



P.O. Box 5374
San Jose, CA 95150
www.lwvsjsc.org
September 30, 2021

To: Transportation & Environment Committee, City of San José:

Councilmembers Davis (Chair), Cohen (Vice Chair), Esparza, Foley, and Peralez

cc: Lee Wilcox, City Manager's Office; Colleen Winchester, City Attorney's Office; Scott Green, Mayor's Office; Toni Taber, City Clerk

Subject: **Community Forest Management Plan, Item CC 21-243**

The League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara supports the key findings and strategic work plan as outlined in the [Community Forest Management Plan](#) (CFMP), although **we would still like to see more input from external stakeholders and interested community members**. We also believe the CFMP would be strengthened if, after input from external stakeholders, it included more detailed recommendations. Overall, our comments are focused on equity, stakeholder and community engagement, and governance structure.

We have read the DOT staff report on the CFMP and find it encouraging. The staff report stresses the three major areas that the League has already communicated to the consultant, and we look forward to seeing the City's next steps towards improving the CFMP. We agree that the CFMP is a living document. Therefore, **we ask that staff provide semi-annual reports to the City Council**.

The League is committed to advancing equity in all of its work. The CFMP shows marked inequities in tree canopy in some San Jose neighborhoods. We had hoped to see more analysis and more concrete examples of how to address these shortcomings. **We encourage you to ensure that the plan has input and ownership from the entire city including its underserved communities**, especially because the city's tree canopy is not spread equally throughout the city.

We understand that stakeholder and community engagement were made much more difficult during COVID, but we strongly believe that such input is still needed – and still possible - to help us reach a true citywide inclusive plan. **External stakeholder input and approval is extremely important** since so much of San Jose's community forest is managed by groups and private landowners rather than the City of San José. Once the outreach is complete, we would like to see the CFMP include a list of involved stakeholders. We are pleased to see the formation of a Community Forest Advisory Committee mentioned in the staff report, and **urge you to accelerate its formation**.

As an organization devoted to good government practices, we are pleased to see the information on current governance structure regarding our community forest. Clearly, the current structure is not optimal. **We encourage you to explore different structural approaches within the City of San José that allow inter-departmental cooperation with compatible mission, vision, and goals which include the community urban forest as part of an overall climate resiliency strategy**. It would be helpful if the plan could include examples of other cities with strong CFMPs and specifics of how San Jose's CFMP could better support Climate Smart San José. If possible, we would like to see this additional information added to the report before the consultant's contract with the City expires.

We look forward to following requests that support the CFMP during the FY 2021-2022 budget process. The CFMP is a critical part of our city's efforts to fight climate change.

Regards,

Carol M. Watts

Carol Watts, President, League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara

- lwvsjsc.org



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Santa Clara Valley
Audubon Society

September 30, 2021

To: Transportation & Environment Committee, City of San José: Councilmembers Davis (Chair), Cohen (Vice Chair), Esparza, Foley, and Peralez

Re: Community Forest Management Plan, Item CC 21-243

We are writing to express our disappointment with the process of development and the resulting document of the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP). We sent in three comment letters, dated: April 10, 2021; July 31, 2021; and September 13, 2021; (attached) and met with staff.

We acknowledge the need to address the loss of trees canopy in San Jose. We support the CFMP recommendations for additional budget and a revised governance structure to protect the community forest on city and private properties and to ensure that mitigation for lost trees is adequate and that all areas of the city benefit. However, we believe that the CFMP, as proposed, conflicts with goals and policies of the Envision 2040 Master Plan, and is thus systematically flawed. Absent a major revision, it cannot address our concerns.

The city of San Jose has included multiple mandates for preferential protections and planting of native trees in the Envision 2040 General Plan.

- MS-21.1 *“Manage the Community Forest to achieve San José’s environmental goals for water and energy conservation, wildlife habitat preservation, stormwater retention, heat reduction in urban areas, energy conservation, and the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.”* This means managing and including native trees for their high habitat value.
- MS 21.4 *“Encourage the maintenance of mature trees, especially natives on public and private property as an integral part of the community forest. Prior to allowing the removal of any mature tree, pursue all reasonable measures to preserve it.”*
- MS-21.5 *“As part of the development review process, preserve protected trees (as defined by the Municipal Code), and other significant trees. Avoid any adverse effect on the health and longevity of protected or other significant trees through appropriate design measures and construction practices. Special priority should be given to the preservation of native oaks and native sycamores. When tree preservation is not feasible, include appropriate tree replacement, both in number and spread of canopy.”*
- MS 21.8 *“For Capital Improvement Plan or other public development projects, or through the entitlement process for private development projects, require landscaping including the selection and planting of new trees to achieve the following goals:*
 - Avoid conflicts with nearby power lines.
 - Avoid potential conflicts between tree roots and developed areas.
 - Avoid use of invasive, non-native trees.
 - Remove existing invasive, non-

native trees. • Incorporate native trees into urban plantings in order to provide food and cover for native wildlife species. • Plant native oak trees and native sycamores on sites which have adequately sized landscape areas and which historically supported these species.”

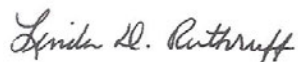
Prioritization of support for biodiversity has also been highlighted by council as an “Urban Greening” priority (January 20, 2021, attachment 4).

Yet the CFMP focuses on tree diversity only, with recommendations that conflict with habitat and biodiversity goals. At this time, we ask for the CFMP to be revised to:

- Recognize the global biodiversity crisis, the importance of urban landscapes in mitigating this threat¹.
- Revise the “diversity of tree species” goal to prioritize biodiversity / habitat goals.
 - Revise recommendations that conflict with this goal. The limits on the allowable percentages of the Oak genus and local Oak species in the Urban Forest should be increased, since oaks support more species diversity than any other tree.
 - Draft specific recommendations that promote the Community Forest as means to support the biodiversity of our region.
- Follow the guidance of the General Plan to:
 - Manage the community forest for the benefit of wildlife by protecting and planting native trees and encourage the maintenance and protection of mature native trees.
 - Preferentially preserve native oaks and sycamores during development.
 - Restore native oak trees and add plantings in spaces large enough to accommodate their mature size

We support the concerns expressed by several environmental organizations (September 23, 2021) and agree with the signatories on the letter that a revised plan, based on community-based stakeholder groups.

Sincerely,



Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair

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Santa Clara Valley Chapter
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Shani Kleinhaus, Environmental Advocate

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¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s42949-020-00010-w>

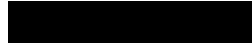


September 13, 2021

To:

Mr. Russell Hansen
City Arborist
Department of Transportation
City of San Jose
Russell.Hansen@sanjoseca.gov

Ryan Allen



Dudek

Re: Community Forest Master Plan 95% draft

Dear Mr. Hansen and Mr. Allen

When CNPS-SCV and Santa Clara Valley Audubon met with the City Arborist in August, Mr. Russel invited us to suggest language about biodiversity to be included in the CFMP. In this letter, we suggest language about biodiversity and provide additional comments on the Community Forest Master Plan 95% Draft.

The following paragraphs are our suggestions. We believe this language fits in after the discussion of the need for a diversity of tree species.

To be added after the discussion of diversity of tree species pg:64.

The traditional concept of diversity in the urban forest is understood as planting a large variety of tree species. This practice is designed to limit the vulnerability of the urban canopy to destruction by a single disease organism or event. But as climate and biodiversity crises impact our local and global biomes, we must shift our thinking about diversity to a much broader scale. The biodiversity of the planet is now at high risk. We are in the midst of a world-wide insect apocalypse which is affecting all the animals further up the food chain, and the plants that depend on insects for pollination. Bird, amphibian and mammal populations are crashing over periods as short as 10 to 20 years. We must recognize our urban forest as an integral part of a larger ecosystem. We need to

select tree species not just to accomplish a forest with a variety of trees but to selectively plant tree species that support the life cycles of a great diversity of other species such as insects, pollinators, birds, amphibians and mammals.

There are exceptions of course, but many commonly planted non-native tree species have little to offer other than a bit of shade and a possible nesting site. Then there are the habitat heroes such as native oaks.

“Native oaks support over 300 species of vertebrate animals and provide food for more species of moths and butterflies than any other plant. Insects that live on oaks provide high-protein food for birds to feed their nestlings” (1.)

We cannot depend on trees in our city parks to provide all these ecological services.

- San Jose is a park deficient city.
- Most of the land in our country is in private hands.
- Isolated populations lose genetic diversity and can't adapt to climate change.
- Individual animals need pathways to connect with others of their species.

If we as a community are to support biodiversity, the choices we make for street and yard trees matter.

End of suggested language about biodiversity.

Additional comments on the 95% Draft

We have provided many comments on previous drafts of the CFMP. Many of them will be repeated here.

Supporting Biodiversity in the Community Forest

Addressing the need for the Community Forest to be managed to support biodiversity of all plants and animals is not something that can be put off for some future rendition of the CFMP.

We can begin this process of supporting biodiversity in San Jose by taking several initial steps.

1. Increase the limit of the Oak genus from 20% to 30-40%.
2. In any informational data set regarding the characteristics of trees, include information about the relative habitat value of the trees in the inventory. This gives residents the opportunity to make an informed choice as to the eco-benefits their trees provide.
3. Follow the San Jose City Wide Design Standards and Guidelines adopted in February 2021. The guidelines regarding trees should be reflected in the CFMP, yet they are not incorporated in the 95% draft.

Section 2.3.8 Landscaping

- a. Guideline G1. Provide native trees, shrubs, and ground cover for landscaping
- b. Guideline G3. Plant at least one native Oak tree on large sites.

4. Follow San Jose's Envision 2040 General Plan. The section of the General Plan that covers the Community Forest should be reflected in this CFMP but many of these directives are missing.

There are multiple mandates regarding the **preferential treatment of native trees**. Yet there is no mention of this special valuing of native trees. In fact, they seem to be relegated to parks and open spaces only.

5. Please include these mandates in the CFMP.

- a. Section MS-21.1: Manage the Community Forest to achieve San Jose's environmental goals for...wildlife habitat preservation... This would mean managing and including native trees for their high habitat value.
- b. Section MS-21.4: Encourage the maintenance of mature trees, especially natives on public and private property.
- c. Section 21.5: Special priority should be given to the preservation of native oaks and native sycamores.
- d. Section 21.8: Incorporate native trees into urban plantings in order to provide food and cover for native wildlife species. Also: plant native oak and native sycamores on sites which have adequately sized landscape areas.

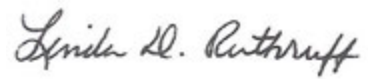
Engaging the Community and Stakeholders in the **Goal Setting** Process

1. Outreach to stakeholders was woefully inadequate. There seems to be an attempt to correct this by creating an oversight committee. But the CFMP only charges this committee with oversight on the *process of implementing* the plan. If this is to be a "living document" as we were told it would be, the oversight committee needs to be able to evaluate the suitability of the plan. There needs to be a **process to change the plan to address its current inadequacies**.
2. The process by which the goals of the plan were developed, is still unaddressed. There must be community and stakeholder input and agreement as to the goals for the Community Forest. This cannot be a top-down process. If it is to be a community forest, the **expertise of the community stakeholders must be included in the process**.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 95% plan. We hope that our comments are incorporated.

San Jose Community Forest Master Plan
CNPS-SCV Comments on 95% plan
09-13-2021

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda D. Ruthruff".

Linda Ruthruff
Conservation Chair
California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shani Kleinhaus".

Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D.
Environmental Advocate
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



July 31, 2021

To: Ryan Allen
Urban Forestry Specialist

Re: **Draft San Jose Community Forest Master Plan, Parts 2 and 3.**

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a non-profit statewide environmental organization, established in 1965. Our mission is to protect California's native plant heritage and preserve it for future generations through the application of science, research, advocacy, education, conservation and restoration. The CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter has over 1,000 members distributed throughout our chapter area, which encompasses all of Santa Clara County and southern San Mateo County.

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the Audubon Society is a non-profit environmental organization and was established in 1925. We have over 1,000 members and are one of the largest chapters in the state. We apply scientifically sound conservation strategies for the protection of native ecosystems, especially those that support birds. We use advocacy, education and experiences to engage the public in the appreciation and protection of birds.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft San Jose Community Forest Master Plan (CFMP), Parts 2 and 3.

Outreach to citizens and stakeholders.

In our previous comment letter on Section 1 of the CFMP, we expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the out-reach process, which left out historical, long-term state holders such as the California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the Audubon Society. When these most recent sections were released, Linda was surprised that even though we had sent in a letter with our contact information, she was not contacted and notified that the new sections were released. There still seem to be problems with outreach.

Action Requested:

Please improve your outreach to stakeholders, including those who have already engaged in the process.

Other problems with the process.

The process of the development of the CFMP has been very difficult to discern. When what turned out to be Section 1 was released, there was no indication that it was only part of the expected final product. I know of comments that were sent in critiquing the lack of many topics that would be expected to be part of a complete plan. We were offered no context. It was just—here is the plan, what do you think? It should have been released with an explanation that this was an assessment of current conditions with the actual “plan” to follow.

Action Requested:

Please be more transparent about the process of developing the CFMP and provide more information to stakeholders regarding the continuing process.

Section 2 “Objectives”

There is no context given for these objectives. Where did they come from? Were these written by the consultant, by the City Council, by staff? It would have been preferable to get feedback from the community and stakeholders on what the objectives were before fleshing them out with so many Implementations.

Action Requested:

Please add an objective for Biodiversity. The urban forest should be used strategically to support biodiversity not only of the trees in the city, but also of the biodiversity of all the other organisms that the trees could support.

Species Selection

It makes sense to want to have diversity of tree species in the Community Forest. But not all trees are created equal in the ecological services they can provide or the habitat value they create. It makes great sense to want to limit Crepe Myrtle Trees and Palm Trees to no more than 10% of the tree population. It does not make sense to limit the Oak genus to 20% of the trees in San Jose.

“Native oaks support over 300 species of vertebrate animals and provide food for more species of moths and butterflies than any other plant. Insects that live on oaks provide high-protein food for birds to feed their nestlings” (1).

Due to their size and longevity, Oaks sequester carbon at a higher rate than most other trees and provide large areas of shade that mitigate the heat island effect in neighborhoods.

San Jose City Wide Design Guidelines, adopted in February 2021 require the planting of at least one native oak on large sites that can accommodate them. (Section 2.3 Guideline # G3.)

Action Requested:

Please increase the allocation for the percentage of the Oak genus to 50%.

Encouraging the planting of Native Trees

It is appreciated that the UFMP supports the planting of native trees in Open Space and Parks. But this does not go far enough. The planting of California Native Trees should be encouraged everywhere. Their habitat value and support of biodiversity should be emphasized in all the outreach efforts of the City.

Action Requested:

Please include in the CFMP objectives that would result in information on the habitat value of native trees being provided to homeowners and businesses that need to select trees for their property.

Biodiversity in the Urban Forest

The concept of diversity in the Urban Forest in the UFMP is very narrowly conceived of as a diversity of tree species.

We are in the midst of a world-wide insect apocalypse. Some are calling the world-wide crash of species diversity the Anthropocene, or the Sixth Extinction (Elizabeth Kolbert.) When we think of species diversity in our urban plantings, we need to look beyond having multiple individual tree species. We need to consider how much biodiversity various tree species support and emphasize the planting of species that support the life cycles of birds, insects, amphibians and other life forms.

There are exceptions of course, but many commonly planted non-native tree species provide little more habitat value than nesting sites.

Most of the United States' land is held in private hands. If we are to halt the loss of biodiversity where we live, we need to realize that what people plant on their small patch of earth matters. It matters not just for the diversity of the San Jose City Forest but for the biodiversity of the planet.

There is a world-wide movement and shift in thinking about the importance of bringing nature into our urban spaces. There is a realization that if we are to maintain biodiversity and support healthy lifestyles for residents--we must bring nature into the built environments where most people live, work and play.

Locally, much work is being done to provide scientifically based guidelines for planning the transition to native plantings in parks, streets and storm water management systems in ways that regenerate nature and support native species. San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI, www.sfei.org) with other partners recently released *Integrating Planning with Nature: Building climate resilience across the urban-to-rural gradient* (see 3 to download the report.)

Action Requested:

Give preference in planting recommendation to trees that create habitat for birds and pollinators. Some recommendations include:

- Locally native oaks (locally native *Quercus sp*)
- Blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra caerulea*)
- Locally native willows (locally native *Salix sp*)
- Big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
- Some native pines (some native *Pinus sp*)
- Buckeye tree (*Aesculus californica*)
- White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*)
- Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Preference for planting locally native plant species.

The city of San Jose has included multiple mandates for preferential protections and planting of native trees in the Envision 2040 General Plan.

- a. MS-21.1 Requires that the community forest be managed to achieve goals of wildlife habitat protection. This would mean managing and *including native trees for their high habitat value.*
- b. MS 21.4 Encourage the maintenance of mature trees, *especially natives* on public and private property as an integral part of the community forest.
- c. MS-21.5 Requires that *priority be given to the preservation of native oaks and native sycamores* in development plans.
- d. MS 21.8 Mandates that *native trees be incorporated into urban plantings* in order to provide food and cover for native wildlife species. *Also to plant native oak trees and native sycamores in sites* which have adequately sized landscape areas and historically supported these species.

Actions requested:

As mandated:

- a. Manage the community forest for the benefit of wildlife by protecting and planting native trees.
- b. Encourage the maintenance and protection of mature native trees.
- c. Preferentially preserve native oaks and sycamores during development.
- d. Restore native oak trees and add plantings in spaces large enough to accommodate their mature size

Educational Program: Preservation preferable to planting.

This report emphasizes that the most cost-effective way of maintaining the urban forest is through preservation of existing trees. Native oak trees have special requirements for the avoidance of summer watering. This is a foreign concept for many of our residents. Many come from other parts of the US or the world without experience gardening in our Mediterranean climate with a prolonged period of summer dryness. I have heard from frustrated and horrified

nursery personnel who visit homes with huge ancient oaks underplanted with flower beds and lawns. The loss of a large oak tree is a major loss to the city's forest and biodiversity.

In order to prevent these losses, we need to develop educational programs to inform property owners of the special requirements of native oaks. They need to understand how to maintain this valuable asset in good condition.

Actions requested:

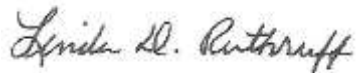
During tree surveys, identify homes and other properties with native oaks.

- a. Develop an outreach program to educate property owners about the economic and habitat value of their oak/s and give them information regarding how to keep their trees in good health
- b. Another option would be to create a program where information about the care of the oaks is provided at the time of transfer of ownership.
- c. Conduct outreach to areas where large native oaks still exist. This could be through libraries, neighborhood organizations or schools.

References

1. http://ucanr.org/sites/oak_range by Rebecca Miller-Cripps, UC Cooperation
2. Download report by San Francisco Estuary Institute here:
<https://www.sfei.org/projects/integrated-planning-nature-building-resilience-across-urban-and-rural-landscapes-silicon>

Sincerely,



Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair

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Shani Kleinhaus

Environmental Advocate
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22221 McClellan Rd., Cupertino 95014



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Santa Clara Valley
Audubon Society

April 10, 2021

To: Ryan Allen
Urban Forestry Specialist

Re: Draft San Jose City Forest Management Plan

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft San Jose City Forest Master Plan (CFMP). We also appreciate the extension of the deadline to Saturday, April 10th, as we only recently found out that this plan was available for comment.

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a non-profit statewide environmental organization, established in 1965. Our mission is to protect California's native plant heritage and preserve it for future generations through the application of science, research, advocacy, education, conservation and restoration. The CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter has over 1,000 members distributed throughout our chapter area, which encompasses all of Santa Clara County and southern San Mateo County.

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Outreach to citizens and stakeholders.

It appears that considerable effort was made to reach out to San Jose citizens. The outreach to stakeholders, however, was inadequate. The California Native Plant Society-Santa Clara Valley Chapter has been very active as an environmental advocate to many San Jose agencies, committees and the San Jose City Council for decades now. We also have a robust history of advocating for the planting of native species with the public. Every year we put on the Going Native Garden Tour with 50-60 participating local gardens, 1600 attendees, and 6500 garden visits. We also hold an annual Wildflower Show in the Greater San Jose area. Additionally, we give 30-40 talks/year, at libraries in both Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, encouraging residents to plant native gardens and giving them the knowledge to be successful. (During the Covid epidemic we have continued our activities online.)

Santa Clara Valley Audubon has a very prominent presence in the sphere of environmental advocacy, usually in a leadership role. They are well-known by the Mayor and City Council as speaking for protecting and increasing habitat for birds and other wildlife.

We are surprised that we were not part of the outreach to “stakeholders.” Linda Ruthruff only found out about this draft when she received an email from a committee member who had received an email from Dave Poeschel (Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter) who heard from Alice Kaufman (Green Foothills.) Linda then alerted Shani Kleinhaus (Santa Clara Valley Audubon) who helped in the writing of this letter.

1. Action requested: Please reopen the comment period and reach out to stakeholder groups who would likely be interested in the composition of the City Forest and how it is managed.

Historical composition of San Jose’s plant communities.

The historical composition of San Jose’s plant composition is described as grasslands and chaparral. This leaves out the (pre-European contact) history of many riparian areas including freshwater marshes, rivers and streams. The alluvial fan was historically described as a mile wide. The area also had many groves of Oak woodland.

1. Action requested: Please include San Jose’s riparian corridors, freshwater marshes and Oak Woodlands in your description of historical San Jose and include riparian corridor, freshwater marsh and Oak Woodland tree species in your plans for the urban forest. These species should include
 - Locally native oak species (locally native *Quercus sp*)
 - Locally native willow species (locally native *Salix sp*)
 - Locally native alder species (*Alnus rhombifolia*)

Biodiversity in the Urban Forest

The concept of diversity in the Urban Forest in the UFMP is very narrowly conceived of as a diversity of tree species.

We are in the midst of a world-wide insect apocalypse. Some are calling the world-wide crash of species diversity the Anthropocene, or the Sixth Extinction (Elizabeth Kolbert.) When we think of species diversity in our urban plantings, we need to look beyond having multiple individual tree species. We need to consider how much biodiversity various tree species support and emphasize the planting of species that support the life cycles of birds, insects, amphibians and other life forms.

There are exceptions of course, but many commonly planted non-native tree species provide little more habitat value than nesting sites.

“Native oaks support over 300 species of vertebrate animals and provide food for more species of moths and butterflies than any other plant. Insects that live on oaks provide high-protein food for birds to feed their nestlings” (1).

Most of the United States’ land is held in private hands. If we are to halt the loss of biodiversity where we live, we need to realize that what people plant on their small patch of earth matters. It matters not just for the diversity of the San Jose City Forest but for the biodiversity of the planet.

There is a world-wide movement and shift in thinking about the importance of bringing nature into our urban spaces. There is a realization that if we are to maintain biodiversity and support healthy lifestyles for residents--we must bring nature into the built environments where most people live, work and play. There was recently a virtual, international 5 day “The Nature of Cities Festival” with 2,300 people from 72 countries. There were 18 plenaries and 180 seed sessions and field trips all on the topic of bringing nature into cities (2).

Locally, much work is being done to provide scientifically based guidelines for planning the transition to native plantings in parks, streets and storm water management systems in ways that regenerate nature and support native species. San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI, www.sfei.org) with other partners recently released *Integrating Planning with Nature: Building climate resilience across the urban-to-rural gradient* (see 3 to download the report.)

2. Action Requested: Give preference in planting recommendation to trees that create habitat for birds and pollinators.

Some recommendations include:

- Locally native oaks (locally native *Quercus sp*)
- Blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra caerulea*)
- Locally native willows (locally native *Salix sp*)
- Big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
- Some native pines (some native *Pinus sp*)
- Buckeye tree (*Aesculus californica*)
- White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*)
- Western redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Preference for planting locally native plant species.

The city of San Jose has included multiple mandates for preferential protections and planting of native trees in the Envision 2040 General Plan.

- a. MS-21.1 Requires that the community forest be managed to achieve goals of wildlife habitat protection. This would mean managing and *including native trees for their high habitat value.*
- b. MS 21.4 Encourage the maintenance of mature trees, *especially natives* on public and private property as an integral part of the community forest.
- c. MS-21.5 Requires that *priority be given to the preservation of native oaks and native sycamores* in development plans.
- d. MS 21.8 Mandates that *native trees be incorporated into urban plantings* in order to provide food and cover for native wildlife species. *Also to plant*

native oak trees and native sycamores in sites which have adequately sized landscape areas and historically supported these species.

3. Actions requested:

As mandated:

- a. Manage the community forest for the benefit of wildlife by protecting and planting native trees.
- b. Encourage the maintenance and protection of mature native trees.
- c. Preferentially preserve native oaks and sycamores during development.
- d. Restore native oak trees and add plantings in spaces large enough to accommodate their mature size

Unsuitable Tree

We agree with the assessment that the list of unsuitable trees should be made specific. (Unsuitable Tree p. 45 par.3) For example, not all Pines should be considered unsuitable for all locations. Pines are important habitat trees and some can fit into the urban forest.

There are trees in the nursery trade that have become invasive in wild areas. These known invasive plants should be included in the list of unsuitable species.

3. Actions requested:

- a. Rework the list of unsuitable trees to delineate the species-specific trees that are deemed undesirable
- b. Consult the California Invasive Plant Council's list of invasive plants in the nursery trade. (Cal-IPC.org.) Add any trees with a rating of medium to high invasiveness to the list of unsuitable trees.
- c. Add trees that are likely to increase fire hazards, such as all Acacias and Eucalyptus varieties.

Educational Program: Preservation preferable to planting.

This report emphasizes that the most cost-effective way of maintaining the urban forest is through preservation of existing trees. Native oak trees have special requirements for the avoidance of summer watering. This is a foreign concept for many of our residents. Many come from other parts of the US or the world without experience gardening in our Mediterranean climate with a prolonged period of summer dryness. I have heard from frustrated and horrified nursery personnel who visit homes with huge ancient oaks underplanted with flower beds and lawns. The loss of a large oak tree is a major loss to the city's forest and biodiversity.

In order to prevent these losses, we need to develop educational programs to inform property owners of the special requirements of native oaks. They need to understand how to maintain this valuable asset in good condition.

4. Actions requested:

During tree surveys, identify homes and other properties with native oaks.

- a. Develop an outreach program to educate property owners about the economic and habitat value of their oak/s and give them information regarding how to keep their trees in good health
- b. Another option would be to create a program where information about the care of the oaks is provided at the time of transfer of ownership.
- c. Conduct outreach to areas where large native oaks still exist. This could be through libraries, neighborhood organizations or schools.

Determining the Value of the Urban Forest

The UFMP rightfully references the many health benefits and some of the ecoservices that the urban forest provides. Benefits such as improved health and wellbeing, reduced heat island effects, carbon sequestration, removing pollutants, preventing runoff etc. are mentioned. The importance of the habitat value of trees is only briefly mentioned. This important eco-function of trees needs to be emphasized when tree choices are made. This information should be included in any database, listing, or discussion of the relative merits of different trees.

5. Action requested: Include information about the habitat value of individual tree species in any listing, database or discussion regarding the relative attributes of tree species.

Availability of tree species propagated from individual watersheds.

Species Selection Related Goals and Policies MS-21.9 requires the planning of trees propagated from local stock. But local nurseries do not carry trees propagated in this manner. This needs to change. In your collaboration with Our City Forest, this area or watershed specific propagation could be developed. Native Here Nursery in Berkeley is an example of a nursery offering area specific trees.

6. Action requested: Develop a plan with Our City Forest to offer trees propagated from specific San Jose watersheds.

Special prohibitions regarding plantings of London plane trees and Holly-leafed oaks.

We appreciated the understanding of the damage that London plane trees and Holly oaks can cause when planted near susceptible wild areas. (Species Selection Related Goals and Policies MS-21.10.) We would like to add that the Holly oak should not be planted near riparian corridors. It has already invaded and formed thickets on parts of the Guadalupe River, where it out-competes desirable native vegetation.

7. Action requested: Disallow the planting of Holly oaks in riparian areas.

Design Review and Approval for Development Projects

This section of the CFMP discusses that trees should be included in the design process of new developments. It should be made clear that including trees in development plans is required by Envision 2040 General Plan (MS-21.5, MS-21.8) and is therefore not a choice for developers and planners.

8. Action requested: Rework the Design Review and Approval for Development Projects section of CFMP to emphasize that the SJ General Plan requires that trees are to be an integral part of the planning process.

Resident choice of street trees.

Residents historically have been told what tree they need to plant. We have heard from frustrated residents who had to fight to be allowed to plant a native tree.

The city expects its residents to become invested in the nurturing and maintenance of their street trees. The best way to do that is to engage them in the selection of their tree. They should be given information about the characteristics of the various trees including the relative habitat value.

9. Requested action: Develop materials regarding the attributes of available trees including the habitat value. Allow residents to choose their street tree.

Community Investment and Collaboration


Currently, the major collaborative partner for maintaining the San Jose Urban Forest is Our City Forest. UFMP suggests exploring other community partnerships for help in developing and maintaining the Urban Forest. The California Native Plant Society-Santa Clara Valley Chapter (CNPS-SCV) has a wealth of information and expertise regarding native trees.

10. Requested action: Explore ways that San Jose can partner with CNPS-SCV to facilitate incorporating more locally native tree species in the San Jose Urban Forest with the goal of preserving and enhancing biodiversity in San Jose.

References

1. http://ucanr.org/sites/oak_range by Rebecca Miller-Cripps, UC Cooperative Extension
2. www.tnoc-festival.com.
3. Download report by San Francisco Estuary Institute here: <https://www.sfei.org/projects/integrated-planning-nature-building-resilience-across-urban-and-rural-landscapes-silicon>

Sincerely,



Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair

████████████████████
California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter
3921 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 205
Palo Alto, CA 94303

Shani Kleinhaus

Shani Kleinhaus

Environmental Advocate
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Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager
Alex Kennett, District 1
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Helen Chapman, District 3
Dorsey Moore, District 4
Shay Franco-Clausen, District 5
Mike Potter, District 6
Kalvin Gill, District 7

September 13, 2021

Ryan Allen, Urban Forester
Dudek

Re: 95% Draft of the City of San José's Community Forest Management Plan

Dear Mr. Allen:

On behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority), I am writing to express our comments regarding City of San José's 95% Draft of the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP).

The Open Space Authority is a public, independent special district created by the California State Legislature in 1993 to conserve the natural environment, support agriculture, and connect people to nature by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations.

Having a comprehensive, forward-looking plan to expand San José's urban forest and to sustainably maintain that urban forest, is extremely important. We are grateful to City leadership, staff, consultants, and stakeholders for the extensive work that has gone into the CFMP to this 95% stage. We especially applaud the analysis of the current urban tree canopy and emphasis in the Plan to bring greater tree canopy equity to City residents, especially communities of color, that, based on our understanding and data included in the Plan, tend to suffer greater impacts from urban heat island effects.

We are also encouraged by some mention in the Plan regarding support for habitat and biodiversity goals in the selection of tree species. However, we feel much more needs to be considered in service of urban biodiversity as the Plan moves forward. As we referenced in our previous letter, dated July 29, 2021, the Authority was not consulted in earlier drafts of the CFMP. Some of the local urban forestry and urban biodiversity efforts in which the Authority has been involved include development of an "[Integrating Planning with Nature](#)" report with San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI) and SPUR, which brings in expertise from multiple sectors to provide Santa Clara Valley-focused recommendations for urban greening benefits, including urban forestry; development with SFEI of an [Urban Ecological Planning Guide](#) for Santa Clara Valley that provides recommendations for biologically interconnected urban plantings that support biodiversity in San Jose and its environs. Both of these reports go much further in supporting wildlife habitat and biodiversity goals as the City's urban forests are replaced and expanded, and should be incorporated into the Plan.

