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## **TREE COMMITTEE AGENDA REPORT**

**SUBJECT:** COMMUNITY FOREST PLAN INTRODUCTION

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### **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

Review the City of San Luis Obispo Community Forest Plan and identify discussion item(s) to be placed on a future agenda.

### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

The City of San Luis Obispo adopted the Community Forest Plan<sup>1</sup> on April 4, 2023. The Community Forest Plan's vision is for the City to implement cost-effective enhancement and maintenance of the urban forest, increases public awareness of the value of our community forest, and maximizes its social, economic, and environmental benefits for current residents and future generations.

The mission of the plan is to achieve this vision by working with and empowering city residents and partners to establish innovative, science-grounded goals and strategies to protect, expand, and nurture the City's public tree cover and the associated benefits over the coming decades and collaborating between and within City departments that are involved in urban forest management, as well as between the City and other local stakeholders (e.g., community groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses, utilities, other cities, Cal Poly, other State agencies).

#### **2.1 Existing Programs, Policies and Goals**

The Community Forest Plan highlights programs, policies and goals that are contained in other City documents regarding the urban forest (referenced and summarized below):

- The [General Plan](#) Land Use Element (2014), contains Sustainability policies that call on the City to develop a long-term tree planting program and recommendations to renew and maintain the urban forest.
- The [Parks and Recreation Element Update](#) (2021), also known as the Parks + Recreation Blueprint for the Future: 2021-2041, calls for shading of play areas in part through the use of trees, and devotes a section to the selection of appropriate park trees.

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<sup>1</sup> The Community Forest Plan is published and available on the City's website at the following link: <https://www.slocity.org/home/showdocument?id=34110>

- The [City's 2020 Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery \(2020 CAP\)](#) called for rejuvenation and expansion of the City's urban forest through the planting of 10,000 new trees by 2035. Subsequently, the City Council incorporated this proposal into the City's 2021-2023 Major City Goal for Climate Action, Open Space & Sustainable Transportation

### 2.2 Financial Planning

In previous Financial Plans, the has City committed to engaging in projects and initiatives that favored accrual of the many benefits provided by trees, including shading and cooling, beautification, habitat, stormwater retention, and carbon sequestration. The Community Forest Plan identifies that the City should continue to focus efforts on completing urban forest-related tasks, as staff and budget allow, that will contribute to the adoption of an integrated, holistic, and equitable approach to urban forestry.

### 3.0 IMPLEMENTATION

The Community Forest Plan has four main goals:

1. Maintain and expand the urban forest,
2. Promote sustainability and climate resilience,
3. Pursue collaboration, and
4. Emphasize equity.

The plan involves multiple City departments and external partners, with a team-based approach for implementation that includes public outreach, equity considerations, and collaboration with local stakeholders and volunteers.

The Community Forest Plan Implementation section outlines the goals, objectives, and actions for San Luis Obispo's urban forest. A full list of objectives can be found on Table 5, the [Community Forest Plan](#) Implementation Matrix, on pages 36-47. Below are some general themes from the matrix.

- The City actively encourages participation in tree planting and stewardship, tree preservation and protection and increased public awareness of the value of our community forest in order to maximize its social, economic and environmental benefits for current residents and future generations.
- The City of San Luis Obispo aims to plant 10,000 new trees by 2035 as part of the 10 Tall Initiative.
- Objectives include accruing and analyzing data, strengthening maintenance practices, increasing new plantings, re-examining tree removal policies, and focusing on sustainability.
- Metrics such as average tree diameter, height, condition, and percent canopy cover will be used to track progress.

## Item 4b

- The City will use adaptive management to remain flexible and adjust strategies as needed over time.

### 4.0 NEXT STEPS

Review the [Community Forest Plan](#) and identify discussion item(s) to be added to a future agenda.