarios based on levels of funding and tree maintenance and six Urban Forest Management and Sustainability Goals. These are: Tree Policies, Staffing, Budget and Funding, Assessments and Plans, Green Asset Management and Community Engagement.

A copy of the entire plan is attached for reference. There are additional materials provided as attachments to the Plan. These include executive summaries, fact sheets and the Research Summary.

Background:

Urban forests are increasingly important to urbanized areas and the people who live and work in

these built landscapes. Trees offer many benefits, some of which are directly identifiable and quantifiable, and others that are experienced. Colorado Springs' urban forest canopy is living infrastructure that shades over 17 percent of the community and provides economic, environmental, and aesthetic benefits: \$100 million annually in air filtration, \$900,000 in stormwater retention, \$97 million in carbon sequestration, and incalculable moments of beauty and serenity. The City's legacy of trees is 150 years old and continues to grow. Caring for Colorado Springs' urban forest is an important part of growing a sustainable, healthy, and vibrant city.

The objective of creating an urban forest management plan is to evaluate the City's existing urban forest resource in terms of physical structure and program management ("what do we have?"), identify goals and objectives as to what the City would like its urban forest to look like ("what do we want?"), determine actions and targets to get the City to that point ("how do we get what we want?"), and to continually reevaluate progress along the way ("how are we doing?").

City Forestry's current management plan is quite dated and lacking in the new plan's level of research and analytics. Additionally it does not include a Pest and Disease plan to address insect issues that were non-existent in 2006, specifically the threat of emerald ash borer (EAB).

The overriding goals of the Urban Forest Management Plan and City Forestry focus on preserving, maintaining, and managing the urban forest ultimately to benefit the residents of Colorado Springs. This plan outlines recommendations, projections, and procedures to achieve these goals for various management scenarios depending on resources.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Financial Implications:

As an advisory planning document, the Plan does not commit the City to any fiscal obligations.

The Plan highlights the need for additional resources to support a higher level of tree maintenance and inventory analysis commensurate with the International Society of Arboriculture industry standards of a seven-year rotation. This includes recommendations of increased staff and operations personnel. Several alternate funding scenarios are explored within the Plan. Any initiatives will be evaluated through departmental work plans and considered through the City's budgeting processes.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

On December 10, 2020, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board unanimously recommended adoption of the Urban Forest Management Plan.

Stakeholder Process:

Community engagement includes the public survey, a stakeholders meeting and opportunities for stakeholders and all licensed tree services to provide input before the completion of the Plan. A public presentation with Power Point scheduled for March 2020 was canceled due to Covid-19 concerns. However, the Contractor did place his presentation online for public viewing with adequate opportunity to provide further input. Once the Plan is approved by City Council and the Parks Advisory Board, the Plan and ancillary documents will be placed online.

Alternatives:

City Council could choose to approve, deny, or modify the proposed Resolution.

Proposed Motion:

Move to adopt a resolution approving the City of Colorado Springs Urban Forest Management Plan.

N/A