



Memorandum

TO: City Council

FROM: Councilmember Matt Mahan

SUBJECT: Community Forest
Management Plan

DATE: January 25, 2022

APPROVED:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Accept the Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP) and the memorandum from Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers Carrasco, Davis, Esparza and Cohen with the following additional direction to the City Manager:

1. Include in the research and outreach entailed in my colleagues' Recommendation #2 potential corporate partners with a significant presence in San Jose, such as Adobe and Zoom, and especially those with a track record of investing in tree and forest-related projects in other locations, such as Cisco and Paypal.
2. In consultation with Our City Forest (OCF), consider requiring that the sponsorship of future tree planting events reflect the true cost of establishing a new tree, as outlined in the OCF Master Agreement. Further consider encouraging partners that are unable to provide this level of per-tree sponsorship to instead sponsor community maintenance and care of existing trees.

BACKGROUND:

Thank you to the Department of Transportation (DOT) staff for leading the creation of the Community Forest Management Plan and to CalFire for funding this effort. I appreciate my colleagues' comprehensive memorandum, which provides a useful framework for putting San Jose on the path to stopping and ultimately reversing our declining tree canopy. I agree with my colleagues' reflections and recommendations regarding the state of our community forest and would like to offer two small additional recommendations.

First, as we pursue potential funding sources we should include outreach to corporate partners that can supplement our funding. Large employers in San Jose have a vested interest in ensuring

that San Jose residents and workers enjoy the many benefits of a robust urban forest, from cleaner air to improved mental health. Two large companies with long histories in San Jose, in particular, come to mind given their history of working with nonprofits that focus on the benefits of trees: Cisco and Tentree; Paypal and the SankalpTaru Foundation.

Second, I believe we have an opportunity to reduce tree loss and thereby improve the efficacy of new tree planting if we account for the full costs of properly establishing a tree before planting it. According to OCF, newly planted trees require up to 15 gallons of water per week and regular care over the course of approximately 3 years before being sufficiently established to survive with significantly less ongoing care. Requiring pre-funded maintenance care as part of new planting sponsorships will reduce future mortality rates and enable sustainable, long-term tree canopy growth at a lower long-term cost. By reducing new tree failure rates, we will also increase public faith in the CFMP's effectiveness and the value of planting new trees, especially in highly visible park and median strips. Partners who are unable or unwilling to provide pre-tree sponsorship at this higher, more realistic level may have greater impact by focusing on discrete maintenance and care activities.

Thank you again to staff, my colleagues and the many external stakeholders and partners, including OCF, who are actively engaged in expanding and caring for our community forest. I'm grateful on behalf of my children, who I hope will enjoy cleaner air and more summer shade as a result of our efforts.