

RESOLUTION NO. 20140828-081

WHEREAS, Imagine Austin sets forth a goal to maintain and increase Austin's urban forest and prioritize the creation of a green infrastructure program to protect environmentally sensitive areas and integrate nature into the city; and

WHEREAS, the Urban Forest--whether on public or private land--provides broad social, environmental, health, cultural, historic and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, approximately 90% of Austin's urban forest is located on privately owned land; and

WHEREAS, the *Austin Urban Forest Plan: A Master Plan for Public Property*, adopted March 6, 2014, was limited to addressing only those trees on public property, but included a recommendation that a strategy be developed addressing trees located on private property; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Board adopted Resolution No. EB020140416 003C 001 recommending the development of a comprehensive master plan that is inclusive of both public and private trees; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Board Resolution finds that while the city's ability to impact the urban forest on private property through regulation is more limited than with public property, there are still substantial steps the city can take including the provision of education, resources, and incentives to private landowners to guide and assist them in their efforts to maintain and enhance the tree canopy of Austin; and

WHEREAS, Council adopted Resolution No. 20130627-070 pertaining to the value, care and maintenance of public trees and the resulting

report, issued on July 16, 2014, inventoried the 20 tree-related programs and activities and recommended consolidation of the comprehensive efforts of the Parks and Recreation Department's Urban Forestry work on public trees within the City Arborist Program as a part of the FY14-15 budget; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to conduct an initial review of the staff, programmatic, and budgetary resources and needs to accomplish a consolidated tree program and make recommendations as a part of the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide a report to Council not later than 90 days after the approval of this Resolution with findings and recommendations for developing a comprehensive urban forest plan to address the entirety of Austin's urban forest, whether on public or private land, to start in 2015. The report shall include a schedule, work plan, and multi-year budgetary requirements. In preparing the report, the City Manager should:

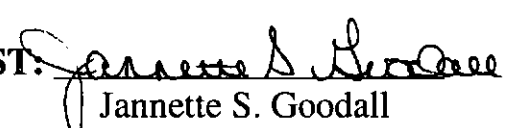
- Direct the City Arborist program to lead the planning process;
- Consider the recommendations in Environmental Board Resolution No. EB020140416 003C 001;
- Consider engaging an independent consultant to lead the planning effort and compile and analyze community input;
- Review the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, Austin Urban Forest Plan: A Master Plan for Public Property*, and other existing City

programs and initiatives, using gap analysis to identify additional efforts needed to integrate these into the report;

- Perform a literature review of urban forest programs and regulations from peer cities and current state of the science for urban forest management;
- Collect data on Austin's urban forest, including previously collected existing data, ensuring accuracy with standard written protocols for data collection, analysis, and quality controls;
- Develop recommendations for a comprehensive annual scorecard that includes both public and private trees (rated separately if appropriate);
- Develop a program to educate the community in urban forest management and provide information regarding the resources available to assist in these efforts;
- As early as possible and to the greatest extent possible throughout the plan, include the community to foster urban forest stewardship and support for the plan; and
- Review applicable City rules and regulations; identify any gaps, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement with a focus not on increasing regulation, but on elimination of disincentives and coordination of various parts of code and criteria manuals to work together towards a healthier urban forest.

ADOPTED: August 28, 2014

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk