



Legislation Text

File #: 1185-2021, **Version:** 1

Background: This ordinance authorizes the Director of the Recreation and Parks Department to modify an existing contract with Urban Canopy Works for professional services associated with the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) Project. The modification amount being authorized by this ordinance is \$45,000.00.

On April 14, 2021, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission voted in support of the Urban Forestry Master Plan and its immediate implementation. On April 26, 2021, Columbus City Council passed a resolution to support the Urban Forestry Master Plan and its immediate implementation. By modifying this contract with Urban Canopy Works, one of the consultants leading the project, the City will have access to the technical expertise needed in the first 12 months of implementation. The fee was developed by determining the level of effort and using already established contracted hourly rates.

The Columbus Urban Forestry Master Plan is the first citywide strategic plan to invest long-term in Columbus' trees. Over the next decades, the UFMP will guide the entire Columbus community to prioritize, preserve, and grow our tree canopy. Tree canopy refers to the part of a city that is shaded by trees. Canopy cover is the percentage of the city that is covered by trees when viewed from above, as opposed to other land cover like water, open green space, hard surfaces, and bare soil. In Columbus, 22% of the city is currently covered by trees.

Trees are part of the solution to many challenges that the City of Columbus faces today and in the future. Trees help reduce urban stressors, cleaning our air, providing shade, intercepting stormwater, and more. The benefits urban trees provide is valued up to five times what it costs to maintain them. In Columbus, our trees provide an estimated 38 million dollars in benefits each year. However, our tree canopy is vulnerable to threats from disease, pests, the changing climate, and increased development. The city is expected to grow by 1 million residents in the coming decades. To improve our residents' quality of life, we needed a strategic plan to invest in our trees.

Residents across Columbus were engaged through five avenues including an online survey, an open house, small-group presentations, interviews, and multiple meetings of stakeholder groups. These groups were comprised of over 100 community leaders and city staff. The themes that emerged were used to develop the vision, goals, and actions of the Urban Forestry Master Plan. The vision of the Urban Forestry Master Plan is to prioritize, preserve, and grow the tree canopy in Columbus, equitably across neighborhoods, to improve health and quality of life for all residents.

The Urban Forestry Master Plan has three goals. One is long-term and the other two are short-term. All are critical to achieving our vision for Columbus' urban forest. These goals are as follows:

- Goal 1: Reach citywide tree canopy cover of 40% by 2050.
- Goal 2: Stop the net canopy losses by 2030.
- Goal 3: Invest in equitable canopy across all neighborhoods by 2030.

To reach our goals, we will follow four strategies consisting of community coordination and collaboration, best practices, dedication of resources, and stronger policies.

Principal Parties:

Urban Canopy Works
11424 US Highway 42, Union, KY 41091
Rachel Comte, 859-493-4132, rachel@urbancanopyworks.com

Contract Compliance Number, Tax ID: 029746, 82-4852065
June 4, 2021

Emergency Justification: Emergency action is requested in order to begin immediate implementation of the Urban Forestry Master Plan. With challenges on the horizon like population growth, public health issues, and climate change, beginning strategic investment in Columbus' trees will ensure the continued health and safety of our residents.

Benefits to the Public: Trees provide tangible benefits to Columbus residents. Columbus had the 8th most intense urban heat island effect of major US cities, impacting health, energy use, and water quality. The recently published Columbus Climate Action Plan recommends planting trees as a solution. Street trees clean our air, reduce heat, and absorb stormwater. In an Ohio summer, trees provide the shade that makes walking outside bearable and trees should be equitably distributed across the city, so all residents benefit.

Community Input/Issues: Over a hundred stakeholders helped create the Urban Forestry Master Plan. Industry experts, universities, nonprofits, developers, community leaders, city staff and leadership, regional partners, landscape architects and many others served on two stakeholder groups. These groups were a Project Team of about 30 members and an Advisory Group of about 100 members, as listed in the Acknowledgments Section of the Urban Forestry Master Plan and on the website. These groups met periodically throughout the course of the plan's creation to provide input. The public was also engaged through an online survey, an open house, small-group presentations, interviews, and a final public comment period on the draft Urban Forestry Master Plan. Public presentations were made to the Recreation and Parks Commission and City Council in March of 2021. At the City Council hearing, over an hour of comments were made by 20 members of the public.

Area(s) Affected: Citywide (99)

Master Plan Relation: This project supports the departments' Master Plan by conserving, protecting, and enhancing the city's natural resources, benefitting its overall environmental health for this and future generations.

Fiscal Impact: The expenditure of \$93,500.00, for a contract with Urban Canopy Works, was legislated for the Urban Forestry Master Plan project by Ordinance 2337-2019. This ordinance will provide funding that will modify the previously authorized amount by \$45,000.00. \$45,000.00 is budgeted and available in the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702 to meet the financial obligations of this contract modification. The aggregate total amount authorized for this contract, including this modification, is \$138,500.00.

To authorize the Director of Recreation and Parks to modify an existing contract with Urban Canopy Works for professional services associated with the Urban Forestry Master Plan Project, to authorize the expenditure of \$45,000.00 from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund; and to declare an emergency. (\$45,000.00)

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the Director of the Recreation and Parks to modify an existing contract with Urban Canopy Works for professional services associated with the Urban Forestry Master Plan Project; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to authorize the expenditure of \$45,000.00 from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702; and

WHEREAS, an emergency exists in the usual daily operations of the Recreation and Parks Department in that it is immediately necessary to authorize the Director to modify this contract in order to begin immediate implementation of the Urban Forestry Master Plan, all for the preservation of public health, peace, property, safety, and welfare; **NOW, THEREFORE**

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

SECTION 1. That the Director of Recreation and Parks be and is hereby authorized to modify an existing contract with Urban Canopy Works for professional services associated with the Urban Forestry Master Plan Project. The amount of the modification is \$45,000.00 and the aggregate total amount authorized, including this modification, is \$138,500.00.

SECTION 2. That the funds necessary to carry out the purpose of this ordinance are hereby deemed appropriated, and the City Auditor shall establish such accounting codes as necessary.

SECTION 3. That the City Auditor is authorized to make any accounting changes to revise the funding source for all contracts or contract modifications associated with this ordinance.

SECTION 4. That the City Auditor is hereby authorized to transfer the unencumbered balance in a project account to the unallocated balance account within the same fund upon receipt of certification by the Director of the Department administering said project that the project has been completed and the monies are no longer required for said project.

SECTION 5. For the purpose stated in Section 1, the expenditure of \$45,000.00 or so much thereof as may be necessary to pay the cost thereof, be and is hereby authorized from the Recreation and Parks Voted Bond Fund 7702 in object class 06 Capital Outlay per the accounting codes in the attachments to this ordinance.

SECTION 6. That for the reasons stated in the preamble hereto, which is hereby made a part hereof, this ordinance is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval by the Mayor, or ten days after passage if the Mayor neither approves nor vetoes the same.