The Plan references grant opportunities to help provide funding for its implementation, but references only State and Federal sources. The Plan should also reference local and regional sources, given that again in our previous communication, the Authority mentioned it has an ongoing Urban Grants program through which it has provided millions of dollars to cities (including San Jose), the County, schools, and non-profits for urban projects and programs, many of which relate directly or indirectly to urban greening and urban forestry.

Once again, the Authority is grateful for the tremendous leadership demonstrated time and time again by City leaders and staff on matters impacting its residents. We look forward to continuing to work together on further updates to the CFMP, on its implementation, and generally to build a more resilient future for our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Andrea Mackenzie
General Manager

CC: Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority Board of Directors
Hon. Sam Liccardo, Mayor, City of San Jose
San Jose City Councilmembers
Rick Scott, Russell Hansen, Eric Hon, Colin Heyne, Department of Transportation, City of San Jose



**SAN JOSE DOWNTOWN
ASSOCIATION**

June 30, 2021

Russell Hansen
City Arborist
City of San Jose Department of Transportation
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Feedback and Comments for Community Forest Management Plan Draft

Dear Russell Hansen,

We commend City staff for their work on the Community Forest Management Plan Draft and look forward to working with staff as a partner on the management of downtown San Jose's urban canopy when the plan is finalized. We have reviewed the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) and have provided feedback in the following areas: design review and approval for development projects, grant funding, challenges with property owner maintained trees, and tree planting.

Design Review and Approval for Development Project

For development projects, there needs to be more consistency and clarity on what the arborists' recommendations are, how they are accepted and implemented as part of the process. The recommendation should be shared at a consistent point in the Public Works process, not at Public Works' discretion as to when to reveal the recommendations. Arborists need to be embedded throughout the process so that developers are aware of their recommendations at the onset of development and not merely at the end. When conditions change and arborists are required to change recommendations, this should transpire prior to the end of the development process as it can cause confusion and costly additional line items for developers. For example, new requirements from Public Works for new tree well sizes that were not recommended prior can be enforced at the end of development, which can be unfair for developers to accommodate. Developers are better able to accommodate tree requirements in the beginning stages or when notified during the review and approval process.

For the term "arborist", there needs to be clarification on what qualifies a standard arborist. When the City asks for a qualified arborist to help make a decision related to development, the qualifications need to be specified. Are there City standards or are these standards defined by the International Society of Arboriculture? Additionally, is certification requested by City staff and is this certification updated on set cadence? This would provide developers with clarity.

Grant Funding

We commend City staff for seeking grants and other funding opportunities as the need to pursue grant funding for tree care as defined in the plan's findings. The cost to maintain the urban forest is high, which necessitates service innovations and partnerships to offset the financial burden.

We recommend exploring additional opportunities including: leveraging existing City programs that provide needed human capital, future partnerships, internships, and private sector grants. Could an educational workforce be created and dedicated to urban forest management?

Challenges with Property Owner Maintained Trees

In San Jose, there is a lack of public knowledge that City municipal code dictates property owners must maintain the street tree adjacent to their property. We recommend closing this awareness gap by leveraging existing and potential partnerships to spread the word. Collaborating with business districts and business associations would be a fruitful partnership. Additionally, we recommend the City look at new partnerships with area nonprofits focused on environmental stewardship to disseminate information and increase urban forestry education.

There is a need to inform property owners with consistent messaging. We recommend creating a timeline for automated messaging for tree care maintenance. This could include automated emails, mailers, and automated phone calls.

Is it possible for there to be incentives to care for trees, stipends for costs of water use, and stipends for property owners' time? We also recommend creating programs that build-off existing or new utility company incentives or carbon offset incentives.

The City's tree pruning cycle is defined in the plan, but is there consideration in the pruning cycle in relation to increased droughts and climate change? Additionally, as new conditions or challenges arise, how will the plan respond to those changes?

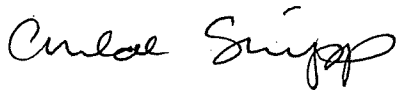
Tree Planting

Tree planting partnerships should be clearly defined as there is an opportunity to pursue and leverage new partnerships for funding such as federal, state, local, and private funding. Utility companies, such as San Jose Water Co. and PG&E, can also be another source for funding regarding tree plantings.

We are aware that trees require lots of care after they are planted. We recommend exploring leveraging civic-based or volunteer-based opportunities to provide more ongoing tree care.

SJDA generally agrees with the 2040 General Plan; we appreciate that the Community Forest Management Plan aligns with existing city plans.

Sincerely,



Chloe Shipp
Director of Public Space Operations

cc:

John Ristow, Department of Transportation Director
Eric Hon, Division Manager, Department of Transportation
Ryan Allen

May 17, 2021

Ryan Allen, Urban Forestry Specialist
DUDEK
38 N. Marengo
Pasadena, CA 91101

SUBJECT: DRAFT PRELIMINARY COMMENTS RE: 85% COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Dear Ryan:

Thank you, again, for ensuring in our recent call your intent to address inaccuracies and missing context concerning OCF in the 85% Draft CFMP are immediately addressed. As we touched on, the draft paints an incomplete and at times inaccurate picture of the decades-long partnership between Our City Forest and the City of San Jose. These same concerns have been shared by the project funder CAL FIRE. That the CFMP was publicly released without being vetted by these key stakeholders is harmful not just to OCF, but to CSJ which carries the responsibility to ensure high standards in its documents, as well as in its planning processes. We are also aware of at least three notifications issued to other stakeholders that we did not receive; the release of the online community survey, the public release of the 85% draft, and the notice of the public comment deadline extension to April 24th. Each instance was a missed opportunity for OCF to add value to this process, to serve as a sounding board and provide reference materials that may have informed meaningfully different findings. Not having been granted that opportunity, OCF will need the full extension through June 30, to collect references and data to substantiate our complete response. Having recently been made aware of a second draft to be released in the interim, however, we are today sharing a preliminary response intended to inform the next draft so that the most problematic references to OCF's work, addressed in detail below, can be omitted from the next release.

While we acknowledge the value of exploring the various complex issues raised in the draft and look forward to providing helpful, positive input about them, we must first ensure that sections discussing OCF's contributions reference accurate financials, performance metrics, communication strategies, partnership models, and program content. Absent these corrections, the CFMP's vision for the future endangers a high-functioning public-private partnership that has become an award-winning model for its ability to fill a core City service void at extraordinary cost-savings.

This response is lengthy in part because it includes the draft sections along with our comments. OCF believes that the context provided by OCF is essential for correcting not only inaccuracies, but to

help reframe perspectives and what appear to OCF as biased content. Thus, OCF has provided here some specific correction, along with critical context.

Please appreciate that this is a rough effort and time did not allow for as well-written or researched a response as we would have liked, but we are feeling a sense of urgency now knowing that a new draft may be released over the next week or two. OCF will be able to provide more substantiation by the June 30th deadline and also address the many other issues impacting our urban forest.

Once you have reviewed our comments and their accompanying historic context, please advise regarding next steps OCF can take to move toward our shared goal of releasing an ambitious, accurate final plan that leverages the strengths of our partnership and increases the integrity of the plan itself.

PAGE xii, Item 6:

The City should clearly define its partnership with Our City Forest: Our City Forest (OCF) is the main conduit for the City to engage and educate residents on trees as it builds support for the community forest program. This long-standing partnership has experienced success from its inception, but a lack of clear expectations and the desire to increase funding and expand AmeriCorps staffing has led to programmatic decisions that distract OCF from its mission. This has impacted the effectiveness of the partnership and the ability of the City and OCF to leverage their expertise and shared resources into receiving large grant funds that would benefit both programs financially and towards reaching their shared community forest goals.

OCF would like the initial statement to clarify that OCF is the city's main conduit not only to engage and educate residents, but also the main conduit for providing urban forestry financing, and also an array of direct planting and technical urban forestry services throughout San José.

OCF is not expanding its AmeriCorps team size nor has it made programmatic decisions that distract from its mission. These are inaccurate assumptions. To see this statement raises concerns for the OCF team regarding the consultant's sources for OCF content. Where did this information come from? Is this the actual opinion of the consultant and, if so, what is it based on? It would be useful for the consultant to meet with OCF so that it can provide an overview of each of our highly integrated urban forestry programs and how their impact ties to both our mission and the overarching objectives of the draft CFMP.

Since its founding, OCF has obtained and administered more than \$15M in state, federal and other non-city grants on behalf of San José's urban forest, and there has been no lack of collaboration or attempts to collaborate with CSJ. OCF is quick to acknowledge the importance of our partnership with CSJ to obtain grants. Grantors want to know that there are stable partnerships in place that will see the work through to fruition. As the fiscal agent for these urban forestry grants, OCF has been an effective grant administrator, saving the City \$2+ million in administrative costs alone for grant submission, accounting and invoicing. Because OCF has never been able to afford a grant writer, this work is conducted primarily on a voluntary basis by

staff, reflecting the dedication of the team in pursuit of funding opportunities for our urban forest.

Another important discussion point that should influence next steps in this area is how to gain alignment regarding CSJ and OCF priorities when it comes to urban forestry work. A couple recent examples:

1. Despite frequent requests, it took nearly two years for OCF to obtain a property owner mailing list from DOT for OCF to use to reach tree-eligible residents in low-income census tracts. DOT often is unable to be responsive to OCF for getting work done and questions answered.
2. OCF received rare, council-approved, one-time funding for early 2019-2020 to assist with planting efforts, yet the majority of that allocation is still held by DOT. With this delay, and the uncertainty surrounding it, OCF had to put a freeze on hiring essential positions and move forward without the approved funding.

The "lack of clear expectations" statement is confusing considering that there are many clearly written expectations delineated for OCF which have been modified over the years in agreements with CSJ. In contrast, there is an immense lack of clarification regarding expectations on the City's end. A leadership void is perceived by the public and, within that void, one can easily witness neglect of this partnership as well as chaotic and random decision-making that makes a partnership challenging at best. OCF has been largely left on its own to serve the public in meaningful ways and to obtain the necessary funding to do so. While it is grossly unfair to blame OCF for this neglected partnership, the draft plan appears to do that. That there is considerable uncertainty within CSJ as to what it wants to do or should do should be the focus here, not the other way around. OCF would ask the consultant to reframe his thinking and let go of the bias that because OCF is a nonprofit, and less "powerful" than the City (and is funding this project through CAL FIRE), that it is OCF that is "distracted", and needs to somehow do better, and must keep proving itself over and over. Any thoughtful city leader reading the detailed reports submitted by OCF for 25 years can easily see that expectations of OCF are quite clear and that it has consistently earned every dollar of tax support received. Yet, this draft does not paint that picture. This is a great disservice to all.

OCF recommends that this management plan delve more deeply into how CSJ is funding for urban forestry, where it is coming from, how services are being duplicated, and providing more transparent data as to how it is being spent. The magnifying glass being applied to OCF in the draft should at least equally apply to what the city has or hasn't done on behalf of urban forestry and at what cost to the public. OCF has many concerns on this topic.

OCF's new programs are not off mission: the Community Nursery was created by OCF as a resource to provide trees for private property (in addition to public) because about 85% of existing planting spaces are on private property. The City had set an ambitious planting goal in its Green Vision but had not directed any funding to OCF for it. LawnBusters is another program created by OCF to address drought which had worse impacts on the urban forest than it should have due to the city's discouragement of planting trees during that time (a policy this plan must address) and is definitely a facet of urban forestry. It is not funded by the City. Truck watering of City median trees, required by the city in order for OCF to plant DOT trees, was initially agreed to for financial survival, and is now being

parlayed into a job training program for the unemployed. None of these programs are distractions but are innovative responses by OCF over time to effectively serve the community and advance urban forestry for San José.

PAGE 4:

The planting of new trees in parks also presents the challenge of how establishment care will occur, and who will be responsible for the tree watering. City parks are a favorite location for tree planting by the nonprofit organization OCF, City Council offices, and corporate groups. Parks provide a setting to effectively manage volunteers and create a good volunteer experience. PRNS staff welcome the opportunity to have volunteer groups plant trees in parks, but do not have the capacity to provide establishment care and watering. Often the care is cost prohibitive to provide automated irrigation to the newly planted trees, and funds are not available to contract out watering. As a result, the group who planted the trees are responsible for tree watering. A newly planted tree in San José will require up to 3 years (sometimes longer depending on weather) of regular watering to remain healthy and establish its root system. This long-term commitment is usually difficult for a community or corporate group to fund or provide, and eventually the care will drop off. If community members, corporate groups, and elected officials desire to continue to plant trees in City parks for community engagement and volunteer activities, there must be an established watering and maintenance plan before the planting project moves forward. Without a maintenance plan in place, PRNS cannot guarantee trees planted by volunteers will survive through the establishment period.

OCF has been quite dedicated to serving San José's parks over many years and has financed and facilitated over 1,000+ projects to plant 10,000+ trees in 114 CSJ parks. (need to look up precise numbers)

OCF has also had success with its stewardship efforts in parks and recommends that outside requests from good-intentioned volunteers be referred to us so that best practices and proper species selection can be achieved. Unfortunately, we have observed that these best practices are not adhered to when random plantings are allowed. OCF has received calls asking why certain tropical species or redwoods were planted, or why a tree was planted too close to a sidewalk, for example, and this is often how we learn these plantings occurred. Addressing this misalignment by fully taking advantage of OCF as a tool in the city's toolbox, and empowering OCF to lead and manage all park plantings would save the city time and money and present an opportunity to define and reinforce role clarity between our two entities. For instance, OCF shares the CFMP's perspective that establishment watering can be a challenge in the park context which, coupled with the drought, is why we've planted very few trees in parks in the past 5 years. OCF understands the immense challenges for PRNS staff, and wants to be of service. OCF can arrange pre-identified volunteers to help monitor and water trees in order to allow plantings but not impose more of a burden on staff. OCF could also arrange monthly watering of mature trees in order to prevent them from dying, and to help PRNS avoid the high costs of tree removal.

PAGE 20:

In addition to the polls conducted during each virtual community meeting, participants were encouraged to ask questions throughout the presentation. Questions and comments were submitted on a range of topics, including tree selection, maintenance responsibilities, illegal tree removal, tree removal permits, social justice, social media as a tool for engagement, youth programs, funding for OCF, and engaging leaders from each council district. Almost all participants in the virtual community meetings expressed appreciation for the content, dialogue, and responsiveness of City staff in addressing comments, questions, and concerns throughout the presentation.

The number of participants was very few and it remains unclear why DOT drove this effort alone. Though DOT is responsible for city street trees - this is still a small percentage of the urban forest. OCF had expected to see other City stakeholders actively involved and would have liked to have had a meaningful role and been notified more than 3 business days in advance. OCF received feedback from participants who were frustrated and disappointed with the content and format. It is unclear who was involved in the preparation and distribution of the survey but OCF was not invited to assist. The lack of diversity for those attending the virtual meetings and responding to the survey was stark. OCF had anticipated assisting DOT as long as 2 years ago with hosting community workshops to engage community members, but this never came to fruition. OCF is still interested in assisting with such an outreach effort that would ensure greater participation by a diversity of residents from throughout the city. All these factors taken into account, OCF believes the City would miss the mark if it attempted to base any findings in the final plan on the limited input it has to this point.

PAGE 36-37:

Tree Planting

The tree planting component of the City’s community forest program is one example of a City management practice that attempts to bridge the responsibility for street trees by dedicating grant funds to provide trees at a reduced cost to disadvantaged residents, free permits, and with support of outreach and engagement efforts. Outside of grant-funded tree planting projects, the City is limited in its ability to actively plant street trees adjacent to private property. Because of this, planting new street trees is dependent on either a property owner initiating a street tree planting, as a requirement for a development project, or by compelling a property owner to plant a tree through enforcement of Municipal Code Section 13.28.400. Enforcement of the Municipal Code requiring a street tree to be maintained or replaced adjacent to a private property typically occurs when the property is not compliant with other repair issues. The City could begin to require any property that has a vacant tree site adjacent to their property to increase the annual total of trees planted. It would be difficult to implement this strategy though without an increase in DOT staff that manage street trees. Requiring property owners to plant trees also has the potential to create a negative relationship between the property owner and the newly planted street tree since property owners would also have to assume the maintenance responsibilities and associated costs for a tree they did not want to plant.

