June 12, 2017

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT GRANT APPLICATION FOR THE 2016-2017 ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT MITIGATION PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein, authorization to apply for grants for tree plantings, is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304(b) (Minor Alterations to Land—New Landscaping); and

2. Adopt a resolution authorizing submittal of a grant application to the Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program for the planting of trees at various locations along City streets, City parks and City facilities.

BACKGROUND:

The California Natural Resources Agency is accepting applications for the Environmental Enhancement Mitigation (EEM) Program 2016-2017 grant cycle. The EEM Program was established by the Legislature in 1989 and amended on September 26, 2013. It offers $7 million each fiscal year for grants to state, local, federal and nonprofit organizations.

Eligible EEM projects must mitigate the environmental impacts of 'Related Transportation Facilities' (RTF) as defined by the grant guidelines. Through the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) grant program, the Natural Resources Agency awards and administers funding for projects designed to offset vehicular emissions of carbon dioxide through the planting of trees and other suitable plants. For the purposes of this grant the 710 freeway widening project was identified as the RTF. Related to the 710 freeway project, in 2007, the Department of Public Works completed the Raymond Avenue widening project, which added other improvements that directed vehicular traffic onto Raymond Avenue rather than to residential streets. An increase in vehicular trips as a result of the RTF, which may contribute adverse

impacts to the environment, may be mitigated through city-wide tree planting through the EEM program.

The Department of Public Works is requesting up to $500,000 in funding to offset increased emissions by planting trees in parkways, parks and by facilities throughout the City. Each planting effort is minor, consisting of a small quantity of trees planted in a small area. The work is limited to planting trees only. No existing trees are removed as part of this program.

The Public Works Department, Parks and Natural Resources Division has been awarded these funds 14 times since the inception of the EEM Program grant in 1990.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The EEM Program grant application is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to improve, maintain and enhance public facilities and infrastructure, support and promote the quality of life and local economy, and ensure public safety. The application is also consistent with the Green City Action Plan, Action 18 to improve air quality.
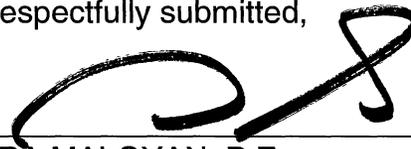
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The actions proposed herein are an application for funding that anticipates the planting of trees in parks, on public streets, and City facilities. This action is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and specifically subsection (b) (New Landscaping), in that the tree additions are minor in scope and do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact as a result of this action. There are minor costs associated with the preparation of the grant application. The City has the potential to gain up to $500,000 to enhance the urban forest through the EEM Program grant. There is no matching funds requirement for this grant program. If the grant is awarded, the Department of Public Works will return to Council to appropriate the funds to the proper budget account.

Respectfully submitted,

ARA MALOYAN, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:

Michael King
Program Coordinator

Approved by:

STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachment A - Resolution