

MEMORANDUM



PARKS AND RECREATION

DATE: May 16, 2023

TO: Justin Hess, City Manager

FROM: Marisa Garcia, Park, Recreation, and Community Services Director
VIA: Michael Del Campo, Landscape and Forestry Services Superintendent
By: Megan Wilke, Administrative Analyst II

SUBJECT: Budget Discussion Paper: Information on Burbank's Reforestation Strategy

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on Burbank's Reforestation Strategy, per Council Member Takahashi's request at the May 9, 2023, City Council meeting.

A successful urban forest requires diversity, maintenance, and a planting strategy that considers a number of criteria, including growth rate, disease and pest vulnerability, drought tolerance, size, and root system. The City's commitment to preserving its 33,000 tree urban forest remains strong, as evidenced by its involvement with Tree City USA and the ongoing investment in the Department's successful tree maintenance program. For over 46 years, the Department has been a proud member of the Tree City USA program. Park's involvement with Tree City USA is a testament to the City's commitment to preserving its urban forest, a recognition that highlights the Department's dedication to sustainable urban forestry, and provides opportunities for the City to access resources and expertise to improve its tree management practices.

Furthermore, the Department's tree maintenance program is an ongoing effort to ensure the health, safety and longevity of the City's existing urban forest. This program includes regular pruning and trimming of trees to remove dead or diseased branches and to maintain the proper shape and size of the trees. The Department's Forestry Division also conducts regular inspections of its trees to identify any potential hazards or health issues. In addition to routine maintenance, Forestry also has a robust tree planting program to ensure the continued growth and health of its urban forest. Most recently in 2019, the Department in partnership with Burbank Water and Power and the Community Development Department launched Plant for a Greener Burbank, a tree planting initiative. Through these efforts, Burbank maintains a vibrant and healthy urban forest that provides numerous benefits, including improving the community's health, aesthetic and quality of life.

Over the past several years, the science of urban forests has evolved. Incorporating climate resilience into tree planting and urban forest management helps improve the adaptive capacity of a community's tree canopy. With ongoing environmental changes, the Department understands that certain tree species will likely perform better in Burbank. Moreover, despite the Department's best efforts, climate changes and water restrictions have impacted the City's existing urban forest. Most recently, the Department observed significant impact to trees citywide from recent heavy rain and high winds on February 28.

To proactively maintain the City's tree canopy for future generations, the Department's long-term plan includes a citywide Reforestation Strategy. The Reforestation Strategy includes strategically planting, removing, and replanting trees. While the decision to remove trees in our community is difficult, prior to any tree removal, the Department diligently identifies alternative treatments and solutions as well as balances the tree's remaining useful life expectancy with the potential benefit for replanting. Notably, the Department will replant more trees than it removes. Unfortunately, sometimes adequate alternative solutions are not available, and trees will need to be removed. However, the Department understands the importance of replanting a beautiful, healthy and resilient urban forest that prioritizes community wellbeing. The Reforestation Strategy will improve the overall ecological health of the area, enhance the City's aesthetic appeal, and provide numerous benefits such as: reducing air pollution; saving energy and reducing energy costs; reducing stormwater runoff; reducing daytime temperatures; minimizing noise pollution; and providing habitat for wildlife and native species.

As the first step in the Reforestation Strategy, the Department will proactively notify all impacted residents and business owners of the tree removal and replanting strategy, which consists of approximately 125 trees citywide, including mature Aleppo Pines. The estimated cost is \$770,000 including removal, replacement, and planting. This effort is expected to commence in July 2023 with an anticipated completion of June 2024.