CITY OF SALEM

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	Salem 2018 Tree Report			

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. 2018 Salem Tree Report, 2. Salem Street Trees: Sample Inventory

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/25/2019	1	City Council	received and filed	

TO:	Mayor and City Council
THROUGH:	Steve Powers, City Manager
FROM:	Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Salem 2018 Tree Report

Ward(s): All Wards
Councilor(s): All Councilors
Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods
Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Update the Mayor and City Council on 2018 tree planting and maintenance of City-owned trees.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

SUMMARY:

The City is involved in many efforts to increase and maintain City-owned trees on public streets, in public parks, and on other City-owned properties. Increasing and enhancing the urban forest is a key goal of the City's *Community Forestry Strategic Plan*. The attached report is the first annual tree report summarizing these efforts in 2018.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

In 2018, planting and maintaining City trees was performed by three groups: City Urban Forestry, Friends of Trees, and Treecology. Attachment 1 summarizes tree projects conducted in 2018.

The City's Urban Forestry program within the Parks Operations Division of Public Works plants, maintains, removes, and replaces trees along our streets, in parks, and on other City-owned properties. The City contracts with nonprofit organizations, such as Friends of Trees, and service providers such as Treecology, to expand the City's planting capacity.

The City has worked with Friends of Trees for six years, beginning in 2013 with a tree planting event at Hoover Park and Hoover Elementary School. Friends of Trees planting events have been primarily in low-canopy neighborhoods identified in the 2010 Urban Tree Canopy Assessment report.

In 2018, Friends of Trees organized tree planting events at Minto Island Conservation Area, Weathers Park, Eola Ridge Park, Cascades Gateway Park, and Judson Middle School/Woodmansee Park. Planting events in 2018 involved over 1,950 volunteer hours and, in addition to planting trees, provided valuable outreach and volunteer opportunities for the Salem community.

Recognizing the limitations of working with large groups of volunteers and the need to plant even more street trees, in 2018 Public Works began a new five-year planting and tree establishment contract with a private arboriculture company "Treecology." Through this contract approximately 150 trees will be planted each year in City rights-of-way. Trees will be watered and maintained for three years to ensure that the new trees become well-established. After three years, the City will assume responsibility for maintaining the trees.

During the summer of 2018, the City of Salem conducted its first sample street tree inventory. This initial effort was not a full inventory, but a four-percent random sample of the City's total street segments (250 street segments). Trees were identified, measured, and assessed for general condition. Based on this sample inventory, and a 10 percent margin of error, it is estimated that Salem has a total of approximately 71,500 street trees. That number of street trees provides environmental and aesthetic benefits valued at more than $6.7 million per year. Attachment 2 is the street tree inventory report.

Salem also participates in a variety of programs and initiatives that help to promote and enhance the city's urban tree canopy. Initiatives like "Tree City USA" and "Cities4Forests" connect Salem with national and international municipalities and experts.

BACKGROUND:

Healthy cities have healthy tree canopies. Trees make cities more livable, improve business, and encourage people to get outside. Extensive research has been done over the last decade on the multiple economic, environmental, and social benefits that trees provide. Some of these benefits can be quantified such as stormwater reduction, air quality promotion, and carbon sequestration that helps reduce greenhouse gases. Trees also help reduce the urban heat island effect by providing shade and reducing temperatures. Trees provide green infrastructure that grows and increases in value over time. Trees also provide less tangible but equally important benefits, such as natural beauty, a sense of place and identity, increased social interaction, and reduced crime.

In August 2013, Council adopted the *Community Forestry Strategic Plan*. This plan provides specific goals and actions to protect and increase Salem's urban tree canopy. The six goals of the Strategic Plan are:

Goal 1: Protect, increase, and enhance Salem's tree canopy;

Goal 2: Increase education and outreach about tree benefits, community forestry program, tree regulations, and incentives;

Goal 3: Develop support at political, management, and public levels;

Goal 4: Improve City coordination, communication, and codes related to trees;

Goal 5: Develop and implement a Community Forestry Management Plan; and

Goal 6: Establish a stable funding for the Community Forestry Program.

In 2010 Salem had 18.3 percent canopy. One of the key goals of the Strategic Plan was to achieve an overall 23 percent canopy cover. Working toward this goal requires focused efforts on City properties and low-canopy neighborhoods.

Salem is a founding member of Tree City USA from the Arbor Day Foundation and in 2018 celebrated 42 consecutive years of participation. Also in 2018, Salem signed on as a founding member to Cities4Forests, an international tree initiative from the World Resources Institute.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Salem Tree Report: 2018 Summary of Tree Projects
2. Salem Street Trees: Sample Inventory