Based on these factors, the current voluntary tree planting campaign offers the best opportunity for the City to increase the total number street trees and create a positive experience for community members, but is not likely to significantly increase the number of trees planted annually.

Clarification is needed regarding the initial sentences pointing to the City planting program. Perhaps it is referring to OCF.

OCF has successfully identified, secured, and trained tree stewards since 1994. Rooted in thoughtful engagement and information exchange, OCF is also able to minimize concerns over a potential “negative relationship” between the resident and the tree.

The positioning of this section from a DOT perspective limits the vision of program expansion and implies funding restrictions. This merits further explanation. For instance, given additional staffing allocated to the DOT over the past two years and the comparatively (to OCF expenses) exorbitant costs DOT spends for contract planting and watering, it’s unclear why resources don’t exist for OCF to partner toward program growth, which OCF is well-positioned to execute. This would give OCF the chance to address, for instance, the idea that current codes requiring trees be enforced by DOT.

Establishment Care

Another important aspect of a tree planting program is whether a comprehensive establishment care program is in place to ensure trees successfully transplant. Establishment care typically refers to the 3- to 5-year period after planting and related tree maintenance activities to support tree growth and health. Maintenance activities include supplemental watering, monitoring, repairing and removing supportive stakes and ties as needed, removing weeds from the planting area, and pruning as needed to remove dead or broken branches and establish good structure. In California cities such as San José that can experience little or no rainfall for months, establishment care is crucial to the survival of newly planted trees.

Residents who receive a tree from OCF agree to maintain the tree for 3 years after planting and follow a prescribed maintenance regimen to water weekly, provide necessary pruning, keep the watering basin free of competing vegetation, and properly support the tree with stakes and ties (OCF 2020). The recommended maintenance practices align with ISA standards for establishment care and when implemented would be effective for tree health and growth. What is not well understood is the extent to which street tree recipients implement the establishment care standards. For trees managed by private property owners, the City street tree inventory indicates a health condition of fair or better for 94% of trees with a DSH of 0 to 6 inches; with 2% of the trees dead. If these percentages are an actual reflection of all similar trees, then it is reasonable to assume newly planted trees are given sufficient establishment care by private property owners. It may also reflect that residents who actively pursue trees for planting in their parkway take the time and effort to obtain City permits and then plant the trees, are invested in their survival. If so, the current model of obtaining trees from OCF and having residents provide establishment care may warrant further investment from the City to expand the current outreach and monitoring program to increase the total number of trees planted each year. Another possibility to increase resident participation in a tree planting campaign could be for the City to fund the maintenance of newly planted trees when residents absorb the cost of planting. Currently the

City provides limited funding for the establishment of newly planted trees on select locations like medians and for trees planted as part of a grant funded program. As reported by the City, it costs approximately \$600 to provide 3 years of watering and establishment care to a newly planted tree. A model of sharing planting and establishment care costs would demonstrate to residents that the City is willing to invest in the growth of the community forest by providing a resource to assist residents. It would also increase the total number of trees that successfully establish, contributing to the long-term expansion of Citywide canopy cover.

OCF is assured to see the CFMP's acknowledgement that the current partnership model for establishment care may merit additional funding. While state and federal programs have continued to put money into San Jose's urban forest to plant trees, establishment care has not been a funding priority and thus far, the City has not stepped up to help meet this need.

With very few cost-of-living adjustments, the original 1994 allocation of city funds in support of OCF programs has grown by only \$44K over 27 years, from \$150K to \$194K. Adjusting for inflation, this represents a 51% decline in City cash support, using CPI ratios. Using the rate of funding established in 1994, also adjusting for inflation, the annual program funding today should be closer to \$400K. As a result, the following OCF programs receive very minimal cash support from the city: community nursery, 3-year tree stewardship, education/outreach, volunteer training, lawn conversions, and the UF Education Center. As with the Community Nursery, CSJ has rejected requests to support its Education Center. Volunteer training for planting trees has also been rejected by DOT as an activity that is "out of alignment" with DOT goals.

The operating grant of \$150K set in 1994 was intended to support the Executive Director salary, an annual audit, financial operations, and two program staff. Today, at only \$194K, this annual operating support does not come close to meeting this aim, and pales in comparison to support for other programs that are not core city services and do not generate the funding to pay for many of those services as OCF does.

The situation is similar for the other base grant from CSJ. Its original AmeriCorps matching grant was \$120K in 2007. Thirteen years later, it is \$127K, and has lost 29% of its worth, using CPI ratios. This partial CASH match comprises approximately 16% of OCF's required cash match and much less if project costs were included, which they are not. OCF is responsible for ~\$770K in match for its \$455K AMeriCorps grant plus all project expenses such as trucks, trees, etc. The per member match is shown over now compared to 13 years ago:

- *\$120,000 Matching support in 2007 for 22 members = \$5,454*
- *\$127,308 Matching support in 2021 for 30 members = \$4,243*
- *\$127,308 in 2021 using same # of members as 2007 = \$5,787*

While OCF has faced this decline in support considering inflation, it has also had to face the stipend increases from \$15K to \$20K required to keep up with other americorps programs. Health insurance cost per member also recently doubled to \$3,400. OCF alerted the City that the program was threatened due to declining support and increased essential costs, and the city council responded with overwhelming and unified support, to OCF's request for \$300,000 increase to its base grants to make up for inflation. The request was rejected in the final budget and OCF's base grants were not increased.

In the opinion of OCF, the plan should address whether it is appropriate for OCF, as an award-winning urban forestry nonprofit that provides a core city service and contributes so much to the overall funding, to continue with below average salaries, insufficient staffing levels and other hardships. Expanded funding from CSJ to offset some of these normal accruals would mean more resources devoted to program operations that serve OCF and CSJ's shared urban forestry goals.

PAGE 41:

Tree Planting in Parks

Currently there is no funding available to plant trees in parks, and PRNS staff are dependent on partnerships with OCF, City Council offices, and other community organizations for tree planting. These partnerships help to plant 250–500 trees per year in City parks and planting is typically a community volunteer event. If one of these groups would like to hold a volunteer tree planting in a City park, they must also commit to water and care of the trees for the first 3 years after planting. Outside of these community planting events, new trees are usually only planted to replace a removed tree or with new park development, and it does not occur frequently.

There are advantages to the community planting model in that it engages residents, corporate groups, and elected officials in the community forest program and builds a connection with the local park and trees. It also benefits PRNS as OCF can sometimes provide trees for park plantings through grants or other awards as there is no dedicated budget to purchase plant material.

Please refer to our above response to the section on park plantings from page 4 of the CFMP. OCF has funded and implemented more than 1,000 projects in San José parks since 1994.

PAGE 42:

Collaborative Approach to Tree Planting and Establishment Care

The success of park tree planting is directly related to the success of the establishment care trees receive, which is dependent on funding to support 3 years of maintenance for any tree planted in a park. PRNS understands the level of watering and care new trees require and are capable of either performing the work with City crews or hiring a contractor if funds were available. There are several options to support establishment care of park trees. First, the City can provide funds requested by PRNS to plant and care for a certain number of trees on an annual basis. PRNS can continue its partnership with OCF to provide trees and hold community tree planting events to offset some of the program costs. Another

option would be for PRNS to use existing City fee structures to develop a per-tree cost to water a tree for 3 years and provide that document to OCF, City Council offices, and corporate groups so they can plan their tree planting event. Those groups should then provide the funds to PRNS before the tree planting event to cover 3 years of maintenance for each tree that will be planted. If the funds cannot be provided by the group, the tree planting could continue at the discretion of PRNS, under the assumption that PRNS would be responsible for tree care. Another option could be for PRNS to partner with OCF to apply for a CAL FIRE grant to fund the planting and care of park trees, to build on their current partnership. These are just some options to support the planting and care of park trees, and no one method is prescribed over another. The point is that tree planting and establishment care must be funded to have a successful tree planting program.

It is essential that additional context be provided. Of the \$15M in outside grants OCF has obtained, none of them has provided funding for establishment watering. One grant has provided funding for basic maintenance. OCF has administered its 3-year stewardship program as well as providing pruning and basic care to thousands of trees without any grants or City support since 1994. Acknowledging this industry challenge, the DOT agreed in 2020 to allow OCF to include a modest fee for its 3 year stewardship program, but this is only for trees planted through the hardship program. OCF therefore understands that the City would consider a similar fee structure for park trees and suggests that this matter, in addition to future collaborations in pursuit of CAL FIRE grants, be discussed by OCF and City stakeholders during a holistic review of the overall partnership agreement between the two entities.

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It would be appropriate to update the replacement policy so the applicant is required to plant the tree in a location that would provide additional cooling and energy reduction benefit, and require a species that is similar in size and appropriate for site conditions without creating a future conflict with utilities or structures. These updates would help to recover the loss of canopy cover and environmental services of the removed tree and meet goals of the community forest program. The permit application form directs applicants to contact OCF, which would be able to further assist in determining suitable tree species and planting locations to meet the replacement requirement. While there is some benefit of having OCF provide consultation in the permit process, this type of responsibility should remain with the City and either be managed by a City arborist or third-party consulting arborist.

OCF exists as a tool in the City's toolbox and has provided the City with tremendous cost savings over the years. It's both economical and efficient for the City to rely on OCF for all manner of urban forestry activities, including site consultations. DOT has acquired several additional staff arborists in the past two years - two of them who graduated from OCF's AmeriCorps program - and perhaps is now positioned to add this activity. This would be a duplication of services, however, at considerable increased expense.

OCF suggests that the need for enforcement of existing tree policies to protect mature trees from illegal removal and malpruning is a better use of the City's staffing resources. We

recommend DOT take on this critical need that is putting our urban canopy at risk and is resulting in hazardous conditions. Mature trees provide the greatest climate change benefits and other positive impacts. The city's willingness to better regulate and enforce the policies adopted to protect these valuable assets is imperative.

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Community Investment and Collaboration

Table 30 identifies the goals and policies that frame the City's approach to community investment and collaboration for the community forest. OCF is the City's primary partner in engaging the City's residents in the community forest; however, the responsibilities and role OCF plays in growing the community forest in partnership with the City are not well defined.

This is inaccurate. The operating grant provided by the City was well-defined from the beginning - it was to ensure the viability of a legal urban forest nonprofit that would serve the public with an operating grant to finance 1) the ED salary, and 2) a staff accountant to prepare required financial statements, and 3) an annual financial audit by an outside auditor, and 4) two program staff. In turn, OCF would recruit and engage volunteers and leverage additional resources to support urban forestry programming. For details about funding parameters, please see the response above in the section on Establishment Care.

Furthermore, the itemized Scope of Services contained in Exhibit A of the CY 2020-2021 Master Conduct Agreement outlines the precise strategic objectives being pursued and the tactical requirements for partnership. For instance, "The GRANTEE shall coordinate with CITY's Arborist, CITY, Parks Managers, and other CITY staff as appropriate, on projects concerning the Community Forest and related matters." To address the report's concern that OCF's contribution toward "growing the community forest" is not well defined, we offer to incorporate our internal performance metrics into future agreements, provided protections against punitive measures for metrics that underperform are also incorporated.

Upon its founding, OCF did not know it would be entirely relied upon by CSJ to also finance tree planting projects for streets, parks, and city facilities, in addition to schools. When advised of such, it began obtaining State grants in consultation with city staff in Transportation Planning and the Planning Dept. These outside grants, coupled with private grants such as the Packard Foundation, Applied Materials, and Intel, have paid for virtually all planting projects conducted through OCF. Only in the past few years, as a result of a Master Fee Agreement for OCF implemented by DOT Director Hans Larsen, who was a strong ally of OCF and someone who was actively engaged in partnering positively with OCF, the city provided its first funding to help pay for plantings in areas that did not qualify for OCF's state grants. Unfortunately, after his departure, this agreement is no longer used for community and park plantings, but has been restricted to high visibility median island plantings directed through DOT. The city allows OCF to

plant on the medians where it will also have to truck-water the trees due to lack of irrigation. To survive financially after developer tree removal fees were redirected to DOT, OCF has obliged. This work, although on mission when volunteers are engaged, and now an important revenue source for OCF, is very time-consuming. To address this issue, OCF has created a job training program that will hire unemployed residents to water the trees beginning this summer.

Administration of OCF agreements falls to the DOT Street Tree Office. This has always been a very mismatched arrangement considering the citywide, environmental, and community engagement mission of OCF. For OCF, this has not felt like a partnership in recent years. DOT directly explained in an exchange two years ago that they “cannot advocate for OCF because we compete with OCF for funding.” If we are to continue to collaborate primarily through this office, there is an urgent need for unifying leadership and for explicitly defined roles tied to shared funding and operational objectives.

The DOT Arborist administers OCF’s grants and fee for service work, and OCF experiences the rules constantly changing as well as the purposes for the various revenue sources DOT uses to also change without notice. There is tremendous ambiguity in how the fee-for-service agreement is implemented; in one instance they spent OCF-allocated funds to pay a contractor for a planting project that OCF couldn’t perform because of the safety risks posed by the planting site. There are frequent policy changes that OCF is not alerted to in advance, changes that impact our planning and budgeting. For instance, OCF was just advised around May 1st that DOT ends its planting season on May 1st, but this deadline had never existed in the past.

OCF’s grants are nearly all reimbursement-based, requiring OCF to front project expenses, salaries and stipends for several months. This makes it important for OCF to receive its CSJ operating grant check in a timely manner, but the check is normally delayed until December. OCF has been close to being unable to make its upcoming payroll several times as a result, with plans for the President & CEO to make a personal loan ready to go.

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Community Investment and Collaboration (Continued)

The role of OCF should be aimed towards educating residents on the importance of trees and promoting the expansion of the community forest through volunteer tree planting activities and distributing trees to residents. The City and OCF should collaborate to receive state grant funds that support the planting of trees and education efforts in disadvantaged communities, and they should continue to partner on future grant opportunities that support the defined efforts and strengths of each entity.

The City could also begin to explore partnerships with other community-based organizations that have a direct relationship to various neighborhoods and demographic segments of the City. A similar model is used in Los Angeles where six different nonprofit organizations partner with the City to engage residents

in specifically designated areas of the City. The organizations provide a deeper connection and relationship with the residents in the neighborhoods they serve that can be advantageous for advancing the community forest goals of the City. It would be important to have clearly defined outcomes and deliverables for new organizations in the same way it is recommended for the current OCF and City partnership.

OCF has actively sought and received funding for urban forestry projects in every San José neighborhood, with an emphasis on disadvantaged communities. OCF's model is inherently collaborative since it engages residents, neighborhood groups, and school groups to ensure buy-in and ongoing stewardship. OCF is one of the nation's successful nonprofit urban forestry groups that illustrates the importance of having a nonprofit with a focused mission dedicated solely to urban forestry. In this way, resources are better coordinated, cost-effectiveness is attained, and best practices are promoted.

For instance, in 2017 OCF was awarded a \$748,000 state grant to offset carbon emissions by planting 1,200 trees in Central and East San Jose. In 2014 a similar \$182,160 grant was awarded for plantings in the neighborhood adjacent to the 280/880 junction. A 2010 planting grant of \$236,900 targeted East San Jose, and a 2007 planting grant of \$230,800 targeted Central San Jose. These are just a few examples from a longer list of government grants awarded to OCF through our coordination with the City, despite not having a grant writer on our team.

Rather than reaching out to coordinate with OCF, the City sometimes partners with other planters on projects that could be eligible for funds managed by OCF. Describing one such project that employed a private contractor, the arborist stated that the trees cost CSJ about \$900 and that included a short follow-up window of 45 days. When OCF inquired about newly planted downtown trees, DOT staff was unaware of who planted the trees, even though these plantings would have required permits. In both instances, DOT was aware of the state grants but did not contact OCF, missing not only an opportunity to collaborate but to accrue meaningful savings.

