

MEMORANDUM



ITEM 12.1.

DATE: March 21, 2022
TO: Honorable Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Albert Stricker, Public Works Director
Steve Harriman, Public Works Division Manager
SUBJECT: **A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN**

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the Resolution.

RESULT OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Adoption of the Resolution would adopt the Urban Forest Master Plan as a policy guidance reference document for the future maintenance, development and improvement of the urban forest in Rancho Cordova.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the City was awarded an Urban and Community Forestry Proposition 68 Grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire). The grant funds are intended to mitigate climate change through the implementation of tree planting projects, with a focus on planting in low income and under-canopied neighborhoods. The grant award from CalFire was in the amount of \$369,500 and included funds for the preparation of the UFMP, additional staff resources from the Sacramento Tree Foundation to assist with community outreach and engagement, and the planting of 750 trees during the grant term.

The primary objective of the UFMP is to provide a third-party analysis of the City's Urban Forest Program, including an evaluation of the current condition of the urban forest and identification of opportunities for improvement. The document includes a Strategic Plan with specific recommendations for implementation in the coming years.

The development of the UFMP included significant community outreach and engagement to measure values and priorities related to the future management of the urban forest. The outreach included an on-line survey for residents and businesses, two virtual townhall meetings, and stakeholder interviews with City Council members and representatives from the Cordova Recreation and Park District, Folsom Cordova Unified School District, SMUD, Sacramento Tree Foundation, Volunteers in Neighborhood Services, and City staff from the Public Works and Community Development Departments.

A key finding is the current tree canopy cover ratio in Rancho Cordova is 6%, which includes

both developed neighborhoods and areas slated for future development with relatively low canopy cover. The plan recommends a 20% canopy ratio goal for Rancho Cordova and includes a series of recommended actions in the coming years to realize the 20% canopy goal.

The UFMP also focuses on strategies for new development, which is generally higher density with smaller planting spaces for medium and large stature trees compared to older neighborhoods. The plan highlights the importance of careful species selection in high-density new neighborhoods to maintain the health of the trees and protect sidewalks, curbs, driveways, and underground infrastructure from root damage. The plan also highlights the advantages of medium and large stature trees in new developments, including larger tree canopies that provide cleaner air and shaded streets, sidewalks, and houses.

With a focus on climate change, the plan recommends the City continually update the approved tree species list to provide “climate ready trees” for changing climate conditions in the coming decades. Finally, the plan urges the City to pursue planting projects in large open spaces like parks and stormwater basins to allow the planting of medium and large stature trees to allow the City to meet the 20% canopy goal.

Adoption of the resolution fulfills the requirements of the CalFire grant and provides recommendations to City staff and the community to protect, maintain and enhance the urban forest in Rancho Cordova.

FISCAL IMPACT AND FUNDING SOURCE

This project has no impact on the General Fund.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Resolution
2. Urban Forest Master Plan
3. UFMP Council Presentation Final 3 21 22 PDF