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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR &  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** David Ferguson  
Interim Director, Public Works

**SUBJECT:** Citywide Tree Inventory and Urban  
Forest Master Plan Update

**DATE:** February 5, 2021

City Administrator   
Approval

Date: Feb 8, 2021

### INFORMATION

#### Purpose

This is an informational report to provide an update on the status of the City of Oakland's Citywide Tree Inventory and Urban Forest Master Plan. This combined project is being performed by a consultant, Davey Resource Group (DRG). The Citywide Tree Inventory is estimated to be completed by February, 2021 and the Urban Forest Master Plan is estimated to be completed by March, 2022.

#### Background

In 2019, the City of Oakland was awarded a grant in the amount of \$970,130 from the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (Cal Fire) to complete a three-part urban forestry project:

- 1) Tree inventory:** All trees in the developed right-of-way, medians, city-owned facilities and within urban parks throughout Oakland are physically inspected, documented, and digitally mapped. Trees in open space, such as Joaquin Miller Park, are not inventoried. A satellite assessment using light detection and ranging (LIDAR) data will measure overall canopy coverage throughout Oakland, supplementing the information collected in the tree inventory. The tree canopy map will include trees on all property types including open space, private property.
- 2) Urban Forest Master Plan (UFMP):** A 50-year management plan for planning and sustaining a healthy urban forest will be developed. The UFMP will make recommendations on what resources are needed to maintain Oakland's urban forest and achieve tree canopy equity goals. This plan will be based off of research of Oakland's current and historical policies and ordinances related to trees (including the Equitable Climate Action Plan, the East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative, the West Oakland Reforestation Plan, and others), urban forestry best management practices, the results of the citywide tree inventory and

urban forest canopy analysis, socioeconomic analyses, air quality analyses, social justice considerations, and additional insights from community members via an equity-focused community engagement process.

3) **Tree planting:** 700 trees will be planted in Oakland census tracts designated as “disadvantaged” by California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment’s (OEHHA) CalEnviroScreen 3.0. To date, City staff and volunteers have planted 190 trees in nine parks: Bella Vista, Carter Gilmore, DeFremery, Lowell, Mandela Parkway, Manzanita, Marston Campbell, Wade Johnson, William Patterson, and Willow.

The contract for the Citywide Tree Inventory and Urban Forest Master Plan was awarded to Davey Resource Group (DRG) in 2019 via a Request for Proposal. DRG has over 25 years of experience working as urban forestry consultants for municipalities and specializes in performing tree inventories and urban forest master plans in California as well as across the United States.

### **Tree Inventory Data Collection Process**

Davey Resource Group project staff consists of arborists certified by the International Society of Arborists who visit and map each tree using a data collection software. Project staff evaluate and document 27 different categories of information per tree, including tree species, trunk diameter, condition, defects, and management recommendations. Project staff also identify locations along streets and sidewalks where there is no tree planted but could be a suitable site for tree planting according to the City’s street tree planting standards. These “vacant” tree planting sites may be used for planning purposes for the City and community members to plant trees in the future. At the time of writing this report, the project staff have inventoried approximately 55,000 street trees, 29,000 vacant planting sites along streets, and 15,000 trees in landscaped parks.

Each DRG project staff member is vetted and audited by Parks and Tree Division staff to ensure consistency and quality assurance. Quality assurance field audits are performed on an on-going basis to ensure that contract specifications for data collection accuracy are being met. DRG project managers meet with Parks and Tree Division staff to review progress and share feedback on a weekly basis.

When the project is complete, this data will be exported as a GIS layer that will integrate into Oakland’s Cityworks asset management software so that the Parks and Tree Division can more efficiently and effectively manage tree-related service requests and work orders during day-to-day operations. By knowing where trees are, where they aren’t, and where new ones can potentially be planted, the City will be better equipped to make strategic planning decisions about Oakland’s urban forest. The forthcoming Urban Forest Master Plan will set the specific goals and strategies by which the urban forest will be managed.

At the time of writing this report, Oakland Public Works has not undertaken the effort to designate each of the approximately 55,000 street trees as either “official” or “unofficial”. However, they are looking into opportunities and best management practices for gathering this information. In the meantime, Oakland Department of Transportation and Oakland Public Works are in communication with each other and have a process to research this information whenever a need regarding tree designation arises.

### **Conclusion**

The Citywide Tree Inventory and Urban Forest Master Plan are intended to measure, quantify, plan, and set policy for Oakland’s urban forest. The completion of the Citywide Tree Inventory and the Urban Forest Master Plan will both be firsts for the City of Oakland. The Parks and Tree Division can provide further information regarding this project upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



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David Ferguson  
Interim Director, Oakland Public Works

For questions, please contact David Moore, Acting Parks and Tree Manager, at 510-615-5852.