Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 1/1/2014 to 12/31/2014

Urban Forestry Board

The Board/Commission mission statement (per the City Code) **is:**

May study, investigate, plan, advise, report, and recommend any action, program, plan, or legislation which the board determines necessary or advisable for the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal, or disposition of trees and shrubs and other landscaping in public parks, along streets, and in other public areas. Develop and establish a comprehensive urban forest plan for the planting, maintenance, and replacement of trees in parks, along streets, and in other public areas, and submit it to city council for adoption before implementation. See Section **2-1-183** of the City Code for additional duties.

1. **Describe the board's actions supporting their mission during the previous calendar year. Address all elements of the board's mission statement as provided in the relevant sections of the City Code.**
    - Actions related to Austin's Urban Forest Plan:
        - Received approval in January from the Environmental Board.
        - Presented it to City Council in February, and received final approval in March.
        - Recommended that City Council increase the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Urban Forestry annual budget by $500,000 for staff support to implement the plan.
        - Recommended that City Council direct the City Manager to have seven key departments work closely with the Urban Forester on implementation of the plan: PARD, Public Works, Planning and Development Review, Austin Water Utility, Austin Transportation, Austin Energy, and Watershed Protection.
        - City staff provided updates about implementation of the plan at monthly Urban Forestry Board (UFB) meetings in 2014.

- We made the following recommendations to the City Council and/or the City Manager:
    - Recommended that City Council increase annual funding for the care, maintenance, and planting of public trees by $12.5 million from the current $3.8 million to the $16.3 million level need for the recommended level of service in a July 2014 report by staff to City Council in response to Resolution #20130627-070.
    - Developed and recommended a process for implementation of a pilot program for the care and maintenance of prominent trees in the urban core in response to City Council Resolution #20120426-076.
    - Recommended requiring the use of green infrastructure and sustainability incentives within the development of CodeNext.
    - Recommended that an appropriate board be allowed to review and comment on a wildfire protection plan before it is finalized and included in broader land management plans.
- We approved the following plans brought before the UFB:
    - Pease Park Master Plan.
    - Urban Trails Master Plan with specific recommendations to minimize the negative environmental impact that this type of infrastructure has on the urban forest.
- We approved the following funding requests under the Urban Forest Grant Program:
    - Oak wilt suppression project by City Arborist's Office on Rae Dell Avenue for $35,000.
    - Management plan for Lady Bird Lake and Butler Trail by The Trail Foundation for $45,145.
    - Trees of Govalle performance by Forklift Danceworks for $15,000.
- Other activities include:
    - Reviewed the recommendations of the Boards and Transitions Task Force, and agreed with consolidating the UFB and Environmental Board into an eleven-member Environmental Commission, with the provision that expertise in urban forestry and arboriculture be considered in the appointment process.
    - Worked with the City staff to develop recommendations for increasing soil volume and street tree health as directed by City Council Resolution #20131107-041 from November 2013, which was a response to a UFB recommendation from September 2013.
    - Recommended that PARD always have a supervisor trained in tree protection on site when maintenance on public land is being performed within critical root zones.
    - Continued working with city staff and prominent community tree experts on developing both short-term and long-term maintenance needs for the Treaty Oak.

2. **Determine if the board's actions throughout the year comply with the mission statement.**
The Board's actions through the year did comply with the mission statement of the Board

3. List the board's goals and objectives for the new calendar year.

- Continue working with City staff on implementation of Austin's Urban Forest Plan that was approved by City Council in March 2014.
- Finalize development of short-term needs and long-term-maintenance recommendations for the health and integrity of the Treaty Oak. Monitor implementation of these recommendations by PARD staff.
- Work with the Environmental Board to facilitate the transition of UFB functions to the eleven-member Environmental Commission.
- Oversee staff implementation of Prominent Tree Care Program approved by UFB in September 2014.