

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STATEMENT



Meeting Date: March 11, 2014
To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
From: George Garrett, Planning Director & Debra London, Comm. Services Director
Through: Michael H. Puto, Acting City Manager

Agenda Item: **Resolution 2014-19**, Authorizing The Acting City Manager To Submit An Application For Urban And Community Forestry Grant From The State Of Florida Department Of Agriculture And Consumer Services, Division Of Forestry; And Providing For An Effective Date

BACKGROUND:

As part of the U.S. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Matching Grant Program, funds are available to organizations to develop or enhance their urban and community forestry programs.

Awards are made as 50-50 matching grants (50 percent federal, 50 percent applicant) to local governments in five grant categories. The City will propose matching funds of \$10,000 to be requisitioned from the City's Restoration Fund; this will reflect the maximum grant award allowed. A Resolution of support is required from the local government as part of the grant application; furthermore, if awarded funds specifically for the Category 2 project, the City will be required to enter into an MOU with FDACS for distribution and management of those grant funds; a sample MOU is attached herein.

The following is an excerpt from the City's draft grant application and describes the present scope of the proposed grant activities.

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Proposal

- Describe the local community and current urban forestry program, and role of applicant in that program if a non-profit group:

The City of Marathon is a coastal community located in the heart of the Florida Keys in Monroe County. Incorporated in 1999, the current population is estimated at 8,400. The City of Marathon has not completed any significant, comprehensive urban forestry initiatives, nor does it have a comprehensive community forestry program; it does however have a Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations steeped in environmental stewardship. The purpose of this grant application is to initiate such programs in the City; the intent is to begin with a strong base of knowledge in order to implement effective community forestry programs moving forward.

- Previous U&CF Grants received by the applicant. When were they implemented and what did they accomplish?

The City was awarded funds under this grant in 2008 but the grant was modified to tree planting and no Master Plan was ever completed; it is the intent at this time to remedy this situation.

- Describe the goals and objectives of this project:

The project includes 3 of the defined Categories:

Category 1 – Local Government Program Development or Improvement.

The goals for the Category 1 project can be summarized as follows:

1. Completion of a tree inventory for all public property within the municipal limits.
2. Completion of an associated Master Plan for inventoried trees within the municipal limits.
3. Revision and upgrading of the current City Tree Ordinances
4. Establishment of an Arborist training program for City staff responsible for management of the City's trees.

Category 2 – Demonstration or Site Specific Projects

The goals for the Category 2 project can be summarized as follows:

1. Install and maintain endangered Keys Thatch Palms along the entryway at Oceanfront Park.
2. Install and maintain 5 specimens of Heritage Canopy Trees at Oceanfront Park.

Category 4 – Information and Education

The goals for the Category 4 project can be summarized as follows:

1. Design, purchase and install up to 5 educational signs to be placed among Heritage Canopy Trees at Oceanfront Park. Signs will be installed to accommodate mature growth of installed trees.

- Describe how this project will help to develop and improve this program in the long-term:

This project will provide the necessary data, inventory and analysis, strategic plan and educational component for a successful urban forestry program for the City of Marathon and its residents. The program will provide for education of City employees, who can then disseminate their knowledge to citizens in the community through their daily interactions. The project will include a site specific planting project including educational information in demonstration of the City's commitment to its new program.

- Describe why these funds are needed to complete this project:

The City's budget is primarily used for fire and police, beach, parks and wastewater facilities operations and management. Grant funds are necessary to fund projects of this nature since there is a limited budget for non-operational items and staff is taxed with day to day operations of the City. Due to Departmental budget priorities and limitations, a City-wide tree survey and associated Master Plan cannot be completed by current City staff; contracting a consultant is deemed the most efficient manner to reach this goal. Similarly, education and training of current City employees responsible for the management of the City's urban forest cannot be effectively completed by the single, City Arborist on staff in the Planning Department; a more regimented and comprehensive training program requires grant funds in order to be coordinated effectively. Finally, some goals of the project can be matched with in-kind services; these include revision to the City's Tree Ordinance and participation in the proposed planting project.

- For a tree planting: Describe what species are being planted and why. How will they be installed and maintained (be brief and concise, but complete):

Only native species will be planted due to lower overall maintenance and increased chance of long term, success on site. Soil tests will determine the best trees for particular locations; however, the proposal includes planting of Gumbo Limbo, Mahogany, Shortleaf Fig, Pigeon Plum, Jamaican Dogwood, Cabbage palm as well as the endangered Keys thatch palm. Soil preparation, planting and all necessary staking will be completed in accordance with ISA standards and under the close supervision of the City's ISA certified

Arborist. Maintenance will be ongoing and will be completed by City Public Works personnel also under the supervision of the City's certified Arborist.

- What environmental or educational value will the community derive from this project?

The proposed tree inventory will provide data to facilitate a systematic approach to the removal of invasive exotics on public property, in furtherance of the City's Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies. This inventory will also include ISA recognized basic tree risk assessments for each tree which will help facilitate work crew efficiency, hazard reduction during storm events and effective future monitoring and management of the urban forest and canopy coverage goals.