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Our City Forest:

The following section provides a discussion of the San José-based nonprofit organization Our City Forest (OCF), which is the main community partner for the City in engaging residents to plant and care for the community forest. This section is dedicated to a discussion of the OCF and City partnership because of the multiple OCF program areas that intersect with various community forest management activities and the depth of the partnership. It is also intended to highlight the potential to further leverage the strengths that both the City and OCF bring to the partnership, to bring more financial and human resources to maintaining and expanding the San José community forest.

Background:

In 1989, the City set a goal to plant 1 million trees for its 1 million residents. In response, OCF was formed in 1991 (incorporated in 1994) with supplemental funding provided by the City. Since that time, OCF has been the leading urban forestry and environmental stewardship nonprofit in the Silicon Valley, and states the values of the organization are:

“We believe in the power of trees to turn our neighborhoods and cities from gray to green, and we believe in the power of people to help achieve this transformation.”

These values have guided the programs and direction of OCF since its inception, which began with a focus on community tree-planting activities. Since that time, OCF has expanded its programming to include tree care services, management of a tree nursery, a turf-removal program, and educational and training programs. As reported by OCF, these programs in fiscal years 2011–2016 annually resulted in the engagement of over 3,800 volunteers, planting of over 1,600 trees, maintenance of 7,900 trees, completion of 433 community projects, and engagement of over 14,000 residents. Much of these activities are directly completed, or lead by, a team of 30 AmeriCorps service members who complete a year of national service through OCF. Since 2007, more than 385 AmeriCorps members have provided over half a million service hours to San José, valued at an estimated \$13 million. It is apparent through the results of OCF programs that the nonprofit has been successful in leveraging donations, grants, and City funds to engage San José residents in being stewards of the community forest. Along with the successes, there are also opportunities to build a stronger partnership with the City that can further engage residents, expand tree canopy in disadvantaged communities, and meet City goals established in the CFMP.

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The references to our AmeriCorps members are inaccurate. We have employed nearly 450 members since 2007, and they’ve given 765,000 hours of service at a value of \$22,911,750 to the city. (using 2020 California volunteer hour value rate of \$29.95)

The numbers related to OCF accomplishments for a 5 years window are odd and OCF would like to see the data source for these and suggest a better way of reflecting OCF’s accomplishments.

OCF has also extensively leveraged Federal, State, and County funds as well as corporate contributions and more to fund its programs.

OCF agrees that there are opportunities to build a stronger partnership between OCF and the City to plant more trees and further engage residents.

OCF and City Partnership

As a nonprofit organization, OCF can generate funding for its operations and programs through individual and corporate donations, grants, fee for services, and funding provided by the City. Table 34 reflects reported revenue by OCF from fiscal years 2006–2016.

Table 34. Our City Forest Revenue by Type, Fiscal Years 2006–2016

Type	Total Revenue	OCF-Generated Revenue	City Funds			
			Development Mitigation	Fee for Services	AmeriCorps Matching Grant	Operating Grant
Amount	\$14,321,950	\$10,252,035	\$884,350	\$616,785	\$1,080,000	\$1,488,780
Percent of Total	100%	72%	6%	4%	8%	10%

Table 34 indicates that, on average, OCF total annual revenue for the time period was \$1.4 million, with the City contributing 28% of OCF total revenue. While there is not one set model for what percentage of revenue type should comprise a nonprofit organization’s operating budget, grant funds provided by a governmental department typically require the receiving agency to meet specific deliverables of the agreement, report back on the accomplishments, and account for the disbursement of funds.

The same is true for the OCF and City partnership, as the City uses tax-generated general funds in support of OCF operations, making both organizations accountable to demonstrate the impact of the partnership to the residents of San José.

There is an inaccuracy in Table 34: Mitigation fees are fees paid by developers, and they were paid directly to OCF so that they could get a receipt to take back to Planning who would then give them the green light to develop. The fees may be city-mandated, but they are still private donations. Similarly, the City receives these now instead of OCF, and they are coded as fees (from non-city sources), not something given from the city.

From 1994 to 2016, OCF provided semi-annual reports detailing its activities in full, including all revenue raised (broken down by category) and a full listing of all trees planted by address, date, and species. More recently, DOT changed this reporting criteria because of the fact that the vast majority of work OCF was reporting on was not being funded by the City.

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Annually, OCF is required to provide the City a summary report containing the data on tree work accomplished and community outreach efforts. They are also required to document applications for other grant funding and the financial sustainability of the organization. The physical actions of planting and caring for trees have an understood and quantifiable impact, while it can be more difficult to measure the impact of actions like engaging volunteers and educating community members. Both types of actions are important components of the OCF mission and programming, but it is unclear how those

actions relate to the goals of the City community forest program. Additionally, the annual summary reports do not provide enough level of detail for the City to fully understand the impact of OCF operations.

OCF will gladly share any of the independently conducted annual audits that would be useful reference materials to inform the next draft of the CFMP. We will also plan to substantiate the link between our engagement efforts and the city's urban forestry goals in the next round of commentary.

The lack of clarity led to a City audit in 2018 of OCF financials to determine how City funds were being appropriated by OCF. The need for the audit could have been avoided with clearer expectations of OCF in the City of San José community forest program and set annual deliverables. Further clarification in the goals of the partnerships would benefit both partners and is needed if the current level of City funds is going to continue to be directed towards OCF. With clear and detailed expectations, the City can feel more confident that funds directed towards OCF are being used in the manner in which they are intended, and OCF can focus on running programs that meet the mission of the organization that are contributing to the City's CFMP goals.

OCF's audit was not a result of a lack of clarity, but was a standard city practice triggered by our urgent request before the entire city council for increased operating and AmeriCorps matching funds. The audit took 9 months, delayed, according to the auditor, by difficulty obtaining the necessary substantiation from the DOT. Though there were no concerning findings resulting from the audit, the protracted outcome prevented OCF from receiving the requested funding that year.

There are numerous other problematic implications in this section of the draft CFMP. (E.g., The suggestion that OCF provided inadequate annual data despite providing exactly the data requested by the City.) OCF will plan to further expand on this section in the next round of commentary and is available in the interim to discuss anything contained in the 85% draft or in today's preliminary reply.

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Leveraging Funds

A key component of the OCF and City partnership is the ability of OCF to leverage the funds provided by the City to further expand its impact and to be competitive in receiving state and federal grants. Table 35 reflects the total operating budget for OCF in fiscal year 2018–2019 and the total of City funds as a percentage of the operating budget.

Table 35. City Funds as a Percent of Our City Forest Revenue by Type, Fiscal Year 2018–2019

Type	OCF Operating Budget	City Funds				
		Office and Nursery Lease	Fee for Services	AmeriCorps Matching Grant	Operating Grant	Total
Amount	\$1,829,673	\$275,000	\$100,000	\$123,600	\$299,014	\$797,614
Percent of Operating Budget	100%	15%	5.5%	6.8%	16%	43.6%

As discussed, OCF has historically received up to 28% of total revenue from City funds, which was recently increased to 43.6%. This allocation is largely accounted for by the additional funds provided by the City to cover lease expenses for the OCF main office and land that holds the OCF nursery.

This table reflects budgeted, not actual revenue, which is unclear and needs to be corrected in the next draft. Critically, it's a one-year snapshot rather than a trendline that demonstrates funding patterns over time. OCF requests that this be re-framed as it includes non-cash support that skews the totals. The \$275K "Office and Nursery Lease" is the agreement amount DOT chose but not what is needed for the rent.

OCF believes that to look at what the urban forest needs, it is wise to look at the actual status of funding and what it is supporting. This would mean looking at all revenue sources available for urban forestry - not just the financials and partial list of grants OCF has obtained, but a similarly comprehensive list of revenues used by DOT and other departments. Cost comparisons are essential, as well, when looking at some of the suggestions which would substantially increase the City staff workload for what appears to OCF to be duplication of services.

The above draft CFMP section re CSJ funding to OCF would be remiss if it did not consider the following:

With very few cost-of-living adjustments, the original 1994 allocation of city funds in support of OCF programs has grown by only \$44K over 27 years, from \$150K to \$194K. Adjusting for inflation, this represents a 51% decline in City cash support, using CPI ratios. Using the rate of funding established in 1994, also adjusting for inflation, the annual program funding today should be closer to \$400K. Thus, the grant amount isn't enough to support what it was designed to support and the following OCF programs receive extremely minimal cash support from the city: the community nursery, 3-year tree stewardship, education/outreach, volunteer training, lawn conversions, and the Urban Forest Education Center. Recent fee-for-service opportunities through DOT, have helped to keep OCF in the black by partially financing stipends and salaries, although this has not been consistent.

CSJ's original AmeriCorps matching agreement was \$120K in 2007. Now \$127K, the grant has lost 29% of its worth, using CPI ratios. This grant comprises approximately 16% of OCF's required cash match. The current AmeriCorps grant is ~\$450K and OCF is responsible for ~\$770K in match plus all project expenses.

Here's a more detailed look at the CSJ AmeriCorps match support over time:

- *Matching support in 2007 for 22 members:*
 - *\$120,000 / 22 = \$5,454 each*
- *Matching grant support in 2021 for 30 members:*
 - *\$127,308 / 30 = \$4,243 each*

Impacting this lack of increased support to keep up with inflation has been the need for OCF to increase stipends and salaries. In 2017, OCF increased the stipend for its full-time AmeriCorps members from \$15K to \$17K and then a year later to \$20K. Health insurance cost per member also doubled to \$3,400. The cost of these adjustments for a the OCF corps of 30 members is nearly \$200K annually. These are significant cost implications that OCF has largely managed alone. For OCF to seek "more funding", as stated in the report, as though it was without merit, is difficult for OCF to process. Seeking more funding has had to do with providing its Americorps members with a competitive stipend and its staff with a living wage. One only need to look at the size of the OCF staff team and its average staff salary to see that it has been in survival mode for some time. The demise of OCF's AmeriCorps program was avoided due to OCF finding a new financial partner in Santa Clara County. There are now new and expanded non-City funding opportunities on the horizon, and if CSJ decides to make urban forestry a greater priority and seek additional funding, OCF fully expects to be a partner in that growth. Expanded funding from CSJ to would mean more resources devoted to program operations that serve OCF and CSJ's shared urban forestry goals.

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The following sections detail the ways by which OCF is using this funding to give the City a return on its investment.

OCF Nursery

The initiation of the OCF-managed nursery is one program by which City funds are successfully leveraged to increase capacity of OCF operations and community outreach. In 2008 OCF obtained federal and state grants to build a nursery facility to be used as a resource for obtaining trees for City street and park projects and distribution to single- family homes, and as a community education center. The nursery officially opened to the public in 2013 and now holds thousands of trees, shrubs, and plants that are available to the public on a donation basis. Operations are supervised by OCF staff and AmeriCorps team members, who in turn manage 2,500 volunteers annually to care for the nursery. In

addition to providing trees on a suggested donation basis, OCF frequently holds training and workshop events to educate the public on the value of native plants, propagation, and other tree-related issues.

OCF initiated the program to improve the quality of nursery stock and selection of species available for planting projects. It was stated in interviews with DOT and PRNS staff that while the tree nursery stock is generally of good quality, it could be improved as there are still instances where stock is either too small to meet the City street tree standard or too large for the container and slightly root bound. In addition, both OCF and City staff recognize the need to increase the variety of species available in the nursery and are taking steps to address the issue. The City is beginning to develop a long-term plan for the species the City would like to plant in the future, so OCF can begin to acquire the desired species from commercial nurseries and grow them to a size appropriate for the public space. Further exploration into commercial nursery contracts for specific species is recommended. Another potential avenue to fund OCF services is to implement a social venture aspect of the nursery.

This type of program has proven successful for other nonprofits like the Sacramento Tree Foundation (SacTree), which received a CAL FIRE grant to create an urban wood reuse program. Through the urban wood reuse program, SacTree takes trees that would have otherwise been discarded in a landfill, or chipped into mulch, and repurposes them into lumber and live wood slabs. The materials are available for purchase by the public and artisans to

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make tables, furniture, and other wood products. The program provides supplemental revenue to support the urban wood rescue program and general operating costs of SacTree. It also provides the additional environmental benefit of keeping carbon stored in the wood of trees, instead of being released into the atmosphere, as carbon is one of the main greenhouse gases contributing to climate change.

Currently OCF accepts donations by residents to purchase shrub and tree material from the nursery but does not have set pricing or an established sales program. OCF should investigate the costs and staffing needs associated with implementing this type of revenue-generating program and determine if it is an appropriate avenue to invest resources, including whether the long-term benefit of generating revenue exceeds the upfront costs to start a social venture program. If so, OCF should consider moving forward with this social venture to support nursery and OCF operating costs.

To state that the nursery is an example of how OCF gives the City a return on its investment is inaccurate considering that the city has not invested in this regional gem.

The City was unable to provide funding to support any aspect of the development of the nursery starting in 2010, and never financially supported its operation - that is until the around 2020 when it offered to begin paying for water and then suggested we get a trailer with "leftover" funds. OCF is aware that the City has taken a somewhat sudden interest in its nursery.

The development of the nursery is a story that belongs in the CFMP - and is as inspirational as the examples of what other cities are doing. The creation of the nursery is a story about partnerships and coming together for good. OCF submitted a successful proposal to CAL FIRE and another for a USFS Recovery Act grant administered through California ReLeaf to add to another AmeriCorps grant. The city gave approval for OCF to take over an unused trash-filled parcel under the airport flight path. With more than 1,000 volunteers, an innovative nursery was built completely from scratch. The last hurdle was finding the \$30,000 needed to install the electricity- all donations from the public. These is a classic example of how partnerships work.

While OCF recently became aware of DOT's first-expressed concern about the Nursery's inventory, we have not been approached by any PRNS staff on this topic and are concerned that it represents input from a very narrow pool of participants -- as noted earlier in this document. Still, to ensure we're solving for the majority, OCF would be glad to meet with DOT and PRNS team members to further understand and explore their concerns. All nurseries of course have trees that have outgrown their pots and have become rootbound, so OCF believes the comment is odd for inclusion in the draft and requests it be deleted.

The discussion of urban wood reuse further highlights the woefully underperformed discovery process that informed this draft. Had the consultant been allowed to engage OCF on this topic, they would be aware that years ago OCF applied to CAL FIRE to receive a kiln for a program very similar to SacTree's. Due to a delay in locating the kiln, then later finding the nursery to be an unsuitable location for the project, OCF stopped pursuing this particular opportunity.

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AmeriCorps

In 2007 OCF began to apply for and receive AmeriCorps member placements to build the capacity of the organization. Since its inception, OCF has leveraged \$1 million in City funding into an estimated value of \$13 million of AmeriCorps service time.

Clarification needed on this analysis.

AmeriCorps is one of many service programs of the federally funded Corporation for National and Community Service that focus on six service areas, including disaster services, economic opportunity, education, healthy futures, veterans and military families, and environmental

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stewardship. Currently, 30 AmeriCorps members serve with OCF to support all programmatic areas from planting and caring for trees, leading volunteers, managing the nursery, and providing outreach to community members. AmeriCorps members have also assisted in the inventory of City trees, bilingual tree maintenance trainings, and turf conversion projects. To receive AmeriCorps members, OCF must

provide matching funds to the Corporation for National and Community Service, which in return provides a living stipend and education award given to AmeriCorps members. Of the matching funds, 55% is directly contributed by the City on an annual basis, with the remaining balance the responsibility of OCF.

What is budgeted or committed is not the same as actual. In the next review cycle, OCF will confirm or refute these quantifications after reviewing actual documentation.

By using AmeriCorps members as a reliable source of support for OCF programs, OCF does not need to commit to hiring full-time staff and encumber the added financial commitment in salary and benefits.

This is inaccurate. It must be clarified that AmeriCorps service members perform daily operations for planting, establishment care, stewardship engagement, volunteer training, outreach, nursery staffing and education. OCF also employs a staff team, the majority of whom supervise and train the AmeriCorps service members.

Although the extent to which adding more AmeriCorps members on an annual basis increases the capacity of OCF's Urban Forestry Program is not fully understood, they do fill a critical role in implementing OCF programs.

