



**THE CITY OF AUSTIN  
URBAN FORESTRY BOARD**

**LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

**Date: 9/19/2012**

**TO: The Honorable Mayor Lee Leffingwell and Austin City Council Members**

**CC:** Marc Ott, City Manager; Burt Lumbreras, Assistant City Manager; Sara Hensley, PARD Director, Greg Guernsey, PDRD Director; Cora Wright, PARD Assistant Director; W. Patrick Fuller, Division Manager-Park Rangers/Forestry; Michael Embesi, City Arborist

**RE: Recommendations for Pilot Program for Prominent Urban Trees**

Pursuant to Austin City Council Resolution 20120426-076, passed on April 26, 2012, which directed the City Manager “to work with staff and the Urban Forestry Board (UFB) to develop a pilot program using the Urban Forest Replenishment Fund and the Planting for the Future Fund to identify, maintain, and preserve prominent trees along transit corridors and in the urban core”, attached is a proposed protocol for the identification, selection, and care process for Prominent Trees in the Austin community.

This proposed process is a result of efforts of the city’s Urban Forestry Board, the community, and city staff including members of the Parks and Recreation and Planning and Development Review departments.

The proposed selection process is recommended as a pilot project to implement the council resolution to aid prominent trees with a high level of contribution to the community. The recommended process will consist of three parts: Identification and selection of candidate trees, compiling of the care needs of the trees, and prioritization of the candidate trees for remediation efforts.

**A. Identification of Candidate Trees for remediation efforts**

**B. Identification of Needs of the Candidate Trees**

**C. Prioritization of Candidate Trees and Implementation of Remediation**

It is also recommended that this process be evaluated by the Urban Forestry Board initially every 90 days and any changes recommended for the process be sent to Council in a report.

Staff recommends that 10 nominated and eligible trees be evaluated as part of the pilot program, provided that the following conditions are met:

1) City legal should review the program and use of public funding to ensure that the program does not violate law,

2) The budget office should review the funding mechanisms and recommend appropriate accountability safeguards, and

3) Staff should evaluate the fiscal impact of administering the pilot program and report that information to City Council. Based on a preliminary review, staff identified some fiscal impacts.