



**Fremont City Council**

3300 Capitol Avenue  
Fremont, CA 94538

**SCHEDULED**

Meeting: 03/05/19 07:00 PM  
Div/Dept: Landscape Architecture  
Category: Grants

**STAFF REPORT (ID # 3686)**

Sponsors:  
DOC ID: 3686 C

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**GRANT APPLICATION FOR CAL FIRE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM - Adopt a Resolution Approving a Grant Application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for Funding from the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program**

**Contact Persons:**

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**Executive Summary:** The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is considering applications to their Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program. The grant funding request in the amount of \$860,000 will fund various urban forestry programs, including conducting an urban tree inventory, creating an Urban Forestry Master Plan, tree planting, and promoting education and collaboration between the City and the public regarding the value and benefits of trees and the urban forest. The City would be responsible for a match in the form of a temporary Associate Landscape Architect and the use of existing staff for the grant program.

As the grant application submittal deadline is March 15, 2019, staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving the submittal of the application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for a FY 2018/19 Urban and Community Forestry grant. The resolution also authorizes and empowers the City Manager, or his designee, to execute, in the name of the City of Fremont, all necessary applications, agreements, payment requests, and any documentation necessary with CAL FIRE for the completion of the grant project.

**BACKGROUND:** On June 5, 2018, voters passed Proposition 68 with a majority vote of 58%. Proposition (Prop) 68, also known as the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018, authorizes \$4 billion in general obligation bonds for the creation and rehabilitation of state and local parks; natural resources protection projects; climate adaptation projects; water quality and supply projects; and flood protection projects. Funds from Prop 68 are administered in part by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) through its Urban and Community Forestry projects, which optimize the benefits of trees and related vegetation through multiple-objective projects as specified in the California Urban Forestry Act of 1978 in Public Resources Code (PRC) 4799.06-4799.12. In fiscal year 2018/19, CAL FIRE expects to award at least \$13.5M of Prop 68 funding through its Urban and Community Forestry projects.

In November 2018, staff submitted a concept proposal to CAL FIRE, under the category of Urban Forest Management Activities. This category funds projects that will result in a net greenhouse gas (GHG) benefit and play a significant role in meeting the State's GHG emission reduction targets. The grant proposal includes the following scope of work:

- Develop an Urban Forest Management Plan
- Complete a comprehensive City-wide inventory of all public trees
- Conduct a Canopy Assessment
- Update the Tree ordinances
- Establish a Tree Advisory Committee
- Conduct community engagement and outreach
- Plant 250 trees, 84 of which will be planted within an area identified as a Disadvantaged Community (DAC)

The State has a goal of reducing net GHG emissions. In order to demonstrate a net reduction of GHG emissions through tree planting and carbon sequestration, an inventory of the City's trees is necessary to quantify a baseline. A significant portion of the proposal's scope of work is concentrated on creating a baseline inventory of all public trees and performing an assessment of the urban tree canopy. Once this baseline has been established, the City will be able to utilize the information in a systematic way to create metrics to monitor the urban forest and establish comprehensive guidelines for maintaining and growing its trees through a proposed Urban Forestry Management Plan.

On January 24, 2019, CAL FIRE invited the City of Fremont to submit a formal application for consideration. Fewer than half of the applicants who submitted concept proposals were invited to proceed with a formal application. Thirty-six applicants have requested a funding total of approximately \$24M, of which at least \$13.5M is expected to be awarded.

**DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:** Completing the public tree inventory, conducting the tree canopy assessment, updating the Tree Protection Ordinances, and establishing a Tree Advisory Committee will inform the creation of a long-term Urban Forest Management Plan. Projects that are either in or serving disadvantaged communities (as defined by Prop 68) will receive scoring preference in the grant program. The grant application proposes 250 trees to be planted, with 84 trees to be planted in an existing DAC. The grant also proposes community education and outreach, which will not only help residents learn about the many benefits trees provide, but it will allow the City to take long-term and meaningful steps to partner with its residents to protect, preserve, and grow its urban forest tree canopy.

In addition to the multiple long-term benefits outlined, the grant proposal's goals would reaffirm the City's commitment to its Sustainability Plan, assist in maintaining a quantified net reduction in GHG emissions, and support mitigation of climate change in compliance with the State of California's Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32).

For the last 22 years, the City of Fremont has achieved recognition as a "Tree City USA" through the National Arbor Foundation. Communities achieve Tree City USA status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management, including the following: 1) maintaining a tree board or department, 2) having a tree ordinance, 3) spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, and 4) officially celebrating Arbor Day. In recent years, the National Arbor Foundation has raised concerns regarding the increased number of tree removals versus tree plantings within the City's urban forest. Completing the proposed planting project will expand the City's tree canopy and increase tree canopy-related benefits to a DAC and other areas; the City will maintain its Tree City USA designation; and the City will strengthen its relationship with the National Arbor Foundation.

The total project cost is estimated at \$1,200,000. The grant proposal will fund up to \$860,000 of the project. As part of the City's obligation to include a minimum of 25% matched funds, the grant application proposes hiring a 2-year temporary Associate Landscape Architect with required arborist certification who would manage the grant project. The remaining portion of the match will be covered by the use of existing staff working on the grant project.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The City will use existing staff and add one 2-year temporary Associate Landscape Architect to cover the City's match should the City be successful in the grant application. The City is committed to funding the position for two years. Tree Mitigation funds will pay for \$210,000 of the position, and additional funding in the amount of \$130,000 will be paid through future Tree Mitigation funds and/or the General Fund. Tree Mitigation funds are collected through penalties and mitigations against development projects that cannot adequately mitigate the loss of existing mature trees on their project sites.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** The proposed grant application would be exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) in that it is an activity covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for a causing significant effect on the environment. The proposed grant application, if funded, would result in the completion of an urban tree inventory, establishment of an Urban Forestry Master Plan, and promoting education and collaboration between the City and the public regarding the value and benefits of trees and the urban forest. In addition, if the grant is funded the City would plant approximately 250 tree, which would be exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(b) as new landscaping.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Draft Resolution- Grant Application for CalFire

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Find that the grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the tree planting is exempt from review under CEQA Guidelines section 15304(b) as new landscaping.
2. Adopt a resolution approving the submittal of an application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for a FY 2018/19 CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program grant and authorizing the City Manager or designee to execute all necessary applications, contracts, agreements, amendments, payment requests, and any other necessary documents with CAL FIRE required to complete the grant as specified in the grant application.
3. If the grant is approved by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, then Council authorizes the appropriation of the grant funds.