



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Michael P. Slevin III, P.E., Environmental Services Director *John G. Parvey*
COPY: Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee; James G. Parvey, P.E. LEED AP, Environmental Services Assistant Division Manager
SUBJECT: Urban Forestry Program Informational Briefing
DATE: August 10, 2016

SUMMARY:

On August 10, 2016 Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability (OEPS) staff will present to the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability Committee a brief history of the City's Urban Forestry Program. The presentation will include details of the new organizational structure within OEPS, national Urban Forest Program benchmarking statistics, and discuss the proposed Urban Forest Management Plan and program level of service.

BACKGROUND:

In spring of 2015 the City of Tacoma's Urban Forestry Program transitioned within the Environmental Services Department from the Environmental Programs Group to OEPS. This transition was made in recognition of the role that all of the City's departments play in the management of the urban forest, as one of the core objectives of the OEPS is to provide policy direction and coordination across the City.

ISSUE:

The City's Urban Forestry Program has roots dating back to 1927 when the first tree ordinances were adopted into Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) regulating tree removals and plantings in the right-of-way (TMC 9.18 and 9.19). The most concerted effort to develop the program occurred in the early 1990s with the development of the first Urban Forest Management Plan for the City (Resolution No. 31309). This multiagency planning effort included stakeholders from the City's Planning and Development Services and Public Works Departments, Tacoma Public Utilities, Metropolitan Parks District and the Port of Tacoma.

In June of 2010 City Council adopted the Urban Forest Policy Element (UFP) of the Comprehensive Plan, which provided policy support for sustainable urban forest management practices (Ordinance No. 27892). The UFP also designated benchmark goals for the City's urban forest, most notably the "30 by 30" goal of achieving 30% canopy coverage by the year 2030. Also in 2010 the program moved into the Environmental Services Department, Science and Engineering Division along with dedicated program funding.

In order to implement and track program objectives set forth in adopted policy documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan and the Environmental Action Plan (Resolution No. 39427), in 2015 the program transitioned into the OEPS. OEPS serves as an umbrella organization, which will help provide support and guidance to all of the workgroups dealing with issues related to urban forestry. This direction, support and a defined level of service will be clarified through the development of a new Urban Forest Management Plan, pending budget approval in the 2017/18 biennium.

ALTERNATIVES: This is an information briefing only. There are no alternatives presented.

FISCAL IMPACT: This is an information briefing only. There are no fiscal impacts.

RECOMMENDATION: This is an information briefing only. There is no recommendation.