Complimentary to the tree inventory, a Master Plan will identify, quantify and analyze the ecological benefits of the current urban forest through utilization of the i-Tree software suite of products. The Master Plan will identify proposed improvements and planting opportunities for the City that would optimize ecological benefits and services. The Master Plan is proposed to include a section on tree benefits and ecological services, development of planting diagrams, pruning standards and guidelines as well as a comprehensive list of grant/funding opportunities for the City to pursue into the future to ensure viability and improve the value of the urban forest.

The City proposes Arborist training and certification for 2 City employees responsible for tree maintenance and trimming. They will receive training and the opportunity to become an ISA certified Arborist. It is anticipated that this investment will continue to reap benefits into the future as these employees educate themselves, their colleagues and the community on tree industry best management practices.

The City of Marathon has not updated its current Tree Ordinance since 2007. The current Tree Ordinance is a vestige from the original Monroe County Ordinances and may no longer be the most efficient means of furthering the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Ordinance is not consistent with model ordinance guidance for small communities. Revision of the Ordinance will further protect and enhance the City's urban forest through up to date guidance and regulations.

- What steps have been taken to carry out this project in a cost effectiveness manner?

The project proposes effective use of in-kind services from City Staff to compliment the overall project goals. The project goals, deliverables and overall timeline have been optimized for cost effectiveness and efficiency, ensuring little to no time lags or inefficient overlaps of critical tasks. Finally, appropriate and critical background data analysis will be completed that will aid the consultant in completion of their project deliverables.

- How will this project increase citizen involvement and support for the Community's Urban Forestry program in the long term? What evidence of community support for this project can be produced?

This project will increase involvement and support through public advertising of the project's initiatives. The City Council has offered support of this project through Resolution 2014-XX. Other community organizations have provided letters of support for this project and the City believes these represent a healthy cross section of the community necessary for effective implementation of the project.

- How will this project be publicized in the local community?

Publicity in the community will consist of regular updates to the Community Image Advisory Board, Planning Commission and City Council via advertised agenda items. Outreach to local press will garner significant coverage through press releases in local newspapers, government access television and the radio. Finally, updates on the City website and presentations to local citizen groups upon request will be offered. Finally, the tree planting project(s) at Oceanfront Park will be incorporated into a publicly advertised Arbor Day or Earth Day event.

Additionally, the site specific planting projects at Oceanfront Park will be advertised on site through the 5 educational signs placed among the Heritage Canopy Trees at Oceanfront Park; this will serve as a lasting reminder of the impact this project has to the community.

- Tree City or Tree Campus USA certification and growth award, last year current?

The City intends this project to be the genesis toward a Tree City designation in the near future and plans on holding complimentary annual Arbor Day celebrations, Earth Day activities and related event opportunities. The intent is to ingrain an undercurrent of community forestry stewardship into the community at large and set an example to tourists and visitors to the City.

- Will a Certified Arborist(s) or a graduate forester from an accredited four-year Bachelor of Science in Forestry program oversee this project? If not, who will provide oversight and what are their credentials?

Kevin Sullivan, City Planner and ISA certified Arborist (FL-5342A) will provide oversight to consultants and City staff responsible for deliverables. Mr. Sullivan has over 5 years of experience in Urban Planning and Community Forestry. He is a graduate of Stetson University, where he earned a double major in Environmental Science and Biology. He has been a certified Arborist in the State of Florida since 2004.

- What new partnerships will the project create or encourage?

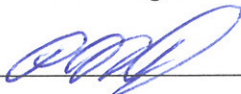
The City intends this project to create stronger partnerships and tree initiatives between the City and the various arboriculture related stakeholders identified as part of this program's outreach.

CONSISTENCY CHECKLIST:

	Yes	No
1. Comprehensive Plan	---	---
2. Other	---	---
3. Not Applicable	---	---

FISCAL NOTE:

Grant award will require appropriation of matching funds.

Approved by Finance Director:  3.6.14

RECOMMENDATION: Council Approve Resolution 2014-19

Sponsored by: Puto

**CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA
RESOLUTION 2014-19**

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, AUTHORIZING THE ACTING CITY MANAGER TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION FOR URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANT FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES, DIVISION OF FORESTRY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that trees constitute an important part of the City's environmental, social and economic community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Marathon (the City) desires to apply for a Florida Urban and Community Forestry Grant which would provide monies in which to help fund the Marathon Comprehensive Urban Forestry Program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, THAT:

Section 1. The above recitals are true and correct, and

Section 2. The City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager to apply for a Florida Urban and Community Forestry Grant to obtain grant funds to help fund the Marathon Comprehensive Urban Forestry Program.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption and shall be filed with the City Clerk.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA, THIS 25th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2014.

CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA

Dick Ramsay, Mayor

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Diane Clavier, City Clerk

**APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY FOR THE USE
AND RELIANCE OF THE CITY OF MARATHON, FLORIDA ONLY:**

City Attorney