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Strategic Workplan



Strategic Plan

Vision: The City of San José Community Forest is a testament to our history and honors our diversity while striving to cultivate the equitable values we hold true towards building a strong and resilient landscape and community forest.

Guiding Principles	Definition
Equity, diversity, and inclusion	City policies and management practices will reflect community values and achieve equitable outcomes by seeking the necessary resources for successful implementation.
Innovation	The City seeks emerging technologies and current research to inform the development of standards and best management practices that lead to a sustainable Community Forest.
Regional Identity	The City will maintain the unique sense of place and neighborhood character that comprises San José as it identifies distinctive community landscapes.
Resilient San José	The City will seek to protect neighborhoods from the adversities of climate change, and to restore and grow canopy cover to maximize the environmental, economic, social and health benefits of the Community Forest.

In order to implement the vision and guiding principles of the Community Forest Master Plan, the following strategies are recommended for implementation. These strategies and objectives are to bring the City into alignment with the CFMP. Finally, recommendations for ways the City can reach the strategies and objectives are presented.

Streamline the Governance Structure

Strategy

1 Consolidate tree responsibilities to one division or create a new division.

Objectives

- 1a. Evaluate respective benefits of consolidation of responsibilities, or expansion of citywide tree staffing to properly manage trees located within the public rights-of-way and at City-owned facilities; and on private property if removal is required. Propose appropriate structure not later than the 2023-2024 budget process.
- 1b. Create one central City arborist or urban forester position to oversee and coordinate all community forest programs.
- 1c. Consolidate Maintenance of Public Works-Maintained City Facility Trees to a new department.
- 1d. Develop a strategy to manage trees in designated Riparian Corridors.

Strategy

2 Include trees in the beginning of the design and planning process

Objectives

- 2a. Update the approval process for all development projects to require an arborist report with permit application materials that at a minimum includes: (1) a discussion of the existing conditions of the trees, (2) project impacts to trees, (3) tree candidates for preservation, (4) tree protection methods, and (5) required replacement plantings.

Strategy

3 Provide an arborist review of all Planning Division tree responsibilities

Objectives

- 3a. Update the process for design review and approval of development projects to require the Building Division to provide City arborist recommendations to the project applicant as part of the initial review of the site plan.
- 3b. All private property tree removal applications submitted to the Planning Division are reviewed by either a City arborist or on-call third party consulting arborist, who is also ISA Tree Risk Assessment Qualified.
- 3c. All arborist reports submitted with private property development applications must be reviewed and verified by a City arborist as a condition of the protected tree removal permit approval process.

Ensure Community Forest Sustainability

Strategy

1. Tree planting activities will promote a sustainable urban forest.

Objectives

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| 1a. | Develop criteria for selecting tree species to plant on City managed streets, parks, and other public and open spaces that prioritizes trees known to be adapted to changing climate conditions such as extreme heat and drought. |
| 1b. | The City tree inventory will comprise no more than 10% of one species, 20% of one genus, or 30% of one family. |
| 1c. | Apply the 10% species, 20% genus, and 30% family standard to smaller geographic segments of the City based on existing defined neighborhood boundaries. |
| 1d. | Create a dashboard of community forest sustainability indicators and annually update dashboard statistics based on the most recent City tree inventory data. |
| 1e. | Continue to plant new trees to ensure a continuum of age diversity within the City managed tree inventory. |

Strategy

2. Increase tree canopy cover across all census tracts and neighborhoods.

Objectives

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| 2a. | Achieve 20% Citywide canopy cover by 2051. |
| 2b. | Annually plant 2,000 new trees on both public and private property. Total will not include trees that are required as replacement for a removed tree. |
| 2c. | Evaluate and adjust the annual tree planting goal every 5 years to ensure the City is progressing towards canopy cover goals. |
| 2d. | Work with local tree nurseries to ensure tree species and quantities are available to meet City tree planting goals. |

Strategy

3. Continually review the City recommended tree species list to ensure trees are adapted to climate change and support local habitat and wildlife.

