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TJ KNIGHT
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February 29, 2024

BPW-2024-0111

The Honorable City Council
Room No. 395
City Hall

GRANT APPLICATION – UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM – BELEAF IN EQUITY PROJECT

As recommended in the accompanying report of the Director of the Bureau of Sanitation, which this Board has adopted, the Board of Public Works recommends that the City Council:

1. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of the Bureau of Sanitation to accept, negotiate, execute, and submit all grant documents, including, but not limited to applications, agreements, payment requests, and amendments, subject to the approval of the City Attorney as-to-form and legality, which may be necessary to receive funding for the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program Inflation Reduction Act Grant for the BeLeaf in Equity Project;
2. AUTHORIZE the Bureau of Street Services' Urban Forestry Division to take over long-term maintenance and operations for all project trees; and
3. AUTHORIZE the Los Angeles City Controller, upon instructions from the General Manager of the Bureau of Sanitation, to create an appropriation up to \$3,000,000 in the Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund 556 or designated front funding source, and to make any technical corrections as necessary.

Fiscal Impact: There is no impact to the General Fund.

Sincerely,

TJ KNIGHT,


Asst. Executive Officer, Board of Public Works

TK:lc



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF SANITATION
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FEB 28 2024


Executive Officer
Board of Public Works
AND REFERRED TO THE CITY COUNCIL

CD: ALL

AUTHORITY TO ACCEPT, NEGOTIATE, EXECUTE, AND SUBMIT ALL DOCUMENTS FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOREST SERVICE URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE BELEAF IN EQUITY PROJECT

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Authorize the Director and General Manager of LA Sanitation and Environment (LASAN) to accept, negotiate, execute, and submit all grant documents, including, but not limited to applications, agreements, payment requests, and amendments, subject to the approval of the City Attorney as-to form and legality, which may be necessary to receive funding for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) grant for the BeLeaf in Equity Project (Project).
2. Authorize the Bureau of Street Services' Urban Forestry Division (UFD) to take over long-term maintenance and operations for all project trees.
3. Request the City Council to authorize the Los Angeles City Controller, upon instructions from the Director and General Manager of LASAN, to create an appropriation up to \$3,000,000.00 in the Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund 556 (ISWWMF) or designated front funding source, and to make any technical corrections as necessary.

DISCUSSION

Trees provide vital human health services in our cities. They improve air quality, provide crucial shade and heat relief to vulnerable communities, encourage active transportation such as walking and bicycling, and often provide the only glimpse of nature in a crowded urban setting. Unfortunately, Los Angeles has severe inequity of tree canopy and green spaces in disadvantaged communities. Hot, barren streets and playgrounds are the daily landscapes of too many Angelenos and without street trees, the most socio-economically impacted neighborhoods in Los Angeles face an uphill battle to have safe, healthy communities. Within the City of Los Angeles, tree canopy is correlated with household income and often disadvantaged communities have very low existing tree canopy. Areas like South Los Angeles, Pico Union, and the north east Valley communities of Arleta and Sun Valley have an especially low tree canopy of 5 - 12% (Tree Canopy Lab) and very high CalEnviroScreen (CES) 4.0 percentile scores. Schools in these highly impacted neighborhoods often have little to no shade around the perimeter of the campus and schoolyards are scorched and sun-blasted, creating an unhealthy and inhospitable environment for children and their families. By taking the transit dependence of disadvantaged communities and the increasing frequency of extreme heat events into consideration, shade inequity becomes a life threatening factor to Los Angeles' most vulnerable residents.

To address the city's shade and heat reduction needs, a significant effort must be made to bring shade equity to the disproportionately impacted communities in Los Angeles. The USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program is offering an IRA grant opportunity for tree planting and related activities, with a priority for projects that benefit underserved populations and areas. BeLeaf in Equity will bring shade and the health benefits of approximately 575 new street trees to neighborhoods that will otherwise remain urban heat islands. This grant project will focus on planting trees around the perimeter of schools in highly disadvantaged, low-canopy communities and the routes families walk to them. By planting 575 street trees, the project will transform low-canopy communities in highly impacted neighborhoods and provide much needed shade equity. To ensure these trees thrive in Los Angeles' arid environment (average rainfall is 12" a year), grant funds would be used to hire local non-profits to water and maintain all 575 new trees for up to five years. This establishment care is crucial to the success of the greening project and would not be possible without the IRA funding.

Proposed Project

On June 1, 2023, LASAN submitted an application to the USDA Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry IRA for \$12,731,758.20 in grant funding. The Notice of Funding Opportunity was released April 12, 2023, which left less than 61 days to submit the application. Therefore, based on the exemption identified in the Los Angeles Administrative Code, Division 14, Grants Program, Section 14.6(b), the application was submitted without requesting Council and Mayor approval.

