



Staff Report

File #: 18-417

Version: 1

Date: 9/10/2018

Item #: 3.3a.

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Approval to become a founding member of Cities4Forests.

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

ISSUE:

Shall Council approve the City becoming a founding member of Cities4Forests?

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the City becoming a founding member of Cities4Forests.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

Cities4Forests is a new initiative that focuses on the value and benefits of trees in cities and forests across the globe. It is an international effort spearheaded by the World Resources Institute, Pilot Projects Design Collective LLC, and REVOLVES (a European-based media group). It aims to cultivate awareness and stimulate action on the part of urban residents to recognize the importance of trees and forests to human well-being. In urban areas the "inner forest" is a critical component of a healthy city. City trees improve public health, reduce air pollution, protect water quality, store carbon, and help a city become climate resilient.

Cities4Forests has a goal of integrating trees into the ways cities develop and grow, and of harnessing the value of trees to meet multiple objectives, such as: improving public health, protecting drinking water supplies, and providing benefits for air quality, water quality, and heat island mitigation.

By joining Cities4Forests, the City will be able to access technical assistance such as: (1) how to

implement and expand urban tree programs and increase citizen involvement; (2) how to use trees to address climate action plan goals; and (3) how to take advantage of new technologies for assessment and communication. Members of Cities4Forests will have access to geospatial tools for calculating tree benefits, locating urban “hotspots,” and identifying focus areas for tree plantings. In addition, members will have opportunities to share urban tree program challenges and learn strategies from other members and technical experts. Membership in the Cities4Forests will complement the City’s current urban forestry programs.

Cities4Forests is a voluntary coalition involving mayors’ offices from around the world. Among the cities that have agreed to participate in this effort: New York (NY), Philadelphia (PA), Seattle (WA), Portland (OR), Eugene (OR), Salt Lake City (UT), Sacramento (CA) Oakland (CA), Raleigh (NC), Manchester (UK), Oslo (Norway), Antalya (Turkey), Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and Salvador (Brazil), Bogota (Columbia), Mexico City, Aguascalientes, Merida, Culiacan, and Guadalajara (Mexico), Johannesburg (South Africa), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Amman (Jordan), and Mumbai and Kochi (India).

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Membership to Cities4Forests is free. A letter of authorization endorsing the importance of forests and signed by the Mayor is necessary for membership. A draft letter of authorization is attached to this report (Attachment 1).

Cities4Forests will provide assistance to individual cities as well as connections to relevant technical experts. Working groups will also be convened to allow members to learn, share, and collaborate on forestry topics pertinent to their city. Members agree to engage in at least one of the forest topic areas by 2020, two by 2022, and all three by 2025. It is anticipated that the involvement with the Cities4Forests will require approximately eight hours a month of staff time.

Joining the Cities4Forests will help the City implement the Environmental Action component of the Salem Strategic Plan as well as other aspects of the City’s Climate Action Plan. In addition, membership in the Cities4Forests will help meet several goals in the Community Forestry Strategic Plan, such as increasing public engagement and participation, increasing our tree canopy, and utilizing new technologies for tracking changes and priorities in our urban forest.

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

Attachments:

1. Salem Cities4Forests Authorization Letter