Objectives

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| 3a. | Tree planting projects in open space, riparian, and native habitat areas will prioritize tree species that contribute to wildlife habitat. |
| 3b. | Tree planting projects in a City park will prioritize the use of local and regional native tree species. |
| 3c. | Prioritize planting trees rated by Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS) as very low and low water users. |
| 3d. | Identify trees that are not expected to adapt to changing climate conditions and replace them with new suitable species. |
| 3e. | Increase the quantity of small and medium-sized species trees in the planting palette to provide more species options in locations that have limited soil volume. |
| 3f. | Develop a strategy to create a network of trees that will support wildlife connectivity and biodiversity. |

Support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Strategy

- 1. Ensure the diverse demographics of the City are represented by the community stakeholders who participate in guiding the development of the community forest program.**

Objectives

- 1a. Establish and maintain partnerships with community-based organizations that are inclusive of the diverse demographics of the City.
- 1b. Establish a Community Forest Advisory Committee consisting of City staff and external stakeholders to guide the implementation of the Community Forest Management Plan.
- 1c. Develop direct outreach and education programs informing the community on the value of trees, and roles and responsibilities, to under-represented communities; property renters, non-English speaking, and others.
- 1d. Maintain the CFMP webpage and use it as a resource to update community members about new initiatives, educational programs, and outreach events.
- 1e. All CFMP program materials, notices, and permits are made available in the 5 most common non-English speaking languages in the City and adhere to web content accessibility guidelines, and City branding guidelines.
- 1f. Annually update the Transportation and Environment Committee on the status of the community forest and report on the progress of achieving CFMP goals. Invite stakeholders to attend and provide an opportunity for input on setting priorities for the community forest management program.
- 1g. Review and modify, if needed, the agreements with OCF and any other non-profit partners the City may use to ensure that there are clearly defined parameters that align with the goals of the CFMP to expand tree canopy cover and promote equal representation in planning efforts.

Strategy

- 2. Prioritize increasing canopy cover in disadvantaged communities.**

Objectives

- 2a. Prioritize tree planting activities in census tracts with low CalEnviroScreen scores and tree canopy cover or designated as areas of need by the San José equity atlas.
- 2b. Collaborate with the Office of Racial Equity on prioritizing areas of the City with the highest CalEnviroScreen Scores for new tree plantings.
- 2c. Develop a framework for the City and Our City Forest (OCF) to partner on and/or submit joint grant applications by providing matching resources that align with their expertise and mission statements, and directs resources to low-canopy and underserved communities.
- 2d. Develop a residential shade tree distribution program in partnership with a utility, corporate sponsor, or community benefit stakeholder, to provide free trees to be planted on private property.

Funding the Community Forest

Strategy	
1.	Develop a plan to annually provide funding to the community forest program so the City can sustainably manage the tree inventory, engage the community, and implement policies and ordinances.
Objectives	
1a.	Define funding scenarios for tree maintenance to determine how much funding would be required to properly maintain: 1) existing trees in City right-of-way areas, 2) all street trees and park trees in the City inventory, 3) Trees at all City facilities
1b.	In collaboration with PRNS and other City stakeholders, research and identify potential funding mechanisms that would provide the necessary resources for the City to maintain all street and park trees.
1c.	Develop a multi-year proposal that will result in the maintenance of all City owned trees that meets the standards of the International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standard Institute, and quantify the budgetary impact to the City Council for inclusion in the annual budget.
1d.	Evaluate the policy benefits and costs of an incentive program for trees that relieves some (or all) of the maintenance responsibility from property owners for both existing and newly planted trees and make a recommendation during the 2022-2023 budget process.
1e.	Continue to evaluate the deficit in funds that are available to maintain the City's infrastructure in the annual Deferred Maintenance and Infrastructure Report
Strategy	
2.	Fund community forest management activities at a level to meet best management practices as defined by the City.
Objectives	
2a.	All newly planted street trees will have a dedicated source to provide watering and establishment care for the first three years after planting, which may include a commitment for residential property owners, contracted maintenance, or irrigation.
2b.	Dedicate City or other appropriate funding to maintain and water the newly planted trees for projects initiated through community tree planting events within PRNS-managed sites.
2c.	Incrementally increase funding for the pruning of all street and park trees until the City achieves a pruning cycle that more closely aligns to the industry standard of 5-7 years.
2d.	Begin to allocate resources to the structural pruning of young trees.

