



CITY OF DANIA BEACH
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
STAFF REPORT

DATE: March 9, 2011

TO: Robert Baldwin, City Manager *Robert Baldwin*

VIA: Robert Daniels, Director

FROM: Corinne Lajoie, AICP, Principal Planner *CLajoie*

SUBJECT: 2011 Urban and Community Forestry Grant

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is offering an Urban and Community Forestry Grant as part of the federal government's matching grant program. Funds are available to organizations to develop or enhance their urban and community forestry programs with a maximum amount of \$10,000. Awards are made as 50-50 matching grants (50 percent federal, 50 percent applicant) to local governments, educational institutions, Native-American tribal governments, and legally organized nonprofit (volunteer) organizations.

Staff would like to apply for a 2011 Urban and Community Forestry Grant. If awarded, the grant can help fund various landscape related activities. The five grant categories are Local Government Program Development, Demonstration or Site Specific Projects, Nonprofit Administration, Information and Education, and Urban Forestry or Arboricultural Training. Staff has identified available matching funds in the Building Department Professional Services and in the Tree Preservation Fund.

While the grant will only provide matching funds for one year, the city may apply for the same grant each year.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approve the attached resolution supporting the grant application.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe the local community and current urban forestry program, and role of applicant in that program if a non-profit group: The City of Dania Beach is a small city, covering six square miles with approximately 30,000 residents. The City is undergoing a major effort to revitalize the City center, though is challenged not only by the recent economic downturn but also by the depressed local economy, with the average per capita income reported in the 2000 census of only \$20,795. Dania Beach's current urban forestry program is staffed by professional consultants that include two Certified Arborists and a Certified Forester. The Urban Forestry program has a limited budget allocated yearly by the City to accommodate all tree removal license reviews and authorizations, code compliance support and program development.

Previous U&CF Grants received by the applicant. When were they implemented and what did they accomplish: Dania Beach received one previous U&CF grant in 2008 for updates to the City's landscape code and creation of a landscape technical manual. The landscape code was successfully updated including additional requirements for tree protection and landscaping, the first draft of the technical manual is currently available for download from the City's website.

Describe the goals and objectives of this project: The principal goals of this project are to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's urban forestry program through program oversight by a qualified professional consultant. The focused use of the grant funds will be to create an electronic management planning tool to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the City's existing resources in a sustainable fashion. Specific objectives consist of implementing a GIS-based tracking system for tree removal permits, compliance citations for tree issues, approved landscape plans and landscape master planning to identify tree planting needs to facilitate budgeting, planning and providing opportunities to utilize free sources of trees when available.

Describe how this project will help to develop and improve this program in the long-term: Currently the City does not have a formal tracking system for tree-related documents and does not have a landscape master plan. The resulting problems are that tree removals and mitigation plantings to compensate for tree abuse violations are authorized but not verified as complete, compliance officers are not easily able to verify whether trees have been removed lawfully or not, properties with approved landscape plans often lack required trees due to losses over time but are not inspected and required to be brought back to approved levels because of lack of landscape plan access. All of these gaps in the system are due to the relative inaccessibility of existing documents. In addition, the City does not have a record/inventory of available planting spaces on City property and preferred trees for planting in these areas.

With this grant, the City will use professional program oversight to develop a GIS system whereby existing City staff can readily and easily upload tree removal license information, code compliance citations and approved landscape plans to a web-based system. City staff will also be able to identify potential planting areas and preferred species to develop a GIS landscape master plan. Once uploaded, any City staff member can then use a web-based property map to zoom in on a given property and click on it to determine what permits/approvals/citations are on file, as well as (for City properties) what availability and preferences there are for new trees. The site will also provide a color indicator to easily identify violations or pending issues to be addressed. With this system in place, code compliance officers in the field or office can verify permit status for any given property, landscape inspectors can easily identify where residential associations and businesses are required to plant trees to meet their landscape requirements and mitigation plantings can be verified and tracked. The City will also be better positioned to take advantage of free trees from private sources, county grants and other sources, that currently go unused because no master plan exists that identifies approved available planting areas. Overall, City staff will not only be able to operate more efficiently but the net result will be *increased canopy cover for the City*.