On September 18, 2023 the USDA released the award information for the IRA grant applications. LASAN was awarded \$3,000,000 for the BeLeaf in Equity project. The project scope has been reduced to fit the new awarded budget.

The grant will fund tree planting labor, estimated 575 15-gallon trees, 445 new tree wells, tree maintenance, and outreach activities. In addition, City Plants will provide 5-gallon trees and tree adoption events at a match value of \$282,350.00, making total project costs equal to \$3,282,350.00

Community Engagement: Local community engagement teams will provide the school staff and students environmental education materials on the benefits of trees in our urban setting. Outreach teams will host a tree adoption event at schools where families and neighbors can adopt free 5-gallon trees to plant in their own yards, thereby extending the green footprint of the project. Outreach teams will also visit the schools and conduct sidewalk information sessions to talk to parents who are waiting for their children about where they would like trees to be planted near school as well as in their own backyards.

Permitting and Inspections: Each tree site will be inspected and permitted by the StreetsLA's Urban Forestry Division. Once approved, the awarded local non-profit planting partners will cut concrete out of the public right-of-way to create new tree wells where needed and then plant and maintain the new 15-gallon street trees.

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Tree Care: Tree establishment care is crucial to the success of the BeLeaf in Equity project. Los Angeles' arid environment with little consistent rainfall requires that every tree receives supplemental water from watering trucks to not only survive but thrive. Every tree planted on BeLeaf in Equity will receive bimonthly to weekly water depending on the season for up to five (5) years.

The \$3,000,000.00 in grant funds will pay for the following:

SCOPE OF WORK	AMOUNT
Contracted services	\$2,445,205.71
LASAN as-needed part-time staff	\$554,794.29
TOTAL	\$3,000,000.00

In summary, LASAN's project will plant 575 15-gallon street trees in disadvantaged and low-income communities in the City of Los Angeles. Newly created tree wells for 445 trees will be planted along major corridors that have high pedestrian and vehicle traffic and currently lack trees. The remaining trees will be planted in residential or commercial districts that have existing open parkways (i.e., areas between the sidewalk and the curb) that can accommodate new trees. Trees will be watered and maintained using project funds for up to five years. Upon project completion, the estimated 575 street trees will become the responsibility of the Urban Forestry Division for long-term maintenance.

Contracted services will include creating new tree wells, procuring and planting 15-gallon trees, and providing water and maintenance for an estimated 575 trees for a period of up to five years. Work done by local non-profits will be invoiced monthly and reimbursed approximately eight weeks later. LASAN expects to invoice the granting agency on a quarterly basis.

PROJECT REVIEW BY DIRECTOR (PRD) APPROVAL

The Project was approved by the PRD on 11/11/2023 for the amount of \$3,000,000.00. On September 18, 2023 the USDA released the award information for the IRA grant applications. LASAN was awarded \$3,000,000.00 for the BeLeaf in Equity project.

STATUS OF FINANCING

There is no impact to the General Fund. Upon grant award, front-funding in the amount of \$800,000.00 is available in the Fund No. 556, Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund, Department No. 50, Appropriation Account No. 50YKKC, BeLeaf in Equity Project. Proceeds from the USDA will be deposited into the Fund No. 556, Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund, Department No. 50, Departmental Revenue Source Code 368407 (Other Federal Grants - General).

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Existing appropriations may change based on available cash balances. Therefore, funds and appropriations will be determined by the Director and General Manager of LASAN.

Funding as of the date of this Board Report has been verified and approved by the Director of the Office of Accounting subject to terms and conditions and cash availability described above.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Contract, including any exhibits or attachments incorporated therein, and in order for the City to comply with its governing legal requirements, the City shall have no obligation to make any payments to the Contractor unless the City shall have first made an appropriation of funds equal to or in excess of its obligation to make any payments as provided in this Contract.

The Contractor agrees that any services provided by the Contractor, purchases made by the Contractor or expenses incurred by the Contractor in excess of the appropriation(s) shall be free and without charge to the City and the City shall have no obligation to pay for the services, purchases or expenses. The Contractor shall have no obligation to provide any services, provide any equipment, or incur any expense in excess of the appropriation, amount(s) until the City appropriates additional funds for this Contract.

(Signature page follows)

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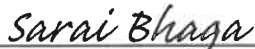
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Respectfully submitted,



BARBARA ROMERO
Director and General Manager
Bureau of Sanitation

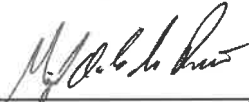
REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY:



Sarai Bhaga (Feb 7, 2024 00:39 PST)

SARAI BHAGA Chief Financial Officer
Bureau of Sanitation
Date: _____

APPROVED AS TO FUNDS:



MIGUEL DE LA PEÑA, Director
Office of Accounting
556/50/50YKKC \$800,000
Date: 2/07/2024

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