



Funding plan for Urban Forest Management Program

Summary: We are requesting FY 2006-2007 funding for an urban forest management program. Information about each component is contained in the cTc's *Urban Forest Management Program for the City of San Antonio*.

Program component	Funding	Source
Evaluation of existing urban forest	\$67,000	General fund
Evaluation of tree preservation ordinance	\$35,000	Tree mitigation fund
Evaluation of tree planting programs	\$8,000	Capital improvements projects
Trend projections and formulation of tree planting/preservation goals	\$6,000	General fund and capital improvements projects
Establishment of Municipal Urban Forester position	\$30,000	General fund (matching funds from Texas Forest Service)
Establishment of Citizens Advisory Committee	\$4,000	General fund
Total	\$150,000	

Urban Forestry Program Synopsis

Goal: Establishment and maintenance of 35% overall tree canopy cover for the City of San Antonio by 2021.

The Urban Forestry Program includes the following components.

- Evaluation of existing urban forest through measurement of tree canopy over the metropolitan area, characterization of trees on undeveloped land, and an inventory of public trees.
- Evaluation of the Tree Preservation Ordinance by measuring completed development projects.
- Evaluation of tree planting programs.
- Trend projections and formulation of tree planting/preservation goals.
- Establishment of a full time Municipal Urban Forester position.
- Establishment of a Citizens Advisory Committee to oversee urban forestry programs.

Urban Forest Management Program for the City of San Antonio

Summary: This is a six-component program for managing San Antonio's urban forest. Implementation of the program is necessary for protecting air quality, water quality, quality-of-life, and the health of the people of San Antonio. Our urban forest is essential infrastructure that benefits the health and economy of the City. Consequently, funding for the program should be included in bond packages.

Goal: Establishment and maintenance of 35% overall tree canopy cover for the City of San Antonio by 2021.

The program's six components are:

1. Evaluation of existing urban forest
2. Evaluation of tree preservation ordinance
3. Evaluation of tree planting programs
4. Trend projections and formulation of tree planting/preservation goals
5. Establishment of Municipal Urban Forester position
6. Establishment of Citizens Advisory Committee

Evaluation of existing urban forest

In order to properly manage the urban forest, an up-to-date evaluation must be made of the existing resource. Total projected cost \approx \$67,000

Regional measurement of tree canopy cover

Tree canopy cover over the metropolitan area, and its rate of decline, should be measured from recent satellite imagery. Similar studies were conducted in 2002 and 2003 by American Forests. Because the resource changes rapidly, the study must be updated every few years. Projected cost \approx \$27,000

Partners: CPS Energy, American Forests, UTSA, Alamo Forest Partnership, SAWS.

Characterization of trees on undeveloped land

A random sampling of trees on undeveloped land should be made to characterize the range of sizes, species, canopy coverages, and stocking densities typically encountered. Such information is invaluable for evaluating preservation standards and projecting canopy cover on completed development projects. Projected cost \approx \$20,000

Partners: TX Forest Service

Inventory of public trees

Continue existing program to evaluate and inventory public trees. Projected cost \approx \$20,000

Evaluation of Tree Preservation Ordinance

Tree canopy cover will be measured on completed development projects.

Projected cost ≈ \$35,000

Three different project categories will be analyzed:

1. Exempt projects
2. Projects complying with 1997 TPO
3. Projects complying with 2003 TPO

Canopy cover will be measured on current aerial photographs of all such projects. A database will be created describing:

1. Pre-development tree canopy cover, and
2. Post-development tree canopy cover, and
3. Preservation percentages from tree preservation plans.

Partners: Citizens Tree Coalition

Evaluation of tree planting programs

An assessment of all significant local tree planting programs will be made. The evaluation will quantify tree planting and project the expected future canopy cover to be created.

Projected cost ≈ \$8,000

Partners: TX Forest Service, CPS Energy, Alamo Forest Partnership, SAWS.

Trend projections and formulation of tree planting/preservation goals

Based on information from the preceding evaluations, urban forest and tree canopy trends will be modeled and projected. These projections will be used in formulating revisions to the tree ordinance and determining the scope and magnitude of tree planting programs.

Projected cost ≈ \$6,000

Partners: Citizens Tree Coalition, TX Forest Service

City of San Antonio Municipal Urban Forester position

Establish a full time position of Municipal Urban Forester for the City.