Describe why these funds are needed to complete this project: Dania Beach has a very limited economic base even in solid economic years. With the recent economic downturn, professional staffing can only be funded at the most basic levels due to low City tax revenues, and virtually non-existent private development has limited the private finances available for funding program development. Current City funding will enable the professional oversight to collect the data on tree permits, violations, landscape plans and master plan locations, but does not provide sufficient funding for the input of the data into a GIS management tool. This one-time allocation of funds will enhance the operation of the program, allowing the City in future years to accommodate tree preservation and planting with current funding levels.

What environmental or educational value will the community derive from this project? The environmental value of this project is the increased tree planting and preservation that will be accommodated through greater follow-up, accountability and enforcement of existing tree preservation and planting requirements.

What steps have been taken to carry out this project in a cost effective manner? The project itself is a system for increasing the cost-effectiveness of City staff and related resources. Existing City protocols will be used and adapted to implement the GIS tracking system.

How will this project increase citizen involvement and support for the Community's Urban Forestry program in the long term? Citizens will have access to a version of the GIS tracker. This will allow residents to verify whether tree removal activities in their neighborhood are occurring with/without a license and therefore identify whether code compliance should be contacted. Additionally, residents of planned unit developments will be able to identify the landscape requirements for their community and request tree planting (typically at/near their residence) that is called for in their approved landscape plan. These types of actions support the efforts and initiatives of the City's urban forestry program and in general increase the public's awareness of tree planting and preservation requirements.

What evidence of community support for this project can be produced? Need a community support letter!!

How will this project be publicized in the local community? The public version of the GIS tree tracker will be publicized on the City's website and the project will be highlighted at a public commission meeting and through publications in local professional organization newsletters including the Florida ISA Chapter and the Landscape Inspector's Association of Florida.

Tree City USA certification and growth award, last year current? Tree City USA status has lapsed but the City does qualify for certification and will be re-applying this year.

Will a Certified Arborist(s) or a graduate forester from an accredited four –year Bachelor of Science in Forestry program oversee this project? This project will be overseen by the current professional forestry program oversight contract staff, headed by an ISA-Certified Arborist/SAF Certified Forester.

What new partnerships will the project create or encourage? This project will encourage new partnerships among the public at large and tree advocacy groups by giving them access to the City's tree master plans and other tree documents, increasing the ability for public comment and involvement.

[Forestry Home](#) > [Forest Management](#) > [Urban and Community Forestry](#) >

Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program

As part of the federal government's Urban and Community Forestry Matching Grant Program, funds will be 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, educational institutions, Native-American tribal governments, and legally organized nonprofit (volunteer) organizations in the five grant categories listed below.

2010 Grant Recipients

Tree planting projects need to be completed by August 1, 2011. All grant related payments must be made in time to where your reimbursement request can be received at our office by September 1, 2011. If you are not able to comply with these deadlines, please apply by email for a six month extension to Charlie Marcus, Charles.Marcus@freshfromflorida.com. The extension request needs to be received at your earliest possible convenience.

[2010 UCF Grant Recipient List](#) (pdf)

Award Categories

Local Government Program Development

This includes tree ordinance development or revision, tree inventories, management plans, master plans, in-house training, staffing, student internships, and equipment purchases.



Demonstration or Site Specific Projects

This includes tree planting on public land, tree protection projects, and tree maintenance projects.

Nonprofit Administration

This is for personnel costs only and is meant to help nonprofit groups become more effective in their ability to support and promote local tree management programs.

Information and Education

This category includes educational programs, Arbor Day programs, Workshops/Training sessions, Youth programs, PSA (public service announcements) development, volunteer training, purchasing or developing brochures and exhibits.

2011 Request for Proposal

[Advertisement](#)

[Bid Package/ Specifications](#) (pdf)

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:

March 18, 2011 at 2:00 pm EST

Urban Forestry or Arboricultural Training

This category is intended to provide cost-share funding for the development of new or additional continuing education courses or degree track educational courses in urban forestry or arboriculture.

A maximum of \$10,000 will be awarded to successful applicants for demonstration and for information and education projects. Staffing grants will be limited to three years, and the applicant will have to reapply on an annual basis. Otherwise, the maximum award is \$20,000 for each applicant, and \$20,000 for individual practices. Approximately \$300,000 in funds will be available during this enrollment period.

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For bid application and instructions, contact:

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Purchasing Office
Mayo Building, Room SB-8
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0800

Telephone: 850/ 617-7181

[Top of Page](#)