



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Jefferson's current community forest management program is young, active and administered by a dedicated and passionate group of staff and volunteers. Since the program's inception just 4 years ago an impressive array of programs has been successfully implemented. In the last 2 years alone, with the leadership and support of city staff, Tree Council volunteers, consulting urban foresters and arborists, the Mayor and City Council, and the community as a whole, the city has completed a city tree inventory (more than 2,500 trees); completed measurements of tree canopy (56 percent) and impervious surface cover (11 percent) across the city; conducted four (4) staff tree maintenance training sessions, three (3) Tree Council development sessions, two (2) park clean-up events, an Arbor Day celebration, and a strategic planning session; completed an assessment of trees on development sites and reviewed provisions of the *Land Use Management Code* to find ways to improve its effectiveness; planted 177 trees on city property for a cost of only \$1,400; and received \$90,240 in grant funding and completed three (3) grant projects. These activities and many more supporting activities have been completed at an expense to the city of less than \$5000!

With a desire to sustain the momentum of the program and to approach management in a more comprehensive and sustainable manner, the city and the Tree Council commissioned the development of this *Sustainable Community Forest Master Plan*. The plan includes both short- and long-term programs and activities. It contains 4 main sections and appendices. After an introduction to the plan in Section 1, a not-so-brief summary of the current state of the community forest and its management is provided in Section 2. Substantial detail has been included so that the new management program described later in the plan can be considered with sufficient context. To guide the city in transitioning from the current state to the vision of a healthy, expansive, and beautiful community forest presented along with long- and short-term goals in Section 3, programs and work plans are outlined in Section 4 which will establish the foundation for the city's program as it moves forward. These programs and work plans address administration, funding, arboricultural standards, community forest information, city tree establishment, new tree maintenance, established tree maintenance, private tree management, and education and outreach.

The Mayor, City Council, City Manager, City Arborist, Jefferson Heritage Tree Council, Main Street Jefferson, Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments, and Jefferson City Schools all have prominent roles to play and responsibilities to meet in community forest management. The city will continue to hire consulting urban foresters and arborists to provide technical expertise and program coordination, and eventually the city will hire a full-time employee to serve as the City Arborist, budgets permitting. Additional recommendations for administration include an annual planning meeting, regular bi-monthly meetings of the Jefferson



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Heritage Tree Council, and expanding the council's voting membership to 11. The council's regular meetings will be attended by city staff and others that work around community trees and will serve as information sharing sessions between community forest management partners.

Improvements in recordkeeping are part of the new administration program so that outcomes can be evaluated against goals and plans to facilitate future planning and budgeting. Regular reporting of tree program activities to the City Manager, Mayor and City Council will continue and eventually be expanded to include an annual state of the trees report.

Funding of the program is addressed in the plan, however, no annual budget requests are proposed as it is difficult to know what constraints will be in place or what opportunities will be available for outside funding when budget requests need to be made. Regardless of these unknown constraints and opportunities the program will rely on three (3) main sources of funding which include the city budget, grants, and donations of cash and in-kind services.

Arboricultural standards and best management practices will be adopted and implemented for all city trees and for trees regulated by the *Land Use Management Code*. The adoption, implementation, and enforcement of these standards are essential to increase tree health and longevity, maintain tree canopy cover, and reduce tree establishment and maintenance costs.

Management will also rely heavily on information gathered about the tree resource during the city's tree inventories and tree canopy cover measurement. Central to the new program is a goal of no net loss of tree canopy cover and the arborist will track tree canopy cover change on city property and attempt to do the same on private property by asking individuals and businesses to voluntarily provide information about changes in their tree canopy online on the city's website.

The city will continue its robust tree planting program, planting a minimum of 125 trees each year along city streets (80), in parks (20), and on school campuses (25). In addition to a goal of maintaining the current level of tree canopy cover, increasing species diversity and 100 percent stocking of street tree sites are long-term goals of the tree establishment program. To double the results of the city's efforts, residential, commercial, and industrial property owners will be asked to match the planting of these trees by planting a tree on their property. If this match program is successful, a minimum of 250 trees will be planted in the city each year.

The implementation of routine tree protection, inspection, mulching, pruning, watering, fertilization, and removal programs, as well as addressing the more immediate maintenance needs identified in the tree inventory, represents a huge increase the workload for city staff. It will take 5 years or more for these programs to become routine and for the workload to stabilize. Getting even the most essential maintenance done will require the involvement of many community partners. City tree maintenance responsibilities are divided between staff from the Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments, Jefferson City Schools, the Jefferson Heritage Tree Council, and a new group of volunteers to be known as "Jefferson Tree Stewards." The tree stewards will be trained to provide specialized training pruning, mulching, and



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inspection for newly planted trees. Eventually 30 tree stewards will be trained and certified to prune and mulch 250 to 400 trees per year to reduce the workload on staff. Residents and businesses will also be asked to help the city in caring for the trees on the right-of-way adjacent to their property by properly mulching them and watering them in times of low rainfall.

In the next 5 years the city will begin to address the maintenance recommendations made during the tree inventory. Each year 30 medium to large street and park trees will be pruned, five (5) will be removed, and one (1) will be cabled and braced. The work will be done by city staff or experienced contractors. Each year 16 medium to large school trees will be pruned, five (5) will be removed, and one (1) will be cabled and braced. The work will be done by city schools staff or experienced contractors. Numerous other maintenance activities will also be scheduled and completed to address tree inventory recommendations, including fertilization, removal of vines and wires from tree branches and trunks, and root collar excavation to remove girdling roots and straps and wire baskets left on root balls at the time of planting.

In the long-term the city will inspect, prune, cable and brace, fertilize, and remove trees as needs are identified. A routine pruning program with a 10-year cycle will be developed. All city trees will be re-inventoried every 10 years, and every 5 years a new tree canopy cover measurement will be completed to determine trends in tree canopy and impervious surface cover change.

The management of trees on new development sites through the *Land Use Management Code* will continue. The recommendations made after the development assessments and *Land Use Management Code* review to improve the effectiveness of the code in achieving the community's vision and goals will be discussed with a stakeholder group after they provide their input a final set of recommendations will be submitted for adoption to the Mayor and City Council. The plan includes the establishment of an environmental fee to pay for the cost of site plan and variance reviews and site inspections by the City Arborist, and the establishment of a tree bank that will accept monies in lieu of trees when reductions in tree density or increases in impervious surfaces are approved. Forfeited landscape bonds will also be deposited in the tree bank.

Finally, the master plan continues the city's ambitious education and outreach program, providing over the years tree care education and information through a variety of media and events to city and city schools staff, landscape, tree service, and construction contractors, Tree Council members, neighborhood associations, commercial and industrial property owners, and the community at large. Of utmost importance will be educating staff and the development community on standards and best management practices for tree care. The city's annual Arbor Day celebration will continue with an expanded multi-event tree festival. A Heritage Tree Calendar will be developed as an educational tool and fundraiser for the Tree Council.

The community forest management program described in this Master Plan is ambitious. It cannot be implemented all at once. If implemented progressively, and diligently, the city will build a sustainable community forest management program and see their community forest vision realized.