Projected cost ≈ \$30,000/year (cost based on matching funding from Texas Forest Service)

Duties will include:

1. Management of public tree resources
2. Ongoing evaluation, modeling, projection, and benchmarking of City, SAWS, and CPS tree programs including tree preservation ordinance.
3. Ongoing evaluation of urban forest resource
4. Citizens Advisory Committee coordination.
5. Serve as a resource for information on urban forestry research and other urban forestry programs.
6. Development of cost/benefit information on urban forestry projects.

Partners: TX Forest Service, CPS Energy, SAWS.

Citizens Advisory Committee

Establish a broad-based committee to oversee urban forestry programs and advise City Council and staff. The Citizens Advisory Committee should have up to 20 members and each member should be committed to the 35% tree canopy goal. They should serve in an advisory role with regard to the Tree Ordinance provisions and programs to plant trees to increase canopy.

The Citizens Advisory Committee will work with City staff to find reasonable compromises between competing interests. They should serve as liaisons to community and business groups that will promote tree preservation and planting. A strong effective Chair who could bridge the gap between competing interests is a necessity for success.

The current Tree Ordinance amendments should be postponed until the Citizens Advisory Committee has had a chance to make recommendations to the City Staff.

Projected cost \approx \$4,000/year

Partners: Alamo Group of the Sierra Club

Proposal for a City of San Antonio and Texas Forest Service Partnership with respect to a Municipal Urban Forester

Our mission is to create self-sustaining urban forestry and tree care programs in Texas communities.

The aforementioned mission statement reflects the Texas Forest Service's belief that the best way to serve the citizens of the State of Texas and its forest resources is to develop sustainable community forestry programs within each community. A sustainable community forestry program is one where "...naturally occurring and planted trees in cities are managed to provide the inhabitants with a continuing level of economic, social, environmental and ecological benefits today and into the future" (USDA Forest Service). To *manage* the urban forest *today and into the future* requires uniformity of purpose and a comprehensive management scheme.

Currently, several municipal departments as well as the quasi-independent municipal utilities address some portion of the urban forest but little is done in a cooperative and comprehensive manner. In other parts of the country, most notably the Northeast, Midwest, and California, municipalities have created Forestry Departments, usually within the Public Works Departments although not exclusively so, to manage and provide a "uniformity of purpose" for the municipality's urban forest. Although the Texas Forest Service views this as the ideal and ultimate goal, we realize that a professional forester, serving in a position where he or she can affect change, is a more realistic goal. To that end, the TFS will offer to the City of San Antonio the opportunity to submit a Partnership Grant application well beyond the normal grant deadline for the purpose of employing a professional urban forester.

Due to the somewhat unusual nature of the offer, the TFS is willing negotiate some of our grant provisions, although adherence to all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations is, of course, mandatory. Possible negotiated provisions include:

1. A grant amount in excess of the current maximum \$30,000.00
2. The grant period would still be 12 months but would not adhere to the standard October – September cycle year.
3. Reauthorization submittals are required but multiple year contracts may be discussed.

As administrator of these public funds, the Texas Forest Service has an obligation to ensure that the grants efficiently and effectively address our mission statement and "four core elements", i.e. a professional urban forester/arborist, a public tree ordinance, an inventory/basic assessment, and a tree advocacy organization. Any grant submission should address these core elements. Also, because of our long history of interaction with the City of San Antonio, the TFS recommends that certain objectives should be pursued and be reflected in the body of the grant submission.

TFS recommended objectives:

1. As a major US city, San Antonio must hire a qualified professional urban forester with a minimum of 5 years municipal experience. It should not settle for anything less.
2. The urban forester must be located in a position to affect change. A possible position would be an ombudsman figure located within the mayor or city manager's office. Another option is as a manager level position within the Public Works Department or Environmental Services Department.
3. The duties of the urban forester must focus on **public** trees, i.e., right-of-way, median, drainage, park, etc.

In a similar fashion, the TFS requires that a grant submission offer a set of desired outcomes or products. The TFS recommended products are:

1. A municipal tree ordinance that will satisfy the requirements of San Antonio becoming a Tree City, USA
2. A basic assessment of San Antonio's urban forest
 - a. An inventory (may be complete or sample)
 - b. Assess all current urban forest programs by city departments and utilities
 - c. Establish basic goals for a future program

The Texas Forest Service hopes that we can assist the City of San Antonio with its goal of producing a better quality of life for its citizens by creating a well-managed, beneficial, and sustainable urban forest. We believe an important step is a professional urban forester.