



## CITY OF ALBANY CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: October 16, 2023  
Reviewed by: NA

**SUBJECT:** City Council Study Session - Street Tree Management Plan (STMP)

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### **SUMMARY**

Council authorized Contract No. C23-64 with HortScience | Bartlett Consulting for a Street Tree Management Plan on September 5, 2023. The purpose of this agenda item is for Council to receive a summary of intended next steps, as well as for Council to provide feedback and any preliminary policy guidance on the development of the Plan.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council receive information regarding the Street Tree Management Plan and provide feedback and any preliminary policy direction on the Plan.

### **BACKGROUND**

As discussed in the City of Albany's 2035 General Plan, there is an overall vision for the City to be a leader in sustainability and local resilience. In part this includes evaluating areas in the City for carbon sequestration and enhancement of tree canopy, and for potential "green streets" enhancements. The City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), unanimously adopted by Albany City Council in December 2019, outlines key policy measures to meet the City's goal of carbon neutrality by 2045 including the development of a comprehensive Street Tree Management Plan (STMP). The CAAP directs the City to devise and implement a plan that includes, but is not limited to, canopy and planting targets; a planting guide that prioritizes increasing available soil, resilience, and other co-benefits; creating incentives and/or requirements for street tree planting; and retiring trees and addressing unintended consequences such as sidewalk uplifts.

On November 8, 2022, the City Council passed [Resolution No. 2022-113](#), authorizing the execution of a contract with ArborPro for an inventory of all existing street trees and vacant planting sites in Albany. The street tree inventory lays a foundation for the forthcoming STMP and allows the City to better maintain and identify opportunities to expand the City's canopy.

On March 6, 2023, staff presented to City Council a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for consulting services to help the City develop a STMP, which was authorized by Council for release.

The selection process was completed on September 5, 2023 with City Council approval of [Resolution No. 2023-61](#), authorizing the City Manager to execute Contract No. C23-64 with HortScience | Bartlett Consulting for the second phase of preparation of a Street Tree Management Plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

The preservation and enhancement of the City's street trees is a uniquely complicated public investment. In response to input provided at recent Parks, Recreation & Open Space Commission discussions, the plan is expected to include the importance of stakeholder engagement to compose a shared vision of what the community wants the City's tree canopy to become, and the role of the Street Tree Management Plan to help achieve that vision. It is important to note that the Street Tree Management Plan is just a piece of this larger goal but will contribute to an understanding of community needs and public values.

The STMP aims to be a programmatic resource to guide street tree-related decision-making to improve canopy cover along public rights-of-way. Tree placement needs to take into consideration underground, surface, and overhead infrastructure. The safe function of various transportation modes will also be part of the evaluation. In addition to potentially complex location decisions, tree species decisions must also be made; taking into consideration the mix of existing species nearby, soil conditions, tree lifespan, and evolving climate conditions. The plan also addresses the aesthetic importance of street tree selection and placement within the urban design and function of the City. The intersection of urban beautification and forestry will allow the City to utilize the Street Tree Management Plan to provide upkeep and species management, while beautifying streets with greenery.

To meet the goals of the City, HortScience | Bartlett Consulting provided their management overview and approach to preparing the STMP. The consulting team will utilize data collected from the recently completed street tree inventory along with input from residents and stakeholders, to prepare an initial assessment of program challenges, opportunities, and aspirations. This will include consideration of the future context of urban forest management as it pertains to changes in climate. Stakeholder engagement and community outreach will be conducted via commission and committee meetings, public events, on-line information and surveys, and focused smaller group meetings. Additionally, there will be a review of City ordinances/policies and discussion of revisions to reflect community vision. Lastly, the STMP itself will be developed, outlining policies, procedures staffing and funding requirements, performance indicators, as well as strategies for ongoing public education and outreach efforts.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The CAAP identifies the development of a STMP as a priority planning initiative to improve and expand natural systems to promote resilience and carbon storage to offset emissions the City is not yet able to cap. Rising global temperatures continue to escalate the frequency and intensity of extreme heat events, further intensifying the urban heat island effect in vulnerable neighborhoods with little to no canopy cover.

## **SOCIAL EQUITY & INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS**

To ensure long-term sustainability and community resilience, the STMP will propose policies and programs that not only protect and enhance the natural environment, but also produce community benefits such as shade and enhanced urban beautification citywide. The plan will also attempt to address existing disparities in tree canopy coverage and lack of co-benefits for historically underrepresented groups. Lastly, the plan will consider inclusivity measures, including the shared responsibility of maintenance between the city and property owners.

## **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES**

This action helps further City Council Strategic Plan – Goal 1: Advance Climate Action & Adaptation – Identify opportunities to enhance City program for management of street trees.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This contract will be funded using existing funds appropriated for Community Development Department professional services.