[Prioritize the Completion of the Urban Forest Master Plan]

Approval of Resolution urging the San Francisco Planning Department to
Prioritize the Completion of the Urban Forest Plan and Identify and Expedite
Funding for Key Portions of the Plan.

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s urban forest is comprised of both publicly
owned and privately owned trees, and;

WHEREAS, Management of San Francisco’s publicly owned trees is
divided among many stakeholders, including private property owners, and;

WHEREAS, Trees positively affect the mental and physical health\(^1\) as well
as the safety of urban residents\(^2\), and;

WHEREAS, Trees can increase revenues in shopping districts by as much
as 12\(^3\), and;

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s urban forest has a structural value of $1.7
billion\(^4\), and;

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s urban forest annually provides the city with
$4.4 million in hydrological benefits\(^5\), $1.3 million in removal of airborne
pollutants, $95K in carbon sequestration benefits, and $3.6 million in total carbon
storage\(^6\), and;

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\(^1\) Urban Nature Benefits: Psycho-Social Dimensions of People and Plants, Center for Urban Horticulture, University of Washington,
\(^2\) The Intersection of Trees and Safety, Landscape Architecture,
[http://www.naturewithin.info/Roadside/Tree&Driver_ITE.pdf]
\(^3\) Trees are worth downtown’s investment, Downtown Idea Exchange,
\(^4\) San Francisco Urban Forest Effect Model, USDA Forest Service,
\(^5\) San Francisco Bay Area State of the Urban Forest Report Final, Center for Urban Forest Research, USDA Forest Service,
\(^6\) San Francisco Urban Forest Effect Model, USDA Forest Service,
WHEREAS, The fragmented management of San Francisco's urban forest has led to overall uncoordinated planning and inconsistent care and negligence, and;

WHEREAS, The inconsistencies in urban forest management have led to costly inefficiencies as well as negatively affecting the health of the city's trees and the benefits derived from them, and;

WHEREAS, The Urban Forestry Council is charged with creating and updating a city-wide urban forestry management plan, and;

WHEREAS, The Planning Department expressed interest to the Urban Forestry Council in refining and further developing the existing Urban Forest Plan, and;

WHEREAS, The Urban Forestry Council passed Resolution No. 006-07-UFC supporting the Planning Department's efforts to create a unified Urban Forest Plan to incorporate into the City's General Plan, and;

WHEREAS, The Planning Department accordingly gained permission from the Board of Supervisors to dedicate $200,000 from their agency budget to hire a consultant team to complete the Urban Forest Master Plan, and;

WHEREAS, Work that began was subsequently halted due to unforeseen budgetary constraints, and;

WHEREAS, The Commission on the Environment believes completion of this work is vital to the long-term health and sustainability of not only the urban forest, but also the overall urban health and sustainability of the City as a whole, now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, The Commission urges the Planning Department to place the highest priority on the completion of the Urban Forest Plan; and be it further,
RESOLVED, The Commission urges the Planning Department to review the work scope and identify key portions of the Plan that can be completed by existing staff, and be it further,

RESOLVED, The Commission urges the Planning Department to expedite the completion of key portions of the plan by dedicating staff time to the plan as well as funding as it become available; and be it further,

RESOLVED, The Commission urges the Planning Department and other agencies to do the necessary economic analysis of having one agency take over the maintenance of all publicly owned trees, including street trees.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was approved at the Commission on the Environment’s Meeting on July 28, 2009.

Monica Fish, Commission Secretary

Vote: Approved (5-0) (2 Absent)
Ayes: Vice-President Gravanis, Commissioners King, Martin, Mok, and Tuchow
Noes: None
Absent: President Pelosi Jr. and Commissioner Wald