

Dear Mayor and Board of Supervisors,

San Francisco has one of the smallest urban forests of any major U.S. city, with canopy coverage of less than 14%, lower even than that of Los Angeles (20%). . Recognizing this problem, our 2014 Urban Forest Plan set a goal of planting 80,000 street trees over thirty years. Yet, eight years after setting that goal, we have only planted 14,086 new trees, fewer than half the amount defined in the Plan. Reaching our goal will require a city-wide effort to plant an estimated 4000 trees per remaining year, an endeavor that our city simply does not have the funding to complete.

As the effects of climate change increase, the impacts of rising temperatures disproportionately affect the neighborhoods with least amount of green space and greatest pollution burden, sometimes termed the “Environmental Justice Communities.” These neighborhoods also lack urban trees, a situation that not only deprives their residents of the tree benefits today, but also makes those neighborhoods less able to cope with the effects of rising temperatures in the future. . It is important to recognize the urban forest is a vital part of San Francisco’s public infrastructure, and is one of the most cost effective options to advance our city’s climate, economic and equity goals.

Just some of the many urban tree benefits:

- **Ecosystem services**, such as providing shade to reduce energy consumption for heating and cooling buildings, intercepting stormwater runoff, adsorbing dust and pollutants from the air, and sequestering carbon.
- **Ecological improvements**, such as increased wildlife habitat and increased biodiversity
- **Economic enhancements**, such as increased activity in tree-lined commercial districts, increased worker productivity in tree-shaded environments, and new workforce development opportunities in urban tree care and arboriculture.
- **Human health impacts**, including a reduction in crime rates and an increase in pedestrian safety, reduced rate of cardiovascular deaths, improved mental health metrics, a reduction in prevalence of low-birth-weight infants, and a reduction in extreme heat experienced and air quality hazards associated with climate change.

Unfortunately, Annual Urban Forest Reports show, since 2014, that the rate of tree removal exceeds the replacement rate. Even if we assume an optimistic 3% annual mortality rate for San Francisco’s street trees, with our current planting efforts (fewer than 3000 trees annually, reported from all entities in the City) we will not only be unable to meet the 2040 street tree goal, but our street tree population will actually have declined by over 10,000 trees. In addition, also reflected in the reports are increasing concerns regarding staffing of urban forestry positions, as well as funding constraints exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. To plant this many trees, we will require wide reaching collaboration between public, private, and non-profit organizations. (Please add table for 5 years tree planted, and 5 years trees removed to show the delta. I believe delta will show tree reduction. As you outline above)

The Urban Forestry Council, is also concerned that because of our City’s perceived wealth and the complexity of our infrastructure, the funding from state and federal grants available for tree planting will become increasingly difficult to secure. **We are requesting that the BOS and Mayor allocate \$30,000,000.00 to begin implementing the city’s Urban Forest and Climate Action Plans tree planting goals during the upcoming budgeting cycle.** The goal is to add 10,000 trees into our sidewalks as soon as possible. The proposal is to open an RFP to contractors and local non-profit groups. The current City system does not have the capacity to reach 4000 trees planted per year by itself. The RFP would help, and provide a boost to the current replanting plan already engaged with DPW, Friends of the Urban Forest and other non-profit City partner organizations.

In the coming months the Council will be creating a report to further illustrate the reasoning behind and the strategies we need implemented to expand and secure our urban forest. The report will include

updated evaluation of the current value of our urban trees, and the practical steps that are needed to get trees in the ground and keep them growing to maturity.

Reasoning: current planting action with all department, and organism will never meet the goal for 30,000 trees in the next 10 years at their current rate.

Planting founding is based on a \$3,000.00 planting per tree, to cover plating, watering, health and replacement, and contract fees. It would add right away 10,000 trees to our sidewalk right away.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.