Again, OCF does not add more AmeriCorps members on an annual basis, so this needs clarification. For example, the corps size was 30 last year, is 30 this year, and will be 30 next year.

More funding for this program may be warranted if it can be demonstrated that organizational capacity increases in proportion to the addition of new AmeriCorps members. If so, it should also be determined what OCF programs align with the City's CFMP goals and where the increased capacity is most beneficial or has the highest return on investment.

There are no OCF programs that do not align with the City's CFMP goals as described to OCF by the consultant 18 months ago. If the purpose, scope, or focus of the plan has changed, OCF would like to be a part of that discussion. It does a disservice to this nonprofit partner to state more funding "might be warranted", when the data clearly illustrated throughout our commentary indicates the city's support has been considerably outpaced by inflation.

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GRANTS

One avenue for nonprofit organizations to receive sizable cash contributions in support of its programs is through government grants (see Funding Opportunities section for an extensive list). Over its 26-year history, OCF has been successful in applying for state and federal grants, receiving a total of \$4,698,000

in funding that has led to the planting of 22,600 trees, or an annual average of \$174,000 and 837 planted trees.

This total is inaccurate and doesn't take into account most of the non-City funding OCF has raised which is in excess of \$15,000,000. OCF can easily substantiate this if it must, but it does raise the question - how many non-OCF trees and how much non-OCF funding are entities such as DOT contributing? Since DOT has ramped up the hiring of contractors to plant trees, it seems prudent to do a cost/benefit analysis of these trends to ensure the best ROI for the CFMP's ongoing implementation and long-term sustainability.

Since the draft report is so heavily focused on planting, it's prudent to note that this is an urban forest management plan - and much of OCF's work involves facets of urban forestry that are essential to the survival of the trees we plant. These include education, outreach, volunteer training and opportunities, stewardship support for residents, service learning, job training, and more. These are all efforts that are largely overlooked in the report though they advance urban forestry.

A key component of a successful grant application is demonstrating that other funds are contributing to the project from either the applying organization or from an outside entity. These matching funds can be in the form of cash contributions, like those OCF receives from the City, or in donated staff time, materials, and volunteer hours. In California, one of the largest publicly funded grant opportunities is through the CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry Program.

Though OCF has never been able to support the hiring of a fund developer or grant writer, we have been fortunate to receive three CAL FIRE grants, though most of our planting grants come from other state agencies.

Many factors guide the nature and amount of an urban forestry grant award: purpose of the request, available capacity to implement, potential planting spaces, local matching support, and the applicant's track record, to name a few. Many grants, including AmeriCorps, do not allow volunteers hours to be as matched. Were this an option, OCF would be eligible for more grant applications.

Available planting space informs the size grant we can seek. With its CAL FIRE GHG grant, for example, there were only 24 census tracts eligible to receive trees. This determined that 1,500 trees would be the maximum to seek.

In terms of scope, OCF works with DOT Transportation Planning to identify transportation eligible projects. Each grant proposal prepared by OCF has based its proposal using the project EIR and evaluating the environmental and health impacts of each transportation project.

In addition to all of the above factors, the comparison of what OCF has raised throughout its 26 years, for a city that has only recently exceeded a population of 1

million, with the organizations serving Los Angeles' population of 12 million is comparing apples to oranges. It should be noted that CALFIRE has doubled their grant amounts only in recent years, and OCF actually obtained the maximum CALFIRE grant award available in 2015 on behalf of San José.

It might be helpful to also be aware that many State grant programs allot considerably more funding to southern California due to its much larger population. It would be interesting also to compare the number of trees awarded versus the grant amounts, since inflation distorts those over time.

OCF believes it is appropriate to provide a more uplifting perspective that recognizes the contributions not just of OCF but of the state and federal funders, to recognize the outstanding grant leveraging of OCF and acknowledge that it has tapped nearly every possible grant source that exists for urban forestry.

In regards to the comment about the match for grants, OCF always has more than one grant - and has had as many as four state and federal grants to manage at one time. This requires that the City match be spread out over those grants and not duplicated. A great deal of the match is required for the AmeriCorps grant, and so it all can't be applied to one single CAL FIRE grant, for example. If local funding was at least keeping up with inflation, even if not supporting growth, this would be less of an issue.

The CAL FIRE grant opportunity directly funds the planting and maintenance of trees, and other urban forest management activities including the creation of the San José CFMP. To receive these funds, the applying organization must provide 25% of the total budget through matching funds. As an example, a \$1 million grant application would ask for \$750,000 in funds and contribute \$250,000 in match. An additional added benefit to this program is that a City or nonprofit organization can receive up to \$1.5 million in funding to be used over a 3-year grant period.

This increased level of funding from CAL FIRE is only recent, and not every grant award is automatically \$1.5 million. Setting such an expectation for San José, when compared to more populous cities, may also not be realistic. The factors listed above are also important to take into consideration.

These projects highlight the significant amount of grant funds being distributed to cities and nonprofit organizations throughout the state and *demonstrate the potential for San José to receive a similar level of funds.*

OCF has successfully tapped State planting grants and carried these out in a cost-effective manner for CSJ. These competitive grants are reimbursement-based which requires the applicant to front project expenditures and labor costs for several months prior to receiving reimbursement. With bare bones administrative staff, OCF has still managed the financial, administrative and reporting responsibilities as well as implementing the grants throughout our community.

Only the City operating and matching grants are paid in advance. Unfortunately, OCF cannot expect to receive these until around December every year. This places a burden on OCF when funding is stretched so thin and requires OCF to put a freeze on any hiring for the new fiscal year.

While OCF is successful in receiving grants, the average total grant award of \$293,628 is well below the grant award amounts listed in Table 36.

As previously noted, this is woefully misguided in its lack of context. Please refer to previous comments about 1) applications for which OCF is qualified to apply, 2) match requirements that OCF cannot always meet, 3) recency of other funds granted, 4) presence of other local funding sources, 5) strength of public-private partnerships, 6) patterns of higher funding in Southern regions, and more.

The current structure of the OCF and City partnership provides a solid foundation for a successful joint grant application for the maximum grant amount.

As previously stated, the maximum grant amount is not issued to all grantees. San José is California's 3rd largest city but compared to Los Angeles and San Diego, it is much smaller. Awards are competitive and based on many factors.

OCF completed a very successful project in partnership with CAL FIRE to build its community nursery. In addition to this grant obtained in 2010, OCF obtained two federal grants and, with an unused barren City parcel, OCF developed a cutting edge nursery and training center over 3 years. Additional needs were paid for with private donations, including a total of \$30K to pay for electricity to be installed. The success of this project led to a planting grant in 2015 for San José's most disadvantaged census tracts. OCF named this project "Trees for All". This cross-organizational funding and effort with over 1,000 community volunteers to build a nursery - all led by a nonprofit partner - would be an uplifting example for the plan.

State grantors take into consideration the amount of local financial support that exists for a project. Sometimes there isn't enough. For example, when OCF stopped receiving the developer fees that had been coming to us for 20 years, we lost the match needed to sustain its federal grant award. An award of nearly one million was cut by more than half for 3 years. OCF experienced a significant deficit for the first time in its history, and nearly lost its AmeriCorps program.

In addition to financial support, grantors require solid partnerships. For its grant submittals, OCF has always obtained partnership letters from City staff, CSJ councilmembers, and community groups that would directly benefit from the grant.

The maximum CAL FIRE award of \$1.5 million requires a 25% matching contribution of \$375,000, which OCF already receives in excess from the City.

The amount that OCF receives from the city must actually be spread out among all its grants. It would be inappropriate to use the same city dollars as a match for two different grants, for example.

PAGE 68:

These projects highlight the significant amount of grant funds being distributed to cities and nonprofit organizations throughout the state and *demonstrate the potential for San José to receive a similar level of funds.*

OCF has requested additional funding for over 20 years to help pay for a grant writer and alerted CSJ in 2017 that without more support for grant writing and related administration costs, it would not be able to keep the same level of leveraging.

Tree San Diego is a nonprofit organization that works throughout San Diego County to increase the quality and density of San Diego's urban forest. Their \$1,180,000 awarded grant funds are intended to result in the planting of 1,575 trees in disadvantaged and low-income neighborhoods of San Diego and surrounding communities. The grant will also support the implementation of an educational tree care program so residents receiving trees will also be equipped to water and maintain them after they are planted.

The breadth of this project is made possible by the partnerships Tree San Diego formed with municipalities, private agencies, and other nonprofits, who committed to support various aspects of the project by providing matching funds to the grant in the form of staff time and materials.

This grant is an excellent example of how OCF could partner with San José to help meet the City's tree planting goals while also staying focused on the OCF mission to educate and engage residents. It also would provide funding for OCF staff time to implement its tree planting and education programs and further demonstrate the organization's ability to leverage City funds.

This is the same model used by OCF since its founding, a model created by OCF's founder for an East Palo Alto grant from CALTRANS. To imply that OCF should model after a framework created by our original and current founder suggests a profound lack of comprehension of our approach. The CFMP would be much more uplifting if it included both highlights of CSJ and OCF's industry leadership as well as aspirational examples of programs we are not yet employing, but strive for.

Another model for a grant-funded project is to have the City lead the development of the application and include OCF as a subconsultant to implement the project. The City of Los Angeles's Sanitation and Environment (LASAN) department has successfully used this model and received multiple CAL FIRE grant awards to complete tree planting projects in disadvantaged communities throughout Los Angeles. Table

37 reflects awarded CAL FIRE grant funding and the expected grant deliverables of LASAN by year since 2014.

As previously explained, this is a false comparison. OCF has also received multiple grant awards but if the City wants to lead the development of an application, it should definitely take the initiative and do so. It is easy to coordinate if the City is interested in doing so.

PAGE 69:

Table 37

shows that in 4 years of grant awards, LASAN received \$1.75 million more in grant funding than awarded to OCF in its entire 26-year history.

This data is terribly inaccurate. OCF suggests an analysis that considers: adjusting OCF's grant awards (all of them, not the partial list) for inflation, comparing the number of people in L.A. to San José, comparing the array of programs funded, comparing the actual number of trees funded, etc.

Of course, this success does not negate the OCF accomplishment to consistently leverage City funds into large grant awards, but rather shows that a significant amount of funding is available should OCF and the City jointly apply for a CAL FIRE grant. A joint application would also add a layer of transparency to the partnership as both the City and OCF would work towards an agreed-upon set of deliverables.

Every grant obtained by OCF has been for the good of San José's urban forest and has advanced San José's stature and visibility at the state and national level. DOT staff once speculated that for the city to take on the work of OCF, it would cost the CSJ easily 6 times as much. We think that is a conservative estimate. In addition, Our City Forest serves as an urban forestry "hub" that is able to transcend bureaucratic boundaries and property lines in order to serve everyone. This allows us to engage more partners, respond to residents quickly, and implement grant projects much more efficiently and cost-effectively.

An important aspect of the LASAN project is the work the department does to coordinate with other City departments, City Plants, and six nonprofit organizations. The grants are designed so each entity can bring their specific strengths and functions to implement the project. The City of Los Angeles Urban Forest Division provides free City permits, watering, and inspections for tree planting locations; City Plants provides additional match in the form of trees to be planted; and the nonprofit partners plant and water the trees in the local communities they serve. This model ensures each partner is not asked to complete a task out of their scope of work, or expand staffing levels, to meet the individual and collective goals of the partners. The City of Los Angeles is able to plant trees towards its goal of planting 90,000 trees in disadvantaged

communities and create 2,700 planting locations by removing concrete on sidewalks. City Plants can engage communities throughout the City, and the nonprofit partners receive additional funding to work in the neighborhoods they serve.

A city the size of Los Angeles, with 12+ million people, is home to a few urban forestry nonprofits and this makes sense especially due to traffic congestion. For San José, population 1 million, duplicating OCF and reinventing the wheel would cost a lot of money and cost the City a great deal of money to administer. OCF partners with

Response to PAGE 69 (continued):

hundreds of community groups, schools, agencies, nonprofits, neighborhoods, religious organizations, and more in every corner of San José and will continue to do so. The only obstacle faced by OCF has been a consistent lack of funding at the local level.

Since CSJ has increased interest in partnering with OCF to procure funding, OCF would expect the plan to point out that if CSJ wants to administer the planting grants directly as the fiscal agent, it will need to invest in administrative costs. There are many new revenue sources available for the CSJ Street Tree Program in the past few years, so this may not be a financial concern. OCF recommends, however, that this still be a consideration and that senior management take a close look at what it would be costing DOT or CSJ to implement some of these recommendations. The more that goes towards CSJ overhead, of course, the less is available to spend on direct services.

It is very important to highlight the fact that planting new trees is not the answer to what ails San José's urban forest. The problem is the loss and devastation of its mature trees. OCF would like to see CSJ work harder on this aspect of urban forest management not only because it's essential, but because this is the work OCF cannot do. Only CSJ can enforce its policies and laws. Planting trees should not be used as a "quick fix" or a distraction away from other serious needs. Without greater protection of its mature trees, which have been devastated over the past years, the City actually runs the risk of having an unhealthy, unbalanced urban forest.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion of this preliminary feedback, it is true that the consultant has consistently been given incorrect information about OCF from City staff, then this should be made transparent in the plan as a concern. Misinformation contained in the draft plan has brought harm to OCF, the partnership and urban forestry and must be addressed.

And critically, nonprofit partners who are providing core city services in order to save the city time and money should be treated with high enough regard to be included in pertinent discussions, and to have their value acknowledged. Throughout the CFMP process, it would appear that the CSJ was unaware it had a key urban forestry partner.

Thank you, Ryan, and your team, and we look forward to a more collaborative process moving forward.

Warm regards,

Rhonda Berry

Rhonda Berry
President & CEO
Our City Forest
www.ourcityforest.org
408-799-9502

DRAFT

September 15, 2021

RE: 95% Draft CFMP

TO: CSJ DOT-CFMP Staff

Our City Forest and its partners recognize and appreciate the 95% draft's inclusion of previously absent critical context about OCF's contributions to the proliferation of community forestry in San Jose and an acknowledgement that the City's financial support has not kept pace with inflation. Numerous previously noted areas of concern remain, however, including continued misrepresentations, the lack of measurability for most of the strategic objectives, and continued omission of serious areas of concern and weak analysis around urban forest management and financing.

These comments -our 4th round - include issues with the process that have continued through this comment period. Also, while some comments here may be repeated from earlier submissions, and some are brand new, these comments are not intended to substitute for any of the previous three rounds. *For brevity, we have occasionally used the term "CFMP staff" to refer to DOT staff engaged in the CFMP, and Ryan Allen from Dudek.*

Failed Process – New

- In April, after the Draft CFMP was issued to the public with essentially no input or vetting by OCF, OCF inquired of DOT whether OCF was a stakeholder in the CFMP process. DOT staff responded that OCF was a "planting partner." OCF then requested a list of actual stakeholders from DOT but was told it could not share it due to confidentiality concerns. Since then, DOT has created a new definition of stakeholder that includes anyone – any resident, any group - who they have only recently reached out or sent a link to the Draft CFMP. Anyone. How Our City Forest, which has *raised and implemented* \$15+ million in non-city cash grants on behalf of San José, solely to foster the development and stewardship of San José's urban forest, would not be considered a "stakeholder" from the start, reflects the flawed nature of the process since 2019.
- OCF has submitted three previous rounds of comments prior to this round. After OCF submitted its first round of comments in May, OCF was advised by the CFMP staff that the plan was "done" and the "analysis will not change". OCF was told it could make data corrections where needed but nothing else would change. As a result of community concerns and city leaders speaking up, the CFMP staff was directed to extend the comment window beyond its initial two weeks, and to work towards addressing the several dozen inaccuracies and gross misrepresentations concerning OCF. OCF appreciates that others stepped in to insist that the unvetted Draft be "cleaned up", but it should be concerning to all those reviewing this process that CFMP staff was initially unwilling to make most of those changes on its own.