Efficient and Effective Tree Management

Strategy

1. Maintain current information on the community forest to ensure management decisions are based on the best available data.

Objectives

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| 1a. | Complete a City tree inventory that at a minimum includes the information needed to analyze tree species diversity, health condition, age distribution, and inform management practices. |
| 1b. | Maintain the City tree inventory in perpetuity, with each tree in the inventory assessed on a regular cycle. |
| 1c. | Centralize tree inventory data using existing management software so community forest program dashboard goals and operational outcomes can be made available on a public online platform. |
| 1d. | Regularly conduct an urban tree canopy cover analysis using LiDAR or other high-resolution spatial imagery. |
| 1e. | Inspect trees for signs of decline, insect infestation, or pathogen infection. Collect samples from suspect trees and submit to a diagnostic laboratory or the Agriculture Commissioner's Office of Santa Clara County. Develop an appropriate long-term maintenance plan, or strategy to remove and replace failing species, to maintain canopy cover. Each tree to be evaluated every 5-7 years. |

Strategy

2. Ensure all City tree management activities and design standards reflect the most current understanding of community forest sustainability.

Objectives

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| 2a. | Regularly review and update City tree management practices to reflect the current industry standards as defined by the International Society of Arboriculture, American National Standards Institute, and current research. |
| 2b. | Develop and adopt alternative design standards for sidewalk installation and repair that minimizes conflicts between trees, sidewalks, and other infrastructure by considering and providing sufficient growing space for trees. |
| 2c. | Develop and adopt design standards for street trees that provide access to stormwater runoff. |
| 2d. | Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects will include the planting of one or more shade tree(s) that will contribute to stormwater reduction and avoided runoff. |

Strategy

3. Community members and private property owners will understand their role in growing and maintaining the community forest.

Objectives

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| 3a. | Educate community members on their responsibility to maintain trees adjacent their property. |
| 3b. | Continue to work with OCF to engage and educate residents on how to properly water and maintain newly planted trees, and explore the possibilities to expand the City and OCF partnership. |
| 3c. | Educate private property owners on proper tree pruning practices. |

Standardize and Improve Planning and Development

Strategy	
1.	Protect and preserve mature trees
Objectives	
1a.	All private property tree removal applications submitted to the Planning Division will provide written justification that no alternatives exist to tree removal.
1b.	Remove the 'unsuitable tree' definition from the private property tree removal application.
1c.	Update the notification process of all tree removal applications for development projects so City Council Offices and community stakeholders have the opportunity to provide comments on tree removals impacting their community.
1d.	Review the fee structure associated with private property tree removal applications and determine if it is feasible to institute incentives that would result in reduced fees for applicants.
1e.	Update the permit fees and illegal tree removal fee structure for private property tree removals so the fine to illegally remove a tree is greater than the permit fee to legally remove a tree.
1f.	Develop an integrated pest management plan that is coordinated on a regional scale with the City, Santa Clara County, and other relevant government agencies and municipalities.

Strategy	
2.	City planning and development will contribute to increasing tree canopy cover.
Objectives	
2a.	All development projects will provide site plans that result in 100% canopy cover over adjacent sidewalks within a 15-year timeframe.
2b.	Update the tree replacement policy for single-family and duplex lots to state that the property must maintain or achieve 35% canopy cover over a 15-year timeframe.
2c.	Update the PRNS tree replacement policy to allow for replacement trees to be planted in adjacent park locations when the current park cannot accommodate all replacement trees.