



City Council

Approval of Community Forestry Assistance Grant Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources

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Title

Approval of Community Forestry Assistance Grant Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

The Council Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC) has been providing staff with direction on development of an Urban Forest Strategic Plan; however, LUEC has not had discussion or provided direction on entering into the Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve entering in an Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of using \$10,000 in awarded grant funds to develop an Urban Forest Strategic Plan.

Report

Issue:

The City of Olympia has been awarded a \$10,000 Community Forestry Assistance Grant by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WADNR). Should Council approve the Interagency Agreement with WADNR accepting the grant funds and allowing use of the funds in creation of an Urban Forest Strategic Plan,

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

None- Consent Calendar Item.

Background and Analysis:

Community Forestry Assistance Grant

The Urban Forestry Program has experienced significant funding and staff reductions over the last four years, which have resulted in a decline in urban forestry staff, community services, and management activities. These issues were raised during 2014 budget discussions, and as a result, Council directed CPD staff to develop options for how to structure, fund, and manage or improve the Urban Forestry Program and the City's urban forest.

To help in accomplishing this, CPD applied for and has been awarded a \$10,000 Community Forestry Assistance Grant to be used in developing an Urban Forest Strategic Plan. Funds for the Community Forestry Assistance Grants are provided by the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program and administered through the WADNR Urban and Community Forestry Program.

In order to formally accept the grant funds and for staff to begin work on the Urban Forest Strategic Plan, Council needs to approve entering into an Interagency Agreement with WADNR (Attachment 1).

Urban Forest Strategic Plan

An Urban Forest Strategic Plan provides direction on how to build a sustainable urban forestry program by identifying challenges, understanding existing conditions, establishing key objectives, and developing short and long-term strategies.

A Strategic Plan will provide a fresh look at the current program organization and responsibilities, and will provide City staff and Councilmembers with recommendations for how best to move the program forward in a sustainable way. Specifically, the Plan will address the following key objectives:

- Identify key existing and future challenges;
- Identify existing resources;
- Identify goals, strategies, and priorities;
- Identify the resources needed and potential sources for those resources;
- Provide recommendations for how to organize and structure the Urban Forestry Program; and
- Provide recommendations for short-term and long-term implementation actions

Please see Attachment 2 for a Powerpoint presentation shared by staff for LUEC on April 24, 2014. The presentation describes further what an Urban Forest Strategic Plan is and how it would provide options for how to structure, fund, and manage or improve the Urban Forestry Program.

It is the intent of staff to use the grant funds to hire a professional consultant to work closely with both staff and members of a volunteer advisory committee to develop the Urban Forest Strategic Plan. There is an existing sub-committee of the City's Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) that has provided LUEC with recommendations on moving the Urban Forestry Program forward, and has expressed a willingness to continue to participate in the development of the Strategic Plan.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

An Urban Forest Strategic Plan would have citywide impacts; it could potentially change how the current program is organized, how services are provided to residents, and how trees are managed citywide.

Options:

1. Move to approve entering in an Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources for the purpose of using \$10,000 in awarded grant funds to develop an Urban Forest Strategic Plan.
2. Decline entering into an Interagency Agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources; decline acceptance of the grant funds.

Financial Impact:

Entering into the Interagency Agreement will result in an additional \$10,000 in grant funds towards completion of an Urban Forest Strategic Plan. Declining to enter into the agreement would mean forfeiting the grant funds; staff would need to seek further direction from Council on whether or not to use existing resources to complete the Strategic Plan.