



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** John Ristow

**SUBJECT:** Master Services Agreement  
with Our City Forest for  
Urban Forestry Services

**DATE:** May 26, 2026

Approved

Date:

6/2/26

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager or her designee to negotiate and execute a sole source On-Call Master Services Agreement with Our City Forest for urban forestry services for a five-year term beginning on or about July 1, 2026, and ending on June 30, 2031, with a total combined not-to-exceed amount of \$4,835,282, subject to appropriation of funds.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

Approval will allow the City of San José to negotiate and execute a master agreement through which the City can continue to partner with Our City Forest (OCF) to deliver urban forestry education, engagement, outreach, events, workforce development, community tree planting projects, tree production, planting, and establishment services in support of the City's Community Forest Management Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

OCF is a San José-based nonprofit that promotes the health and welfare of Silicon Valley residents through urban greening and education. OCF has been the City's main urban forestry nonprofit partner since 1994.

OCF provides a wide array of unique services for the City of San José, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Tree planting and establishment services for trees planted in park strips, medians, neighborhood parks, and City facilities.
- Workforce development through training AmeriCorps service members to be urban forestry specialists who assist the community with tree planting and care needs.
- Organizing volunteers and conducting a minimum of 50 neighborhood tree planting events annually to increase public awareness of the community forest and create community stewardship.
- Education and awareness training about the community forest to local schools, community groups, and individual residents through its Community Nursery and Training Center and its Urban Forestry Education Center at Martial Cottle Park.
- Leveraging funding to obtain additional funding through state and federal grants, and private donors.
- Producing trees for planting that are appropriately acclimated to local conditions.

## **ANALYSIS**

The City has been partnering with OCF through four partnership agreements managed by the Transportation Department, which include an operating grant, an AmeriCorps workforce training matching grant, a nursery facilities grant, and a fee for service agreement, all of which have been renewed annually. OCF also performs work in coordination with the Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department through these agreements. The current four agreements will end on June 30, 2026.

To streamline the administration of the partnership agreements with OCF, the Transportation Department proposes combining the four agreements into one master agreement to increase efficiency. The new single agreement will provide services that include outreach, coordinating tree planting and educational events to engage residents to support tree canopy expansion in all Council districts, with a priority focus on neighborhoods identified through the state's equity framework, operating an AmeriCorps workforce training program, and meeting the Community Forest Management Plan goal of planting and establishing 2,000 trees per year in City-maintained areas.

OCF also provides young tree care services, technical assistance, volunteer recruitment, project management, tree cultivation, fund development, and grant administration activities. To accomplish these goals, the City requires a local, accessible tree vendor with a reliable stock of City-approved trees acclimated to the San José environment and intends to use \$420,000 of the funds awarded by the U.S. Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act grant to purchase trees to be grown in a nursery managed by OCF.

OCF is uniquely equipped with the expertise and infrastructure to provide community planting and community forest education in San José. This infrastructure includes:

- The Community Nursery and Training Center, which is a valuable community resource with a full cultivation operation for trees and shrubs, while also serving as a hub for greening resources, volunteer opportunities, and community education.
- The educational center and arboretum at Martial Cottle Park, through which OCF conducts educational events engaging school students, community members, and neighborhood groups.
- A nursery near the San José Mineta International Airport where trees are grown and acclimated to the San José environment for future planting events.
- The nation's first AmeriCorps program dedicated to urban forestry, providing workforce training for more than 18 years to generations of environmental stewards and community leaders.

OCF operates as the City's sole service provider because no other organization currently exists that has equivalent infrastructure or can provide equivalent services. Since its founding, OCF has planted more than 80,000 trees and trained over 650 AmeriCorps service members to support and sustain this work. Operating the partnership through one Master Service Agreement will streamline the administrative work required of City staff, so time can be refocused on accomplishing the goals of the Community Forestry Management Plan.

### **Climate Smart San José Analysis**

The recommendation in this memorandum aligns with multiple goals in the Climate Smart San José and Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan by facilitating the reduction of energy use consumption, sequestering carbon, and facilitating job creation within city limits.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

The Transportation Department provides ongoing evaluation of the partnership and agreements with OCF and provides periodic reports regarding urban forestry topics to the Transportation and Environment Committee.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

The total of \$4,835,282 is recommended for the agreement, against which service orders will be issued for urban forestry outreach, workforce development services, tree production, planting and establishment services, and various other urban forestry services for the initial term. These service orders are to be funded by the General Fund, the Construction Excise Tax Fund, tree mitigation fees, and Community Forest Investment Project funding. It is estimated that \$582,000 will be spent with OCF for Fiscal Year 2026-2027.

**BUDGET REFERENCE**

The table below identifies the fund and appropriations to fund the contract recommended as part of this memorandum.

Fund #	Appn. #	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation	Amount for Contract	2026-2027 Proposed Operating Budget Page*	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
001	0512	DOT Non-Personal/Equipment	\$25,163,717	\$460,000	766	N/A
001	207H	Tree Mitigation	TBD	\$748,000	TBD	N/A
001	229Q	Inflation Reduction Act – Urban Forestry Grant	\$1,762,686	\$420,000	808	N/A
001	2016	Subdivision Tree Planting Park Trust Fund	TBD	\$149,000	TBD	N/A

*\*The 2026-2027 Proposed Operating Budget was released on May 2, 2026. The budget is scheduled to be reviewed on June 9, 2026, and adopted on June 16, 2026, by the City Council.*

Fund #	Appn. #	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation	Amount for Contract	2026-2027 Proposed Mid-Biennial Capital Budget Page**	Last Budget Action (Date, Ord. No.)
465	7566	Urban Forest Management (CIP)	\$100,000	\$100,000	300	N/A

*\*\*The 2026-2027 Proposed Mid-Biennial Capital Budget was released on April 27, 2026. The budget is scheduled to be reviewed on June 9, 2026, and adopted on June 16, 2026, by the City Council.*

**COORDINATION**

This memorandum was coordinated with the City Attorney’s Office, City Manager’s Budget Office, Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department, and the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City Council Agenda website for the June 16, 2026 City Council meeting.

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**BOARD, COMMISSION, COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

No board, commission, or committee recommendation or input is associated with this action.

**CEQA**

Categorically Exempt, File No. ER24-086, CEQA Guideline Section 15301(h) Existing Facilities.

**PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

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JOHN RISTOW  
Director, Transportation

For questions, please contact Jennifer Seguin, Deputy Director of Transportation, at Jennifer.Seguina@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 794-6453.