- A great deal of unnecessary harm has been caused to OCF as a result of decisions around the process. Most of the harm was caused after DOT was directed to extend the comment window for all. Even though DOT had possession of corrections to many of the harmful inaccuracies contained in the unvetted initial draft, DOT refused our request to even a few corrections right away, and insisted that the this draft remain online until they came out with they released a revised draft. That took 5 months. In essence, OCF's request to extend the comment window for all turned into a window whereby DOT did a rush "community engagement" campaign and distributed this draft to tens of thousands through the City's webmaster mailing list and through Next Door e-lists and beyond. (It is our opinion that this is not community engagement to merely push a link to a technical documents.) Consequently, the damage to OCF from the biased and incorrect information sent out to so many, including council offices, donors, and partners, cannot be measured. These decisions by DOT had a demoralizing impact on OCF's extremely hardworking nonprofit team that is so dedicated to being the City's community forest partner, as well as being a significant financial partner to help with the continued CSJ revenue shortages.
- Since OCF submitted two additional rounds of comments, there has yet to be any request to discuss these. There was one joint meeting with DOT and CAL FIRE - but rather than DOT using the meeting to discuss these issues, which we had thought was the purpose of the meeting, DOT used it to present a lengthy "CFMP process update". DOT explained how they had started meeting with many other groups throughout San José, referring to them as "stakeholders". DOT had explained earlier they are now labeling any group or individual who they have reached out to about the CFMP including those on a massive webmaster list where a link to the initial draft is posted, as "stakeholders". These people even receive letters from DOT addressed to them as "stakeholders". This is a nice take on the fact that OCF's works diligently to increase capacity of everyone in the community to plant and care for trees and teaches that all residents are beneficiaries of tree benefits, but this definition of "stakeholder" rubs the wrong way in the context of the flawed CFMP process. These are not plan development stakeholders for a citywide physical asset, whereby they have substantial ownership, management, oversight, or a financial investment in the urban forest. It is these highly impactful stakeholders which remain essential to the development *and support* of a citywide plan for a major asset managed mostly by non-city entities – but who, unfortunately, were left out of this process.
- Given Our City Forest's role as a true urban forest stakeholder, this rushed process has unfairly put immense pressure on OCF to attempt to straighten out, correct, research, expand, analyze, and otherwise improve on the Draft CFMP. It is simply not possible to stop all other work and try to make up for a flawed process and 2+ years of missed dialogue, input and review time that would normally be afforded key stakeholders and be conducted through a steering body. An authentic stakeholder steering committee is essential, and no one stakeholder can be expected to fill in the omissions and blanks and analyses. There also remain many critical analyses that OCF has simply not had the time to prepare even for what is still needed to address OCF misrepresentations - as well as the research and analysis to address the many serious topics that have been ignored or given a light brush.

Vision and Goals

- The vision statement remains vague and implies external stakeholder input where there was none.
- Most of the objectives are still not SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound)

Relevant Topics Still Omitted – some examples...

- Tree Board (vs. an advisory group)
- PG&E tree work impact and analysis
- Developer in-lieu fees and analysis
- Planting challenges in high-need areas
- Past/current use of commercial contractors and analysis
- OCF efforts and track record in high need neighborhoods

Superficial Discussion / Deeper Dive Needed

- Plan for improving code enforcement practices
- Pruning cycles of 5-7 years still discussed throughout, yet not a best practice depending on species and other conditions
- Protection of mature trees – laws, practices, enforcement

OCF Representation (REPEATED)

- Skewed, Misleading Data, Page 99: We have previously noted why Table 35 should be removed. Again, it was a highly anomalous year, and the table includes bloated values on what were zero cost (inkind) contributions (both the office lease and nursery parcel) – and thus vastly skews the total in Table 35. Further reflecting this unfair comparison is that the city-identified office space and a lease amount that it secured for OCF (after OCF was asked to move out of a hazardous inkind city space). Though that high amount was temporary, it is used in the Table. Moreover, the *current* OCF office rent is less than half the previous cost. There is no mention of the City having provided inkind space until recently or suggestion that a program providing and financing core city services and serving residents would fit well into an inkind city space such as a vacant community center. The city could easily free up what it now pays in rent funds and redirect it to help partially fill the 50% cost-of-living gap of the OCF City operating grant. Using skewed and questionable data leave readers to think that this is the value of current and ongoing support when it is not.

In addition, the sudden high market value given to the airport flight path parcel where the nursery sits should obviously not be included. Using it makes it appear that support has increased to OCF when this is not the case. There was no increased cash or even inkind support – simply a sudden inter-departmental transfer of funds. Yet readers are deliberately given the impression that program support to OCF has increased and that this Table reflects ongoing cash support. The revised version does mention the leases but using these numbers in the Table does not provide readers with the level of clarification or transparency needed to communicate the actual story.

- “Joint” Grant Applications, Page 101: The report still suggests that City/OCF joint grant applications would be straightforward, but then goes on to specify that the City may lead the process and “sub-consult” with OCF. We recognize that Strategic Goal #3, Objective 1g suggests building a framework around this, but our concern is the absence of a SMART goal identifying what constitutes a successful framework. We are compelled to repeat our concerns and elaborate on our experiences with “sub-consulting”.

City properties have been the greatest beneficiary of OCF's fundraising efforts. OCF has successfully raised \$15 million outside funding for all jurisdictions throughout San José – but in addition to thousands of streets and hundreds of parks and city facilities - the funding has served hundreds of schools in all 24 school San José districts, county parks in San José, county pockets, commercial properties, private properties, businesses, open space, trails, etc. All to the benefit of the residents of San José – enhancing the quality of life, cleaning the air, and growing a healthier city for all. OCF's ability to finance and serve across jurisdictions is the most notable contribution of Our City Forest and must be described in the CFMP in order to present an accurate picture of the value of a nonprofit hub that serves across jurisdictions. But what would happen to this capacity if the City decides that OCF should no longer compete for this funding on behalf of all of San José? Where does DOT want to plant trees? Who will those grants serve? Does community forestry go out the window and fewer trees planted due to City overhead and use of commercial contractors?

OCF actually did “sub-consult” for the City on a State grant proposal once. OCF contributed the tree planting and education narratives and budgets. OCF came to find out after the fact that the grant had been awarded and the trees were planted by a commercial contractor, OCF was never notified.

In contrast, OCF has included the City since 1994 as a partner in every planting grant proposal as well as in its grant implementation efforts. The vast amount of funds raised by OCF have been used for City property or parking strips such as San José parks ,street trees, airports, trails, community centers, libraries, fire stations, etc. Upon obtaining a State planting grant, OCF always notifies the City, and asks council offices to help spread the word in their districts so that residents can apply for free trees. OCF partners with various City departments to provide free grant trees and services for their properties – not only parks, but the airport, trails, and yards. The City of San José has no doubt been OCF's primary beneficiary.

OCF has never once failed to carry out its grant performance and administration responsibilities for the vast array of State and Federal grants it has implemented since 1994. These are reimbursement-based grants and must be invoiced regularly to maintain cash flow. This effort includes routine financial audits and field inspections as well. OCF has successfully managed these grants and an extreme cost savings to the City of San José. With the City's operating grant support to OCF losing 50% of its value due to inflation over this period, (and service members are not allowed to do grantwriting or admin work), it has been due to OCF's dedication to service that has kept this going. If the current recommendation holds that DOT wants to undertake all of this effort, what would it cost? This is the kind of information and analysis that is missing from the Draft CFMP.

- Incorrect statement on Page 103: Once again, the statement that OCF has “...added additional programs such as contract tree watering and landscape conversions that do not directly support the core values of the organization and detract from its mission” is wholly inaccurate and should be removed. It remains quizzical, at best, as to the purpose of continuing to include this. If anyone on the CFMP staff had reached out to OCF to discuss this, or to at least allow OCF to review the initial draft prior to its public release, this misinformation could have been corrected in timely manner. Even with our previous comments, it seems there is a desire to include this false statement. OCF is aware that DOT hires commercial tree contractors quite a bit at much, much higher rates and we understand that funding is never the issue. Still, we again

recommend that the CFMP include an analysis in this regard, since that missing expenditure information is just what our elected officials need to know.

As has been stated, the mission of OCF is... **To cultivate a green, healthy, sustainable San José-Silicon Valley by engaging people from all walks of life in the appreciation, understanding, development, management and protection of the urban ecosystem, especially its urban forest.** OCF reaches out to invite, inspire, train, educate, engage and support thousands every year, including representatives of government agencies, school districts, businesses, neighborhood groups, civic organizations, service clubs, volunteer groups, and countless others, around urban forestry.

It is not difficult to see that any form of watering trees is aligned with OCF's mission. Truck watering provides training and experience for Our City Forest's service corps members, corporate volunteers, and job trainees, directly contributing to their ability to *understand, appreciate, maintain, and manage* a community forest. The plan's lack of acknowledgement of this clear connection to the mission is a symptom of the early communication failures that have persisted throughout this process.

The reference to "landscape conversions" presumably pertains to OCF's Lawn Busters program through which OCF converts the lawns of low-income residents and seniors into drought-tolerant gardens filled with shrubs, plants, and trees. The scope and purpose are entirely aligned with OCF's mission as it also *engages and trains residents to understand and care for their urban forest right where they live*. Shrubs and groundcover are, by the way, important components of the urban forest. One of the reasons LawnBusters has won awards and is so highly regarded is because it is another good example of OCF's focused environmental justice efforts.

Tree Equity Efforts Omitted

- The Draft unfortunately fails to shine a light on the decades of targeted fundraising and planting by OCF to serve San José's most high need and low-canopied neighborhoods, particularly the hundreds of schools and neighborhoods throughout East San José. The impacts of this work are measurable and a study is underway to illustrate the changes from 1994 to now. OCF knows where progress has been made over this period and what areas need attention now, but was never asked by the CFMP staff about this. A list of grants was provided to the consultant State grants obtained to provide services for our Downtown, Central and East San José neighborhoods. In addition, OCF recently completed a multi-year CAL FIRE funded effort to plant 2,000 trees in San José's highest need census tracts and immediate surrounds, primarily in East San José. But there is no mention of this in the CFMP. This fantastic effort to close the tree equity gap is the result of the OCF/City of San José partnership and should be fully highlighted in the plan. To omit and deny this long-term effort is a disservice to San José which has every reason to be proud of how much funding and effort has been directed to address environmental injustice thus far – all a result of the CSJ- Our City Forest partnership. To omit and deny this effort is also a disservice to the State and Federal partners who have consistently funded this work through OCF over the years when planting trees was not the "hot topic" it is at the moment. The CFMP is the right time for the City to acknowledge these efforts, and show the rest of the world what San José has been doing regarding this serious issue.

OCF Photos in the Draft

- The revised draft contains two OCF photos which are not ones we would have selected for use in this document. One photo is of a City DOT staff member wearing an OCF t-shirt at an OCF planting. We're thinking that a photo with an actual OCF member, staffer or volunteer would be more suitable. The other photo is this DOT employee's roommate (and ex-employee) at the OCF Nursery. Neither photo seems appropriate for inclusion in the CFMP – at least for highlighting the work of OCF.

OCF has hundreds of more recent photos that are inspirational and colorful, including ones with current service members and volunteers serving residents. Photos of our team providing services to residents would tell the story of OCF's role in this partnership so much better. We would be happy to provide you with great photos if you'd like – and grant our permission to use them.

Regards,

Rhonda Berry

Rhonda Berry
President & CEO
Our City Forest

OUR CITY FOREST

June 30, 2021

To: Ryan Allen

From: Our City Forest

Subject: Public Comments on the Draft San José Community Forestry Plan

Our City Forest has reviewed the Draft CFMP and offers the attached comments for your consideration.

This is the third round of comments submitted by OCF in accordance with various deadlines. Whereas the first two rounds of OCF comments addressed inaccuracies regarding OCF and attempted to more fully explain OCF's role in serving the community as well as the City, this third round focuses on other aspects of the CFMP.

The vast majority of our comments in this round fall into the categories of "Concerns Regarding the Process" and "Omissions of Relevant Topics, Data, & Analysis". In our estimation, the lack of a stakeholder group for this citywide project was the cause of significant omissions.

We appreciate the opportunity, albeit limited, to comment on the Draft CFMP.

OUR CITY FOREST

Our City Forest Comments Regarding City of San José Draft CFMP 3rd round of OCF Comments Submitted 6-30-21

I. Concerns Regarding CFMP Process

A. *Lack of Effective Community Outreach & Engagement*

1. 56 participants at 4 virtual meetings = 0.006% of San Jose's population.
2. The online survey participants do not reflect the City's racial or economic demographics.
3. No in-person community meetings were hosted for soliciting feedback in year prior to pandemic.
4. City rejected OCF offers to conduct outreach and co-hosting meetings in council districts and to help with forming stakeholder group.
5. The virtual meeting and the online survey were deficient in design and outcome.
6. No mailers were sent for the virtual community meetings.
7. Survey led to false implications that renters do not engage in urban forestry.
8. Interviews with council members excluded those representing low-income areas.
9. Virtual DOT meetings for the CFMP were capped at 30 participants.
10. Community not notified in advance of virtual workshops (2 business days)
11. Virtual meeting format was ineffective for soliciting community input.
12. Only one person presented at the virtual meeting
13. Virtual meeting had no other City department reps or stakeholders participating (other than OCF given 5 minutes)
14. The massive distribution via Next Door of an unfriendly technical 105-page document is ineffective and even insulting for residents, and cannot replace the lack of a stakeholder-driven process and user-friendly input opportunities.
15. Targeted outreach was not included to solicit input.

B. *Accessibility of Language*

1. The CFMP draft is a discouragingly long read that needlessly employs vocabulary that is difficult for non-expert audiences to interpret
2. Readers should not need arboricultural knowledge to understand it.
3. Enhanced science communication would use brief explanations of arboriculture terminology and concepts after their introduction, thus empowering the non-expert to understand the content.

OUR CITY FOREST

I. **Concerns Regarding CFMP Process, continued**

C. *Absence of Key Stakeholders*

1. OCF was not consulted in the development of the CFMP. Other key stakeholders were also ignored. This has resulted in the omission of dozens of critical topics and many inaccuracies. This should be acknowledged in the Plan itself.
2. The CFMP states that internal and external stakeholders were interviewed. The only external stakeholder interviewed was Our City Forest nearly two years ago and the information reported has multiple errors and incorrect data. This absence of stakeholders must be acknowledged in any Plan distributed to the public.
3. Due to the many omissions resulting from lack of stakeholder engagement, it would be beneficial to the City and the future of its urban forest to course-correct and create a CFMP that considers the needs of the urban forest as well as the needs of the community who depend on it, are responsible for it, and who steward it. The City and County of San Francisco developed an excellent plan and it could be a guide for the City of San José's CFMP.
4. The Draft states: "The City of San José chose to use "Community Forest" throughout its Community Forest Management Plan to be inclusive of all the built environments in San José, including urban, suburban, and rural locations." This acknowledges that the Plan is intended to be citywide across jurisdictions yet the process for developing the Plan was anything but.
5. The vast majority of the urban forest is neither owned by nor managed by the City. This is the reason it is essential to engage the key stakeholders. This is needed to ensure a comprehensive vs. a one-sided viewpoint and also collaborate on solutions. This process creates the essential buy-in to bring the plan to fruition. The Plan needs to provide data regarding property ownership.

II. **Omissions of Relevant Topics, Data, & Analysis**

A. *Lack of Plan Alignment*

1. No stated consideration of, or alignment with, Green Stormwater Plan, Bike Plan, or Vision Zero.
2. Reference made to Climate Smart Plan, but that plan excludes the urban forest.

B. *Vision and Goals*

1. The vision statement is confusing.

OUR CITY FOREST

II. Omissions of Relevant Topics, Data, & Analysis, continued

B. Vision and Goals, continued

2. Overarching goals are unclear. There is neither a comprehensive vision of what San Jose's urban forest will look like 25 or 50 years in the future, nor any plan to achieve such a vision.
3. The Draft presumes the continued loss of canopy, but offers no actionable steps to address this.
4. Draft aligns urban forestry with other City initiatives such as Climate Smart and the Urban Village Plan. The Climate Smart Plan does not include the urban forest.
5. There are no SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, time-bound) goals. The Draft needs goals and actionable steps with input from key stakeholders.
6. The Draft lacks goals and plans outlining the challenges and projections by land use type, including residential property, commercial property, medians, parks, industrial lands, schools, etc.

C. Resident Responsibility for Tree Care

1. In discussing reasons for not shifting responsibility back to City, Plan omits discussion of the disproportionate burden on low-income residents in regards to tree care costs including sidewalk repair, tree removal, and pruning.

D. Public Health

1. The CFMP's fails to describe how lack of tree canopy is associated with higher rates of respiratory illness and other diseases.
2. On Pg. ix the quantification of benefits *excludes* health and other benefits

E. Improper Tree Care/Pruning

Topping and malpruning of mature trees is rampant in San José.

1. Pg. 24: 5–7-year pruning cycles are only appropriate for older trees
2. Inappropriate tree maintenance and tree topping/improper pruning are mentioned as threats but the plan lacks actionable items and policy changes to address these issues.
3. The highest fine for tree topping is only \$250 for a 24"+ tree in SJ. whereas in SF it is \$1,800 minimum.
4. The plan should include an assessment of the current policies regarding improper tree care, as they are failing to reduce topping. This is a major threat to our mature trees, and it is only mentioned once on page 7, in a casual context.
5. Pg. 31: Data needed on costs associated with **not** maintaining the urban forest.
6. How are private pruning companies going to be monitored? Pg. 38, second to last paragraph: More likely the trees that are pruned by residents are increasing their liability issues through improper pruning, including topping.
7. Plan lacks discussion and analysis of code enforcement for these violations.

OUR CITY FOREST

II. Omissions of Relevant Topics, Data, & Analysis, continued

F. Equity Issues

1. The CFMP fails to include any geospatial context to illustrate inequities.
2. There is no mention of 28 years of funding efforts and tree planting by OCF for Downtown San José and East San José neighborhoods, parks and schools.
3. The Draft fails to describe how barren these areas were prior to these efforts, overlooking the most compelling evidence the City has to prove the effectiveness and impact of the OCF-CSJ model partnership and to take some credit.
4. These areas still remain under-canopied compared to other areas of the city, yet the only remedy offered in the CFMP is to partner with the Office of Racial Equity. The CFMP should also consider directing more funding to the OCF-CSJ partnership so that it can do more for these areas. To date, OCF has relied almost solely on non-City grants for tree plantings.
5. The CFMP should address displacement pressures in order to ensure that this plan serves the interests of long-term residents of San Jose.

G. History of City of San José Tree Management

1. The history of the DOT street tree management program is inaccurate.
2. No timeline of CSJ tree management history is provided to bring context
3. Historical data to show trends in expenditures and revenue are lacking.
4. Lack of annual tree removal data is concerning.

H. City Policies & Impacts

1. No comments or analysis as to recent weakening of tree ordinance/policies.
2. No impact analysis of weak code enforcement and no plan to improve.
3. No case study of, or feasibility study for, the implementation of a Tree Commission
4. No coverage of CSJ policies and communications related to PG&E tree work
5. No analysis or recommendation regarding a City Tree Commission
6. Lack of discussion of tree protection measures and enforcement.
7. No mention of impacts regarding City drought policies resulting in tree loss.
8. No analysis/data of environmental and financial impacts from loss of those trees
9. No data regarding City maintenance backlog.
10. No plan for managing tree removal backlog from drought-related tree loss
11. No data/analysis Impact of developer in- lieu tree replacement fees program, including increasing fee from \$300 to \$880; what has been the result, how much is it generating, and how it is being used?

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II. *Omissions of Relevant Topics, Data, & Analysis, continued*

I. *City Tree Program Missing Content and Discussion*

1. City tree removal data
2. Expenditure data and analysis for commercial contractor work
3. Clarity regarding increased DOT staffing for tree management
4. Data showing historical/comparative CSJ Street Tree Program expenditures
5. Street tree inventory data
6. DOT staff regarding OCF as a competitor rather than a partner
7. Historical/comparison data charts for annual CSJ urban forestry dollars spent

J. *Private Tree Planting Opportunities to Increase Canopy Cover*

1. Page 4 - Data missing regarding where planting opportunities exist on private land which comprises the majority of the urban forest.

III. **Misleading Use of Data**

A. *Inappropriate comparisons to other cities*

1. Pg. 30, Table 23:

- a. Many confounding variables are present in the current dataset. Readers cannot reasonably be expected to extrapolate correlations between community forest management practices and funding received without taking into consideration the context of specific variables that heavily influence these relationships, such as population size, funding priorities (e.g.g hotter climate zones), demographics, previous funding, etc. This flaw in the draft could be remedied by providing the reader with contrasting evidence or evidence of a broader scope.

B. *Other*

- a. Page xi- How is time accounted for in the statistic that 40,000 trees are needed to recover 1% of lost canopy?
- b. Bottom of pg. 13 and top of pg. 14: Why are health and structure equated? These are two different things that both contribute to risk but should be approached differently

IV. **Assumptions and Conclusions**

Imbalanced perspective regarding option for City to take on tree maintenance

- A. Page 22- In place of specific recommendations, the draft reports the responses to a survey with a problematically low sample size. Conclusions are drawn that do not

OUR CITY FOREST

IV. Assumptions and Conclusions, continued

promote further action on the part of the City. To say that the results indicate that respondents “could potentially support a hybrid City/private property owner management model” seems to be pulled from the 35.36% of respondents who indicated that they would prefer a hybrid of responsibility, while the majority (60.28%) were in favor of the City taking full responsibility.

B. Page 23- This discussion misses the opportunity to address this difficult financial challenge head-on and to leverage the CFMP toward new solutions such as S.F.’s Proposition E that was approved by voters after being supported in their Plan.

C. The CFMP mentions the idea of having the City fund maintenance of newly planted trees if residents pay for the planting - is this establishment care or long-term care? Would this cover sidewalk repairs? For newly planted trees in residential neighborhoods, the Our City Forest stewardship model is a proven and sustainable alternative to truck watering.

D. On page 35, it is suggested to the reader that this shift of responsibility would be cumbersome and expensive for CSJ. The reader is further dissuaded with the example of how Los Angeles is experiencing costly settlements because of street tree responsibilities. A more balanced perspective could be achieved by including reference to the many examples of positive feedback provided by the thousands of street tree stewards recruited and supported by Our City Forest for 3 years after planting. Recommend that the CFMP include an analysis showing the financial savings to the City for this cost-effective tree establishment stewardship program.

E. Top of pg. 17: Large canopy trees should be planted wherever there is room due to increased environmental, health, and economic benefits.

F. Pg. 45: Are all eucalyptus species deemed unsuitable? All Pine?

G. Page 6, Table 1: What is included in “functional” services that trees perform? Why is this number so low compared to Structural Value and Carbon Storage?

H. Page 10, Table 7: Is Total Canopy supposed to be the Total Number of Trees? Also, why are 22.75 ft squared size trees used here?

I. Page 15: Agrifolia has a relatively low RPI because there are so many older specimens, because they predate most development.

J. Page 16, Table 13: Why are Chinese Pistache considered small trees?

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the first Draft CFMP.

City of SAN JOSE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

Valley Water Comments

September 24, 2021

Valley Water appreciates this opportunity to review the San Jose Community Forest Management Plan. Overall the Plan appears to provide a clear path forward for the City to maintain existing street and park trees under its responsibility, provide support to private property-owners to maintain street trees on their property, and plant additional trees that are resilient to climate change and provide maximum community benefit. Valley Water particularly supports the creation of a management-level position with responsibility to implement the Plan; and would urge strongly that this position have expertise in both urban forestry programs and natural ecological principles, including familiarity with riparian ecosystems, wildfire and fuels management; as well as community engagement.

We offer the following specific comments:

1. Regarding Strategy 3, **Continually review the City recommended tree species list to ensure trees are adapted to climate change and support local habitat and wildlife**, Valley Water particularly supports Objectives 3.1: *Tree planting projects in open space, riparian, and native habitat areas will prioritize tree species that contribute to wildlife habitat*; 3.2 : *Tree planting projects in a City park will prioritize the use of local and regional native tree species*, 3.3 *Prioritize planting trees rated by Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) as very low and low water users*. And 3.4. *Identify trees that are not expected to adapt to changing climate conditions and replace them with new suitable species*.
 - a. With the increased risk of fire due to those experiencing homelessness residing in riparian and other natural or semi-natural areas, please consider modifying Obj 3.1, by adding the phrase “are less flammable or resistant to wildfire”.
 - b. The Plan should reference and incorporate the City’s Riparian Corridor Policy and provide objectives which specifically address protection and management of trees in the riparian zone. The Plan makes several references to trees along riparian corridor but does not address how these trees will be identified and managed. Riparian trees can include some of the oldest and most valuable legacy trees in management area, and the City owns hundreds of acres in the riparian corridor.
2. *City has responsibility for maintenance and management of riparian trees on City property*. Valley Water has a long history of collaboration with the City to provide for public trails on Valley Water property. While Valley Water maintains trees on its property adjacent to trails, it is not responsible for maintenance or stewardship of trees and riparian habitat on City property adjacent to trails. The Plan should clarify that the City is responsible for maintenance and stewardship of trees and riparian habitat on the City’s creekside property, including, for example, management of hazard trees along trail corridors.

- a. On page 167, the Plan states that tree management along creek corridors lies with CSJ, VW and CDFW. Although CDFW regulates the removal of riparian vegetation, it does not manage riparian trees or habitat.
 - b. The discussion on street trees (pg 166) and following discussion on pg 177 about riparian areas and responsibilities should clarify that VW is an adjacent property owner therefore responsible for street trees along its frontage and in riparian areas, as a public entity not subject to City permitting. The language in the document isn't clear.
3. *Invasive Trees* – The plan includes a list of four invasive trees (black acacia, tree of heaven, blue gum eucalyptus, and Chinese tallow). This list is extremely simplified, especially with regard to wildlands and riparian areas throughout the management area. Consider including a full list (including some palm species) in table format so the public can identify and understand invasive tree species and thus help prevent further spread. Invasive trees like holly oaks, locust, and palms are dispersed from developed areas into wildlands and creeks through storm water system and by human/wildlife movement. These trees unnecessarily crowd natural areas, increase wildland fuels, and contribute to catastrophic fires that can damage or destroy native overstory species (valley oak, coast live oak, sycamore). This has become especially apparent as homelessness and associated wildfires proliferates in wildlands around the management area. What will CSJ do to simultaneously promote the urban forest and manage invasive species/tree densities that are a direct threat to many of the oldest and most valuable legacy trees in the management area?
4. *Native Trees* – Consider providing a table listing local native trees, their distribution, and other resources to help the public identify and understand. Not all oaks are native and beneficial. Not all native trees are suitable for the urban/suburban landscape. Management of wildlands/riparian areas is a completely different occupation than management of street trees, grid plantings, and the traditional urban forest. More details should be included to address how legacy trees within these lands will be identified, monitored, and protected long term.
5. *Phytophthora* The Plan should include discussion of soil pathogens in the genus *Phytophthora* and include guidelines to prevent their introduction and spread into natural areas.
6. Access to Scenic Resources: Mention of "Rural Scenic Corridors" in this section. Sparked idea of interpretive signage promoting importance of Community Forest along recreational trails and/or near heritage trees. Guadalupe River and Coyote Creek recreational trails are potential locations for this.
7. Addition of Trees and Sidewalks Policy Improvement and Funding: City's current street tree and sidewalk policies are repeatedly criticized. City should consider taking ownership of these areas or otherwise provide incentives for proper tree maintenance and selection. Also, consider serving under privileged communities in an increased capacity
8. "Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan-Relationship to CFMP-Species Selection" Recommend creation of online tool for interested individuals. Tool could run through questions to determine options of tree species to plant in various applications.

Support the Community Forest Management Plan Item# 5.1

Carol Watts, President LWVSJSC <president@lwvsjsc.org>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:43 AM

To: Liccardo, Sam <sam.liccardo@sanjoseca.gov>; Jones, Chappie <Chappie.Jones@sanjoseca.gov>; Cohen, David <David.Cohen@sanjoseca.gov>; Davis, Dev <dev.davis@sanjoseca.gov>; Carrasco, Magdalena <Magdalena.Carrasco@sanjoseca.gov>; Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; Esparza, Maya <Maya.Esparza@sanjoseca.gov>; Foley, Pam <Pam.Foley@sanjoseca.gov>; Peralez, Raul <Raul.Peralez@sanjoseca.gov>; Jimenez, Sergio <sergio.jimenez@sanjoseca.gov>; Arenas, Sylvia <sylvia.arenas@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>; climatechange@lwvsjsc.org <climatechange@lwvsjsc.org>; vicki.alexander [REDACTED]

📎 1 attachment (93 KB)

LWV Support of CFMP Item 5.1.pdf;

You don't often get email from president@lwvsjsc.org [Learn why this is important](#)

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In the attached letter, we make several recommendations for plans going forward during the implementation of the CFMP. Please vote yes to support this plan on December 14.

Thank you for serving on the Council.

--

Carol Watts, President, League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara

lwvsjsc.org

votersedge.org/ca

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P.O. Box 5374
San Jose, CA 95150
www.lwvsjsc.org
December 10, 2021

To: Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Jimenez, Peralez, Cohen, Carrasco, Davis, Esparza, Arenas, Foley, and Mahan
cc: San Jose City Clerk

Subject: **Item Community Forest Management Plan; Agenda #5.1**

The League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara supports the key findings and strategic work plan as outlined in the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP). We have read the DOT staff report on the CFMP and find that it points out many of the challenges that the CFMP faces. We appreciate the DOT perspective that the CFMP is a living document, and look forward to following the plan as it evolves.

We recommend that the Plan as implemented undertake direction for 100% of San Jose's tree canopy rather than just street trees and trees on City-owned property. We were distressed to learn that the City's tree canopy has been decreasing. Therefore, a concerted effort and cooperation with other organizations, community groups and volunteers involved with tree planting and maintenance will be required to turn around that decline.

We ask for the following direction as the City moves forward with a revised CFMP:

1. The majority of San Jose's trees are planted and maintained by external groups and private landowners, and for the CFMP to be meaningful, it needs to include **all** trees within San Jose. The database and planning should be created using resources from the many City departments, non-profits (such as Our City Forest), corporations, school districts, local arborists and services, and others who have trees or who have planted / maintained trees. We encourage regular and meaningful planning and coordination that includes all stakeholders. We are pleased to see the formation of an Urban Forest Advisory Committee mentioned in the staff report, and we urge you to accelerate its formation. We also recommend the formation of a Stakeholder Working Group composed of experts in the field of urban forestry practices.
2. The League is committed to advancing equity in all of its work. We are especially concerned because the CFMP shows marked inequities in tree canopy in some San Jose neighborhoods. As the CFMP evolves, we expect to see more analysis and more concrete examples of how to address these shortcomings, including input from these underserved communities. We recommend that the inventory database of trees constituting the urban forest be made public.
3. We appreciated reading the information on current governance structure regarding our community forest. As an organization devoted to good government practices, we encourage you to explore different structural approaches based both on examining how other cities implement their community forest plans as well as options within the

City of San Jose to facilitate inter-departmental cooperation as part of an overall climate resilience strategy.

4. As mentioned above, the CFMP is a living document. As another example of good government practices, we ask that staff provide semi-annual reports to the City Council including updates and recommendations from the Advisory Committee and the Stakeholder Working Group
5. We encourage the City Council to provide adequate staffing and other budget items so that San Jose's community forest can thrive. The community forest is an integral part of San Jose's climate resilience strategy, and increased funding for management of our community forest will lead to a healthier San Jose for us all.

The League has strong positions on the management of natural resources and on the importance of combating climate change. **San Jose's CFMP is a critical part of our city's efforts to create a more livable city and to increase our climate resilience.**

Sincerely yours,



Carol Watts, President, League of Women Voters of San Jose/Santa Clara
president@lwvsjsc.org - lwvsjsc.org
Virginia Holtz & Judy Chamberlin, Co-chairs of Climate Change Committee
climatechange@lwvsjsc.org